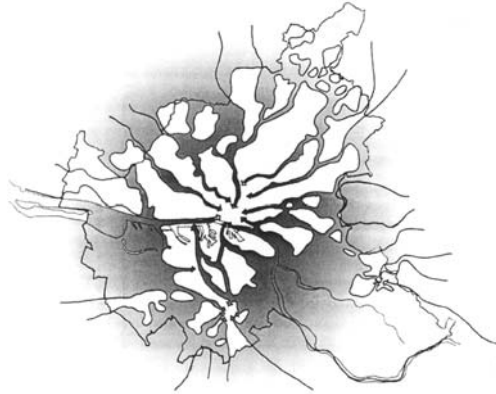
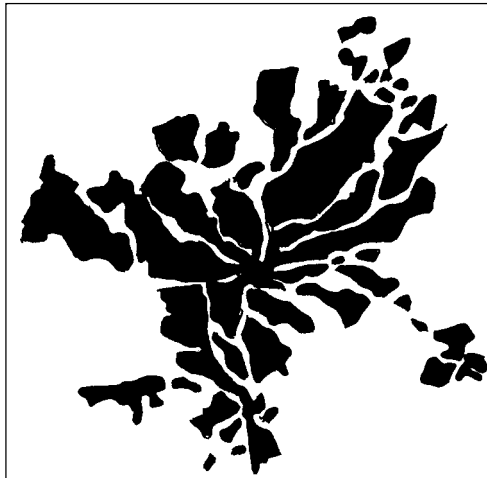


Figure 4.16 Landscape strategy for the City of Hamburg, Germany



this idea and recommends that local authorities should ‘...prepare a single strategy for their public realm and open space, dealing with provision, design, management, funding and maintenance’, and that a national programme be introduced ‘...to create comprehensive green pedestrian routes around and/or across each of our towns and cities’ (Urban Task Force, 1999).

Figure 4.17 Figure-Ground Study. City as the Figure, Landscape as the Ground



4.17

Figure 4.18 Figure-Ground Study. Landscape as the Figure, City as the Ground

THE PRIMACY OF THE LANDSCAPE

Urban centres are normally considered as the positive elements of the regional landscape: often, they are given the greatest planning attention. In some mapping conventions the urban area is depicted as darker, the positive element, set against the surrounding countryside, which is largely white. Figure 4.17 uses Hamburg in Germany to illustrate this image of a city seen against a landscape backcloth. Being beyond the day-to-day remit of planning, large parts of the countryside in this country were known in the planning profession as ‘white areas’. In Figure 4.18, the tonal values for town and country are reversed. The map now shows landscape as black and the urban area as white. A different picture emerges. The regional landscape is seen in a new perspective. All mapping is a simplification of reality and this way of depicting regional landscape is particularly so. However, with the change of viewpoint, the new image, does



4.18

serve the simple purpose of emphasizing the rural hinterland: it now becomes the positive element in the picture. For sustainable development the regional setting is the primary consideration.

The function of the bioregion and its landscape is to maintain environmental services including waste management, water, energy and food supplies for the regional populations together with the maintenance of biodiversity, a cornerstone of sustainable development. For too long monoculture has dominated the rural landscape: its role has been to support the global food markets, seeking justification in the presentation to the population of a spurious choice of food products. Clearly, the very shortest supply lines, serving local markets with good quality, fresh produce would seem to be both in the people's best interests and to be a more sustainable system in the long term. An assumption of urban landscaping is that the city is not, apart from a few token allotments, the place where food is grown. The city is not the location for trees and bushes bearing fruit, where groundcover is edible, or where vegetables are used as decoration. Mollison (1996) suggests that we, 'Replace energy hungry parkland lawns (requiring frequent mowing, fertilizing, and weed control with health damaging pesticides) with edible and decorative understorey species such as blueberry, comfrey, lavender, strawberries and so on, depending of course on climate. Nut trees could replace barren hedges. In the industrial zones, greenbelts and undeveloped city land, urban woodlots could be created. These could include native trees to attract birds and productive insects, as well as orchards. . . .' In Portugal, for example, it is usual for the city squares to be lined with orange trees which



Figure 4.19 Fruit trees as decorative features: Villa Real De Saint Antonio, Portugal

are perfumed when in flower and lovely, and potentially useful when in fruit (Figure 4.19).

CONCLUSION

The sustainable city or bio-city is one that is in balance with its region; in synergy with its natural environment, an active part of the larger ecosystem of which it is a vital component. For this to happen, the landscape in which the city is located must be accorded its due attention and not remain the 'Cinderella' of political decision-making: the space left over after economic and urban development priorities have been met. This is not to argue that the city in its bioregion must be entirely independent of the national or global economy, either now or in the future. The city is a place of exchange of both goods and ideas. That