

Public and private property developers alike compete or cooperate within an 'invisible web' of existing laws, codes and design guidelines (Lai, 1988). They have to see the rewards that can accrue to them if an urban design proposal is to proceed. Somebody must want the product that is being sold. There has to be a market for it.

### **The Market**

No project in capitalist societies proceeds without some image of it being marketable. It needs to be saleable. The market required to support a project and make it feasible in its developer's eyes is made up of the population seeking real estate and other services and its ability to pay for them. For all the types of urban design schemes that one is considering the question is: 'Is the market large enough to support it?' – as all but two of the studies included in this book have been largely implemented, the answer in all the cases was that in somebody's mind it was. There are some schemes that are based on market research and others based on intuitive feelings and yet others simply on hopes. There are a number of urban design projects around the world, however, that are largely uninhabited because the market was incorrectly identified. Muong Thong Thani in Bangkok is possibly the best known (see Marshall, 2003).

The public and private sectors have different but overlapping images of the marketplace. The former thinks in terms of future tax revenues and the latter in terms of the perceptions of current or future demands. The private sector is concerned about the purchasing power of potential investors and their disposal incomes in deciding on programme mixes. The public sector may intervene in terms of its perceptions of the public interest and, ideally, on behalf of the needs of those people in whom the private sector is uninterested.

The market and its values are not static. Fashions change. All-of-a-piece designs that evolve over long periods of time thus often undergo substantial changes not only in the facilities provided but also in aesthetic qualities in order to be up-to-date. The market is segmented into many parts in terms of the culture, stage of life cycle and socio-economic status of the people who form it. Each urban design project described in this book has been aimed at a particular segment of the market. Each property developer feels comfortable in targeting one sector rather than another. One of the urban design questions is: 'How can developments be shaped so that private developers will provide public interest facilities when the market is incapable of supporting them?'

### **Controls and Incentives**

A number of the legal mechanisms used in city planning shape the built environment. Zoning (often called land-use regulation) is a prime example. Taxation policies are another. Most zoning ordinances demand the segregation of activities on behalf of the public interest in terms of public health and other amenity variables.