

urban design guidelines for the central area of Glendale in California, for instance, form the public realm policies for the downtown area of the city (see Chapter 8). Much can be learnt about the interrelationships of city planning and urban design from such examples.

Public realm policies deal almost universally with accessibility, the servicing of buildings and the ways traffic is to be handled. Strong lobbying has led to the almost universal development of policies specifying accessibility for people in wheelchairs to places open to the general public. As the public's fear of crime increases so are public policies being more specific in formulating design principles that deal with the natural surveillance, territorial control and the lighting of public spaces. These concerns are related to the accessibility and safety needs of people shown in Figure 1.6. The more general concerns of urban design are, however, poorly considered. 'Broader considerations of the network of public streets and public spaces, the permeability of blocks and . . . questions of the quality of the public realm are largely neglected' in city planning in Britain (Punter and Carmona, 1997: 169). Design issues come to the forefront only when citizens and planners are discussing the physical and symbolic character of an existing place and the desire to retain it.

Questions of the character of places are seldom addressed with any specificity. When they are, the formulation is poor. For example, at a community meeting the inhabitants of a town decided it wanted to retain its 'rural character'. What was meant by this objective was not articulated with precision verbally or in drawings. The town planning board developed a land-use regulation for two zones in the locale: one a rural/agricultural zone and the other a commercial zone. The former was aimed at retaining the rural character of the area by specifying 1-acre (0.40-hectare) lots. Where an extensive amount of road frontage was required, the lots were to be 3 acres (1.21 hectares) in size. In the commercial zone the lot size was to be at least 1 acre. The goal was to have houses scattered in a dotted pattern around the countryside. Instead what was achieved were the sites with short street frontages and thus buildings lining the roads. The rural character that citizens sought was lost (Craighead, 1991). Many planning policies conceal such hidden urban design processes.

One of the major areas in which hidden urban design occurs is in the design of roads. The prime criterion may be designing for public safety and accessibility. The definition of safety is, however, often established only by the size of the equipment – ambulances and fire engines – that have to be able to manoeuvre through a street. Such space requirements are often grossly overstated. Accessibility is also narrowly defined in terms of the speed of traffic flow. Streets have other functions and if simple criteria alone are selected as the basis for their design, their amenity level for pedestrians and their overall character may well be lost. Street width becomes the sole design specification. Visualizing dimensions and their consequences is not easy for lay-people on planning boards.

Many of the design ideas developed by well meaning architects during the first half of the twentieth century have been found to be counter-productive when