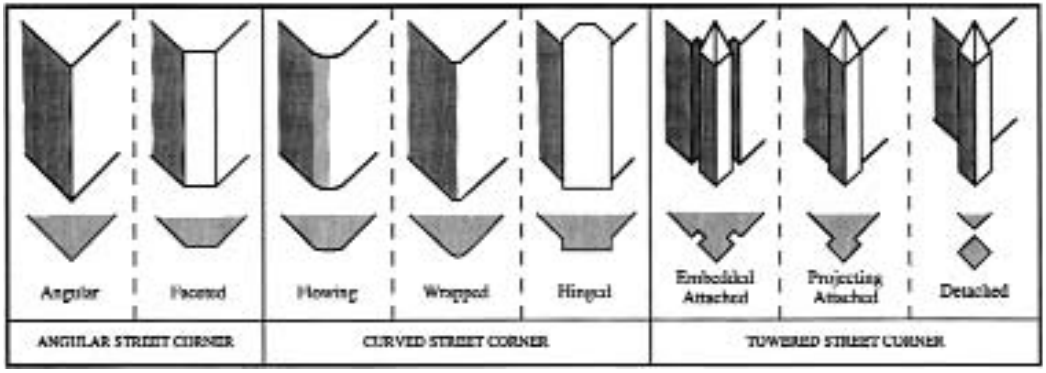
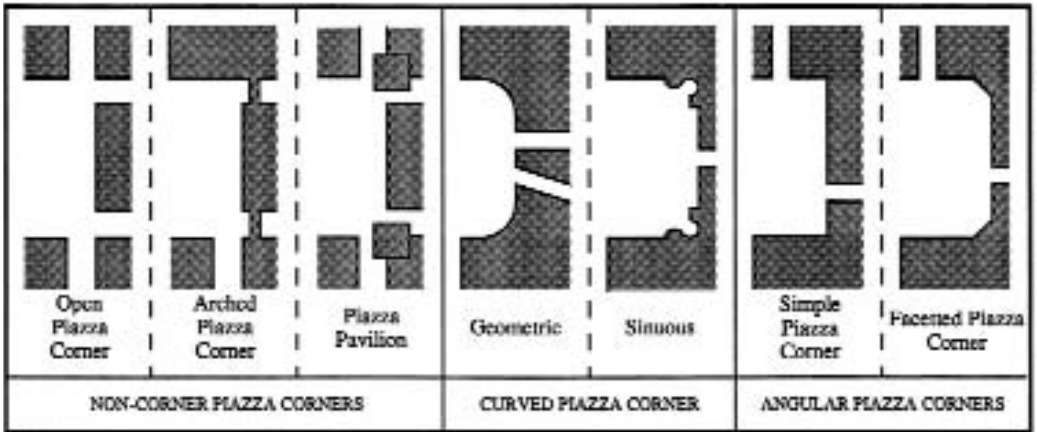
Figure 3.4 Street corner typology
Figure 3.5 Piazza corner typology



3.4



3.5

a simple angle corner, or be a faceted corner. Within the curved corner type it is possible to distinguish three sub-types: 'flowing', 'wrapped' and 'hinged' corners, while the towered type can be 'attached' or 'detached'. The piazza, that is, the space-enclosing corner, can be categorized as: the non-corner, the curved corner and the angular corner. Each of these categories can be subdivided into further recognizable types. The non-corner occurs where the flanking buildings do not in fact meet to form a junction: such corners can take three main forms: 'open', 'arched', or 'pavilion'. The curved piazza corner can be either 'geometric' or 'sinuous' while the angular piazza corner, probably the most common corner for a public square, may be a simple internal corner or a more complicated faceted corner.

THE STREET CORNER TYPOLOGY

THE NEGATIVE STREET CORNER

Post-Second World War designers, have tended to ignore the problem of the street corner. A survey in

Brussels found that 'architects and public powers neglected the treatment of corners which are now systematically denied or destroyed' (Murdock, 1984). The authors of this survey suggest that the neglect of the corner imperils the traditional urban structure and is one reason for the city centre having the appearance of a slum. These strong views about Brussels hold true for many cities throughout Europe. One reason for the dismissive treatment of corners may have arisen from the imposition of engineering sight lines but this requirement was also supported by the urban philosophy of the day with its lack of respect for traditional urban spatial arrangements, streets, squares and the urban block.

As Le Corbusier, (1967) wrote: 'Our streets no longer work. Streets are an obsolete notion. There ought to be no such thing as streets; we have to create something that will replace them.' The negative corner takes the form of two buildings with gables exposed exhibiting the three dimensional form of both abutting buildings. The re-entrant corner is often a wasteland or it may be decorated with planting or murals painted on the gables. Often it becomes an ideal location for large advertisement hoardings. There is a need for strongly defined corners to establish the form of the urban street block, therefore, the negative corner is not recommended here as being suitable treatment for the meeting point of streets. It is included to establish a complete coverage for the typology.

THE ANGULAR STREET CORNER

The types of corner subsumed under this general heading are usually associated with buildings of the Modern Movement. The junction of walls, while giving emphasis to the expressive possibilities of the corner, nevertheless have been consciously designed: they are not, like the negative corner, the result of neglect. They are a response to the belief that the unadorned meeting of planes on a vertical line results in the most pleasing appearance for such a junction. Such corner types are not usually associated with ornament or decoration.

Figure 3.6 The faceted corner: Glasshouse Street, London

(i) The Simple Angular Corner

This sub-type arises when two street façades meeting at a corner join to form an unadorned sharply defined line. The façades may or may not join at ninety degrees. In this case the corner is often of less importance than the two façades, and in many instances is given no additional recognition or special decorative treatment. The different or similar design of the two façades may indicate or reflect the two streets coming together being of different or equal importance. This corner type is less than ideal where shop fronts are required on the corner of both façades.

(ii) The Faceted Corner

This design type is a primitive attempt to come to terms with the functional and expressive requirements of the corner while retaining 'modern lines' and a machine finish. The angle of the corner in this sub-type is simply chamfered, which improves the sight lines for the traffic engineer and resolves the difficulty of arranging shop window and/or entrance on the corner (Figure 3.6).