An alternative type not described here is the underground pedestrian network mentioned earlier in this chapter. That in Toronto connects 38 office buildings, 3 major hotels and 5 subway stations. It houses 1000 stores and restaurants. Montreal has its Golden Square Mile of protected walkways, reputedly the most extensive in the world. In Kansas City there is Tropolis, an underground business complex of 4 million square feet (371,600 square metres) with an employee population of 1300 people. It has wide, paved streets that are completely dry and 'brilliantly illuminated'. It is located in old mines. Sydney has extensive subterranean walkway in its city centre. They link the underground stations of its suburban railway system to basement shopping areas in adjacent blocks. The walkways themselves are lined with shops and lead to major destinations. They are well used.

Major references

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Case Study

The skywalk system, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA (1959 to the present; planned completion 2015)

The Minneapolis skywalk system consists of pedestrian walkways that link the interiors of buildings in the office and retail core of the city at the second storey level (i.e. first floor level in countries using British English) (see Figure 10.22). These spaces consist of shopping galleries and hotel and commercial building lobbies. It is an indoor, climatically controlled network of links and places. It is not a unique example but it is the most extensive in the United States.

The idea to build such a system is credited to the president, Leslie Park, of a real estate company, Baker Properties. His goal was to have the city centre compete effectively with suburban shopping malls with their vast temperature-controlled internal spaces. Initially Park received little support from the city administration but in 1959, the Minneapolis City Planning Department commissioned him and an architect, Ed Baker, to develop a plan for such a system.

Park and Baker proposed a skyway scheme that would link buildings on Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis's main street. It would enable people to move from building to building without going outside. Escalators at the corners of each block at street level would provide easy access to the elevated walkways. To demonstrate the merit of the scheme, Park commissioned Baker to design Northstar Center, a mixed-use building. It was opened in 1959. The first link (1962) in what has become the skyway