

makes a similar point, stressing the need to transform: ‘... housing zones (dormitory cities) into complex parts of the city, into cities within the city, into quarters which integrate all the functions of urban life’ (Krier, 1978). An account of the development of a small traditional Portuguese town, Tavira, is given in the companion volume to this book, *Urban Design: Street and Square*: that account stresses the importance of the quarter as a town structuring element.

SUSTAINABLE QUARTERS

From the argument developed so far, it would seem that there are two possible structures for city sub-division into sustainable quarters. The first is a city quarter of 20 000 to 100 000 people with a major centre and sub-centres, around which are organized neighbourhoods of 5000 to 10 000 people. The second arrangement is a quarter of about 20 000 people with one centre but sub-divided into small neighbourhoods of 500 people. These model structures may be applicable for the planning of a new town or a large suburban extension to an existing city; however, such developments may not be the norm in the future. For the foreseeable future Western cities will remain much as they are today. The changes will be marginal: over the next few decades most city people in the West will live in a suburbia already built and inhabited. All cities have parts which are referred to as districts, enclaves, sectors, quarters or precincts. They are sometimes discrete areas having dominant or all-pervasive characteristics. Not all cities, however, can be neatly sectioned in this way: ‘The most prominent enclave may

dissipate visually at its periphery. Most urban enclaves lack outstandingly prominent characteristics. Further, complexity in an urban enclave should not be mistaken for confusion. Urban complexity – the intense intermixture of complementary activities – is one of the major reasons for cities and the spice of urban life’ (Spreiregen, 1965). Cities are complex social, economic and visual structures; nevertheless, the users of cities simplify the physical structure so that they are able to comprehend its form and therefore react to it. It is the designer’s task to assist in the creation of cities and parts of cities with a strong clear image. A strong image in part is due to a clearly defined outline or edge to component parts (Lynch, 1960).

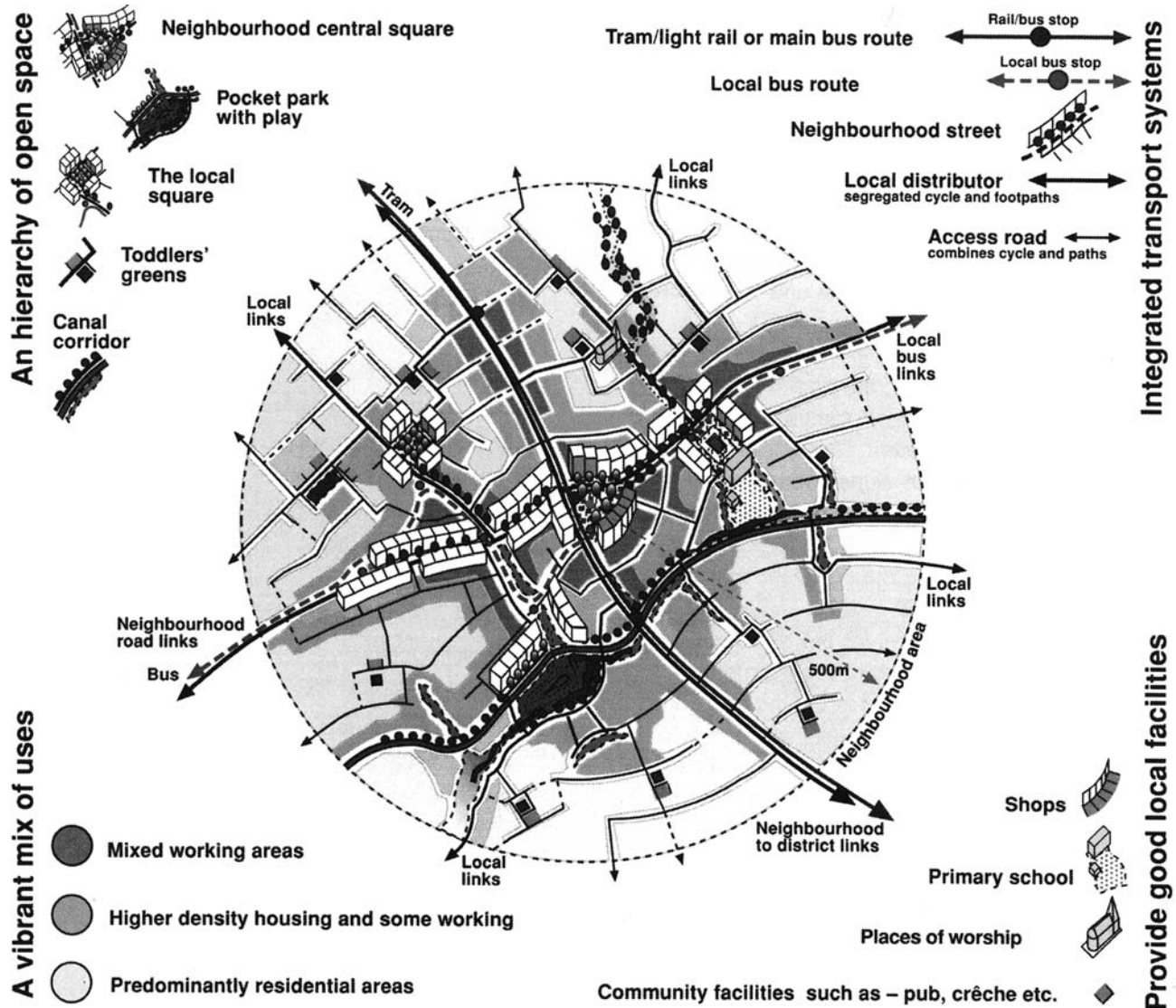
Towards an Urban Renaissance – the report of The Urban Task Force (1999) – builds upon the experience of new town planning in Britain during the twentieth century and applies this knowledge and thought process in the service of sustainable development. Figure 8.8 shows a possible form for such a neighbourhood, a component for the compact city in the Irish context. It is a self-contained community, at least for local services. It is served by public transport, has a mix of land uses, together with a mix of housing types and tenures. Densities in the compact city are higher than those of a traditional British dormitory suburb and vary throughout the neighbourhood, having the highest densities near the centre but decreasing towards the periphery (Figure 8.9). The furthest distance from a centre would be about a 600- to 800-metre walk. The neighbourhood is structured around a linked pedestrian public domain comprising streets, squares and green areas: this linkage of open space would extend to

other neighbourhoods, the city centre and out to the open countryside.

The compact city with its component parts, in its own terms, is a coherent answer to the environmental problems associated

with the over-use of fossil fuels for mobility in the city. It would, if implemented, result in a much improved environment, a reasonable step towards an urban renaissance: this is a civilized reaction to the environmental

Figure 8.8 Concept-sustainable, high-density, mixed-use district



(Andrew Wright Associates)