cohesive group of this size can identify and agree communal goals and then pursue those goals actively and efficiently.

Another view – held mainly by physical planners – relates the size of the quarter to a comfortable walking distance from its centre to periphery. This viewpoint is a particularly important consideration when designing a sustainable quarter. This definition of the quarter is advocated eloquently, particularly with his drawings, by Leon Krier. The size of the quarter for Krier is about 12 000 people – that is, the number of people housed at moderate to high densities who can be accommodated within 10 to 15 minutes' walk from a central place. This is a Continental European interpretation of the sustainable quarter, and follows the tradition of the Continental city where street blocks of four and five storeys are common.

British culture results in a city form which, despite the best efforts of planners and architects, is largely determined by a desire for low- to medium-density residential living conditions. The garden suburb comprising detached or semi-detached houses set in their own plots is still the ideal for most British people. The neighbourhood of about 5000 people which was a feature of the early post-Second World War, twentieth-century British new towns, was designed for easy pedestrian movement. The size was limited to 5000 so that it was a comfortable walk from the periphery to the centre while accommodating the population at, by British standards, reasonable densities. Those early new towns grouped neighbourhoods to form a district of 18 000 to 24 000 people. This district with its centre is possibly, in planning terms, the British equivalent of the Continental quarter. The gross density of the district in those early new towns was reduced still further by the introduction of landscaped areas between the neighbourhoods. This practice, while strengthening the physical identity of its component parts, increases the need for movement and makes walking, particularly to the District and Town centres, less attractive. This tendency is further compounded by the provision of additional land to facilitate both the moving and stationary motor car.

The proposals in Britain of The Urban Task Force (1999) build upon a long tradition of new town planning, adapting the ideas to achieve a more sustainable form of development by compacting urban form in order to support viable public transport. Further, it can be argued that a compact urban form of mixed land use reduces the need for movements about the city and results in economies in the use of urban land: higher local densities may also support the development of efficient neighbourhood combined heating and power systems.

Another view of the quarter presented in the chapter develops from the notion of the bioregion introduced in Chapter 4 and the concept of the bio-city developed in Chapters 6 and 7. In this view of the quarter, the basic building block is the home in its garden, or the 'Englishman's Castle'. The quarter would be developed, mainly, at densities found in the traditional British suburb. The quarter would still be served by public transport, though walking distances from home to centres of activity for some, would be greater than the half-mile which has become an unchallenged standard. The trade-off between density and walking distance has been tested neither in the market place nor by the ballot box. The quarter would be built along fingers of public transport route deeply embedded in the countryside, as indeed is the

British psyche. In such a city structure there would be no role for the artificial Green Belt – another unchallenged British planning legacy. New urban quarters should be considered as extensions of the countryside into the city. If the 'environmental pessimists' prove to be correct in their predictions, such urban forms would preserve a potential land bank for essential urban food production, where every green space, both private and public, each wall and roof could be brought into service for food production. During the Second World War in Britain, as part of a radio gardening programme there was a catch phrase 'Dig for Victory'. It spearheaded a successful campaign to make Britain less dependent on food shipped across the Atlantic from the USA. If the pessimists are correct in their assumptions, then 'Dig for Survival' may be the catch phrase of the future. Hopefully the predictions of the 'environmental optimists' will prove to be closer to the future reality: in this case Britain, at the end of the century, would inherit some attractive village-like green quarters, conforming closely to the taste of the average person in this country. The bio-quarter would also have its village streets, squares and greens, linking it to the public domain of existing urban structures.

This chapter has dealt mainly with the design of new city quarters. However, for the next fifty years when the country will begin to feel the impact of any environmental perturbations, most of the existing city structures – including the suburbs – will still be here. It is the way in which designers adapt these suburbs, where most people will continue to live, that will be the true measure of our efforts at sustainable development. It is here that the logic of the compact city and the bio-city ideals are in most conflict. The logic of the 'compact city' requires existing suburbs to be 'densified' – an ugly word, meaning to build new homes on all available spaces by combining semi-detached and detached homes into some form of the terrace. This could be described as 'town cramming'. A more civilized way to deal with the existing suburbs is by weaving into its structure, at strategic points, essential community services, using, and converting where necessary, existing houses, together with providing institutional support for local community bus services. It may also be useful for Government to consider providing financial support for homeowners to install solar heating and small wind turbines, a far more environmentally friendly prospect than the building of a new generation of Atomic Power Stations.

Clearly, there are a number of terms which have been used in this chapter to describe sections of a city: they are sector, district, quarter, neighbourhood, domain, and community. The position is complicated further by the different definitions given to these terms by those working in the field of urban design and planning. In this chapter, the term 'quarter' is used to describe a large section of the city with a population of 20 000 to 100 000 people. 'Neighbourhood' is used here for an area of the city which has a population of between 5000 and 12 000 people, and the term 'local community' is used to describe a few related streets with a population of 500 to 2000 people. There is no ideal or fixed size for a quarter, neighbourhood or local community, nor is it essential for a city to be structured to include all these urban components. It is probably true to say that the size of these urban components will vary with the size of the city. For large metropolitan cities the quarter may be large with a population of 100 000,