



**Figure 3.2** Roosevelt Island, New York in 1993.

book, major precincts of the larger Singapore metropolitan area. There are other similar examples.

During the 1970s the term ‘new-town-in-town’ was used to describe large mixed-use urban design projects on cleared brown-field sites. In New York City, for instance, Roosevelt Island (see Figure 3.2), formerly Welfare Island, and Battery Park City were referred to as such. Welfare Island, the home to a number of aging hospitals and other obsolete institutions has been transformed into a residential precinct with the retail and other institutional facilities required to support it. Surrounded by water, it is indeed a clear entity. So is Battery Park City with the Hudson on one side and the West Side Highway on the other. Neither was considered to be a self-contained entity.

Much urban design in cities consists of relatively small enclaves of like use buildings. They may be commercial or institutional types. Penn Center in Philadelphia, a relatively small enclave of commercial buildings related to a railway station and the new CBD for Beijing, are examples of commercial precincts (see Figure 3.3a). Lincoln Center in New York is an example of a cultural complex (see Figure 7.7). One of the great urban debates is over whether such facilities should indeed be agglomerated into a single unit or distributed throughout the city. This question was also raised about the decision to assemble so many of the facilities that were required for the highly successful 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia into a single precinct (see Figure 3.3b).

Campuses are a special type of precinct – a unified set of buildings set in a predominantly park-like environment and separated by distance (by the use of a park or roadway) or fences from the remainder of the city or countryside. The university campus is typical. While some universities are merged into the surrounding city: the Sorbonne, Stellenbosch and the University of the District of Columbia, many others, especially recent ones, are separate entities. The same urban design idea appears in the layout of office and business parks. The Denver Technological Center on the periphery of that city clearly falls into this category and it is, in many ways, the city’s new downtown (see Chapter 8).