

types can be designed to afford the needs of different household types and ways of life but it cannot dictate them. People make choices for themselves, provided they have the means to do so. Thus it is the poor and powerless who have to make do with what is left. It is their needs that require special attention.

The Segregation of Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic: the Nature of Streets

One of the goals of every development covered in the case studies here has been to house the comings and goings of people (on foot or in cars and other vehicles) in comfort and with efficiency and also, sometimes, with pleasure. Cars are an important part of everyday life. They are also sources of danger. How best to segregate or integrate pedestrian and vehicular traffic and how to deal with parking are recurring themes in urban design. Every case study included in this book has dealt with the concerns in one manner or another.

The major clash in urban design paradigms has been over the way streets are considered. Are they seams or edges? When is one form more appropriate than the other? As seams they join blocks together; as edges they divide districts. The superblock has been a generic urban design type keeping vehicular traffic on the periphery of districts and having the interior pedestrianized as in Brasília, Charles Center, Baltimore, La Défense in Paris, the GSFC Township in Vadodara and the State University of New York campus at Purchase and Paternoster Square.

Providing for pedestrian and vehicular traffic on separate planes vertically as in the skyway system in Minneapolis or pedestrian deck as in La Défense (see Chapters 10 and 8, respectively), or subterranean pedestrian passages has many advantages. It creates a safer world. If enclosed, pedestrian routes such as the skyway system in Minneapolis are also made more comfortable by protecting people from the vagaries of the weather (and air pollution). At the same time there is a sense that the richness of life is reduced. Does it matter? The segregated systems are often highly popular and cater to our desire for safety and comfort (see Figure 11.6). The skyway system at Charles Center in Baltimore, however, sees low usage. The ‘uncomfortable’ bustle of streets is more popular. How comfortable and safe should we strive to make the world? This question is answered in every design but it is seldom openly discussed. The ‘woonerf’ is a residential street type in which cars, pedestrians and playing children use the same space, often simultaneously. Each expects the others to be there. Cul-de-sacs function in much the same manner in many places. They are now regarded as ‘old fashioned’ by many architects even though they work well on many behavioural dimensions.

A Sense of Place

Every place has a ‘sense of place’. It is not always that desired by critics; lay-people often grieve for the lost identity of places with which they are familiar