Figure 7.62 Harlow

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Implementing policies for sustainable development does not simply mean the sensitive location of urban development in relation to landscape features such as hills, valleys, streams and woodland. Of equal importance is respect for the ecological function of the landscape. Even a cursory reading of material by landscape architects such as Colvin (1948) shows that an understanding and an appreciation of ecology is central to the discipline of landscape architecture. Apart from the advocacy of an organic approach to design by some professionals in the field of city planning and urban design the main actors dealing with urban development have often been reticent in adopting ecology as a fundamental concern for development strategies, stressing the ornamental function of landscape.

There is, however, a growing concern with biodiversity, the conservation of natural landscapes and development of local indigenous plant regimes (see Chapter 5). For example, Leicester – the first Environment City in Britain – adopted an innovative approach to landscape planning for the city. Leicester was one of the first district councils to adopt a city-wide ecology strategy based on a detailed habitat survey. The Leicester Ecology Strategy aims to develop a network of greenways and natural habitats. The strategy considers the full range of open space in the city including: formal open space; private gardens; agricultural land; land left to nature such as woodlands and wetlands; the natural network of canals, rivers, hedgerows, ditches, road verges and railway lines; and finally the land outside the city. The size and continuity of habitats are important factors in maintaining the ecological value of a city's landscape provisions. Establishing a green network is therefore important to secure biodiversity and a sustainable local ecology. According to the ecological strategy devised by Leicester: 'Protecting areas of highest ecological value should be seen as the minimum requirement for conserving nature

in Leicester. Whilst other open land may presently be of lesser ecological value, it does nevertheless provide habitats for wild plants and animals and contributes to the quality of the City environment. It is the aim of the Ecology Strategy to encourage a greater abundance and diversity of wildlife and provide more opportunities to enjoy and benefit from natural landscapes. This will involve the protection of a network of open spaces and linear habitats. In order to achieve the aims of the Ecology Strategy the Council has devised a set of policy statements. For example, 'The City Council will define, and take appropriate steps to protect, a ''green network'' of wedges and other vegetated areas and features, so as to conserve an integrated system of wildlife habitats and will resist development on these sites' (Leicester City Council, 1989). This is a pattern being followed by other British and European cities and such landscape strategies could form a basic element in the structure of the sustainable city of the twenty-first century. Norway's environmental cities have a similar attitude to city landscape as Leicester in their approach to sustainable development, an account of which can be found in *Urban Design: Method and Techniques* (Moughtin *et al*., 2003a, pages 130 to 139).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the three main archetypal urban forms. Each main form – the linear city, the grid-iron plan, and the highly centralized or inward-looking city – may have a role to play in achieving sustainable development. Very much will depend on the circumstances in which each form is used. A public transport strategy and an ecological strategy are probably the two most important factors in determining urban form. Broadly speaking, there are two main approaches to sustainable urban development: both have much in common and a high degree of overlap. The first places great emphasis upon planning for a public transport system and derives from the 'new urbanist movement'. The second, the eco-city movement, places greater weight upon the support services of the environment. Mumford and McHarg were writing about the ecological relationship of man and environment, respectively, in the 1930s and 1960s, but it is probably *Ecotopia, A Novel about Ecology, people and Politics*, first published in 1978, which is the Utopian foundation for this movement (Callenbach, 1978). Paradoxically, both of these approaches to the planning of sustainable human settlements have their origins in the USA, the country that some would describe as the engine of global pollution and unsustainable growth. It was Roelofs (1996), again from the USA who put flesh on the bones of Callenbach's Green City.

In Britain, The Urban Task Force under the Chairmanship of Lord Rogers of Riverside gave clarity of form to the idea of the compact city planned around a public transport system. *Towards an Urban Renaissance* summarizes very clearly and elegantly this way of thinking about sustainable urban design (Urban Task Force, 1999). According to the Urban Task Force, the sustainable city – or more correctly, a city that approximates to a sustainable form – is a compact and flexible structure in which the parts are connected to each other and to the whole, with a clearly articulated public space. The public realm connects the different quarters to each other across the city, while also linking individual homes to