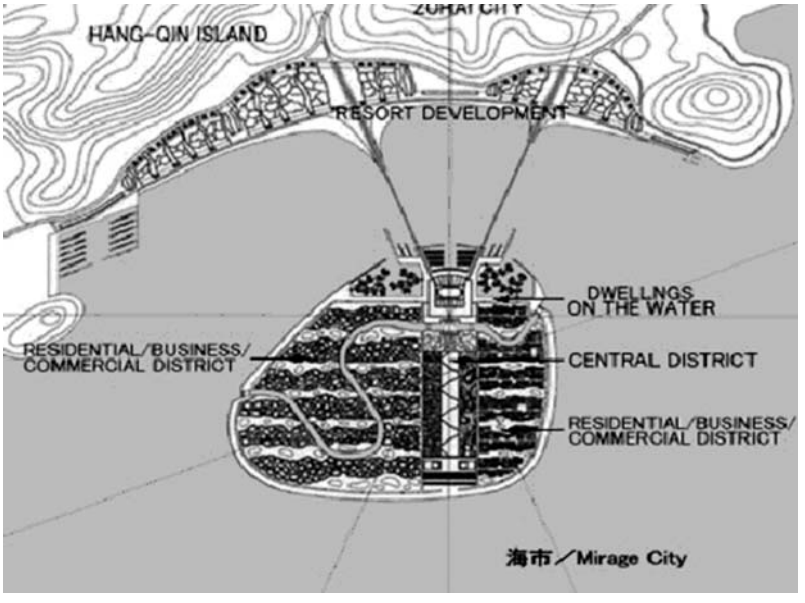

Figure 7.4
Plan of Mirage City, by Arata Isozaki, 1996. (*Source*: Catalogue of the Venice Biennale 1996.)

Mirage City, near Macau (Figure 7.4) (Morioka, 1997). In this project, Isozaki considered the image of a New Utopia, allowing for new perspectives in a time of globalization. To emphasize global connections, Isozaki created a web page with his design and through the Internet-invited international architects and the public to contribute to the design (Tanaka, 1998). The design combined the principles of Feng Shui and geomantic technologies that were intended to reinforce the harmonious connections with nature, and led to a proposed man-made island approximately the size of Venice. In the design process, Isozaki also used a computer-simulation program in order to create various scenarios within the city.

It is clear that Isozaki's work does not belong to Metabolist theory. Where the Metabolists' architectural concepts were grounded in a linear conception of time and growth, Isozaki's work sought to escape from these constraints, entering a more complex labyrinth of time and space, to create more organic systems capable of dynamic and complex growth. Isozaki represents the post-Metabolist movement, which has become known as 'neovitalism',[2] which concentrates on developing more organic systems, capable of dynamic and complex growth (Hanru, 1999).

Although Archigram emerged in Britain, and without a doubt influenced many architects and planners during 1960s and early

Figure 7.5
Byker estate, by Ralph Erskine, 1978. (*Source*: http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/Byker_Redevelopment.html/cid_1803148.gbi)

1970s, British 'megastructure' projects could never compare in scale with the Japanese ones. The Byker estate (Figure 7.5) in Newcastle (Erskine, 1982) is one of the biggest; the complex was intended to be one mile long, with one elevation almost blank as a screen from the north winds and the adjacent highway. The other elevation is rich with balconies and windows. Here the megastructure was not just the architect's dream; Erskine invited the tenant's cooperation in designing the project, making the Byker estate an early attempt to create a dialogue between architecture and the community (Sharp, 1990). There are other examples of megastructures in Britain, like the Brunswick Centre in London, designed by Leslie Martin and Patrick Hodgkinson for Camden City Council, but the vision of megastructures as an approach to city design was not well received either in Britain or Europe. It was too often impractical to build structures for large populations in one project, and financing was not sympathetic to such a scale. Above all, population growth and housing shortage in Western Europe is not of the same scale as in South-East Asia.

Megastructures in Hong Kong

Such problems of scale do not exist in Hong Kong. Here, the need to accommodate an ever-increasing number of people, combined with an acute shortage of land, has led to the