



Figure 9.37 Inland Revenue Building, Nottingham

Figure 9.38 Inland Revenue Building, Nottingham



INLAND REVENUE BUILDING, NOTTINGHAM: MICHAEL HOPKINS AND PARTNERS

This is not simply a single building on one plot, the site has been developed as a group of island blocks surrounded by streets (Figures 9.37–9.39). The building is the result of a competition won by Hopkins and Partners. It occupies once derelict and under-used land adjacent to a canal. The streets within the development are tree-lined to give protection and shade from the summer heat and to help purify the air in this part of Nottingham. The building pattern adopted for the development, by breaking up the mass into strips of slimmer accommodation, permits more of the occupants to be near a window, so reducing the need for artificial lighting while giving them a pleasant view of the landscaped courts. The Inland Revenue building in Nottingham has a number of innovative features for reducing the energy used in running the buildings, and is also sited on ‘brown land’ rather than a greenfield site. As urban design, the complex enlivens the canal, particularly the tent-like structure which dominates the scene, while the organization of the programme into a number of semi-autonomous units has enabled a breakdown of the accommodation into blocks of small scale. This is, however, a large development of single use which is dead in ‘out-of-office’ hours, and the development does little to revive the architecture of the city centre. The developers, perhaps, should have considered the conversion of some of the unused office space in the city before embarking on a prestige building on the canal site. Despite these criticisms, the Inland Revenue Building in Nottingham is a great addition to the city architecture giving delight to visitors and citizen alike:

it is attractive when seen from the canal towpath. Being a major employer, the Inland Revenue Building will bring extra business to the city and is a welcome move to decentralize Government activity to the regions. Together with the other developments along the canal in Nottingham, it may give an added stimulus to the redevelopment of other degraded areas in the city centre.

APARTMENT BLOCKS, KREUZBERG, BERLIN

The area of Kreuzberg close to the site of the Berlin Wall consists of city blocks of high-density housing. The blocks are four- and five-storey apartment blocks built over shops and arranged around the perimeter of the block. In addition, there is a mix of apartments, workshops and small-scale industries grouped around courtyards. The area, run down and ripe for redevelopment, is typical of inner city areas in large European cities. The intention for many years was to demolish the properties and rebuild *de novo* on the cleared site: this was the typical reaction to run-down areas by most European city authorities in the 1950s and 1960s. After a reversal of policy, and with the residents' support, it was decided to rehabilitate the area but without causing disruption to the existing community. Buildings were made structurally sound, weatherproofed, well-insulated, and the accommodation was upgraded by adding new bathrooms and kitchens. The refurbishment had energy savings: '... since the apartments have relatively few external surfaces from which to lose heat' (Vale and Vale, 1991).

One block is of particular interest, having been designed as an ecological showpiece.



Figure 9.39 Inland Revenue Building, Nottingham

Solar energy systems have been installed, waste water filtered through the roots of reed beds and methods of water economies introduced. Where flats and other buildings have been demolished, the spaces have been intensively planted. The rehabilitation of Kreuzberg with the active participation of the residents has set a pattern and model for the sustainable rehabilitation of inner city areas. The treatment of street blocks is of particular interest: this development has proved to be an effective method of urban regeneration (Figure 9.40).

BERLIN GOVERNMENT CENTRE: LEON AND BOB KRIER

Leon and Rob Krier see a project like this for the Berlin Government Centre, not only as a unique opportunity to create a governmental quarter, but also as a possibility to integrate these functions with an urban fabric of mixed