

Examining the street layout to determine the level of choice and variety of route for moving from place to place will indicate the degree of permeability in the neighbourhood. Hierarchical layouts, based on cul-de-sac development as opposed to the traditional layout of small street blocks surrounded by public roads, have a tendency to reduce choice of route. 'Hierarchical layouts reduce permeability: in the example below (Figure 3.35) there is only one way from A to D, and you *have* to go along B and C: never A-D directly, or ADCABCD but always ABCD. Hierarchical layouts generate a world of cul-de-sac, dead ends and little choice of routes.'¹⁷ It should be noted, however, that the cul-de-sac development in traditional Muslim cities serves well the cultural norms of privacy and family seclusion which are of paramount importance for that society. Now that there are many Muslim people settling in Western cities this is not a problem peculiar only to distant lands. Cul-de-sac development also provides great security for residents. With cul-de-sac development there are fewer escape routes, that is, less choice for the mugger, rapist or burglar. Designing an environment with a high level of permeability for the law-abiding citizen has to be weighed carefully against the possibility of establishing areas which give freedom of action and a greater sense of security for those breaking the law.

Public safety on streets depends primarily on the intensity of use which, for this purpose, is probably more important than the physical form of the street. Streets are safer if heavily used and if overlooked by

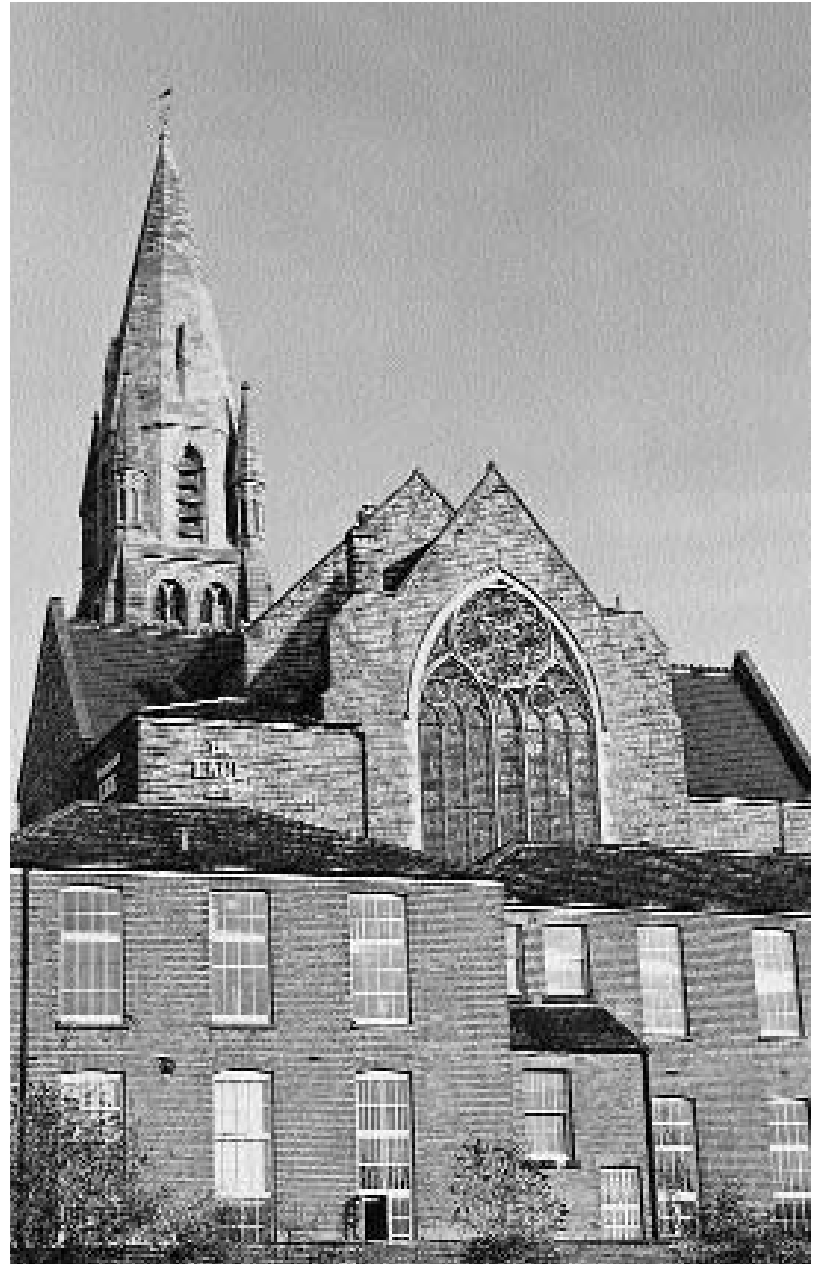


Figure 3.34 The Lace Hall marking the entrance to The Lace Market, Nottingham. Since the writing of the manuscript for this book The Lace Hall has been converted into a fashionable bar and restaurant (Pitcher & Piano), and a visitor centre established near the weekday cross. See also page 75, Figure 4.8.