



where improvements are possible and provides a basis for discussing the topic with members of the public.

According to Bentley *et al.*, 'Both physical and visual permeability depend on how the network of public space divides the environment into blocks: areas of land entirely surrounded by public routes'.¹⁵ Clearly, an area divided into small blocks gives greater choice of routes than one divided into large street blocks. Contrast The Lace Market and The Victoria Centre, both in Nottingham (Figures 3.14 to 3.16 with Figures 3.32 to 3.34). The Victoria Centre, being in private ownership, has a system of internal streets which remain open to the public largely at the discretion of the owners. Access to these internal streets for pedestrians and therefore through the development is limited to four main entrances. The entrances to shopping malls like The Victoria Centre in Nottingham clearly indicate that the citizen is entering private property: these areas are not public streets. One of the problems facing future generations of designers is how to break down the scale of development such as in The Victoria Centre and so increase accessibility in the public realm. A rough guide for an acceptable level of permeability is a street layout with street blocks somewhere between one acre and one hectare in area.¹⁶ Such a layout would mean that street junctions would occur at centres of 70 to 100 m. The pattern of street blocks is therefore one measure of permeability and accessibility; it is also an indication of the degree of flexibility which the user has in moving round the area.

Figure 3.33 Entrance to The Lace Market, Nottingham, past Weekday Cross.