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# THE CITY QUARTER

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## INTRODUCTION

Fundamental to sustainable development is active public participation in decisions which affect the environment. Popular involvement in the planning and management of the environment is most effective at the local level of the quarter, district or neighbourhood. It is at this scale of planning where the local resident has most knowledge and expertise (Moughtin, 2003). The resident of the neighbourhood has first-hand experience of problems faced by the family, friends and neighbours. There is, therefore, a need to support, develop and institutionalize this local participation by creating formal political structures which empower the citizen. The development of local political structures having the power to influence decisions which affect the local environment is the route to fulfilling the ideals of sustainability. This chapter seeks to explore the forms that the city quarter may take to fulfil this political role in the sustainable city.

It has been suggested that the city quarter is the main component of urban design

(Gosling and Maitland, 1984). It has also been argued that clearly defined city quarters about 1.5 kilometres (1 mile) across will be a major preoccupation of urban designers in the coming decades (Moughtin, 2003). The scale of development in the twentieth century, but particularly after the Second World War, increased significantly both in the public and private sectors. It is now possible to consider the city quarter as a single design problem undertaken by one developer or group of collaborating developers working with a single design team. Urban Development Corporations involved with inner city regeneration are involved with major components of the city such as the Isle of Dogs in London or the once-great docks of Liverpool. While there seems broad agreement that the quarter is a legitimate subject for study by the urban designer, there is some doubt about its size and nature. This chapter will therefore, explore the historical origins of the quarter, some reasons given for structuring the city in quarters, the various definitions of the quarter, particularly in terms of its size and its structure, and finally the chapter will end with examples of city quarters