

through a combination of knowledge about paths, edges, nodes, districts and landmarks. Lynch was able from his empirical work to draw maps of his studied cities that described their commonly held public image using these five elements. It is therefore worth studying Lynch's elements to see what generic value they have. In fact, two of them, nodes and landmarks, are effectively points. Two more, paths and edges, are linear in nature. Finally, the district is an areal or two-dimensional concept. Paths are simply the routes along which people move or think they could move. Edges are the boundaries between places or the barriers that prevent movement. Nodes are points where routes intersect or where one might naturally pause, perhaps to change methods of transport. Districts are the regions that can be identified as in some way homogeneous and distinctly different from other regions. Landmarks are objects of special uniqueness or of high contrast to their surroundings.

In both his original and later texts on site planning (Lynch and Hack 1984), Lynch argues persuasively that careful design of each of these elements can improve the quality of the urban environment. For example, making paths have direction rather than simply being routes is, he argues, desirable. This would perhaps include having meaningful visual termini at either end of routes and vistas towards them. Giving clues as to which way you are travelling by means of gradients or distinctly different sides would be another.

We are increasingly making indoor cities in the world. Airports and some larger shopping centres are now so large and complex that they begin to take on many of the characteristics of the traditional town centre. One of my students recently studied a major airport, Changi in Singapore, and the huge out of town shopping centre at Meadowhall near Sheffield using Lynch's techniques. She compared the results to a similar study of the centre of Glasgow to see what we could learn about such places. In general we found that the airport lacked landmarks, probably largely because of the lack of verticality within the spaces. This made route finding much more difficult for passengers, who became almost entirely reliant on signage to get around. Our shopping centre had used a number of features in its design clearly intended to create urban-like qualities. The linear malls were given a slight slope, which was intended to create a sense of direction. We found that this had virtually no effect, and people were frequently confused as to which direction they were travelling in. The malls were themed and zoned by grouping together certain types of shops and by means of the interior decoration, and were then given names such as 'Market Street' and 'Park Lane', but again our shoppers were largely oblivious to such devices (Fig. 9.2). It seems that the designers were simply tinkering at the margins and not really manipulating the features that people see as foreground.