



**Figure 1.1** Sixteenth Street, Denver in 1993.

(Le Corbusier, 1934). Certainly the sun and sky are of importance everywhere and have been commodities with which to bargain in recent urban design work. Nevertheless, Le Corbusier's list is not a particularly helpful one in thinking about the nature of the public realm.

A fruitful way of looking at the public realm is to consider it as a set of behaviour settings – a term coined by ecological psychologists in the 1960s (see Lang, 1987). A behaviour setting consists of a standing (or recurring) behaviour pattern, a milieu (pattern of built form) and a time period. The milieu must have the *affordances* for the behaviour to occur, but because the affordances are there does not mean that a specific behaviour will take place there. What actually occurs depends on the predispositions, motivations, knowledge and competencies of the people involved. Thus the same pattern of built form may afford different patterns of behaviour for different people at different times of the day, week or year. Some of the patterns may be occurring frequently on a daily basis or even throughout the day or year, while others may occur only on special occasions (e.g. the celebration of national days).

The milieu consists of the floor of the ground, the surfaces of buildings and other physical elements, and the objects that both bound it and structure it internally. The variables are diverse and their attributes even more so. Of particular importance in urban design are such concerns as the sequential experiencing of the environment as one moves through it, the ground floor activities, or lack of them, that are housed in the milieu, and the attributes of the enclosing elements of spaces. In the urban scenes shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, the physical public realm consists of the elements of the artificial environment around a person. In