

**Figure 3.25** Suburban centres, Nottingham.



**Figure 3.26** Suburban centres, Nottingham.

**Figure 3.27** Suburban centres, Nottingham.



fuel for road transport. Fundamental changes at Government level have given a fresh impetus to the search for more effective public transport systems for cities. There is also a new drive to find means of reinvigorating the city centre, serving it with effective public transport, and making it the location for those land uses which generate traffic. The city centre will then, once again, become the prime location for important commercial, office and residential developments served by public transport. Nottingham is experimenting with the development of public transport, securing funding for a light rail rapid transit system (LRT) while implementing an extension to its system of 'park and ride'. The city centre is being redeveloped along the length of the canal with some fine buildings including the Inland Revenue Building, Law Courts and other public, commercial and residential developments. This is a natural location for the city-centre extension bringing back into use the canal and connecting the main railway centre with the new extended city centre. The redevelopment of the Midland Railway Station will create an impressive gateway to the city, connected to the centre with landscaped pedestrian, cycle and public transport links.

Where does Nottingham go from here? A broad strategy for healing the wounds caused by the developments of the 1960s and 1970s is in process. Methods of controlling the use of the private car remain to be discovered while new uses may have to be found for the inner-city multi-storey car parks. In addition, at a time when sustainable development is so important in guiding urban design strategies, ways of encouraging a vibrant residential population to reoccupy the city centre have to be devised. Following on from the example of continental cities, Nottingham has yet to define a large central zone where pedestrian needs are considered paramount. Finally, probably the most demanding problem facing Nottingham is devising strategies for dealing with the two large 1960s shopping centres, The Victoria Centre and Broadmarsh, and the out-of-scale inner ring road, Maid Marian Way, again dating from the 1960s. Each of these major developments, characteristic of similar developments of the period in other British cities, continue to be destructive in terms of the urban fabric of central Nottingham.

### **TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS**

There are three main aspects of townscape analysis. The first concerns the legibility of the urban structure, that is, the ways in which people perceive, understand and react to the environment. It concerns those qualities of a place which give it an immediate identity, one which is quickly perceived or grasped by its users. The second aspect of townscape analysis concerns the permeability of the environment, that is, the choice it presents to the user. The third aspect of the analysis, a visual study, conforms more closely to the more traditional meaning of townscape, as used by Cullen following on from Sitte and his disciples.<sup>10</sup> The visual analysis includes studies of urban space, the treatment of façades, pavement, roofline, street sculpture and an analysis of the complexity of visual detail which distinguishes one place from another.

### **PERCEPTUAL STRUCTURE**

The small traditional city and those parts of the traditional city which survive twentieth-century development have qualities admired by people, many of whom feel psychologically alienated by the impact of a visually bland and overpowering city governed, not by local burgers, but by the power of international commerce. Legibility is one of the qualities of the traditional city. The traditional city is 'easy to read'. The important public and religious buildings were the tallest and most imposing in the city; the main public squares and streets for parade were embellished with decoration, fountains, sculpture and ornamental lighting. Districts within the city were clearly apparent, defined and given distinct names such as The Lace Market in Nottingham or The Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. Places had a beginning, an end, a defining boundary and, above all else, a centre for meeting and commercial display. Kevin Lynch illustrated a method for analysing legibility and suggested ways in which the concept can be used to structure new developments and strengthen the legibility of existing areas where this quality of the environment has been impaired by modern developments.<sup>11</sup>

Lynch demonstrated with his studies of mental mapping that a legible environment is one that is capable of being structured by people into accurate images. With this clear perceptual image of the city, the user can react to the environment more effectively. Lynch also found evidence that groups of city users share features of a common image. Mapping this common image is fundamental for an urban design study. There are five key physical features by which the user structures city image; they are paths, nodes, districts, edges and landmarks.<sup>12</sup>

The path is probably the most significant structuring element in image building. Most people relate other imaging features to their main network of paths. Paths are the main channels of movement,