

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND LEISURE PATTERNS IN SAUDI ARABIA

**AND THEIR ROLES IN DETERMINING
OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN:
THE CASE OF
JEDDAH'S CORNICHE**

A thesis submitted to the University of Sheffield in Candidature for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Landscape Architecture

by

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S U M M A R Y

Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Patterns in Saudi Arabia and Their Roles in Determining Open Space Planning and Design: The Case Of Jeddah's Corniche

THE THESIS DEALS with outdoor recreational opportunities within the urban environment of Jeddah. The lack of sufficient research on resource demand has persuaded the author to attempt to reach an understanding of the existing outdoor recreational and leisure facilities that have shaped the current provision, to determine present use and attitudes and their compatibility with the local culture and environment.

The study argues that there is a relationship between various external influences which dominate the planning and design of outdoor recreational provision and users' satisfaction, attitudes, and their leisure behaviour. Despite the great demand for recreation, municipalities have made inadequate provision, which is not based on social or behavioural studies. That is without considering people's desires and needs. Factors such as culture and climate will influence the users' behaviour and their use of recreational opportunities which were disregarded in the planning and design process. Plans and concepts from foreign cultures were *blindly used* to shape outdoor recreational areas, which created problems such as privacy intrusion for women, and the failure to predict future behaviour. This research investigates how visitors use the space, their demands and what are the *hidden social problems* to be solved.

The research involved a questionnaire, observation and a personal landscape architectural appraisal of Jeddah's Corniche in Jeddah in the summer of 1989. The questionnaire investigates visitors' needs, uses and problems of the recreational facilities. The open space observation explores the intensity of use, type of activity, type of user and their behaviour. The results confirmed the inadequacy of some recreational sites because they adhered to geometrical shapes which had neither integration, nor function, nor did they form adequate space articulation with appropriate shade and shelter. The overall layout causes people's dissatisfaction, especially when their women and children's privacy and safety were exposed to other eyes and physical contacts with traffic or the dangers of sea water. The study raised the need for the development of a strategy and guidelines to prevent future problems on leisure and recreation particularly with respect to local culture. Accordingly the data collected enabled the author to suggest that landscape architectural concepts must be adapted to the Saudi environment, which would seem to be most effective in satisfying existing demand for adequate patterns.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
MOST GRACIOUS, MOST
MERCIFUL

"Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from God and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of God). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception? "

﴿٥٠﴾ اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَمَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ
وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ
فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ
نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ
مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَمًا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ
وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ

5302. Cf. 6:32, and n. 855. In the present passage the idea is further amplified. In this life people not only play and amuse themselves and each other, but they show off, and boast, and pile up riches and man-power and influence, in rivalry with each other.

5303. Cf. 39:21, and n. 4275. Here the Parable is meant to teach a slightly different lesson. Allah's mercies are free and open to all, like His rain. But how do men make use of them? The good men take the real spiritual harvest and store the spiritual grain. The men who are in love with the ephemeral are delighted with the green of the tares and the grass; but such things give no real nourishment; they soon wither, become dry, and crumble to pieces, like the worldly pleasures and pomps, boastings and tumults, possessions and friends.

5304. *Kuffār* is here used in the unusual sense of 'tillers or husbandmen', because they sow the seed and cover it up with soil. But the ordinary meaning, 'Rejectors of Truth', is not absent. The allegory refers to such men.

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FIRST AND FOREMOST, praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, by His will and bounties the accomplishment of this work is made possible; and may His peace and blessings be upon His Prophet Mohammad. I hope that The Almighty Allah make this work purely for His sake.

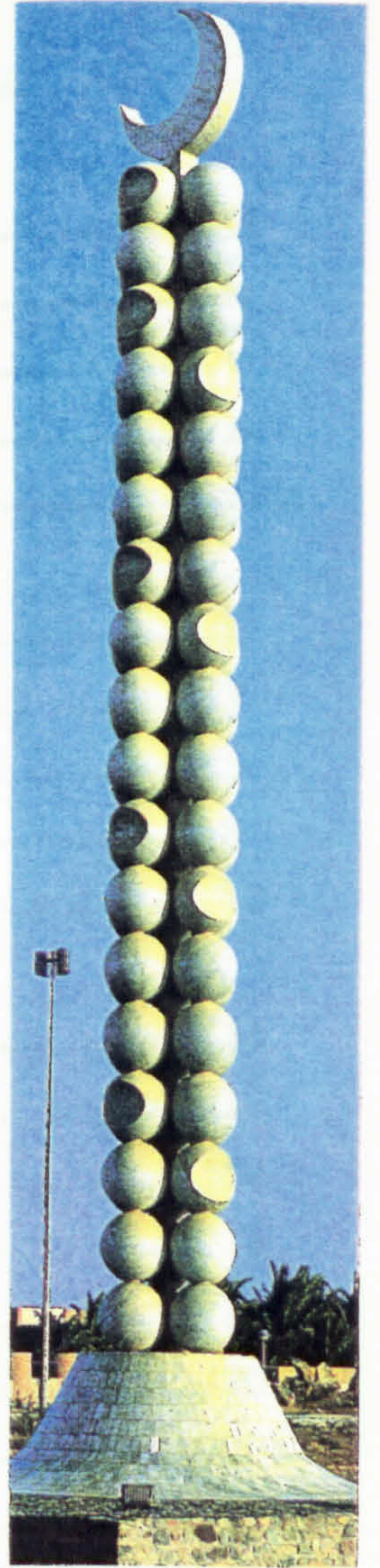
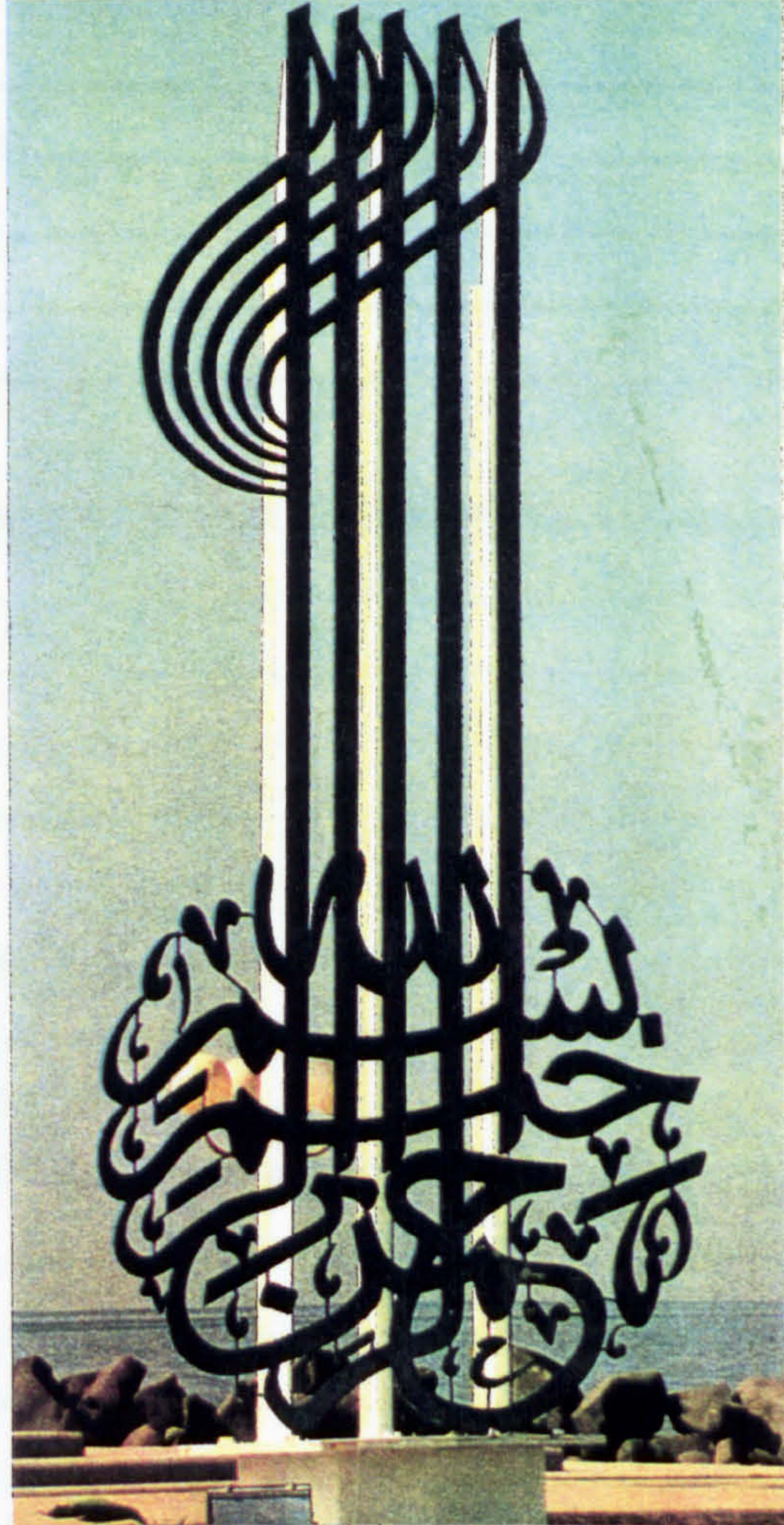
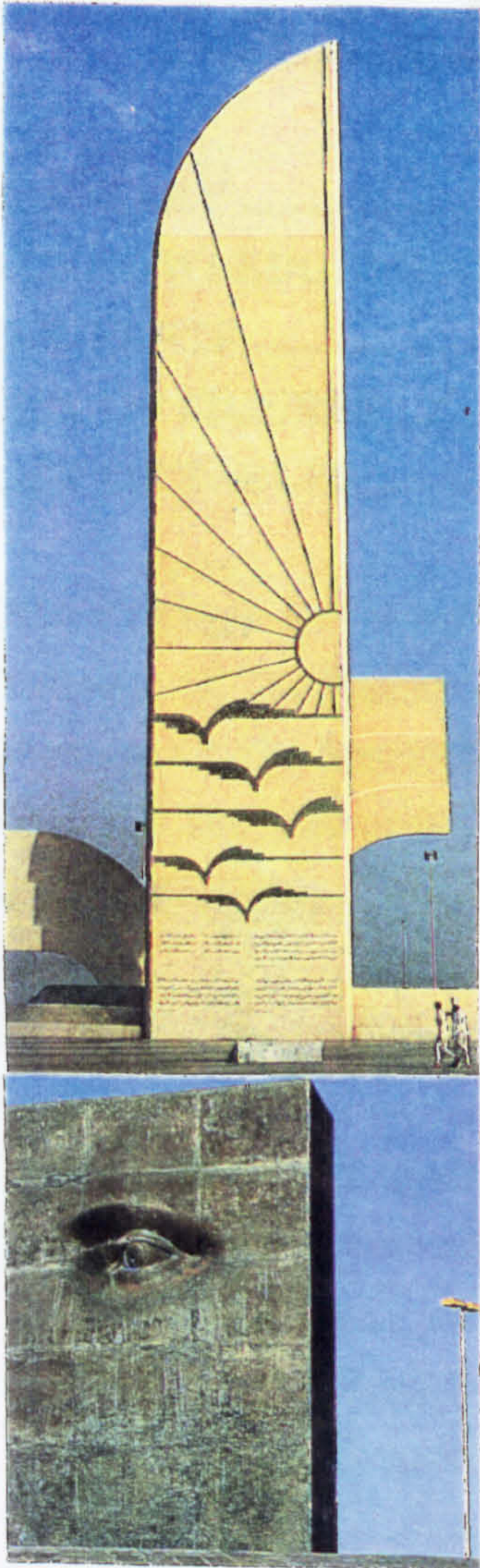
I am eternally grateful to my father and my mother who through their love and guidance made my childhood happier and my future brighter. I pray to Allah Almighty to reward them and to forgive us all.

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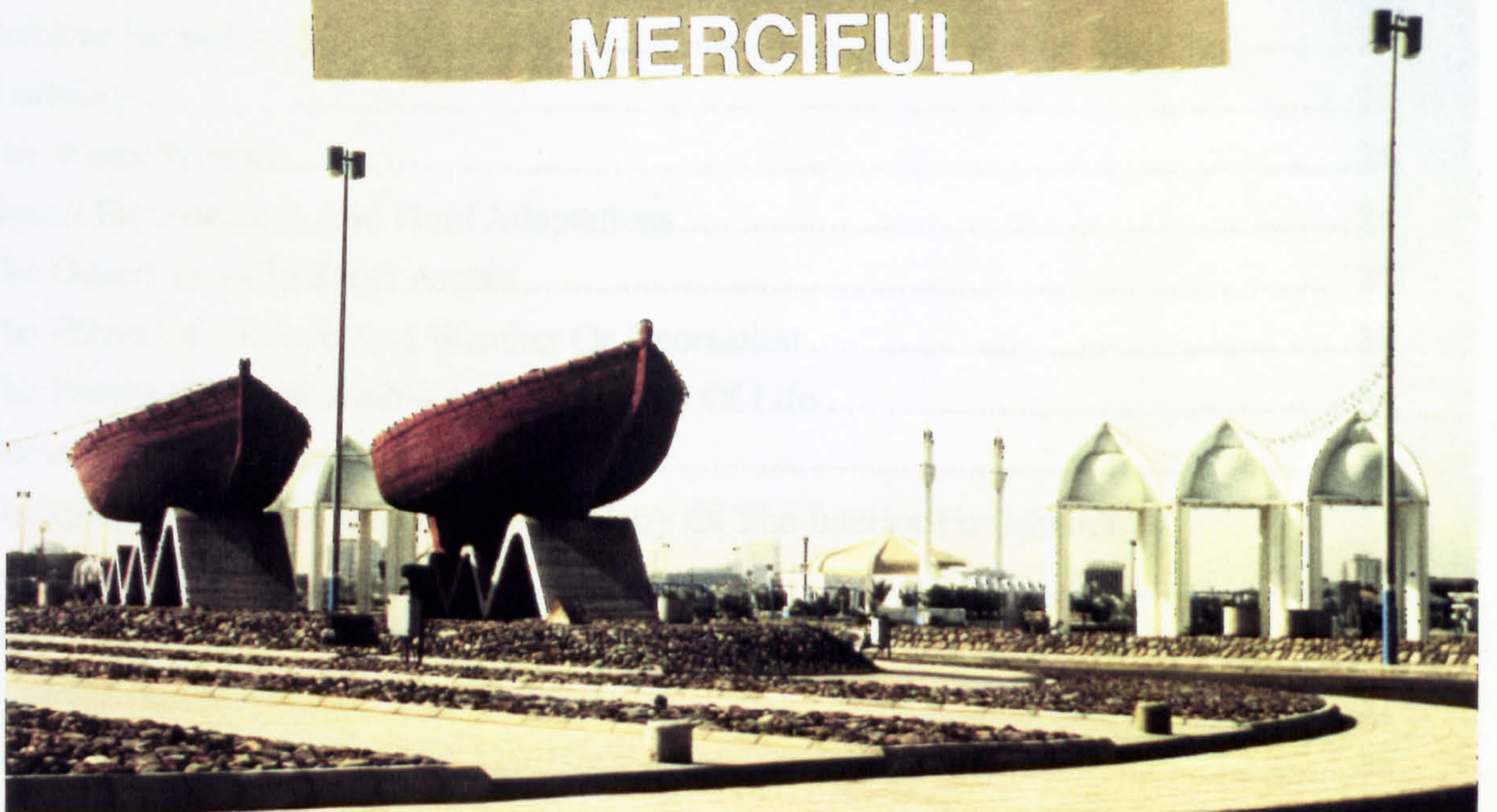
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IN THE NAME OF
ALLAH,



THE BENEFICENT, THE
MERCIFUL



*To all those I love, my parent, my wife
and my children*

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction And Research Structure



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe, and Peace and Prayers upon his Final Prophet and Messenger.

1

Introduction And Research Structure

SAUDI ARABIA is regarded as one of the most exceptional countries in the world. The extent of its gifts is recognised by both its residents and visitors. Its wealth has made it a recognised force in the world economy. The rapid and phenomenal growth in Saudi Arabia since it was proved that the Kingdom is blessed with the largest oil reserves in the world (169,970 million barrels)¹ made it possible, in a way which is perhaps historically unique, for the government to pursue virtually any development, including a total transformation of the economic and industrial base, without financial constraints.

Theoretically everything that related to urban development could be undertaken and done at once. However, this proved to have its own problems. On the one hand, there were impatient young Saudis who complained that the city urban developments are moving too slowly and, on the other hand, older and more cautious professional and academic people were asking for a slow-down, for a system of adequate landscape design, for a system of priorities, and greater care in protecting the social and physical structures which were inevitably being shaken by the rapid speed of change.

Saudi Arabia suffers often from forbidding heat and, as a result, the Saudi Arabian landscape is often cruelly dry. Yet it is blessed with some moderate temperatures and seasons that vary greatly due to its topographical features, thus changing the horticultural environment with its varying seasons and terrain. Many

parts of Saudi Arabia's vast area enjoy dependable rains as well as the underground water from past geological eras, which could be tapped to provide wells, and natural springs and oases, that change some arid and desert areas into rich blossoming sands. This grand desert that has stood for centuries defying the ingenuity of man to make it bloom, is finally yielding to a more booming perspective.

The country and its leadership are strongly committed to Islam. In its current policy there is devotion to the march of progress and development, and helping the realisation of people's hopes and ambitions, while at the same time adhering to the divine teaching and the Prophet's tradition. As King Fahad has said "We pray to Almighty God to enable us to move ahead along the path of progress and development under the guidance of the Holy Qura'n and the Prophet's *Sunnah*" (tradition and saying of the Prophet).²

In this context of Islam, radical improvements have been made through the last few decades, giving higher standards of living to the citizens and the realisation of their personal expectations, and in addition a well designed plan for the accomplishment of the maximum possible self-sufficiency in industry and agriculture.

Unfortunately most of the design tasks of this country's built environment had been assigned to foreign professional consultants. This resulted in an alien scheme which contradicted and fell short in providing for the traditional constraints, needs and demands of the society and its Islamic culture. This was also reflected in the provision of inadequate and poor landscape planning and design. In the existing pattern of urban structures, planners had failed to achieve an important part of environmental design which is user satisfaction and that the way of life should be within the framework of local culture and traditions.

The change and development of both the social life of the people and the urban environment have affected widely the leisure and recreation pattern. The pattern has shifted from one of leisure linked mainly with work in farm or pasture, to a great period of leisure time which requires innovative skills and appropriate facilities in order for it to be utilised efficiently. The development of open spaces, either in quality or quantity, has not coped with the increase in leisure time and change in the life style.

Efforts to promote open space and recreation provision are highly individual, limited to a number of state agencies working in isolation from each other.

This research addresses the above subject matter, focusing on outdoor recreational and leisure patterns and their effect on the attitudes and behaviour of Saudi families, identify possible solutions and then test these through case study of the seaside outdoor recreational areas of Jeddah's Corniche .

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

THE ADOPTION by humans of their various leisure pursuits is believed to be a spontaneous response to an elemental physiological need for pleasure, rather than a calculation of the benefits to be derived from such pursuits.³ From the time of primitive societies until the nineteenth century leisure and outdoor recreation has often been the prerogative of the powerful and most wealthy minority in society. The rise of science, technology and general societal development, however, have brought leisure and outdoor activities to the masses.

Leisure and recreation in Saudi Arabia have become highly significant elements in people's lives and are increasingly prominent features in today's society. A great deal of attention has been given to considering these phenomena which have become vital forces in the lives of people. The increased amount of leisure time contributes to growing demands for more opportunities to pursue recreation activities. Meeting those demands can be difficult because the Saudi Arabian culture is strict about privacy and how people behave and react with each other, and the environment is mainly desert and barren.

However there has been a significant increase in the importance of leisure and recreational programs in Saudi Arabia due to the growing social concern for leisure which resulted from the interrelated programs and projects in education, health, housing, social welfare and social protection for society. Leisure has also become a subject of increased focus among the media.

Rapid urbanisation and fast growth of cities has occurred without parallel provision or adequate concern for social infrastructure especially relating to outdoor recreational needs and user satisfaction. There tends also to be significant disparity in leisure provisions between various sectors of society. In Saudi Arabia, the fact that recreational provision is a social concern and responsibility is still not adequately studied or incorporated into the overall provision of outdoor recreational areas.

Many of the existing outdoor recreation provisions in Saudi Arabia were not adequately planned or designed to reflect basic social, cultural, physical and religious factors. Socio-cultural and religious factors influence strongly the leisure patterns of individuals and of groups as well as recreational development processes. Their influence therefore affects and shapes people's behaviour, extending as they do over leisure pursuits and those who formulate recreation policy. The integration of these social-cultural aspects, the leisure system and recreational development will need to underwrite objectives and planning.

From examining many of the modern planning and design schemes, it has been found by the researcher that they have not comprehensively considered various cultural and environmental requirements for individuals and groups. For instance, many public outdoor recreation areas are poorly shaped to accommodate Saudi families and the need for privacy for women. In general there is little consideration of local culture and environment in the formation of public parks. The outdoor urban forms are not adapted to the harsh climate and also do not reflect the social patterns of close-knit family and clan life. Many of the existing outdoor patterns in Saudi Arabia keenly feel the need to be shaped according to local culture and environment. In general in Middle Eastern settlements, there is a considerable history of designed public open spaces but little of public parks. The *Soaks* (markets), public courtyards, streets and alleyways each serve as social meeting areas, but the urban form is introverted, and inward looking. This is an adoption to the harsh climate as well as a reflection of the social patterns of close-knit family and clan life - the extended family. This pattern is still largely intact today. Allied to this is a keenly felt need for privacy - for the individual, for the family unit, and between men and women.

Therefore, this research is a contribution towards a better understanding of Saudi Arabia's recreational and leisure patterns and their roles in determining open space design. This research is not designed to provide methods for shaping outdoor provision in Saudi Arabia or to give a blue print for their development. Instead it tries to present the problems which are inherent in the planning and design of existing outdoor recreation areas, and to provide the elements and recommendations of a discussion on possible alternatives.

At the top of the many social, cultural and landscape physical problems inherited in existing outdoor recreation in Saudi Arabia are the problems of privacy, how to meet the public demands and desires for adequate recreation patterns and how to shape urban open spaces with appropriate facilities, opportunities and management.

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

AL-NOWAISER ⁴ notes that Saudi Arabia has experienced one of the most rapid and massive modernisations in human history over the last ten or so years. As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabia has witnessed various changes in both the social and physical components of its environment, which result in abrasive problems in terms of the landscape design of open space provisions. In particular, the author, as a landscape architect responsible for landscape provision, has sensed the lack of adequate visual privacy in most, if not all, recreational provisions in Saudi Arabia. This has also been noticed by both providers and users, but none of them has taken the initiative to explore the *innermost social problems* or the hidden but sensed social and physical conflicts or the inconsistency of some recreational and leisure urban open spaces. These in turn affect both the nature of landscape physical environment and the nature of human being's behaviour. This is because the integration and consistency of the overall design within the Islamic environment must be coupled with the Islamic religious *Shari'a* (laws and teaching), which require the strict privacy of users (mainly for women's activities) and not to cause any kind of *mischief*, to either the nature of the

environment or the nature of human beings. It is traditionally believed that physical environment influences human behaviour as well as social and economic conditions.⁵

According to Al-Nowaiser,⁶ historical studies have shown that a strong profound association develops between people and their spatial setting when that setting corresponds to their activities, cultural norms, and lifestyles. "The mass movement of people from country to town created a sense of longing in many for their rural and traditional heritage. The nature of industrial employment led to an inclination for the wide open spaces and fresh air in such leisure time as was available, there are pressures to develop recreation activities that have little to do with their setting, in a high-quality landscape"⁷

Conversely, when the form of the environment is dictated by a limited number of social objectives to the diminution or exclusion of other valid considerations, the resultant physical form is not likely to offer the optimum quality of human experience. It seems that people in Saudi Arabia feel that some of the present forms of design do not, to a large extent, correspond adequately to their way of life despite a number of beautification approaches to making the outdoor areas attractive places. The existing beautification of many outdoor urban open spaces can be considered as too-much makeup and has less meaning or function. Not all people have the knowledge of landscape architecture or the traditional art of architecture. Some of them never went abroad to see other countries' planning and design of urban open spaces. Some people come from the desert or rural areas and then suddenly find themselves in a different environment. Accordingly, their judgement of the adequacy of the site depend upon their culture and experiences, education and economical status. It is the task of qualified professional advisers to investigate the physical and social problems associated with each environmental provision. However, there are some indications that the municipality will establish an acceptable physical social environment, which can meet the rising expectancy of an increasingly mobile and comparatively affluent society. In this situation there is a need to advance beyond the provision of open space and recreational facilities as a functional requirement of urban planning, to an appreciation of how future citizens may wish to view their physical environment.⁸ In

order to contribute the initial steps in exploring such social and physical landscape problems, the aim of this study is to investigate current outdoor recreational and leisure activity patterns in the Jeddah's Corniche (the main sea-side recreational park of the city), particularly in terms of the spatial, and physical structure of the recreational sites.

The research therefore evaluates the existing outdoor recreational pattern within the framework of landscape architecture. The study was applied to the main and most attractive outdoor recreational area in the city of Jeddah. This is Jeddah's Corniche, more than 80 km coastal stretch from the southern to the northern parts of the eastern part of the Red Sea in city of Jeddah (see chapter 7). The study analyses the positive and negative aspects of this, Jeddah's most preferred landscape, in terms of social, physical and landscape spatial elements. At the end of this study, some recommendations are provided which could improve the decision making process and aid progress towards higher user satisfaction.

The objectives can be categorised as follows:

- 1• to investigate outdoor recreational and leisure patterns in the Corniche and their roles in determining open space planning and design.
- 2• to describe and explain the users' behaviour, attitudes and the leisure patterns of people participating in some existing outdoor recreational areas in the Jeddah's Corniche.
- 3• to determine the degree of user satisfaction with the Corniche, for example, with the spatial and physical layout and the kind of facilities provided.
- 4• to confirm or deny whether there is a relationship between user satisfaction and the provision and layout of landscape physical elements, which might influence the determination of open space design.
- 5• to determine privacy requirements to meet women's needs and opportunities;
- 6• to investigate and focus generally on some landscape architectural elements in terms of the quality of recreation site design, facilities, arrangement, visual corridor, visual contact, circulation and general space articulation and hierarchies of spatial and physical components of the particular site.
- 7• recommend appropriate solutions or further investigation of the problems facing the users which cause dissatisfaction.

NEED FOR THE RESEARCH

"THE INTRODUCTION of technological developments, allied with social changes, have had repercussions as regards architectural design in Jeddah. Mechanical systems have given possibilities which can conflict as well as blend with traditional conformities, lack of privacy and reorientation of cultural viewpoints must follow. Automobiles possess different physical requirements which contradict previous modes of transportation, giving a changed character to urban vistas and morphology of the city-wide straight streets instead of narrow multiple-directional passageways, wastelands of parking and interchanges replacing market places and building space-frontages. "9

The previous quotation illustrates the need for more social, physical and environmental studies to evaluate and solve problems emerging from such situations. This study is needed to meet the privacy objective and to increase visitors' satisfaction, by improving the living and recreational conditions of the existing landscape design's problems associated with the layout and spatial and physical components of an open space provision. Also there is a need to up-date and develop new social and physical landscape research recommending adequate and suitable determination roles of how physical open spaces can be planned and designed according to local social culture and local environment, as well as for applying design concepts such as the pivotal role of the primary circulation elements, space hierarchy and articulation privacy, main pathways, major through pedestrian pavement patterns and the three-dimensional elements (volumetric places and spaces' articulation and hierarchies).

Landscape architecture is not merely an aesthetic background to life, rather it is the setting that both expresses and conditions cultural attitudes and activities. From the perspective of experience landscape cannot be understood merely as an assemblage of objects, land forms, houses and plants. These comprise no more than a physical setting and it is cultural attitudes and intentions that give meaning to that setting. Even more, the space is one of the key elements in landscape design where so few landscape

architects learn how to be creative. Spatial perception for landscape architects appears to be quite different from that of architects. Landscape architects see and focus on space and the composition of space, whereas architects centre attention on the built form (which may be addressed by a frill of peripheral space). For architects, planners or urban designers studying landscape architecture, it is as if they need to look at the world differently, as though it were a negative. Space has to be regarded for its own sake, having its own identity, character and quality. But the concept is a difficult one.

- In landscape architecture space is not well defined. It does not have edges like a building. It is a dynamic, more difficult to grasp. Students tend to take refuge in the surface patterns or the 'edges' of the space, and to assemble 'motifs', creating fragmented two-dimensional designs.¹⁰

Landscape in Saudi Arabia has been far behind modern and up to date technology, conceptual and novel designs and the progressive art of shaping outdoor spaces and places. "The landscape plan is not always done by landscape architects or planners, but these larger developments (such as Jeddah's Corniche) are found to succeed best if there is a landscape planner in an important position in the design hierarchy especially during the crucial site selection and land use planning stages of the project. A landscape consultant called in afterwards to carry out some specific subsidiary project often has his hands tied by major policy decisions already finalised. Most of these large projects have been carried out by western consultants sometimes with limited knowledge of the extreme conditions to be found in Saudi Arabia."¹¹ Also, the overall pattern of the landscaped areas was not suitable to accommodate or facilitate the local people's way of life. This is apparently because the landscape has always been structured and given identity by those who have little professional knowledge about the topic of landscape architecture, and how to conduct social and physical inquiries to shape the spaces and places according to a sound foundation of environmental design techniques. "The new landscape is the distinctive product and expression of new beliefs, aesthetic, technologies and economies."¹² It is impossible, to some extent, for anyone from the other non-Islamic culture to do any more than attempt to understand the environmental and social conditions and ideas, or the

landscape architectural concepts that have given rise to outdoor recreational patterns in the Muslim countries. The final expression of those concepts and factors has to come from within the Islamic context.

The landscape pattern must not cause people to be deviated from their morals, principles and conventions. It is a positive point to take the adequate landscape concepts from all over the world and to shape, adapt and integrate them to suit the local environment. The negative points are to overlook the actual social and cultural principles of Muslim society. There is a balance which must be achieved between the landscape design concepts and local cultural principles. If the balance is not adequately achieved, as in various projects in Saudi Arabia, then problems will result which cause social tension and physical conflicts. "The pace of life is different now. People are concerned that traditional values will change too"¹³. Women in Saudi Arabia must be secluded and protected from men outside their home by adequately formulating and updating existing landscape design policy under the light of Qura'n and *Sunnah*.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

IN ORDER TO INTRODUCE THE READER to the study area, the first two chapters were intended to give a general introduction and background about Saudi Arabia and the thesis topic, purposes and structure. The research is contained in eleven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and presents the problem statement. It also includes the purpose and objective of the research and research structure. Chapter two provides a general introduction about Saudi Arabia. Chapter three gives background about Islamic principles as a client with a specific set of requirements, and the importance of Islamic culture in shaping social spaces.

In Chapter 4, the demand for recreation in Saudi Arabia is discussed. It covers the growth, present use, and future predicted demand. In addition other recreational activities that people wish to participate in are explored to gauge a future understanding of the leisure pattern and users' requirements. The fifth chapter focuses on recreational

provision in Saudi Arabia, and also categorises the main types of recreation sites and resources. Indications are given of their use, and main landscape design features: size, layout and management. The sixth chapter investigates recreational problems in Saudi Arabia. This is to establish how well government provision does or does not meet the people's demand in terms of quantity and quality of provision. An assessment is made of the efficiency of provision in terms of activity, usage, site area and the criteria of layout, design and management of the establishment. Consideration is also given to how well existing provision fits with the characteristics of the traditional Muslim culture.

The case study area is introduced in chapter seven. Jeddah's Corniche is used to test design goals in relation to the city of Jeddah for both the nature of its citizens and for the local environment. This includes describing the area and its characteristics, usage, and a critical analysis of the recreational provision in relation to the problem issues identified in chapter four. Chapter eight is about the research questions. These are derived from the earlier assessment of the problem issues and ask what opportunities for recreational activities does the Corniche offer, how do visitors use them, how well or not and why? In other words, it examines the recreational and planning aims and how those aims provide people with what they want, where and when they want it and with an approach of balance of resource development and protection. Adding to that, chapter eight examines whether these requirements are met as have been indicated by designers. That might be reached by the answers to a number of questions. For example, do visitors use the site as designers intended? How well do designers respect the tradition and religious culture of the environment? The answers to these and related questions will rely upon how policies and planning are allocated to leisure resources and the reasons behind their determination and range of facilities provided, their location and the way are managed and formed.

In chapter nine the research methods are described. This is the way in which to try to answer the research questions identified earlier. This includes a personal assessments - as a landscape architect - of plans for the design, and observation survey to investigate systematically human behaviour and how visitors use outdoor

recreational site. This is to know why certain behaviour have taken place in certain manners or patterns, number of people, spatial and temporal distinctions, activities, management and length of stay. It is a useful method to assess and explore which activities occur at what time, and to find clues to help in understanding certain behaviours, then relate them to the planning and design of the place. A questionnaire survey used to determine users' attitudes to provision, levels of satisfaction and opportunities for further improvement. Discussion of the sampling cover and distribution is also included in this chapter.

The results derived from analysing the data of this case study, together with the relevant statistics, are in chapter ten. Finally, chapter eleven provides the conclusion and recommendations.

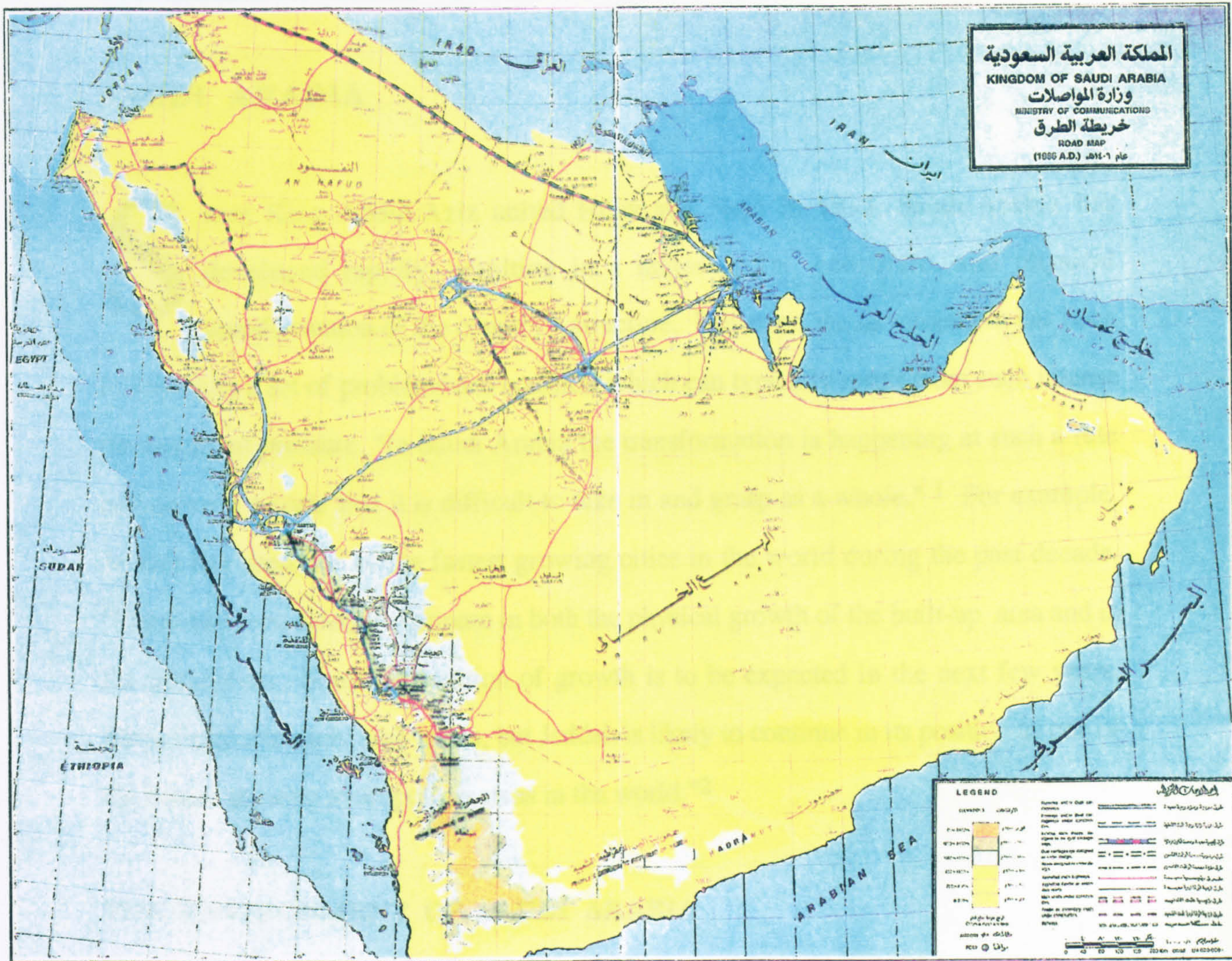
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2

CHAPTER 2

Brief Background About Saudi Arabia



A vast desert, the country of Saudi Arabia forms by far the largest part of the Arabian Peninsula. It covers 2,250,000 square kilometers (870,000 square miles) with a population of 17 million (of which 12.3 million are Saudis, and 5 million are expatriates). The country's strategic location has earned it a reputation as the "crossroads of the world" since ancient times, for it was a transit point for people

2

Brief Background About Saudi Arabia

SAUDI ARABIA

Since King Abdul-Aziz united Hijaz and Najd in 1932, Saudi Arabia has developed rapidly, resulting in a major social, economic, and physical transformation of the country's structure. However, the development has been followed by a set of problems and conflicts which can typically result from such intense development pressure. "In Saudi Arabia the transformation is happening at such a rate and on such a scale that it is difficult to take in and grasp as a whole." ¹ For example, Jeddah has been one of the fastest growing cities in the world during the past decade. "There has been dramatic increase in both the physical growth of the built-up area and in the population. Some moderation of growth is to be expected in the next few years, albeit from extremely high levels; but Jeddah is likely to continue in its position as one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the world."²

THE ENVIRONMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA

A vast desert, the country of Saudi Arabia forms by far the largest part of the Arabian Peninsula. It covers 2,250,000 square kilometres (870,000 square miles) with a total population of 17 million (of which 12.3 million are Saudis, and 5 million are non-Saudis) and the fertility growth rate has increased from 3.5% to 3.8%).³ It lies at the cross-roads of three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. It has close links with Europe, via the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic via Gibraltar. Its unique location has allowed it to play a major role in world affairs since ancient times, for it was a transit point for people

migrating eastwards, westwards or northwards. The meeting of cultures which resulted from Saudi Arabia's location has had a major impact on the regions surrounding the Arabian peninsula, particularly in the dissemination of Islam.

Saudi Arabia covers 80% of the total area of the peninsula. Its northernmost point, Ras Al-Sheikh Humeid is 34° east of Greenwich, and its south-eastern border is 56° east. It spans 15° of latitude from the point where it meets with Jordan in the north to its southernmost point. " The location of Saudi Arabia, and its climate, have affected how its population is distributed, the diversity of its geography, and its agriculture. The Arabian Gulf to the east, and the Red Sea to the west, have also been major factors in the lives and movements of the people of Saudi Arabia throughout its history."⁴ It is thought that the Arabian Peninsula was in fact a detached fragment of Africa, in spite of the fact that now it is considered to belong to Asia. Figure 2.1 illustrates the geological composition.

Due to that geographical origin, as the movement occurred the Arabian plate tilted, uplifting the western side and lowering the eastern side so that ancient resistant rocks cover the west side with progressively younger rocks towards the east. Saudi Arabia exhibits in its geography, very broadly speaking, a north -south running grain. In the extreme west along the Red Sea, there is a coastal plain (*Tihamah*), flat and usually very narrow, except in the Jeddah area where it offers a small but useful lowlands gap giving access to Makkah and the interior.

Along this *Tihamah* runs the high plateaux with steep scrap edges, rising in some places to heights of 2,500 metres. Further to the east of this highland, altitudes gradually decline and reveal a whole succession of younger, sedimentary rocks, sandstone, limestone and marls. Further eastwards, the altitude gradually diminishes, to form the low-lying coastal plain of *al-Hasa*.

Although some of these lowland areas or basins consist of bare rock pavement, most tend to be covered in loose rock deposits eroded by wind, by shattering due to temperature variation and, in the recent geographical past, by water action. Sand, often reddish in colour, covers large areas, crossing areas of bare rock pavement. This opens

to form the largest desert in the world the *Rub Al-Khali* (the empty quarter) which occupies much of the south of Saudi Arabia.

The soils of Saudi Arabia are fertile and suitable for cultivation wherever sufficient water is available but tend to become unproductive without adequate fertilisation. Many areas become alkaline from standing water but remain productive for date culture. Vegetation during most of the year is sparse, drab, stunted desert growth. Only during the wet season does the desert, often nearly void of vegetation, come to life, and the sparse grasses and shrubs become green.

The most common natural types of vegetation are the palm trees, acacias, and tamarisks in the Wadi alleys and around the springs in the oases. Grains and some fruit trees, including date palms, are cultivated in the inhabited wadis and oases.

Climatically, the Kingdom is related to the east Mediterranean and neighbouring areas. The air masses come predominantly from the north and west. Any climatic effects from the tropical areas to the south are interrupted by the mountains extending from Oman to South Yemen. Dryness (except in the Asir) is the prevailing climatic character of the Kingdom, due to natural influences including air disturbances, humidity sources and mountain barriers. The Asir area receives good amount of rainfall due to its geographical and topographical configuration. Rainfall in most areas of the Kingdom is rare, irregular and not dependable.



FIGURE 2-1 Geological Composition and Location of Saudi Arabia⁵

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM'S REGIONS

Saudi Arabia's varied environment consists mainly of harsh desert, with the exception of the mountain and oasis areas. The *Rub al-Khali*, the Empty Quarter or Great Sandy Desert in the south, contrasts with the moderate and cool mountain villages in *Asir*, near *Abha* in the south-west. The mountains rise from the Red Sea to the west (*Sahal Tahammah*) with gradual smooth slopes of hilly sand dunes. The four major geographical divisions of the land are known by descriptive names: the *Najd (highland)*; high country in the heart of Saudi Arabia; *Al-Hasa*, (sandy ground with water), or Eastern Province, the sandy and stony eastern part of the country, *al-Hijaz* (barrier) an elongated shelf region along the upper Red Sea coast; and *Asir*, the difficult area, in the southern Red Sea-Yemen border area.

That is to say, Saudi Arabia while arid for the most part exhibits a varied geography that in places belies its sand desert image. Rugged on the south-western side, with stark peaks rising boldly from a narrow coastal plain, the *Asir* area is a highlands where bare mountains of jagged igneous rock some 10,000 feet high (3000 metres) plunge to terraced green fields and cultivated lowland valleys where regular crops are grown.

Although Arabia is surrounded on three sides by sea, aridity is the dominant feature. With the sole exception of *Asir* in the extreme south-west, any influences from the southern tropical zones are excluded by the highland rim that runs from Oman through the Yemen, which benefits the rainfall in Summer.

Najd's Region

West of the sands of the *Dahna* lies *Najd*, the heartland of Saudi Arabia, about 200 miles (320 km) wide. *Najd* is the core area of Saudi Arabia. It has a common frontier on the north with Iraq and Jordan; on the east with *al-Hasa*; on the south, across the *Rub al-Khali*, a boundary in dispute with the Aden Protectorate and Oman, and on the west,

indefinite borders with al-Hijaz and Asir. This area is a plateau gently sloping eastwards from 5,000 feet (1500m) on the west to 2,000 feet (600m) on the east. It is dominated by several escarpments which are steep on the western side with gentle eastern slopes; among them are the 500 mile long *Tuwayq* Escarpment (780 km) and the Aramah Escarpment. The *Tuwayq* Escarpment has an average elevation of 2,800 feet (840m) above sea level with a maximum of 3,500 feet (1050m). The top of the escarpment is about 800 feet (240m) above the level of the plains to the west. Sedimentary formations that outcrop along the eastern watershed of the *Tuwayq* Escarpment include the water bearing strata that support irrigation works of important agricultural areas on the plains to the east, such as al-Kharj. The Aramah Escarpment, about 1,800 feet above sea level, is less imposing; it is only about 400 feet (120m) higher than the plain to the west of it.

The Crystalline Najd is the part of the Najd region that is underlain mainly by resistant rocks of metamorphic origin. The plain is a rocky expanse of coalescing pediments and desert, as much as 580 km. wide, and is dotted with prominent, isolated rock knobs or spires. Over 20,000 km² of volcanic plains extended along the western limit serrated by faults running northwards. Other areas contain saline surfaces extending to some 10,000 km² in area as well as several terminal basins, which apparently were formed by wind scour.

The sedimentary Najd (the Arabian Shelf) is the part of the Najd region underlain by sedimentary rocks that crop out in a great curved belt along the eastern edge of the older crystalline rocks. Deposits of gravel and sand partly cover the floor of these valleys and plains, i.e., erosion of softer materials has resulted in the formation of a vast drainage channel and Wadi systems often coalescing into plains covered with gravel and /or sand.⁶

The annual rainfall is 4 inches (10 cm). The temperature represents the desert conditions which are very hot and arid in summer and very cold in winter. It can rise to 46 °C during the summer. Thus the *Najd* area in the summer is very hot but winters are far cooler with temperatures, falling to 4° C. This allows seven months of acceptable weather conditions but the remaining are so hot that the pouring of concrete is often restricted to night time. Diurnal temperature variations are as much as 25° C. A ten

degree variation between shaded and exposed areas makes any kind of shade giving device extremely valuable. People have been known to run from one shaded area to another to escape the hot sun. Trees with small leaves such as Acacia may give inadequate shade and are sometimes supplemented by old rags.⁷ Examples of recreational resources with desert climates include those found in Riyadh.

The Al-Hasa Region

The Eastern Province, formerly called al-Hasa after the oasis of that name with its enormous springs of water, extends south-ward for about 200 miles from the Neutral Zone jointly administered with Kuwait and has an average width of not more than 100 miles. Formed of sedimentary rocks, gravel, and sand, which are the common oil-producing formations of the Middle East, it has been known for both its hot and cold springs. The coast is low and flat with sand dunes separating it from the desert. In fact, the eastern coastal plain of the Gulf is extremely irregular and is composed of an unstable land surface of marshes, salt flats, and sandy plains that slope toward the Arabian Gulf. The inshore waters of the Gulf are shallow and the waterfront may shift back and forth across a width of several kilometres. The flat lowlands are covered by sand and gravel that average 160 km in width.

The humidity is high during most of the year and reaches 100%, without rain, several times yearly. Annual precipitation is about 4 inches or less (about average Saudi Arabia) and heavy fogs occur early in the morning in the winter season. Day-time temperatures may range as high as 120°F (48°C).

The Western Region (Al-Hijaz)

Al-Hijaz, an area of 150,000 square miles, has a coastline of about 700 miles along the Red Sea stretching south from the Gulf of Aqaba to Asir and extends inland from 100 to 200 miles to an undemarcated boundary with Najd. Two zones, a coastal plain and a mountain area, are separated by the steep western slopes of the mountains.

In the mountain areas are wadis (valleys normally dry but carrying run-off water in the rain season) and basins where both water and fertile soil make sedentary habitation possible. Although the wadis are not permanent water suppliers, springs and palm trees are found in some places. The city of Madinah is located at an altitude of 2,500 feet (750m) in the centre of an upland plain in the mountain area, and the Makkah, the most holy city in Islam, is on the western side of the steep escarpment separating the plain of al-Hijaz from the mountain areas and Najd beyond. For some distance from the coast the sea is shallow and full of shoals and in many places the waterfront shifts back and forth over several miles at the whim of tide and wind. Shallow fords connect some islands with the mainland at low tide while under some conditions coastal flats are covered by the sea for miles inland. Sand spits often change their form as a result of wind and waves.⁸

The main ecological feature of the Tihamah plain can be described as waterfront with environmental characteristics of humidity, salt areas, sand beaches seaside areas. The shore-line can be abrupt, rough, gentle or smooth; it can be in the form of beaches, marshes, docks, tide pools, caves, river basins, dams, dikes, grassy slopes, rocky abutments or sea walls. In addition, it may include piers, floats or buildings extended over the water.⁹

In fact, the western coastal plain along the Red Sea consists of a low and sandy narrow beach in the north (*Tihamat ash-Sham*), but it broadens to a width of more than 40 km near Jazan in the south (*Tihamath Asir*). The Tihamah is a low deposition surface, mostly on a coral-line plain, that grades upwards towards the east to form a pediment on mainly hard crystalline rocks of the geologic basement.

Asir Region

Asir comprises an area about 180 miles wide, extending 230 miles along the Red Sea coast, bounded on the north by al-Hijaz, on the east by Najd, and on the south by Yemen. Its western, coastal lowland, called at-Tihamah, is about 40 miles wide. A rugged mountain area rises for about 80 miles to the east of the seashore, then slopes

gradually to meet the desert of Najd and the Rub al-Khali. The Asir plateau forms the top of the southern half of the Red Sea escarpment, extending from At-Taif into Yemen. The plateau slopes gently to the east and north from a maximum height of 3,050 m near Abha.

The coastal lowland is fertile farming country, and the mountains are terraced for the retention of fertile land for agriculture. The location of the wadis governs the settlement pattern; the two largest are those of Bishah and Ranya. Asir has more rainfall than any other part of the Kingdom and there is luxuriant vegetation. Because the winds and air currents reaching Arabia have already lost most of their moisture over the large African and Eurasian land masses and can only partly replenish their moisture content from the narrow bodies of water that bound the peninsula, rainfall over the country is very light about 4 inches of rainfall yearly. An exception of Asir where the mountains bounding this coastal area force the westerly winds upward, causing the release of enough moisture to provide Asir with an estimated 10 to 20 inches annual precipitation, which comes between October and May.

Temperature

The temperature of the air masses surrounding the Kingdom differs widely from one season to another and from one area to another. In terms of temperature the Kingdom can be divided into the following areas: Northern, Eastern Internal Central, Western Internal Central, Asir and Coastal. The most moderate seasons are Spring (March, April, and May) and Autumn (September, October and November). These periods enjoy relatively cool nights and warm, sunny days. During Winter (December, January and February) the temperature falls below zero in some areas excluding the coastal areas which in Winter record temperatures higher than those in the internal areas.

Summer temperatures in these internal areas often reach over 48° C., which seldom occurs in coastal areas. For example, the highest temperature recorded in Jazan during July throughout ten consecutive years- 1971-1980 did not exceed 40°C. Figure 2.2 shows the monthly temperatures in the main cities of the Kingdom.

Month	Ar Riyadh		Jeddah		Dhahran		Al Madinah Al Munawwarah	
	Min °C	Max	Min °C	Max	Min °C	Max	Min °C	Max
January	8.2	20.2	18.9	28.5	15.0	26.0	11.2	22.9
February	10.2	23.1	18.9	29.3	10.9	22.5	13.9	27.1
March	14.3	28.1	20.5	31.0	15.0	26.0	16.9	30.2
April	18.6	32.3	22.2	33.3	19.2	31.3	20.9	34.9
May	23.6	38.4	24.5	35.4	23.5	37.2	24.7	39.0
June	25.6	41.6	25.3	36.4	26.7	41.1	27.1	42.2
July	26.8	42.5	26.8	37.6	25.1	42.0	27.9	41.7
August	22.3	42.3	28.2	37.1	27.2	41.4	28.5	42.1
September	23.4	39.9	26.1	35.8	24.5	39.4	27.0	41.5
October	18.1	34.3	24.2	34.9	20.4	34.9	21.4	36.4
November	15.5	30.3	22.3	33.0	19.2	31.0	16.8	29.8
December	9.3	21.9	20.0	29.7	12.9	23.4	12.5	24.2

FIGURE 2.2 *Monthly temperatures in the main cities of the Kingdom¹⁰.*

Rainfall

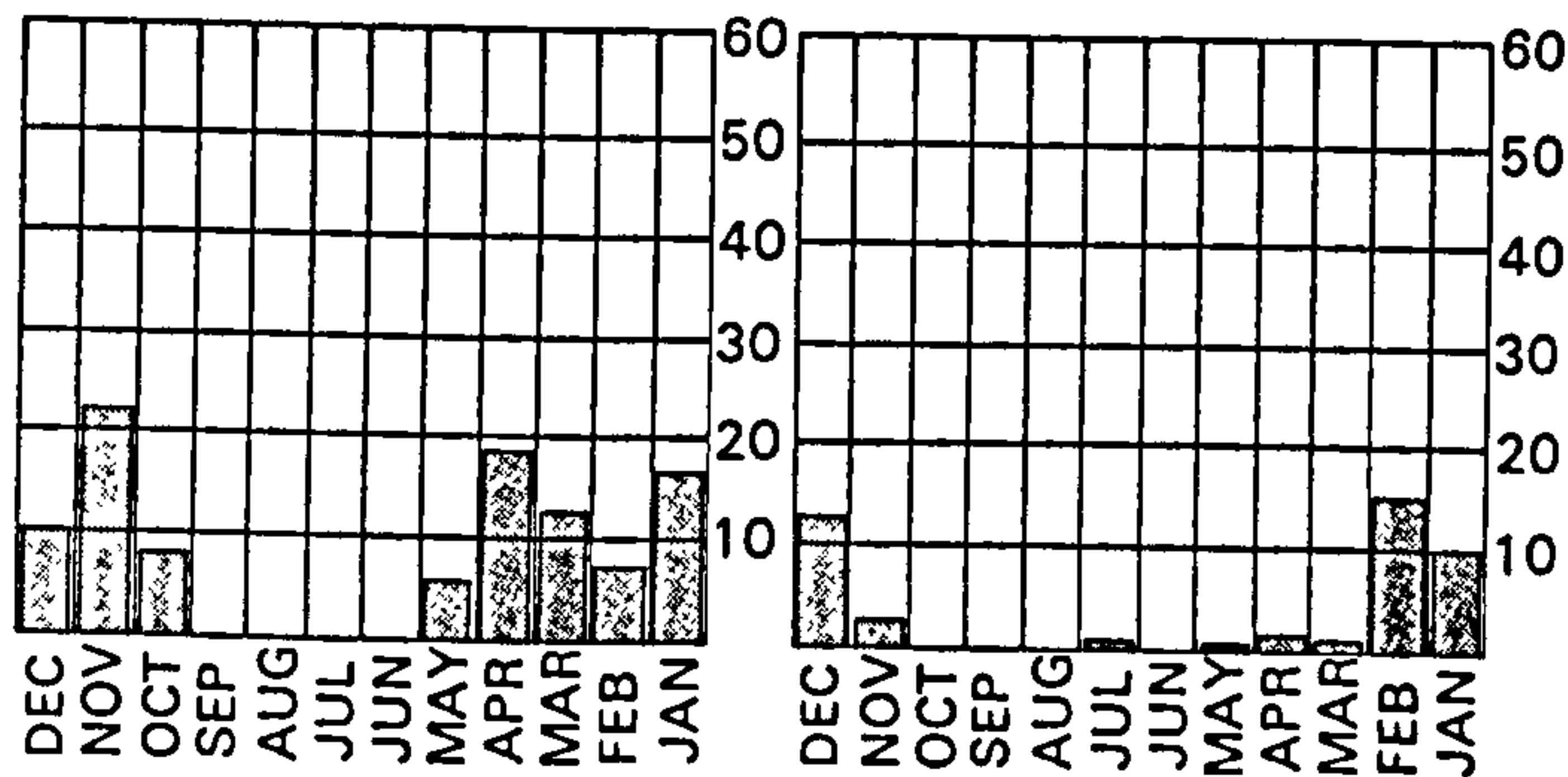
Rain usually falls on the Kingdom during Winter and Spring, due to the meeting of the Mediterranean Sea Air current with the Sudan low pressure area. Some areas receive occasional Summer rain such as Asir areas.

Moderate rainfall occurs on the northern, western and eastern areas. Spring rain falls on the central and southern areas while Summer rain falls only on the south-western part of the Kingdom. The north-western area is closer to the cold areas which bring rain to the Middle East area. The north-eastern areas receive more rain than the western areas. The area extending from north of Ar-Riyadh to the vicinity of Hail receives from 8-22mm rainfall monthly, averaging from 100-200mm per year which falls mainly in Winter.

The rainfall on the northern part of Jeddah area records from 4-15mm monthly, averaging from 50-100mm per year. Rain falls mainly during the Winter. The area covered by the city of Taif meteorology station, which falls within the rain areas of the Red Sea heights, records from 100-200mm per year. The city of Taif itself receives the larger quantity of rain in Winter and Spring with the largest portion in Spring.

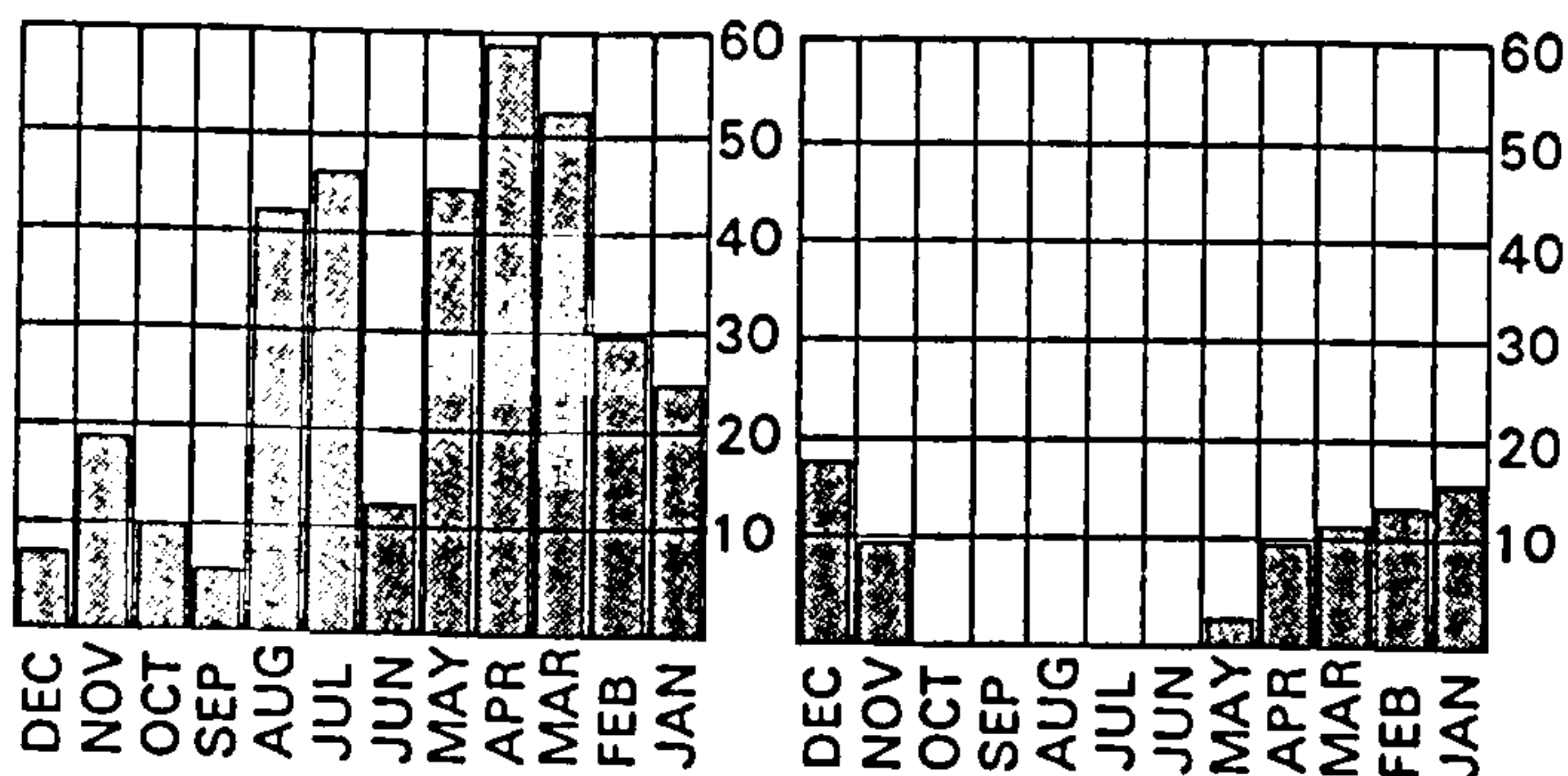
The southern Red Sea heights receive rainfall throughout the year; it is heaviest on the upper heights around Khamis Mushayt and Abha (Asir areas) caused by the tropical air masses which blow into this area. Rainfall peak times are Winter, Spring and Summer. The south-eastern monsoon wind becomes stronger during Spring, and these winds cause widespread rainfall. Thus, April is the wettest month and 50mm rainfall within 24 hours is a normal occurrence. The average of rainfall in the southern part of Asir is between 17-50mm monthly or 200-600 mm per year.

In the Arabian Gulf coastal areas, Dhahran and Dammam cities in particular receives 4-18 mm rainfall monthly or 73 mm per year. Figure 2.3 shows the annual rainfall in the four cities of Hail, Jeddah, Abha and Dhahran.



3.2.4. Hail av. annual rainfall in mm.

3.2.5. Jeddah av. annual rainfall in mm.



3.2.6. Abha av. annual rainfall in mm.

3.2.7. Dhahran av. annual rainfall in mm.

FIGURE 2.3 shows the annual rainfall in the four cities of Hail, Jeddah, Abha and Dhahran.¹¹

Relative Humidity

Generally, relative humidity reaches its lowest limit in the Kingdom during June and July and its highest during December and January. Along the coastal areas like Jeddah and Dammam, relative humidity reaches its highest limit in January and in July. The annual difference in relative humidity throughout the year is high in the coastal areas and low in the internal areas.

The relative humidity in the western and south western highlands areas reflects the influence of the different air masses. The annual average figure for humidity reaches 60% in the mountains and gradually decreases to 30% towards the internal areas to much lower figure in the desert areas. While the relative humidity at times exceeds 90% in the coastal areas, a drop to less than 10% is common in the interior during the summer months.

Visibility

Visibility tends to be poor during the warmer months, particularly in the afternoon, due to dust and haze. This is particularly so of the central and eastern part of the country. Though the haze can occur throughout the year, it is far less frequent during the Winter months. In the summer heavy sand and dust storms occur, causing several days of poor visibility and a surge of oppressive discomfort. At times they pose a threat to the safety of the people living in the region forming a major hazards to aircraft and road traffic.

In addition to the above environmental conditions, cities - in particular the large ones- have a much more harsh environment as a result of their topography and urban life system, which affect their weather and the movement of their local air cycle. The local air cycle circulates the pollutants within the atmosphere surrounding the city, a field known as "the dust dome" or "urban heat inland".¹²

In short, most of the Kingdom experiences a hot and dry climate. Away from the coast, humidity is very low and temperature range from a blistering 45°C. or so in the

summer to a pleasant 15-20°C in the winter. Rainfall, when it occurs, is brief and torrential. Several centimetres of rain may fall in Riyadh or Jeddah within a few hours and then none for 12 months. Jeddah and Dammam on the two coasts have more moderate temperatures, ranging from about 40°C in summer to 25°C in winter, and have a similar pattern of rainfall to Riyadh, but humidity is high reaching saturation point on many summer evenings.

The Water Wealth

The Kingdom is blessed with abundant potable ground water, drawn to the surface by water wells. Large volumes of water are stored in some aquifers but the average annual recharge is at best less than that used, which means that virtually all ground water drawn, comes from aquifers where water accumulated many thousands of years ago.

Water in Saudi Arabia is obtained through various resources such as from dams and reservoirs, springs and finally from desalination plants. For example, there are now 21 plants in operation. The plants' capacities range from 60,000 to 253.5 million US. gallons per day (GPD). Their total design capacity is 481 million GPD, which could be increased to 550 million GPD. Water pipelines extend along both coasts and to many inland cities of the Kingdom. Their total length is about 3 million metres.¹³

DESERT ENVIRONMENT AND PLANT ADAPTATIONS

About 30% of the Arabian Peninsula is covered with sand in the form of sand-seas. The term sand-sea is defined in Arabic by the word "*Nafud*" denoting areas with deep sand-sheets or sand-dunes. The Great Nafud is a very large depression filled up with masses of sand and covers an area of almost 60,000 sq. kilometres. One striking aspects of this great body of sand is the lack of oases and river-systems.¹⁴

The sand is regarded as a great scourge to man and beast alike. The moving sand has buried oases, villages and civilisation underneath it. It is difficult to travel on, while it also blocks communication by obstructing road networks, rail-roads and sometimes

even runways. The sand blasting as a result of stronger winds can devastate vegetation in general and food crops in particular.

Often the sand has thin layers - usually paper-thin layers- of very fine soil particles sandwiched between sand deposits of different ages. These increase the nutrient level in the sand as well as increase the water holding capacity of the sand and, apparently, play an important role in the extremely subtle, but intricate mechanism in conserving moisture and making it available to the plants in the form of water-film around particles or the water vapours in the sand or the "internal dew" as a result of condensation of water vapours in the upper strata of the sand.¹⁵

The sand and sandy areas also act as a vast reservoir of seeds of many annual plants species and, often, a large number of dormant bulbs of a few species. Receiving the first shower of rain in autumn or winter or spring, the sand areas grow a blanket of annual desert flowers of various hues but mostly white, yellow or purple.

The loss of vegetation in areas with shrub cover resulted in sand surface becoming mobile, loss of sand and ultimately bare barren areas where, a few short lived annual plants may appear. The sand or sandy soil provides excellent drainage which prevents salt build up in the extensive agricultural fields all over the sandy desert regions of the Kingdom. The desert environment is a hostile environment for living organisms in general. However, the perennial herbs or shrubs or trees which have to survive through the hot summer and often extended drought sometimes of several years, have their own adaptations which enable them to live in certain kinds of desert habitats.

The desert trees in Saudi Arabia

The desert trees in Saudi Arabia are a group of a small number of species. Most important of this group are the *Acacia* of which 14 species grow wild in Saudi Arabia. Four of these - *Acacia ehrenbergiana*, *Acacia gerrardii*, *Acacia raddiana* and *Acacia tortilis* - are found in the central desert regions, typically in wadis or plains through which the flood water flows at least once in several years.

Another characteristic tree of the Saudi landscape is the *Calotropis* tree family. Its seeds are windblown with a "parachute" mechanism and are carried over long distances. It grows in relatively depressed areas where some water accumulates in certain years and where there is a deep alluvial soil. Date palms and *Tamarix* species are often considered as desert plants. But both of these trees must have access to plenty of water to survive and are trees characteristic of oases and not of waterless deserts. However these and especially *Tamarix* can tolerate very high levels of salinity. According to an Arabic saying, the date palm "needs to have its feet in water and its head in the sun" for proper development and fruiting.

The vegetation in arid regions is determined by the degree of aridity. The trees generally require larger amount of water. The desert may support shrubby plants and some trees especially adapted for different habitats within the desert environment. The eastern coastal plains, the Asir mountains and the wadis in central Saudi Arabia support plant communities with trees. In the central deserts the plant communities can be grouped into three very broad categories i.e. the *Rhanterium* complex of communities, the *Hammada* complex of communities, and the *Nafud* group of communities. The *Rhanterium* complex of communities and *Hammada* complex of communities cover extensive areas while the Nafud type of communities are restricted to deep sand sheets and sand-dunes. The highly saline areas have their own kind of vegetation or lack vegetation depending upon the degree of salinity. Also, certain other areas, e.g. rocky areas, steep slopes, runnels, etc., support communities of restricted distribution.¹⁶

There are no forests in Saudi Arabia, but in parts of the Asir uplands the wild olive and other trees grow together beside waterfalls, cascading streams, and hillsides covered by fir tree Arar (junipers) in which wild clematis, honeysuckle and roses grow. Acacia trees are common in some parts of the country. Vegetation in the eastern and northern region is typical of arid areas, where drought-acclimatised shrubs grow. Species such as the Rimth salt bush or the yellow flowered Arfaj shrublet dominate the landscape. A variety of Saudi Arabia's flora includes *Echinops galalensis*, *Solanum incanum*, *Carissa edulis*, *Verbisina enceliodes*, *Capparis carilaginea* and many others.

Endangered species such as *Ceropegia mansouriana*, *Duvalia Sulcata* ar *Seminuda rhytidocaulon macrolobum* are in danger of becoming extinct due to cutting, overgrazing and the thoughtless clearance of natural vegetation. The following are some plants that are successfully adapted in Jeddah for use in silviculture and outdoor planting programmes:

Trees: *Terminalia aruna* Bedd. (Indian almond); *Melia azedarach* L. (Neem); *Acacia nilotica*; *Tamarix aphylla*; *Albizia lebbek*; *Brachychiton populenum*; *Parkensonia aculeata* (Parkensonia); *Zizyphus spina-christi* (Nabq); *Delonix regia* (Hook) *Poinsiana*.

Shrubs: *Nerium oleander* (Defla); *Thevetia peruviana*; *Bougainvillea* (Johannamiya); *Ipomea* spp.

Hedges: *Jasminum sambac* (Yasmin)¹⁷

In addition, there are many "Mangroves" in the inlet and along some island coasts of the Kingdom. The east coast like the northern and central parts of the western sea coast (Jeddah's sea-side coastal plains) has patches of mangrove vegetation consisting of *Avicennia marina* (Qarm) shrubs/small trees. The south-western sea coast and the larger of the Red Sea islands have dense stands of tall mangrove trees. In a few small areas, *Rhizophora mucromata* (Qandal), another mangrove tree is also found. The mangroves, especially those on the south-western coast and the Red Sea islands constitute characteristic habitats which support marina life and are breeding habitats for sea-faring birds. Also, on the Red Sea islands, there are major sources of feed for the native gazelle population. Besides providing the feed, presumably, the heavy dew condensation on the leaves provides water to the gazelles when no other source of water is available. These plants (mangroves) grow in mud which lacks oxygen. The mangrove trees, therefore possess special roots - the pneumatophores- which stick upwards like pegs out of the mud and carry on respiration for the underground parts of the trees. *Rhizophora* possesses another special adaptation. The fruits formed from the flowers remain attached to the trees for a very long time. Meanwhile, the root of the embryo within the fruit starts to grow a prominent radical many centimetres long. The fruit falls off the branch with the radical downwards which sticks into the mud ensuring proper orientation of the plantlet, its anchorage in the soil and establishment there.¹⁸

THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE AND WEATHER ON RECREATION

WEATHER influences or controls almost all outdoor pursuits and some indoor ones as well. Thus the aspects of climate as they relate to recreation (mainly outdoor) may be considered as follows: firstly, the existence of Climatically controlled resources (e.g. aesthetic natural milieu, warm water, snow cover, or fresh wind); secondly, the personal comfort factor (e.g. hot or cold, humid or dry for the pursuit); thirdly, the occurrence of unfavourable weather conditions, such as torrential rainstorms in wet regions or a dust-storm in desert regions, which limit the enjoyment of outdoor activities. That is to say, the effect of climate and weather on recreation varies and can be identified as the effect on the activity itself, the effect on the participant and his comfort and the effect on the spectator. The effect also extends over the ground surface where the activity takes place bearing in mind other environmental factors. Therefore recreational planning can benefit substantially from serious consideration and the application of climatic information. Thus all the integral aspects of environment, including climate and its components (precipitation, temperature, wind and humidity), topography and soil, have a crucial and direct impact on outdoor activities and, by indirect influence, on indoor pursuits. They affect participation, as well as the planning and design of the outdoor recreational opportunities.

Clearly, it is not easy to designate a particular climate as being the best for recreation in general. A particular climatic or weather factor may facilitate one activity whilst hindering another. Thus an optimal recreation climate may be defined as one that will permit participation in comfort, for a maximum number of days each year (and number of hours each day) in such activities as walking, playing games, or sitting out of doors relaxing. Yet, heat, aridity and (in some cases) cold are the shortcomings of the dry climate. Therefore, it is important that these climatic and topographic condition be borne in mind by those who pursue and provide recreation activities and facilities to recognise these natural determinants. They are to be aware the pursuit of an activity may be inhibited by unpleasant weather or obstructed by an unsuitable site. Thus it is very

important to shape all outdoor recreational areas with the most adequate landscape planning and design to achieve the maximum benefits of the sites as well as to direct the pointer towards the positive rather than negative approach of adequate quality of outdoor environments.

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE

HISTORICALLY, the people of Saudi Arabia comprised many tribes, each paramount and fiercely independent within their tribal lands. They were unified by King Abdul-Aziz in the 1930s.

Racially, almost all Saudis see themselves as pure Arab, stemming from Bedouin stock. However, some families came, perhaps generations ago, on the Hajj pilgrimage from other countries, particularly Yemen, Oman, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. A few can trace their origins further afield, for instance to Iran, India and some of the Muslim African countries.

To some extent, the people of Saudi Arabia differ from one city to another depending on their culture, tribes and way of life. For example, the people of the Southwest region can be categorised as those inhabitants of this upland region (Asir mountains) where they are blessed with rainfall throughout the year. They lead a settled life as cultivators of the soil and as herdsmen. Traditional veiling of women has not taken hold and strong colours prevailing among the women's dress. The influence of Africa could be seen in the traditional conical kraal type homes of the southern Tihamah coast which have now been largely replaced by permanently built houses in communities with mosques, schools and other social facilities.

The people of the western province are those people who lived in the Hijaz area. The origins and distribution of the Hijazi' people have been influenced strongly by geography and climatic conditions. Farming and trading communities were formed where there was water and fishing communities grew by the sea. But where arid conditions prevailed, settlements were fewer and virtually adapted a nomadic way of life.

The Hajj brought new racial and cultural strains into the Hijaz and as the Islam reached many people outside the Kingdom so this diversity increased. Many who came, stayed, while others brought their skills to service the pilgrimage. From, for example, India, Palestine, Turkey, Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt and from many other countries came individual groups who were absorbed into the cosmopolitan embrace of the Hijaz way of life: only their names distinguish their origins.

The wide variety of geographical features and habitat is reflected in the traditional social diversity of the inhabitants of Hijaz region. The Bedouin interrelationship with the settled coastal fishermen along the Red Sea, the townsmen and the oasis farmers was generally harmonious; each depending on the other for essential goods and services. In contrast, the people of the central province are more conservative and more adhered to the Islamic way of life. The people of this region called Najdi (from Najd region). Among the Najdis the townsmen far outnumber the Bedouin. Their basic conservatism and attachment to traditional ways and ideals are still strong. They have devoted themselves with all their heart and strength to the cause of Islam. As warriors and missionaries, countless left their homeland, many never to return, carrying the message of Islam as far east as China and as far west as the Atlantic. They have contributed greatly to the expansion of the Islamic faith. In short, the traditional loyalty of the Najdis to the house of Saudi remains -to a large extent- unchanged.

From previous points about the kind, traditions and way of life of those united people in terms of Islam, but differ, to some extent, in their traditions and way of life gives an indication to environmental designers in Saudi environment to consider very carefully how to shape all social and spatial components of any space or place within the urban fabric of any city to facilitate the actual Muslim way of life. That is to say, the planning and design of, for example, an outdoor recreational provision must be adhered strictly to preserve the typical Muslim family. Privacy, protection, and adequate design that do not cause people to be diverted from their moral values and Islamic boundaries. In short, the basic question of how, when, where and for whom to design must always be borne in mind by those responsible for shaping the environment that contains society's members. The design must express the identity of the country and its people. "Large-

scale mistakes have been made in Saudi Arabia; but it is the recognition of these mistakes and how to remedy them that creates a healthy growing development. This is not to say that another country would have been more successful given the dimension, speed and scope of work accomplished. With the enormous foreign contribution toward a new architecture and the influx of foreign architects into Saudi Arabia, a challenge has been posed to the increasing number of Arab architects to create a base upon which new developments for a Renaissance of Arab culture can grow. In spite of the mistakes the high quality of the achievements is unrivalled in the world. As the country further develops and grows with its enormous potentials so will its architecture. Arab architecture, as in the past, can again be the articulation of unity in diversity and in harmony with its great tradition, thus creating a contemporary Arab (and Muslim city) identity of a new and exciting quality"¹⁹

GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONS

IN SAUDI ARABIA THE KING IS THE CENTRE OF POWER; he rules and operates the state with the help of the Royal Court and his cabinet, which includes the Council of Ministers set up by the Decree of 1373 AH (1953).²⁰ The King has the power to issue a Decree where religious law is applicable.

The main components of the political system in Saudi Arabia are: The King, the Crown Prince, the Royal Cabinet, the Council of Ministers, and the ministries. The King is the source of supreme authority and power. He plays a very unique role in the administration, organisation and development of Saudi Arabia. As the Chief of State and head of the Saudi government, the King is the supreme commander of the armed forces. He appoints all military officers, and also appoints:

- A. Ambassadors and envoys to foreign nations and world bodies;
- B. All ministers, senior government officials, and Regional Amarah (Provincial Governors);
- C. Members of the Royal Cabinet.

As part of his organisational authority, the king presides over the Council of Ministers. Being the Prime Minister of this Council, His Majesty the King must sanction regulations initiated, discussed and approved by the Council of Ministers and issue a Royal Decree to enforce their regulations. All international treaties and international agreements must be approved by the king who also directs the government policies, guarantees co-operation among the ministers and agencies, and supervises the implementation of regulations and orders issued by the Council, while delegating some of his executive, legislative and judicial functions to institutions like the Council of Ministers and Grievance Board or to individuals, such as the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince is second in command in Saudi Arabia. The king delegates the presidency of the Council of Ministers to his Crown Prince, who is its First Deputy Prime Minister. In case of the Crown Prince's absence, this responsibility is delegated to the Second Deputy Prime Minister. During the King's absence, the authority and responsibility of government the country is delegated to the Crown Prince by way of a Royal Decree or Order (Figure 2.4 represents the government of Saudi Arabia).

The Government of Saudi Arabia

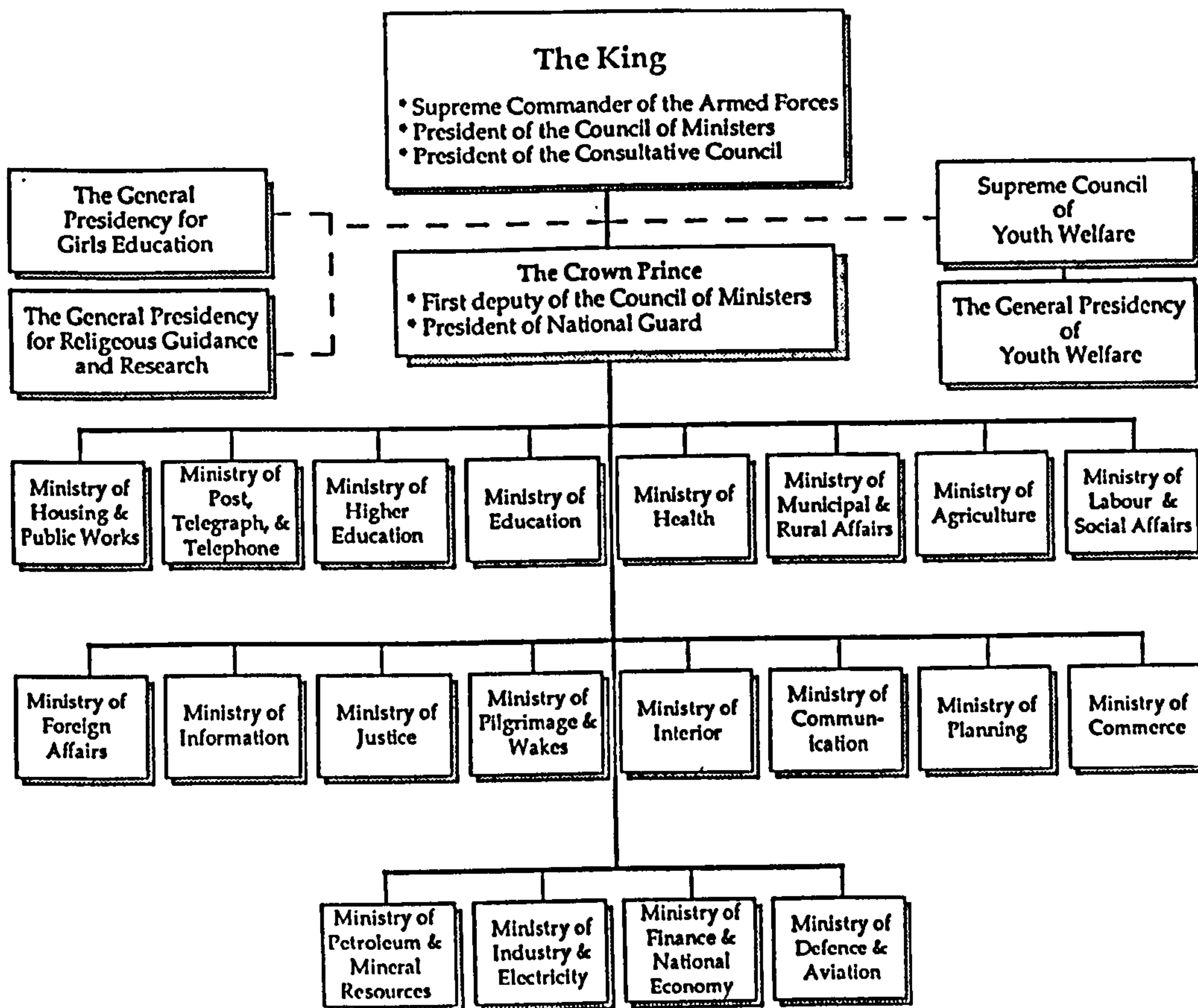


FIGURE 2.4 The Government of Saudi Arabia²¹

The ministers play a vital role in the Council of Ministries. As active members of the Council, their job is to effectively and productively exercise the legislative, administrative, and executive functions of the Council through proper co-operation with

other government agencies and ministries. Each minister may have one or more vice ministers as his assistants, who are governed by the same rules and regulations as the minister.

The political organisation of the ministries is consistent with the Central Government's general objectives of providing economic independence, social stability, national security, and the continued well-being of all the people -- all this while maintaining the religious and moral values of the Kingdom.

The Establishment of the Deputy Ministry of the Interior for Municipal Affairs

At the central government level, the situation of the municipalities remained the same - with all municipalities in the western region under the Minister of the Interior, and under the governor's authority in the other regions. This situation continued until 1960s, when the Ministry of the Interior was moved to the new capital, Ar-Riy'adh (Riyadh), in the central region. At this time all municipalities in the Kingdom moved under the Department of Municipal Administration in the ministry. When this department was established in 1958, it provided social services only. In 1960, the department started to control, supervise and provide administrative, financial and technical services.

In 1962, the Council of Ministers approved the Interior Minister's proposal to create an independent central system in the ministry to deal with municipalities. This sub-ministry was named the Deputy Ministry of the Interior for Municipal Affairs.²² Its creation marked a major development in the history of Saudi municipalities.

The expansion of municipal services, the addition of new municipalities, the desire of the government to provide more and better services, the general changes and development in the country, and the increase of the national income were some of the reasons behind the creation of this new organisation.

Organisational Structure

During the first year of the municipalities existence, the deputy ministry contained only a few major departments. In Riyadh city there were departments for finance, personnel, statistics and land. In Jeddah there was an office for city planning and one for technical administration. At the same time, all municipalities were linked to the deputy minister

As time went by, the Deputy Ministry established more departments, sub-departments and regional departments to meet the demands for more services. In 1963, offices for technical and city planning were established in the city of Riyadh; later, in 1965, the Deputy Ministry created the Technicians Assistant Institute to meet the need for assistants in municipalities and the water administrations. In 1966, the Health Environment General Administration was founded to supervise the Health Environment in the municipalities (which became independent and more important). In 1967, the General Utility Administration was established to deal with water and sewage in places where there is no independent water and sewage authority.

Regional Structure

At the regional level, the importance of municipalities also grew. They have been established in most areas of the Kingdom and their services have been broadened and their influence on central government has increased. The Deputy Ministry recognised the need to create four regional offices, each containing departments of utilities, engineering, survey and city planning. Regional offices are located in the eastern, central, western and southern regions of Saudi Arabia.

These regional offices are not actually regional administrative authorities as much as a liaison or source of communication for technical matters. They participate in municipality functions in some cases and actually perform part of the job in other cases, depending on the ability of the municipality and its size. They also supervise the local technical departments to ensure that they follow the same direction as general policy.

This entire structure was changed with the establishment of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA).

The role of MOMRA (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs) concerns the provision and management of all relevant facilities in cities, towns and villages, and the application of standards and building regulation. In addition, it carries out a co-ordination role among Governmental Departments to ensure the provision of the basic services necessary for economic and social development and well-being. Apart from that, it lay a role as regards rural affairs. The Ministry is also responsible for the development of villages. The aim is to make rural areas more attractive, and to provide the necessary services and public facilities. This is to help minimise the exodus of villagers to the major urban centres.

Local Structure

The number of municipalities in the Kingdom has increased reaching 101 in 1975. At the local level, while all municipalities are linked to one central administration and they all operate under one set of ordinances and regulations, there are many differences in their structure and functions. For instance, some municipalities have a city council, research unit, city planning departments, project departments and engineering directory, while others do not. Administratively, some municipalities have complete personal, finance, and public relations departments, while other municipalities contain only some or none of these departments.

The same situation occurs in municipal activities. Reasons for this diversity could include the following:

- Population levels range from only a few thousands to more than a million.
- The status of the cities varies from industrial, agricultural, or commercial or a combination of these types.
- The personality and activities of the Municipal Mayor of the city varies from those at the central level.
- There are differences among the governors of small cities and how they evaluate their city's circumstances.
- The city's importance to the planners in the municipal central administration varies.
- Budgets and budget levels vary.

- There is a difference in availability of technicians, staff, and administrators.
- The experience and educational level of local officers vary.
- Available equipment differs, and
- Municipalities differ in the amount of time they have existed.

Urban And Regional Planning Machinery And Concept Of Urban Plans In Saudi Arabia

Historically, the form of the local government evolved within the context of the state and society's evolution as a whole. Thus the early stage of the local bureaucracy reflected the primitiveness and highly centralised nature of the system. The primitiveness was reflected in the regional level through the continuous vagueness of the regional physical boundaries. In fact, although the first regional divisions included four regions; namely Najd, Hijaz, Asir and Hasa, their boundaries were not clearly determined.

The same negative feature occurred in the first developments of the regional division which involved eight regions (Amarah).²³ The previous four regions plus the new regions included Makkah, Riyadh, Hail, and Al-Qassem region. These regions were also connected hierarchically with the king directly which means the governors (Amarah') of the regions were reporting directly to the king. However, after the creation of the Council of Ministers, the regional divisions were categorised according to the link between the region and the central government. Later on, the number of the regions increased to nineteen, whereas the categorisation remained the same as well as the vagueness of the regional boundaries. In 1975 the Ministry of Interior changed this system and divided the country in 14 regions as shown in figure 2.5.



FIGURE 2.5 *The regional administrative divisions in Saudi Arabia (the current existing condition)²⁴*

All of the 14 regions were linked directly to the Minister of Interior. The regional division was based on an administrative criteria rather than any other criteria.²⁵ Each region includes in its administrative authority and structure a council called *Al-Majlis Al-Edari* or *Majlis Al-Mukatta* which both mean the council of the region. This council is headed by the governor and used to contain four to eight members who used to be appointed by the King. Most of the administrative structures in the local level was based on dispersed regulations and sanctions which led to a considerable intersections between the local ministerial subordinates, particularly between the principality and the municipality. Consequently a Royal decree was issued in 1984 involving a clarification of the relationship between the principality and the municipality in term of authority, responsibility and administrative hierarchy.

Accordingly, it could be stated that the relationship between the local and central government tends to be highly centralised especially in terms of legislating and making the judicial judgements, except for the local simple judicial cases which can be decided by the local court. In addition, the local government does have a very limited authority where the council's authority or some of it has been assigned to both the Minister of Interior and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

The Three Elements In The Administrative Relationship Between The Central And Local Government

a) The Principality is led by the Prince (governor), and he is the highest authority at the regional level. He reports to the Minister of Interior and is responsible for following up the local ministerial subordinates' performance including the Municipality. In addition, the governor or *Amir* is also responsible for supporting the decisions made by the local court and executing them without any change of amendments.

In addition to the security responsibility of the region, the Prince actually leads and supervises most committees which aim to co-ordinate the various governmental agencies' actions in the region, such as the high committee for city planning and the committee concerned with the water and sewerage networks developments. In some cases the prince leads the higher committee for city developments such as Riyadh, Makkah and Madinah.

b) The Municipality has its own policies, regulations and budgeting programme. In policy making the municipality reports to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs which approved in particular the regulations concerning land development and distribution, planning and building permits. However, the municipality may co-ordinate with the principalities and other governmental agencies within the framework of the Five-Years-Development National Plans. They can also in consultation with the principalities issue local specific regulations and instructions but within the central framework of approved general regulations and policies, such as building heights, set-backs and so forth.

c.) The ministerial local subordinates are agencies independent of the principality and the municipality regarding the vertical administrative relationship. These agencies include:

- The local court which is a local subordinate of the Ministry of Justice.
- The Directorate of Mosques and Endowments which is a local branch of the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Endowment.
- The Directorate of Roads which is a local subordinate of Transportation Ministry.
- The Directorate of Agriculture which is a local branch of Agriculture Ministry.
- The Directorate of Water and Sewerage Networks which is a local branch of the Municipal and Rural Affairs.
- The Directorate of Traffic, civilian defence and other civic services which is a local branch of interior Ministry.
- The Directory of Housing which is a local branch of Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

There are some other local public subordinates and agencies but they are not directly concerned with city planning and development. However, although the above local subordinates report to different central agencies and have their own different policies and strategies, they are supposed to co-ordinate with the Principality and the Municipality in regard to local developments and outdoor recreational urban, national and planning processes and design approaches. In fact, there is no clear and substantial co-ordination between or among many of the above government bodies which resulted in many social, physical and environmental problems. There is a need to establish more adequate connection channels between all the different agencies to be framed by the local Islamic culture and the vernacular environment. This is because the relationship between central and local government in Saudi Arabia is a vertical centralised one, with top policies, laws and regulations, plans and financial programmes made in the central level, while the implementation process is mostly performed by the local ministerial subordinates (apart from some local specific regulations which can be issued by the Principality with the recommendation and consolation of the concerned agency). In addition, some municipalities in the late period were given the authority to make and approve their local plans and policies, and negotiate with the Ministry of Finance, their budget programme,

directly without referring to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. Figures 2.6 to 2.7 show the hierarchies of the Saudi Council of Ministers, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the relationship between central and local government and the relationship between the central and local government.

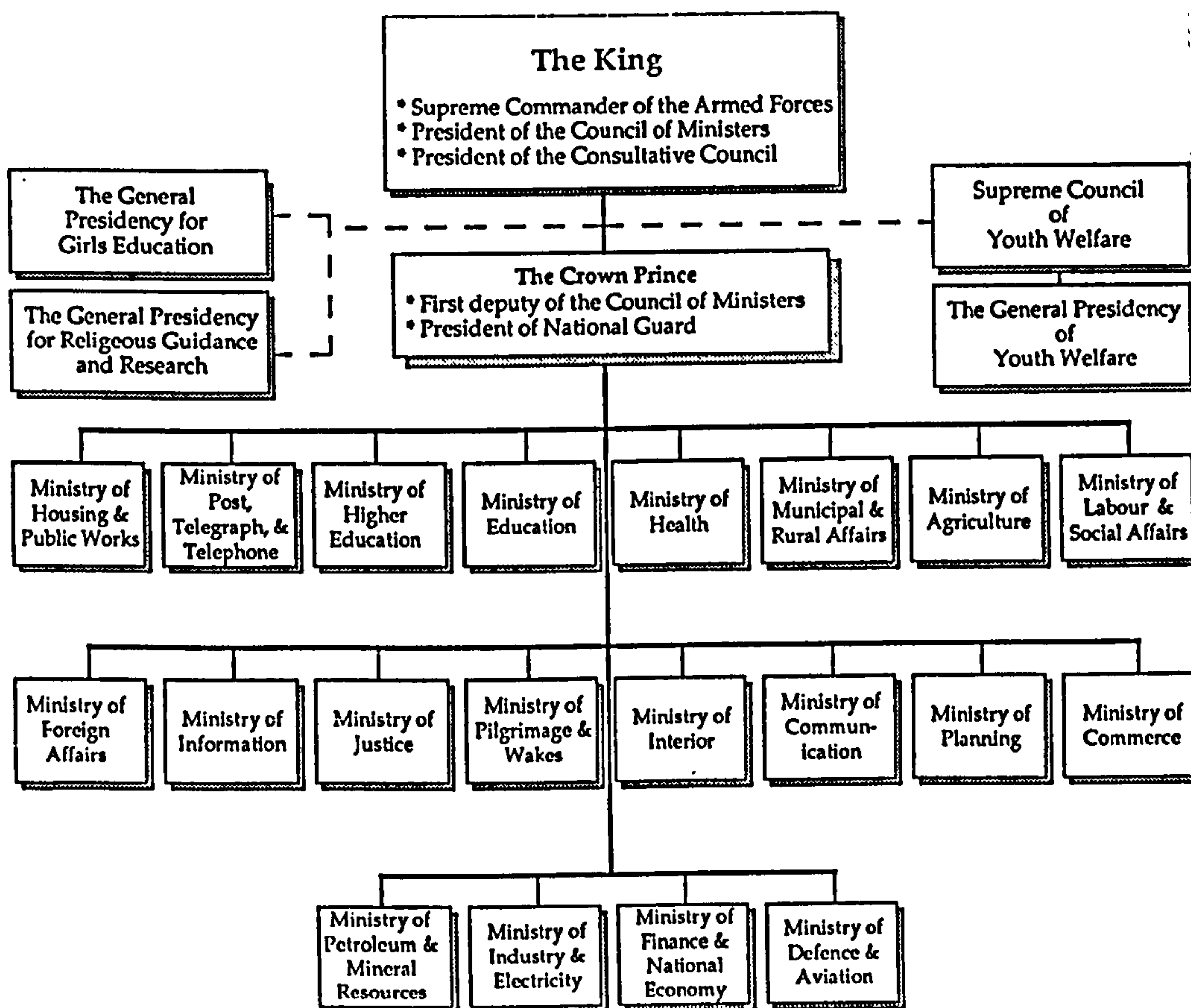
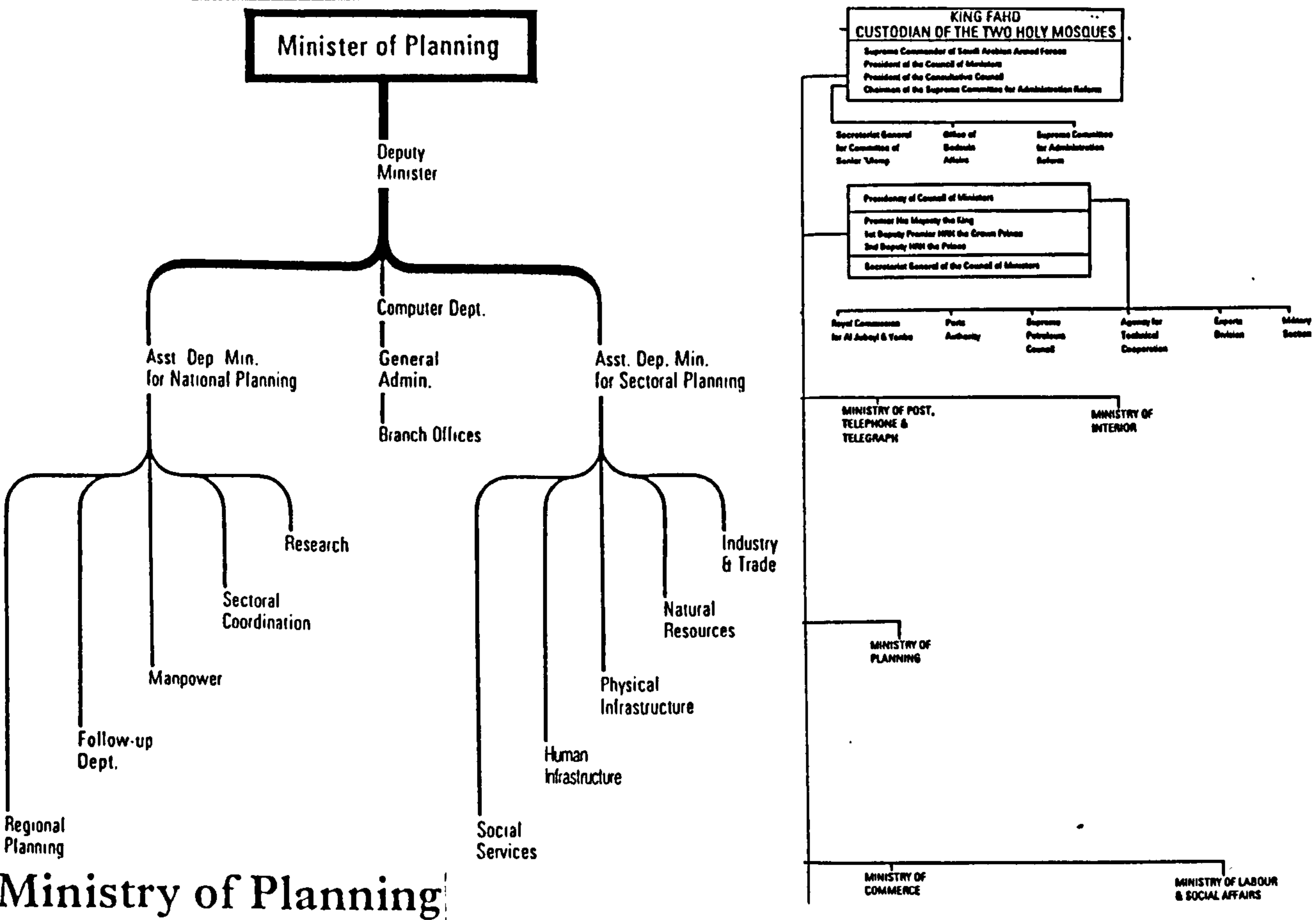


FIGURE 2.6 *The Saudi Council of Ministers*²⁶



Ministry of Planning

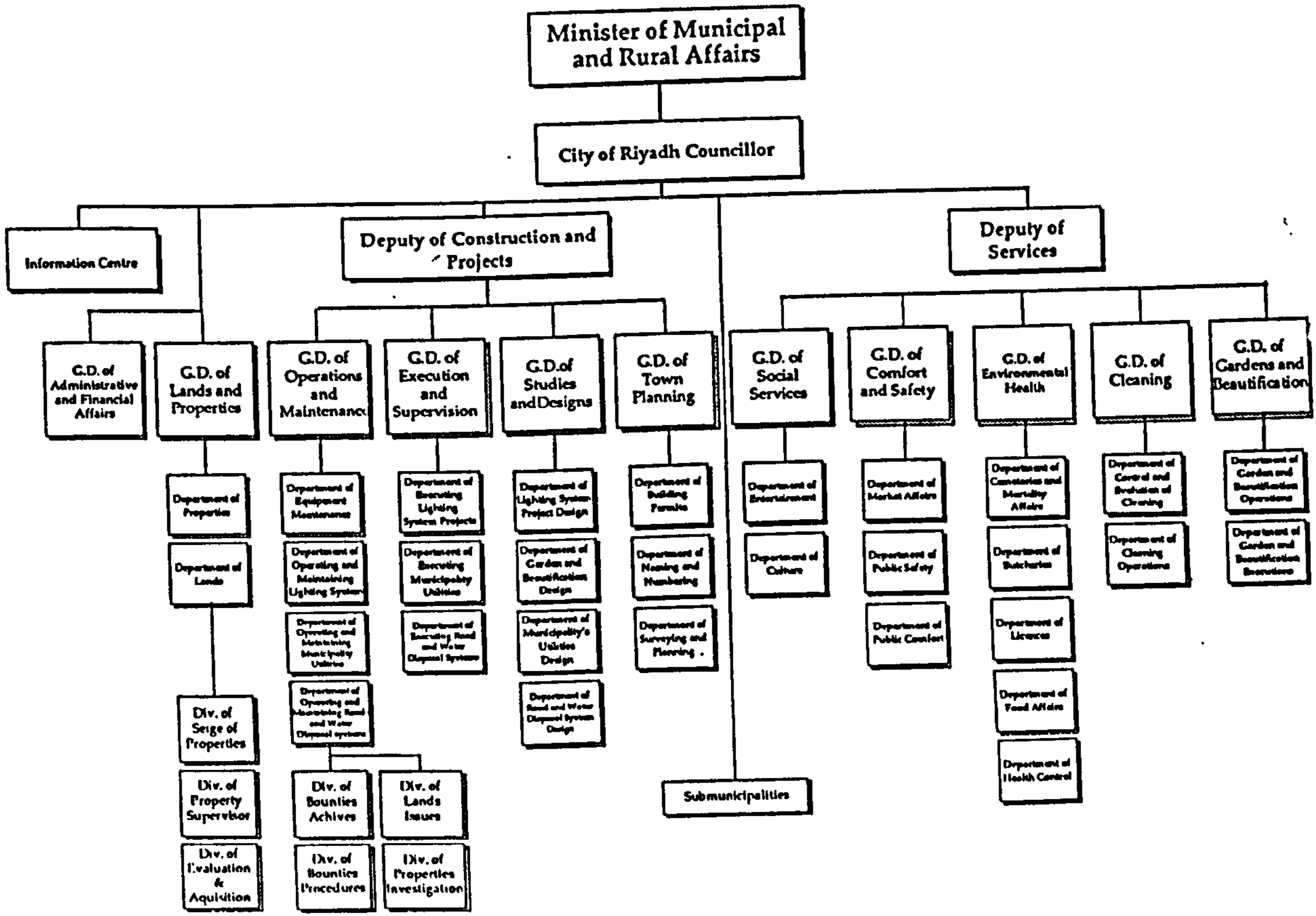
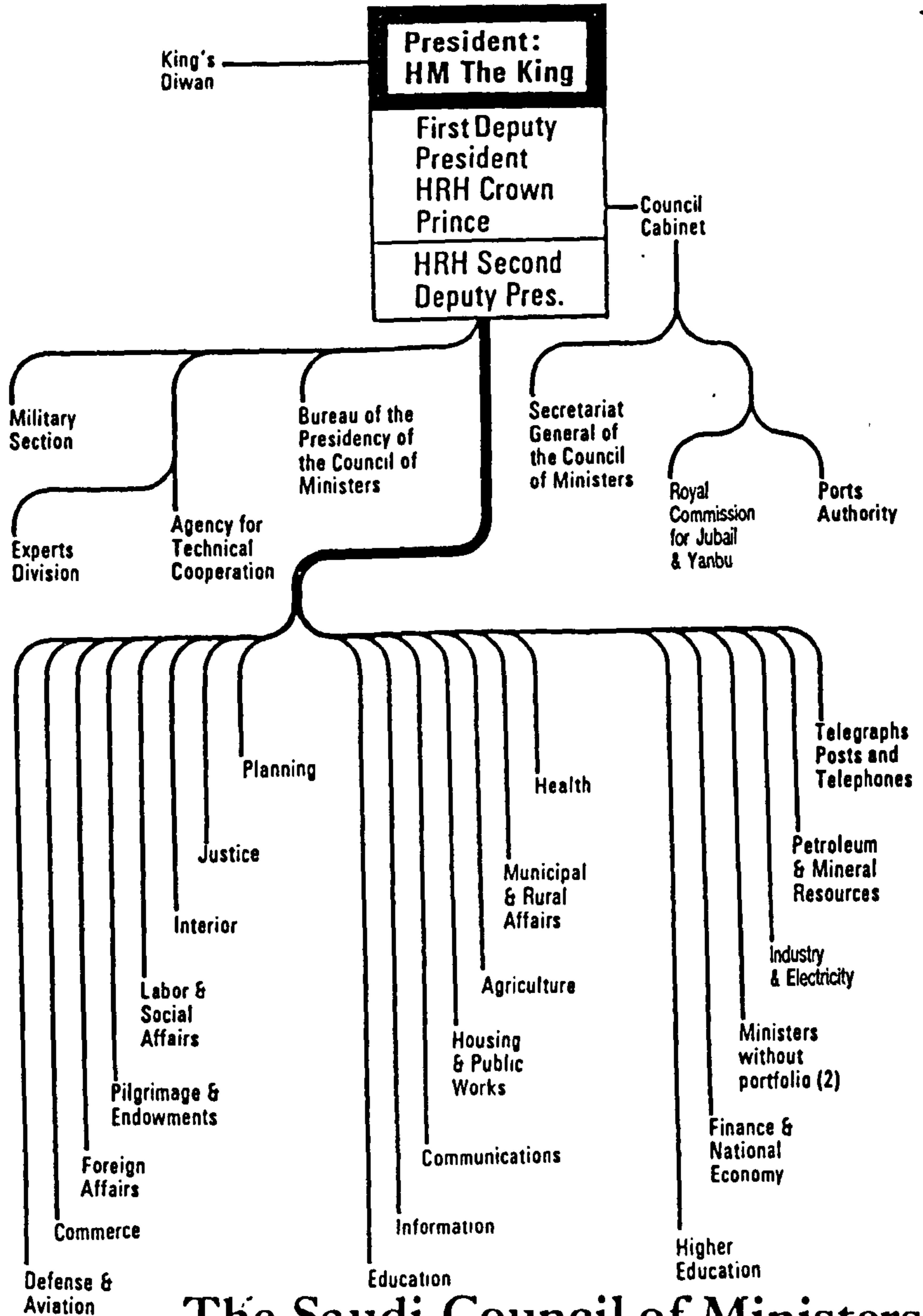


FIGURE 2.7 Ministry of Municipal & Rural Affairs



The Saudi Council of Ministers

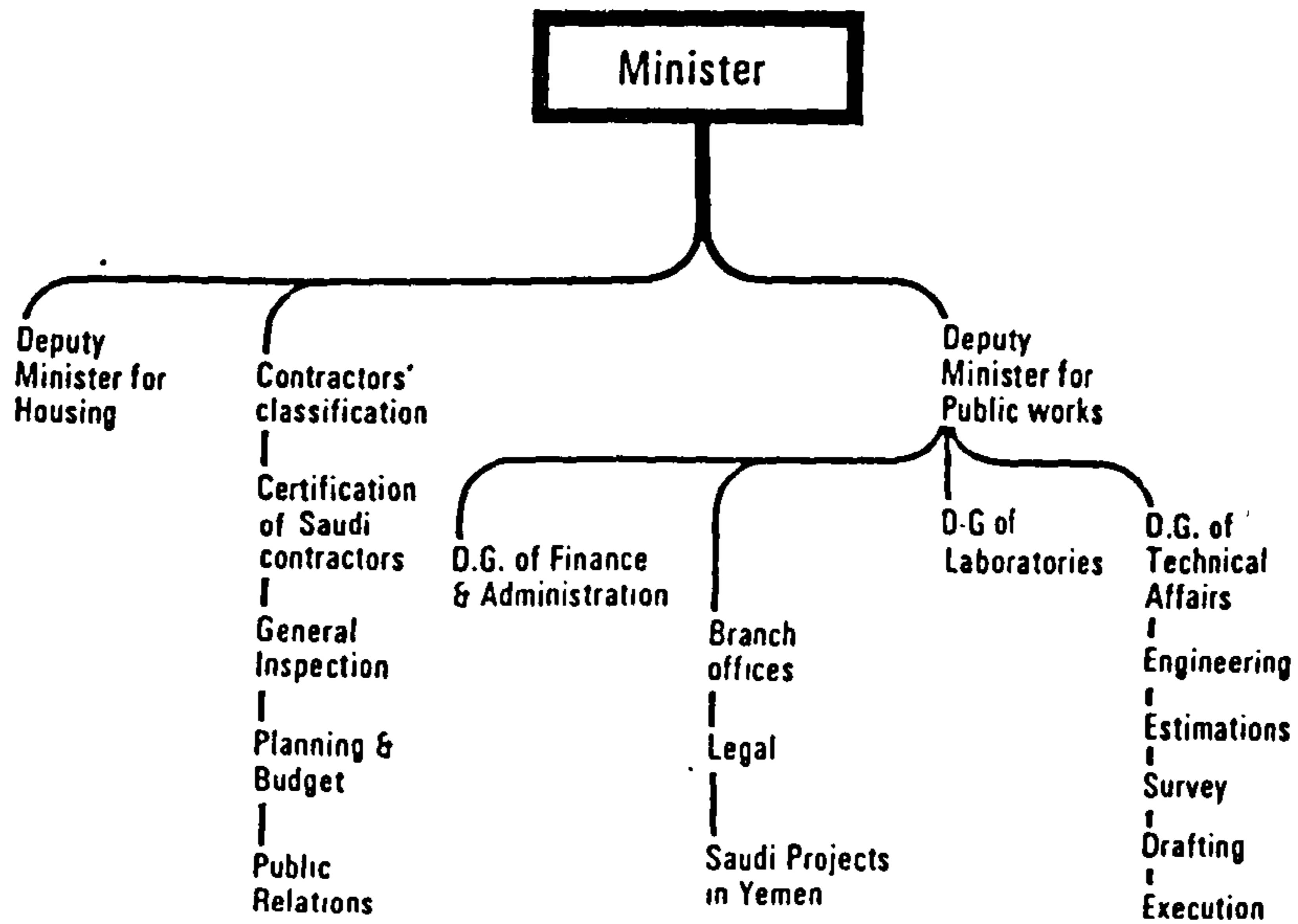
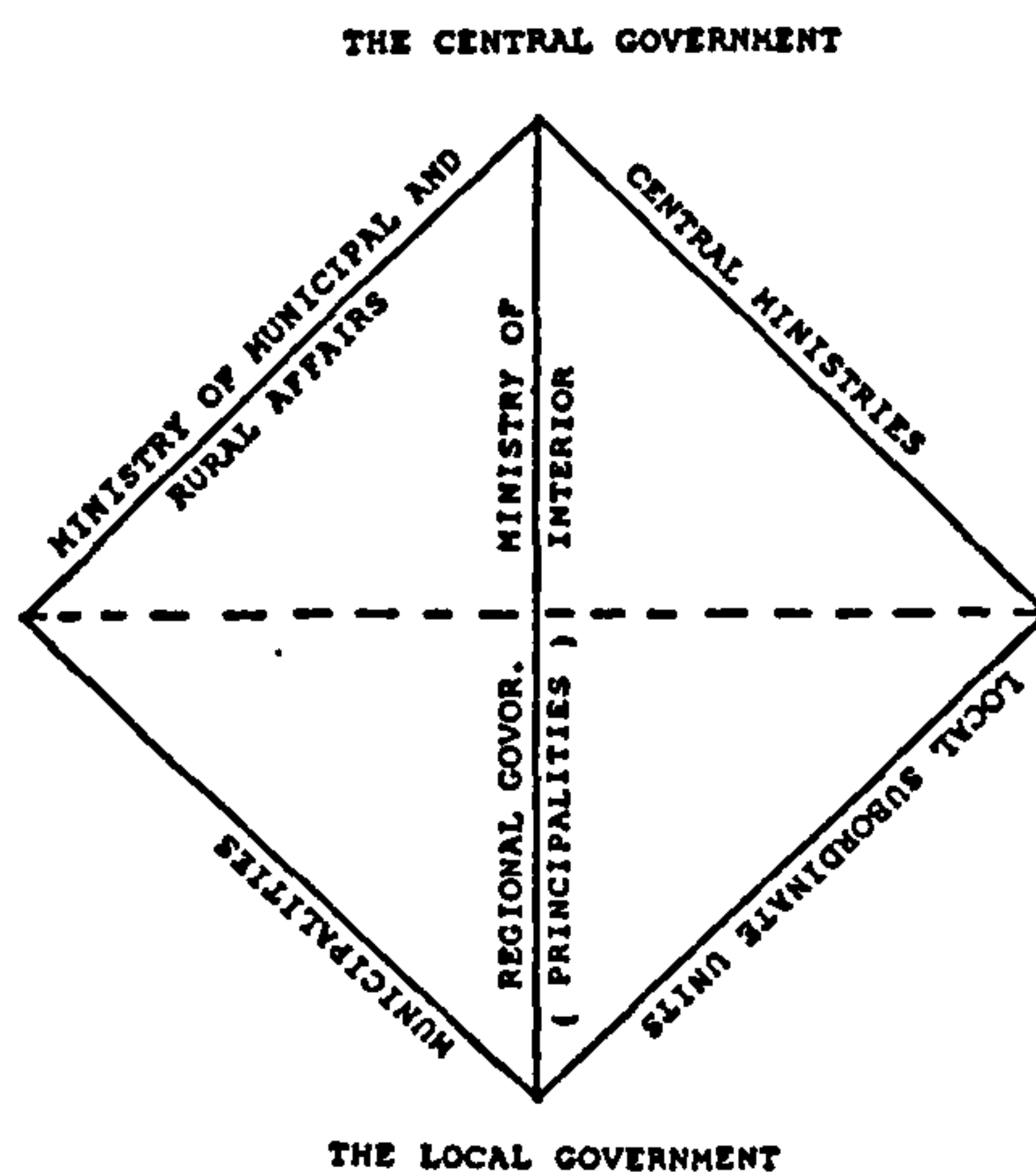
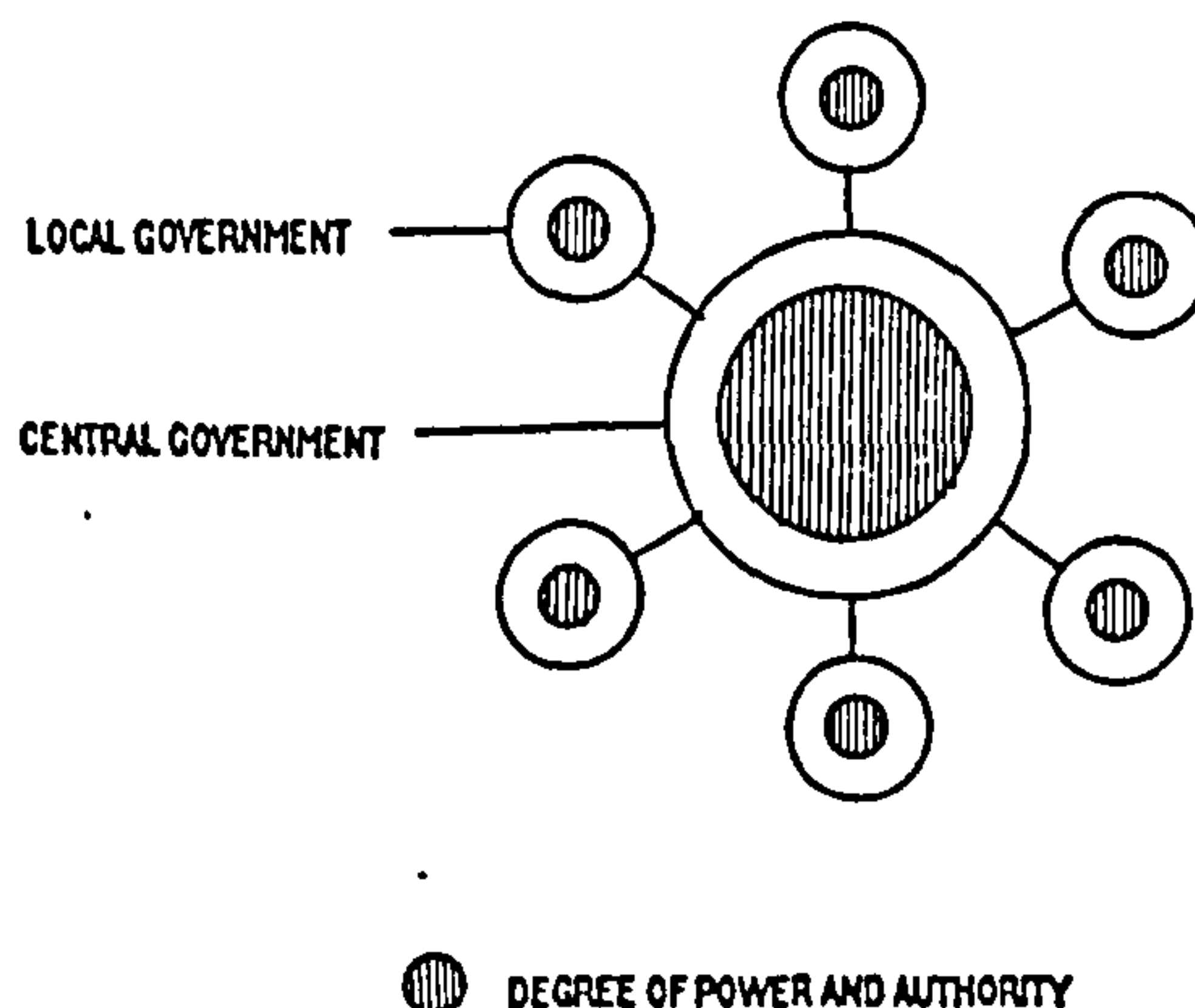


FIGURE 2.8 Ministry of Housing & Public Works.²⁷



: The relationship between central and local government regarding vertical hierarchy (source: khashoggi, 1979)



The relationship between the central and local government regarding the degree of power and authority

FIGURE 2.9 *The relationship between central and local government regarding vertical hierarchy and regarding the degree of power and authority.*²⁸

THE RECENT PLANNING MACHINERY OR PROCESS IN SAUDI ARABIA

According to Kari²⁹ the recent planning machinery or process in Saudi Arabia can be explained briefly as shown in figure 2.6. The system clarified in the figure is based on four principles. Firstly the plan is approved at approval at the highest level by the council of Ministers, or the King by Royal Decree, in the Ministry's central office, and at the

local level either through the High Committees for City Planning in each city or through the municipalities. The National Five Year Development Plan used to be approved at the Council of Ministers, while most of the physical plans and strategies used to be approved either in the central office of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs if it is a national strategy and framework while the local and regional physical plans and policies are approved at the local level except in the case of rural and small municipalities. They operate and execute plans and policies that are made and approved at the central or regional level.

Secondly, plan making, in the case of the National Development Plan, is processed at the central level, whereas the physical plans and strategies are processed at the central level if it is a national strategy or framework and at the local level if it is a plan of a major city which has a *Manna t* type of municipality.³⁰ This new generation of plans appeared at the same time as the Second-Five-Year-Plans (1975-1980)³¹. These are concerned with regional development, especially, as a result of the massive and dramatic changes in national economic development and urbanisation. Therefore, the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs - as one of the major executive channels in the Saudi public administration for the national socio-economic objects- drew a comprehensive framework to direct the spatial and physical activities in the whole national, regional and local levels. For example, in 1976-77 the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs launched a new project to prepare Master Plans for seven major cities in the Kingdom; involving Riyadh, Jeddah, Madinah, Dammam, Taif, Jazan and Abha. The project was called "*Action master plans project.*"³² The scope of it was concerned mainly with physical aspects (changes and developments for short and long term), but in more detail, than the previous urban plans. The plans were more specific in proposing the envisaged physical locations for land uses and development, and for major projects proposed by the Second and Third Five-Year Plans. In addition these plans were to be adjusted according to any short term changes that might emerge. Consequently, the plans involved a framework for the future urban growth and development within a fifteen year period (from 1980-1995). This time span, furthermore, was phased into three five-year phases to be linked with the National Five-Year Plans.

The Action-Master-Plans included specific outlines for land use transportation, essential utilities networks and housing. The accompanying maps (scale 1:2500) give the specific locations and distribution of land uses and developments in the cities. The plans, also include detailed plans for particularly sensitive and important locations, in addition to general recommendations on the appropriate legal tools and land development policies. An evaluation and monitoring process takes place at the end of each phase.

In fact, until recently only five regional plans had been formulated and were being used: Makkah, Baha, Hail, Qassem and Tabuk regional comprehensive plans. The other regions such as Madinah, are formulating their regional comprehensive plan or will formulate it subsequently.³³

However, during this round of activities by the urban and regional machinery, the Ministry of Planning produced the Third, Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Development Plans. In the Third Plan (1980-85) the emphasis on the regional level was increased considerably. It involved objectives that direct attention towards regional development such as the concern with a balance of economic growth between regions and it offers assistance especially to parts of the regions to involve them in the process of production. In the Fourth Plan (1985-90), the concern for regional development was made explicit, through the Operational Plans.³⁴ While in the previous plans, the Operational Plans implemented through the Ministries according to their hierarchical administrative structures, in the Fourth Plan, the Operation Plans in the first time assigned to the regional government offices (*Amarah*)³⁵ to use it in following-up the ministerial local activities, regarding the socio-economic developments in each region.

The Development Plans have considered many aspect of the Kingdom's economy, identifying its infrastructure, agricultural, industrial and commercial needs and formulating strategies to achieve defined national goals. Oil revenues have made the government the driving force behind the economy and, out of those oil revenues, the government has provided essential infrastructure without which the economy could not mature. For the various government agencies the Five-Year Plans and annual budget determines the level and pattern of expenditures, with all the associated implications for the progress and direction of sectional development. For the private sector, the system

defines the regulatory and economic framework in which to operate. In a broader sense, the Five-Year Plans provide orientation for the private sector on the likely course of the economy, on related government policies, and on potential business opportunities.

According to the "Objectives of the Fifth Five Year Plan 1990-95 (1410-15 AH)"³⁶, the completion of the infrastructure and many industrial/agricultural development projects, together with the down-turn in oil revenues, have reinforced the shift in strategy first clearly discernible in the Fourth Development Plan. Apart from the preservation of Islam, defence of the realm and education of the citizenry, the emphasis now is firmly on encouraging the private sector to build upon the economic foundations laid by the government. The main objectives of the Fifth Plan are defined as follows.

- 1) To preserve Islamic values, duly observing, promulgating and confirming Allah's *Shari'ah* (God's Divine and his prophet's -peace be upon him- law and teaching).
- 2) To defend the faith, and nation, and uphold the security and social stability of the Realm.
- 3) To form productive citizen workers by providing them with the tributaries conducive thereunto, ensuring their livelihood and rewarding them on the basis of their work.
- 4) To develop human resources thus ensuring a constant supply of manpower, and upgrading and improving its efficiency to carry out the requirements of national economy.
- 5) To raise cultural and informational standards to keep pace with the Kingdom's development.

Thirdly, the execution and implementation of the plans, which in the case of the National Development Plan is processed through the ministerial local channels and followed-up by the principality. Physical plans and strategies are supposed to be executed and followed up by the municipalities and central office of the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs.

Fourthly, appeals may be made against the urban planning system particularly by private developers. The appeal can be applied directly to the Mayors in the municipalities or to the central office of the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs as first

alternative. The second option is to appeal to Appeal Bureau through its offices either regional or central.

The national Development Plan contains two main components; the Plan Documents, which outlines the medium-term economic policies and development strategy, and Operational Plans which are a detailed outline for each Ministry and public agency, which in terms translated into specific projects and programs. While, on the other hand, the physical policies composed of national strategies and frameworks which are the whole national physical development, and the local plans which include the regional comprehensive and metropolitan master plans. Any attempt to develop land within the urban areas should be applied to the local municipalities to the planning department, which study the proposed concept of urban plans.

The Concept of Urban Plans in Saudi Arabia

The concept of urban plans which include all outdoor recreational or urban infrastructures in Saudi Arabia needs to be seen within the planning context as a whole in Saudi public administration.

Planning in Saudi Arabia is essentially concerned with two aspects. One is the socio-economic aspect which is the subject of the national five year development plan. The other is the physical aspect which is the scope of the urban plans especially at the local level. The main purpose of adopting national planning was to organise government institutional activities and co-ordinate them within a comprehensive integrative framework. The aim was the socio-economic development and improvement of society as a whole.

Consequently the objectives of the first Five-Year Plan (1970-1975) was to eliminate some major constraints emerging because of the inadequate infrastructure facilities, manpower shortage and budgetary constraints. During this period of the First Five Year Plan, the urban planning process was trying to cope with rapid urbanisation. Several contracts were signed with an international consultant to prepare comprehensive

physical plans for the four major geographical regions of the country (Hijaz, Najd, Asir and Hasa).

The main purpose of the plans was to control and direct the physical spatial changes and developments within each region. The contracts for these projects included the preparation of master plans for the major cities in each region. The plans were concerned mainly with land use allocation policies, and locations of major outdoor recreational projects to be established within each city. In addition, the Master Plans included a legislative framework and action area plans (detailed plans for particularly crucial and sensitive areas in the cities).

Nevertheless, however useful this experience of urban and regional planning was as a whole, its individual impacts were very poor because of the lack of information and of skilled planners or landscape architects or well qualified environmental designers involved in the preliminary stages of the planning and design process. The situation was made worse by the failure to make accurate forecasts of either national economic performance or urbanisation structures in the regions and cities. Even more, more of the existing Master plans were planned, designed and implemented without conducting comprehensive social and physical inquiries to meet the needs of local people nor their vernacular environment.

Responsibility of the Leisure Services

In fact the leisure services are the responsibility of a number of government bodies such as the municipalities, the General Presidency for Youth Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Water (which includes two departments concerned with leisure and recreation; a general directorate for forests and another one for national parks), the military sectors and universities provide their personnel with their own leisure activities and recreational facilities, and there are other governmental bodies dealing with other aspects of development, which affect leisure and recreation. Included in these are health, transport, commerce and other authorities. The point is in spite of all these various bodies it is noticeable that leisure services are the responsibility of a number of government bodies

but a distinct lack of co-ordination exists among them when it comes to recreation. At national level, the public sector in Saudi Arabia deals with the provision of leisure as well as other essential development programmes like education and culture. The sort of programmes it concentrates on are religious affairs, media, education, youth and sports activities, archaeology and arts, all of which form part of a comprehensive government programme to develop human resources.

People's Conservatism And Their Need For Privacy

Leisure and recreation as social phenomena are affected by numerous surrounding social influences. Religious teaching and the society's values and customs together with other social factor such as the structure and size of family are important. Familial and other behaviour patterns are also important.

The relationship between religion and leisure is a significant social phenomenon affecting recreational participation and development. The prevailing attitudes of the society play a vital role in determining recreational behaviour. Whilst some of these attitudes may not be related to fact and understanding, they may have gained status by becoming part of the society's cultural heritage and have often been accepted unquestioningly. Saudi Arabian society is traditionalist. It sustains cultural continuity in its attitudes and institutions, in conservative resistance to the new channels of communication that have been opened with the other cultures, and to the changes in the economy and in social formation. Its system of social values is based on a combination of the elements of religion, kinship and tradition.

The System of Kinship in Saudi Arabia

Traditional Saudi society may be divided into four sectors; the urban population, the village settlers, those who depend upon the sea for their living (the Red Sea or the Gulf), and the nomads (Bedouins).

The discovery of oil and the concomitant change in the economy and in standard of living, brought about a vital alteration in these traditional social formations. The Bedouins, in particular, began to drift away from their desert life and the villagers neglected their traditional work, mostly as peasants, as a result of the emergence of new opportunities in the public and private sectors.

Moreover, Saudi Arabian society is predominantly tribal, although for economic and social environment reasons the tribal system is steadily undergoing fundamental change. Though on the decline, tribal ties are still important and as people become more economically and occupationally mobile these ties become proportionally more observed in leisure practices. Communal values, such as mutual obligation and interdependence, are still the basic social values of the country.

The majority of people may trace their origins to tribal backgrounds. Thus, the behaviour pattern and life style of individuals are functions of the familial institution. Traditionally the family is an economic subsistence unit, encompassing a miniature society in itself. It comprises a financial security system, insurance programme, an unemployment and disaster relief organisation, a major entertainment network and is a source of love, honour and joy. It plays a prominent role in socialisation and development of basic personality traits and values. Therefore, the family, and not the individual, is the basic social unit and hence the centre or source of all loyalty, obligations and status of its members. The family structure in Saudi Arabia is usually of the extended patri-lineal type. Typically, this consists of the parents, their children and their grandchildren. The development of a structurally more specific, institutionalised and industrialised economy may (in particular in more urban areas) lead to a reduction in the family's role and in that of its individual members, resulting in the eventual break up of the extended family system.

Nevertheless, the principles of loyalty and responsibility to the family and its members are ingrained in the individual's behaviour. As a result, family and community considerations are uppermost in each individual's mind when engaged in any activity or in making significant decisions. That is to say, an individual will not express his recreational needs if these contradict social norms and Islamic teaching. Thus, the

behaviour pattern of the individual, and this includes the recreational pattern, are moulded by the beliefs and requirements of each of the various social groups to which he belongs. Since the Saudi live in a society which has a strong multi-nuclear family structure (patrilineal joint family system) they usually take part in more family group activities than people who live in societies where the family unit is more restricted; say the common nuclear family in the non-Muslim cultures. Therefore, leisure and recreational providers or planners have to be aware of the socio-religious and cultural factors in order to make suggestions for services that are socially acceptable. They cannot be overlooked without running the risk of offering resources which run counter to social and religious norms.³⁷

SAUDI ARABIA AFTER THE FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLANS³⁸

Saudi Government has been preparing formal development plans for more than two decades. Corcoran³⁹ notes that the Saudi Government has been preparing development plans for the whole area of Saudi Arabia. The First Development Plan was published in 1970 and subsequent plans have dealt with the periods 1975 - 80, 1980 - 85 , 1985 - 90 and 1990-95. It is important to realise that the plans deal with government expenditure programmes only. These of course, include the loan programmes to the private sector - especially to industry and commerce through the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF) and to agriculture, through the Saudi Arabian Agriculture Bank (SAAB) - but expenditure plans exclude the investments that the private sector will itself be undertaking. Saudi Arabia is not in that sense a planned economy.

Co-ordination of the planning activity is carried out by the Ministry of Planning (formerly called the Central Planning Organisation) but each Ministry is responsible for submitting expenditure proposals and preparing the detailed project plans that support those proposals. The Ministry of Finance and National Economy clearly also exercises considerable influence on the plan period and the balance among the different programmes.

Nowadays Saudi Arabia after the *Five-Year Development Plans* has witnessed many changes taking place in all aspects of life. The physical environment of Saudi society has been transformed. Development, progress and modernisation are the prime concern of the Saudi government, where its aspiration to development has led it to seek advice and help from the developed countries. This has stimulated a strong alteration of the domestic physical characteristics of Saudi Arabia. In addition, rapid population growth in Saudi Arabia has influenced the rate of alteration. Alteration came in small and quick ways as well as large and at moderate speed. Nowadays townsmen are more civilised with all the available technology and modern inventions. People can now go for a weekend drive in their air-conditioned cars and stop for ice-cream cones or pastries. Some women attend some social functions or go to restaurants with their husbands, spend their holidays abroad, or visit some local new waterfront boulevard or bustling shopping centre with traffic jams, flashing neon lights and glass and chrome-fronted stores selling most products.

Saudi now has a number of office towers, several first-class hotels and a number of good places to eat out along the twin roads along the coast or in the desert where there is a succession of housing compounds, store yards and light industrial areas. Almost every thing has been changed. People stroll and shop each evening, pray in magnificent mosques, visit public outdoor open spaces and they can drive on the network of motor ways and local roads. In short, the pace of life is different now. People are concerned that traditional values will change too. The wealth they had was their faith, a code of conduct, a generosity of spirit, a foundation man could build on. Now education, travel, television and contact with foreigners - have all made Saudi Arabia a full partner in the modern world. Through technology, people hope to strengthen their future in Saudi ,but not at the cost of destroying the foundation, of losing what they had: the closeness of the family with its loyalties and responsibilities, their respect for custom and pride in the richness of their language and the sustaining strength of their religion.

Many of the five year development plans failed to achieve maximum benefits from the juxtaposition of land uses because responsibility for landscape and urban open space design were given to separate non-professional agencies and entirely divorced from

integrated landscape architectural design and planning principles. For example, the construction of new seaside outdoor recreational areas necessitated the excavation and deposition of very large quantities of earth. Since land form is one of the main aspects of landscape design, it is surprising that the subject has not received more attention in the master plans of many Saudi Arabian cities.

The existing cities were not comprehensively nor adequately planned. They were planned to accommodate a transportation framework and housing schemes. A better approach advocated by an American transport consultant argues that "the planning of new towns must start with the pedestrian, from the point of view of both transportation and liveability. All other transportation elements must conform to that framework, otherwise the town will be dominated by vehicles."⁴⁰ In other words, the public street, the outdoor recreational areas and gardens and all city squares should be designed before the private houses and city development by incorporating aesthetic and functional criteria into outdoor design and laying out minor roads, footpaths, handicapped ways and parks before the buildings are designed. A considerable advantage is that it enables land uses and buildings at different stages to be intermixed and integrated to establish unity within the variety, as well as to avoid the problems of excessive 'differences' to enable designer to come forward with proposals for single houses, groups of houses, workshops, offices, schools, shops, outdoor recreational areas and other uses according to the needs of users, without the constraints of an 'already planned layout'.

Finally, certain subtle changes are already noticeable. It has become virtually impossible to register an enterprise in the Kingdom unless a Saudi partner is involved and the Government has set out a number of attractive fiscal and other inducements to tempt foreign companies into joint ventures with Saudi nationals. At the same time, as qualified Saudis are returning home, they are replacing the non-Saudi Arabs and other foreign technical and middle management staff that until recently abounded in every ministry, regional office and municipality.

What opportunities, then, will the Five-Year Plan offer foreign business? First, the construction boom is by no means over. Although the character of projects will change as the most basic infrastructure is set in place, a huge programme of industrial

development is already in progress. Most of the giant petrochemical and gas gathering projects that form the cornerstone of the industrial strategy have been let, but each will generate many smaller subcontracts to provide ancillary works and services. And there still remains to be built many schools, clinics, housing and outdoor recreational provisions.

ECONOMY OF SAUDI ARABIA

THE ECONOMY in Saudi Arabia has depended heavily on the oil industry which is under government control. Because of oil revenue, the people of Saudi Arabia enjoy high per capita income and free social, health and education services. The government is trying to reduce the country's dependence on oil by encouraging and participating in the establishment of both oil-related and non-oil-related industries. The scarcity of raw materials other than oil and natural gas, and high labour costs impose limitations to industrial growth. Agriculture contributes just 1 per cent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)⁴¹. About half a million Saudis work on the land, producing wheat, sorghum, alfalfa, certain vegetables, and dates. Poultry, sheep, goats, cattle and camels are also raised.

In short, the Saudi economy remains dominated by the oil sector. According to Corcoran⁴² Saudis might be considered as among the world's richest peoples in terms of income *per capita*. Accordingly, the increase in more free-time and healthier status within the economy has freed many people to use the recreational and leisure facilities and opportunities in Saudi Arabia and abroad. This has put more pressure on government agencies to meet the great demand of people for more recreational opportunities. The next chapter will highlight some relevant cultural issues associated with the Saudi Arabian people, notably Islam and privacy.

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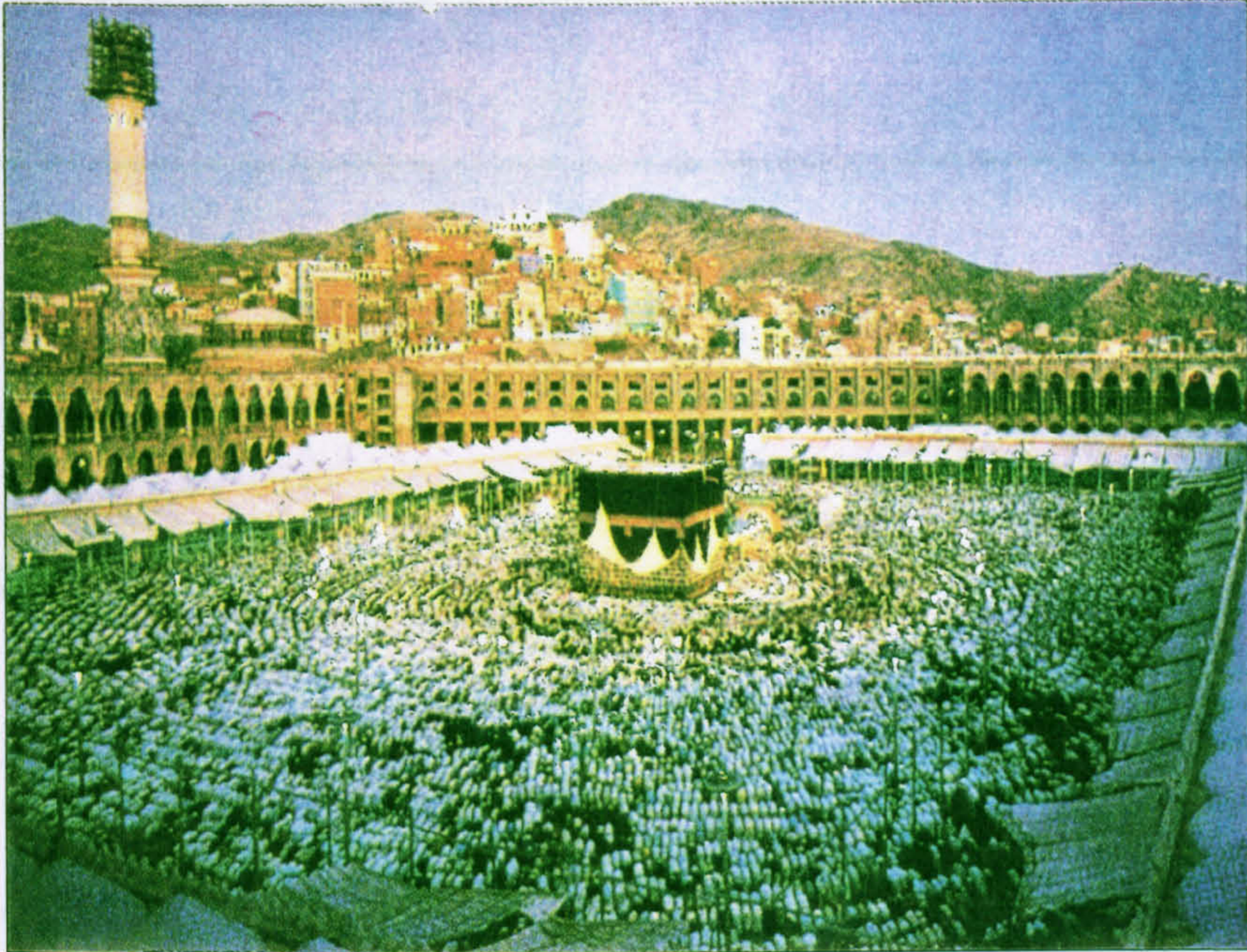
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- 30 *Amanah is the highest level in the municipalities' administrative classification and hierarchy. Jeddah municipality is of this level. However, for the purpose of the present study; Amanah and municipality will be used interchangeably. Amanah is connected with the Minister directly, and do have the authority to prepare their own financial and budgeting programmes. Also, they can negotiate directly with the Ministry of Finance about the annual budget, without referring to the central office of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. Moreover, these type of municipality can prepare and technically supervise and approve their own physical plans and developments. Most of them are of the largest cities in terms of population and those cities are managed by this rank of municipalities include Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, Medina, Dammam and Taif. The other ranks involve four types of municipalities: type A, B, C, and D. All of them are linked to the regional office. They differ in the size of authorities and were given to run their internal and external works. Accordingly they are supervised by the regional offices, particularly in preparing the annual budget, physical plans and administration of the consultants work. For more information see Kari, H. (1992), The Implementation of Urban Plans : The Case of Medina Master Directive Plan, Saudi Arabia, unpublished Ph.D., the University of Sheffield.*
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CHAPTER 3

Islam And Privacy



The black-silk covered Kaaba stands in the courtyard of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. Muslims all over the world turn toward the Kaaba when they pray five times a day. Here, the faithful gather for prayer during their pilgrimage.



The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah



Chahar Almosa

3

Islam And Privacy

ISLAM AS A CLIENT WITH A SPECIFIC COMPULSORY REQUIREMENT

THE Saudi society is affected and controlled by Islamic regulations. Islam as *a way of life* is a religion revealed to Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, in the Arabian peninsula more than 1400 years ago. Islam in Arabic means peace, purity, acceptance, submission¹ and commitment.²

From the Islamic point of view, Islam is the most important issue to be taken as a whole to develop and enhance this earth as a means to preserve the well-being of human life within the full care and integration among all created things. Apart from that, there are certain requirements and principles to be addressed in each development. Security, prosperity and equity are among those necessities. For example people's satisfaction must obviously be a major concern of policy makers, planners, managers, and all environmental designers. The role of recreational areas within the context of local leisure provision is to ease the tension of city life, provide comfort, convenience, relaxation and rest to the society. These recreational areas cover a range of types of open spaces in terms of their setting, management, provision of facilities and pattern of use. The public and private recreational areas must satisfy the needs and desires of the local people, children and women, together with the importance of preserving both the nature of the local environment and its users' culture and traditions. Such needs include importance of access and privacy, as well as the enhancement of the visual and scenic appearance of the recreational spaces which is a very important factor in attracting visitors of all ages and

types. That is to say the need to conserve and enhance the visual appeal, privacy contact, privacy corridors and all degrees of privacy levels must be the key of objective policy.

The strains and pressures within Saudi Arabian society today are recognised as inevitable. Yet the intent to preserve what is right and true in traditional values, while accepting the enlightenment of education and the challenge of progress wins the admiration of some people. All Qur'anic orders and prohibitions are taken seriously. Alcohol is forbidden, modesty is indeed expected of womenfolk, and the segregation of the sexes is a must in every design, while it is being modified in certain aspects, is widely accepted. To seek knowledge is a duty for both Muslim genders, and all Muslims have to meet their obligations towards their family, neighbours, fellow Muslims and all people. The Prophet Mohammad -peace be upon him - declare that :

"Lo ! All of you are leaders and shall be questioned on the Day of Judgement in respect of your trust. So, the king is a head unto his subjects and shall be questioned in respect of them; the husband is a head unto his wife and shall be questioned in respect of her; the wife is a head unto her husband's house and the children, and shall be questioned in respect of them all; the slave is watchman unto his master's effects and shall be questioned in respect of those. So you are all shepherd, and you shall be questioned in respect of that entrusted to you." 3

It is an obligatory issue from each individual in the Muslim society to take care of, and comprehensively to preserve, maintain and respect all environments of social, physical, economical, ecological, behavioural affairs to serve human beings in a manner that is within the Islamic framework. In addition, Islam, also encouraged each Muslim to take care of his neighbours unto the seventh neighbour on both sides of his house. By the application of this principle within the community, a strong society is created (Figure 3.1). Islam as a way of life is to achieve success and good life here in this world and hereafter.

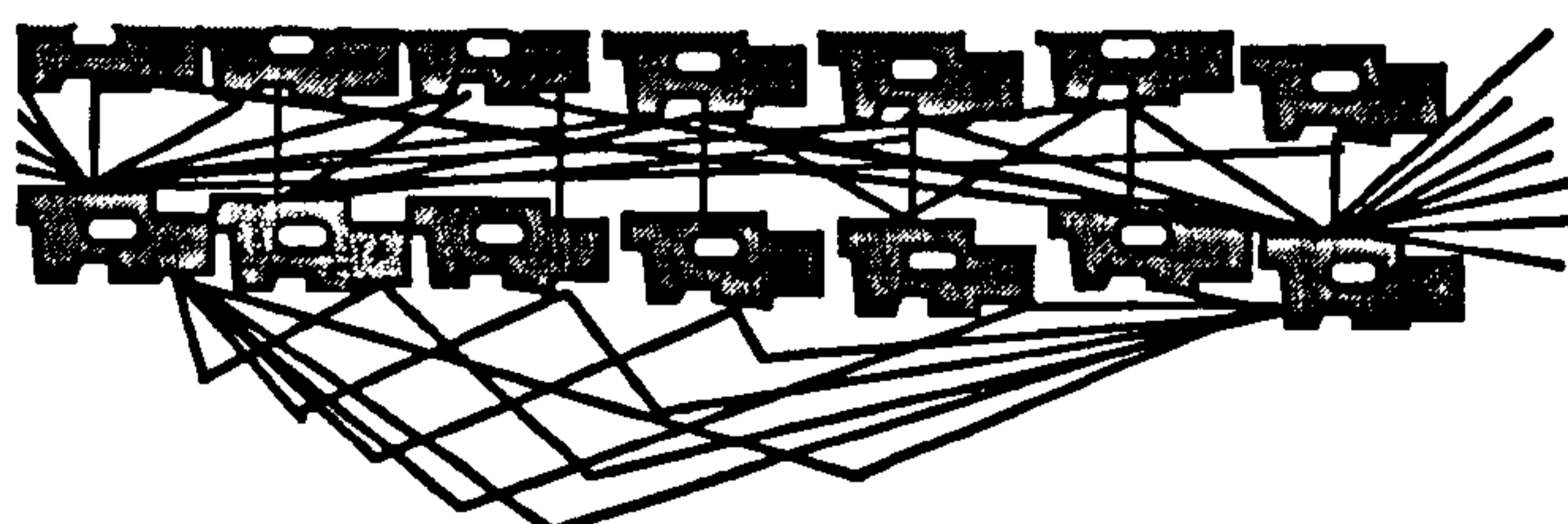


FIGURE 3.1 *Each Muslim must take care of his neighbours unto seventh neighbours⁴.*

ISLAM, PRIVACY AND SEX SEGREGATION

THE ALMIGHTY GOD revealed that:

"Say to the believing men That they should lower Their gaze and guard Their modesty that will make For greater purity for them: And God is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women That they should lower Their gaze and guard Their modesty; that they Should not display their Beauty and ornaments except What (must ordinarily) appear Thereof; that they should Draw their veils over Their bosoms and not display Their beauty except To their husbands, their fathers, Their sons, Their husbands' sons, Their brothers or their brothers' sons." ⁵

Thus, as Othman Llewellyn has indicated;

*"Urban design must insure privacy for women with sufficient air and sunlight. Design for privacy, whether in the courtyards of houses or in picnic grounds and campgrounds, protects the family structure, for example, while indirectly protecting property and religion"*⁶.

The anthropologist E.T. Hall⁷ suggested that each person is surrounded by an invisible bubble of personal space. He showed that people prefer to maintain themselves without overlapping with the bubbles of others. People will space themselves out often at fairly regular intervals. "Privacy is about the right of each individual to control what the world knows about him or her. . . It is important for the site planner to get this right. There are acceptable distances apart that people prefer in different social settings. These differ with culture, but the distances that are acceptable in the local culture are important for the site planner to understand. A design must allow people to perceive that they have sufficient space to chooses between social interaction or privacy."⁸ Privacy refers to personal clothing and the private domains of the home. It also refers to the privacy of communication. The privacy of others, according to Islamic law, must be respected and its invasion is prohibited, such as via direct visual corridors into the private domain of others. The Qura'n prescribes various behavioural patterns including those designed to respect the privacy of others, such as the manner of announcing one's presence to the occupants of a house or keeping away from other women, or lowering the eyes, and others. The Qura'n teaches the virtues and importance of privacy, the right to it, and

respect for it. All mediums affecting privacy are included in Muslim teaching, but the visual medium especially is directly affected by urban building or landscape forms and it is therefore very important to maintain all satisfactory required degrees of privacy in every hierarchy of the spatial and physical structure of environmental projects.

PRIVACY IN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL ISLAMIC CULTURE

WITHIN THE CONTEXT of urban open spaces, the family is the main concern in visual privacy, particularly the importance of protecting female members from the eyes of male strangers (any adult male that a woman can marry or *non-Mahram*). Accordingly, a context that facilitates visual overlooking is considered harmful and is therefore an offence in Muslim law and must be avoided. The Prophet - Peace be upon him- said: "*Do not harm others or yourself, and others should not harm you or themselves.*" The source of any offence is viewed by Muslim as correctable and / or removable.⁹

There is a strong sense in Arabian society of what is public and what is private, and the division is rigidly maintained. A man's home, as well as his territorial outdoor open space, and the activities that take place in it are private, and even a tent will have provisions for receiving and entertaining guests apart from the women of the family.

Women or *harem* belong to the private world. Visiting may be frequent in a community, but women will have their own female friends, many of whom their husbands will never know or even been seen. When a woman ventures into the public sphere, in addition to being veiled she will be accompanied by some other member of her household, must be a *mahram* such as a son, brother, and husband.

Veiling before strangers is the Islamic rule in cities, towns and any space or place. While this is always done outside the house, it must also be obliged be practised in the home. In short, a woman must be veiled in presence of any male stranger reached the age of 15 years old. It must be carried to such an extreme that in an extended family residence, for example, a wife of one brother must veil when she is in the presence of another

brother or cousins. Women do not veil, except before strangers, and they usually keep a respectful distance between themselves and groups of strange men. Elderly women past childbearing age need not be so circumspect.

It is obvious from the previous points that privacy is an important social right to be provided adequately according to Islamic Law. The segregation of gender is an important approach to privacy issue to take to achieve satisfaction and social comfort. Islam's concern for privacy insists and prohibits mixing between sexes. It is prohibited for a strange man to sit alone with a woman. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Hemiddi has conducted a detailed study of the urban parks in Saudi Arabia¹⁰. He notes some distinctive Islamic characteristics of Saudi citizens and their relationship with the use of outdoor recreational areas. Such features show that most Saudi societies are conservative, and prefer the separation between the two sexes in both private and public places. This results in the separation between gender in public places, such as schools, universities, markets, hospitals and public parks, as well as in private places such as in homes, cars, and waiting rooms at all facilities and utilities. Al-Hemiddi also argues that privacy and the segregation of the sexes form an important part of Saudi life and govern the conduct of groups and individuals. Examples of privacy as a custom generated from Islamic culture are as follows:

- A Saudi family tends to prefer an isolated place out of sight of others within a semi-limited area.
- It is the habit of Saudi women to wear special dress when they frequent common places or public parks. This special dress covers the whole figure and face and is called "hijab"(a veil). Women cannot take off this dress while at communal places or public parks because of the presence of strangers men who are not related to them. While this dress confers a certain anonymity and may make some women more comfortable in public, it also gives some women a feeling of limited movement and consciousness which could be another reason why some conservative citizens do not wish to take their families to parks.
- During a picnic, members of a Saudi family gather together. If two families agree to go on a picnic together, the men will gather at one place and the women at another in order to ensure privacy and more freedom.

"O ye who believe! let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence), on three

occasions: before morning prayer; then while ye doff your clothes for the noontday heat; and after the late-night prayer: these are your three times of undress: outside those times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: Thus does God make clear the Signs to you: for God is full of knowledge and wisdom. But when the children among you come of age, let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age): Thus does God make clear His Signs to you: for God is full of knowledge and wisdom. Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage,- there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty: but it is best for them to be modest: and God is One Who sees and knows all things." 11

Therefore, Islamic culture is a valuable guide to enhance and achieve adequate landscape planning and design that maintains privacy. Thus, the comprehensive knowledge of environmental and social sciences must go hand in hand with the interpretation of Islamic culture. This will enrich present and future social projects. It is the responsibility of all Muslims to begin to re-assert their Islamic identity so that *Shari'a* (Law of Islam) be re-instated in its entirety. Life in this world is no doubt exciting and interesting, but this is all a mirage, ultimately it leads to frustration, despondency and ruin. In such a situation, it is very difficult for a Muslim to maintain his Islamic identity, if they are not properly equipped and instructed in Islamic manners and way of life.¹²

CULTURE DIFFUSION AMONG THE CITIZENS OF SAUDI

SEEKING TO MAINTAIN the desired Islamic traditions while fostering technological changes and up-to-date landscape architectural art and science is the major issue for environmental designers to bear in mind. " There are attitudes, values, and beliefs which are inherent in the culture and are necessary to sustain the intellectual and emotional integrity of the populace during a time of unparalleled change. Culture continuity is required in order to understand and surmount the shocks and dislocations of lifestyles in a technological society, while attempting to maintain the cherished cultural values and beliefs."¹³

Saudi Arabia is made up of various nationalities and cultures. However it was not always this way. In the past most of the population was nomadic and rural, with

some living in agricultural communities. Until 1932 Saudi Arabia was inhabited by tribes of pure Arab descent, who lived mainly off the sea as fishermen, traders and herders of livestock. Their life style was simple with deep religious faith and conservatism. Muslim-Saudi culture accorded women a position somewhat superior to that of many women in other cultures. Their work was vital: to raise the children, teach them the main religious teachings and principles, milk the animals, cook, spin yarn, and weave the cloths and blankets. As a result they were confined within their private domain, which accorded them great respect. Adding to that, the household is the essential cultural arbiter, where values, attitudes and beliefs are nurtured, and where cultural transmission, early childhood education and socialisation take place. Family life is guided and supported by the mosque, the school, the media, and by the intellectual climate of the community. The family and the community were closely knit, encouraging socialisation and co-operation amongst neighbours.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, foreign peoples from all over the world seeking job opportunities and welfare in Saudi Arabia . Several minority groups of Asian, Western and African descent shaped their lifestyles within the Saudi environment. A cultural diffusion affected the local vernacular life. Foreign invaded the Arab language.

Women in Saudi Arabia have less opportunities for using outdoor recreational facilities as they did not respect their nature since most provision fails to respect their requirements. The architects, planners or landscape architects who gain their knowledge from foreign countries and return to their homeland are required to adapt their knowledge to suit the locality. They must not become *copiers of foreign plans* to be implemented without comprehensive acknowledgement of *Shari'a* , which enable them to modify, change and adapt the overall physical and spatial patterns to suit both the nature of the local people and the nature of the environment. The result of over-look Islamic requirements is an inadequate design or a complete contradiction, where the designers try to shape users life styles and leisure patterns to fit their alien plans. The domain of women has not been considered during preliminary design stages.

The reason why some local planners and designers are not so successful in adapting, modifying or changing the existing pattern occurs because standards were not developed to suit the modern way of life nor to cope with landscape architectural concept to be framed within Islamic principles. In addition professionals do not always occupy appropriate positions. For example, in some municipalities, architects take responsibility for planning departments; in others, agricultural engineers take charge of landscape design; and in others civil engineers take charge of housing projects, electrical engineer take care of cleaning work and maintenance of the city.

According to Chubb, ¹⁴ overall recreational provision can stimulate changes in society. It can affect a society's belief and change its social structure. What will happen if the overall provision is designed and planned the same way as it has been in other completely different cultures? The obvious answer is an overall or partial transformation and diffusion of local people's traditions and way of life to the imported overall pattern. The overall pattern will influence people's behaviour and attitudes. The arrangement, order and site-layout will determine the use and pattern of participation. For example the traditional Saudi way of spending leisure time in desert environment, visiting the countryside or camping on natural beach areas has been changed, to some extent, to spending many of their leisure hours watching television, video or playing indoor electronic games. Furthermore the introduction of modern media, as well as the new housing styles affect people to change from multi-family structure to nuclear family of parents and children. Where in the near past many families consisted of grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, cousins, sisters and brothers all living in one big house, eating together, spending leisure time in the courtyard talking, playing or visiting in one large group an open space for two or three days.

The environmental designers must not plan or design an area that causes invasion of privacy or mixture between males and females. The overall provision must give so much attention to separating female areas from male domains. It is not suitable to provide such projects blindly into other cultures. Each culture needs its own pattern of provision. It is preferable to take the things that suit the task in hand but with careful adaptation to fit the right combination of social factors.

The design of Muslim style outdoor open spaces must not break down the moral and religious values and traditions for any kind of reason, especially outside media invasion and influences. The modernisation ought to be confined to local conventions for the benefit of the country. Planners and decision makers dealing with the Muslim public must decide how to plan for a Muslim family, Muslim individuals and for the Muslim's environment. Recreation is amongst those priorities that are to be examined due to its importance as an influencing factor in affecting people's behaviour and attitudes. It is the restoration potential which regenerates individuals and cause them to be more active, happier, healthier and able to cope with the daily routine of life.

The maintenance of Islamic traditions, values and the local culture allied with the ability to foster the new technology and cultural bifurcation is an important issue to be addressed in the development of all human beings developments. This obviously will satisfy the users and will attract all ages and types of the society. The need to conserve and enhance the visual, functional and socio-physical spatial and structure of all social provision should be a key objective to accommodate and satisfy the need for adequate design and planning of outdoor recreational urban open spaces within the Islamic context.

THE USE OF SHARI'A VALUES IN OUTDOOR PLANNING

THE QURA'N DECLARES that nothing is created without value and purpose: "we did not create the heavens and earth and all between them carelessly. We did not create them but for the right ends."¹⁵ Shari'a values underlie the Islamic tradition of landscape planning and design which includes the design of outdoor open spaces. The Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that increasing the fruitfulness of the earth is a profoundly moral, and ethical act. He said:

*"If anyone revives dead land, for him is a reward in it, and whenever any creature seeking food eats of it shall be reckoned as charity from him. There is no Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, and a human, bird, or animal eats from it, but it shall be reckoned as charity from him. If anyone plants a tree, no human nor any of God's creatures will eat from it, without its being reckoned as charity from him."*¹⁶

Another *Sunnah* declaration prohibits the cutting of any tree in the desert if it provides valuable shade or sustenance to either humans or animals, and establishes state reserves around Makkah and Madinah within which no trees can be cut for firewood or game hunted. The previous points indicate that the aim of both production and conservation in Islamic law is the universal common good, of humans and other created beings together. The establishment of well-being and prosperity as well as the enhancement and beautification of earth are the fundamental purposes of all planning and design in Islam. These are *ihya* (revival, making life flourish in the land) and *tahsi'n al-ard* (creating beauty and reclaiming the surroundings of human beings).

In Islamic law, all acts, including planning and design decisions, are evaluated in terms of *masalih* (social goods) and *mafasid* (social evils). These are similar, though not identical to ideas of social benefits and costs in secular planning. Social goods are hierarchically ordered as *daruriyyat* (absolute necessities), *hajiyyat* (social needs which alleviate hardship), and *tahsi'niyat* (refinements which promote ethics, aesthetics, and honour). Absolute necessities include religion and morality, life, offspring and family, reason, mental health and property. All of these categories (most of which cannot be expressed in terms of financial profit and loss) must be considered in weighing social goods and evils for planning and design decisions. Design for privacy, whether in the courtyards of houses or in picnic sites and outdoor open recreational areas, protects the family structure, for instance, while indirectly protecting property and religion.

Applying Islamic law and teaching (*Shari'a*) to conflicting interests might solve most, if not all, social and physical problems. Llewlynn¹⁷ notes that "Islamic law dictates that the wider interest of the entire society and creation must take precedence over the more limited interests of individuals and particular groups, and the prevention of evils normally takes precedence over the acquisition of benefits. Allah, the Almighty forbids corruption in the earth and forbids wasteful extravagance. Mohammad, on whom be blessings and peace, forbade that water be wasted in washing for prayer even by an abundantly flowing river". The previous prohibitions require the use of methods which maximise the conservation and beneficial use of all environmental and landscape

resources, such as the control of the micro-climate by means of site selection, and planting, the use of native plants, building form and orientation, spatial and physical organisation, and the use of wind and sun that should be encouraged to minimise the depletion of non-renewable sources of energy.

In addition, and in order to satisfy Islamic design criteria, a plan or design must be in accordance with the natural processes by making specific sites most suitable for users and in balance, with natural environment. Design should also enhance rather than resist the nature of man and of the environment. "Verily, all things have we created, in proportion and measure" ¹⁸ Every thing in this life was in balance and harmony through the natural process (*sunan of Allah.*) Accordingly Islamic criteria and the balance of nature must be made in consultation (*Shura*) with all people affected by it, and great care must be taken to give full weight to the needs, demands and desires of human beings in accordance with Islam's insistence on the equality of people. The faithful who have done good works are described as dwelling "in gardens beneath which rivers flow"¹⁹; "among shades and springs, and such fruits as they desire"²⁰; and "in a flowery meadow they shall be made glad"²¹ enjoying "rest and fragrance, and a garden of delight."²²

The characteristics of Islamic values, laws, and teaching will encourage human beings to trusteeship. In making nature prosper to the utmost, man enjoys and benefits from nature to the utmost, so that a relationship of reciprocity or symbiosis is established, and the fundamental objective of the Shari'a, the universal common good of all created beings, is realised.²³

WOMEN AND THE USE OF PUBLIC URBAN OPEN SPACES

FRANK²⁴ has conducted valuable research in the United States about how women use public urban open spaces. Most environmental studies about women have focused on women's activities and needs in the home and the adjacent neighbourhood, with little research on women's use of urban public spaces. In other words, little attention has been given to gender differences in the use of these spaces. For example, some existing outdoor patterns allow strange (meaning men who are not related) to approach the domain of families, which causes harassment and exposure to the eyes of others. Such approaches range from annoying overtures and harmless exhortations to sexually explicit comments and, sometimes, actual touching. In addition to that, Al-Nowaiser²⁵ notes that women in Saudi Arabia were expressing a greater degree of displeasure with the modern environment than did men. Women are traditionally restricted to the dwelling and its immediate environs by their social and religious status and by the requirements of privacy. Al-Nowaiser concludes that "women are subject to the greatest degree of stress in the new privacy-less environment because the physical setting has further constrained their already restricted social status and thereby has further limited their freedom."

People in Saudi Arabia believe that tradition and modernity can live honourably side by side; that women will be able to take a more active part in society and in the development of their country within the context of Islam, without neglecting their essential roles as wives and mothers; that boys and girls can go to school and learn how to flourish in the larger world and still cherish their past and esteem their elders. They can participate in outdoor activities and passive participation even in public open spaces if the layout, spatial and physical components are adequately integrated to fit and suit local Islamic culture. Men or women can take the time, even in the rush of twentieth-century commerce, industry, or their participation in leisure time activities to pause or to close a shop or stop work at the amplified call of the *muezzin* (the call to pray) to pray and kneel only to Allah at their compulsory five prayer times each per day and offer thanks to God for what He has given.

Accordingly, and from the negative expression that has been felt by the author from the overall landscape design, particularly of outdoor recreational areas in Saudi Arabia, there has been a lack of sufficient social and behavioural studies about women's attitudes and behaviour in public social urban spaces and places. This is regrettable since there are social and physical landscape problems associated with recreational and leisure provision in outdoor urban open spaces including the privacy of women, no adequate opportunities and poor landscape architecture. Apart from those inadequacies, there is a great need to explore, examine and recommend some solutions that might ameliorate the existing situation and enhance future landscape projects in Saudi Arabia.

The concern must concentrate not only on providing open spaces, greenery, paving and the planting of any void space. It must also observe the Muslim's use of outdoor recreational urban open spaces, by the use of comprehensive adequate landscape architectural techniques and principles. Muslims' attitudes and behaviour must be framed with the Islamic culture. Their privacy must not be ignored, the vernacular Muslim nature must not be overrun by already planned and designed open spaces imported from other non-Islamic countries. It is very important that this sort of outdoor recreational development and the manner of producing wealth through the city must be sufficient to be in harmony and have regard for the human aspects. The Islamic society is strongly tied to the traditional values of Arab Muslim culture. They have to pray five times a day and respect all religious rituals of the society, which has a great influence on the leisure and recreation pattern and on the design of their facilities.²⁶

The following chapters will discuss the demand for recreation, resources, and problems that are associated with the open space planning and design of recreational and leisure pattern in Saudi Arabia. They will cover different outdoor recreational aspects, as well as exhibiting the effects of some of the above discussed arguments and how they compare with existing outdoor recreational and leisure pattern development and to existing facilities, their use and people's demands and requirements.

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CHAPTER 4

The Demand For Recreation

In Saudi Arabia



4

The Demand For Recreation In Saudi Arabia

GROWTH IN LEISURE TIME

The English word 'leisure' appears to be derived from the Latin *licere*, 'to be permitted' or 'to be free.' Hence the French word *loisir*, meaning 'free time', and the English words 'licence' and 'liberty.' Generally it is defined in terms of 'freedom from constraint', 'opportunity to choose', 'time left over after work' or as 'free time after obligatory social duties have been met'.¹ The term leisure means different things to different people. For some, leisure equates with the enjoyment and satisfaction associated with free-time activities. Frustration and anti-social behaviour can occur because of the difficulty of occupying this time with any meaningful activity. Developed countries increasingly are faced with the situation of adjusting to and providing for a society oriented towards leisure rather than labour.² "We have now (in the USA) reached a stage where almost a third of the year, and a similar proportion of consumer spending, is devoted to leisure. There is a continual move towards a shorter working week and to more holidays each year. It is said we are moving to the three 35s - i.e. 35 years of working life, 35 working weeks per year and a 35-hour working week."³ Much the same could also be said about the developing countries for there as well, leisure time is increasingly growing and also there is a continual move towards shorter working hours and more vacations, due to the substantial changes in the social and economical fare of the society.

It is important to acknowledge the difference between the two terms *leisure* and *recreation*. Clawson⁴ notes that "Leisure and recreation are highly correlated, but they are not the same. Leisure is *time* of a special kind; recreation is *activity* (or inactivity) of

special kinds. Recreation takes place during leisure but not all leisure is given over to recreation." Basically, if the motive is enjoyment and personal satisfaction and the performance of the activity has its own appeal, then it is recreation. In other words leisure time is free and discretionary time which is free from work and non-work obligations.⁵ While recreation is an activity which occurs if the motive is enjoyment and personal satisfaction and the performance of the activity has its own appeal, then it is recreation.

The growth of leisure is the development of the leisure experience that includes the improvement of humans' mental and intellectual growth. Growth is to become, to change, to enlarge. It is the increase of free time or discretionary time, that is time that can be utilised according to the wishes of an individual, i.e., growth as more constructive use of leisure time, not in value in time. If some of the free time is devoted to enjoyment purposes then it will be leisure that is occupied with recreation, which includes activities to be done for pleasure, rather than for health, income, duty or any other reason.

The growth of leisure time can be traced back to the beginning of the conversion of a fundamentally rural society into an industrial society (the Industrial Revolution in the early 18th century)⁶, where the effect of socio-economic and institutional factors and technological progress have resulted in reducing the working hours. For example, in the United States, "The working week has been reduced from an estimated 70-hour, six-day a week in the mid-nineteenth century to around 40 hours or less, spread over as little as four days."⁷ This has also meant that workers are now provided with lengthy segments of free time. It is this time that is associated with the increasing productivity of labour, and accelerated by the industrial revolution during the last century, and the electronic development at present, has produced a large quantity of spare time.

The technological innovations and modern development and civilisation have reduced the number of working hours still further, and accordingly more leisure time has been created, this is because the lack of spare time before the industrial revolution was the main barrier against participation in recreational activities. For example the growth in leisure in the USA has risen greatly with total leisure time doubling in each 50-year period. Total hours of leisure for the whole population increased nearly twice between

1900 and 1950 and is expected to increase 2.5 times between 1950-2000. Leisure time has also increased relatively from 27 percent of total time in 1900 to 34 percent in 1950, with an expected further increase to 38 percent by the year 2000.

The change in total hours of leisure for the whole population, plus the changes in time distribution of leisure will mean a tenfold increase in total vacations and total retired time between 1900 and 2000. The average workweek in USA has declined greatly in the past 100 years or more. In 1850s the average workweek was 70 hours - about - 72 hours for agriculture and about 65 hours for all non-agricultural employment.⁸ Accordingly the total demand for outdoor recreation will be affected primarily by the total volume of leisure.⁹ Leisure time in Britain, for example, varied from 8.3 hours for workers of 53 hours or more a week in the 1940s to 13 hours for those working 31-36 hours.¹⁰ It was also found that as income increases, also, the growth and demand for more leisure time increases, and many of the most distinctive upper income recreational pursuits are relatively time-consuming such as hill walking, climbing or camping.¹¹ However not all leisure time is given to recreation because the use of leisure time implies choice, including the choice to do nothing. Most interpretations of leisure imply a freedom of time and attitude.¹²

As Saudi Arabia has developed economically, it has paid particular attention to the growth in leisure time. No specific central government minister was allocated responsibility for leisure and recreation that would compare, for example, with the Minister of State for Sport and Recreation in England, or the French Ministry of Leisure. But because of the significance of recreation, psychologically, educationally, socially, politically and physically as a prime consideration of the local authority, the Saudi Government has legally established the importance of leisure and recreation by adopting the UN's "*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*" in 1984.¹³ The latter protects the citizens right to leisure and to participate in leisure activities. That the citizens have "the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holiday with pay, and the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."¹⁴ Consequently, legislation has been passed relating to hours of work, time for leisure, holidays and

relating to leisure activities themselves. This in turn has caused the increased growth in leisure time.

Employment patterns and conditions play a determining part in people's recreational behaviour. The stipulations regarding working time came as a result of long and extensive demands for free time among the people. The average working week for the majority of Saudi civil servants is less than 40 hours, and there is a five-day week now in effect for most government workers. If therefore we assume the employee needs eight hours for sleep, three hours for other essential activities and has no other obligations, this leaves him with 50 hours free time each week, about half of which will be concentrated in two non-work days.

The number of working hours per week have changed in Saudi Arabia from over 70 hours in the 1950s - when many residents worked on farms and in other agricultural firms- then to 42 hours per week in 1970, and to 36 hours in recent years. Every employee and government worker has the right to take 30 days annually of paid holiday. They also have the right to retire after 35 years of work. The students have a four month vacation during the summer and two weeks in the mid-term (spring vacation). Thursday and Friday are the Saudi 'weekend' and Friday is Islam's holy day. There are two official holidays on the Islamic calendar during which all government offices, private businesses, and educational institutions are closed. The first of these is *Eid al-Fitr*. This starts on the 25th day of the month of *Ramadan* (the month of fasting) and lasts through 5th days of the following month of *Shawwal*. This feast can last between ten days and two weeks, depending upon the weekends involved. The second official holiday is the *Eid al-Adha.*, which lasts approximately ten days (5th to 15th of *Al-Hajj* Month).

The growth of leisure time has led people to demand more recreation facilities and provisions. The demand for recreation refers to the amounts of various recreational activities in which a population will be willing and able to participate, given that access to facilities is very easy, that resources are adequate and that the environmental conditions are acceptable.

In Saudi Arabia, the growth in leisure time was the privilege of the elite, but today it has become the prerogative of the masses. Man's historical preoccupation with work as a means of livelihood appears to have been replaced by a new set of priorities geared towards the acquisition of more leisure.

The growth of leisure time can be traced primarily to the operation of socio-economic and institutional forces and technological progress in reducing the necessity to work long hours for the maintenance of living standards. Progressive reductions in the working week, provision of more substantial periods of paid annual leave, and earlier retirement have meant that workers are now provided with more free time.

The growth in leisure time was an international trends. Saudi Arabia as all other developed countries increasingly is faced with the situation of adjusting to and providing for a society oriented towards leisure rather than labour. In the United States for example, calculations show that so far this century, American workers gained about 800 hours of additional leisure time and should experience further substantial increase in leisure by the year 2000¹⁵. A similar trends has been experienced in other parts of the developed world. For Britain, the Report of the Cobham Committee¹⁶ suggests an absolute rise in leisure time of one-fifth by the turn of the century, with consequent implications for the leisure industries and government in the provision of recreation opportunities. In France, leisure is increasingly recognised, both by providers and users, as a central life interest and the Government has gone so far as to establish a Ministry for Leisure¹⁷. In Australia too, liberal working conditions are pervasive and Australian now work 31 days fewer than they did in 1947, an increase of 26% in leisure time or an extra month off work each year. Current moves for a 35-hour week and three-day weekends will bring about even more fundamental changes and learning to live with this amount of leisure is predicted to become the problem of the 1990s for Saudis. Therefore it would seem desirable, in the interest of recreation resource management, to devise a system of more flexible work patterns incorporating extended, but staggered blocks of disposable time.¹⁸

REASONS FOR GROWTH IN LEISURE TIME AND RECREATION

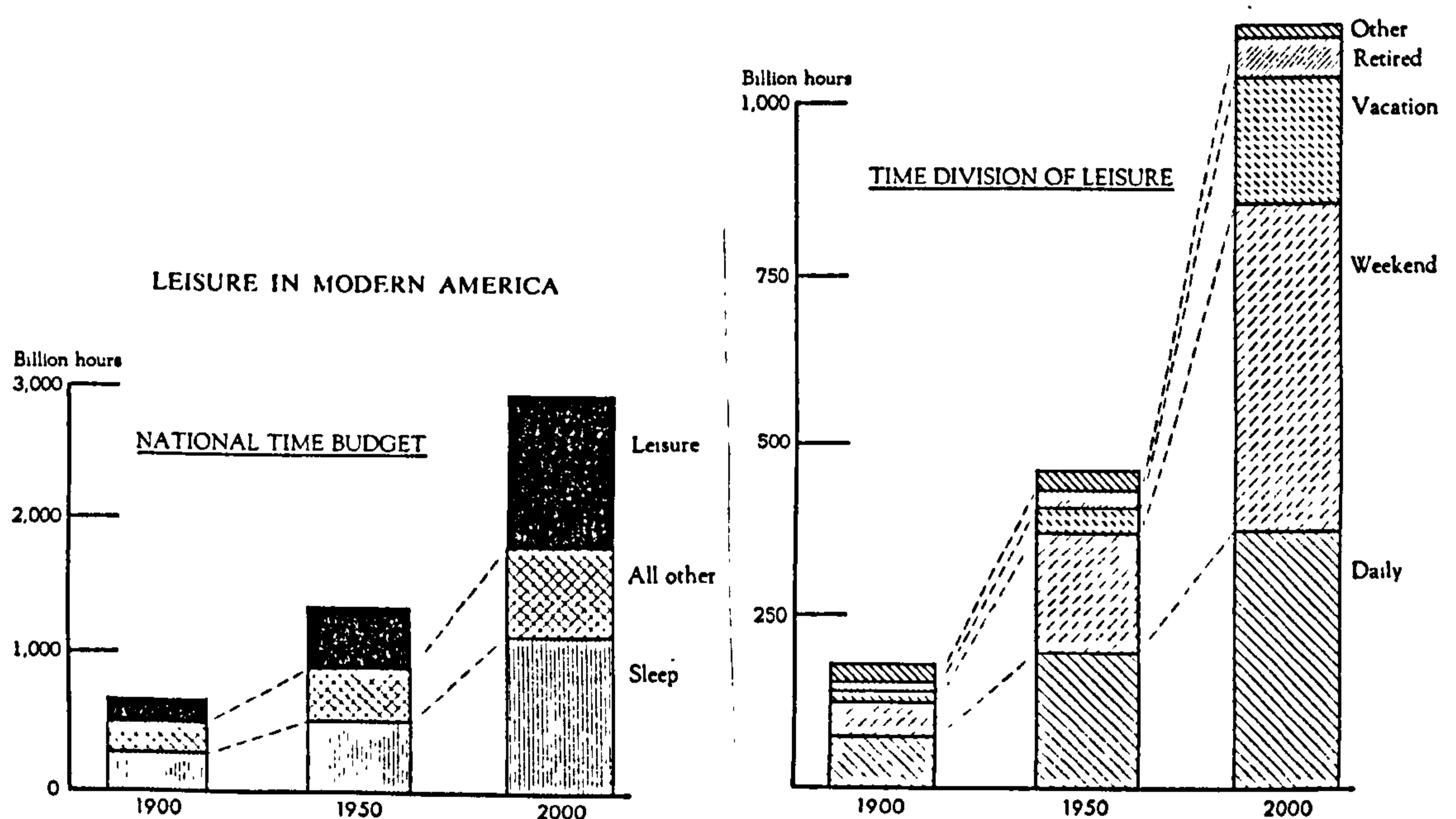
THE GROWTH in leisure time has resulted from several inter-locked social, physical and economic factors such as the improvement of medicine, better economic conditions, and the substantial increase in the life expectancy of babies born, because the longer the man lived the longer the retirement time he has. One of the factors that has changed leisure time is "The average life expectancy for boy babies rose from 48 years in 1900 to 65.5 years in 1950, and is expected to reach 73 by the year 2000."¹⁹ It is worth mentioning that the growth of leisure and work cannot be considered in isolation, but work must be considered in juxtaposition to leisure. As work changes from being the grinding necessity of the individual, so too leisure grows from being solely relaxation from toil into a time of opportunity for personal, cultural, psychological and intellectual enrichment. "There is a dual challenge, for the Saudi population to seize the new possibilities for the creative use of leisure time, and for the Government and the private sector to provide the facilities for cultural appreciation and wholesome recreation, and to sponsor cultural and artistic activities."²⁰

One of the reasons of growth in leisure time as well as the demand for recreation in Saudi Arabia, as well as some other countries, for example, was related to several factors such as population growth, youth, rising incomes, rising educational levels, and increased mobility. Besides that, the freeing of the day before the weekend (Saturday in Western countries and Thursday in Saudi Arabia) from work has created the 'two-day' weekend break, as well as the extended holiday with pay. "It was available only to a fortunate few a hundred years ago, but in the last 20 years has doubled in length".²¹

There has been a long-term trend to begin the working life later and to retire earlier, and earlier retirement together with long life expectancy now allows most people to end their lives with many years of spare time. The leisure time is the interval block or period between sleep, work, school, housekeeping and the other obligatory duties. It is of varying length from a 15 minute tea-break to substantial periods taken during the 20 years or so of retirement. The leisure time is the time block of daily leisure hours,

weekend leisure hours, vacation time, retirement and others. The size of the block will determine where we can spend it. Short periods during the day are spent at or near our homes, schools or work places. The two-day weekend allows us to make day trips many hours travel distance from home. For the annual holiday we can spend more days travelling and as tourists extend our range thorough countries and continents. Finally retirement may free us from many ties to places of work and allow retirement colonies to be established almost anywhere in the country or beyond it.²² In short, the growth in leisure time, in Saudi Arabia or in other countries was related to the following reasons:

- The freeing of the day before the weekend (Saturday in Western countries and Thursday in Saudi Arabia) from work has created the two days weekend,
- The extended holiday with pay. "It was available only to a fortunate few hundred years ago, but in the last 20 years has doubled in length."²³,
- Shorter working day. It was 12 working hours and now it is 7 working hours per day.
- There has been a long-term trend to begin working life later and to retire earlier, and earlier retirement together with long life expectancy now allows most people to end their lives with many years of spare time. Figure 4.1 gives a general but graphical illustration of leisure available in the past, present and expected in the future for USA. It also shows the overall trend towards an increase in leisure time and the distribution of that leisure time.



'. National time budget and time divisions of leisure, 1900, 1950, and 2000.

FIGURE 4.1 *leisure available in the past, present and expected in the future for USA.*

USE OF LEISURE TIME

HOW HAVE PEOPLE used their available leisure time? It is impossible to present an estimated division of total leisure time into various activities in Saudi Arabia. However, some rough estimates can be made from United States and United Kingdom for total time spent on certain outdoor recreation activities for which information on numbers of participants and estimated time per unit of participation is available.

The home is the most central place and space of all, especially in Saudi Arabia, due to the nature of the climate and culture. A *time budget study* was made in the UK by Glyptis,²³ and showed that 86% of all recorded activities took place in the home, including 74% of all leisure activities. Equally worthy of emphasis is the very localised focus of out-of-home activity, and therefore the importance of neighbourhood facilities and a pleasant local environment: over a third of out-of-home activities took place within a mile of home.

Traditionally in Saudi Arabia, the way people planned their time was effected by clearly determining factors, especially the physical environment and cultural-religious characteristics of the society. For example it is a norm for the people to take a siesta in the middle of the day when the heat outside precludes any other activity. Modern technology, however, has made it possible for people to continue their active day into the night. Modern lighting has this effect. A shift in most social activities and some work activities to the hours of late evening has resulted. This has been in order to avoid unsuitable climatic conditions, and also to allow women to visit outdoor recreational areas. They visit during the hours of darkness in order not to be seen by others

The understanding of the suitable time and the concern of the family for privacy, especially relating to leisure time, is affected by the way people allocate their time to fit in with the climate and the existing pattern of outdoor recreational areas. As regards the socio-religious factors which determine people's activities and the use of leisure time, the organisation of prayer time is considered crucial for people living in Saudi Arabia.

Muslims arrange their lives in accordance with the five prayer times every day. Prayers are arranged at intervals throughout the twenty-four hour period and people arrange the pattern of their activities around them.

The institutionalisation of time through statutory regulation in Saudi Arabia is overshadowed to some extent by the impact of environmental and religious factors upon time planning and leisure patterns, though their importance is still recognised. For example, the working-day runs from 7.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., about an hour before *Al-Asor* prayer should be performed. The time interval between the end of work and the *Al-Asor* prayer is normally allocated for lunch, which is the main meal of the day and the meal to which guests are usually invited. The use of leisure time, usually take place between or after *Al-Asor* prayer. For example between 3 and 6 p.m. is the women's social gathering time. It also provides overtime work for men or time for family shopping. Thereafter some time may be allocated to spend with the family or as social male gathering time . Modern leisure activities time (social gathering, dinner parties, matches and games) takes place after *Isha* Prayer, usually between 8 p.m. and midnight.

In relation to the use of leisure time, the private clique (*Bashkah* or *Shellah*), where male friends spend most of their free-time together (especially in the evening) , is the norm among the majority of the people. The venue may vary, but is always considered a cultural and recreational spot.²⁴ In the past it was called *El-Merkaz*, a raised shady area outside the house, by the street. Today architectural design has improved the gathering area and it now has the privacy and status of the male-living room, often introduced as a supplementary room outside the main villa building, and known as *Moulhak*. Here men meet without fear of disturbing the host family by noise or hookah smoking (*Shisha'h*). Those who have no such facilities, often, they use walk-side areas to spend their leisure time. On the other hand, for some people the time after the sunset prayer (*Magrib*), is a favourite time for hearing recitations from the Koran, especially among older men. Occasionally, men sit to listen to stirring tales of romance and bravery out of the past, and today radio news, television and music programs absorb much time. Delight in physical contests has become focused in recent years upon the soccer matches. This game has almost become the national sport, and great crowds

gather to watch the much-advertised contests. . .Men spend much of their time sitting and discussing or just sitting. Those who enjoy smoking the *Shisha'h* know that this too must be accomplished at a leisurely pace.²⁵

The women's afternoon get-together may be considered to be a private clique for women, but with essential differences from the male version. The women meet in their homes on a rotational basis, making no particular demands on physical provision, as in the case of the male meeting place, due to the lack of suitable public social places for women. Today the private gathering and clique is questioned, largely by the educated wives, on the grounds that they feel threatened by the influence of the gathering on their husbands' lives. They complain that their husbands are ignorant of their family and children's affairs, especially if the gathering is a nightly rather than occasional occurrence. Besides being segregated, male and female persons are physically distanced. Such an attitude reduces the opportunities for husband-wife recreational pursuits. If environmental designers were to provide adequate husband-wife outdoor recreational areas, this might encourage and produce different leisure pursuits within the family.

The new style of *Media Life* has influenced the use of leisure. In the near past people spent most of the day working in agricultural areas from sunrise until sunset, with only one or two hours in the afternoon set aside for lunch time, and then returned back home to sleep very early. "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." That English proverb was their main daily concept. But what had happened to the *space generation*? Many of them went very late to bed, woke very late, then spent the remaining time watching television, walking on the streets, and in parks or killing their valuable time in meaningless leisure activities such as playing cards, playing electronic games or bothering others.

Saudi Arabia's community often spend their leisure time within the limits of Islamic law and teaching. However Islam encourages people to recreate themselves evenly between serious work and spare time. Islam encourages people to teach their children shooting, swimming, and horseback riding. Even more, Islam considers the act of recreation as a worship if it is intended to strengthen the body for the sake of the Almighty God. The use of leisure time or the layout physical structure, must not cause

any kind of harm to the others or the person himself. The prophet Mohammed, on whom be blessing and peace, declared

“Do not harm others or yourself, and others should not harm you or themselves.

Avoid sitting on thoroughfares, they said it is difficult to avoid as they are our gathering places where we spend time talking, ‘but if you insist then you should respect the right of thoroughfares’. What are these rights they asked, ‘Avoid staring, do not create harm, salute back to those who salute you, bid to honour and forbid dishonour.’²⁶

There are many indications that Saudi society is experiencing the same development pattern as the modern world. More of the population is exposed to modern development which affects their use of leisure time. The whole society consists of various groups. It is the same situation that Europe faced at the beginning of the industrial revolution. Some people work for more than 10 hours a day for the whole week while others do not work or do not have adequate qualities to be employees. These individuals in return require some time to recreate their energy and enhance their mental, moral and psychological feelings. People need to participate and use their leisure time in the pursuit of useful hobbies, physical activity, and things they like and enjoy. They may select activities according to their desires as a means to express themselves and maintain the necessary balance to preserve their personality and identity as a human being, but to be aware of the many of the attractive vanities of this world which are but nets set by the Evil One (Satan) to deceive men. The only thing real and lasting is the Good Life lived in the Light of Allah .

Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from God and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of God). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception? ²⁷

In practice the people of Saudi Arabia use some of their leisure time by, for example, playing on children's play equipment like the swings. Some others practice activities like fishing, picnicking and sitting. Families stayed close to their cars which were used as a screen for privacy, for providing shade, as sitting place (see figure 4.2).



FIGURE 4.2 *Some visitors use their cars as three-dimensional screen to create an enclosure space for privacy, shade and sense of territory*

Some families spend their leisure time by clustering on the side of pavement where their cars park in alignment along the pavements (see figure 4.3). The use of leisure time varies between sitting, walking, watching, swimming and picnicking. People in Saudi Arabia were able to spend their leisure time participating in the hobbies of hunting and camping where they meet together and in spring (March, April and May) go hunting in the desert or mountains, for native birds such the *Ghata* and *Gamaries* . Others spend their leisure time fishing, visiting relatives and friends or playing some

traditional games, such as *rallyy*, while their children go to play in groups, and some of the women are busy carrying out household activities.

It is worth mentioning that many Saudi people are confined to more home-based activities such as watching the television, watching video tapes, or reading. It has been noticed that this is a universal trend, and that watching television and listening to records amounted to more than 90 percent of population's as total time participation in recreational activities.²⁸ Nahass mentioned that watching television is the most participated in leisure activity among both males and females. This could be attributed to the lack of sufficient, adequate and suitable outdoor recreation and public entertainment in Saudi Arabia, as well as to some other social and physical aspects such as the hot and arid temperatures in some cities of Saudi Arabia.²⁹

In the 1940s, the use of leisure time in Jeddah, for example, before the demolishing of the wall that surround the whole city in 1947s, was very simple and had more contact with nature. The bad traditional pattern of spending leisure time for instance was by *Al-Muzmar*, (men-dancing around a fire) - this sort of dancing is not compatible with Islamic Shari'a, since it is played around fire, which is *Majous'* worshipping fire.

Al-Gal, or *Riri'e* (like cricket) was a good traditional game to spend the leisure time. Some Saudi families used their leisure time for boating to island (*Sanabic boats*). They visited the seaside in groups, and took with them their music instruments, such as the *Al-Rababah* (drums). Some others visited the Coffee houses (*Ghawa*).



FIGURE 4.3 *The use of the pavement side to spend leisure time. The garbage collector has been used to provide the second three-dimensional screen for privacy purposes and the sense of being within an enclosed space.*

One aspect of the use of leisure time is the participation in special occasions, for example at a marriage, feast, celebration or party. The celebration or feast is an Islamic occasion which occurs twice a year. Special places within the urban fabric of the city were devoted to special occasions such as *Al-A'ayd* as outdoor recreational places.

The other traditional pattern of spending leisure time is in the places called *AlMarabba'ats* which are places for recreation spread all over old-Jeddah. The *AlMarabba* is a small house which consists of one or two rooms and a *hush* (courtyard), a place for kitchen works and a small toilet. These important places were used for leisure time. The ultimate aim required from environmental designers is to provide more enjoyable, beneficial and adequate outdoor recreational facilities, that enhance the mental, psychological and physical fitness of participants, to achieve "A healthy mind in the healthy body".

The uses of leisure time depends, to some extent, on each individual or group's income, age group, or occupation. How time is used depends in part upon the number of people in various age and activity classes and upon what the typical person in each class does with his leisure time. Besides that the use of leisure time is matched by how an individual perceives the nature of leisure itself. The time of leisure is abundant and predictable from the annual holidays, the weekends, and the evenings after work, but the use of this free-time is not available to everyone. For example young mother's leisure occurs in lesser quantity, often in brief spasms and at unpredictable times. While for other members of the family, the use of leisure time depends on recreational opportunities where the single man can, for example, schedule his weekend or free time as he pleases.

The amount of leisure time varies with each individual and stage of life. Figure 4.4 shows a typical profile of leisure time related to age and gender in the USA, which may be used to help formulate public policy on the type, location, and responsibility for providing various types of outdoor recreation opportunities. For example, time budget studies in the states indicate the average working adult has approximately five hours of free time per average day of which it only one hour is spent in outdoor leisure. The remaining four hours are spent watching television and in other leisure activities that take

place indoors or around home. Of the 1.4 hours of free time spent in outdoor leisure, approximately 0.1 hour is spent in local public outdoor amenities with the remaining time, 1.3 hours, is spent in gardening, walking, reading and in conversation. Landscape designers cannot assume people should spend more time in public parks. However they can provide a range of choice in public or private opportunities where people can spend their leisure time as they wish within the boundary of their culture. The planner's task is to translate time into space and encourage home-oriented, commercial, private, and public leisure opportunities that can take place in outdoor recreational environment. The planner should sense the widest range of potential opportunities and design these into the urban environment to provide a range of choice and diversity for leisure time. The city can be designed as a place for work and leisure.³⁰

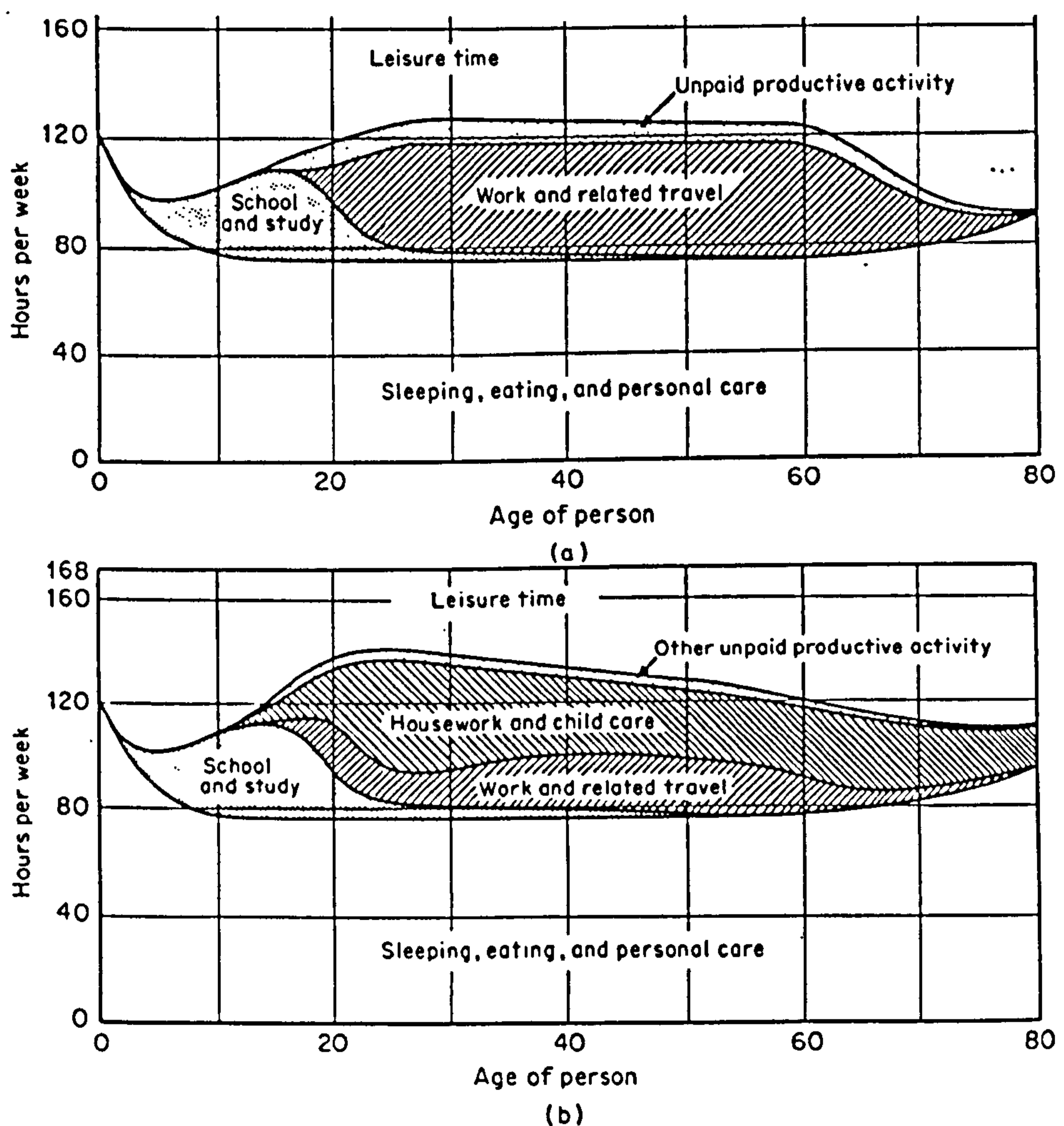


FIGURE 4.4 Profile of leisure time for different groups: how (a) an average man and (b) an average woman (in USA) spends time at various ages³¹

No doubt the use of leisure time differs from one country to another depending on its culture, way of life and environment. The use of leisure time takes place within the total activity pattern of the daily life of each individual. From the daily schedule of a typical Saudi Family (figures 4.5 A, 4.5 B, and 4.5C) and the time-activities relationship for a day in Saudi Arabia (figure 4.6), it is obvious that the early time of the day is for work or school, because (as mentioned before) the government has designated the official working hours to be from 7:30 am to 2:30 PM. Bank hours are from 8:00 am till noon and from 3:00 PM till 6:00 PM. Markets and bazaars stay open until 9:00 PM and some times until 11 or 12 midnight, especially during festivals and special occasions. The rest of the day is free time. The women often spend more time at home (cooking and taking care of children) than the men do because females are mostly do not work outside their realm.

The increased time for leisure and the decreased time for work has encouraged people to be engaged in outdoor recreation which has risen even more. Figures 4.7 gives a graphical picture of the activity of a typical Muslim persons. It is worth mentioning that all the daily activity patterns of families are similar to some extent in utilising the leisure pattern and the time of praying. Five times a day each Muslim over the age of 15 years must pray. Women pray within the house while males are obliged to pray at the near-by mosque.

In the typical household the day begins with the first call to prayer just before dawn. Afterward, the family partakes of a light breakfast and the men and female and male students depart for their work and schools. At home the women, the other children, and the servants will put the house in order and make such preparations as are necessary for the later meals.

The largest meal of the day is ordinarily taken in the early afternoon. In the afternoon, while the men are at work, women frequently visit female friends and neighbours. During the latter part of the afternoon, Saudi men gather with their friends at cafes to take coffee or tea and talk or play cards or soccer games. These sessions may carry on into the evening. Early evening is also a visiting period for men, and during

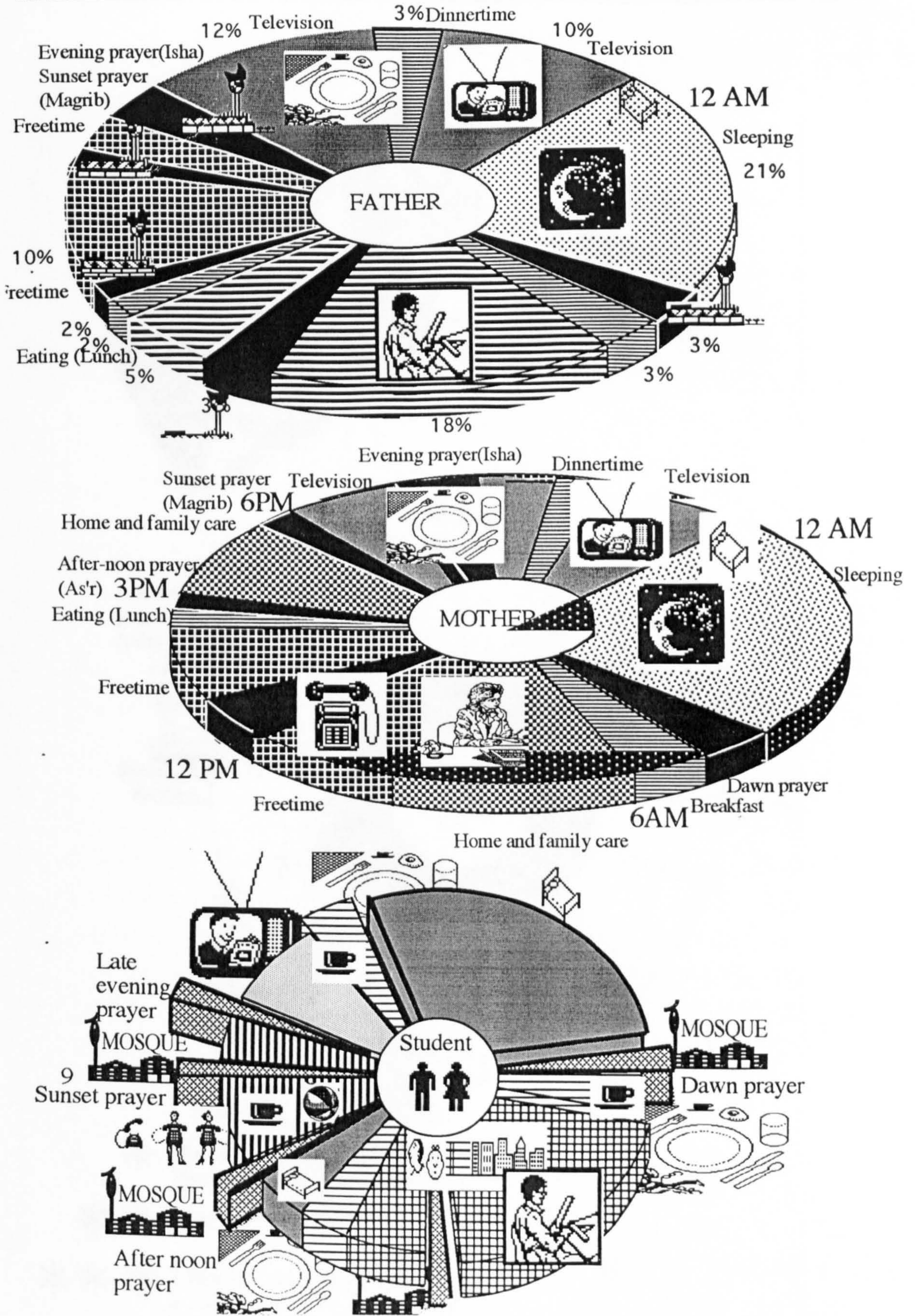


FIGURE 4.5 A, 4.5 B, and 4.5 C Activity schedule for a contemporary Saudi family

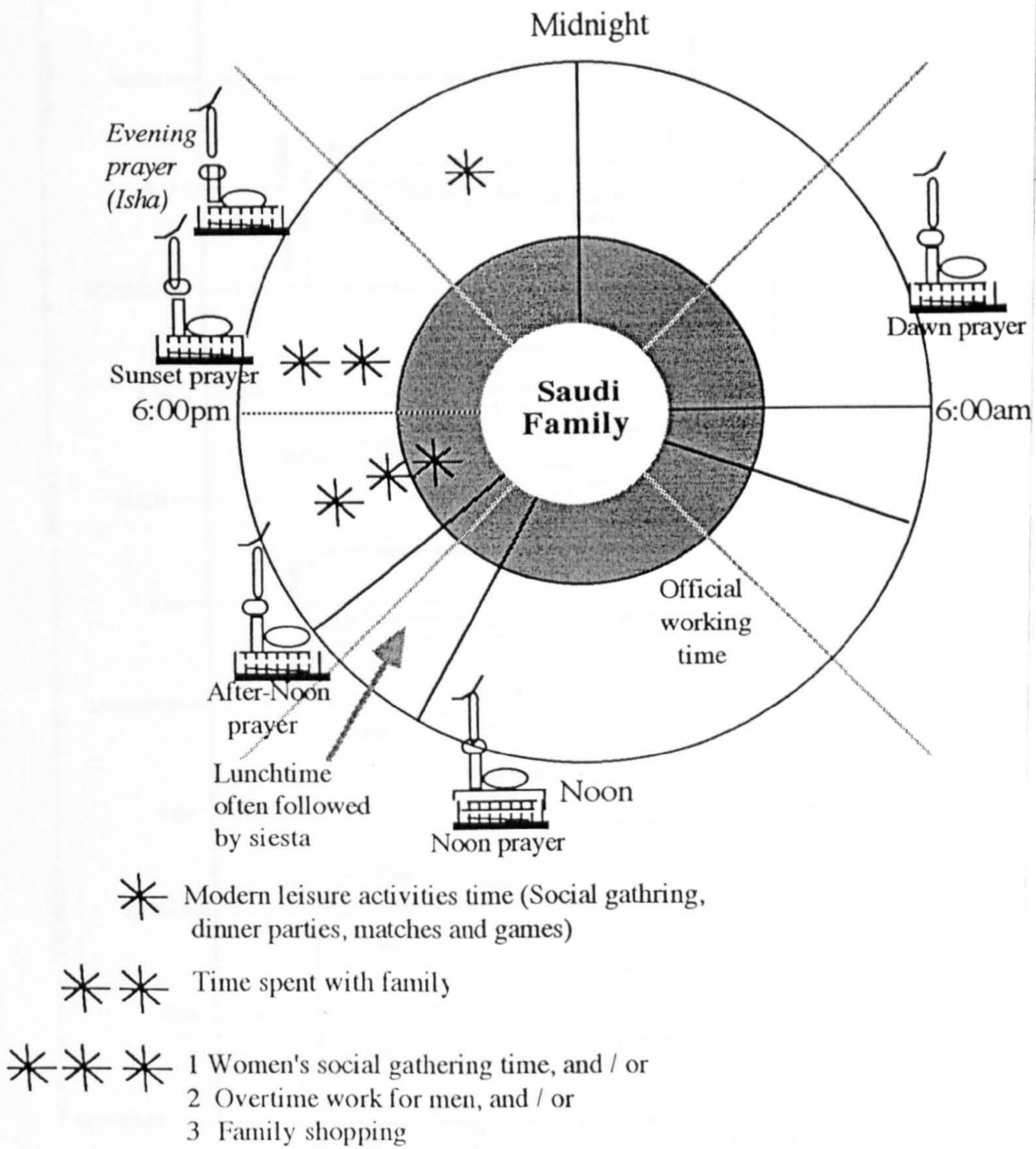


FIGURE 4.6 Time-Activities Relationship for a day in Saudi Arabia³²

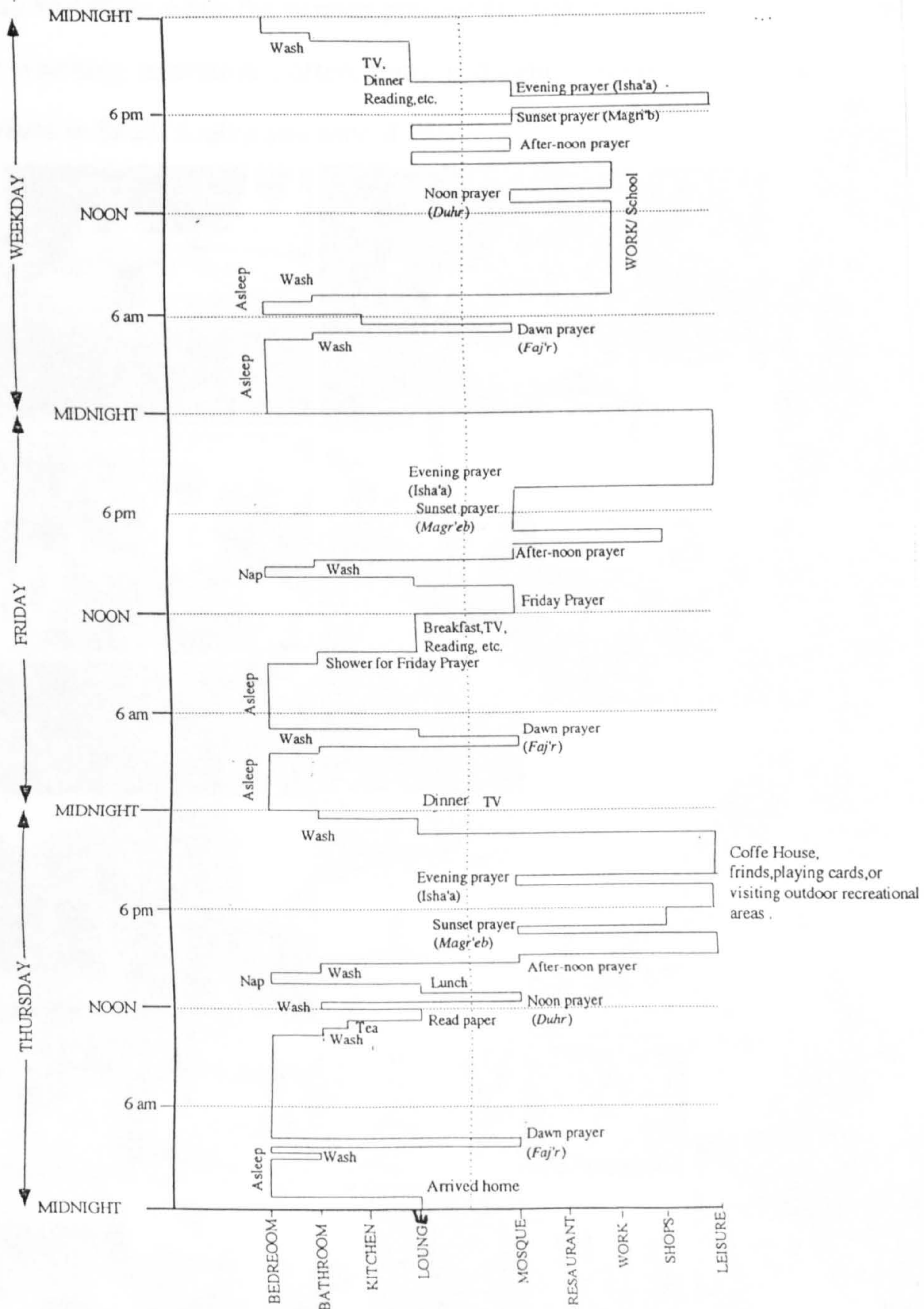


FIGURE 4.7 Activity patterns of a typical Muslim person

USE OF LEISURE TIME IN SAUDI ARABIA

The use of leisure time in Saudi Arabia as mentioned by Al-Abdullah,³³ include using leisure time to recreate themselves by, for example, at weekends or during *Eid* vacations, visiting parks, seaside areas or deserts. When the Saudis go for recreation they usually go in one of three ways: a couple of families together in one group, single-family groups, and bachelors. Each group has its own recreation pattern in terms of shelter, eating and pleasure. The group which includes a couple of families goes for camping for two to three days, bringing tents and picnicking equipment for cooking. They usually look for a place where they cannot be seen, yet where they can see others at a distance to-see-without-being-seen, and they try to maintain their own camping area territory. They spend their leisure time swimming, playing football, cooking, engaging in social interaction, chatting and playing cards (see figure 4.9).



FIGURE 4.9 They spend their leisure time swimming, playing, cooking, engaging in social interaction, chatting and playing cards

The single-family generally goes for a one-day picnic, taking its own food. It also tries to find a place that gives privacy and a sense of being secure. Usually the family has the picnic under shelters or between the car and erected canvas or by driving the car right to the edge of a view point or shore-line to minimise exposure, and provide privacy and shade.

Bachelors and young people sometimes prefer to be far away from families and usually go at weekends or afternoons in groups of friends. They usually sit near the sea shore, enjoying the view of the sea or spend their leisure time playing soccer and volleyball, or fishing and swimming. While some bachelors visit some outdoor recreation areas to enjoy themselves by taking part in prohibited actions such as bothering women for example, or staring and talking in a sexually explicit manner, and sometimes even actually touching the women (see figure 4.10).



FIGURE 4.10 *Some bachelors and young people go at weekends or during the afternoons in groups of friends to bother women and cause some social tensions.*

The habit of segregating of the sexes forms an important tradition or part of Saudi life and governs the conduct of groups and individuals. Habits or tradition, custom and culture, are important factors which affect the use, pattern, attitudes, and behaviour of people, which in turn influence the recreation and leisure pattern (Figure 4.11).



FIGURE 4.11 Privacy issue as an important social factor affecting demand and use of leisure time.

DEMAND FOR RECREATION

RECREATION demand relates to the amounts and kinds of recreation opportunities an individual or population subgroup desires (total) or uses (expressed demand) in a given time period, place, or planning unit. The recreation need is the difference between current recreation demand and the existing use of opportunities expressed in terms of land, facilities, or programs.³⁴ The time available for leisure activity influences the demand for recreation.³⁵ and also influences people's choice of, for example, what to do for recreation, and the related questions of how much, when and where? Perhaps someone plays soccer because he was taught in school, or his friends play it, there is a kick-about or open space nearby, which is open to public. In other words, there may be a whole series of social, cultural and economic factors, as well as opportunities in time and space that affect the demand for recreation. Moreover, the income, stage in the life cycle, regional culture, population distribution, distance and mobility are all important factors which affect the demand for recreation.³⁶

The purpose of recreation planning is to create opportunities for people to engage in activities at specific sites. Planning for a specific site requires estimates of demand to help select the best site and provide the most appropriate type or mix of recreation resources, facilities, and programs. Identification of potential users and a detailed consideration of site characteristics are the basis of demand estimates for a specific site, facility or program.

There are three types of demand which condition the use, design, and management of recreation resources. The existing and future dimensions of each type of demand should be considered in the preparation of recreation plans or the design of projects. The first type of demand is the latent demand. It is the recreation demand inherent in the population, but not reflected in the use of existing facilities. Participation can be expressed, if adequate facilities, access, and information are provided. The second type is the induced demand. It is latent demand which can be stimulated by public conditioning through the mass media or the educational process. Induced demand

exploits latent demand by encouraging people to change their recreation patterns. Finally, the third type of demand is expressed demand. It is consumption or participation in terms of existing recreation opportunities. It describes what people do instead of what they would like to do (latent demand) or can be conditioned to do (induced demand). The differences between expressed and latent demand can also be described in terms of participation and preference for selected activities. Expressed demand is often the expression of latent or induced demand but not always. It only indicates participation at prevailing opportunity conditions and normally omits considerations of price, supply, access, skill, or equipment necessary and user satisfaction with the recreation experience.³⁷

Torkildsen³⁸ mentioned that until now (i.e. 1992) there is “no single theory and no clear consensus exist relating to peoples' needs. In theories of motivation need is seen as a force within the individual to gain satisfactions and completeness. There appear to be many levels and types of need, including the important needs of self actualisation and psychological growth. ‘Leisure needs’ as such may not exist, rather there are human needs which can find satisfaction through leisure opportunity.” One of those needs is the demand for recreation.” If the physical opportunity for outdoor recreation exists, and if people are given a free choice, a large majority of them will spend some of their money and some of their time on outdoor recreation.”³⁹ Saudi Arabia is no exception, the same things, to a large extent, have occurred in Saudi Arabia as the populace now has access to more money, better life, longer holidays, more retirement years, and more mobility. The modern way of life has affected and increased the demand for more and more recreational areas.

The current demand and predicted demand for these and perhaps other recreation activities (including what people would like to do if they were given the opportunity) can be described in a simple way as a continuous and proportional relation with the increases in the society, economic structure and the new electronic innovations that safely allot labour time. It has been sensed that there is a steady growth of all aspects of human life, there will be more people, more income (for some people only), more leisure, more

travel, more opportunity for individual choice and growth and more varied recreational entertainment.

In addition, the demand for recreation increased due to people's conditions, people are becoming better educated, healthier and more progressive. Shifts are therefore taking place in the age of people and their places of residence. The steady movement of people from rural areas to the urban environment means that more open spaces are required to breathe the congested urban fabric to breath, i.e. to ease the congested and more crowded areas or high density urban areas to be more healthier by providing greenery outdoor open spaces. Economic security in retirement and earlier retirement, coupled with a longer life span, are further increasing leisure activity possibilities and creating more and more recreational demands.

In short, there have been a whole series of social, cultural and economic factors which have been and still are influencing the increase in the predicted demand for more modern and adequate recreational provisions.

The *Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission* during the course of the 1960s concentrated on three main factors of variables as being the most important in explaining the behaviour of the mythical average visitors. This also includes the main factors which affect the demand for outdoor recreation, and the leisure pattern attitudes. Ashworth⁴⁰ has listed those three main factors as income, stage in the life cycle and cultural factors that relate to life styles. Because none of these three can be analysed in isolation from space, he adds a fourth factor that will underline the others. This is the distribution of the population, which in turn raises the fundamental question of distance and attempts to overcome distance through mobility, because recreation also means travel.

The demand for recreation and the supply of resources does not often match the right combination and location of those who would use them. "There is a spatial imbalance between the demand for recreation resources and their supply."⁴¹ Figure 4.12 is illustrating the key elements in the demand for outdoor recreation. Those key elements, which represented by rectangle, are growth, affluence, urbanisation, population, car ownership and so on. The figure shows that growth is affected by

affluence, the increase in population and urbanisation. The affluence (prosperity or wealth) can be expressed in the democratisation of leisure, then those affluent increase the mobility masses, the mobility needs spatial interaction for travel purposes. For example, the mobility, as the figure shows, leads to spatial interaction, the spatial interaction can be expressed by the density of travel. Then mobility leads to another key element which is the accessibility which can be expressed by transportation facilities such as automobiles trailers and highways (motor ways) which leads to problems of parking, peaking and aesthetic. These problems as well as other problems of such increased pressure on recreational resources, natural and man-made or problems of availability of data or the problems of largest concentration of people far distant from most extensive resource-based recreational areas leads to the key element of *Research*.

The research in the demand for outdoor recreation leads to projections which requires planning and system analysis. By understanding the previous flow diagram of the previous figure we might be able to know exactly how and what are those significant key elements in the demand for outdoor recreation, its problems, requirements and what are the needs.

Demand for a particular recreation program may be affected by the total number of potential visitors in the surrounding areas, how they are distributed, their socio-economic characteristics, such as age, sex, income and such alike, their tastes and preferences which are in part related to their education, their past experiences, skills in leisure pursuits, and their degree of knowledge about available recreation opportunities. In addition demand for a program or an activity at a particular site will be related to the attractiveness of the site, the quality of the leadership, its location relative to other parks, the capacity of the area, and climatic conditions. "There is probably latent demand for almost every recreational activity provided in a city as well as a demand for those services not provided at all." 42

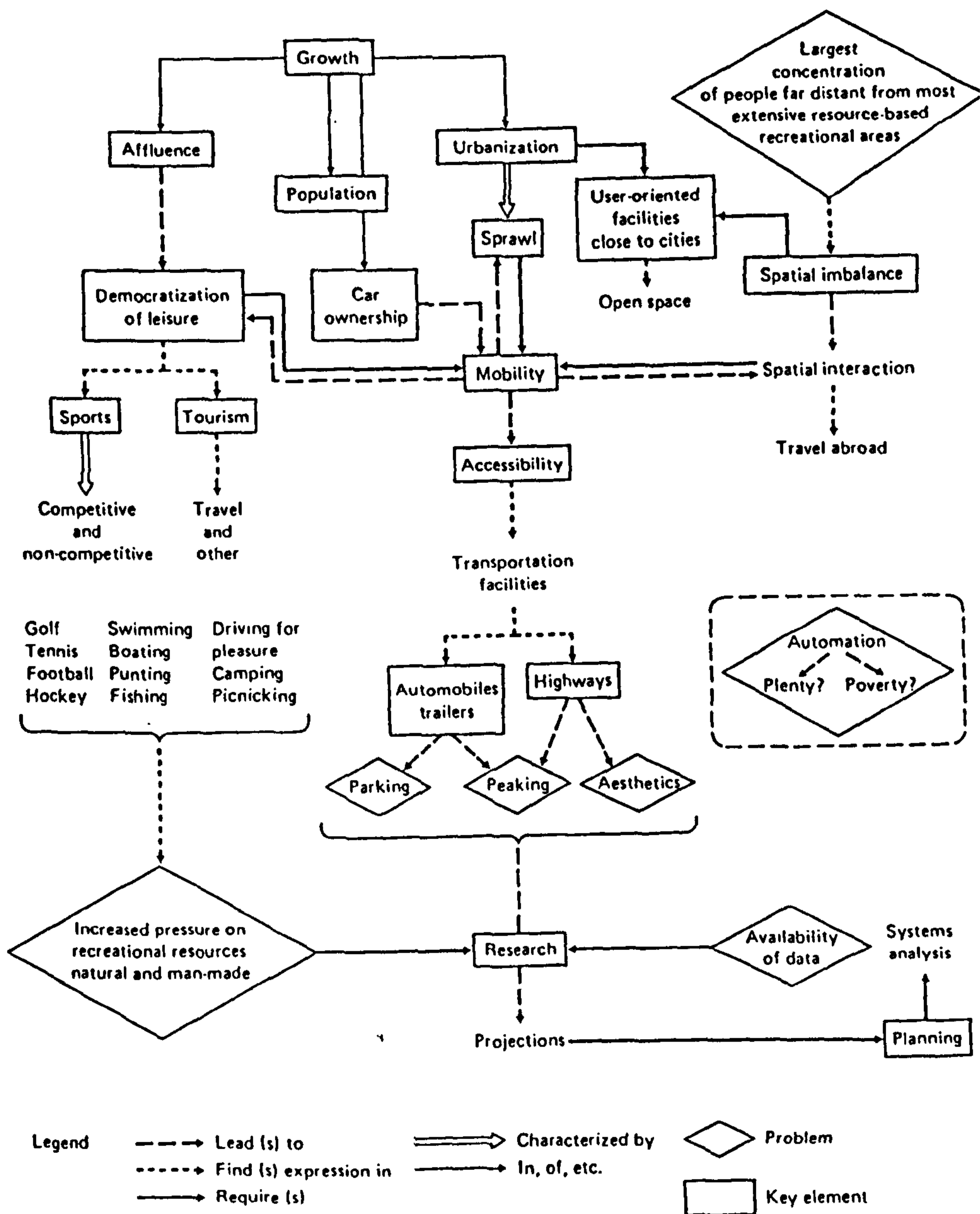


FIGURE 4.12 The key elements in the demand for outdoor recreation⁴³

The demand for outdoor recreation and the space that accommodates the desired choices of leisure is mainly the individual's choice. For example, his or her choice of type of facilities, or user's interests and skill of how to pursue the outdoor recreational activity. The choice is influenced by the expectation of users which is also effected by his/her age, family status, social group, personal taste and education. Pigram⁴⁴ notes that the general upsurge in recreation which has accompanied the increased availability of disposable time throws into relief the various influences and constraints which impinge upon the choice of leisure activities and the demand for outdoor recreational space. Figure 4.13 presents a schematic presentation of the interrelationships between the characteristics of participants and the providers of recreation opportunities within the particular constraints of time, money and space.

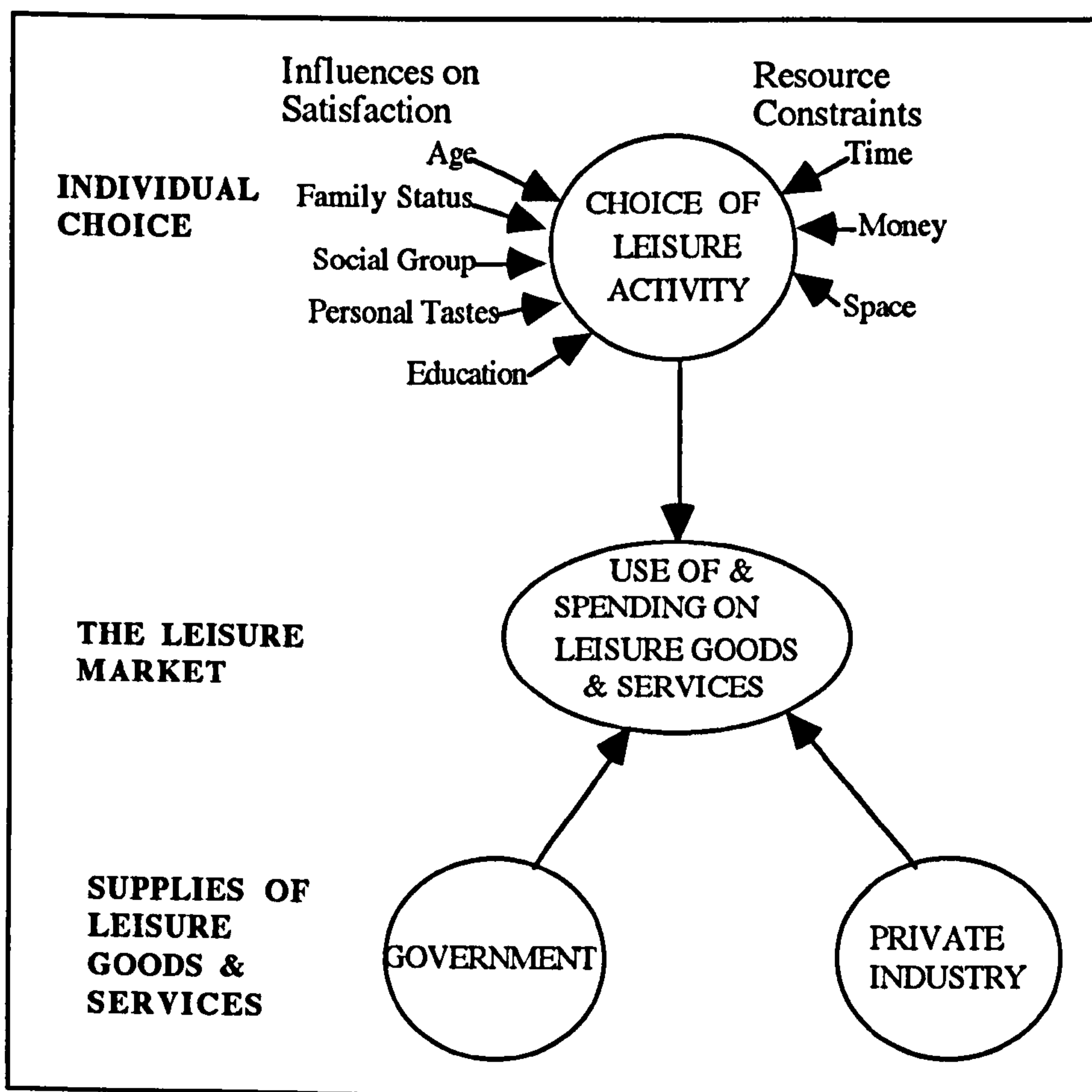


FIGURE 4.13 A Schematic Model of Leisure Choice⁴⁵

Examples of the recreations demanded and activities that people would like to do if they have the choice and the opportunity are as follows, and are taken from the researcher's personal observations and from discussing these matters with some of the researcher's female relatives. Women seek more active rather than passive pursuits, as long as there is separation between genders and privacy can be preserved. Swimming areas for all social and gender classes, physical and athletic activities in an open air environment, and the enhancement of the seaside resorts to fulfil the functions and the supply of recreational experiences (as sensed by the researcher) now demanded, for sunshine beaches and entertainment facilities. Concentrating on serving older people, women, handicapped visitors, and families with young children and those who have neither the financial resources, nor maybe the wish, to travel abroad, but who would make good use of the existing stock of recreational facilities, and call for little new investment within the frame of local culture.

Hendon⁴⁶ has emphasised the importance of estimating demands and the significance of knowing the details of the demands that the consuming public exhibits, because the *wants of the public* are insatiable and are therefore not a sufficient guide for the planners to act. It is necessary to know about *consumer demand* so that people can gain those things desired among those things possible, but consumer demand alone does not tell us what is possible. What is additionally needed is some criterion or set of criteria for efficient park and recreational areas, and the availability of recreation resources.

In the 1970s the Saudi Arabian government was geared to meet the demand of people's for recreational facilities. The dramatic growth in population, the economy, transportation, and education causes a boom in various demands. These included the demand for better environment, for better housing, for better social status and for better conditions relating to comfort and convenience in all aspects of life. The Saudi Government realised the importance of providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, and now most of the Saudi people are given the free choice to spend some of their money, time and efforts on outdoor recreation. At present the demand for recreation in Saudi Arabia is greater than the supply of facilities. "The provision of both open space and recreational facilities is critically inadequate, being less than 1.5 sq.m. per person.

(i.e. 0.4 acre per 1,000 population in the city). The overall minimum urban space devoted to the total of the foregoing recreational spaces ranges from about 3 acres per 1,000 population in the city to a desirable standard of ten acres per thousand persons.⁴⁷ In terms of recreational facilities the current situation is equally critical. While there exist major stadiums for football club use, there are no facilities such as sports fields, air-conditioned gymnasium, sport halls or swimming pools available at a more local level for the pulsating user.”⁴⁸ In fact, the demand for recreation has increased because the total leisure time has increased, as well as because the proportion of leisure time devoted to recreation has also increased.

To put it differently, the demand for recreation in Saudi Arabia is increasing while the scarcity of resources and the lack of adequate design and planning policies are in need to be considered. Deeper understanding of the true nature of recreation demand would throw light on the reasons for non-participation or under-participation in specific areas and activities, and reduce the mis-allocation of resources. It should ensure also that induced demand as a result of additional recreational investment is directed towards remedying these deficiencies. Not only can the supply of opportunities release latent demand and translate it into effective demand, but can be used to manipulate and redirect from one area or activity to another.⁴⁹

PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

THE PARTICIPATION in outdoor recreation activities has changed over the years in a steady and continuous pattern. The typical example of how culture and climate affect the participation in outdoor activities is when Saudi families take trips to open spaces during moderate seasons, especially after rain, when the desert gets some natural green areas. Participation in outdoor recreation experiences carried on within leisure, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant. “Recreation can be viewed as personal experience (*what it does to a person*); as activities (*the forms it takes*); or as an institution (*the structure in which it is made available to the community*). Recreation

can be viewed as a process (*what happens to an individual*), and as a structure (*the framework in which recreation is practiced*).⁵⁰

According to Lansing⁵¹ the variation across communities in participation in outdoor recreation may be attributed, to a large degree, to the accessibility of facilities and to the socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the community resident, and to other environmental factors. Age, for example, is negatively related to participation in outdoor recreation, because here the availability of time, the car ownership as well as disposable income and the new technological facilities make a difference. The older a person gets the more he turns to passive rather than active recreational pursuits. Another variation is the distance travelled to recreation facilities which influences transportation planning. Limited opportunities for recreation within a community will force people to seek different uses for their leisure time within their home, community environment, or travel to recreation facilities throughout the metropolitan area. The latter alternative increases the use of both the recreation facilities and the roads linking the residential to recreational areas. On the other hand, the provision of recreational facilities within a community should reduce travel outside the community for recreation purposes. People who live in planned communities and participate in recreation activities are more likely to find a place within two miles with adequate opportunities than people who live in less planned communities. The presence of facilities near people's homes does have a tendency to lead them to participate more in some outdoor recreation activities.⁵²

Participation in outdoor activities in Saudi Arabia varies between soccer, driving for pleasure, walking, swimming, sitting, and horse riding, which are considered to be among the popular outdoor recreational activities participated in by Saudi males, while the recreational activities that are usually practiced by Saudi females are mainly contained within more secure areas.

The women participation in outdoor recreation areas cause them to be in dangers. Frank and Paxson⁵³ show that in the USA the frequency with which women are approached by strange men when they are attending public urban areas is a less severe determinant than physical attack but is nonetheless significant in women's use of public space. Such approaches range from friendly overtures and harmless exhortations to

sexually explicit comments and actual touching. No thorough or systematic research exists on the frequency, location, or reasons for this behaviour despite the fact it is a daily occurrence in urban settings for many women. . .women were approached twice as frequently by strangers as were men and that the most frequent type of interaction for women were sexual remarks and pick-up attempts. Over a five day period one woman was approached 19 times; 16 of these incidents involved single males and 8 of these were clearly sexual attempts. The hassling of or looking at women is strictly prohibited in Islam, as well as severely limiting their freedom in using outdoor recreational areas in public and limits women's right to use public space undisturbed.

Participation in outdoor activities of Saudi families is often controlled and organised by the head of the family. The selection of place, the time and the recreational and leisure pattern is determined when the head of the family or parents are at home and is due to the limited mobility of women where they must combine *a mahram* (brother, son and husband) during the visiting of any outdoor area. Leisure activities take place within this framework, especially for children and young people.

Many other factors combine to increase participation in outdoor recreation than in the past. As mentioned before the introduction of high employment, and high discretionary incomes has led many Saudi cities to develop their own park and recreation projects. While the rapid growth, poor planning, high land values, escalating construction costs, and the demand for more and more recreational and public services often created difficulties in maintaining the balance between the demand of people and the supply of recreational resources that accommodate people within their frame of tradition and cultural demands. It is preferable to encourage people in Saudi Arabia to tend their movement towards individual participation in outdoor recreational activities and away from interested in mass spectator sports where more people, with the benefit of better education, to do more things themselves rather than watch others doing them, and this inevitably means greater pressure for land for recreation purposes.

The younger age group needs more recreational areas for active pursuits, while older people need more passive or less energetic recreation facilities. As for the very young, they play in the street, in the household or on roof tops, playing with the available

toys such as dolls, stones, bottles, slings, skipping ropes and so on. The point is that Saudi society consists of various age groups and their leisure time is continually growing. Therefore all different age groups need more recreation to accommodate their requirement of the adequate urban open spaces for their young children, and older people need more recreational place that meet their practical and psychological requirements with particular reference to the issue of privacy in outdoor recreational spaces and places.

In addition, women's use of public space in Saudi Arabia was mainly restricted to passive outdoor activities such as sitting and watching the surroundings, without giving them the chance for suitable provision to allow them engaging in the more healthier activities such as swimming, running and playing without bother from others, either physically or socially. Because the intention is to be emphasise and encourage the active and healthier environments rather than passive participation in outdoor recreation with the adequate degree of privacy and safety.

It is often found that some Saudi families recreate themselves in open desert areas, over a hill, next to trees, shrubs or a bank of Wadi, under highway bridges, where they find shelter and shade, or around any accessible natural barriers that provide them with some sort of privacy and the sense of personal space and territory. If they do not find a vertical dimension, they use their car(s) as an alternative to form vertical screening. "Policies of provision appear in some cases to discriminate against women (e.g. male-dominated activity programmes). This being the case, it could lead to even greater dissatisfaction at the current patterns of supply and corresponding high levels of demand. A thoughtful and forceful study of women's leisure experiences in Sheffield illustrates the damaging influences upon the leisure potential for women. The constraints and social controls on women's freedom to spend their leisure time as they may choose can be seen as a direct result of the operation of economic, political and cultural forces, which exemplify the oppression of women under capitalism."⁵⁴

SOCIAL BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

THE BENEFITS of outdoor recreation might increase the demand for more and more recreational facilities. When some one get more educated and knows that outdoor recreational activities will increase his performance, refreshing his body, more beneficial to his mentality and physical appearance, he might demand for more outdoor recreational areas.

It is an important issue that all relevant public agencies provide resources for outdoor recreation, because it is a common desirable need among people to visit recreational resources. This includes access to, and opportunities for, recreation at lakes, rivers, mountains and forests, deserts and beaches. "In 1981 on over a billion occasions, individuals or groups (in USA) invested time and money to get to such public recreation sites for a day or longer. There is no lack of evidence that people use outdoor recreation resources when they are available."⁵⁵

The complexity of assessing recreational benefits begins with the phenomenon itself. Why do people decide to participate? The reasons for this vary with the kind of activity, companions, environment, and factors specific to the situation, demographic and social factors. The anticipation of definite outcomes is a major impetus in attracting participation. There are, however, other types of benefits as well. These might include behavioural changes such as improved health or job productivity, the preservation of the resource from more destructive uses, and also economic reasons and enhanced family solidarity. In short there are many personal, social and economic benefits that are essential to enhance and to improve both the nature of man and the nature of the environment. The adequate recreation provisions will promote beauty, comfort, health and convenience for the whole society.

Kelly⁵⁶ notes that there are many social benefits from outdoor recreation which can be summarised as follows:

1 Outdoor recreation fosters and facilitates psychological outcomes to present them in a relatively straightforward manner. For example, outdoor recreation contributes social

benefits by the demonstrated interaction potential of outdoor recreation settings for families enhances the communication, coherence, and enjoyment of the social system.

2 A high degree of consistency has been found that related to particular activities made possible by the resource. These outcomes are defined as indicators of psychological outcomes that lead to changes in behaviour, personal development, and a sense of well-being.

3 Common to all outdoor recreations are relationships with nature, escape from social pressure, and contact with the recreation group, escape from physical pressures and learning/exploring. The benefits of physical fitness and exercise and family togetherness are reported for most activities. In general, there are many types of psychological benefits reported such as:

- (a) Developmental: learning and exploration with longer-term skill and self-definition consequences;
- (b) Health: fitness benefits from involvement in the outdoor environment as well as rest and relaxation;
- (c) Mental health benefits: outdoor recreation outcomes (feeling and enjoying the happiness of the outings) provide a reprieve and relief, renewal from problem of stress and its emotional and physical components such as pressures and sadness. Indoor and outdoor recreation both have major satisfactions related to social interaction and physical health;
- (d) Child development, family benefits and social cohesion are all enhanced by outdoor recreational benefits. The social and environmental contexts combine to give enhanced opportunities for human growth and identity development. *"There is evidence of increased marital satisfaction and familial coherence from such joint recreation. Leisure has been found to contribute to the development of familial intimacy, trust, communication, and stability. Outdoor environments provide a special set of opportunities for such development."*⁵⁷ People enjoying companionship and building relationships, especially with family. The adequate outdoor recreational provision might encourage people to socialise together, playing various games, which in turn increase the ties among different people to be happier and more co-operative;
- (e) Social Cohesion: Outdoor recreation research shows evidence of the high levels of satisfaction obtained and the significance of social relationships. It is a societal that contributes to social integration between individuals; and
- (f) Environmental benefits: The experience of being in a natural setting is a benefit in itself. Outdoor recreation participation may produce an awareness of the ecological interdependence of existence, i.e. resource-based outdoor recreation provides a context of behaviour that takes account of and is directed toward the natural environment with the potential of altering future attitudes and behaviour. Evidence of

the relationships of environmental attitudes and outdoor recreation participation indicates that such resources are one factor in attitudes favouring concern with the long-term effects of human intervention, as well as the awareness of adequate management of land for recreational use being maintained and preserving it from serious degradation by other users or by inadequate landscape design and planning.⁵⁸ The experience of being in natural environment being separated from back-home pressures will increase and enhance the physical fitness of users and give them better chance for exercise and family togetherness as well as many psychological benefits for them.

The benefits of outdoor recreation are far more profound than merely escape and feeling better. Outdoor recreation research shows evidence of the high levels of satisfaction obtained and the significance of social relationships. Outdoor recreation, for the most part, involves getting away from pressures and other people, with selected companions. Those companions, family and intimate friends, are the primary relationships in which a sense of security, self-expression and integration with social world may take place. The outdoor resources provide a context for the development and enhancement of those primary relationships in ways that make the experience is the basis for the network of relationships outward to the social institutions that hold the society together. "Evidence that outdoor recreation opportunities are special in the experience of participants is not to be dismissed simply as insignificant "fun." Rather, it is in such experiences that enhanced realisation of personal and social development has been documented. Outdoor recreation environments are demonstrably special and the experiences made possible by those environments are highly valued because of their contributions to the lives of participants".⁵⁹ The previous points can be considered as among those principles to bear in mind during planning, designing and management of outdoor recreation resources.

The demand for recreation is expressed by certain activities that people pursue or wish to pursue. Those activities require various sorts of resources, which in turn can be effected by site requirements and market locations. There is a relationship between site resources and site location characteristics and both need to be taken into account in determining the supply of facilities. Recreation is a social activity. Policies with demand

for recreation should be considered as an element of social policy and site-specific development which in between them identification, measurement, and projection of the demand prompts choices or trade-offs between the types, quantities, and general location or access of opportunities. It requires recreation planners and designers to know or find out what people want, and what opportunities would best satisfy these wants.

This aspect of recreation demand requires decisions on (1) categories of resources, facilities, or programs to be provided (2) strategies for assessing responsibility, cost, and operation, (3) implementation programs or priorities, and (4) the geographic distribution, access, and effectiveness of recreation resources for general and special populations. It is important for public agencies to provide the previous four points for recreation at the site. Figure (4.14) illustrates that in spite of the lack of the sense of being in secure or articulated spaces, people use what is available. In addition, the picture shows how different visitors group apart from each other for privacy purposes.



FIGURE 4.14 *Jeddah's Corniche lacks adequate recreational provision for families.*

In order to achieve most of the above mentioned benefits the outdoor recreation provision must be based on three main ingredients - within the framework of local culture and traditions- to be successful. These are good location, buildings and appropriate provision of high quality facilities providing people with what they want and an attractive landscape setting. Adding to that, the overall provision must avoid being devoid of function, adequate and functional screening that satisfies users as well as landscape planning and design concepts. The desired benefits might be achieved by establishing a landscape design that performs passive, active and aesthetic values in which it is promoting a sense of well-being, enhancing personal performance and contributing to the maintenance of the balance among all different social, economical and physical landscape aspects and elements. The success of the landscape project might be achieved by the successful interaction between the work force and the environment within local culture.

In conclusion, the demand and supply of outdoor recreation is determined by the effect or the relationship between leisure provision and leisure use. The demand for recreation has increased because leisure time has increased, rising in disposable incomes, rising educational levels and mobility, and also because the proportion of leisure time devoted to recreation has increased. What is needed from authoritative bodies is outdoor recreation provisions which are rendered and shaped in balance and harmony with the locality. It seems that there is a continuous demand for more outdoor recreational areas, facilities and new or innovative enjoyment that copes with modern life. Significantly, the supply of outdoor recreational provisions must be in balance and comprehensively adequate to suit the existing pressure of the demand for outdoor areas. The need is for more adequate planning and design of recreational resources with minimum physical or social problems.

The next chapter will explore some of the main recreation resources in Saudi Arabia: their main characteristics, a description of some typical sites/areas, size, natural and man-made features, the way the site/area is used and its organisation and management.

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5

CHAPTER 5

Recreation Resources In Saudi Arabia



5

Recreation Resources In Saudi Arabia

"What appears to have happened is that an increasing number of people have achieved a degree of economic security that has liberated them from an obsessive concern with income, with a consequent increase in the importance of non material needs -(spiritual and soul)- the need for a sensitive and responsive material relationship."¹

RECREATIONAL PROVISION

O pportunities to establish new public outdoor recreational areas are rare and it should be necessary to make the most of the spaces that already exist.

Recreational provisions are a valuable feature of many towns and city's overall urban fabric. The main types, sizes and shape, as well as the typical sites of recreation resources, their density of use, nature, man-made features, organisation, physical and landscape spatial structure and management will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will provide the main characteristics of recreational resources in Saudi Arabia. It will illustrate who owns and manages sites, the way sites are used and their main landscape features. Frank and Paxson ² provided some useful suggestions to assess the characteristics of public open spaces pertaining to provision and management, which might include the name of the type of space and the reason for its development, "What a space is called reflects what the providers of the space envisioned and strongly influences how it is designed and, subsequently, how it is used. The name, in part, defines what the space is for and what behaviours are expected and accepted in it."³

Recreational provisions have been established mainly for recreation, entertainment, education, commerce, health, setting a building apart, "cleaning up" a deteriorated area, or providing a visual amenity and pleasure. Some public recreational areas were intended to be used primarily for one purpose or may be temporarily transformed for other uses: block parties, large street festivals or open markets.

Saudi Arabia, as any Islamic country in the Middle East, is concerned with provision for recreation and sport. The reason behind is to safeguard the health of the citizens and to preserve their physical fitness, to improve the strength of personality and self discipline in their spirit, and to provide them with a proper means of spending their leisure time. Recreation resources were mainly intended to improve the health or job productivity of people, as well as the preservation of the resources from more destructive uses, enhance family solidarity and economic benefits.

Klein and Taboroff⁴ argue that "Saudi Arabia has built a much-admired mix of local, regional and national parks in the past decades; they provide the country's inhabitants with verdant scenery and easily accessible recreational opportunities". This is a Western point of view and it contrasts with what some indigenous people have said about recreational resources in Saudi Arabia. For example, Al-Hussien⁵ notes that many gardens have been abandoned for a variety of reasons, most of these reasons are the lack of suitable location, or deficiency of safety and psychological seclusion. He then mentions the importance of privacy in urban parks as a determining factor influencing the use, behaviour and leisure pattern. Both opinions are in some degree right, for while there are some high quality landscape projects which were designed for the major cities or for special quarters, such as the Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh and the King Fahad Garden in Taif city, there are also some poor quality landscape projects. Examples of the last include some public areas and urban gardens within the city that reflect only the grid-pattern, with row of trees and fences and which are over-looked from near-by houses. The missing point is balance and the integration of the existing recreational resources to suit all classes of local people, and to help build up the human beings' physically and psychologically. That might be achieved through the combination of physical exercise and cultural and recreational activities. Recreational areas and leisure complexes can be grouped into several categories depending on the natural resources available and the pressures of the demands placed upon them. Demands stem from the attractions of the recreational places and their accessibility and proximity to the people, as well as their layout and system. The recreational resources can be described in terms of determining characteristics of recreational open spaces and their use. Public outdoor recreation spaces

should be accessible to all people, that no one—because of physical ability, gender, cultural or ethnic background—should be excluded because of some aspect of design.

RECREATION RESOURCES IN SAUDI ARABIA

In the late 1970s, the world-wide national park movement reached the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom established a policy to maintain a system of parks and reserves in various parts of the country, implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture. The purpose of the policy is to assure that the significant scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Kingdom are identified and afforded protection for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Asir National Park and Thamama National Park are typical examples of that policy.

In examining Saudi Arabian policies for the provision of recreational resources, one may get an impression that overlapping or mixes of various recreational sites, make it difficult to categorise each space. The point is that, most recreational resources were distributed on sites all over the areas which make it very difficult to categorise particular areas according to specific conceptual framework of public outdoor recreational areas, which make it, also, difficult to know what the site was to be used for. The common factor that many recreational resources ought to have is the experience of maximum qualities. The aim should to provide access and opportunities for the maximum number of people, while at the same time ensuring environmental protection and satisfying their various physical and social demands. The point is, as mentioned by Lawson⁶, that "the planning problem is to weigh conservative values (tradition and local culture) against development suitability and against the recreational needs of the neighbouring population, the density and the location of facilities in national or regional parks are largely dictated by circumstances and policies."

Each recreational provision is to be distinguished according to what type of opportunities it offers, active or passive or both, the overall layout, organisation of its soft/hard landscape elements and how all physical structures are composed to facilitate

people's needs and way of life. Table 5.1 represents general classification of outdoor recreational uses and resources.

TABLE 5.1 GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL USES AND RESOURCES⁷

Item	Type of recreation area		
	User oriented	Resource based	Intermediate
1. General location	Close to users; on whatever resources are available	Where outstanding resources can be found; may be distant from most users	Must not be too remote from users; on best resources available within distance limitation
2. Major types of activity	Games, such as golf and tennis; swimming; picnicking; walks and horse riding; zoos, etc.; playing by children	Major sightseeing; scientific and historical interest; hiking and mountain climbing; camping, fishing and hunting	Camping, picnicking, hiking, swimming, hunting, fishing
3. When major use occurs	After hours (school or work)	Vacations	Day outings and weekends
4. Typical sizes of areas	One to a hundred, or at most to a few hundred acres	Usually some thousands of acres, perhaps many thousands	A hundred to several thousand acres
5. Common types of agency responsibility	City, county, or other local government; private	National parks and national forests primarily; state parks in some cases; private, especially for seashore and major lakes	Federal reservoirs; state parks; private

Saudi Arabia's varied environment consists mainly of harsh desert, with the exception of the mountain and oasis areas. (see Chapter two) The *Rub al-Khali*, the Empty Quarter or Great Sandy Desert in the south, contrasts with the moderate and cool mountain villages in *Asir*, near *Abha* in the south-west. The mountains rise from the Red Sea to the west (*Sahal Tahammah*) with gradual smooth slopes of hilly sand dunes. The four major geographical divisions of the land are known by descriptive names: the *Najd (highland)*; high country in the heart of Saudi Arabia; *Al-Hasa*, (sandy ground with water), or Eastern Province, the sandy and stony eastern part of the country, *al-Hijaz* (barrier) an elongated shelf region along the upper Red Sea coast; and *Asir*, the difficult area, in the southern Red Sea-Yemen border area.

Increased prosperity, a rising demand for new houses and outdoor recreational areas, the ability to afford finer materials and the introduction of foreign styles have introduced changes in Saudi outdoor recreational resources. The modern technology, ideas and oil revenue has had its effect on Saudi recreational provisions.

EXAMPLES OF RECREATION RESOURCES IN SAUDI ARABIA

THE MASTER PLANS aim to provide an integrated land use and transportation structure and various standards of recreational resources in Saudi Arabia to accommodate the growth and demand of the city development.

The provision of recreation resources was marked on the master plan. This was divided into two levels. First, the local recreational spaces within the communities, and the other, is the major recreational spaces on the city level. The local recreational resources or open spaces were identified in the master plans and reports sited to be within walking distance of all houses. It has been proposed the provision of one hectare (2.47 acres) per one thousand residents for local recreation space, about 10m² for a person. Within each city in Saudi Arabia there are various small gardens, some vacant or undeveloped open spaces where social life takes place. They include street corners, sidewalks, paths connecting buildings and some mini parks (one to three house-lot-sized parks) for children and some family use.

The major recreational resources were identified in the master plans to be as large as possible. Those major open spaces or city-scale outdoor recreational areas were provided by three main areas to be preserved such as seaside areas, natural forest and large park areas. The next section will illustrate the main recreational resources in the four provinces of the Kingdom.

THE MAIN RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN NAJD

West of the sands of the *Dahna* lies Najd, the heartland of Saudi Arabia. About 200 miles (320 km) wide. Najd is the core area of Saudi Arabia. It has a common frontier on the north with Iraq and Jordan; on the east with al-Hasa; on the south, across the Rub al-Khali, a boundary in dispute with the Aden Protectorate and Oman, and on the west, indefinite borders with al-Hijaz and Asir. This area is a plateau gently sloping eastwards from 5,000 feet (1500m) on the west to 2,000 feet (600m) on the east. It is dominated

by several escarpments which are steep on the western side with gentle eastern slopes; among them are the 500 mile long *Tuwayq* Escarpment (780 km) and the Aramah Escarpment. The *Tuwayq* Escarpment has an average elevation of 2,800 feet (840m) above sea level with a maximum of 3,500 feet. (1050m). The top of the escarpment is about 800 feet (240m) above the level of the plains to the west. Sedimentary formations that outcrop along the eastern watershed of the *Tuwayq* Escarpment include the water bearing strata that support irrigation works of important agricultural areas on the plains to the east, such as al-Kharj. The Aramah Escarpment, about 1,800 feet above sea level, is less imposing; it is only about 400 feet (120m) higher than the plain to the west of it.

The annual rainfall is 4 inches (10 cm). The temperature represents the desert conditions which are very hot and arid in summer and very cold in winter. It can rise to 46 °C during the summer. Thus the *Najd* area in the summer is very hot but winters are far cooler with temperatures, falling to 4° C. This allows seven months of acceptable weather conditions but the remaining are so hot that the pouring of concrete is often restricted to night time. Diurnal temperature variations are as much as 25° C. A ten degree variation between shaded and exposed areas makes any kind of shade giving device extremely valuable. People have been known to run from one shaded area to another to escape the hot sun. Trees with small leaves such as *Acacia* may give inadequate shade and are sometimes supplemented by old rags.⁸ Examples of recreational resources with desert climates include those found in Riyadh.

The degree of overall provision in Najd is related to its area, population and economic situation. The capital city of Riyadh with over 2 million inhabitants was located in the middle of Najd area. The overall area of Riyadh is about 600 square miles (1,600 square km.). The building boom in the capital was caused by a very rapid expansion in population and a great deal of building had to be done in Riyadh. In addition, the government sought to supply many recreational resources such as public gardens, national parks and community open spaces.

SAIAH PARK IN RIYADH

Saiah Park currently under construction, is an urban park owned by the government. It is located 1.06 mile (1.6 km) from the centre of Riyadh. It is within easy daily visiting distance. This site is in a proper location for a recreational park near the city centre and is considered to be one of the main projects designed for the city

This site will serve the adjacent residential areas, especially southern Riyadh's Quarters which lack big parks. It reflects a satisfactory visual experience with its palm groves and green areas. The recreational resources were located at the eastern part of the site along the Makkah motorway. There are places for recreation such as the 'Amusement and Recreation' area. This is called *Utaiqah* park. It was established in 1983.⁹ The park is often used during special occasions.

The Municipality of Riyadh established Saiah Park to meet the increased demand for urban parks. The planning concepts, layout and characteristics were evolved around the preservation of the ecological setting of the area. The planning follows ecology-oriented procedures which call for a minimum of man-made objects in the site. The layout of the park follows the natural contours which allow walkways to be winding and the imposition of some strict geometrical shapes

There are some commercial uses within the site such as stores, shops, a fuel station and residential use, as well as some schools and mosques. In addition the site is covered by a number of agricultural plots. Date palms, alfalfa and vegetable farms are irrigated by ground water obtained from wells by pumps.

Land topography at the site is even in general. Land level differs between the surface of the site and the bottom of the Wadi Hanifah. This difference in level varies between three and four metres. The soil is mainly clay mixed with sand and gravel. Layers of lime rocks appear on the surface of the soil. The sub-surface layers are generally solid rocks which dominate the whole site and the Wadi Hanifah. Water resource was obtained from a number of water pumps for pumping underground water for irrigation and other uses.

The major landmarks are the water wells located at various points, the castle located on *Khashalila* Road a mud tower located centrally on the site. There is also a mosque that rises up to meet the horizon line.¹⁰ Family park objectives were to confer freedom, maximum comfort and privacy for the families during recreation. 59% of the visitors wanted the park to be divided into two parks: one for families and the other for bachelor males, and to provide play opportunities for children without their interfering with the families' privacy. The following 'Space program relationship diagram' (figure 5.1) illustrates the main landscape design concepts of the picnic areas.

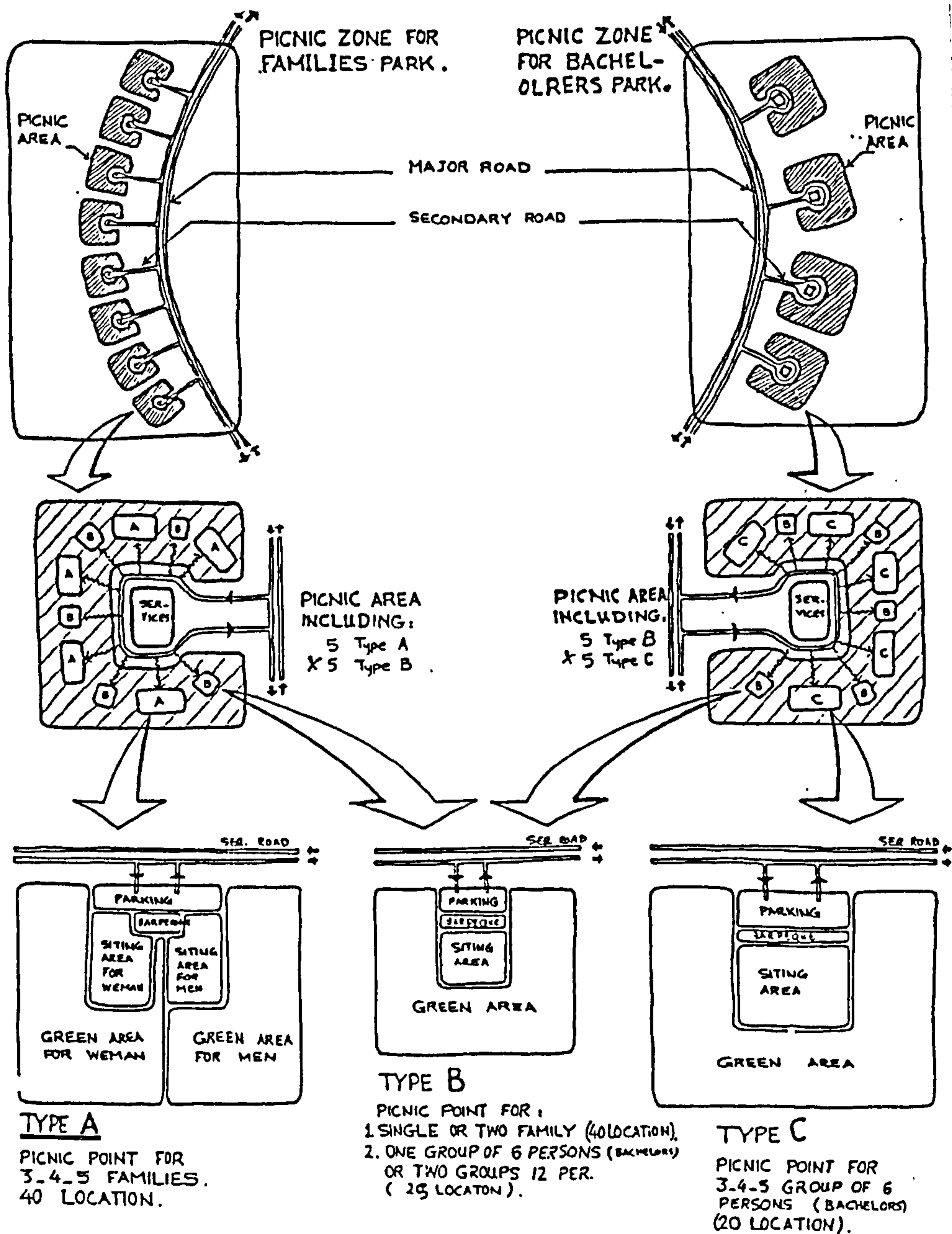


FIGURE 5.1 Space concept diagram of picnic areas at the family's and bachelor's park.¹¹

The planning and design concepts of the park represent it as a neighbourhood park. Its location, development and use have been zoned as an open-space system for the city. Its layout was characterised by natural vegetation, and some man-made plantations with picnic areas.

The enormous development of Riyadh in all aspects has intensified the demand for urban parks. This has resulted in affecting the purpose and function of recreational resources. In addition, certain social problems have been observed by ¹²Al-Hemiddi in some urban parks. He notes that the rapid growth of population and of development has created social and environmental problems, such as: mixing between men and women in the existing parks, particularly in the family picnic areas, contrary to Saudi culture; the absence of essential services and facilities in parks providing shelter during noon times, toilets and difficulty in circulation as well as the lack of various clubs, educational and recreational centres. From a landscape architectural point of view, this park, to some extent, is a poor design concept that did not take into consideration the needs and demands of local society. There is a failure to use local materials such as rocks, sand, clay blocks and palm fronds and there is no allowance for future expansion. In fact, this park lacks the diversity, redundancy which allow a variety of opportunities. The diversity and redundancy of facilities will provides the necessary activities for personal choice and leisure enjoyments. Although there is some successful outdoor recreational landscape design such as the Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh.

THE DIPLOMATIC QUARTER (DQ)

One of the recent significant developments of landscape planning and design of an innovative park is the Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh. It is a good example of a positive approach to recreational resources provision. It is a laudable illustration of how the landscape can be adequately integrated into the existing environment using limited site resources which it has carefully utilised. "The Diplomatic Quarter contains one of the highest concentrations of excellent quality landscape designs in the world today, all work outside the embassy grounds should demonstrate the Islamic way of life and religious

beliefs".¹³ It is important to provide such a project not only to give a portrait to 'foreign people' but also to the general public who are in need of adequate recreational resources. The green areas occupy 30% of the Diplomatic Quarter. There are 23 gardens with a total area of 128 acre (52 ha). In addition, the overall park has total area of 78 acre (32 ha).¹⁴

The project was established when it was decided to move the diplomatic capital of Saudi Arabia from the old Red Sea port of Jeddah, which was the centre for foreign missions and diplomatic communities until the year 1975 to the capital (Riyadh), was taken in 1985.¹⁵ In 1975 the Council of Ministers headed by the King decided to relocate the centre to the administrative capital of Riyadh.¹⁶ A government Bureau was set up to administer the project. This was built up around three Saudi engineers, with expatriate personnel hired as experts and advisers. The site was built over a flat plateau of limestone hammada above the major Wadi (dry valley). This Wadi divides one side of the site into bays through the erosive action of tributaries. The site as a whole is roughly triangular with motor ways bounding the other two sides (Figure 5.2 and 5.3).

According to Filor,¹⁷ the managing consultants, appointed in May 1977, were Speerplan of Frankfurt, in partnership with Heinle Wischer of Stuttgart and Rhein-Ruhr Ingenieur-Gesellschaft of Dortmund. Bodeker Boyer Wagenfeld & Partner (BBW) of Dusseldorf acted as landscape consultants to the master plan team. The final report was submitted to the Bureau in May 1978.

The Master plan covers 586 hectares of land. It is 8 km from the city centre of Riyadh. The elevation is about 640 metres above sea level and the average gradient is about two per cent. Geologically, the Riyadh limestone has good bearing capacity and, because it is highly stratified, is capable of use by the landscape architect in the formation of natural looking steps and terraces.

The concept of the Master Plan of Diplomatic Quarter was based on a linear development to be accessible from the city and the other parts of the Kingdom. The topography and its accessibility have influenced the overall plan. The linear concept was represented by two spine boulevards running from north to south. Between the two are the residential and embassy buildings and areas. The individual embassies are located on

the two outer sides. The roads running east to west are intended to link the two central spines which divide the central area into a number of blocks. The roads were planned to minimise the negative effects of wind, dust and sand storms. The sequences of different spaces, plazas and landscape areas create the traditional atmosphere of older settlements in the Najd area. A typical example from the Diplomatic Quarter is the 'Riyadh Diplomatic Club'. The firms Otto and Omrania, in 1980, became partners for the project. The new partnership is responsible for the implementation of the ideas and principles of the design philosophies.

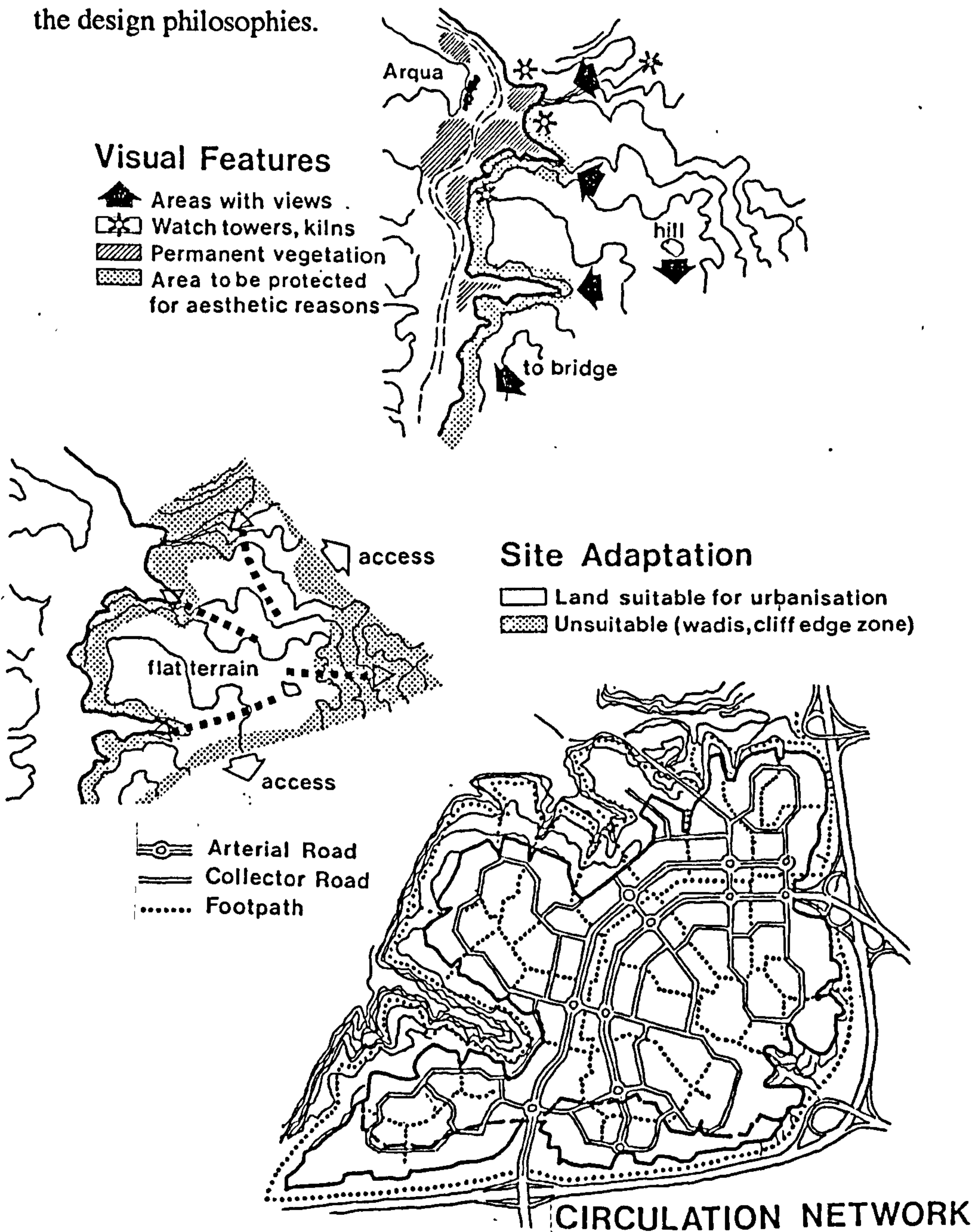


FIGURE 5.2 The Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter (DQ) Plans.

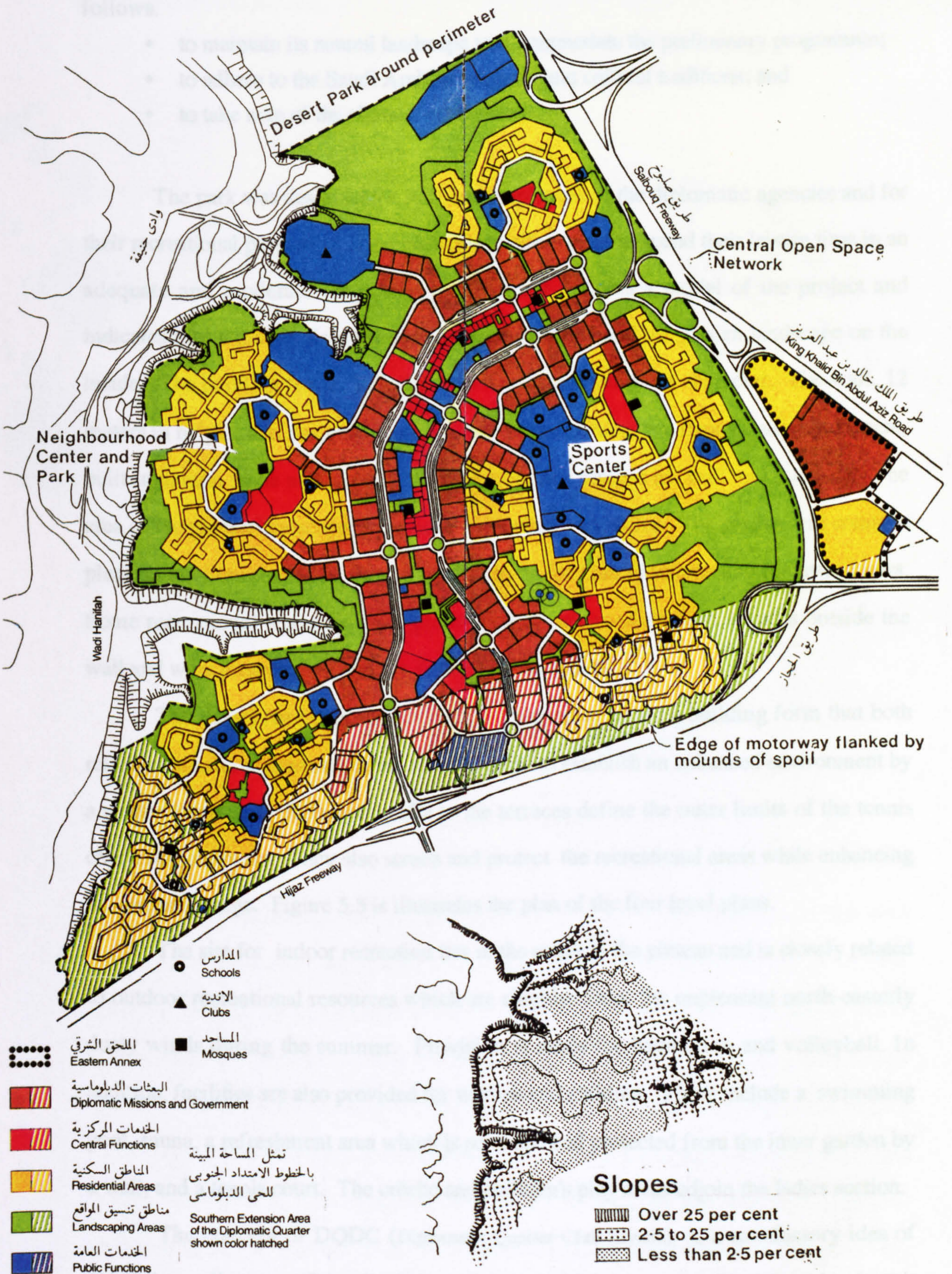


FIGURE 5.3 The Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter (Master Plan)¹⁸

Albena¹⁹ notes that the broad principles identified and agreed upon were as follows.

- to maintain its natural landscape to accommodate the preliminary programme;
- to adhere to the Saudi Arabian religious and cultural traditions; and
- to take note of the climatic environment.

The park was designed for staff and employees of the diplomatic agencies and for their recreational purposes and amusements to allow them to spend their leisure time in an adequate and moderate environment. Figure 5.4 shows a model of the project and indicates it as a mainly desert landscape on the outside and the garden landscape on the inside. The building forms, linked by the wall, are tradition in character. The wall, 12 meters in height, was designed in such a way as to function as a strong unifying element, built in natural stone and generating protection, and screens as wall and building. The area of the garden landscape is provided with shade structures. The garden will create a pleasant environment. The uses of it were to be for club functions and fantastic views. Some recreational resources were planned on the series of stepped terraces outside the wall and were protected by *elegant desert rose* structures.

The *desert rose* concept has been developed to create a building form that both reflects the natural character of the site and helps to establish an enhanced environment by a garden landscape. Retaining walls to the terraces define the outer limits of the tennis courts and car parks. They also screen and protect the recreational areas while enhancing the stepped image. Figure 5.5 illustrates the plan of the four level plans.

The site for indoor recreation lies to the south of the plateau and is closely related to outdoor recreational resources which are shielded from the unpleasant north-easterly dusty winds during the summer. Provision is made for badminton and volleyball. In addition, facilities are also provided for women and children. These include a swimming pool, sauna, a refreshment area which is screened and protected from the inner garden by a wall, and a tennis court. The crèche and children's play areas adjoin the ladies section.

The concept of DQDC (Diplomatic Quarter Club Riyadh) is a satisfactory idea of using the wall as a unifying landscape element which integrates all various landscape elements and patterns to reflect the desired degree of protection from the harsh arid and

hot environment. The wall also provides a circulation and space articulation route linking the various club functions.



FIGURE 5.4 *Model of the Riyadh Diplomatic Club²⁰.*

The Diplomatic Quarter can be considered as community urban open space with neighbourhood outdoor and indoor recreational spaces. The physical layout and the landscape features are a good example of an understanding of the local traditional forms of recreation that response to various factors such as culture, topography, climate and vegetation which were a successful integral part of the landscape planning and design.

Open space was seen as an essential part of the plan and had been integrated with the built development. The design of the extensive landscaping area aims to link the new development to the adjacent Wadi both visually and environmentally while providing facilities for outdoor activities, which are not found in many of the designated public

parks in Saudi Arabia. It included a plan to provide a pedestrian network to connect the Wadi with the neighbourhood housing and to contain sitting-play- and picnic-areas, sports facilities and examples of semi-natural habitats. These habitats were to include flat and dune arid areas and wet oasis-like areas so as to introduce a wider range of native plant species. In fact the overall features represents that the planners and designers have been given a great care to respect the traditional social and cultural values of the local people, especially with respect to family privacy.

Upper ground floor plan

مسقط الطابق العلوي

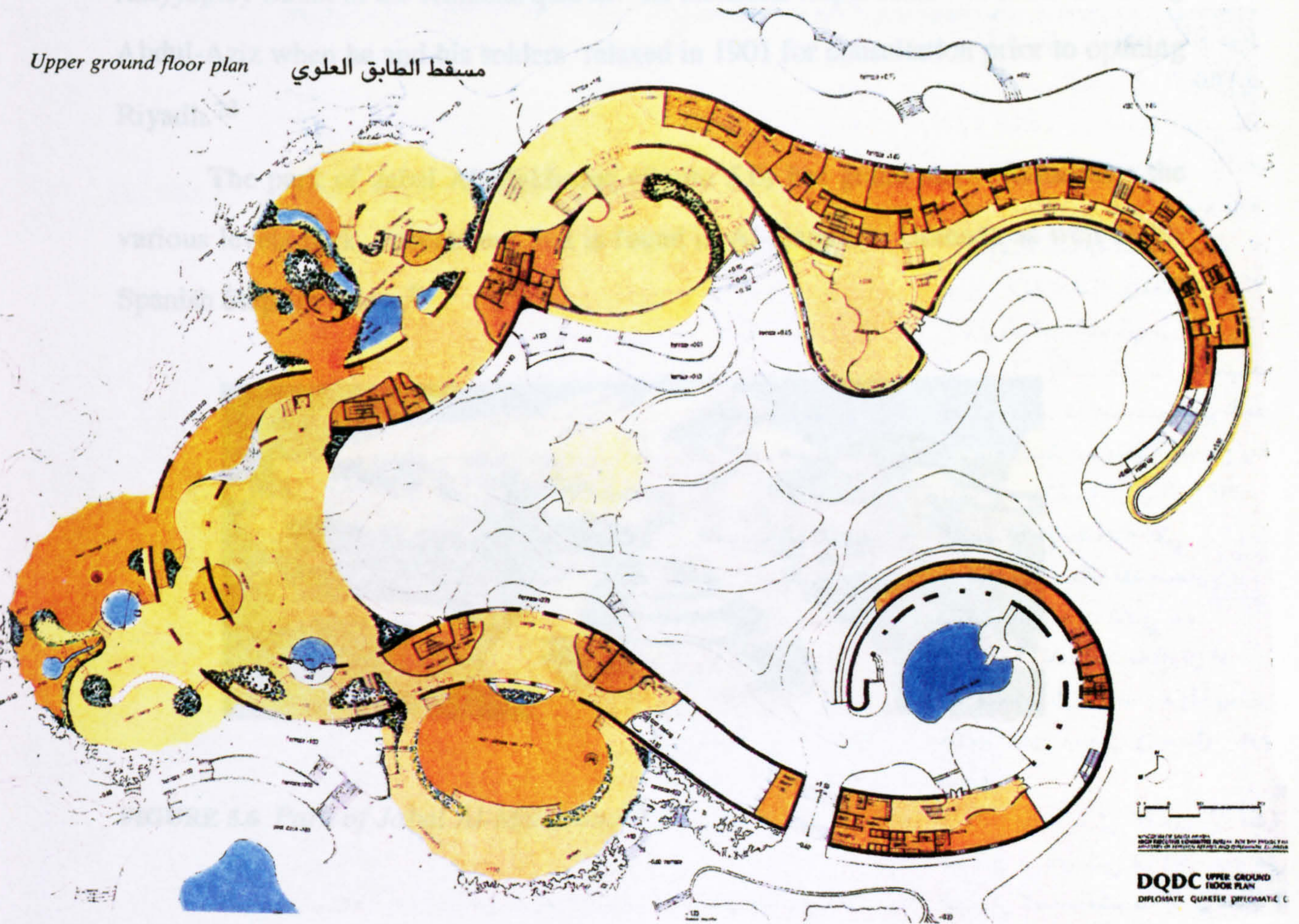


FIGURE 5.5 Diplomatic Quarter Diplomatic Club Riyadh(DQDC)²¹

One final thought concerns the future of Wadi Hanifah. This beautiful natural feature plays an extremely important role in the environmental quality of the Diplomatic Quarter in terms of aesthetics, recreation and climate amelioration. It is not in the ownership of the Diplomatic Quarter, however, and so any long-term changes are not

their control. It is gratifying to know that a study of the Wadi is being carried out by the RA-Riyadh Development Authority (ADA) to encourage a long-term environmental strategy for this important landscape feature.²²

PARK OF JABAL AL-MAKHROUQ

A neighbourhood park in Riyadh located in the middle part of the city. It was opened in 1979 with an area of 10 acres (4 ha) This park was overlooked by *Salah-ul Dien Alayyopiey* Street in the Almalaz quarter. Its historical importance was related to King Abdul-Aziz when he and his solders relaxed in 1901 for consultation prior to opening Riyadh.²³

The park of Jabal Al-Makhrouq (figure 5.6) has grand stairs connecting the various levels park, a treatment that is found in Al-Hamra in Granada as well as the Spanish Steps in Rome.²⁴



FIGURE 5.6 *Park of Jabal Al-Makhrouq*²⁵

The main contradicting feature of Jabal Al-Makhrouq is the exposure of families to one another and that has been, to some extent, overcome now by the existing trees which have grown to a level that allows privacy to be achieved in some areas.

In Wizarat, Al-Rabwa, Salah Al-Din and Al-Rawdah parks the fluctuated (wavy) lines of Baroque architecture and connections of levels by steps are used in the layout of paths and plants. According to *Albenaa* magazine²⁶, some of the park's design concepts

were copied, to a large extent, from Olmstead's Park of New York (Central park) or Boston where design imitates nature (figure 5.7).

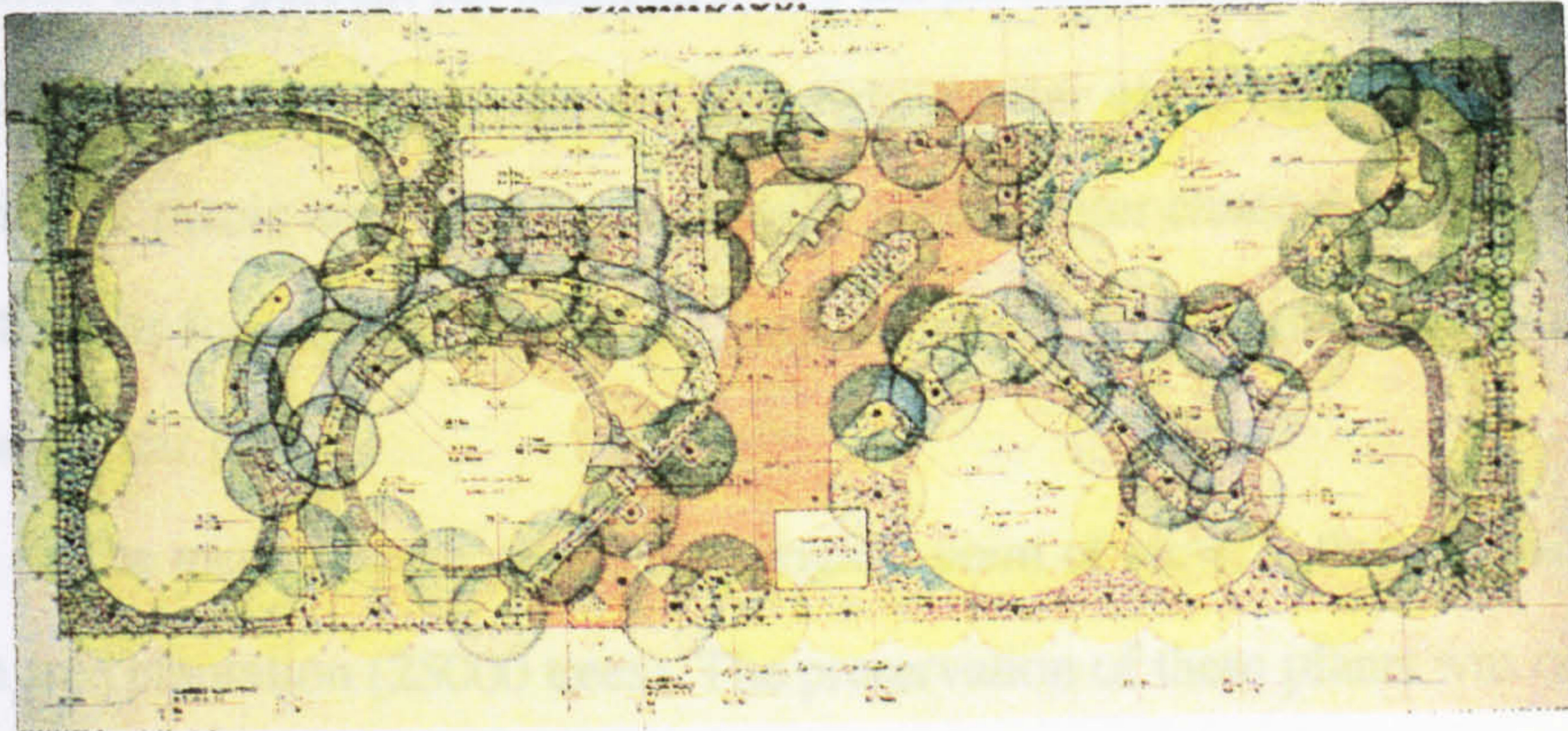


FIGURE 5.7 *Master Plan of Al-Sala park*²⁷

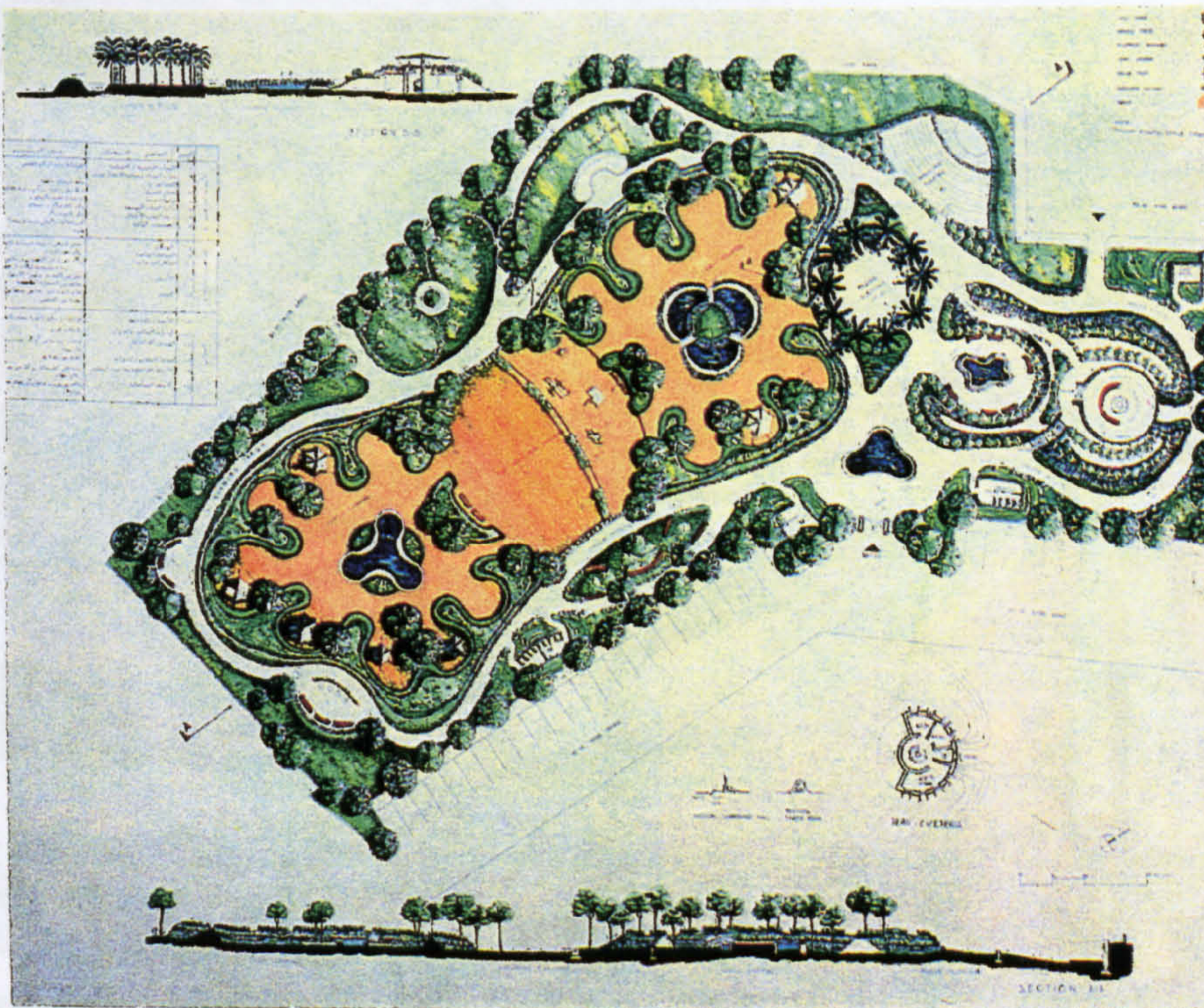


FIGURE 5.8 *Master Plan of Al-Wazarat park*²⁸

AL-SUWAYDY

Al-Suwaydy Park covers an area of 25 acre (10 ha). Of this area, sixty percent is for families, thirty percent for bachelors, and ten percent for administration. It was opened in 1983 and is located in the Al-Suwaydy quarter at the southern part of Riyadh. It consists of picnic areas, playgrounds, play fields, water channels and services. The park has 40 tents for visitors, restaurants, and children's playgrounds and 19 tents to provide shade for car parks.

The main feature, from an ecological point of view, is that the park was a private palm tree plantation (25000 trees). The preservation of these plants was one of the major aims of this project. The picnic areas are covered by light tensile structures surrounded in some areas by walls to provide privacy for families and the atmosphere of the traditional way of tent camping (figure 5.9). A landscape feature of water was introduced to the park in the form of channels crossed by bridges.

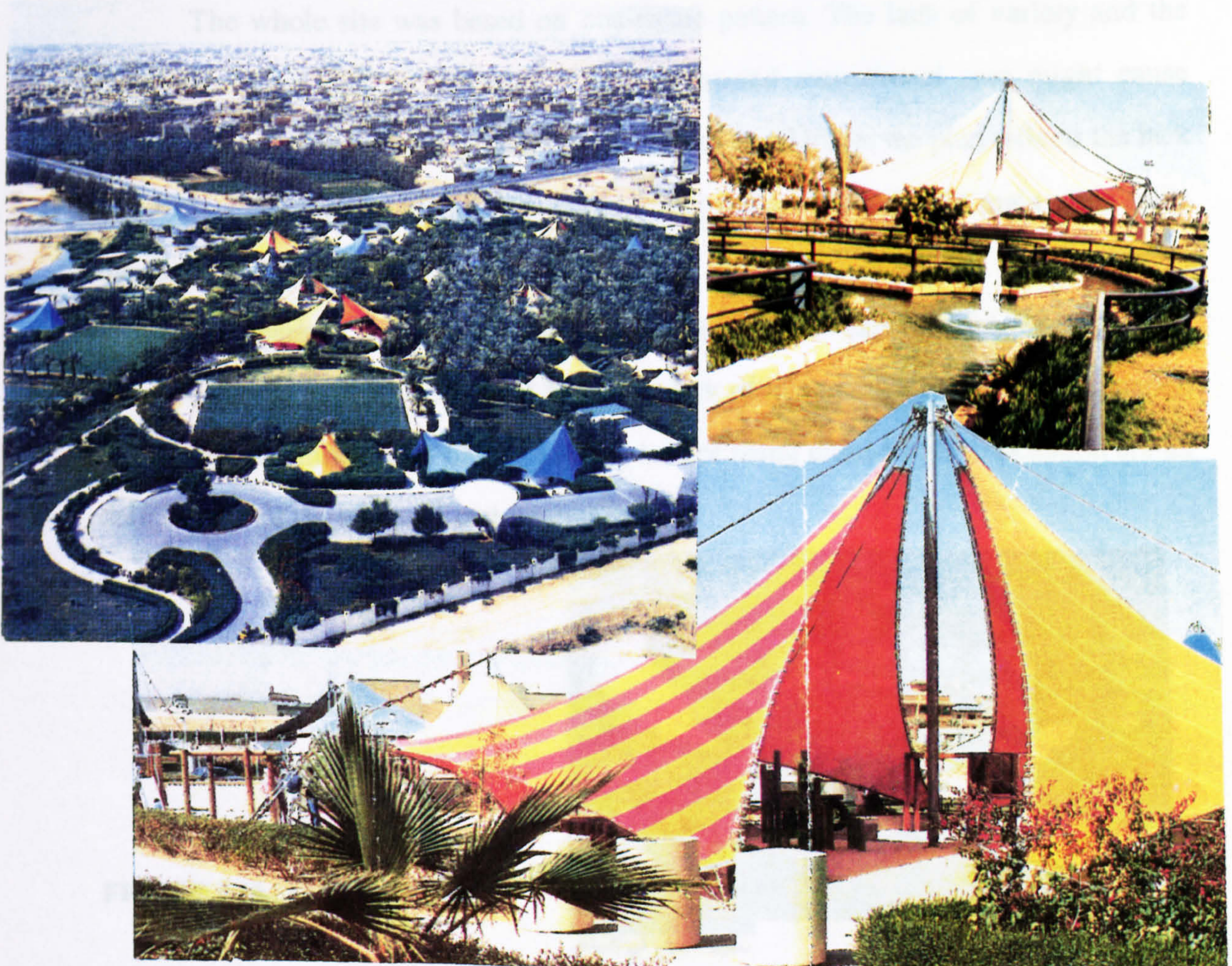


FIGURE 5.9 Al-Suwaydy park²⁹

AL-HEZAM PARK

The park's total area is approximately 42,000 sq.m. (ten acres or 4 ha). It is located to the west of the city of Riyadh, on Prince Sattam Ibn Abdulaziz street. The park consists of playgrounds, picnic areas, pools, waterfalls and a service area. The overall recreational resources and patterns (figure 5.10) are irregular but parts of the layout are geometrical circles. Segments of circles are used in delineating the various activities in the park such as paths, playgrounds, play lots and sitting areas.

The design pattern consists of the geometrical shapes of circles overlapping each other. The main toilets are located outside the main park recreational areas which might make it very difficult for women, the disabled and children to have easy access. It seems the designers were fond of playing with patterns that were not consistent and were not functional or integrated to represent a meaningful adequate landscape design.

The whole site was based on one-shape pattern. The lack of variety and the inadequate approach to providing a well-organised recreational area might cause disorientation in the private spaces and territories. In addition, the plan reflects the lack of a main spine and the hierarchies of pedestrian paths. The lack of a main spine splits the park into two unrelated areas.

This park as well as others in Saudi Arabia fails to express patterns that reflect people's leisure pattern and way of life. The lack of integration of geometrical shapes, the lack of the imitation of nature, and the lack of using multi-levels' conception are all deficiencies in the layout of paths and plants.



FIGURE 5.10 *Al-Hezam park*

حديقة الحزام في الرياض

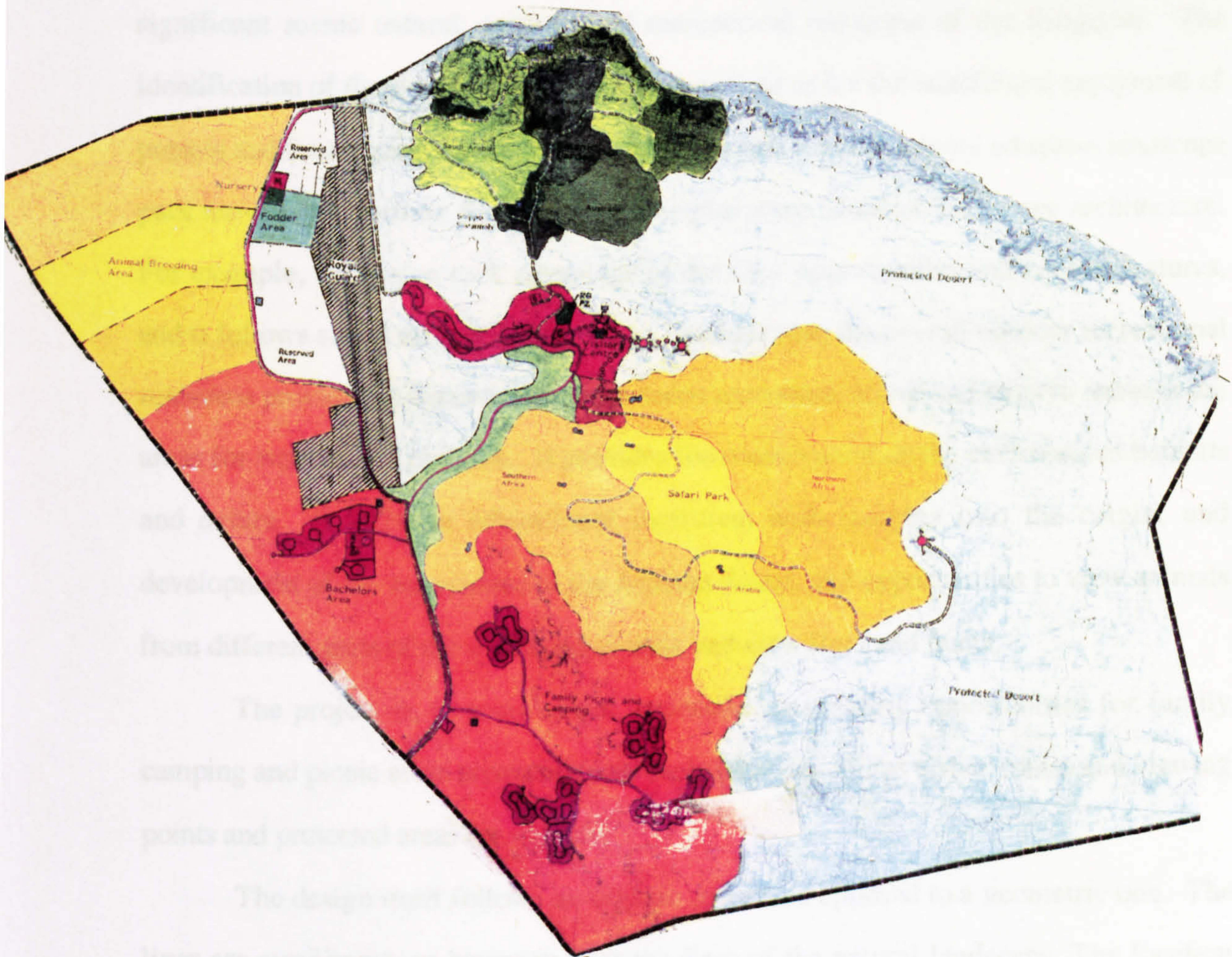


FIGURE 5.10 *Master Plan of Al-Hezam park (continued)* 30

THAMAMA NATIONAL PARK

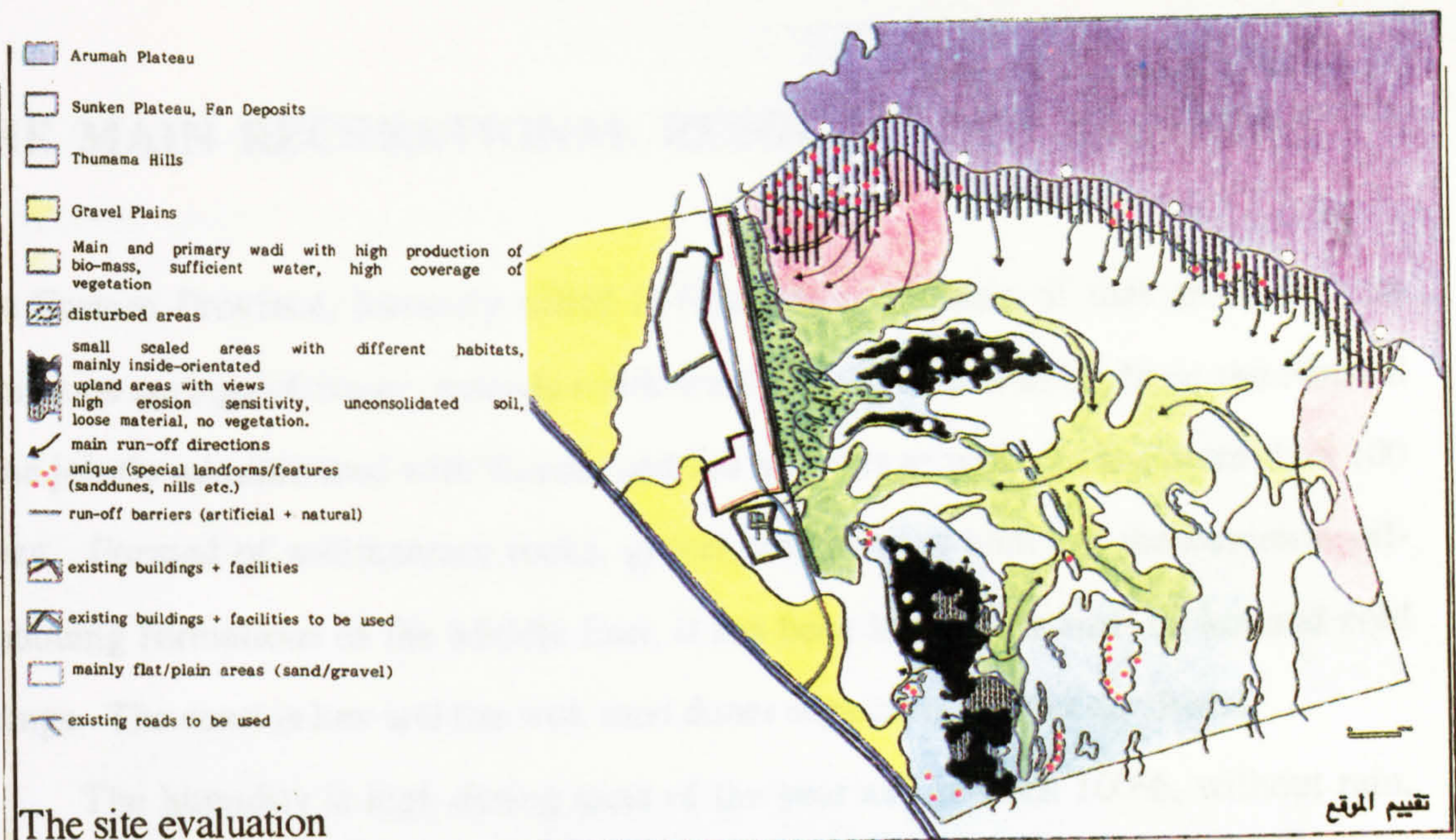
The high committee of the Riyadh city development supervised the Al-Thamama desert-park which is located about 85 km north of Riyadh, with an area of 59302 acre (24017 ha). The main purpose in developing this park was to establish an outdoor recreation provision with all necessary facilities and services. The planning and design of Thamama national park emphasised preserving and maintaining the natural environment of the site. The other purposes of the park were for education and wildlife, to widen the understanding and concerns of citizens to preserve and comprehensively understand the nature of desert and maintain its natural beauty.

Thamama National Park was succeeded, to some extent, in preserving some significant scenic natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Kingdom. The identification of these will protect the nature, as well as for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. It is a good approach towards a more adequate landscape park movement, because the planning principles were based on landscape architecture. For example, the design took advantage of the sites' opportunities and natural features, and it follows sound ecological principles. Besides that, the overall outdoor recreational resources provide the desired traditional desert recreation, active and passive recreational areas for women and children. It provides for conservation of the environment habitats and nature. It includes educational facilities, with insights into the origin, and development of the ecosystems of the Arabian desert, and opportunities to view animals from different parts of the world and to walk and view flora and fauna.

The project is, to some extent, successful in creating opportunities for family camping and picnic areas separated from bachelor areas. It has visitor routes and viewing points and protected areas for wildlife.

The design itself follows an organic pattern as opposed to a geometric one. The lines are curvilinear, in harmony with the lines of the natural landscape. The location offers a wide variety`

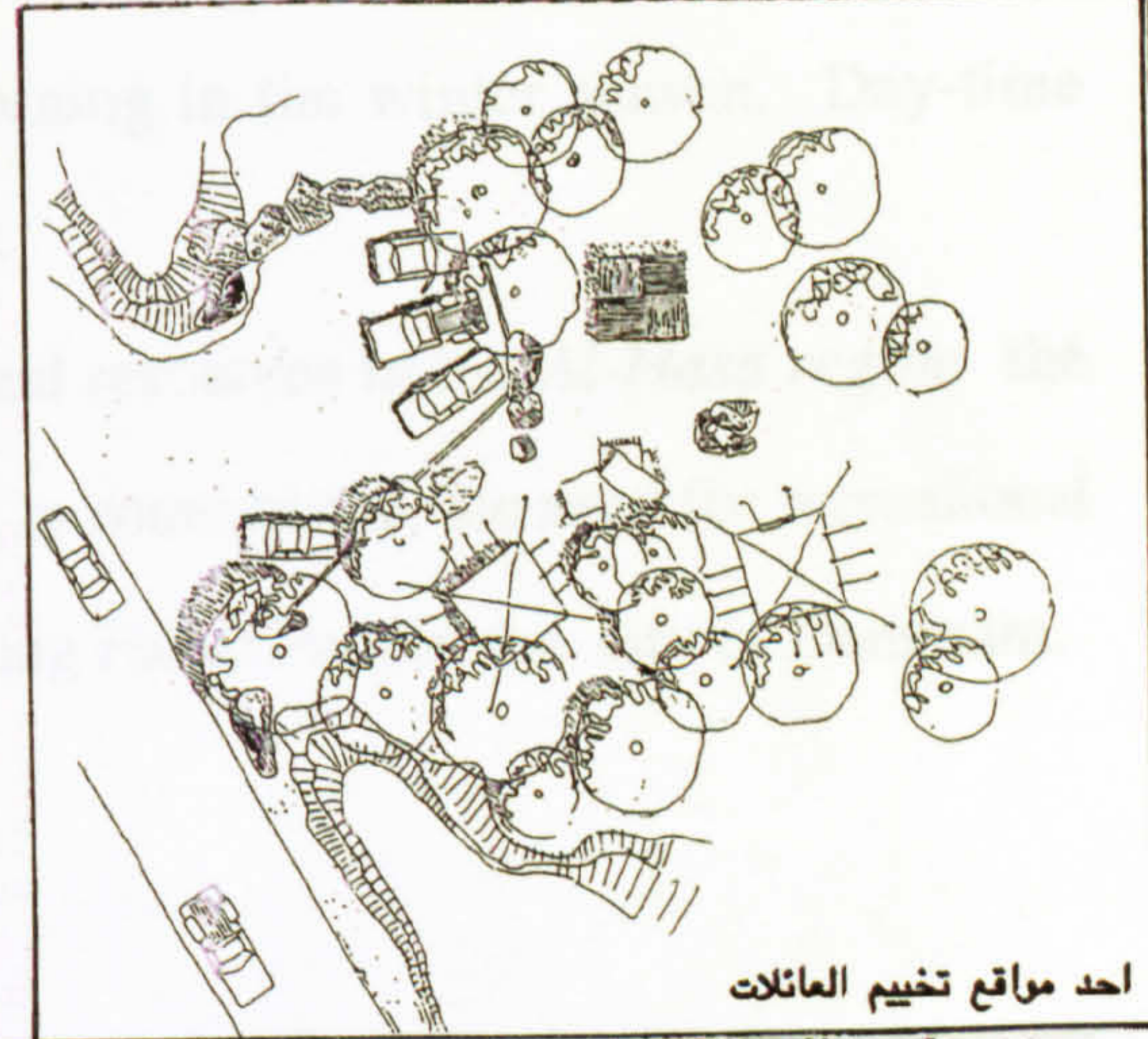
This park includes 500 camping sites with plantations and some privacy for families and safety (figure 5.11). The concern for ecology is seems satisfactory aspect of the site. Although the park is in need for more and greater interest on ecological findings. Consulting firms are in need for the ecologists' participation in the search for sound planning. Plans have been restricted simply for considerations of an orderly system of land use and the facilities which serve those uses regardless of the ecological scenarios. Some attractive recreational resources can be found within this park such as the 'Rest Garden', Botanical Garden, Safari Park, Zoological Garden and Family and Bachelor's areas .



The site evaluation



The general location for the visitor's centre



An example of a family camping site



FIGURE 5.11 Thamama National Park. A good approach to using the natural rocks and simple landscape elements to create the sense of being in a secure, private and natural area³¹;

THE MAIN RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN AL-HASA

The Eastern Province, formerly called al-Hasa after the oasis of that name with its enormous springs of water, extends south-ward for about 200 miles from the Neutral Zone jointly administered with Kuwait and has an average width of not more than 100 miles. Formed of sedimentary rocks, gravel, and sand, which are the common oil-producing formations of the Middle East, it has been known for both its hot and cold springs. The coast is low and flat with sand dunes separating it from the desert.

The humidity is high during most of the year and reaches 100%, without rain, several times yearly. Annual precipitation is about 4 inches or less (about average Saudi Arabia) and heavy fogs occur early in the morning in the winter season. Day-time temperatures may range as high as 120°F (48°C).

There are good examples of recreational resources in the *Al-Hasa region* the Eastern Region of the kingdom- that may satisfy, to some extent, the need for recreational area for the city's inhabitants. One such is the King Fahad Park in the city of Dammam.

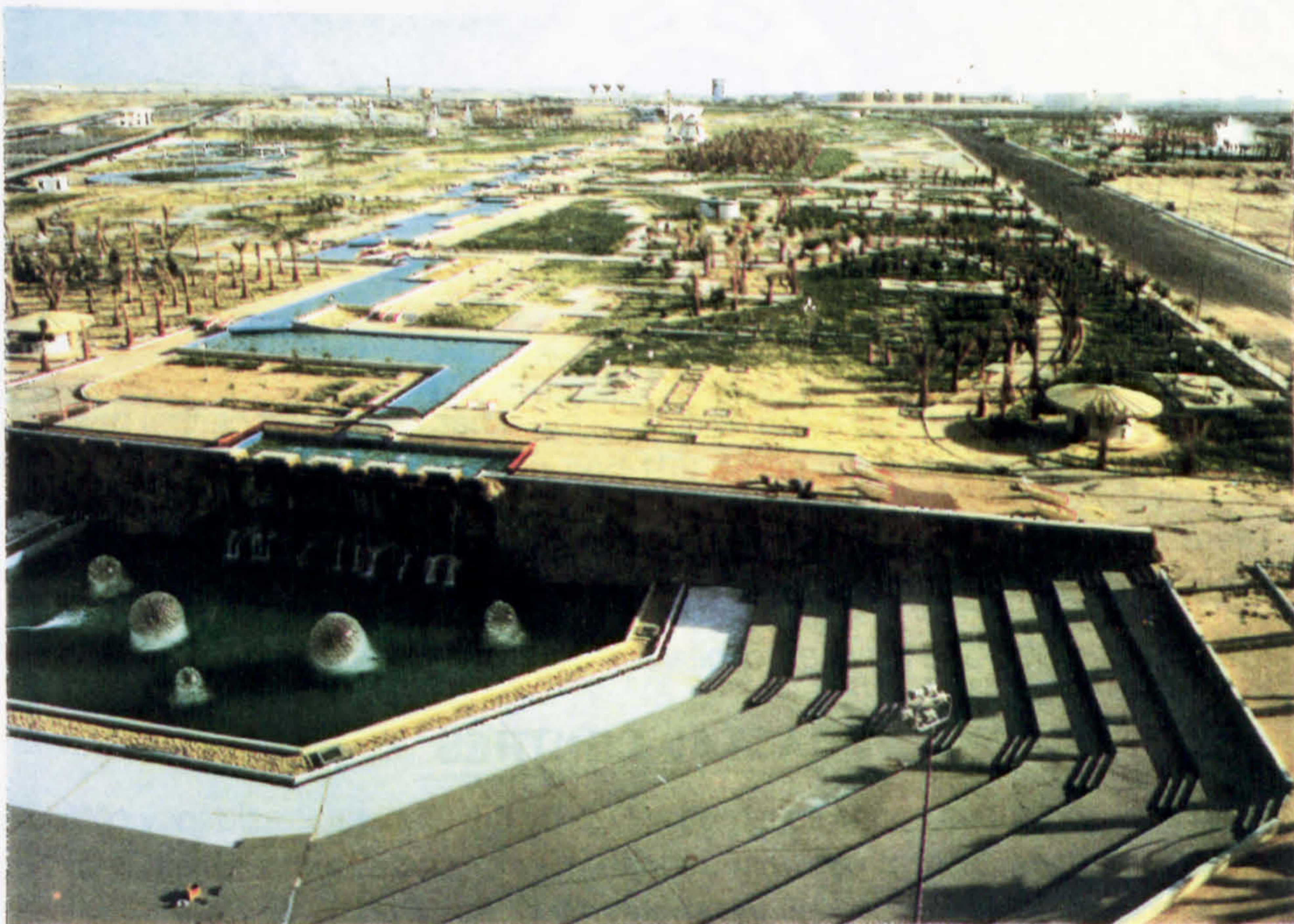
KING FAHAD PARK

This is the largest recreational resource of 297 acres (120 ha) which was developed by the Municipality of Dammam. It is located between Dammam and Dhahran on the Dammam-Dhahran Motorway.³²

The main aims of the King Fahad park are as follows.³³

- To provide a recreational and leisure area, with of ample green areas, and facilities and services appropriate to traditional customs of the Saudi family, at the same time to be within Islamic Law and the vernacular and habits of the society.
- To find a suitable location in the middle of the three main cities (*Dammam-Khobar-Dhahran*) as an essential element connecting the civilian centres and producing the required social interaction.
- To find recreational elements within the urban fabric, to encourage visitors to the *Niesf Al-Gamar* beaches (the Half-moon seaside Park) and Al-Aazizyyah Park, so that people coming from different areas of the Kingdom get to know the attractive features of the cities.

The landscape elements were designed to utilise and to be in harmony with the surrounding natural environment, in terms of layout and to work with the existing contour lines. These elements include *Al-Khyyam* restaurant, the mosque, and the administration buildings. In addition, there are artificial lakes (28,000 sq.m. or 3 ha), fountains and waterfalls. On the eastern side of the park, there is *Al-Boja'a* lake (300m by 50m) where there are three artificial islands with palm trees and sitting areas. It can be boats.



• A view of the King Fahd Park •



FIGURE 5.12 *The Mosque within King Fahad Park* ³⁴

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The main feature of the King-Fahad Park is the three acre Recreational City." (0.5 ha). Its pattern looks like a mountain. Most of the familiar recreational resources were provided, such as the flying Rag (*Sinbad* carpet), cars for children, botanical gardens, open theatres, the palm oasis, recreational garden, and exhibition garden. It seems -from the master plan-that there is a lack of integration between the different recreational resources and most of the geometrical patterns have no purpose. There is a deficiency of harmony and a lack of unity, in other words one gets the impression that the overall triangular land pattern was saturated by circles, octagons and unrelated patterns which produced a blueprint that was intended for ornamental purposes.

The main landscape architectural concepts were not adequately provided for, such as space articulation, hierarchy, and transition between zones and different areas, for example the concept of moving from public or semi-public, to semi-private to private and gradually, to intimate private. In addition to that the concept of enclosures and the three dimensional screens for seclusion were not suitably designed.

CORNICHE OF AL-DAMMAM CITY

One of the current and future recreational resources which was designed to satisfies the demand for *seaside-based recreation* is the Corniche of Al-Dammam city (opened in 1992). It is the Eastern Region Park and stretches for more than 40 km alongside the coast of the Arabian Gulf. It is owned and managed by the government. It had a total cost of 250 million Saudi Riyals (£40 Million). It has been observed -by the researcher- that Dammam's Corniche was originally planned and designed to be only 18 km long. But due to the great demand and rapid growth of the population, as well as the city expansion, the length was increased to 40 km. The point is that such a large venture needs the allotment of environmental and behavioural studies and researches; but what happened was just the reproduction of the same patterns to fill the open spaces without adequate consideration to land use, changes of level, how people will use the spaces, in which pattern, and how to create beauty and functional spaces and places with integration and unity. Again the main concept is creating a sea front cornice with fingers into the

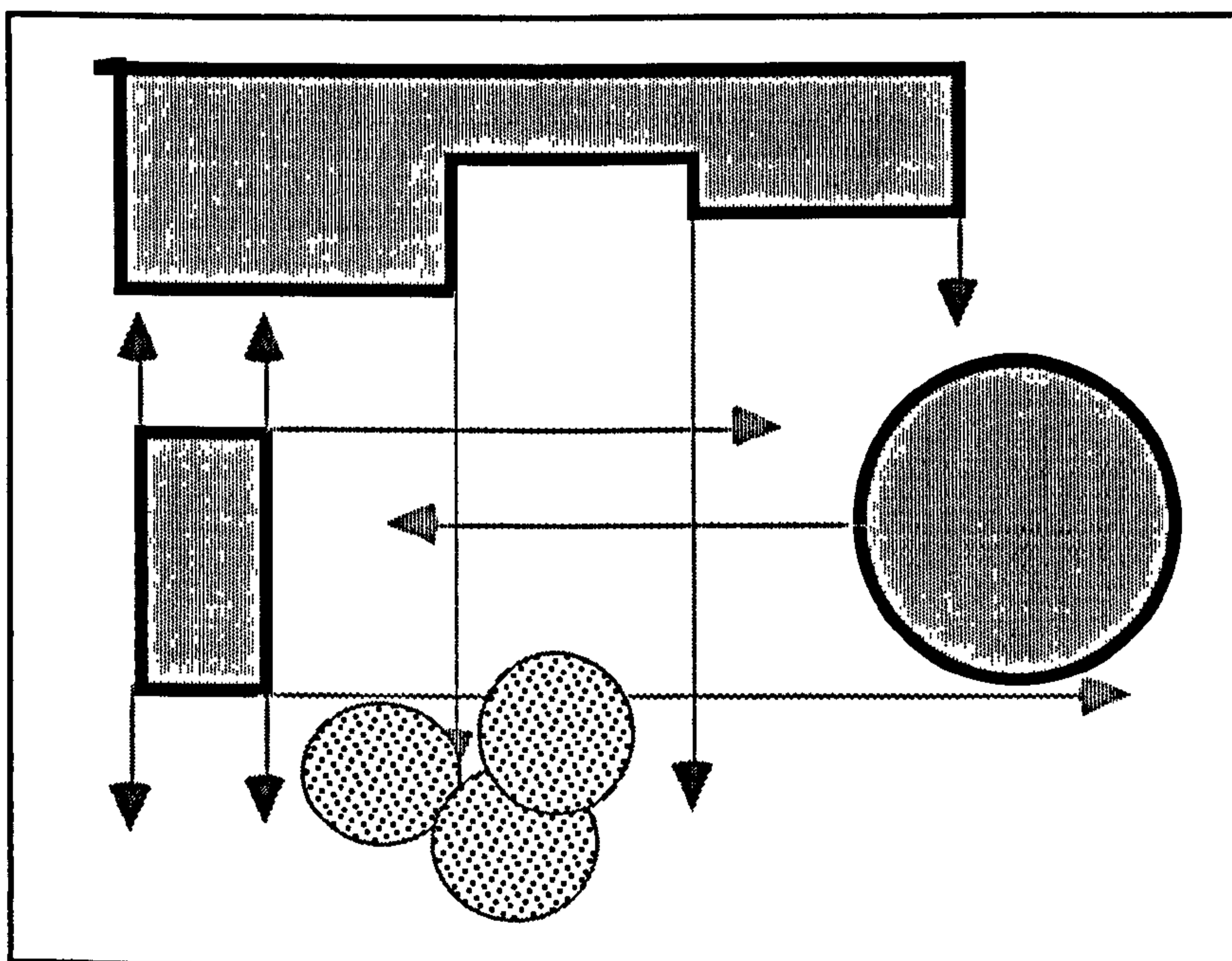
sea-water without adequate consideration of landscape architecture's technique and concepts. For example, how, when, and where different members of the society will recreate themselves is not comprehensively taken into account. It is an impression that those patterns of design were established to accommodate automobiles and not the human beings (Figure 5.14).



FIGURE 5.14 *The overall pattern of Dammam's Corniche Park*³⁵

Dammam Corniche consists of resources for water-oriented pursuits such as a marina, an amusement park, parks for picnicking, a lighthouse, and some artificial lakes. The main unit of design is the circle geometric technique and forms. For example, the amusement park plan is three adjacent circles (Figure 5.14). The circular and geometric are so often used by designers for many reasons. Although there are some self-personal-expression by the designer to express his own ideas by the simplicity of using of geometrical shapes, i.e. some designer are not capable or they do not have the sense of feeling how to form variety of shapes with the sense of keeping all various shapes or physical to integrate in unity each other in a functionally, purposefully and in harmony manners. In short, many designers have some know-how, a great many skills, and a certain amount of aesthetic sensitivity but with almost no method for obtaining any basic insights.³⁶ For example, a human being is created by the Almighty God in proportion

and scale, and at the same time each single part or system of the body has a function, purpose and meaning. The point is each line or shape on the plan must have a function, purpose and an answer to why this pattern has this structure and shape. The danger of using the techniques of geometrical shapes lays in whether the designer relates those shapes to certain landscape principles or according to the site's natural features. This requires a highly professional designer who has a sense of creating integrating structures according to function, purpose and unity of design. For example, the use of 'hidden dimensional forces' can be used by professional designers of great expertise to create the relationship between or among different hard/soft landscape elements. Each object can radiate invisible guidelines (opposing structures generate a field of dynamic tension)³⁷ that dictate the designer to formulate his/her design accordingly³⁸ (Figure 5.15).



The dotted - arrow lines represented the invisible force lines that radiate from each object which can be used to formulate adequate open space design.

FIGURE 5.15 *The use of invisible radiated force lines to shape outdoor or indoor areas*

It is sensed by the researcher that many outdoor recreational areas were shaped without regard for basic landscape principles or for the existing landscape hard/soft elements. The harmony, variety within unity and adequate formulation or using of

geometrical shapes, mainly depends on how the designer feels and perceives those invisible force line of both the man-made and the natural environment.

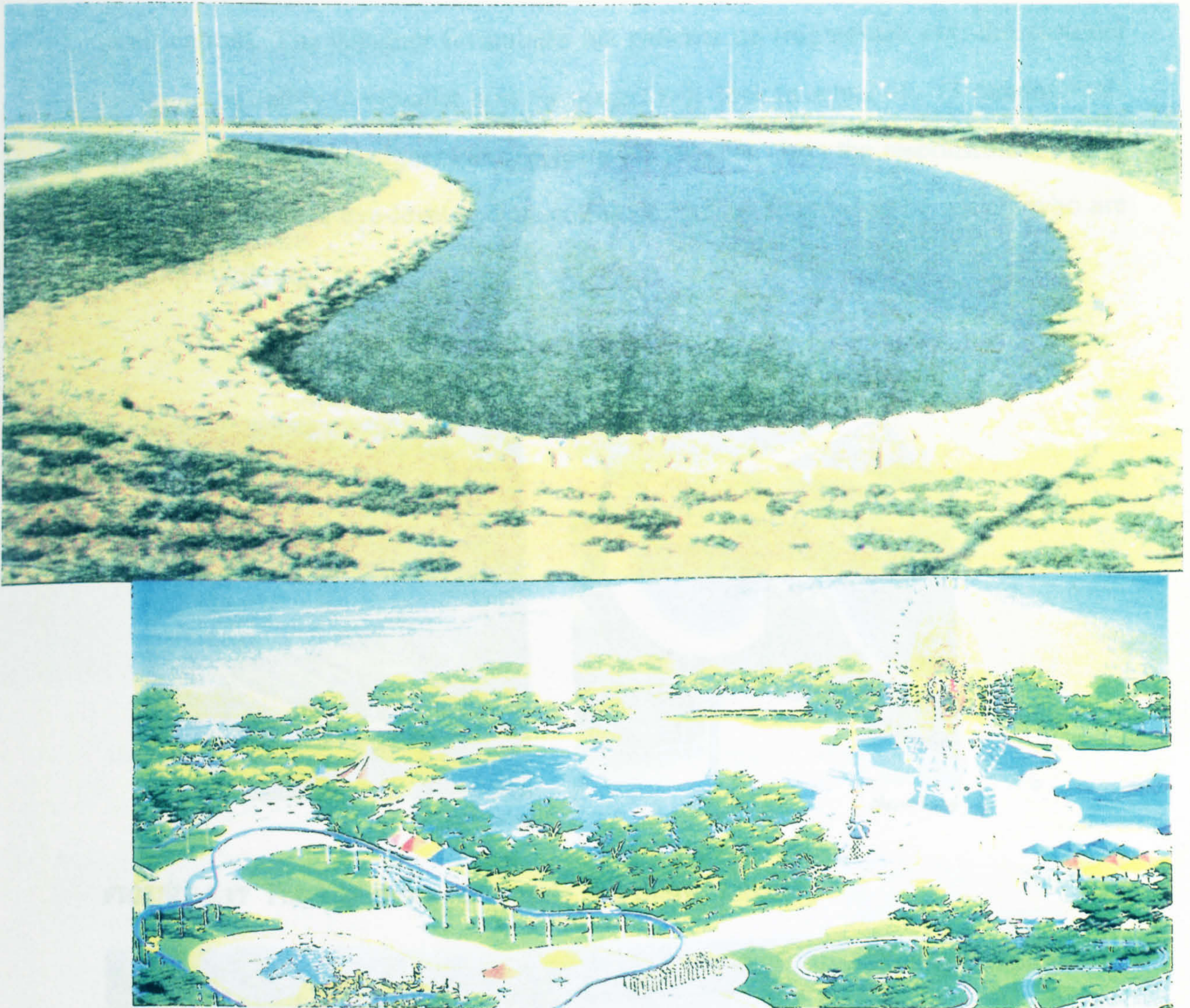


FIGURE 5.16 *The Amusement area in Dammam's Park*³⁹

Another example of giving more emphasis to geometry rather than the needed local recreational style is the lighthouse peninsula and the lake (figure 5.17). The persistent geometry is in the shape of a circular island reached by a semi-circular driveway. The purpose of this shape is to form "the southern wave breaker"⁴⁰. Not only did the shape not accommodate actual cultural demands, but it is also only recognisably as a birds eye view from aeroplanes only. Many landscape architectural projects in Saudi Arabia were designed to be enjoyed from an aeroplane. The need for patterns to be seen from the eye-level of visitors is very important because most people see the

projects from eye-level (160 cm). Such examples of those bird's eye view's are the marina, the horseshoe-shaped wave breaker and Sayha lake (Figures 5.17 to 5.20).

The reasons for this seem to relate to the designer's own experience and qualifications. The designer formulates his patterns on fragmented two-dimensional design. The ability to visualise how the project will look in actual life (3-dimensional) depends on how the designer can represent his product. It is the responsibility of the designer to produce eye-level and appealing designs to be enjoyed by people who are walking not flying.

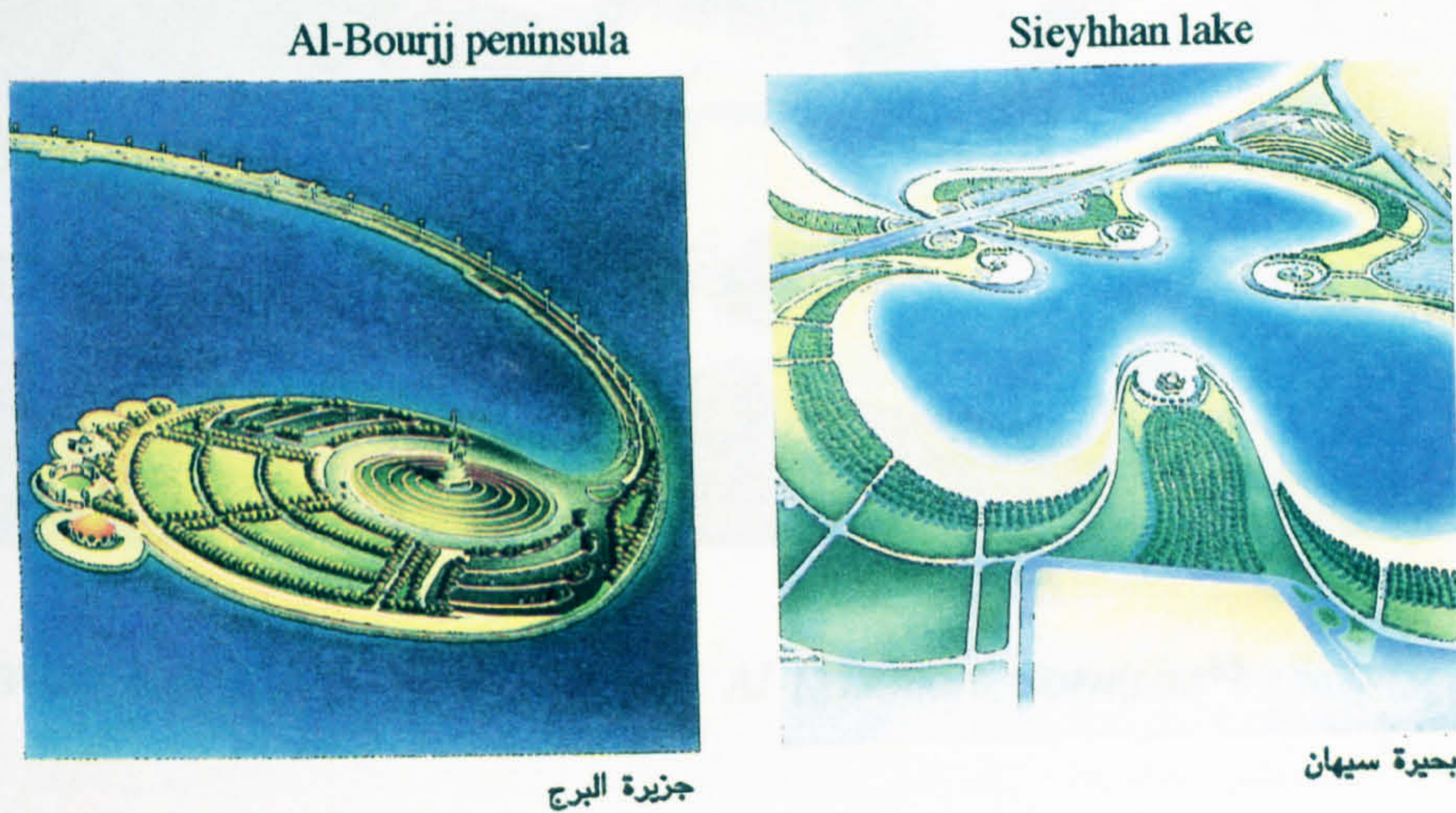


FIGURE 5.17 The Lighthouse peninsula and Sihan Lake⁴¹

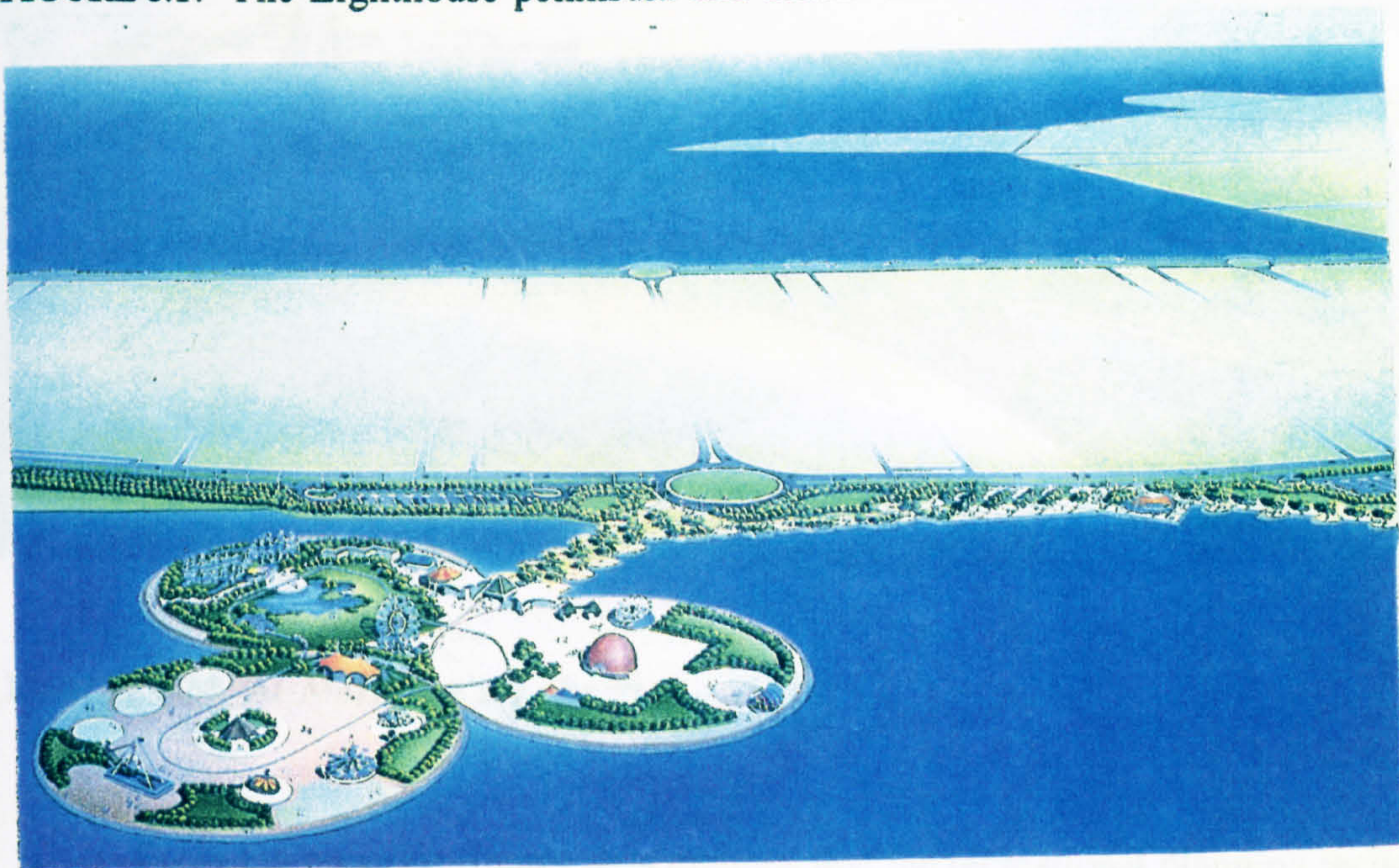


FIGURE 5.18 *The Game's lake*⁴²



FIGURE 5.19 *The main spine of the Al-Dammam Corniche*⁴³



FIGURE 5.20 *Al-Meridian's Lake*⁴⁴

From the previous figures, it is obvious that the recreational planning techniques were not related to local leisure patterns nor how to fit the leisure patterns into the overall

recreational layout. The art and science of landscape architecture and its concepts were not adequately utilised to produce well integrated shapes with unity and functions. The task of recreation planning is to innovate, analyse, synthesise and identify the problems and issues of all the various social and physical aspects of the environment. It is then to formulate goals and objectives to determine suitable recreational resources that satisfy both social needs and environment. It is to establish the relationship between people's behaviour, leisure time and recreational activities to the place and its resources. A reasonable recreational resource that lacks the full consideration of the landscape principles is the Eastern Region seaside recreational resource at Half Moon Bay (*Shati'e Niesf Al Gamar*).

HALF MOON BAY(SHATI'E NIESF AL GAMAR)

An urban park of the Half-Moon Bay development is the largest of the Eastern Province Corniche Projects.⁴⁵ It starts on one side with a marina and a park and ends on the other side with another marina and park. The development connecting these two ends consists of parks, a horse-race track, camping accommodation, a bridge over the lagoon at the centre of the project and a marina (Figure 5.21).

The landscape design technique has again used the highly geometrical patterns. The marinas at both ends are circular with docking facilities radiating from their centres. In the western marina a strong axially is achieved by three adjacent circles. The eastern marina has three nodes composing a triangular path at its entrance. The camping activities are located along streets planned as triangles or circles.

It seems that again in this project the designer was concentrating on geometrical shapes rather than on designing for human behaviour. The problem of privacy, for example, is still not adequately solved, the problem of finding solutions for improving micro climate conditions, shading, the elimination of glare, and circulation movements needs more study and research. Each outdoor open space has to be regarded for its own sake, having its own identity, character and quality.

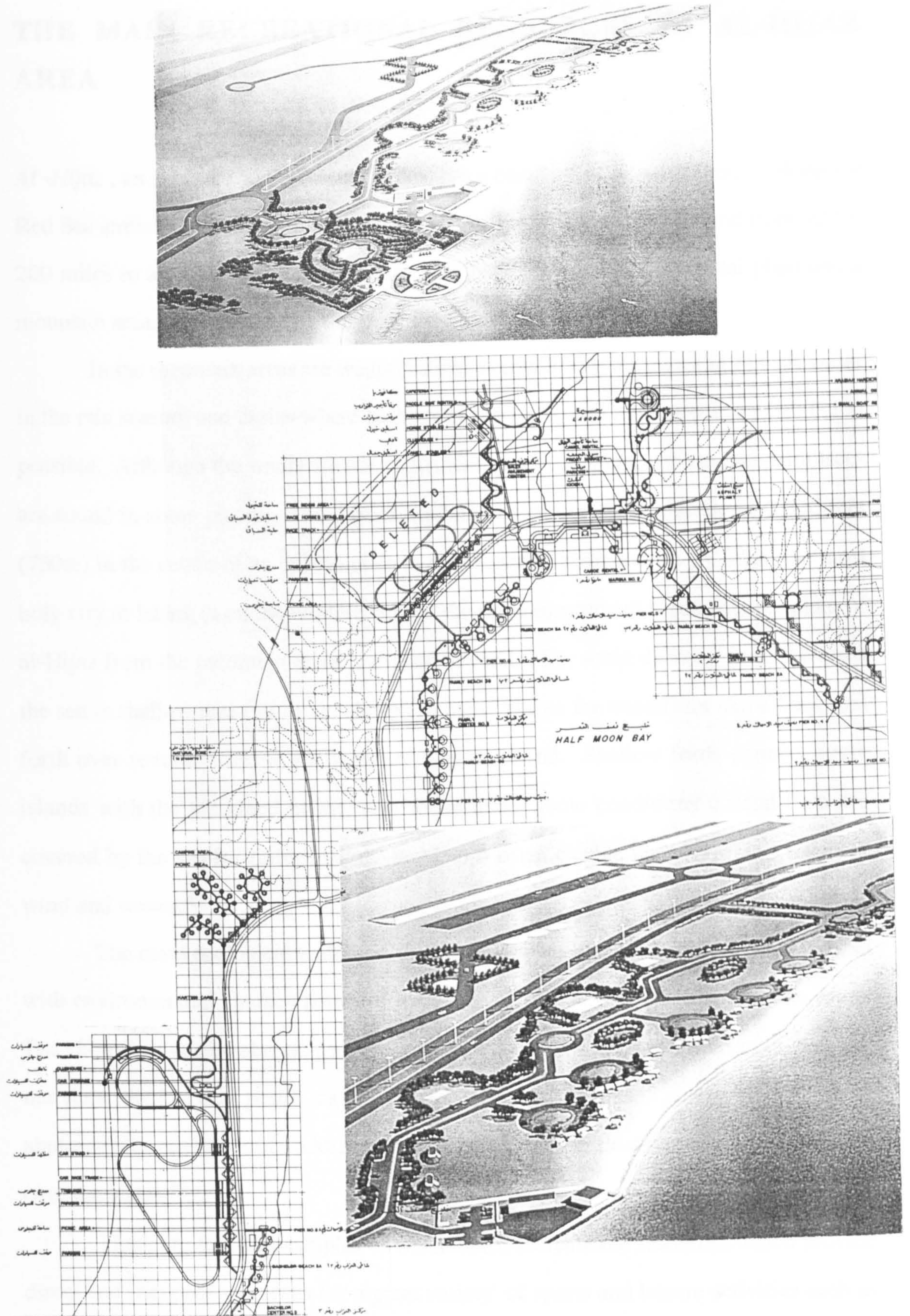


FIGURE 5.21 Half-Moon Corniche⁴⁶

THE MAIN RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN AL-HIJAZ AREA

Al -Hijaz , an area of 150,000 square miles, has a coastline of about 700 miles along the Red Sea stretching south from the Gulf of Aqaba to Asir and extends inland from 100 to 200 miles to an undemarcated boundary with Najd. Two zones, a coastal plain and a mountain area, are separated by the steep western slopes of the mountains.

In the mountain areas are wadis (valleys normally dry but carrying run-off water in the rain season) and basins where both water and fertile soil make sedentary habitation possible. Although the wadis are not permanent water suppliers, springs and palm trees are found in some places. The city of Madinah is located at an altitude of 2,500 feet (750m) in the centre of an upland plain in the mountain area, and the Makkah, the most holy city in Islam, is on the western side of the steep escarpment separating the plain of al-Hijaz from the mountain areas and Najd beyond. For some distance from the coast the sea is shallow and full of shoals and in many places the waterfront shifts back and forth over several miles at the whim of tide and wind. Shallow fords connect some islands with the mainland at low tide while under some conditions coastal flats are covered by the sea for miles inland. Sand spits often change their form as a result of wind and waves.⁴⁷

The main ecological feature of the Tihamah plain can be described as waterfront with environmental characteristics of humidity, salt areas, sand beaches seaside areas. The shore-line can be abrupt, rough, gentle or smooth; it can be in the form of beaches, marshes, docks, tide pools, caves, river basins, dams, dikes, grassy slopes, rocky abutments or sea walls. In addition, it may include piers, floats or buildings extended over the water.⁴⁸

There are several examples of water-based recreational resources which provide direct and inexpensive means for a great variety of sports and leisure activities such as swimming, diving, surfing water skiing, cruising, motor boating, sailing, fishing, and most recently air gliding because of the steady wind at the shore-line. A typical example of such areas is the Corniche of Jeddah which is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

KING FAHAD GARDEN IN THE CITY OF TAIF

The other example of Al-Hijaz recreational resources is the gift which has been given by the King Fahad to the citizens of the city of Taif the *King-Fahad garden*. This is a public recreational area. It is located to the south-west of the city, adjacent to the *Al-Hada* Road. Its total area is 43 acres (17 ha) (Figure 5.22).



Aerial view of King Fahd Park, with its lake and sheltering pavilions



FIGURE 5.22 *King Fahad Garden in Taif City*⁴⁹

King Fahad Garden has been considered as an attractive outdoor recreational park to spend Summer time. It is very heavily used and can be very crowded. The main recreational resources are children's play areas which are provided with 2000 sq. (0.5 acre) family sitting areas. There is also an 1.8 acre artificial lake (7200 sq.m.), with a 20 meter long bridge over it, and water cascades. A mosque, a restaurant, shaded sitting areas for 10 people, and another traditional area for squatting on the ground.

Due to the heavy demand for recreational areas in Taif city, the government aims to expand some existing areas and to develop some new ones. For example, in 1983 King Fahad give an order to expand the King-Fahad garden for more 35 acres (14 ha) . I.e., its total area now is 78 acres (31 ha). This new development is intended to be for women only.⁵⁰ This is because the intensity of demand for spending the leisure time in this garden leads many people use it, causing social problems with mixing between gender, crowding and bachelors bothering families. Accordingly, the municipality of Taif has declared the use of zone-timing; that is, certain days of the week are for men and other days are for families.

From the design pattern of the garden, it is obvious that the *heart-shape* was applied to the main water-body of the site, after which all remaining spatial and physical structure were formulated accordingly. It is also clear that the circle was an important influence on the site. But the landscaped design pattern failed to facilitate local leisure patterns and to satisfy the needs of people for convenient and trouble-free areas. The lack of interpretations or the understanding of the local traditional forms of recreation and their response to various factors such as Islamic culture, topography, climate and vegetation can noticed clearly by a well qualified landscape architects.

THE MAIN RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE ASIR AREA

Saudi Arabia while arid for the most part exhibits a varied geography that in places belies its sand desert image. Rugged on the south-western side, with stark peaks rising boldly from a narrow coastal plain, the Asir area is a highlands where bare mountains of jagged igneous rock some 10,000 feet high (3000 metres) plunge to terraced green fields and cultivated lowland valleys where regular crops are grown.

Although Arabia is surrounded on three sides by sea, aridity is the dominant feature. With the sole exception of Asir in the extreme south-west, any influences from the southern tropical zones are excluded by the highland rim that runs from Oman through the Yemen, which benefits the rainfall in Summer.

Asir comprises an area about 180 miles wide, extending 230 miles along the Red Sea coast, bounded on the north by al-Hijaz, on the east by Najd, and on the south by Yemen. Its western, coastal lowland, called at-Tihamah, is about 40 miles wide. A rugged mountain area rises for about 80 miles to the east of the seashore, then slopes gradually to meet the desert of Najd and the Rub al-Khali. The coastal lowland is fertile farming country, and the mountains are terraced for the retention of fertile land for agriculture. The location of the wadis governs the settlement pattern; the two largest are those of Bishah and Ranya. Asir has more rainfall than any other part of the Kingdom and there is luxuriant vegetation. Because the winds and air currents reaching Arabia have already lost most of their moisture over the large African and Eurasian land masses and can only partly replenish their moisture content from the narrow bodies of water that bound the peninsula, rainfall over the country is very light about 4 inches of rainfall yearly. An exception of Asir where the mountains bounding this coastal area force the westerly winds upward, causing the release of enough moisture to provide Asir with an estimated 10 to 20 inches annual precipitation, which comes between October and May.

Asir National Park

The Asir National Park became the first major natural national park in the Arab world.⁵¹ Asir National Park was designed by firms called Berger / Idea Centre, and West.⁵² It is located in the south western corner of Saudi Arabia. It is 644 kilometres south of the Holy city of Makkah or 710 km from Jeddah. The scenic areas range from the white sandy beaches and coral reefs of the Red Sea to the soaring cliffs of the Arabian escarpment. The park was established to conserve for the people of Saudi Arabia an outstanding example of their natural and cultural heritage. The purpose of the park is to provide protection for the region's resources and leave them unimpaired for the benefit of future generations. In other words, to preserve wildlife in its natural habitat for the enjoyment of the individual. The wildlife in this area is fairly rich, with hyena, baboon, leopard, wolf, birds, fish, and reptiles. There are various butterflies, spiders, scorpions, beetles and locusts. Birds such as swallows, harriers, buzzards, and eagles are also found in this area. Walker⁵³ notes that "There are 300 different bird species including the large and endangered species, Iammergeier. Reptiles include scaly lizards, chameleons and green tree frogs. There are also vipers, puff adders, and Egyptian cobras."

Since the purpose of Asir Park is to preserve nature and its wildlife, recreational resources were limited. Facilities have been placed at several locations throughout the park and include the park headquarters, overlook areas, a visitor interpretative/information centre, beach and bathing areas. In addition, there are certain areas preserved for camping, platforms to enjoy good views, as well as some sitting areas, bridges to connect these elements and foot paths. The planning concepts, layout and characteristics were concerned mainly with the ecological base. The park's 1224 acres (455 hectare) spans to four distinct ecological areas: the coastal plains, the escarpment (Tihamah), the highlands, and eastern plains (Figure 5.23).

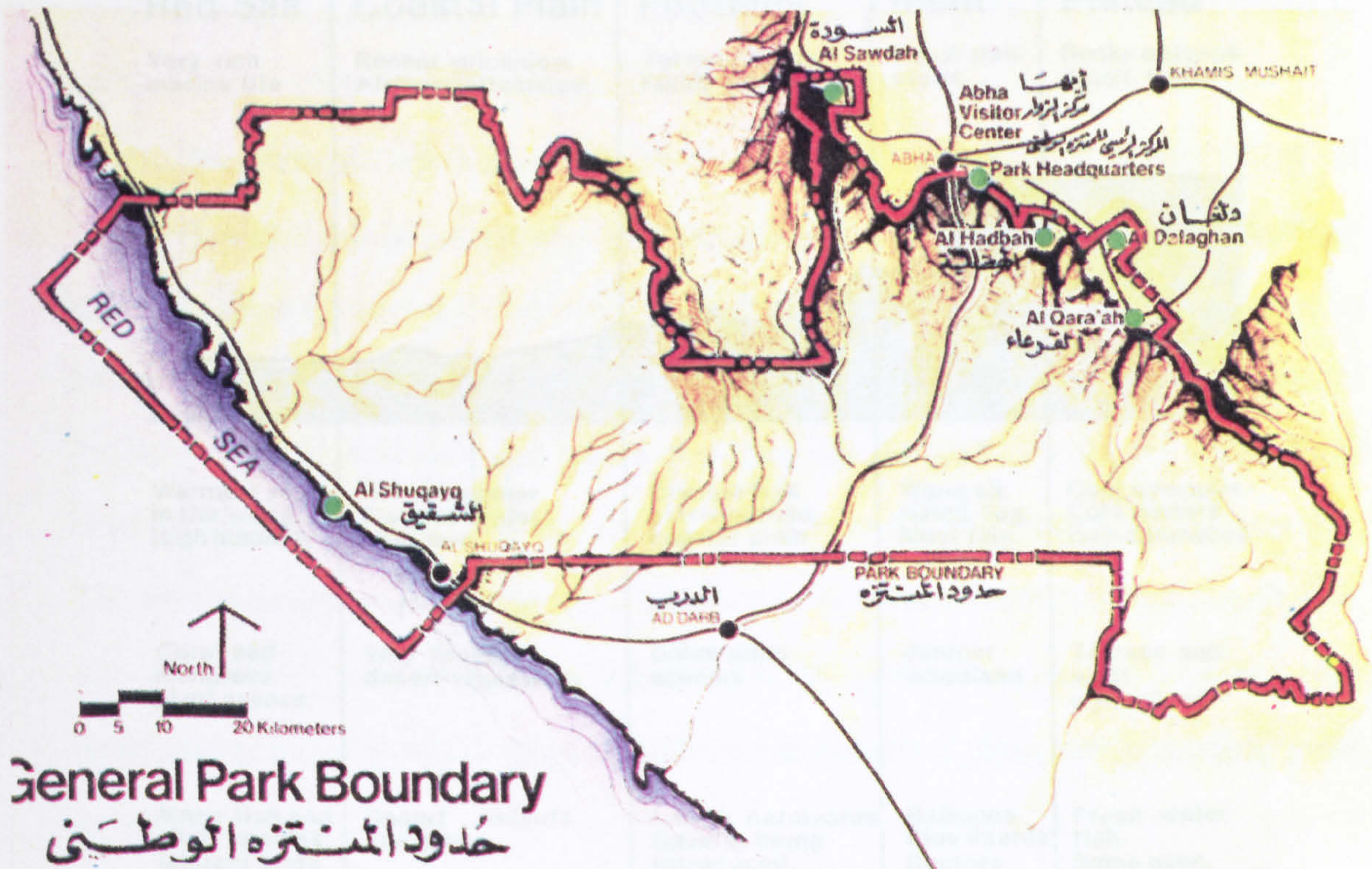
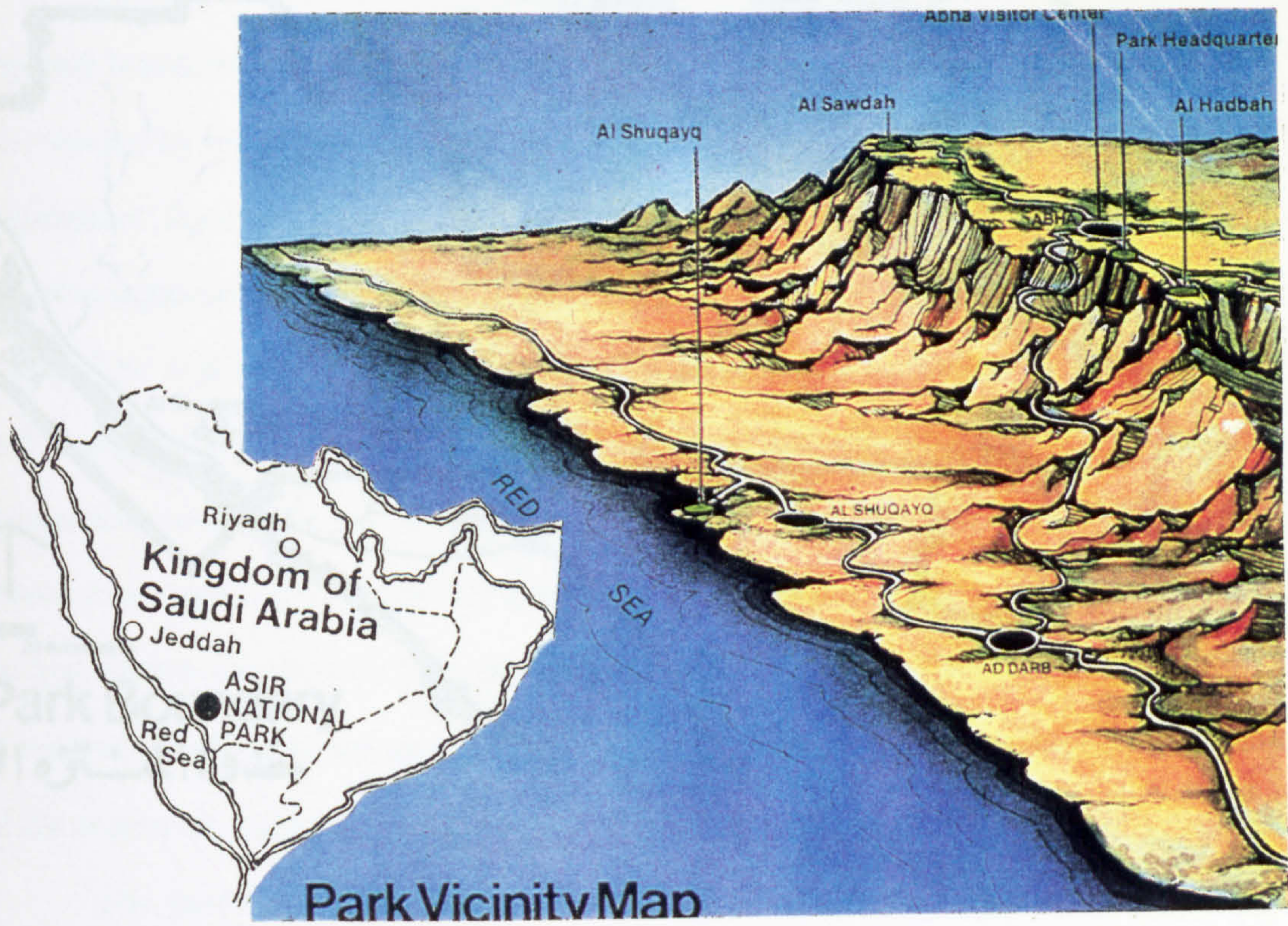


FIGURE 5 23 The location and park vicinity maps.⁵⁴

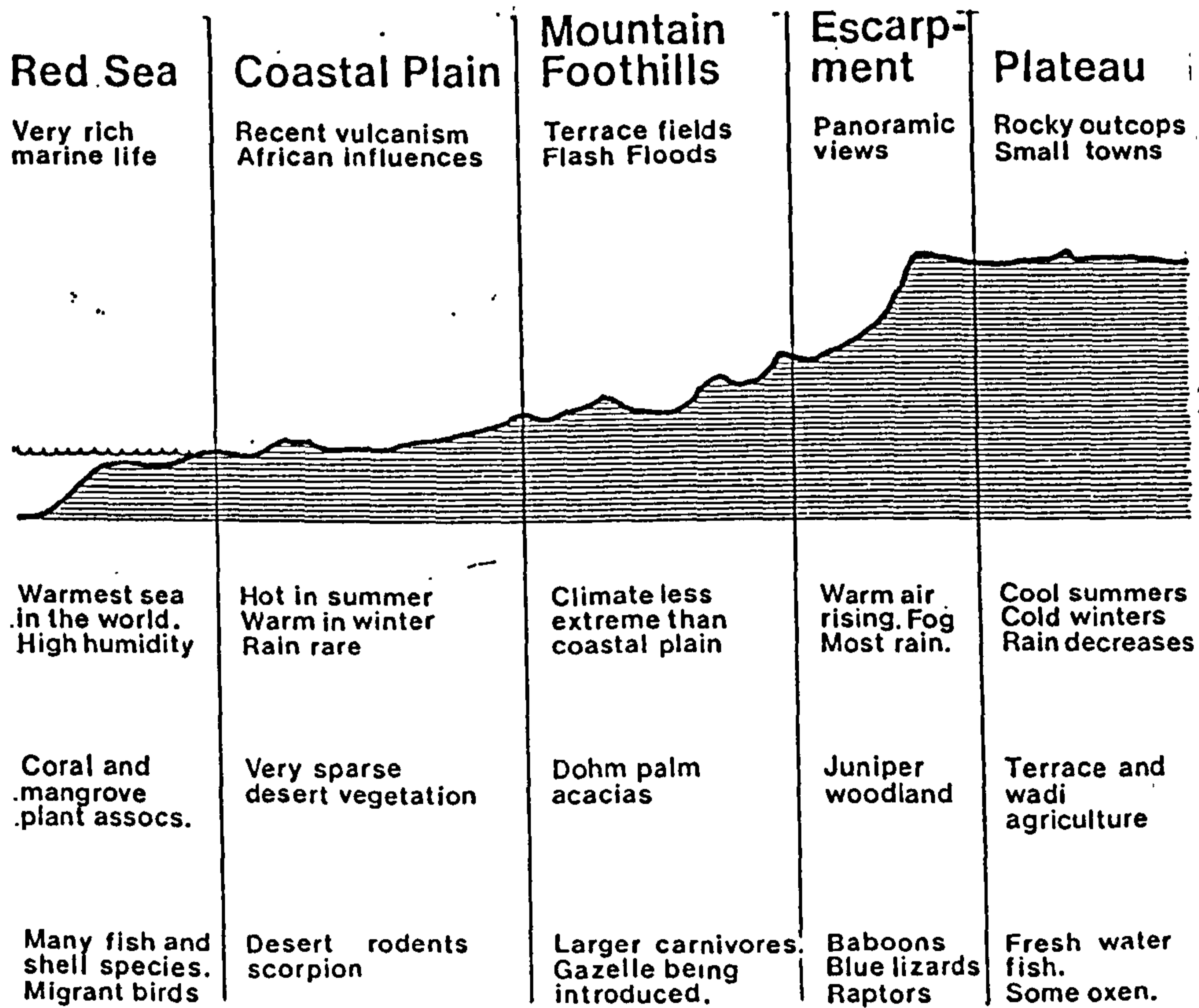
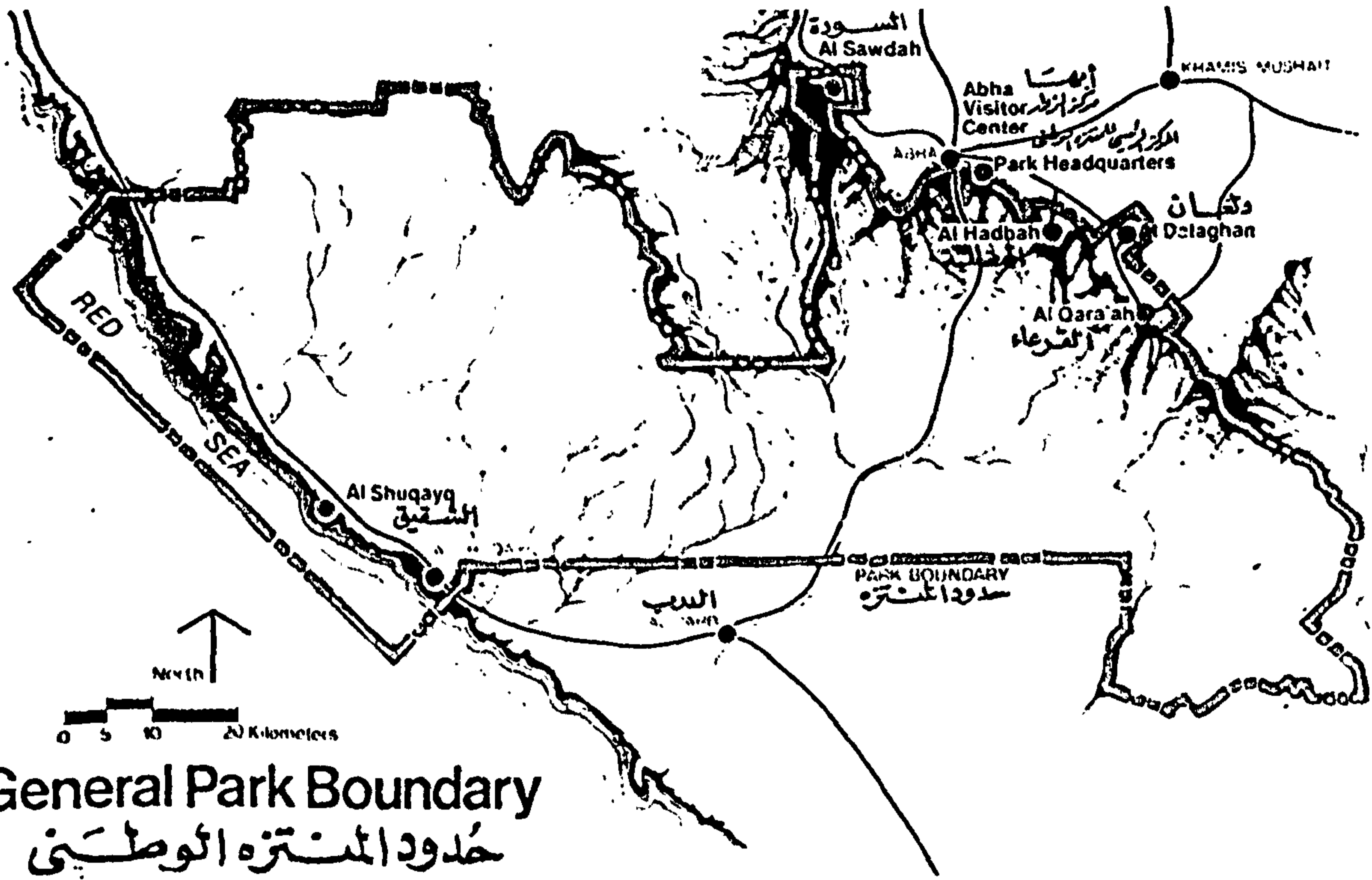


FIGURE 5.24 General park boundary and section through Asir's National Park.55

The coastal plains forming an area parallel to the coast of the Red Sea, and enjoyed beautiful beaches with moderate weather. The Escarpment (*Tihamah*) is the part surrounded by mountain chains from one side and the coastal plains from the other. The escarpment form an area of the coastal plain to the hills of Tihamah, and to the top of the heap escarpment consist mainly of granite intrusion and igneous rocks.

The highlands are mountains made of a massive crystalline rocks on the surface and a granite base with a cover of sandstone or basaltic layers with sediments in depressions within the basement rocks. The Highlands is the most popular area of the whole Asir region (Although it is also the highest altitude between 10,000 and 11,000 metres above sea level), it is populated by about one million. The majority of governmental projects and national parks developments are concentrated within this part of the region which is becoming the national summer resort of the Kingdom.⁵⁶

The park rises from the Red Sea to over 3048 metres⁵⁷ within a narrow band 160-240 kilometres wide. During the summer days when the rest of Saudi Arabia swelters in high temperature days and nights, the park areas reach 29⁰ C and cools to 15⁰C at night. Figure 5.28 illustrates different ecological zones of Asir's Park.

The main recreational resources in the park have been organised to some extent in a logical way, to provide people with experiences of enjoying the nature without exposing them to man-made structures. Visitors can feel themselves as if they are in natural environment. For instance certain recreational sites were preserved and opened to the public which includes some recreational facilities, as well as enjoying wildlife and other platforms for scenic viewing, sitting areas with a trail overlook and visitors centre. The sites currently accessible are all situated on or in close proximity to the escarpment. Apart from the visitor centre which is open by prior arrangement and the park headquarters building where the park staff may be consulted, there are three other areas, as follows.

AL-SAWDAH PARK

Al-Sawdah Park represents the first comprehensive conservation programme in the Asir region.⁵⁸ The park was initiated by the Ministry of Agricultural and Water sources aims to preserve the natural and the built environment, as well as to provide tourist and outdoor recreational attractions , opportunities and facilities for the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Al-Sawdah park has an area of 2180 acres (883 ha), situated about 25 km. to the north west of the city of Abha, along the main road (As-soudah Road), and to the higher level of the road where the park exists. It is located at the top of Al-Sawdah mountain, between 2900m. and 2700 m. above sea level. This park has proved to be a national success providing camping, stripling and sight seeing facilities supported by the high location of the park (it is the highest point in the region). It has been developed with most of the recreational resources needed for visitors such as parking, trails for hiking, picnic tables and benches, stove stands and toilets. The design of platforms for overlooking were shaped in a curvilinear manner matching the contour lines (Figure 5.25 and 5.26).

As has been mentioned before that the park was planned to provide outdoor recreational and leisure facilities for families, gender separation for privacy protection was the missed goals for the success of the project. Although there some areas which have been screened either visually or physically and naturally but the visual access to family areas needs more considerations from the authority to achieve people's satisfaction.

In addition, the park have been divided to two sections: a family section which is located on the eastern side of the park close to As-soudah Road, and the another section was assigned to bachelors on the other side of the road. This division aimed at reassurance of privacy issues for the visitors.

The second aim of the park was to protect the natural areas from the large number of visitors who visit the park on a daily basis. This include the wildlife which includes baboons on the steep slopes of the mountains and different of birds.

The general concept is to provide a minimum of man-made objects so as to preserve the nature of the site and to create the sense of being in nature. For example, the layout of the park follows the 'space articulation' concept. Thus, walkways are winding of varying width and, with focal points. The contemporary approach of weak way of imposing geometrical shapes was avoided. In addition to the visitor's centre there are some attractive recreational areas such as Al-Hadabah, Dalaghan and Al-Qara'ah parks.

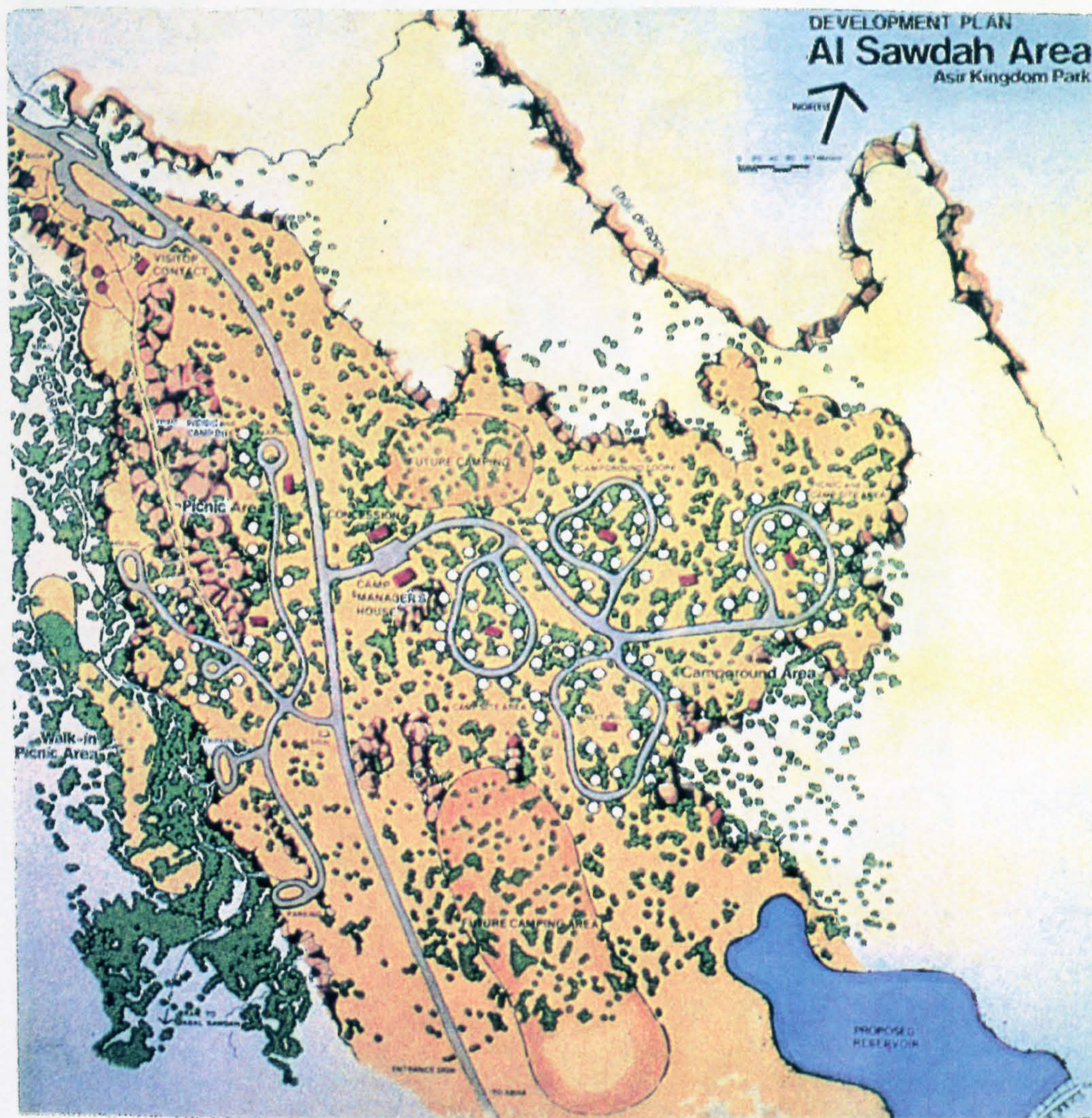


FIGURE 5.25 *Al-Sawdah Outdoor Recreational Areas*⁵⁹

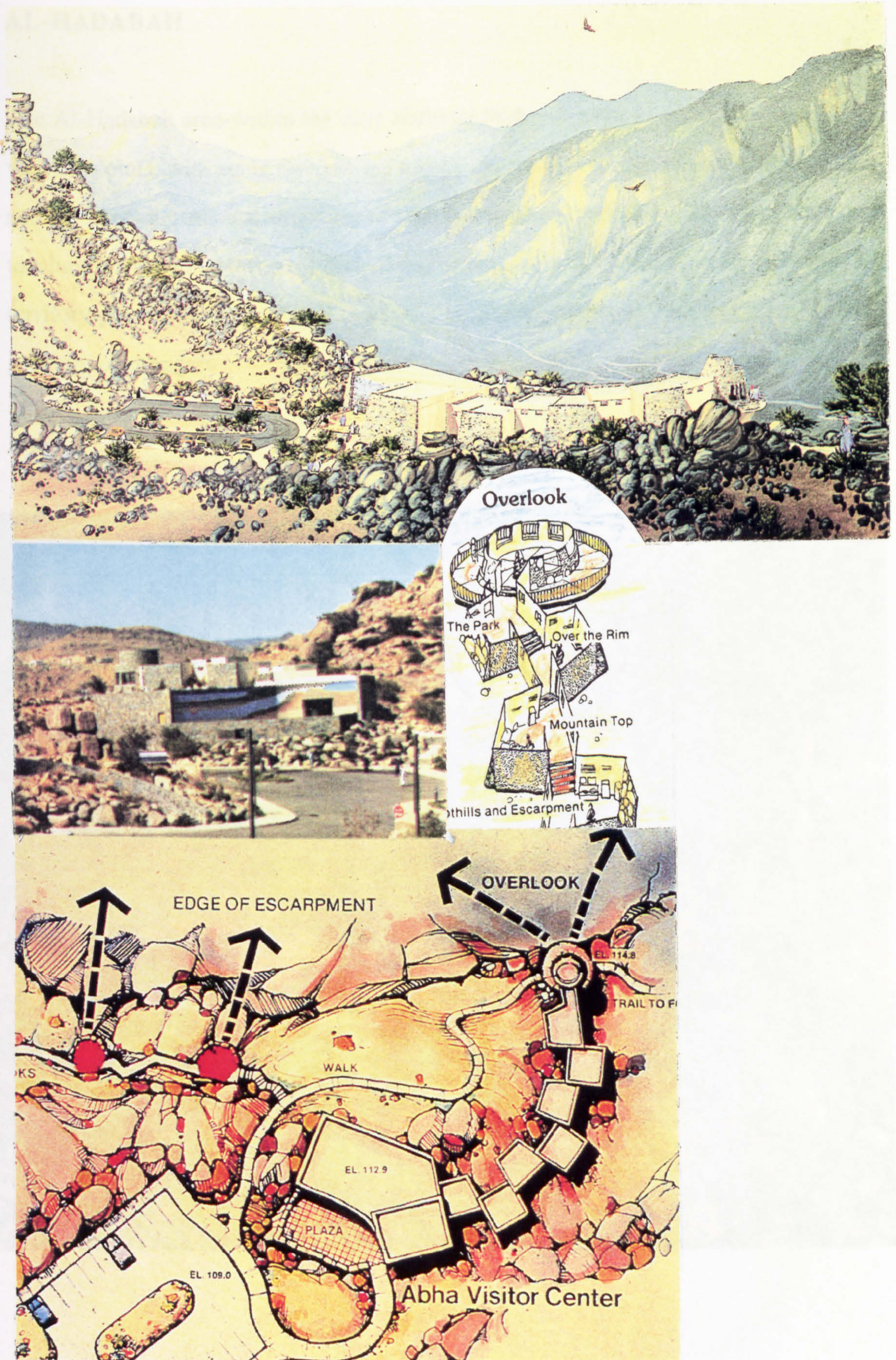


FIGURE 5.26 *Layout of visitor's centre*⁶⁰

AL-HADABAH

The Al-Hadabah area-within the Asir National Park - consists of trails and overlook viewing points, with some shelters and toilets. Again the concept of space articulation and the three-dimensional structures of segregating places between gender does not exist, to a large extent, to maintain the desired degree of privacy as well as to create the sense of territory-place (Figure 5.27). It is very difficult for women to visit this place in the presence of strangers.



FIGURE 5.27 *Al-Hadabah Overlook Area*⁶¹



The Al-Hadabah overlook area is a natural scenic area. The Al-Hadabah overlook area is a natural scenic area. The Al-Hadabah overlook area is a natural scenic area.

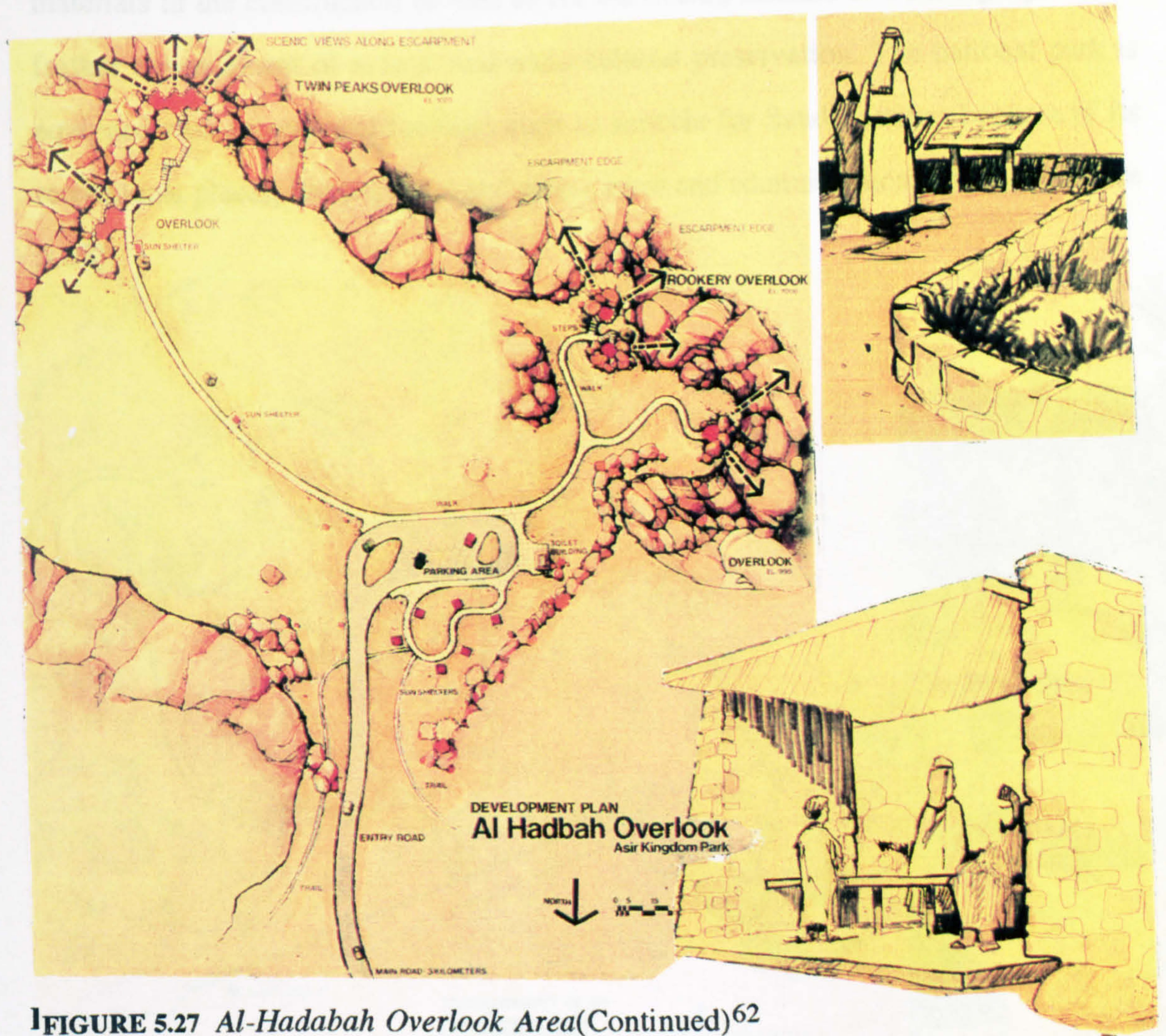


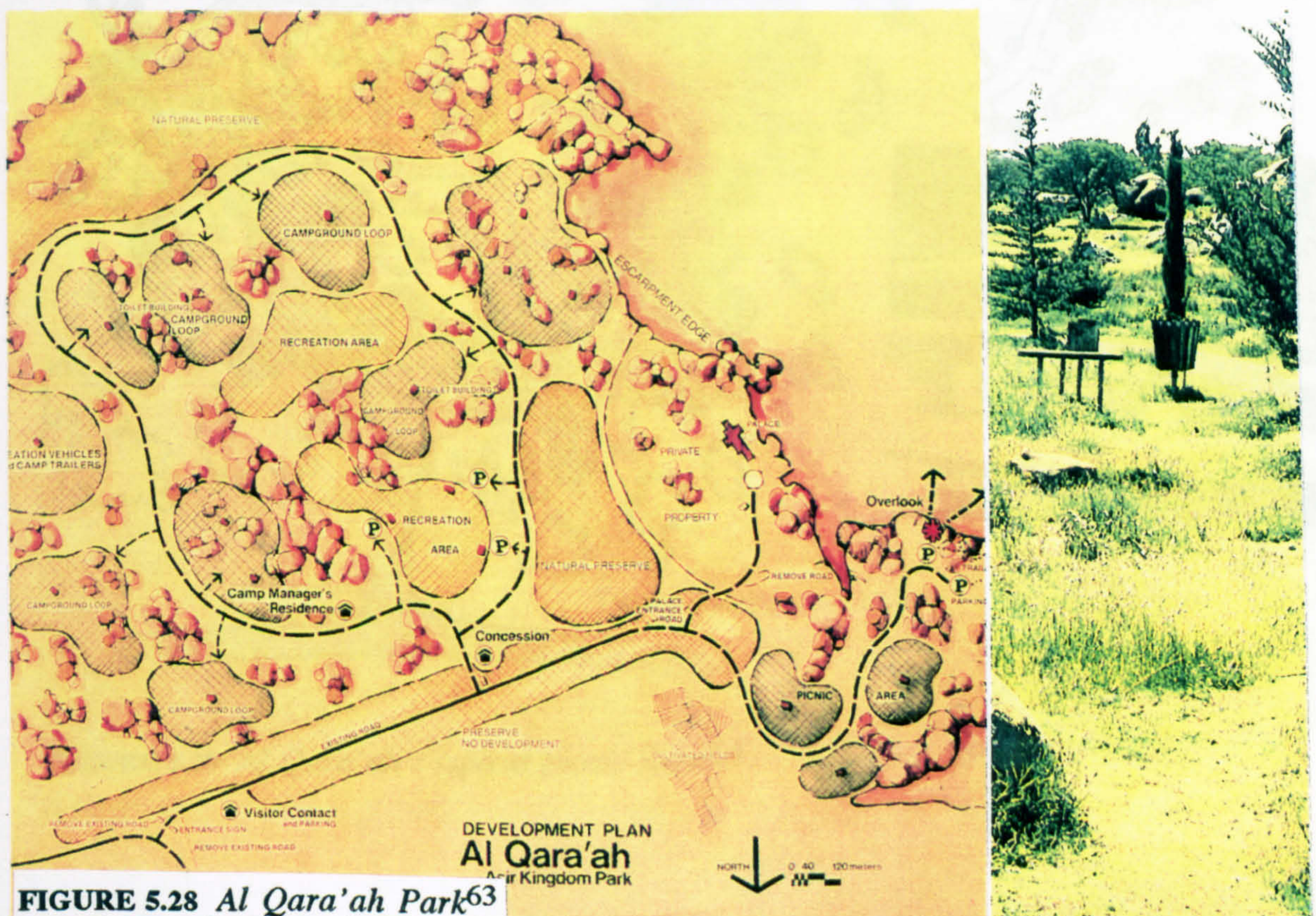
FIGURE 5.27 Al-Hadabah Overlook Area(Continued)⁶²

AL-QARA'AH PARK

Al-Qara'ah park is a conservation project that has been initiated by the Ministry of Agricultural and Water sources to protect the natural and built environment in the region of Asir, as well as to provide outdoor recreational facilities for the citizens of the Kingdom.

The park was built on the southern side of Abha, at a distance of 30 km., along Al-Qrarah road. It occupies an area of 1037 acres (420 ha) of almost flat land. The site is located between 2275 and 2100 metres above sea level facing the Tihamah region of Asir. The natural vegetation of Al-Qrarah park is very dense, comprising mainly of 95% of juniper trees (*ar-ar*) which tends to dominate the total vegetation.

The Ministry's concept for the design of the park emphasised the use of local materials in the construction as well as for the overall scheme of building styles as a further enhancement of natural and socio-cultural preservation. The national park is equipped with recreational facilities such as suitable for Saudi families because of its recreational places, camp-ground and picnic areas and administration buildings (Figure 5.28).



In addition, most of the recreational resources in Asir Park have good designed washroom and toilet facilities which are block buildings faced with a cladding of local slates so that they blend well with the environment. These are much appreciated by the campers (Figure 5.29).

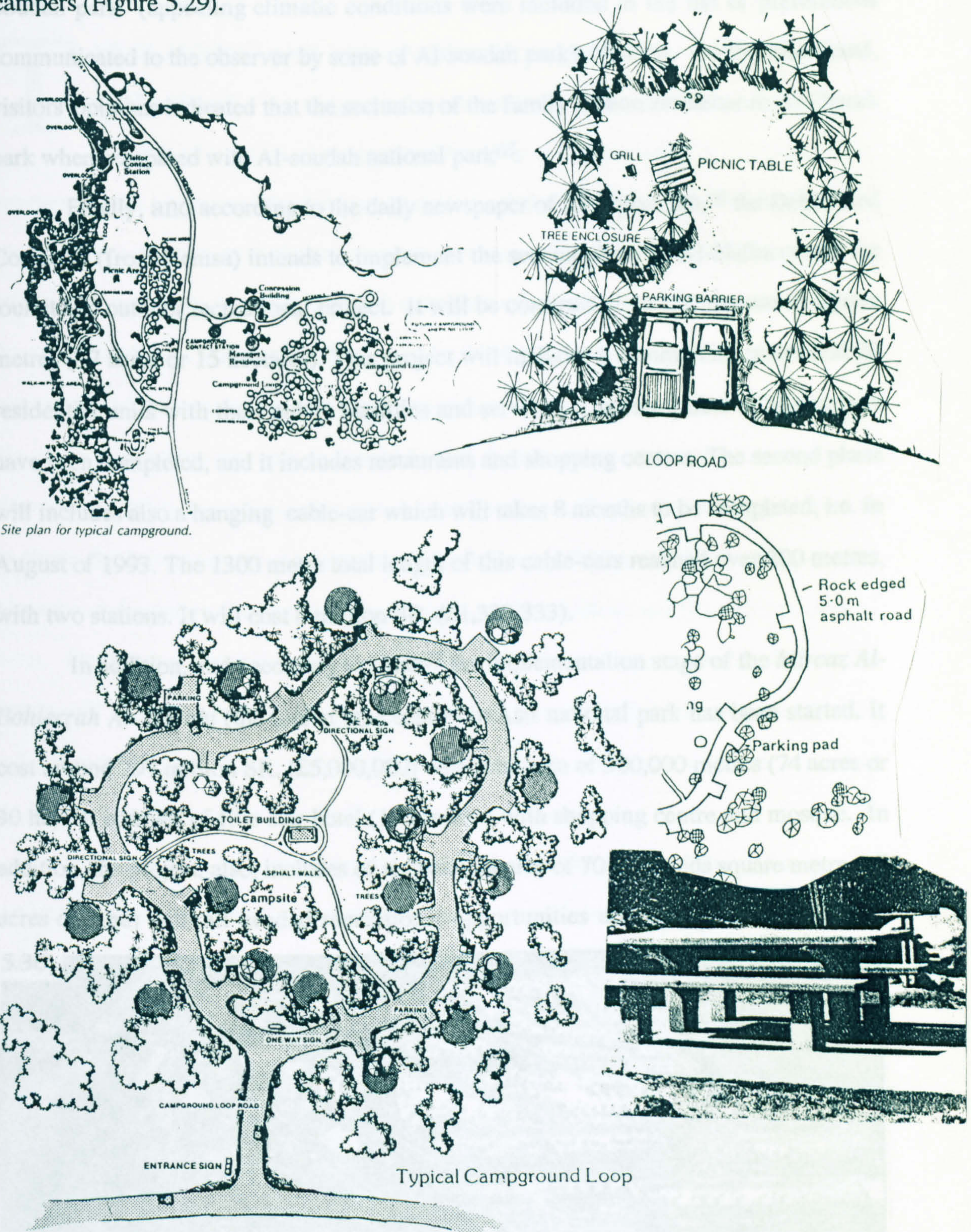


FIGURE 5.29 Al Qara'ah : typical picnic sites 64

One of the observed disadvantages of Al-Qrarah park is its flatness and lack of attractive scenery if compared with Al-soudah park for example. This observation was further confirmed by the visitors' preference to spend most of their leisure time in Al-Soudah park (appealing climatic conditions were included in the list of preferences communicated to the observer by some of Al-soudah park's visitors). On the other hand, visitors' opinions indicated that the seclusion of the family section are better in Al-Qrarah park when compared with Al-soudah national park⁶⁵.

Finally, and according to the daily newspaper of Al-Eqtisadiyah,⁶⁶ the Deblomied Company (from Nemsal) intends to implement the second phase of Al-Halba centre for tourist and outdoor recreational project. It will be constructed on 150 thousands square metres (37 acres or 15 hectares). This project will include a commercial centre and 20 residential units with their public facilities and services. The first phase of this project have been completed, and it includes restaurants and shopping centres. The second phase will include also a hanging cable-car which will take 8 months to be completed, i.e. in August of 1993. The 1300 metre total length of this cable-cars reached over 200 metres, with two stations. It will cost 8 million SR. (£1,333,333).

In addition, and according to Gdah⁶⁷ the implementation stage of the *Mircaz Al-Bohierrah Al-Suyahi* (the tourist lake centre) in Asir national park has been started. It cost around 297 million SR. (£5,000,000) with total area of 300,000 metres (74 acres or 30 ha). It consists of five-star hotel (135 rooms) with shopping centre and mosque. In addition, the project, also, includes of recreational area of 70 thousands square metre (17 acres or 7 ha) with all needed recreational opportunities and public services (Figure 5.30).

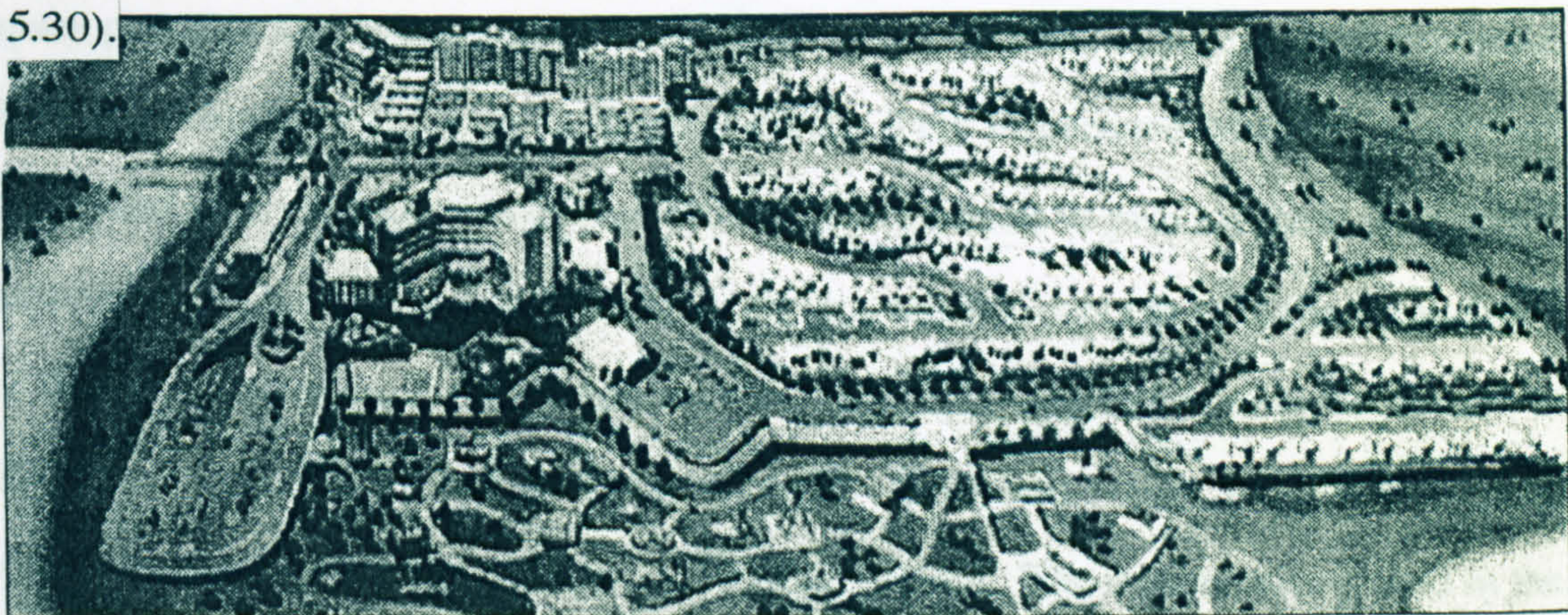


FIGURE 5.30 A model for the tourist national park in Abha.⁶⁸

IDEAS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL URBAN OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN

THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL URBAN OPEN SPACE is a very complicated process with many alternatives. It is the solution of a series of problems defined in site planning: the circulation and movement, the surfacing, the location and form of facilities, the form and the type of space for any purpose or multiple purposes. It is the shaping of land and water, and the selection of materials, to make many different places that form our cities and then parts of the moral landscape that need to be clarified. Outdoor recreational planning and design must be based on a rational procedure that in its formulation depends on an experience of life and social behaviour, and understanding of the landscape characteristics of special sites and an ability to understand how to use technology. This understanding enables us to shape the environment. It demands an imaginative design ability to devise new, adequate and creative forms out of the analysis of the problem and the determinants of form. Design is a growth or an evolutionary adaptation of environment. Successful design will express sympathy for the people who will use it, and it will express a feeling and understanding of use. It will exhibit a relationship to all else around, before, and in the future, visually and historically.⁶⁹

In order to set up criteria to judge the theoretical success or failure of a specific outdoor recreational site it is important to have in mind how an "ideal" system of open space planning and design can be formulated within the local culture and environment. This is particularly the case in Saudi Arabia. This is because Muslim people are concerned with outdoor recreational provision as a means to provide them with relief, enjoyment and recreational opportunities. In fact, Muslim concern with the urban fabric of the cities started from early Islamic times, when they established new towns such as Basra and Kufa in Iraq, and al-Fustat in Egypt. Basra was found by Ukba b. Nafi as winter quarters for the army in approx. 14 AH (635AD). The mosque was placed in the centre with the Dar al-Imara, the dwelling of the commander-in-chief with a prison and

Diwan, in front of it. It was similar in Kufa which was founded in 17 AH (638 AD) by Sa'd b. Abi Waggas. In the centre was the mosque and beside it was laid out the Dar al-Imara; later Caliph Omar ordered it combined with the mosque⁷⁰. In these towns they divided the land into lots in different sizes (sub-divisions) with different street widths. Houses grew around the Mosques (*Masjeds*) as a centre. These houses conformed with Islamic law and tradition in respecting the privacy of the neighbours, simplicity of design, and segregation of Mahrams from non-mahrams (Mahram is the close family male/female, non Mahram is the non-family members). In short, the main influence of Islam on housing, open spaces and places is its concern for the welfare of the Muslim community, physically and psychologically. So how to develop some design criteria for an ideal system of open space planning and design in the contemporary modern Islamic environment? In order to achieve an approach to answer this broad question, it is important to look at the subject in two different scales: macro and micro.

At the macro-scale the criteria to be developed might be related to land subdivision, zoning, locations of services, open spaces, choice of outdoor recreational types, housing and so forth. On the other hand, at the micro-scale, the criteria will be developed concerning types of urban open spaces, privacy for individuals within the spatial and physical structure of the designed open space, segregation of mahrams from non-mahrams, the separation of male-bachelors from families (ladies) and the design of the site and its relationship to surroundings.

At this point, and before proceeding with this subject, it is necessary to give the reader some design criteria about what might constitute an ideal system of open space and place planning and design for Saudi Arabia.

SOME DESIGN CRITERIA

According to Konsh⁷¹ and from the Qura'n and Sunnah (Hadith: tradition of the prophet Mohammad peace be upon him), the scholars had developed certain criteria (Fiqh) relevant to planning and design. The rules can be set out as follows:

-
- (1) Not to harm and be harmed.
 - (2) Muslims should be one community and avoid selfish behaviour.
 - (3) To respect the privacy of others.
 - (4) The right of the neighbours (respect, protection, security, safety and so forth).
 - (5) The right of precedence for usage.
 - (6) The right of the community.
 - (7) Not to be wasteful.
 - (8) Land sub-division or any housing or city project should consider an adequate size, location and orientation for a place or places for Mosques, gardens, and outdoor recreational areas.
 - (9) Land sub-division should not be divided equally in shape and sizes or distributed to one kind of social class or to unrelated and absurd geometrical patterns. This kind of arrangement causes segregation which is an un-Islamic approach. All kinds of people (low-class, middle and high classes) should be dwelling co-operatively together as one body, where each individual is integrated and depends on the other(s).
 - (10) The Mosque or appropriate praying areas should be integrated, located and planned in integration to other urban activities.
 - (11) For any housing project, all daily services and activities of a Muslim individual (mother, father, daughter, son disabled and singles) should be thoughtfully considered in shaping the outdoor social places and spaces, such as shopping, schools and parks or urban outdoor recreational sites.
 - (12) Separation of automobiles, pedestrian movements from social and recreational places and spaces for safety and privacy purposes.
 - (13) Space articulation, zoning and volumetric spaces should be organised adequately to facilitate, functionally, artfully and purposefully each type of activity.
 - (14) People are different so each site must satisfy most of them by providing many choices and various opportunities within each planned and designed provision.
 - (15) In every urban fabric, a consideration of all types and hierarchies of public spaces such as parks, gardens and play grounds must be located within each different scale of city development. That is to say, for example, an adequate neighbourhood-scale outdoor recreational site must be provided for those families (women with pre-school children) while their husbands are at work. Then, these should be specially designed outdoor recreational sites, relatively distant from housing units for picnics or "one day" outings. Then, a more ample and wide open space or a city-scale park for those outdoor recreational activities to spend the weekend.
 - (16) Privacy: to protect the privacy of the outdoor recreational site and to protect other outdoor recreational areas from being intruded upon.
 - (17) Separation of genders is the paramount criteria in shaping any space or place.

- (18) Islam is a simple religion and this simplicity should reflect on the outdoor planning and design, i.e. to design simple functional areas without superficial and poor functionally elements.
- (19) Vastness or large and ample open spaces for users to give them comfort and more freedom to enjoy the outings without the limitation of sizes.

In short, all the previous points should be taken into consideration by designers and municipal institutions when developing urban codes and regulations to shape the environment.

In addition to the previous criteria, there are some basic physical environmental facts in any land subdivision, as well as some recognised concepts which can be applied in any physical planning design. For example, any landscape design process involves a series of compromises in tailoring concepts to outdoor recreation's site-specific realities. For example, the pivotal role of the primary circulation elements in relation to its urban open spaces provide the ordering/structuring landscape elements of any area. Primary circulation can be used as an ordering tool in the design process. It dictates a clear hierarchy and articulation of the "decision steps", and assists in assuring a better or more adequate landscape design. The process is simple and direct: a) determine main circulation, generally by connecting previously evaluated access points to a site, b) the other elements fall in place with the secondary circulation following often perpendicular to the main street and cul-de-sacs.

In addition, an intelligent and rational landscape design process, based on consistency, integration and orientation in combining the other landscape elements of a project must parallel these more obvious determinants. Lack of consistency (or lack of variety within unity and harmony) makes success of a landscape design problematic, and often results in mismatched development, with the consequence that it is seen as insufficient, wasteful, rejectable and leads to dissatisfaction with costly outdoor recreational provision. Filor⁷² in his book "The Process of Landscape Design" has successfully suggested, the logical way of achieving a landscape plan and design. He said that "The role of the designer in this process (the design process) is crucial. He or she (the designer) must arbitrate between the often conflicting demands and needs of interest groups, respect the inherent values of the land, and satisfy his or her own design

standards. This is why landscape designers have always worked to a set of design principles, explicitly stated or not, to ensure that their proposals are sensible, rational and artistic solutions to particular problems. . . . Too often the design process is illustrated or imagined as a series of discrete parts, following each other in a set sequence - standard survey, analysis, concept and final design. This drastically simplifies what is in fact an interactive process, where information arising at one particular stage must be tested against facts, goals and issues thrown up at other stages. The pattern is cyclical rather than sequential, like a wheel which is moved clockwise or anti-clockwise as the need arises: 'backwards' to validate a concept against previously established site information, or 'forwards' to monitor a previous, completed project to investigate whether this has achieved its aims in use, and can thus serve as a design precedent." The following are some suggestions of how, where, when and for whom the landscape design process should be initiated in Saudi Arabia, allowing the desired type of outdoor recreational urban open space to be shaped, located and its conceptual design and planning techniques developed.

URBAN OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS

First of all, the process and the production of the required urban open spaces must relate to the leisure time of people to space. It is very important to use the concepts and methods of many disciplines to provide public and private leisure opportunities at every different scale of city structures. In practice, outdoor recreation planning and design blends the knowledge and techniques of environmental design and the social sciences to develop alternatives for using leisure time, space, energy, opportunities, services and money to accommodate human needs and maximise their satisfaction. As we know, recreation planning is concerned with human development and the stewardship of land by helping relate people to their environment and to each other. In short, recreation planning and design of open spaces is mostly concerned with variables of leisure behaviour and open space.

Recreation planning and design is a hybrid of physical and social planning that has evolved from the professional fields of city planning, landscape architecture, recreation and outdoor and park administration with links to social, economic, religious, civil engineering, forestry, geography and environmental health. In short, the planning and design of urban open spaces is a sensitive and important issue concerned with how to shape the environment of local people.

For the sake of this argument, Figure 5.31 represents a flow diagram of how to formulate a sensible or ideal system of planning and design of outdoor recreational urban areas. Figure 5.32 relates to this flow diagram and Figure 5.33 a "Leisure planning process - a practical approach" This explores in more complexity the common approach to the design and planing of outdoor leisure based activities.

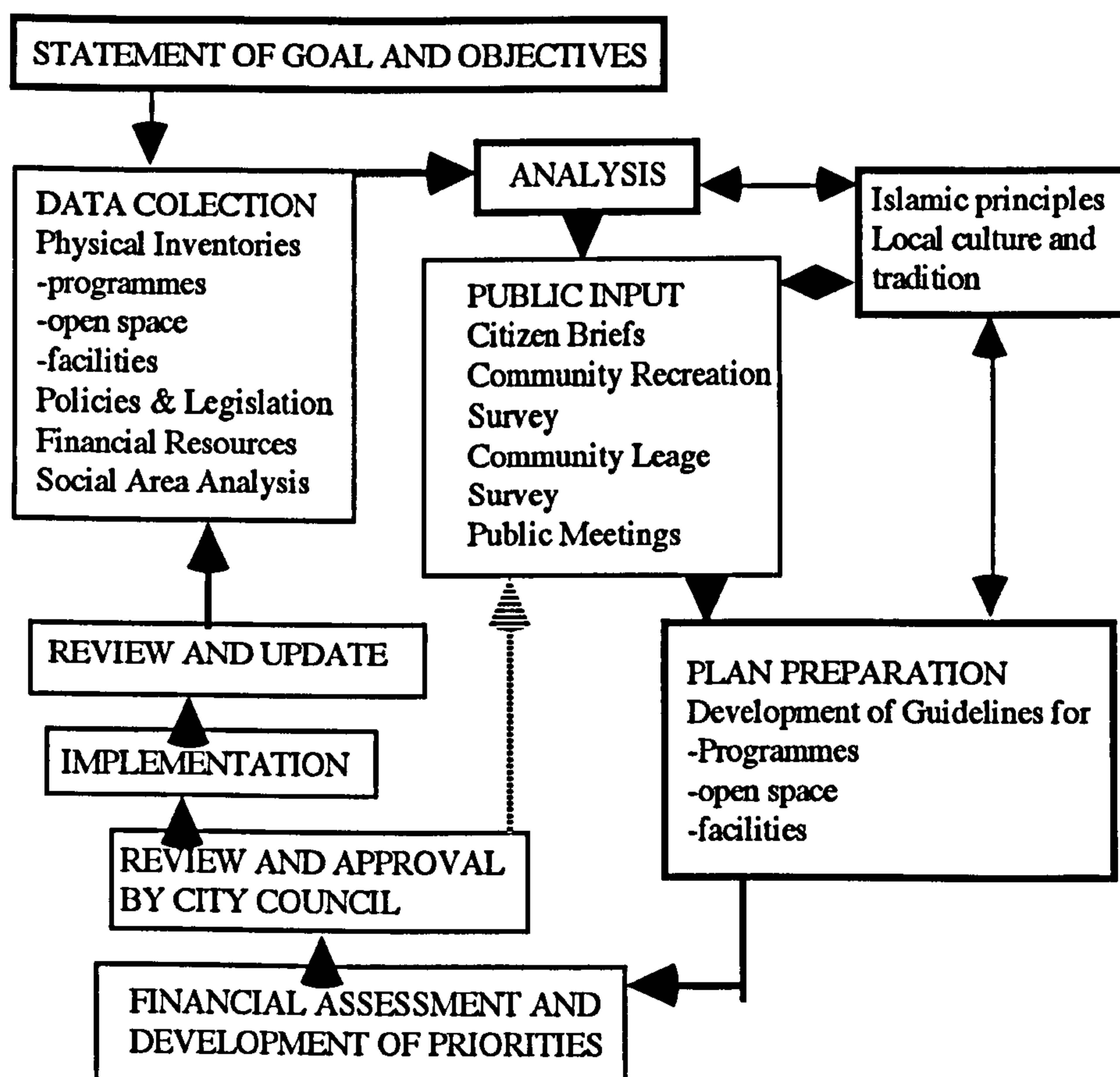


FIGURE 5.31 An "ideal" process for open space planning and design.

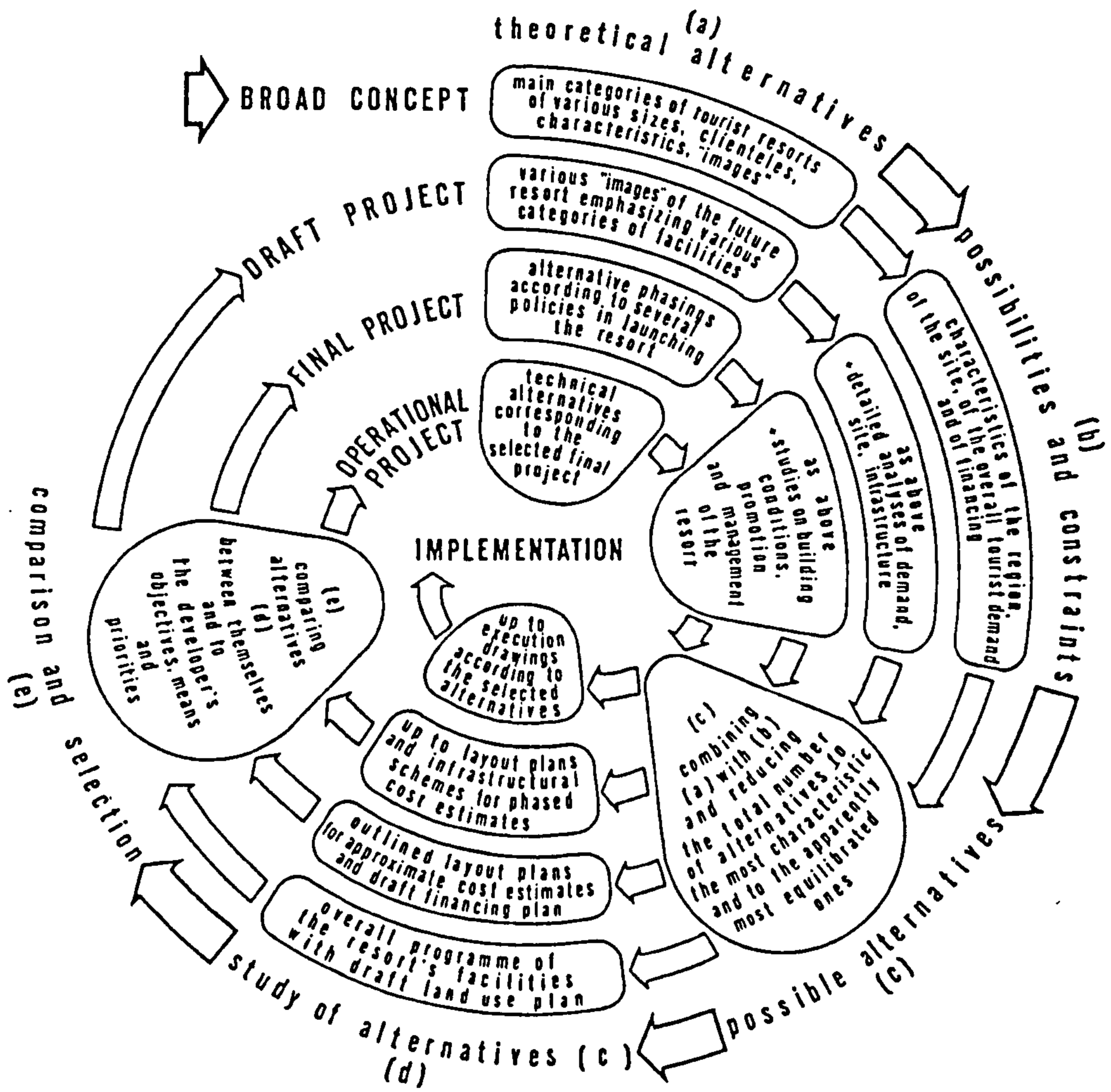


FIGURE 5.32 Leisure planning process - a Methodological approach.⁷³

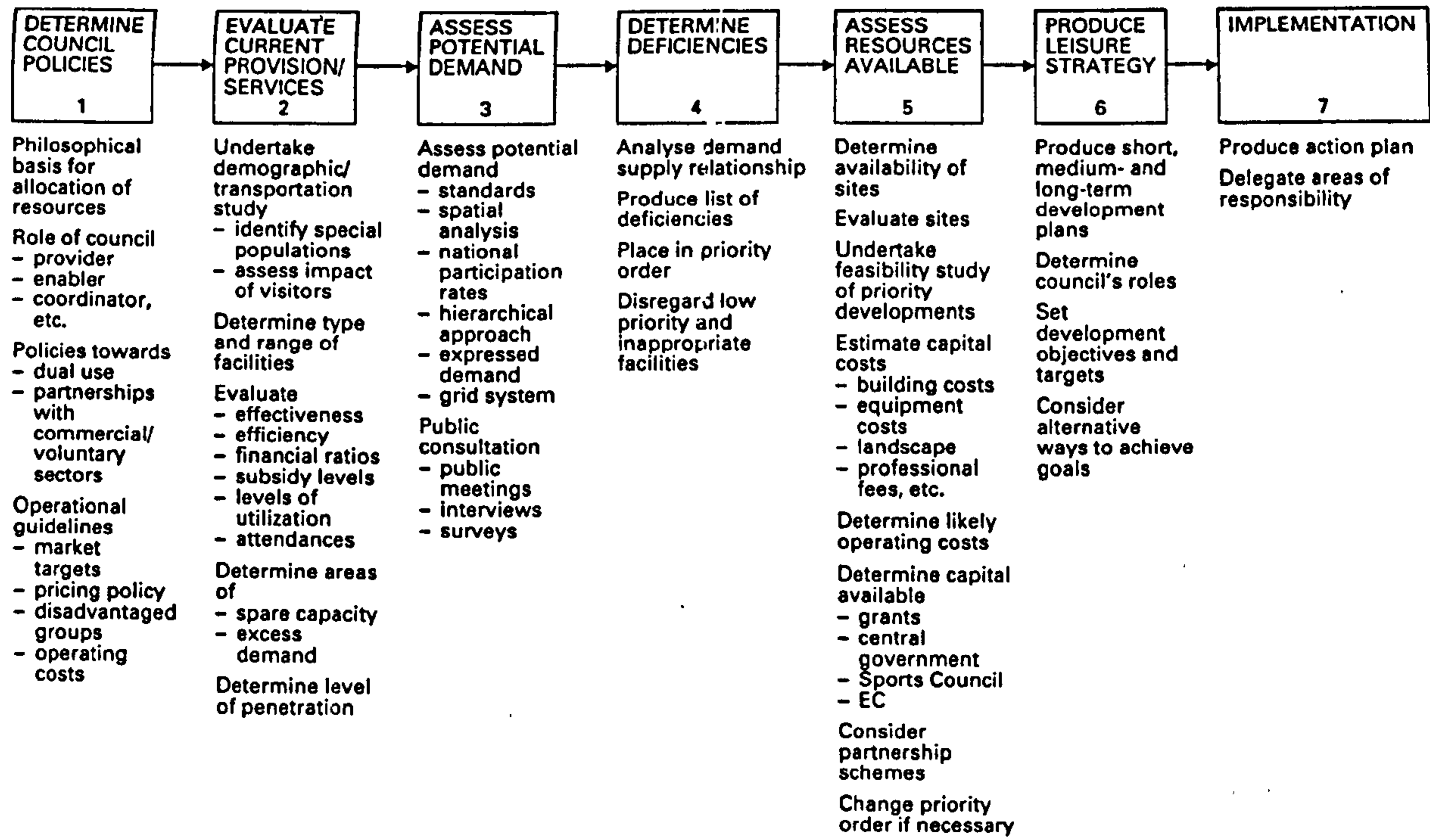


FIGURE 5.33 Leisure planning process - a practical approach.⁷⁴

RECREATION SPACE CLASSIFICATION

IN THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS of Greece and Rome a number of urban open spaces were traditional: the marketplace (the agora in Greece, the forum in Rome); gymnasia for athletes; and sacred burial groves. Each of these was designed or set aside for a specific purpose. No areas of public landscape or public parks as we understand the term today were provided within the cities for unspecified recreation. Only on special occasions when a private estate was opened to the public did people have an opportunity to enjoy planted gardens.⁷⁵ In Islamic cities similarly there were few open spaces except in private gardens.

According to Gold,⁷⁶ the range of existing or potential recreation spaces in a city can be classified in a way that (1) acknowledges different scales or service areas, (2) relates to travel time-distance or access criteria, (3) provides for different levels of design and management, and (4) relates to the natural or human carrying capacity and design load of the area. However, this classification must also be based on how to approach conclusions regarding the ability of the various landscape components to respond to changes- cultural, economic and environmental...the interplay of development with natural features and forces, driven by cultural and social attitudes."⁷⁷

The classification of a space should also match the functional use and design potentials of a given area. For example, to designate an area a playground, but not have this space designed or managed to accommodate the behavioural needs of children, is absurd. Likewise, an area designated as a city-centre plaza requires an appropriate commitment of design and development, or different classification.

The classification of an area in the planning process implies the commitment of resources to develop and manage it to an adequate level. It also implies a level of use and satisfaction that can be used in projecting needs. Recreation spaces can be classified by (1) function or dominant use, (2) ownership, (3) degree of use, density or development, and (4) planning unit orientation. The planning unit orientation is most appropriate at the community or metropolitan scale because it best relates to use patterns, public recreation,

and private recreation opportunities. The following categories include most recreation spaces and provide logical planning service areas:

CATEGORISATION OF MOST RECREATION SPACES AND THE PLANNING SERVICE AREAS

HOME-ORIENTED SPACE Most leisure time (90%) is spent in or around the home in private spaces. This type of space must not be ignored in plans as it has the good potential of the home as a leisure environment

NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE These spaces, often associated with an elementary school, are pedestrian oriented, and normally planned to serve a population of 5000 people. They should provide a range of active and passive recreation opportunities oriented to the changing needs of a neighbourhood.

COMMUNITY SPACE These spaces usually serve three to six neighbourhoods, are pedestrian - or mass - transit-oriented, and normally planned to serve a population of 20, 000 people. They are, often, normally associated with a junior or high school complex and shopping or community centre. They provide a range of specialised facilities not possible in neighbourhood parks to serve the diverse needs of a planning district.

CITY-WIDE SPACE These spaces serve an entire community, are auto - or mass-transi- oriented, and normally serve a population of 100,000 people or more. They provide a range of intensive and extensive activities and highly specialised facilities not possible in community oriented spaces. The large urban park usually serves those within a 30-minute drive, which may be 50,000 to 100,000 people. The recommended standard for large urban parks is 5 acres per 1000 and a minimum size of 100 acres.

REGIONAL SPACE These spaces are commonly resource-oriented areas that serve metropolitan needs with the types of passive, extensive activities not possible or appropriate in city-wide parks. Access is by private or public transportation. The regional urban or metropolitan parks are normally acquired to provide the urban dweller with an opportunity to get away from the noise and congestion of the city without having to travel a great distance. Central or arterial locations are desirable but not always possible and the large urban park is often located near or outside the city limits. A minimum of 100 acres is required with 250 to 1,000 acres being more desirable. This park may feature wooded areas, desert, varying topography and water features, picnic

areas, boating and swimming, a nature centre, nature, hiking and riding trails, shooting, day camps and some sports facilities on a less formal basis than a district park.

REGIONAL PARKS These parks serve the people of a large region - usually those within an hour's travel time. The size and location will vary but at least 250 acres is recommended and may go up to several thousands acres. The responsibility for providing these extra urban parks generally falls upon the national or a regional authority. They should not, under any circumstances, take the place of neighbourhood or district parks. As the metropolitan area expands, there is often pressure to put facilities in the regional park that are not in keeping with the philosophy or purpose of the park. If proper location and development of neighbourhood and district parks is achieved, such pressure need not exist.

Some of the outdoor recreational facilities normally found in the regional park are campgrounds, picnic areas, nature centres, trail systems, water areas, a miniature train, botanical gardens, zoo, and in some cases sports fields. The recommended standard for regional parks is 20 acres per 1000, with a minimum size of 250 acres.⁷⁸

SHORELINE PARK

The Shoreline park is a spacious and linear area of scenic or natural character in which a variety of recreational experiences and facilities related to the presence of water are provided for outdoor recreational pursuits for public enjoyment and education.

A minimum area (including tidelands and marshes) of 100 acres has been recommended⁷⁹, either in a single block, or in a series of smaller units stretching along the sea/bay shoreline with the potential existing for linking the units with a trail, scenic road, transit, or ferry system.

The other feature that should be provided in the shoreline outdoor recreation park is a scenic or natural character. Various portions of the shoreline should be designated as functional natural environment units for planning and management purposes. At least 20 to 40% of the total area must be suitable for accommodating a variety of recreational activities and not possess any significant environmental features that would conflict with the development of recreational facilities. This portion(s) should be designated an Outdoor Recreation Unit(s) for planning and management purposes.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The development should be for the purpose of making the site available for public enjoyment in a manner consistent with the preservation of natural and cultural values of

the locality. Facilities might include such things as access roads, trails and the basic but not elaborate development necessary for camping and related outdoor activities.

In regard to resource management and use policies, the primary management objective should be to provide for a variety of recreation experience in the out-of-doors, while preserving, or when necessary establishing, scenic landscape conditions. Users should be encouraged to enjoy the site "as-is" in an outdoor environment where man is a visitor. Typical recreation activities within the site might include such things as hiking, fishing, camping, swimming, picnicking, nature study, boating, and horseback riding, but in Saudi Arabia these should be opportunities for both genders to have equal opportunities without mixing.

The planning and management of outdoor recreational areas, as well as planning and development policies, should ensure the outdoor recreational site be provided with all the substantial facilities such as campground, picnic areas, snack stands, nature interpretative facilities, equestrian complexes, road network, beaches, bathhouses, turf meadows and fishing piers required for a successful recreation area. Facilities which would involve major modifications of the land, natural sand beaches or water should not be provided. They are attractive in themselves but not essential to the public's enjoyment of the outdoor environment. Indoor or formalised recreation facilities are also not appropriate within an Outdoor Recreation Unit. On the other hand, all facilities should be designed to harmonise and integrate adequately in appearance with the surrounding natural or man-made landscape. That is to say, the outdoor recreational areas should accommodate the more structured outdoor recreation activities and thereby preserve the natural environment characteristics for unstructured enjoyment of the out-of-doors.

Besides that, the land must not possess any significant or delicate environmental features that would conflict with the intensive development of recreation facilities, or the land must be capable of withstanding intensive human impact and have the resource characteristics (including size) required by the design criteria for specific recreational facilities (such as a quarry that could be used for a swimming lake, an area of varied terrain suitable for an off-road vehicle recreation area, or a calm lagoon useful for a small-boat marina and sailing area).

It has to be recognised that the purpose of planning or design is not to create a static physical artefact or just to beautify the appearance of the landscape, but to produce a functional setting for human behaviour. Unfortunately too, many designers have overlooked the understanding of human behaviour or social activities as a basis to inform and shape the designed environment. "An approach based almost exclusively on visual form leads either to the reproduction of previously used "solutions" or to the proliferation of artistic statements that pertain more to current design fashion than to the needs of the public...aesthetic goals need to be balanced and merged with ecological needs, contextual issues and user preferences. There are many economic, technical and aesthetic considerations, that shape the buildings we know; they in turn shape the behaviour patterns of people who use them. To reverse this relationship, to start from an understanding of human motivation and let this convert shape the form, will require a profound alteration in the basic approach to design".⁸⁰

There are many types of urban open spaces such as urban plazas, neighbourhood parks, mini parks and vest-pocket parks, campus outdoor spaces, housing and outdoor spaces and gardens, amusements and natural areas. Therefore, it is very important that the designer should consider the appropriate type of the urban open space to be formed through the design process. Appropriate principles and guidelines for deciding this might include requirements that:

- * development should be sited to take advantage of the containment of natural features or to limit intrusion into views of attractive landscape especially from locations accessible to the public (especially in the vernacular of Asir region areas).
- * landscape features of relief or vegetation should be exploited to help create a framework of planting and space in a new design. Existing and new planting should be used to conceal, limit or soften views of development, improve scenic interest, reduce visual intrusion, emphasis or frame views and reduce exposure of vegetation affected by felling.

SOME PANNING GUIDELINES FOR MAJOR OUTDOOR RECREATION LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

The following are the main factors to be considered in developing plans and designs for outdoor recreation areas in Saudi Arabia:

- the framework should create visual and functional linkages between places.
- the potential of the framework to act as a system of wildlife corridors should be exploited.
- landscape and open space should be easily accessible to the whole community.
- existing developments should be key elements in the pattern of linkages.
- opportunities for views to and from the site should be carefully exploited.
- planting should, generally, be typical of the indigenous trees of the district.
- planting should form an integral part of the design of city parks and of outdoor recreational areas. It should relate to existing vegetation and should complement policies or proposals for surrounding areas. Such planting should be designed as far as possible to: conceal, limit or soften views of the road and traffic; supplement existing planting and link and formulate "articulated progressive volumetric spaces and places or outdoor rooms" in a cohesive landscape; replace or supplement wildlife and vernacular habitats; improve scenic interest; emphasis or frame views; soften the silhouette and outlines of engineering works and provide a framework for structures and reduce the exposure of visitors to other natural and social factors.
- Structures or ancillary works such as lighting, overhead structures and signing should be designed as a contributory part of the overall patterns, not like Jeddah's Corniche where lighting, signings and plants were all poorly designed and managed.
- The design of hard landscape including walls, fences, barriers, kerbs and paving should be undertaken as an integrated process, meeting environmental, people's as well as utilities needs.

To undertake all the necessary studies a wide range of professions need to be involved in the planning process. The timing of landscape planning studies is clearly of crucial importance if such studies are to be properly integrated into the development planning process. The separate contributions required from different disciplines need to be identified and a team approach needs to be encouraged to ensure a creative dialogue at each stage of the process leading to sound use of landscape for the benefit of future generations of Saudi Arabia⁸¹.

For the sake of this research, the author will highlight a few of the main types of urban open spaces for which the design process needs to be clarified: city scale urban parks and recreation areas, and neighbourhood outdoor recreation sites.

PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR URBAN PARKS

Since parks are considered very important public facilities, just like schools and hospitals, there is a need for some "ideal" system of park planning and design on which to base decisions about the proper location and layout of the facility. The design of the urban park has been characterised by planting and trees, a place for adults to sit, a place for children to play or sometimes areas large enough to play group games and picnicking. But what size should the parks be and where should they be located?

People are attracted to use city parks for a variety of reasons. The sources of this attraction are the opportunity for physical activity and engaging in passive outdoor recreational pursuits, and the use of specific recreational facilities: Tennis courts, ball fields, bike paths. People are also attracted to urban parks for the sheer appreciation and enjoyment of nature. They like to be in a natural setting (not in traffic environment as in Jeddah's Corniche), to look at wildlife, see sights, enjoy the quiet atmosphere and look at pleasant scenery (not to intrude into others privacy as happens in many outdoor areas in Saudi Arabia). All city parks must provide interesting natural landscape which might contribute to their perceived value in the public's perception of them and to increase their satisfaction.

In fact, it is very difficult to set up a rigid standard, concerning the location and size of each provision and facility. This is because the leisure time behaviour of people is by no means predictable; it is rather a matter of personal choice. The situation is exacerbated for the individual if one's preferred choice is not available and one has to seek a substitute activity. Provision should not, therefore, be based upon a simple set of measurements, criteria or rules.⁸² That does not however mean that the parks should be located, planned and designed without a logical and rational approach. For example there are certain standards of provision which can guide use: the metropolitan parks standard is about 150 acres (61 ha. minimum) within 2 miles (3.2 km) of population. The district park ought to be 50 acres (20 ha..) within 0.75 mile (1200m) of population. The local park's standard is 5 acres (2 ha) within 0.25 mile walking distance (400m). While the small local parks and district indoor sports centres should be under 5 acres (2ha) with one per 40 000-90 000 population, plus one for each additional 50 000 population (17 m² per 1000 population). It is worth mentioning that many of these standards are not based on empirical research, but on long-accepted assumptions of what is 'needed'.⁸³ They are a useful basis for checking provision.

The availability of city parks allows the circulation of fresh air and provides space for exercise, rest, refreshment and many recreational facilities in a shaded/sunny landscape setting. The layout of a city park can include a wide variety of what have become traditional elements: curvilinear drives and paths, rustic gates, Gothic architecture, irregular lakes and informal landscape planting. The city public park ought to be a place of sufficient size where the landscape design process can be carried out successfully to accommodate a large number of people in a pleasing place. City park projects can foster the love of natural beauty and increase the knowledge of and taste for rare and beautiful trees and plants. The park can be a piece of "rural scenery" in which people can walk, ride or drive. It should be a relief from the city street and its pollution, danger and noise. Unfortunately, many city parks in Saudi Arabia were planned and designed to accommodate traffic movement. Moreover, many designers in Saudi Arabia planned traffic roads to be the main skeleton of the park and even then the traffic roads were poorly located in relation to where recreation takes place.

In Jeddah there are parks described as city-wide recreation areas. These are large parks which provide the city dweller with a chance to get away from the noise of the city, its dirt and traffic. In Jeddah's Corniche the facilities fail to do this, the users instead find themselves among the traffic with all negative aspects and dangers. In fact, the automobiles must be controlled or if possible prohibited from a city park if it is to function properly.

The major city parks serve as a breathing space in the built-up areas. Their frequency depends a great deal upon the degree of population density, 5 miles apart being an average distance in congested areas and 10 miles being a standard in a highly decentralised city. The city parks ought not to be smaller than about 30 acres in size, with a standard of about one acre per 2,000 people as a minimum area.⁸⁴

The desired effect of city park can hardly be provided in less than 100 acres. There should be sports centres and facilities for soccer, boating and so on. The 1956 standards for California suggest that a city of 100,000 should have 883 acres of city park, of which 21 would be needed for parking. Beyond these park standards lie special items. Every city should have golf courses, outdoor theatre, zoos, botanical gardens, or similar facilities.⁸⁵ These standards are abstractions, created by the parks and recreation industry. They may not take into account the extent to which recreation patterns have changed in recent years, but in general they make sense. The need is for diversion rather than for recuperation and that the majority of people need and will seek challenging and active recreation and meaningful involvement, which can be regarded as an integral part of living, as it should be, rather than as something to be enjoyed in a playground. The landscape profession, in collaboration with parks and recreation departments and with the community, must be geared to re-evaluate their role in society, they must provide new park forms to meet modern needs rather than historical restoration.⁸⁶

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR AN "IDEAL" PARK SYSTEM

In addition to the main planning and design guidelines of the previous paragraphs, the following are some examples of the main points of the "ideal system" to formulate outdoor open spaces and places in Saudi Arabia.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

"The specified spaces for defined recreational use are not the full measure of adequacy of a recreational program under any circumstances; an abstract area of land in proportion to the population is but a part of the planning for recreation space in the city. It is the distribution of this space which measures the adequacy, not the amount alone."⁸⁷ The neighbourhood recreational areas may be only 20 feet wide but they may be 3 acres. Usually in Saudi they are one to three lots in size. The design should included all or most of the following:

- Planting or trees
- A place for adults to sit
- A place for children to play (a minimum size of 3 acres for a playground is recommended)⁸⁸
- Identifying logos: a mural, a name, a colour scheme or other suitable landscape elements
- A basketball net
- Sometimes areas large enough to play group games.

More than in almost any other open space plan, the designers of a neighbourhood park (sometimes called mini park) will have to understand the neighbourhood's social and political complexities. This is because they are providing for a wide range of ages and habits of the people who use the park at different times of day or night. Variants in patterns of use at different times are particularly important in Saudi Arabia.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines in reality must vary in relation to the specific needs of a neighbourhood, the dictates of the physical site, and the available budget for construction and subsequent maintenance. Normally a neighbourhood park should be sited so that users from a four-block radius can walk to it without crossing a major street. If possible, the location and programming should be undertaken in conjunction with neighbourhood traffic plans. For example, a very small park can be considerably enhanced if it is situated approximately mid-block and extended into and across the street, then closing the street to through traffic.

If we are to make any progress in planning and design small neighbourhood parks in Saudi Arabia it will be necessary to:

- give up the idea that beauty, aesthetics and scenery are of primary importance (as in the cases of Jeddah's and Dammam's Corniche recreational areas) in policy-making and, at the same time, ditch the romantic ideas about the countryside that have been imported from Britain.⁸⁹
- in giving up romantic delusions, we also need to abandon the concept of static landscapes and adopt an understanding of continuous landscape change.
- replace the present presumption in favour of maintaining the existing landscape by a presumption in favour of healthy viable land use, whether it follows the status quo or contradicts it.
- decide that all land is worthy of equal consideration, no matter what its present attributes are.
- in formulating policies, direct resources towards the land which is in the greatest need, rather than the land which is prettiest.
- stop using blanket, all-purpose evaluations and designations for any purpose other than the most elementary.
- substitute 'land' for 'landscape' in the terms landscape evaluation and landscape planning if there is any chance that the word landscape could be taken to mean only the appearance of the land.⁹⁰

SITE SELECTION

The site selection of parks should be such that users from near-by residential units can walk or drive to them without crossing a major street. For example, the location of a local park is crucial because whatever goes on around the park determines its use, the type of users, and their times of use and leisure activities. As a rule of thumb, a park can serve a great variety of users only if it is located where its potential users are concentrated: near high-density housing, activity centres, stores, shops and transportation.

Sites not within walking distance of potential users may be suitable for specialised use. A park, providing facilities not found elsewhere, attracts users from a larger area, as well as those in the neighbourhood. If possible, the location and programming of district parks needs to be planned in conjunction with neighbourhood traffic plans. For example, a very small mini park can be enhanced if it is situated approximately mid-block and extends into and across the street, thereby closing the street to through traffic. This not only offers an attractive and functional means of diverting traffic but also makes a small neighbourhood park more visible from nearby blocks. In addition, the location and size of neighbourhood parks should be planned through-the-block lot so they connect two or more streets or neighbourhoods and allow children and adults to walk more directly between home and school, shops or friends.

The neighbourhood park type is one characterised predominantly by a soft landscape of grass, trees and planting areas, usually it is located in a residential setting and detailed and furnished for a variety of active (sport, play, walking) and passive (sitting, sunbathing, resting and enjoying the views) uses. With the growth of the suburbs and increasing automobile use in the 1930s, new and larger parks were built that provided a myriad of courts, swimming pools, and fields. Physical exercise -team sports in particular- was deemed as important to maintaining morale in hard times as it was to biological and public health purposes. According to Marcus, Watsky, Insley and Francis⁹¹ the open space concept, which has developed since 1965, combines separate

pieces of land, such as neighbourhood parks, playgrounds, and urban plazas, into a system.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TO FULFIL OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL USERS' NEEDS AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

- Create a rich and varied aesthetic environment to maximise the desired feeling of contact with nature. For example, there ought to be many kinds of plants of varied colours, textures and hierarchical shapes; plant fragrant and flowering trees and shrubs; plant species that attract birds or butterflies; provide water that is moving (e.g. a fountain or waterfall) or is still (e.g. an ornamental pool). The soothing sounds of falling water create a sense of well-being and calm. Similarly, an isolated and protected spot away from activity and noise may satisfy the family or women in need of a calm, private and silent niche.

A comprehensive master plan for park development must include six parts.

- 1- Recommended policies and priorities for recreation, based on surveys and analyses.
- 2- Programme of additional facilities required.
- 3- Physical master plan detailing the locations of areas to be developed or protected and their facilities (not like the case of Jeddah's Corniche where many actions took place on site without any previous landscape design studies).
- 4- Strategy for implementation, co-ordination and financing.
- 5- Evaluation of resulting ecological and socio-economic and cultural impacts.
- 6- Action programme and mechanism for monitoring the changes and their effects.⁹²

The following examples are some site plans of different size, shape and functional city-scale outdoor recreational areas (Figures 5.34 to 5.40). In the USA such spaces are frequently referred to as "Mini Parks".

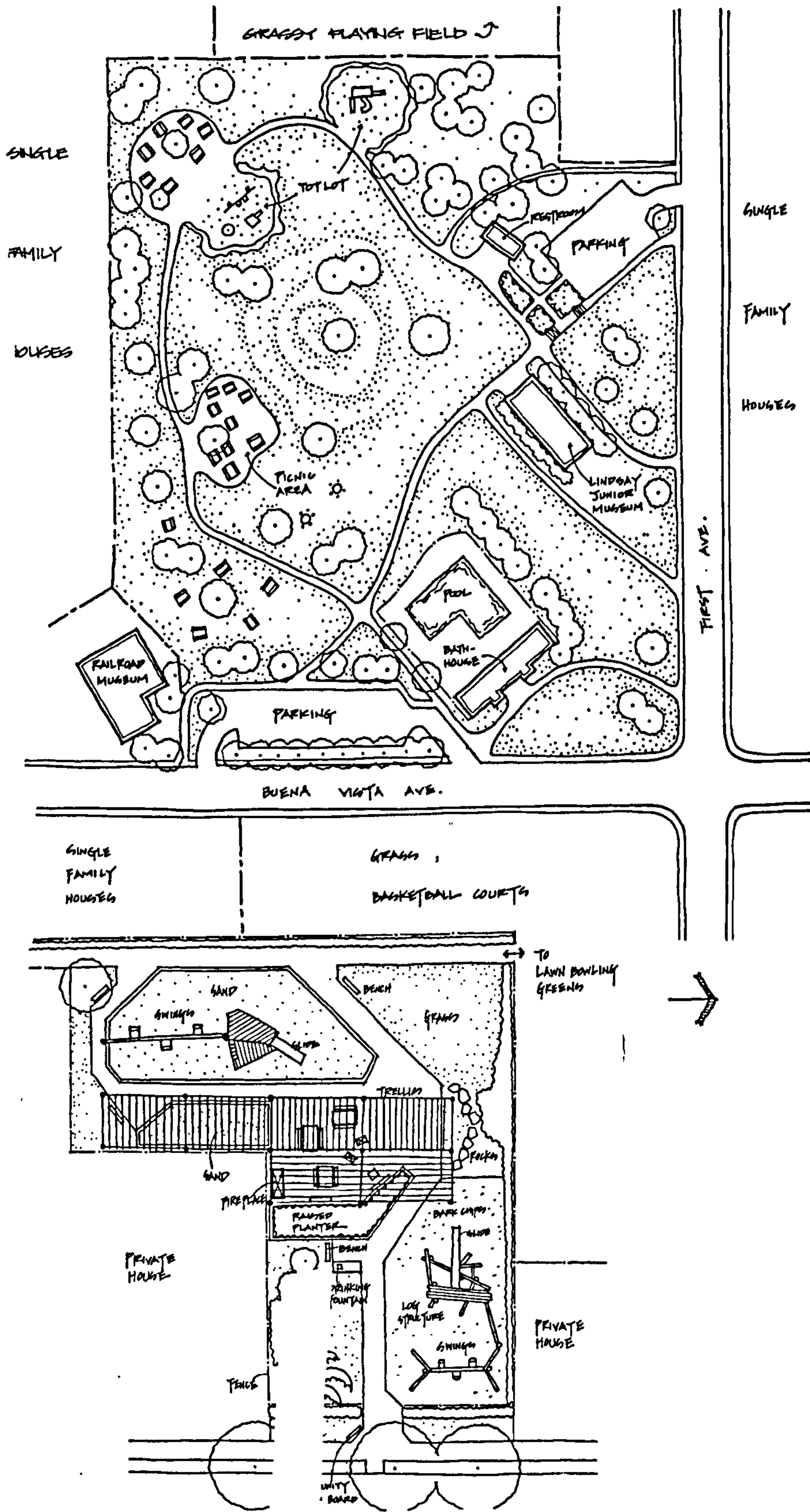
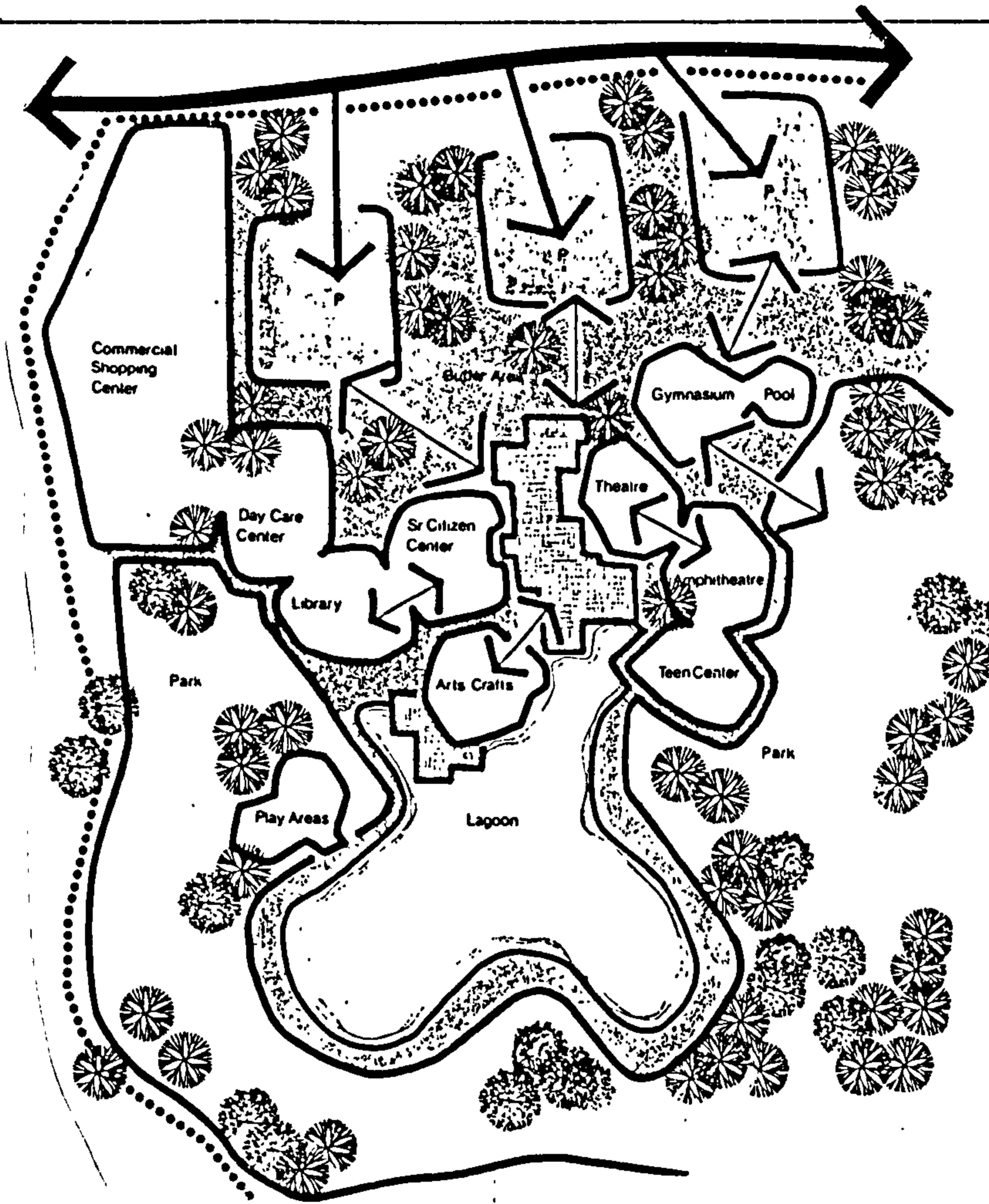


FIGURE 5.34 Site plan of some outdoor recreational sites in California.⁹³



Integration of recreation with other community services/Santa Cruz County, California.

FIGURE 5.35 Some examples of Mini-Parks in USA.⁹⁴

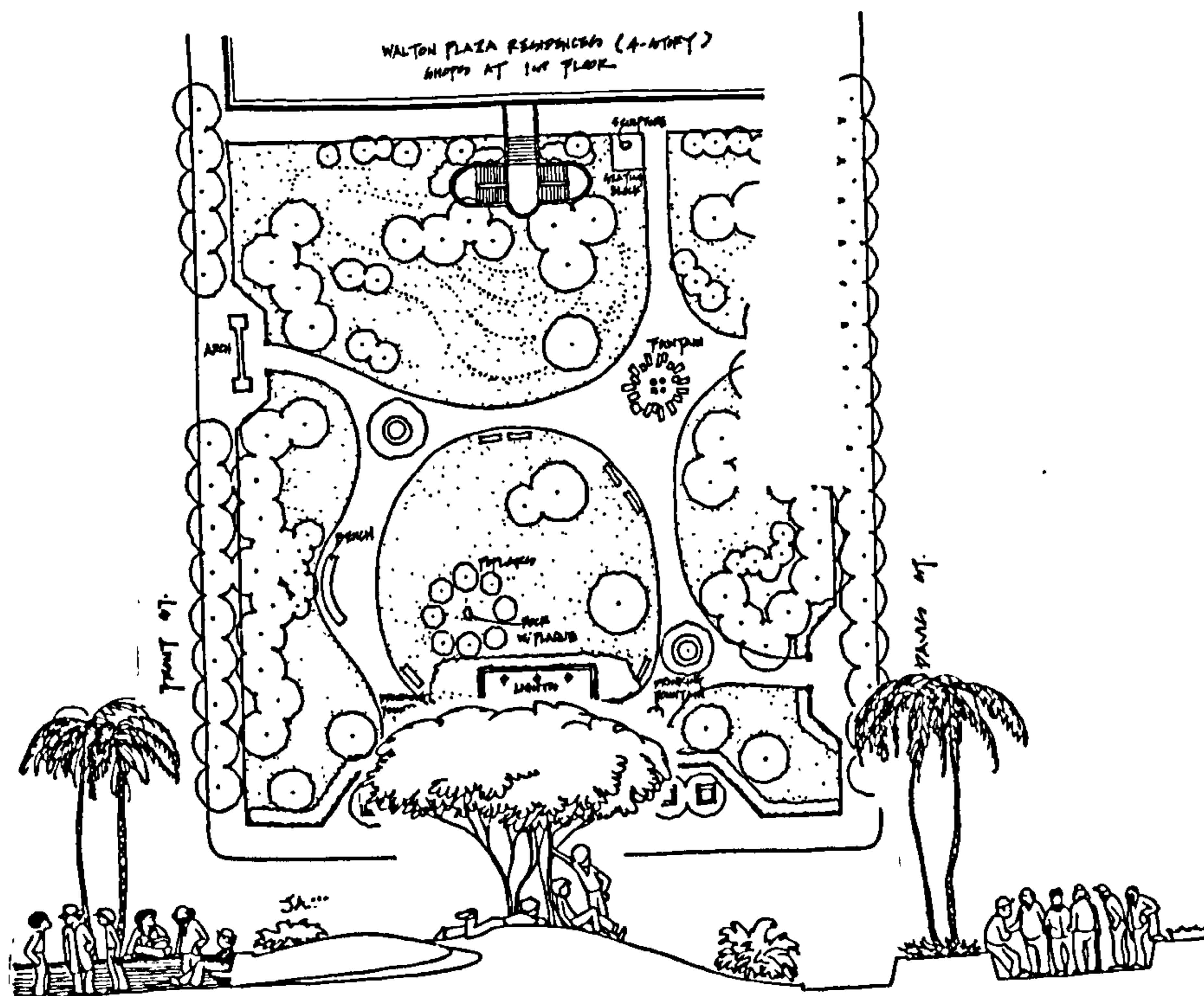
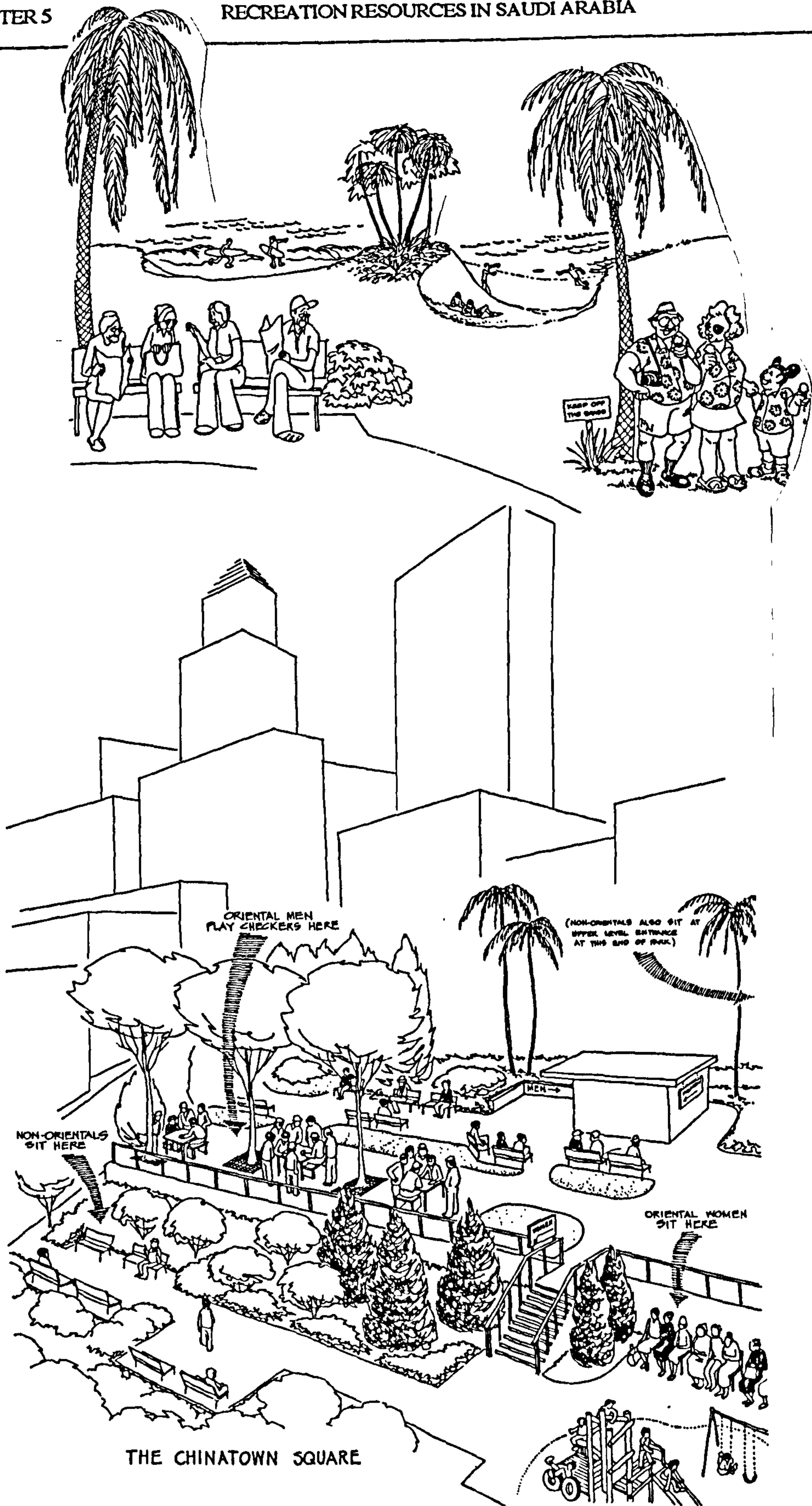


FIGURE 5.36 Some examples of Mini-Parks in USA.⁹⁵



An example of territorial design responsive to the social customs of the user groups.

FIGURE 5.37 Some examples of Mini-Parks in USA.⁹⁶

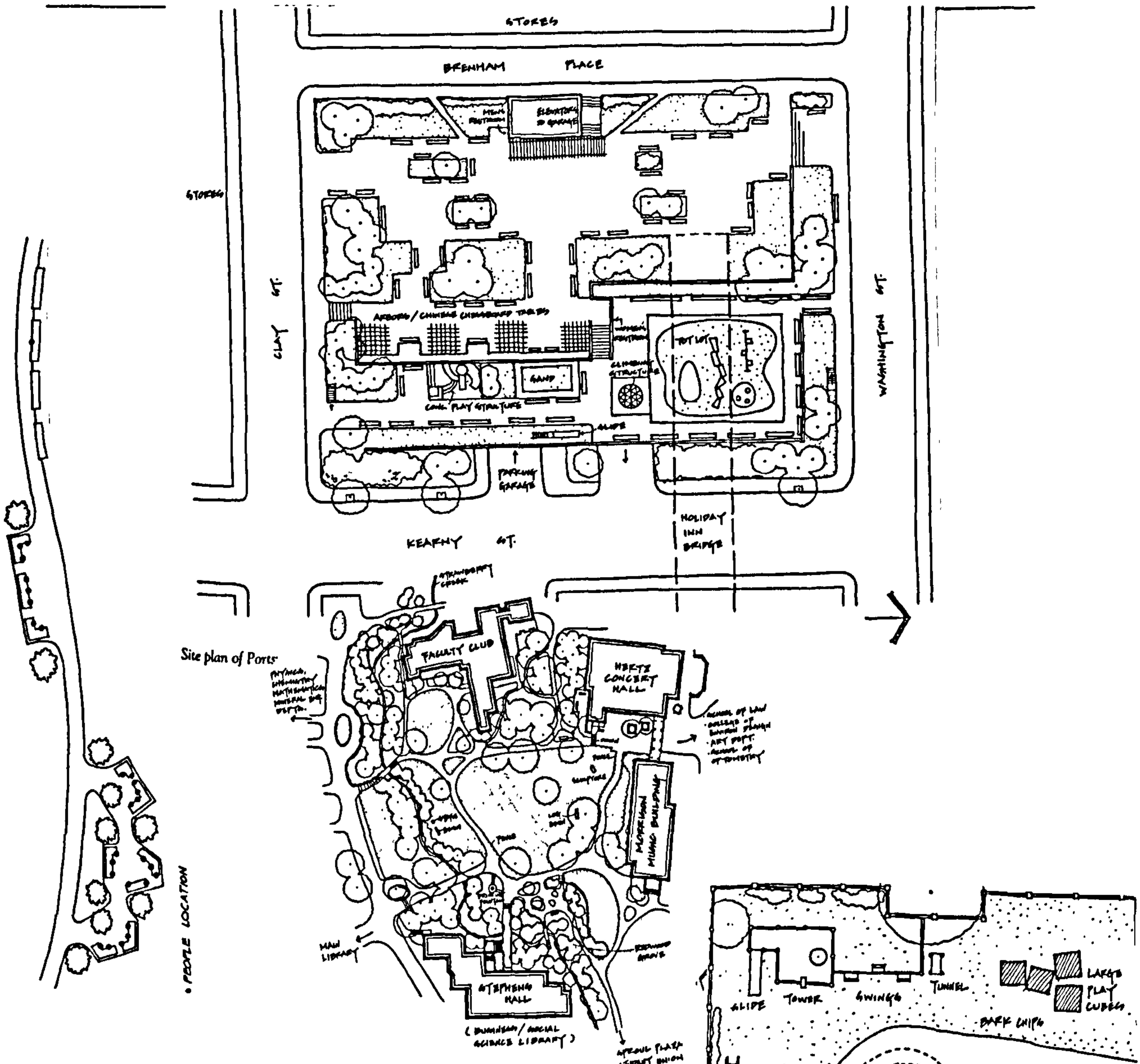


FIGURE 5.38 Some examples of Mini-Parks in USA.⁹⁷

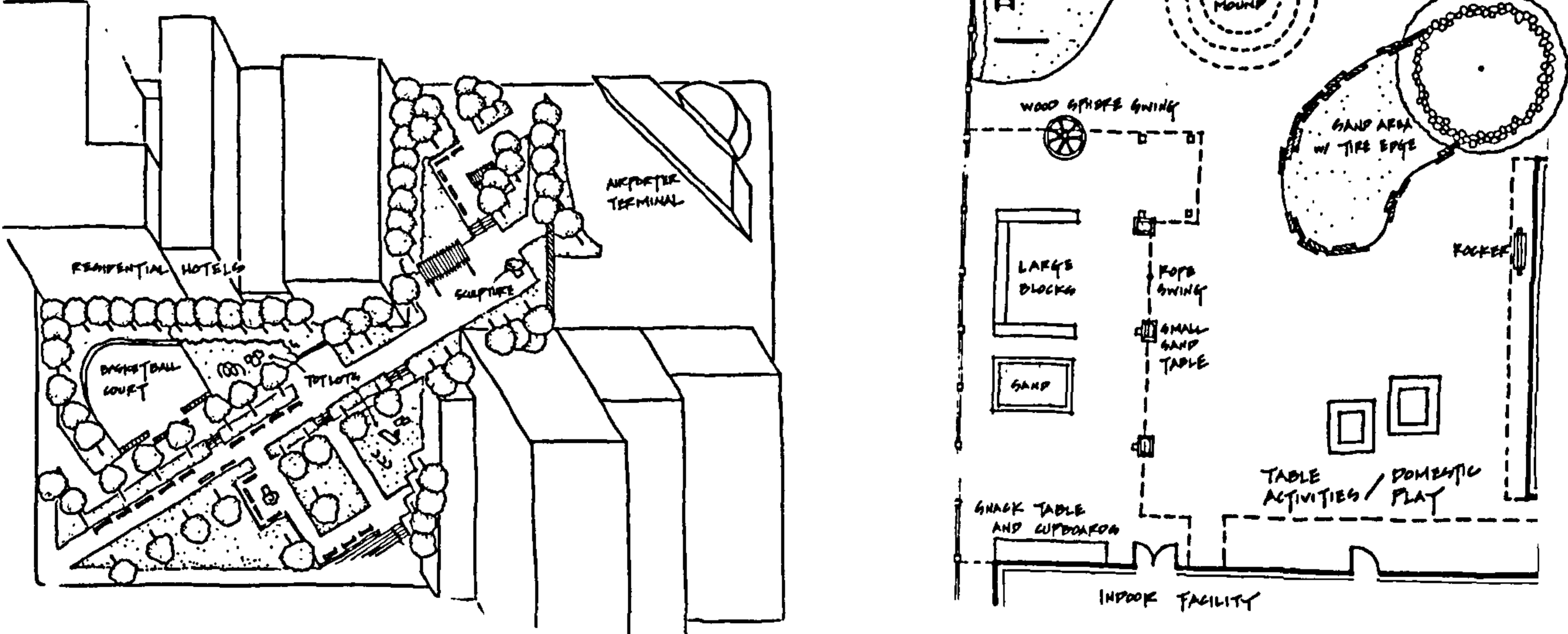


FIGURE 5.39 Some examples of Mini-Parks in USA.

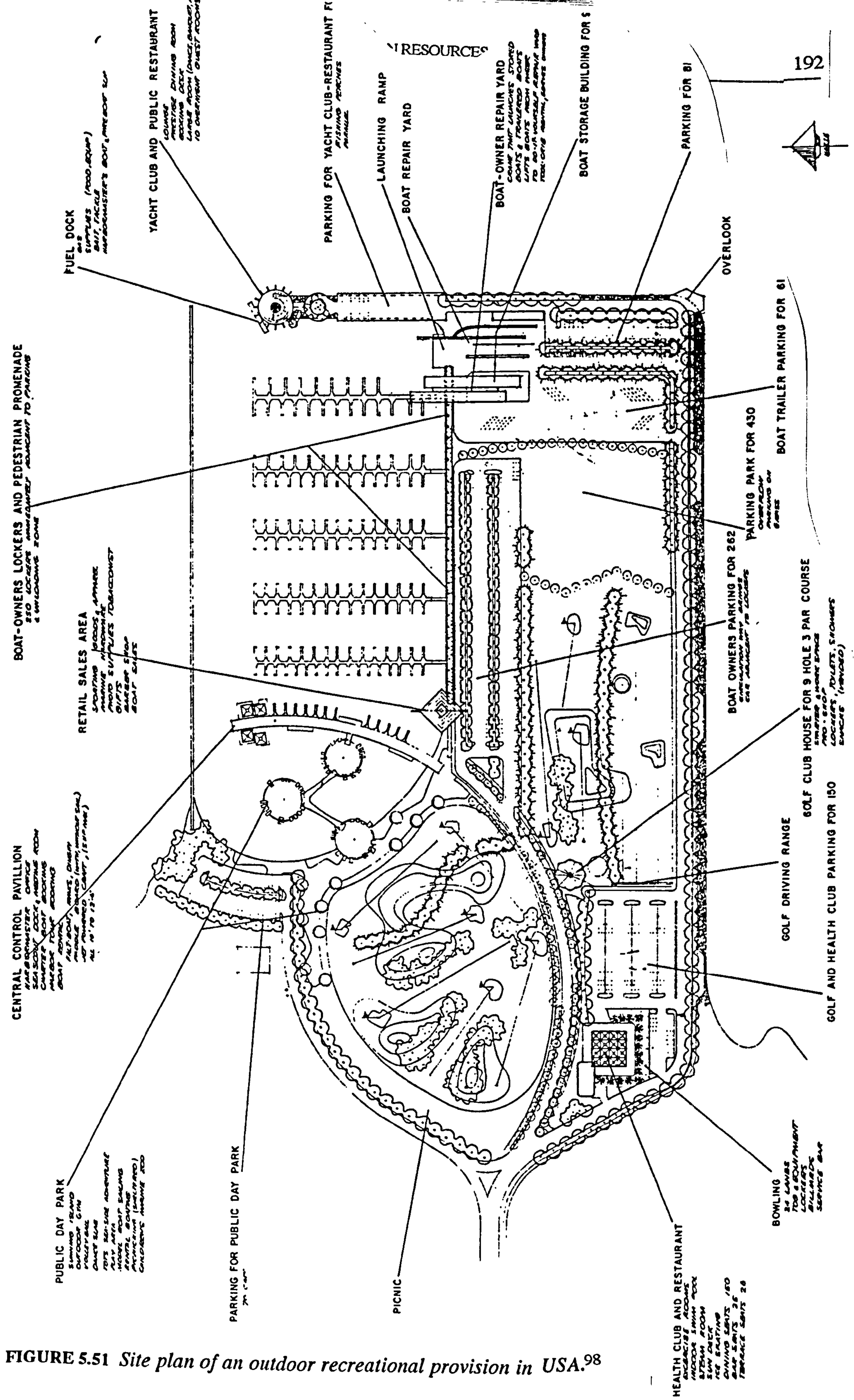


FIGURE 5.51 Site plan of an outdoor recreational provision in USA.⁹⁸

In relation to Saudi Arabian neighbourhood parks, such as Khozam Gardens in Jeddah, King Fahad Garden in Taif and Gable Al-Makhrog in Riyadh , the overall layouts reflect the poor aesthetic environment which lacks the feeling of contact with nature. Observation of what people actually do in outdoor areas suggests that social contact - both overt and covert- is equally important. All outdoor recreational areas should offer opportunity for both overt socialisation, or getting together, and covert socialising, or watching the world go by. Many outdoor recreational sites in Saudi Arabia were not adequately planned or designed to allow people to enjoy the outings without problems. For example, the circulation patterns in Jeddah's Corniche did not offer people the opportunity to be out-of-sight of others. The Corniche's design - seating patterns, circulation system, recreation facilities, and so on - also were not arranged to formulate outdoor recreational areas that enable people more direct, easy and safe access to its component parts. In fact, many outdoor recreational areas must be designed to permit regular groups of users to lay claim to certain areas. A regular group of users, distinguishable by age, gender, or recreation interest, should have the opportunity to claim a subsetting within the park, for example, a particular seating area, group of tables, or portion of a beach. Claim to a particular territory, however informal, may be necessary for them to maintain a sense of group cohesion and identity and to be able to predict where and when to meet or to be out-of-sight of others.⁹⁹

- Allow space for trees that do not need drastic pruning. By defining and enclosing spaces with their mass and bulk, large trees may do more to establish a natural ambience than can the expanses of turf that are often associated with the word park. Trees also can be used for shade, windbreak and creating outdoor rooms. In fact, many neighbourhood open spaces in the Kingdom's cities suffered from many problems such as isolation and fragmentation. Plantation techniques were based mainly on "agricultural grid patterns" i.e. there was no consideration for orientation, type of tree and so on, where and how to formulate "outdoor rooms' still needs more attention in the Saudi Arabian design process. "The open spaces within the local areas (in Saudi cities) have failed to achieve the purpose they were provided for. The tenants' use of these places is very limited for social or recreational purposes. When these spaces were designed, social factors were not seriously considered. These open spaces are overlooked by the surrounding buildings so the provision of places

which maintain privacy for the users was ignored. In the physical sense, the open spaces are mostly primitive in nature. It is the place of agglomerated trees which shows a lack of pedestrian routes as well as places to sit or interact. The function of public and semi-public open spaces in the Islamic City is not provided for. Often, the location of the open spaces within the neighbourhood does not encourage such informal uses."¹⁰⁰

- Provide meandering pathways through or alongside natural setting. People in need of privacy may wish to stroll along a circuitous path system with varied views, alternating settings of enclosure and openness, and opportunities to sit and rest. Perhaps one of the most pleasing types of park path is around an expanse of water. And this is to allow women and children to stretch their legs, view the ducks and other waterfowl. People prefer freedom of choice as to when and where they make contact with others. Thus it is unwise to have a path leading to, and terminating at, a setting where contact seems likely or not. Rather, pathways should not allow people to be in danger with traffic as in Jeddah's Corniche, nor to allow people to pass close to others which cause privacy intrusion.
- Create an area in the outdoor recreational site that can be allowed to grow naturally. In an urban setting, such an area may provide an important spiritual link between humanity and nature.
- Isolated tables should be provided for those people wanting to eat, read or study outdoors in a natural setting. Quiet areas should be usable and their silent and tranquil mood should be expressed clearly and strongly enough to discourage other more intense or noisy activities, such as large picnic groups.
- Provide some areas for sitting close to the site perimeter yet partially screened from street noise and activity. People with only a few minutes to spend, those with limited mobility, and those who are security conscious may wish to choose areas where one can observe green and natural spaces yet not be totally inside the site.
- Be aware of the micro climate(s) of the site when locating quiet seating areas. Degrees of sun, shade and wind protection will have an important impact on visitors' use. Consider the extremes of the climatic conditions likely to be experienced (which might include summer heat and dust storm wind), and design for both these and normal conditions. Evergreen trees are often the best choice for areas with hot summer climates. The dry climate and lack of precipitation have a limiting effect on the flora and the fauna of an area. Thus lawns and planted areas are difficult to

maintain in some Saudi cities, even with the assistance of irrigation. The type and amount of plants need careful consideration. The strong wind especially near the coast may hinder planting certain types of vegetation. Air movement can have a positive effect for those who practice some activities like sailing. At the same time it can restrain building temporary shade by canvas and blow beach sand which can disturb recreationists. Tree species that might be suitable in Saudi Arabia are those native trees or some adapted vegetation that will withstand a harsh environment. Although many plants in Saudi Arabia produce well-protected seeds that can remain dormant for years, they germinate and sprout rapidly. Most of them live out their entire life cycle in one rainy season that may be only a few weeks long.

Plant species such as a sedge (*Cyperus conglomeratus*) and a perennial grass (*Panicumturgidum*) are common in the coastal sands. Further inland, the 'Arafaj shrublet (*Rhanterium epapposum*) is the dominant species over hundreds of square miles, while a saltbush called Rimth (*Haloxylon Salicornicum*) covers the ground in poorly drained areas where the ground water is salty. Both 'Arfaj and Rimth provide important pasturage to camels, with the saltbush supplying the salt that grazing animals need. South-western Arabia has native Cactus plants. What is probably the most familiar, and valuable, plant in the Kingdom is the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*).

- Place sitting areas in planted and enclosed articulated volumetric and progressive areas, facing pleasing views of open green areas. Those sitting areas backed by structures such as walls, plants, trees or mounds, rocks to provide a greater sense of security and being in territorial private realms. The textures, odours and micro climate around these areas can also enhance the sense of being in nature.
- All outdoor recreational areas should offer the opportunity for both overt socialising, or getting together, and covert socialising, or watching the world go by. The location of the outdoor recreational site will, in large measure, determine which will predominate. For example, recreational sites in family-oriented, low-density residential neighbourhoods may be best for getting together for picnics, games, sports, and so on. This kind of site needs a circulation system that enables more direct, easy access to its component parts.
- Design the outdoor recreational site to permit regular groups of users to lay claim to certain areas. A regular group of users, distinguishable by age, gender, or recreation interest, should have the equal share and opportunity to claim a sub-setting within the site, for example, a particular seating area, group of movable benches and tables, or portion of a beach.

- Claim to a particular territory, however informal, may be necessary to maintain a sense of group cohesion and identity and to be able to predict where and when to meet their friends. This is because the site's layout and details can enhance casual meetings in the site, or cause privacy intrusion and many social problems
- For walkways, use surfacing materials that are smooth, yet not slippery and free of glare with various width. For example, make sure that no path crosses a ramp access way, as this can be a difficult manoeuvre for those in wheelchairs. So use a change in paving material to show changes in level, path intersections or changes in type of use. In addition, avoid curbs unless absolutely necessary for drainage edging or safety. When curbs are necessary, they should be painted to increase visibility.
- As regards vegetation, keep away from paths, trees and plants with a large amount of fruit, which could pose a hazard to safe footing. In addition, prune plants so as not to hang down or jut out into pathways, or obstruct notice boards.
- Locate tot lots well away from streets. If they are too close, even if they are fenced, the fear of traffic danger will be enough to keep parents from relaxing.
- Ensure that toilets are easily accessible and include diaper-changing facilities. Toilets should be located close to children's play areas.
- Create smooth-surfaced walkways within and leading to the tot lot. The walk from the site or parking lot should be as direct and simple as possible, with a pathway wide and smooth enough for baby strollers and barely toddling children. In the tot lot, small children like to play in sand or on equipment and also to pull a wagon or ride a bicycle on a hard surface. Therefore, the path to the tot lot should also encircle it.
- Vary the topography between undulating and flat areas. A varied topography can enhance the site greatly for users, by surprising them with places to roll on, run on, slide down and hide behind.
- Locate a hangout area that maximises views of and from passers-by; clearly define the area; and provide seating for at least five to seven persons. A defining edge might be mounding, a retaining wall, steps or the back of benches.

Furthermore, and in addition to the previous guidelines and the examples of different site layouts, the site plan of the outdoor recreational area should reflect the

tremendous diversity of the neighbourhood. At any given time, all ethnic types, especially Muslims, and age groups are likely to be present. The designer, for example, might attempt to segregate the users into well-demarcated zones through differences in level and texture, fences and spatial and volumetric distances and spaces. In other word, the clear segregation of uses through separation of activity zones will prevent conflicts among the different user groups.

CITY PARKS

City parks are most often used on weekends and holidays. It is preferable for environmental planners and designers to link city parks with a more or less continuous system by the use of , for example, landscape boulevards, parkways, pedestrian easements, linear parks, drainage channels, utility easements and similar connecting elements. Such an approach will have the potential of connecting urban and suburban communities. They can bring people together for social and cultural interchange. This contrasts with the present use of streets and highways in Saudi Arabia as 'outdoor recreational places'. These service elements isolate people.

All planning of city wide park facilities should seek the optimum relationship between people and their desire for adequate recreation in a park.

The design of a city park involves careful analysis of flow patterns and circulation. Large numbers of people generally require access, car parking space and admission to the various facilities over relatively long peak periods. Circulation planning must take into account the different needs of visitors, making suitable provision for the participants in the various activities, spectators with specific interests, entertainment and interest, and families with multiple requirements. The design of social areas for the non-active members of the family, including the aged must be given as much attention as the design requirements for outdoor recreational pursuits.

City-parks are usually situated near to the city or the large town. This close proximity allows the facilities to be used regularly not only at weekends but after work on weekdays and by schools, societies, clubs and other groups.

Picnic sites may play a major role if planned for intensive use and are conveniently located near or along the main routes of access. Picnic sites are generally less than 25 acres (10 ha) area and have fewer recreational facilities than country parks.¹⁰¹

In fact, picnicking standard size in USA allow 15 to a maximum of 40 facility units per ha (6 to 16 per acre), each unit serving 4 to 8 persons and including both car parking, if possible behind a visual barrier and no more than 100m from the site, and picnic facilities. The latter should include one or more benches (or enclosed gravel sitting area in the Saudi environment), a fire grate and appropriate rubbish containers. Maximum concentrated densities at any instant may reach 300 and even 500 picnickers per ha including their cars (120 to 200 per acre), but this is excessive and produces a major deterioration in the visual appearance of the area and of the individual enjoyment of the experience, as well as privacy and social tension problems¹⁰².

Capacity limits for picnicking, especially in the desert areas of the kingdom or beaches, are very dependent on the extent to which the areas are managed, equipped and controlled, for example, with car hardstandings, turfed areas and tree, shrub or rocky and vegetation screening. Litter and fire control are critical requirements.

In addition, the city-park, also, should include a variety of alternative environments to allow a choice in recreation pursuits including, for example:

- A wild or rural environment.
- A mix of natural areas and of places equipped for specific activities.
- Developed facilities in an attractively landscaped, if not natural, environment.

It is important that maximum densities of use compatible with any of these environments should not exceed the 'capacity' to avoid degradation of the recreational objectives or of the environment, or both. "Most outstanding natural sites can accommodate a limited number of visitors without detriment and the provision of a few well designed facilities will invariably add to convenience and enjoyment without loss of the benefits of the surroundings. But the situation changes, often dramatically (as Thamama natural park in Saudi Arabia or some natural sea-side areas along the beaches

of the Red Sea) when the number of visitors or facilities increase beyond a certain threshold:

- The quality of the experience progressively decreases.
- The facilities invade the site and lose (owing to a change of scale) the 'primitive' contact with the surrounding scenery. Often this change in character is recognised only after the event.
- The excessive number of visitors physically damages the site itself.

All these effects are magnified when vehicles are also involved, as at many sites in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the "carrying capacity"¹⁰³ of each site must be maintained and balanced or actions 'alleviating the pressure' from the recreational resource should be pursued by, for example:

- Restriction of access: limiting car park provision, prohibiting access by car, regulating the number of entrances, charging high and / or differential admission prices, etc.
- Limiting the facilities: prohibiting the building of additional roads, accommodation facilities, etc. Non-renewal of licence and concessions of lease.
- Zoning the various activities: separating quiet activities (such as walking, fishing, etc.), from those which are fast moving and noisy (motor boating, water skiing, etc.)
- Scheduling: excluding one or more activities at different times of the day, week, month, year, for example fishing from 1800 to 2100 hrs, water skiing from 0900 to 1200 hrs, swimming from 1200 to 1800 hrs.
- Developing alternative destinations: for example in the cases of excessive pressure on a forest or beaches by building a road to a second forest, or beach, or by developing areas to take part of the pressure away from sensitive areas.¹⁰⁴ Effective city-park design is essential and depends on good management.

In addition, in selecting sites as city parks, the following are important considerations:

Size This may vary from several hundred ha (minimum) to several thousand. However, the size of the park is generally less important than its location and suitability for medium density recreational use. For example, UK country parks are established to provide more convenient recreational alternatives in order to reduce pressure of demand on the more vulnerable national parks and on the countryside generally.

Accessibility. Good road links and, if possible, a railway station in close proximity, are important. It is often important to be able to control the use of any roads crossing the area of the city-park (to regulate speed, parking, charges, etc.) and to divert the main bypassing traffic (to reduce noise, hazard and damage as in Jeddah's Corniche). In the cases of extensive linear parks, it is an advantage if the motorway network runs distantly parallel, with connecting access roads at intervals

Paving for cars

The park's paving should be distinguished from the standard asphalt paving of parking lots. For instance, crushed rock rolled into the surface of all park roads would immediately identify the park by its particular colour. For all but the most intensively used parking areas, softer and more parklike materials - gravel or sand- should be used.

Paving for pedestrians

Three types of "pedestrian paving" are appropriate, including board-walk, pebbly concrete, sand or gravel trail. Variations such as brick, flagstone, coloured concrete, should be held to a minimum and used only where most effective.

Trees and shrubs

The continuity of basic trees - eucalyptus, palm, Tamarix, Zizyhus spina-christi, Mekia azedarach , Albizia lebbek etc. - and the continuity of colour patterns in shrubs and basic species and patterns allow interesting and meaningful variety. But avoid a haphazard and confused impression as in many parks, gardens and sea-side outdoor recreational areas in Saudi Arabia. Trees have ample variety in use and selection within the site. Variation in size, silhouette, structure, texture and colour are all available. By use of plants and by topography the park can be easily articulated naturally into many zones. Each will have its special character.

Park boundaries

If the park is to be an entity, it must be finite. The visitor should know when he/she is in it and when he or she is outside, when the visitor is entering and when leaving. The city park should be gently but firmly separated from the small-scale urban patterns surrounding it. The park boundary should be marked either by a peripheral road, or by a walkway .

A peripheral road will delimit the park very clearly, and it should give a view of the park's main features such as water activities and so on. A walkway can be also an

extension of a promenade which might serve as a very pleasant park boundary if carefully designed. Therefore, seen from the encircling roads or promenade, the distinctive planting materials, signs, landscaping, buildings, and progressive articulated spaces and places will further indicate to the visitor that he is in "a park" not in the man-made artificial routine of city life.

The way in which traffic roads go through the recreation areas of the Jeddah's Corniche is diametrically opposed to the principle of making the park an entity. Motorways chop up the park rather than unify it. In fact, there must be a thoughtful reconsideration of where and why traffic may speed through the park and, where through routes are imperative, how to incorporate them gracefully.

In addition, the city park must be a good value environment. The park must include visually attractive natural features. Many areas, such as woodlands, have high visual appeal and concealment, with good ecological carrying capacities and mixes of forest, grassland, rocks, mounds, clumps of trees, glades and serrated edges of natural landscape elements are preferable.

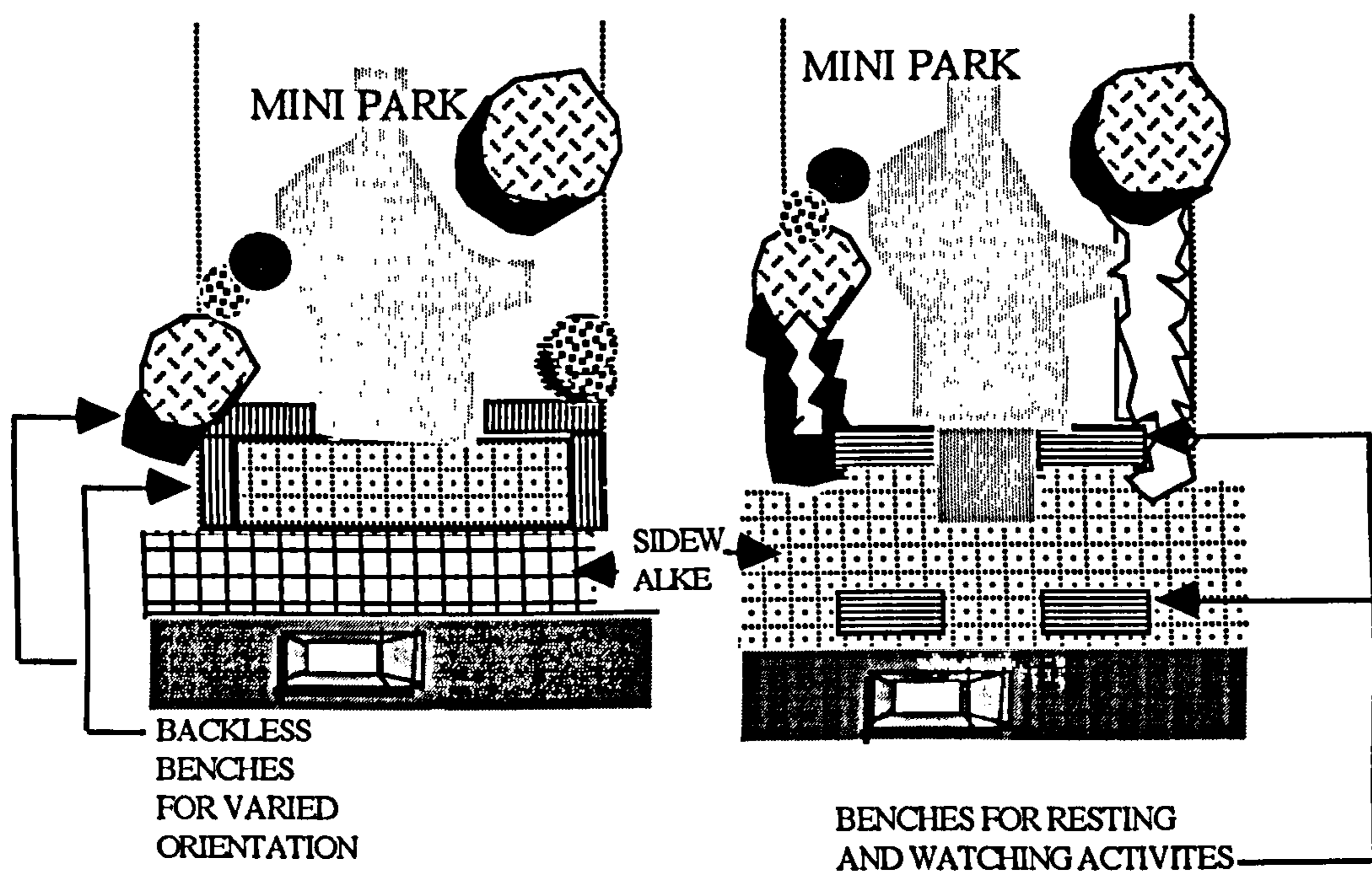
Finally, the potentialities of city-park designs and all other outdoor recreation areas are extremely important. Good design can increase the satisfaction that most users obtain from an outdoor recreation area. It can also increase the recreation capacity of an area without loss in the quality of the recreation experience. Internal traffic through the whole recreation area can be reduced, thus minimising wear and tear on the environment and reducing the points of friction between users, as is the case with many outdoor recreational sites in Saudi Arabia : the Corniche, Thamama park and Asir National park. Vegetation can be used to screen the activities of one group from those of other groups, thus adding to a feeling of distance and privacy . Good design of city-scale parks can reduce the psychological aspects of crowding by creating a feeling of spaciousness. Landscape design offers great opportunities to shape adequate parks.

Good landscape design of city-parks and other outdoor recreation areas can also affect the attitudes and actions of their users, and thus reduce the maintenance and management problems. Good design must be matched by good management and good maintenance. This is because personal observation suggests that a great many outdoor recreation areas are not maintained as well as they have been designed and built.¹⁰⁵

ASPECTS OF THE DETAILED DESIGN OF PARKS

ENTRANCES

A small entrance plaza is essential at each entry point to the site even in a pedestrian-oriented urban setting. This is because some sites are difficult to find, therefore the design should "announce" the location of the park to people approaching on foot or by car. This can be done, for instance, by means of noticeable paving extending out from the park to the street and/or striking street trees along the park's street frontage as in Figure 5.41.



CITY OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL SITE

Entries to the site should be carefully designed to allow passing pedestrians to watch the activity while not fully entering the park. Elderly people especially appreciated these sidewalk benches.

FIGURE 5.41 *City-scale outdoor recreation's entrance plaza*¹⁰⁶

Boundaries

Because of the inevitable proximity of public to private territory, the boundaries of the outdoor recreational urban site should be clearly defined. The size of a neighbourhood recreational site often means that two or more of its boundaries are clearly defined by adjacent streets. But because the site might be very small, two and often three sides are usually bounded by adjacent, frequently residential, properties.

Attention should be given to the site's street boundary. Where a high boundary fence is not appropriate. A low, attractive fence and perhaps a gate along the street frontage of the site might be considered in order to channel pedestrian movement along pathways and keep children safe. And a fence can also demarcate separate areas for only women use .

The Walls

A range of wall heights can be used to serve different functions. They can be used to define and enclose spaces, create road closures and small seating areas (Figure 5.42). For example: 2m walls or hedges immediately define spaces, but they can also provide protection from the sun, wind, sand and cars. They can also help support and protect planting, seating and pergolas. They also can produce subtle degrees of privacy and help to guide circulation.

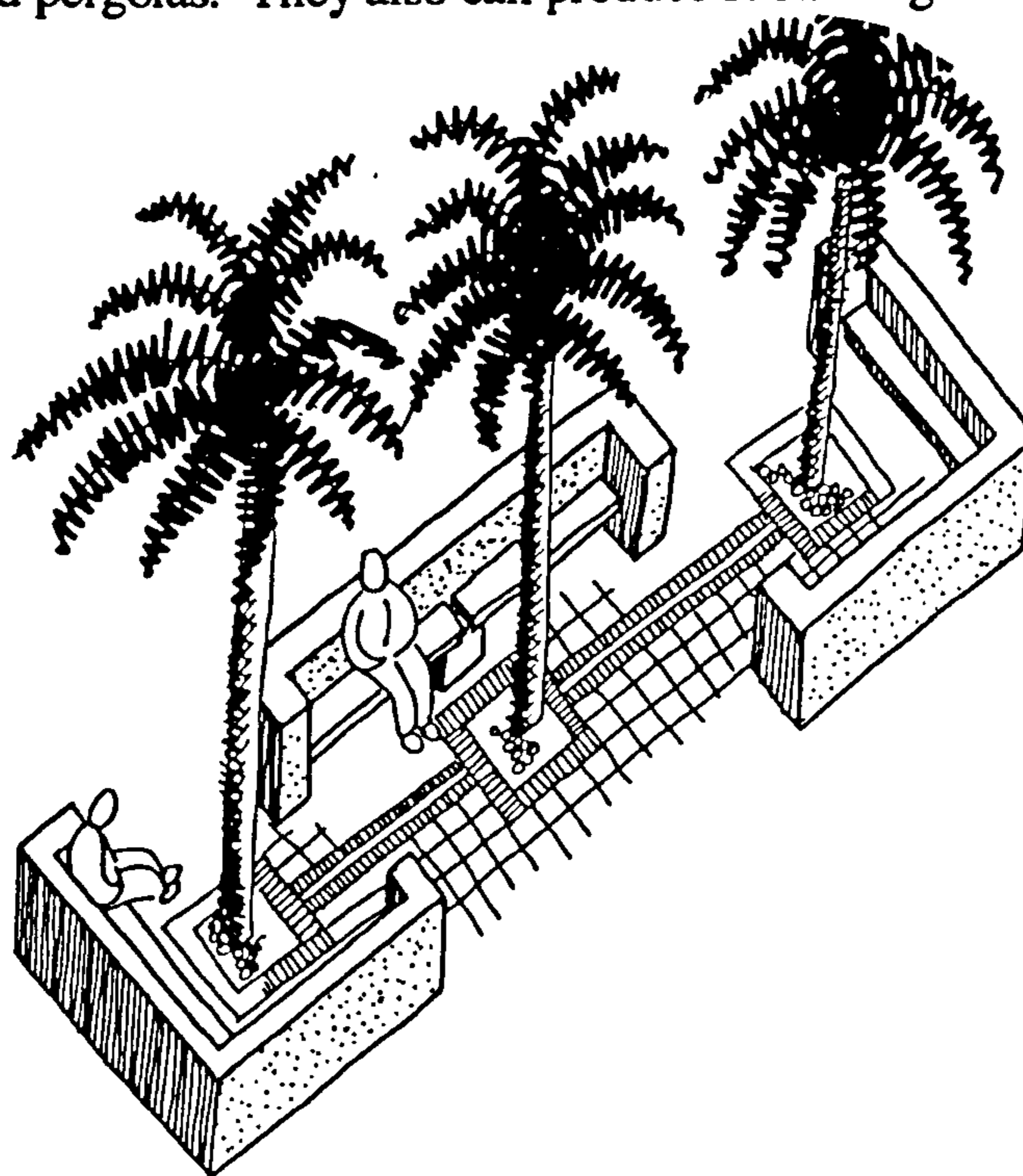


FIGURE 5.42 *A range of wall heights can be used to serve different functions*

Functional Areas

In the smaller parks, "user spaces" should take priority over visual spaces. This is because every square foot should be used and shaped carefully if the outdoor recreational urban garden or small park is to be adequately designed. The intended use of every portion should be considered and reconsidered and areas for aesthetic effect should almost always also have multi-functions or purposes (e.g. trees that also cast shade where it is needed, lawns that are also comfortable for outdoor active recreational purposes).

The outdoor recreational site form should be varied and detailed, but from the entrance people should be able to see what activities and facilities are available and how to reach them without conflicting with others or causing intrusion on others, particularly on female's privacy (Figure 5.43)

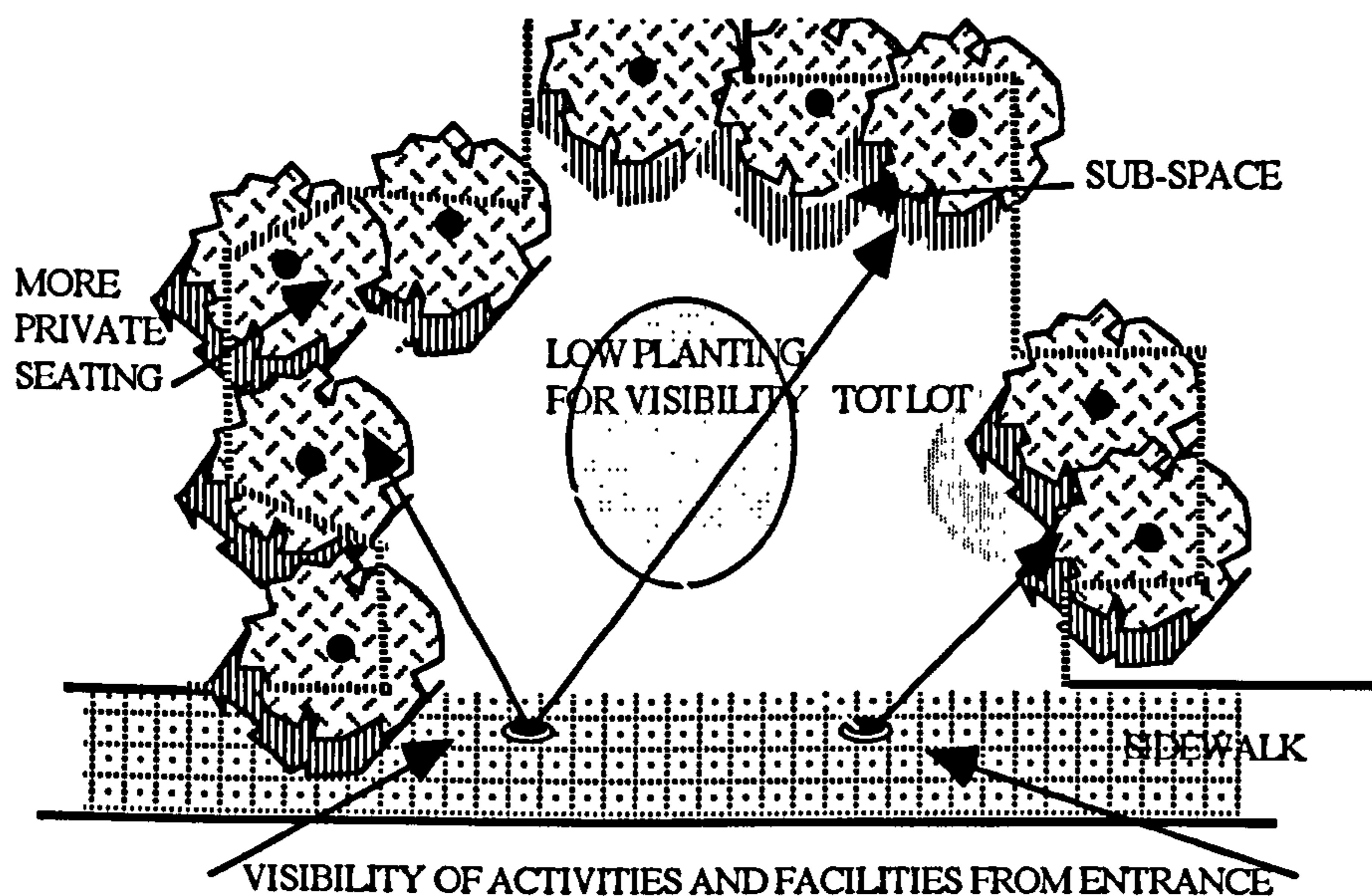


FIGURE 5.43 Prospective users should be able to see the facilities available in the outdoor recreational urban site and how to reach them from the entrance.

Children's preferences for a varied, exciting environment should be respected in the design of the site, for they will be the predominant user group. While engaged in fantasy play they and their mothers need some secluded places and places to hide and be protected from single-bachelors and their annoying interferences. The site plan should

reflect this need for an exciting play environment with as great a variety of articulated spaces and places, surfaces, levels and plant materials as possible. Often an irregular form aids in achieving this.

In addition, the layout of the outdoor recreational areas should provide some passive 'secret' places away from the street and pedestrian movements. Secluded areas offer space for ladies and their need for privacy. They need a place to talk, play and enjoy the outing, but it should not be so secluded that the place is unsafe. Besides that, the overall site design should facilitate use of the park by people with disabilities. All outdoor recreational areas must be designed to remove structural barriers to people with disabilities. For example, there should be no steps without a parallel ramp for a wheelchair, and paths or pavements should be wide, smooth and the corners gradual and level enough to accommodate people using wheelchairs and walkers.

Play Areas

The location and design of play areas must be carefully considered. Traditionally in neighbourhood urban parks, play areas for tots and older children have been separated. Thus the area could be spatially separated for older and younger children. Or, as often happens in play areas, there may be a temporal separation, with the younger children and females using the area more often in the morning, the older children and adult males after school and working time and in the evenings.

If the lot is so small that only one play area can be provided, it is probably better to locate it toward the back of the lot. Such a location will ensure (1) safety from traffic, (2) privacy for older children and female teenagers who may use it in the evenings, and (3) privacy for families. However, a play area at the back of a deep or L-shaped lot may lead to problems such as use for antisocial or illegal activities. Therefore, the layout and its size must be safe and large enough for two separate areas. Older children tend to gravitate to the back of such spaces for privacy. " Parents say that they feel happier about sending their small children to a park alone if (1) their play area is separate and they are therefore less likely to be roughed up by older children, (2) if the younger ones' area is at the front of the site and they do not have to go past the older children's area to get there,

and (3) if its front location makes it visible from a number of nearby homes."¹⁰⁷ (Figure 5.44)

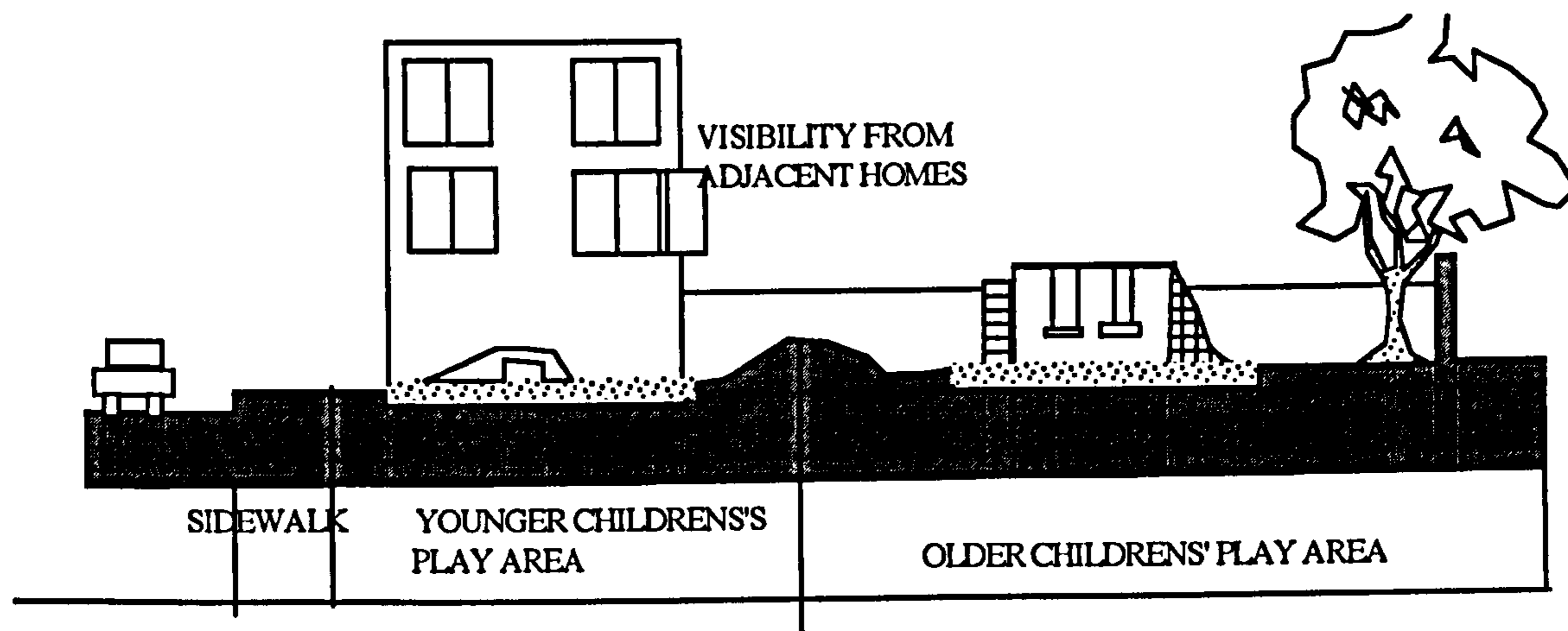


FIGURE 5.44 *If the outdoor recreational site is large enough for two play areas, the one for younger children should be located near the entrance.¹⁰⁸*

Moreover, the play area for small children should provide sand for manipulative play and for jumping; bench or "lip" edges to enable adults to sit close by; hard surfaces for tricycles and wagons; and grass areas for running, rolling or resting (figure 5.45).

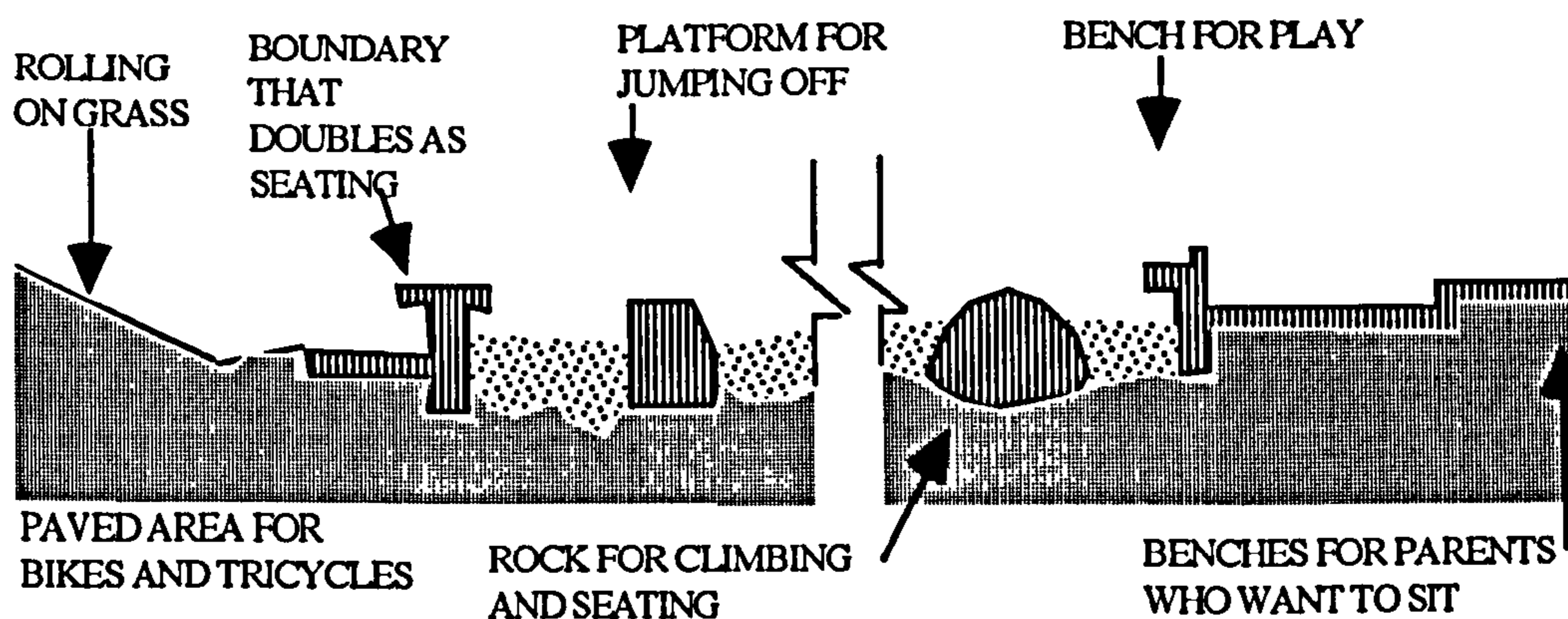


FIGURE 5.45 *the play area for small children should provide sand for manipulative play and for jumping; bench or "lip" edges to enable adults to sit close by; hard surfaces for tricycles and wagons; and grass areas for running, rolling or resting.¹⁰⁹*

The main design criteria of such small and residential urban open spaces

While public green and shaded urban open spaces are a necessary addition to urban life, their survival and maintenance is fragile and a matter of great difficulty in most hot arid Muslim environment. In every design process of transforming ideas and concepts to formulate residential urban open spaces the cultural values of Islam must find their expressions both in terms of behaviour of the individual and the community, and of the forms and structures which shelter them.

The expressions that can be very clearly identified in the Islamic behavioural codes are: simplicity (ways of living and aspirations); adaptability (with limitations and constraints); participation (to generate the most from scarce resources); co-operation (united efforts to survive); humility (contentedness with life); devotion (gratefulness to the Allah who provides for us all); stability (through minimum aspirations) and security (through a sense of tolerance, adequate degree of privacy, brotherhood and self-reliance).¹¹⁰

Simplicity, adaptability, participation, continuity, equality, harmony, functionality and a sense of stability will become the canons or the basic foundation to formulate the proper criteria to formulate the residential outdoor recreational urban open spaces. These canons will be interpreted in terms of building design and forms, and give rise to the unique landscape architectural expression which will offer designers in Saudi Arabia a participation role in the process of landscaping of the Kingdom's environment. In addition to the previous codes; the following are some basic criteria to aid in shaping small and residential urban open spaces within the cities of the Kingdom.

- The design should provide casual seating at the edge for passers-by who might not want to enter the site.
- The street-side boundary of the site should encourage entry and provide a sense of enclosure and security for visitors who are inside the site.
- The planting, paving and seating areas should draw attention to its use

- The boundaries of the site adjacent to private residences should be adequately screened for privacy.
- The site should, if possible, be provided with mature trees, changes of level in topography, sheltered and safe locations, and
- The site's planting, circulation, and facilities must take account of the maintenance that to be taken place when the site is in use.

Beside that, and since active recreation areas are desirable for both genders an adequate access should be provided between the family location and the active recreational areas for those who accompany their families and want to practice some sports or games. Further empirical social and landscape research is required on the decisions that need to be taken about site layout and spatial and physical formulation in order to provide adequate landscape outdoor areas in Saudi Arabia.

THE MAIN DESIGN CRITERIA FOR JEDDAH'S CORNICHE

In relation to Jeddah's Corniche, an ideal system of planning and management of open space areas should be formulated and developed to provide whatever degree of facility development is necessary to accommodate the many and varied forms of recreation now demanded by the citizens. Large crowds should be expected, so heavy capital investment and substantial alteration of the environment may be necessary to facilitate intensive public use of the area, but this must not happen at the expense of the local morality nor of the vernacular environment. In addition, wherever feasible, nature interpretative facilities should be provided within the outdoor recreational provision. Marshes, wildlife refuge areas, ponds and other similar facilities may be artificially created for this purpose. In addition, and in order to provide a wide range of activities for many people, development might include such things as parking areas, separated swimming beaches, marinas, bathhouses, man-made lakes, playing fields, eating facilities and specially designed areas for women's use only.

Finally, the success of the Jeddah's Corniche as of all recreational resources in Saudi Arabia should be tested against the following criteria.

Landscape as a resource

The landscape should be understood as a resource of at least national as well as regional and local significance for reasons of its rarity or representativeness.

Scenic quality

Areas of high scenic quality should be preserved, with pleasing patterns and combinations of landscape features added as the new functions require. The importance of aesthetic factors should be recognised.

Unspoilt character

The landscape within the area generally should be unspoilt by large scale, visually intrusive industry, mineral extraction or other inharmonious development.

Sense of place

The landscape should have a distinctive and common character, including topographic and visual unity and a clear sense of place.

Conservation interests

In addition to its scenic qualities, the landscape should include other notable conservation interests, such as features of historical, wildlife or architectural interest.

Consensus

There should be a consensus of both professional and public opinions as to its importance, for example as reflected through writings and paintings about the landscape¹¹¹. This is because the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon. Although scenic or visual factors are most important, non-visual factors in the landscape such as physiography, history, wildlife, nature and architecture are also relevant, as are cultural associations and public preferences and demands.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on some of the main recreation resources in Saudi Arabia, and their role in providing for recreation and sport, as a means to safeguard the health and improve the physical and mental status of its inhabitants.

Many recreational resources were planned and designed without sound landscape architectural concepts. Moreover, the local traditions and environment were over-looked by some designers in order to supply a greater quantity of resources. In regard to many open spaces in Saudi Arabia there are similarities among recreational resources because many of them are planned and designed with the same concepts and in the same manner, with little regard to the local landscape and the real patterns of behaviour of the people - the users. This has resulted in a repetition of the same problems throughout the country. Although Saudi Arabia has four major geographical divisions (Najd, Al-Hasa, al-Hijaz and Asir), the design concepts have not been adapted to suit each division. The overall impression is that many parks were established to provide recreational facilities in general terms, regardless of the type of people, their culture and their way of life. The lack of space articulation or special areas for family use, as well as monotonous designs, is all too evident. Certain types of parks are not represented in this chapter because it is beyond the scope of this research or they are new projects or in development stages such as some campus outdoor spaces, vacant/undeveloped open spaces or pedestrian malls, or because they are too many to be covered in this study. On the other hand, those kinds of open spaces share, to some extent, the same contemporary approach to the planning and design of the open spaces an approach which has failed to create an appropriate landscape of open spaces for Saudi Arabia. Everywhere we see the same poor landscape patterns of, for example, pavements with trees planted in the middle, or of grid-patterns which lack the space articulation or by fuzzy (absurd) and funny geometrical shapes that are not based on landscape architectural principles and concepts.

Rapid growth of population and the boom in development has created some social and environmental problems, such as mixing between genders, absence of essential services, and the poor style of parks. There are a few successful recreational resources

planned and designed for special people and areas, such as the Diplomatic Quarter (DQ) with its good garden design that creates a pleasant environment. Here the main concepts are satisfactory, to some extent, because of protection, circulation and integrated functions. "The standard of planning and maintenance in public areas in the Diplomatic Quarter is probably the highest in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As with new town corporations in the United Kingdom, these management responsibilities will eventually be handed over to the local municipality - Ar-Riyadh. There is an obvious danger that the present high standards will no longer be met and that the present quality environment will decline, through either neglect or change in maintenance techniques."¹¹²

According to Filor,¹¹³ the main things that affect the public open spaces in Saudi Arabia, particularly the intensive parks, are overuse and abuse by the public. For example, over 5000 cars were counted on one weekend in the Diplomatic Quarter gardens. This shows the popularity of the parks, but unfortunately, the pressure of numbers has led to damage to plants and irrigation systems. There have also been complaints from the diplomatic community about the influx of people from outside the Quarter (because of the poor design of some public outdoor recreational areas within the city). The main cause of that is a lack of similar high quality outdoor recreational areas close to public housing areas.

In general terms, most of the poorly designed recreational resources might be enhanced by careful analysis of the social needs and site-specific conditions. In addition, consideration should be given to how to transfer the raw natural landscape into naturalistic patterns. In other words, man-made artefacts must be shaped and managed to reflect locality. Moreover, the choice of indigenous landscape elements should be incorporated in the design process. The end product must display responsiveness to the particular social and recreational needs of the Saudi family. This is because the reason behind achieving a satisfactory degree of success of some of the parks mentioned, such as the Asir National Park, is due to maintaining the natural characteristics of the site, improving the micro-climate, enhancing views and the adequate vegetation cover and arrangements which gives ideal seclusion for Saudi family groups. As Waller ¹¹⁴ notes "Many of the town dwellers have their roots in a Bedouin past. It is quite natural that

they should forsake the town life occasionally and take to the wild so that their children can have some of the same experiences. Saudi tradition involves living in the country's wide open spaces"

Having investigated several outdoor recreation resources in Saudi Arabia, it is possible now to look at the landscape planning and design of those outdoor provisions as a whole and to examine their general characteristics and objectives. It is apparent that some of the previous outdoor recreation resources have suffered from not involving landscape architects in their design process. The lack of their skills is also evident at the master plan stages. For example, the King-Fahad garden in Taif has been arranged in a heart-shape regardless of the basic principles of landscape architecture. The lack of space articulation, the poor arrangement of facilities and the mix between genders, as well as the overuse of outdoor areas, cause people's dissatisfaction. It has been observed that some people use pavements and busy walkways if no better place is available. The separation of men from women is of paramount importance in any landscape scheme. Where this cannot be achieved the whole planning concept may well be unacceptable.¹¹⁵

In order to know whether there is a relationship between user satisfaction and the provision and layout of landscape physical elements, which might influence the determination of open space design, the Islamic principle of discouraging women from swimming or mixing in any situation where they could be overlooked by men was not applicable in many, if any, of the outdoor recreation resources in Saudi Arabia. In other words, there is a social division between families and bachelors which should be expressed whenever possible. Very often the landscape architect can achieve this physical separation by the careful use of rocks, mounds and hedge planting. This is not comprehensively achieved in many outdoor provisions in the Kingdom. This objective might be important to determine the desirable need of privacy to meet women's needs and opportunities.

At the top of the many social, cultural and landscape physical problems inherited in existing outdoor recreation areas in Saudi Arabia are the problems of privacy. How to meet the public demands and desires for adequate recreation patterns and how to shape urban open spaces with appropriate facilities, opportunities and management has to be

addressed. These situations can cause problems and increase users' dissatisfaction. There must be an ultimate response to the needs, recommendations and appropriate solutions and further investigation of those problems. The recognition of successes and failures of previous recreational resources can help to enhance some of them as well as those being planned for the future.

Finally, community needs and values must not be over-looked. Such things as protection from criminal activities are needed. Protection from intruding eyes, noise and distractions from the desired activities is important for personal, family and community life. People are in need also for territory or places which they feel 'belong' to them, for which they can care and feel responsible, even if they are not owned. They need an environment where they can express themselves as a person, family or community in a way which recognises their cultural identities within their framework of their religious teaching and law.

The question that addresses itself is what are the recreational problems and issues in Saudi Arabia that need immediate attention to enhance the quality of recreational resources? The next chapter seeks to answer this question.

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6

CHAPTER 6

Recreation Problems And Issues

In Saudi Arabia



6

Recreation Problems And Issues In Saudi Arabia

THIS CHAPTER explores the main recreational problems and issues in Saudi Arabia. It seeks to establish how well government provisions do or do not meet people's demands in terms of the quality, as well as examining some aspects of the provision such as its sufficiency of provision in terms of activity, usage, size of the outdoor recreational area and the criteria of layout, design and management . The chapter also investigates how well present provision meets the characteristics of the traditional Muslim culture mentioned in the social and demographic description in chapter 3.

THE MAIN OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL PROBLEMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

IT SEEMS from the existing outdoor recreation resources in Saudi Arabia (chapter 5) that the planning and design of many outdoor provisions were not suitable to satisfy visitors' needs. The inadequate layout and the lack of appropriate physical structures will cause exposure to others as well as cause social and physical conflicts. For example, the allocation of traffic roads next to highly populated areas causes danger and problems of noise and pollution. The allocation of a roundabout to be used as a recreational site is another aspect of a very poor design decision. For example the daily newspaper *Okaz*¹ reported in the north Jeddah's Corniche that a child riding a rented motorcycle had been killed by a car accident. Because in this area many people, mainly from outside the Kingdom, have motorcycles and animals for rent and recreational purposes, where there were more than 200 motorcycles and over 100 ponies and other

animals such as camel and donkeys. The lack of adequate landscape design was the main reason for attracting motorcycles-rentals or animals' rentals. The lack of special areas for different recreational purposes as well as the lack of space articulation, hierarchies and transition zones all contributed to cause many problems. The accident mentioned previously resulted because of inadequate planning and the poor design.

The present outdoor recreational provision in the kingdom are not capable, to some extent, to comprehensively meet people's demands in terms of both the quantity and the quality of outdoor recreational provisions.

OVERALL PROVISION

WHAT is meant here by overall provision is to the extent of sites and opportunities that have been provided to meet the demand. People will be less likely to use, or be less satisfied with the overall provision if it fails to meet their way of life and the desired recreational facilities. Figure 6.1 represents graphically an example of inadequate provision, which had no consideration to what the provisions must provide in terms of, for example, sufficient facilities for each type of activity. The area is almost under-used due to its poor landscape design.



FIGURE 6.1 *An example of an irrelevant overall provision: Public Garden, in Jeddah (continued in next page)*

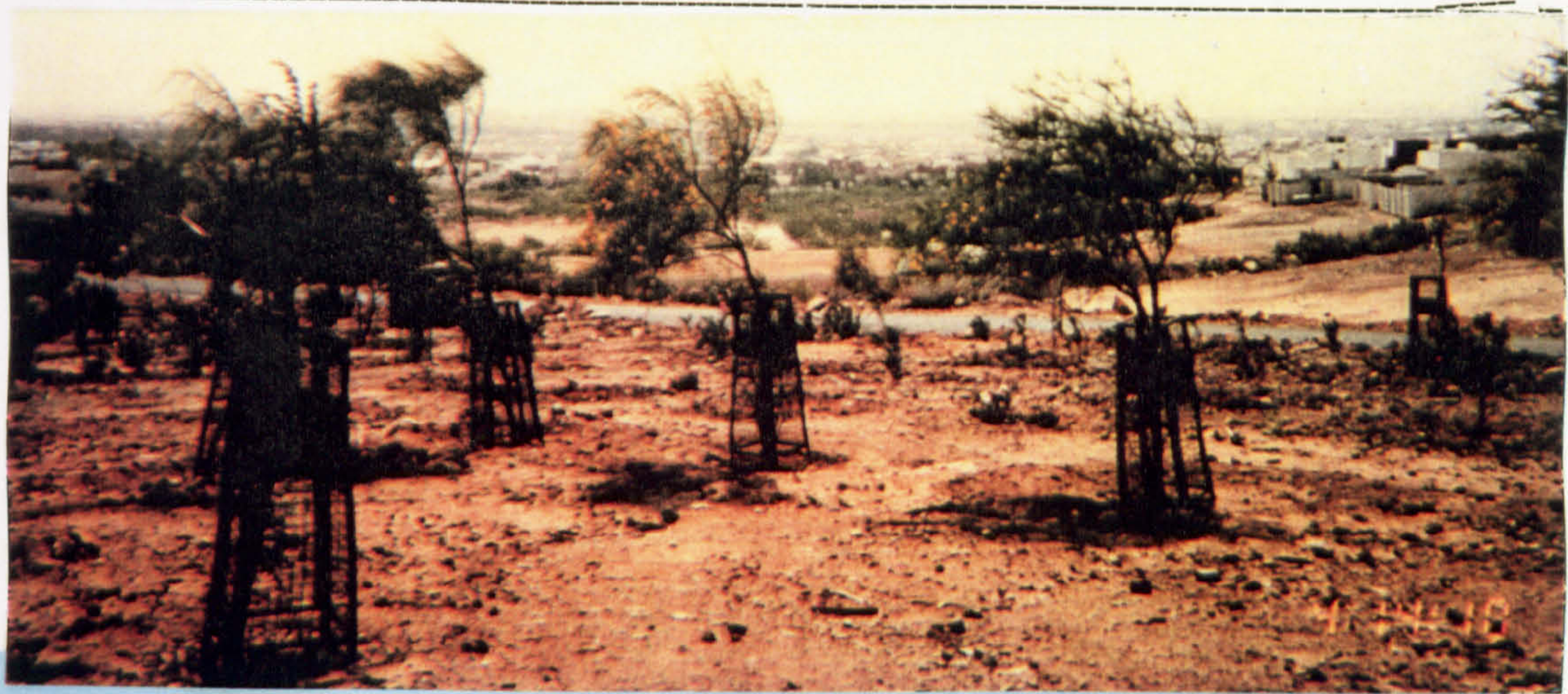


FIGURE 6.1 *An example of an irrelevant overall provision: Public Garden, in Jeddah (continued from the previous page)*

Overall provision is adequate if people are provided with enough quantity of opportunities in good quality to do what they want, when and where they want. Many people will prefer the landscape architectural design that provides them with lots of possibilities for doing different things, and a variety of leisure settings; while at the same time maintaining their Islamic values and principles. "Landscape design plays an important part in many kinds of recreation experience from the wilderness to the city park or square." ²

In terms of quantity, much existing provision has not been adequately provided with sufficient different types recreational facilities, or suitable layout structures of landscape soft/hard element. The layout of outdoor recreational resources did not accommodate by various recreational opportunities of, for example, sea-side attractive and shaded picnic areas, playgrounds for different age groups, shelters to protect people from sun, wind and other natural factors. The figure 6.2 illustrates an outline recreational provision where there are only pavements and some limited areas and facilities that lack the appropriate opportunities.

Al-Sayyed³ explained that "Contemporary urban areas were planned to accommodate the use of technology such as vehicles and to facilitate their movements." Where the overall physical layout of recreation provisions does not allow the traffic volume to pass easily, this may cause conflict and dangers to pedestrians. Moreover, the existing layout exposed different areas to each other which caused visual contacts and privacy intrusions. "The importance of privacy comes out of human nature, and failing to address this principle means eliminating people who indeed need the park."⁴

It has been sensed by the author that many outdoor recreational provisions were not designed to accommodate each individual in the family. Each individual varies from one another. Each type of activity needs a certain pattern of design and spatial components. Swimming, for example, needs special safe and adequate design that provide equal opportunities for males, females and their children. The selection of landscape materials must be adequately arranged or managed. Monotonous feelings and boredom must be avoided.



FIGURE 6.2 *Typical of a problem of design in Saudi Arabia where there are limited outdoor recreational opportunities, lack of facilities and the sense of do not know where, how and when the visitors might use the sites. The lack of outdoor recreational opportunities limits people's opportunities and cause many problems.*

The lack of various design concepts within each provision limits, and some times prevents, people from feeling free to enjoy the desired recreational pattern. Only limited recreational activities might be pursued such as sitting idly, walking and a few playing areas, while the need for seclusion, contemplating spaces, or special areas for active women-use are rarely found.

Many outdoor recreational provisions in Saudi Arabia were similar, to a large extent, in terms of the limits on participation and enjoyment of recreational facilities. For instance the Jeddah seaside Corniche is similar, to some extent, to the Dammam's

Corniche as both have the same design concepts such as a sea-side promenade, and as a ribbon of dual-carriage way with pavements for sitting and pedestrian movements. In addition, the overall patterns of various kinds of urban open spaces and gardens within Saudi cities adhere to the same patterns of unrelated geometrical shapes which have no function, other than the function of attaching geometrical shapes of circles, squares and triangles with fragmented shapes or not landscape architectural design. "The open spaces within local areas have failed to achieve the purpose they were provided for. When these spaces were designed, social factors were not seriously considered. These open spaces were overlooked by the surrounding buildings so the provision of places which maintain privacy for users was ignored."⁵

Many of the existing physical and spatial structures of these open spaces were places having piles of trees (figure 6.3) which showed a lack of organisation of different spaces and land use. These overall provisions need to provide the feeling of moving from public to semi-public, from private open space to very intimate private personal and territorial realm. On the other hand, the overall provision does not encourage informal use and the accommodation of different types of recreational passive/active activities.

It seems that the magnitude of the need to provide the recreational open spaces was provided by inadequate quality of overall provisional landscape design of , for example, planting any vacant lands, the lack of co-ordination to achieve or apply the basic landscape techniques and methods. One of these needs is the observing of many citizens using road sides and planted sites near bridges, houses and sea-sides. It is also worth mentioning that due to the lack of adequate municipal laws means that there are uncontrolled styles of overall garden or outdoor recreational provision design or landscape planning within the urban communities. Some were merely planted vacant lands, others were primitive and simply designed with agglomerated trees, with irregular shapes and based on overall grid patterns of agricultural techniques.



FIGURE 6.3 *Many of the existing physical and spatial structures of these open spaces were places having piles of trees which showed a lack of organisation of different spaces and land use. These overall provisions in need to provide the feeling of moving from public to semi-public, from private open space to very intimate private personal and territorial realm.*

The overall provision varies between 'rock gardens' which adhered to a jumbled heap of large stones, with trees in some areas. The other gardens (although they are not gardens in their actual terms) which showed a lack of space hierarchies and poor circulation system. Shrubs and pavements which are enclosed by metallic fences to control vacant land and to prevent dumping on public lands. Figure 6.4 is an example of a public garden in Jeddah.



FIGURE 6.4 *An example of a public garden, in Jeddah.(The Rock-Garden) in Al-Bugdadiyyah quarter*

It has been observed -by the author-due to the poor design provisions; some visitors tend to congregate and behave in a certain way during participation in outdoor recreational areas. For example while women spend their leisure time on outdoor recreational areas, they group together in a pattern that provides them with the desired

degree of privacy, so that their faces and bodies are not seen by male strangers (figure 6.5).

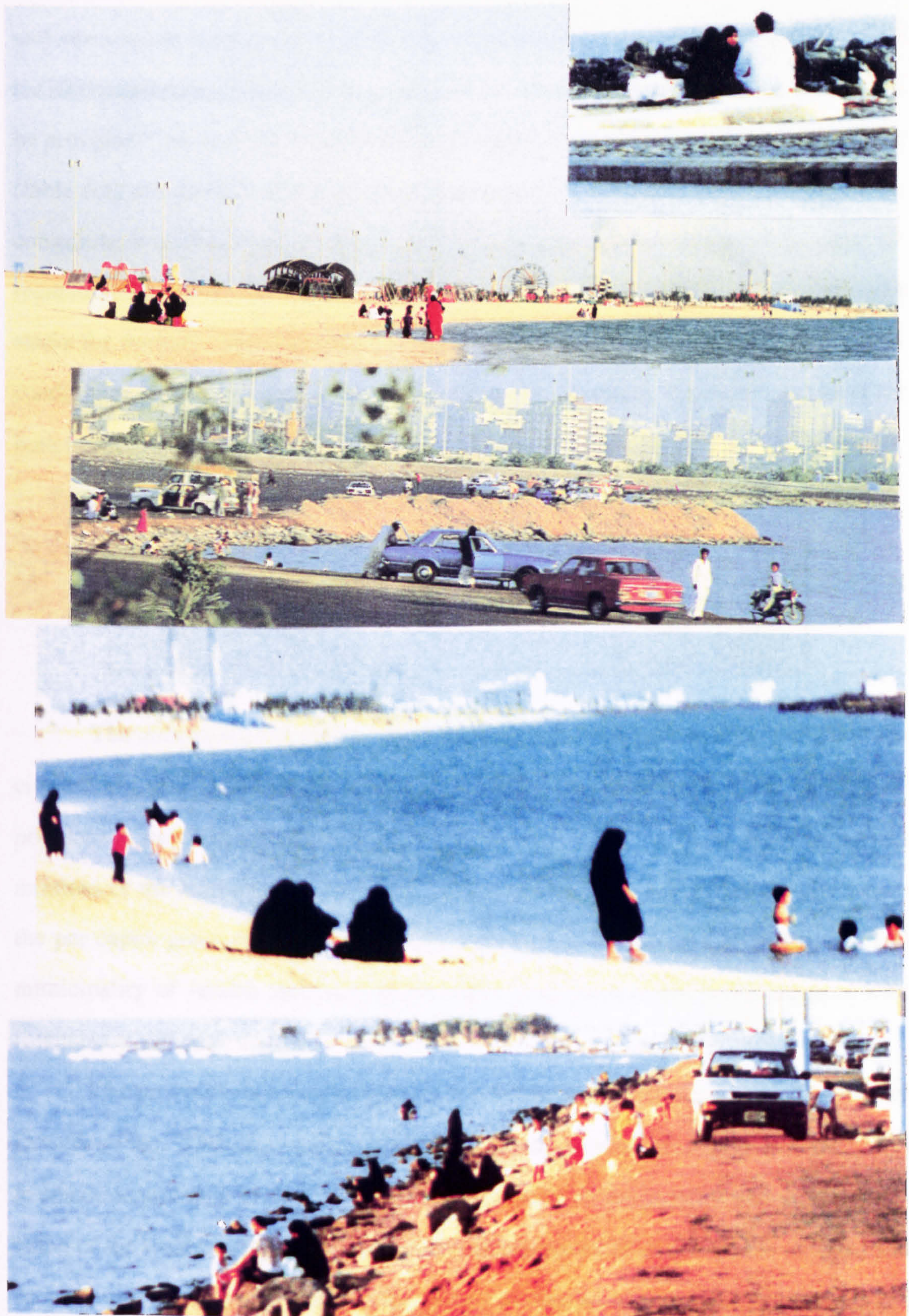


FIGURE 6.5 *The problem of the lack of three dimension structures causes some Saudi families to group together in a pattern and at a distance that provides them with the desired degree of privacy and a visual-distance from each other so that their faces and bodies are not seen by male strangers or other families.*

The size and location of existing facilities will affect the number of visitors and their preferences. However the overall provision of both outdoor recreational facilities and open space is critically inadequate, being less than 1.5 sq.m. per person (0.15 ha/1000 population), while the minimum park provision of 0.4 ha/ 1000 population must be provided.⁶ An analysis of approved subdivisions of the open space in Jeddah in 1979 (table 6.1) also reveals that very often, particularly in the small subdivisions, future commitment to development will be deficient in open space provision.⁷ In terms of recreational facilities the current situation is equally critical. While there exist major stadia for football club use, there is a shortage of facilities such as sports fields, air-conditioned gymnasia, sports halls or swimming pools available at a more local level for both males and females for popular use.

TABLE 6.1 Recreation and Open Space size by Type (in Jeddah) 1977 and 1989⁸

TYPE OF THE RECREATION OPEN SPACE	1977	1989
Metropolitan space	112 ha.	480ha.
Foothills/desert reserve areas	20ha.	80ha.
District open space	13ha.	240ha.
Total areas in hectares	146ha.	800ha.

The municipality of Jeddah was founded in 1913 to improve urban growth in the city and plan for future municipal projects, taking into consideration the increase of population and development of all city urban structures. Among those important missions of the municipality, there are improvement of the landscape of the city where the per capita green space was planned to increased from 1.5 sq.m. to 15 sq.m. The municipality of Jeddah supplied certain parks, open spaces and public squares with fountains of different designs.

The provision of adequate space and facilities was the main concern of the Master Directive Plan. This plan applies not only to the provision of open space at a local level to ensure a minimum of 'breathing space' for the sake of the physical and mental well-being of the local population, but also to the establishment of an acceptable physical and social environment, which can meet the rising expectations of an increasingly mobile and comparatively affluent society. "In this situation there is a need to advance beyond the provision of open space and recreational facilities as a functional requirement of urban

planning, to an appreciation of how future citizens may wish to view their physical environment (in terms for example of space, cleanliness, planting, shaded sitting areas or access to regional parks and beaches) and their social environment (in term of the recreational and leisure opportunities made available with the initiative of the municipal authority)⁹ Table 6.2 gives a land budget requirement to accommodate the population of Jeddah (1,600,000 in 1990) , a total of 16 sq. km (4386 acres = 1776 ha). of open spaces at various scales will need to be provided for recreation and leisure in Jeddah

TABLE 6.2 Open Space Jeddah 1398AH (1977AD)¹⁰.

Category	Area in Hectares
Urban parks, rock gardens and open space	78.3
Stadia	35.0
Picnic areas	16.0
District and community squares	10.0
Community district parks, playgrounds	3.7
Greenbelt, foothills and desert park land	3.0
TOTAL Area in Hectares.	146.0

The over-use of some recreation sites can be noticed in the higher density areas of the city which are the most critically deficient in many kinds of open space. Despite the lack of facilities and poor maintenance, many sites indicate a reasonable use. The highly used open spaces were causing over-use and crowding which was not suitable to accommodate the Saudi family's leisure pattern. The size and location of many sites affected the intensity of use. As the location, size and layout differ, so the maintenance and management level and level of use differ as well. Al-Shahrani¹¹ notes that the highly maintained and highly used open spaces of Qabil Street and the *Al-Sharafeyyah* Rock Garden in Jeddah are good examples to compare between the over-used and the under-used provision. They are both less than 0.5 hectare each, located near commercial activities and are highly used. In contrast the Desert Garden and *Al-Safa* Neighbourhood Garden are both primarily located in or close to residential areas, their sizes are more than 2 hectares each, with low maintenance and paltry use or under-used because of the lack of sufficient shaded outdoor recreational facilities.

This means the more maintained and the more adequate the design and exploitation of recreational resources, as well as the location and the provision and its

attractiveness the more this will affect the level of use as well as the behavioural aspects of visitors.

Moreover the present situation of insufficiency of outdoor recreational provision resulted from poor standards. Many of the existing outdoor overall provisions were based on poor *standards* to guide development and different land uses such as housing, schools, shopping, transportation and pedestrian pavements which were not based upon sufficient empirical analysis. For example, the manner of dealing with recreation in general and with the local recreation spaces in Jeddah in specific were two-fold. Firstly, the way of expressing the need for open spaces was given in absolute figures related to the number of the population regardless of the actual need of the people, how these open spaces were going to be used, how to meet people's demands, what quality, sufficiency of opportunities for each type of activity and how to fit the right combination of Islamic values and principles in the right matrix of overall provision.

Secondly, it was not evident how these figures could be implemented in the existing built-up areas. The latter was referred to by the consultants but no suggestion was given as to how to achieve it, nor how to modify the poor standards to cope with the up-to-date landscape architecture. It was left totally to the municipality to deal with. For example, the master plan of Jeddah has mentioned the need for local recreational provisions within a walking distance of all houses. They proposed providing one hectare (2.47 acres) per thousand residents for local recreational space, about 10 sq.m. for a person which should be reserved for public open spaces and recreational facilities. This proposed figure should be apportioned according to the future service hierarchy as follows¹².

- Neighbourhood Parks (approx. 2.7 to 4.2 hectares each) at the rate of 0.35 hectare per 1,000.
- District Parks (approx. 7.5 to 10.0 hectares each) at the rate of 0.15 hectare per 1,000 population.
- Metropolitan Parks (approx. 800 hectare each) at the rate of 0.50 hectare per 1,000 population.

In addition 1 sq.m. per person should be provided in local residential clusters for toddlers play areas. This was in addition to another three large areas planned as urban parks. These figures were never realised for two reasons. The first was the lack of any

legislation and the absence of the means to achieve them. Secondly, the rapid development which occurred in the last decade attracted the attentions towards other urban necessities such as housing and transportation, with little emphasising on providing adequate recreation provision.¹³

The above mentioned points mean that inadequate standards were affecting the sufficiency of provision. In other words, the existing situation of overall provisions inadequately met the people's demands. The situation was the lack of sufficient open spaces in already densely built-up areas. Policies were needed to assure the reservation of some of the undeveloped lands within or near to communities and to investigate how the people would use them.

In the existing situation, the local overall provision sprang up within the urban fabric from the general municipal concept of *planting, paving and lighting any vacant land*. In addition, outdoor urban open spaces and their availability came under severe pressure from developers and, in many circumstances, many vacant spaces were privately owned. This situation, as mentioned before, causes people to use road sides and planted sites near bridges to spend their leisure time. This in fact reflected the magnitude of the need for sufficient recreational open spaces and more co-ordination among different agencies to achieve the main objectives of the plan.

According to Nahass and Al-Shahrani¹⁴ many outdoor provisions were not designed (in Corniche areas) according to the kind of recreational use (active v passive) or according to the age of visitors. In addition, the overall design does not adequately consider the cultural norms of the Saudi society (married visitors, bachelors and family recreation). Each individual of the society needs an equal opportunity and a certain type of recreation that helps him or her re-create and enjoy themselves within their cultural boundaries. A female student for example needs to enjoy swimming, running, playing and amusements of all legal games; but she could not participate because of many social and physical constraints. The overall provision of many areas were intended to be used by males and children. The layout and lack of enclosures enforce or deter women from participation in active recreation.

The other element that is causing insufficiency of provisions which was inadequately thought of is the distribution of provision, which is equally important to ease the over-use of some areas and to encourage people to distribute among different provisions all over the city, as well as to provide more adequate opportunities, a greater variety of opportunities and suitable locations.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROVISION

The distribution of provision was often determined by planning consultants. It was mainly influenced by rapid urban growth and the application of traditional planning approaches to achieve an efficient environment through a planned land use pattern. The urban and landscape development of most major cities has encountered some planning problems. The most serious physical planning problems are the high population densities in some vulnerable areas. The rapid urban growth has caused inconsistency in land use provision and distribution. Urban planning policies have failed to provide an appropriate interaction among the different land use patterns. In practice, there was mixed residential, commercial and industrial use. "The ad-hoc distribution of land uses makes it possible for a car workshop or car maintenance premises to be established within the same place or close to the residential area, which is generally unacceptable as it causes a lot of damage...the recreation and open space areas inside the urban areas are inadequate. In most cases, the built up area leaves few, if any, sites for open spaces for social activities such as recreation. Nowadays an attempt is being made to create recreational open spaces outside the urban fabric."¹⁵

In Saudi Arabia many of the present overall provision of outdoor recreation influencing people to concentrate in some particular outdoor recreational areas or confined themselves to their indoor recreational home-based activities, where there were not enough public open spaces. The recreational opportunities were not evenly distributed and in proximity to housing units in relation to potential demand. Many people also live faraway from any accessible park, picnic site, sea-side resort or natural environment. The introduction of the new traffic network has increased people's

mobility and they have access to all available open spaces. This in turn causes many problems and causes a lot of pressure on a particular site and the great demand for more recreation at relatively convenient distances. The problems of overcrowded recreational sites has resulted from such trends. The Corniche of Jeddah, King Fahad Garden in Taif and Al-Suwaydy in Riyadh (Chapter 5) are the current examples of overcrowded areas with some social and physical landscape conflicts.

Ashworth¹⁶ assumes that distance is a factor deterring people from travelling and therefore the further they have to travel, the fewer will bother to make the trip. The actual number of visitors is reduced to a percentage of the population at a given distance from the recreation site and may be plotted as a distance decay curve. A distance decay curve is based on the assumption that distance is a friction deterring people from travelling, and therefore the further they have to travel, the fewer will bother to make the trip. Figure 6.6 shows the curve we might expect for a drive in the country. The scale on the horizontal axis could be measured in physical distance, or more realistically in hours of travel. Few people come from too close because the drive itself is part of the enjoyment of the trip. This sort of curve has been found to exist in study after study of many different sorts of recreation site. What is of most interest is the angle of slope of the curve. If it is steep then distance is a major constraint on participation; if it is shallow, then distance is having less effect.

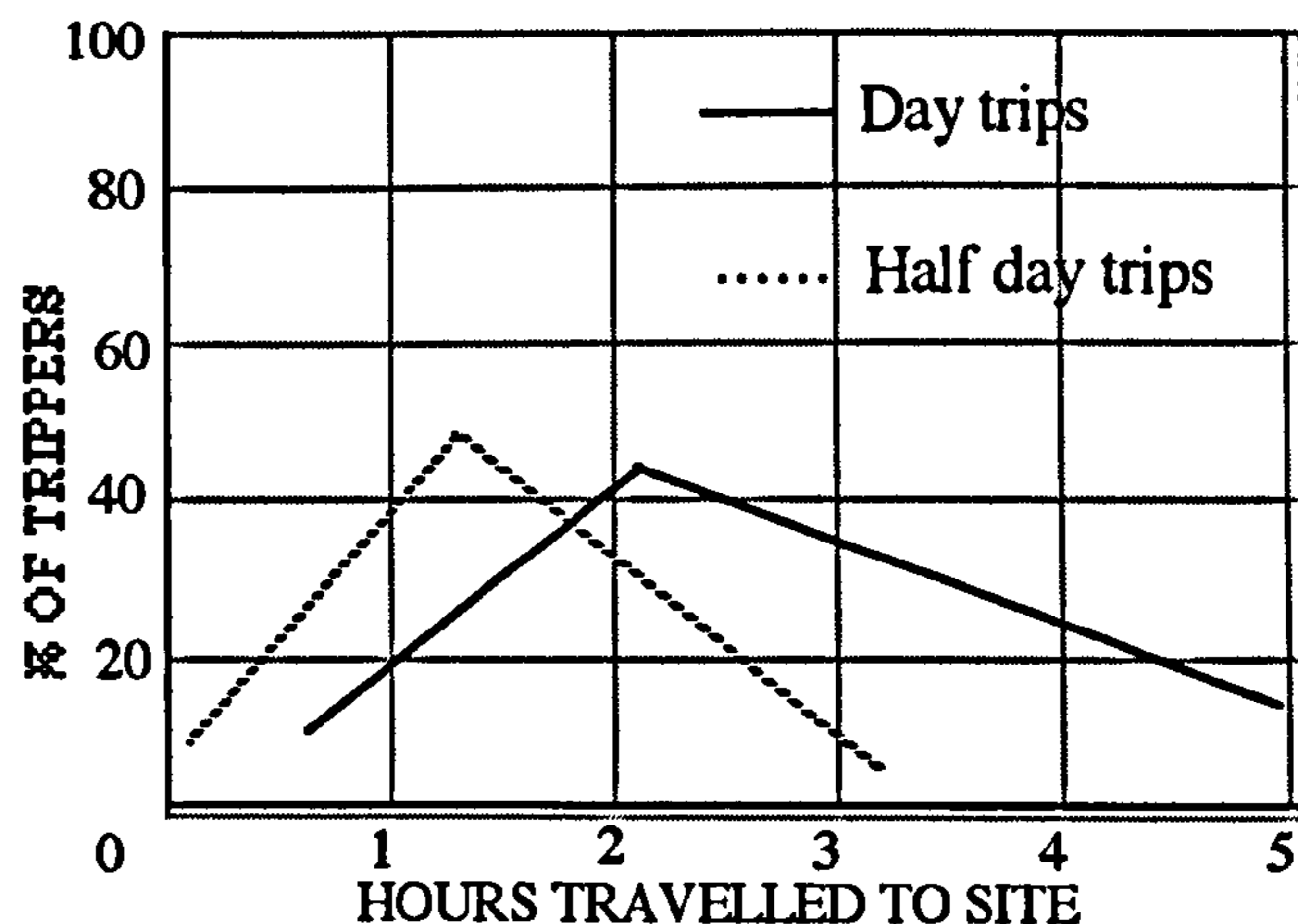


FIGURE 6.6 *Distance decay curves for countryside trips*¹⁷

Recreational provisions and their opportunities must be evenly distributed in relation to potential demand for the desired recreational facilities, i.e. some people live further away from any accessible park, picnic site or holiday coast. The idea of *intervening opportunity*, that is the tendency for visitors to frequent the nearest possible site, has proved to be a useful planning concept, for example, if planners are concerned that the recreational pressures on a particular site are too great, they can develop an intervening opportunity which may *soak up* some of the potential visitors from the more vulnerable areas. In other words, when people wish to take part in recreational activities in the densely populated areas, the intervening opportunities in the form of attraction points and adequate landscape provisions will ease the tension and reduce the pressure on other vulnerable parts of the outdoor recreational areas.

The inadequate distribution is one of the reasons why some of the existing recreation sites were over-used and others under-used. The overall site planning and design of outdoor recreational provision must be adequately distributed to be within easy reach of residents. The determining factors that relate to the distribution of provisions are very complicated and many of them are interrelated.

The overall provision of most existing recreational areas in Jeddah were insufficiently distributed to accommodate most type of activities. Because the original design concept was based on facilitating traffic circulation, the pattern of land resulted from remnants of former housing areas. The use of any vacant land was also put to greening areas which varied from small gardens allocated among or between buildings to large open spaces with heavily planted rows of trees and shrubs.

This inconsistency of distributing outdoor recreational facilities and services according to the needs of people means that adequacy of provision in its good location is an important factor that influences people to accept or reject such urban spaces. It is a significant factor to maintain the overall provision to be near residents and within easy walking distance.

The distribution of provision did not provide what people wanted. The inadequate distribution of provisions should make some of them easy to reach and others

difficult to be used, for example some outdoor recreational areas within neighbourhood were rarely used, in spite of its easy access or of its recreational facilities.

Many of the existing provisions were not well distributed in relation to people's demand where some of them were located far from residential units. That means the idea of *intervening opportunity* based on the tendency of visitors to frequent the nearest possible site can guide the development of recreation opportunities which may help to satisfy the demand for appropriate distribution of provisions.

The existing distribution causes people to seek more distant recreational areas and leaves open-spaces within the city fabric with few visitors. Other areas were over-used, such as national parks or sea-side areas. Thus the inadequate distribution of urban open spaces influences people to travel to more attractive areas causing them to be very crowded. Lansing notes that there is a relationship between the distance travelled to engage in outdoor recreation activities and type of community. "Limited opportunities for recreation within a community will force people to seek different uses of their leisure time within their home or community environment or travel to recreation facilities throughout the metropolitan area. The latter alternative increases use of both the recreation facilities and the roads linking the residential to recreation areas. On the other hand, provision of recreation facilities within a community should reduce travel outside the community for recreation purposes."¹⁸

A good example of the inadequate distribution of provision is the Corniche of Jeddah. The northern section of it is often very crowded during certain times and during weekends and holidays. At the same time some areas - in the southern part- are under-used. The lack of intervening recreational resources -offering appropriate opportunities along the Corniche at logical intervals- causes some areas to be almost vacant. Jastanyyah¹⁹ who has conducted very useful geographical research to determine existing outdoor recreational facilities has examined the level of recreational use and observed the concentration of some recreational activities within certain sites. Although it is legitimate for different parts of the Corniche to offer different opportunities, 89% of private fun-fairs were located on the north section of the Corniche and 11 % in the Al- Hamra area while there is an absence of such activities in the southern parts of the Corniche. Fig 6.7

illustrate the distribution of recreational areas in the northern Corniche of Jeddah. The actual location of a facility is at the utmost importance and will affect use; the rate of use of the facility falls progressively as one moves further away from the facility. The method of travel can affect the level of satisfaction: one method will take more time; it can determine distance and destination; apart from walking, all other means of travel incur financial cost; the method of transportation will lessen or heighten the experience.

The absence of various types of recreational resources on its appropriate location are one of the main detractions to visitors. The nature of the recreational site itself, in terms of size, type and quality of facilities, will affect its power to attract visitors over distance. The idealised system of distributing urban parks within the urban fabric, according to Ashworth²⁰ (Figure 6.8) was not applied in most Saudi cities. The system provides useful criteria helping planners to distribute various types of recreational urban spaces to serve each section or segment of different areas within the urban fabric. Policies should ensure the location of facilities on main transportation routes or within easy reach of the greater number in the community to allowing people to have far greater potential use.²¹

The idealised system can be used to examine the adequacy of the distribution of existing provision in relation to the overall urban fabric of the city. For example, it is easy to allocate each type of urban park according to certain standards and measurements. The hierarchy of urban parks means that each level provides a different set of potential activities.

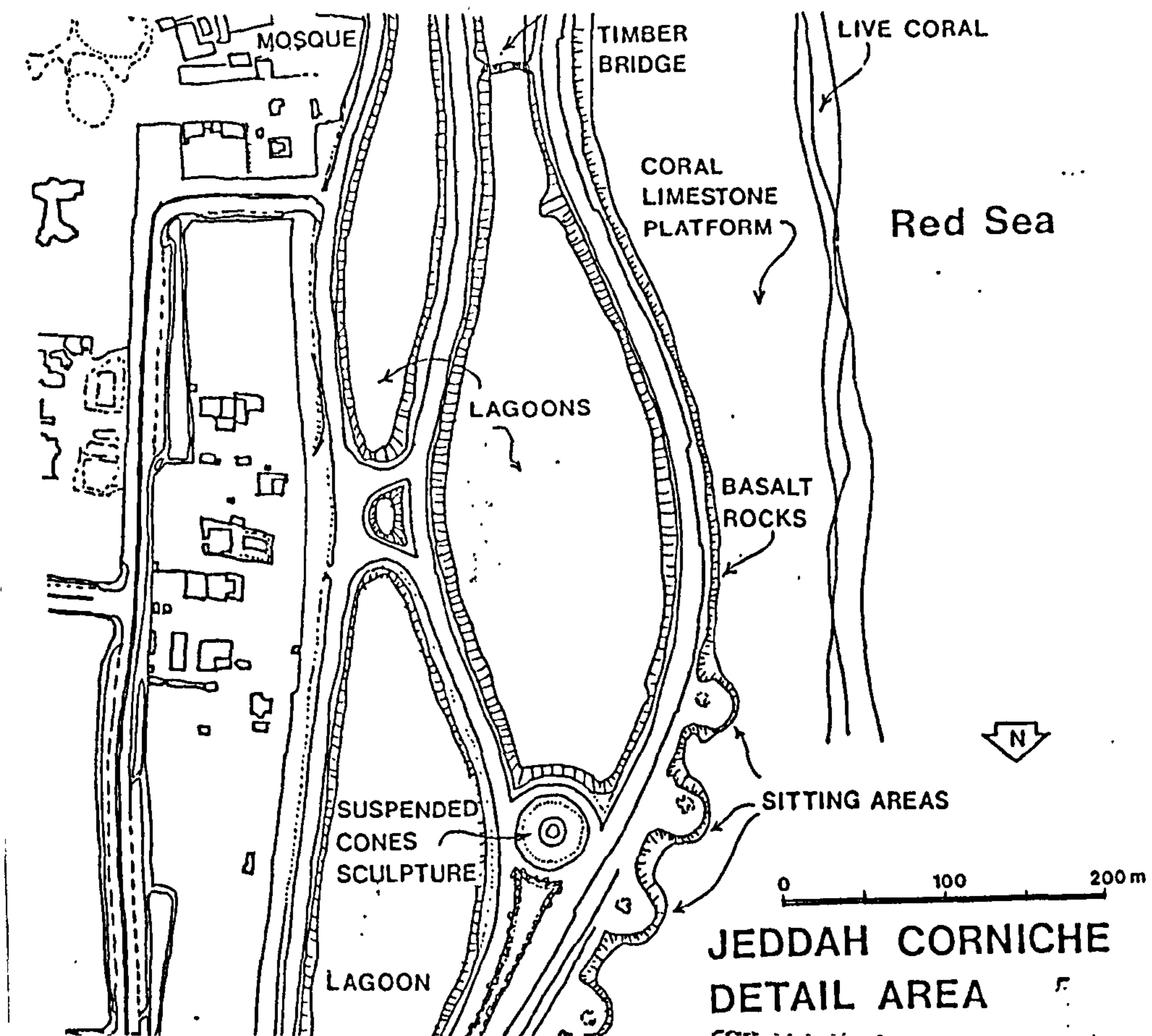


FIGURE 6.7 The distribution of recreational areas in the northern Corniche²²

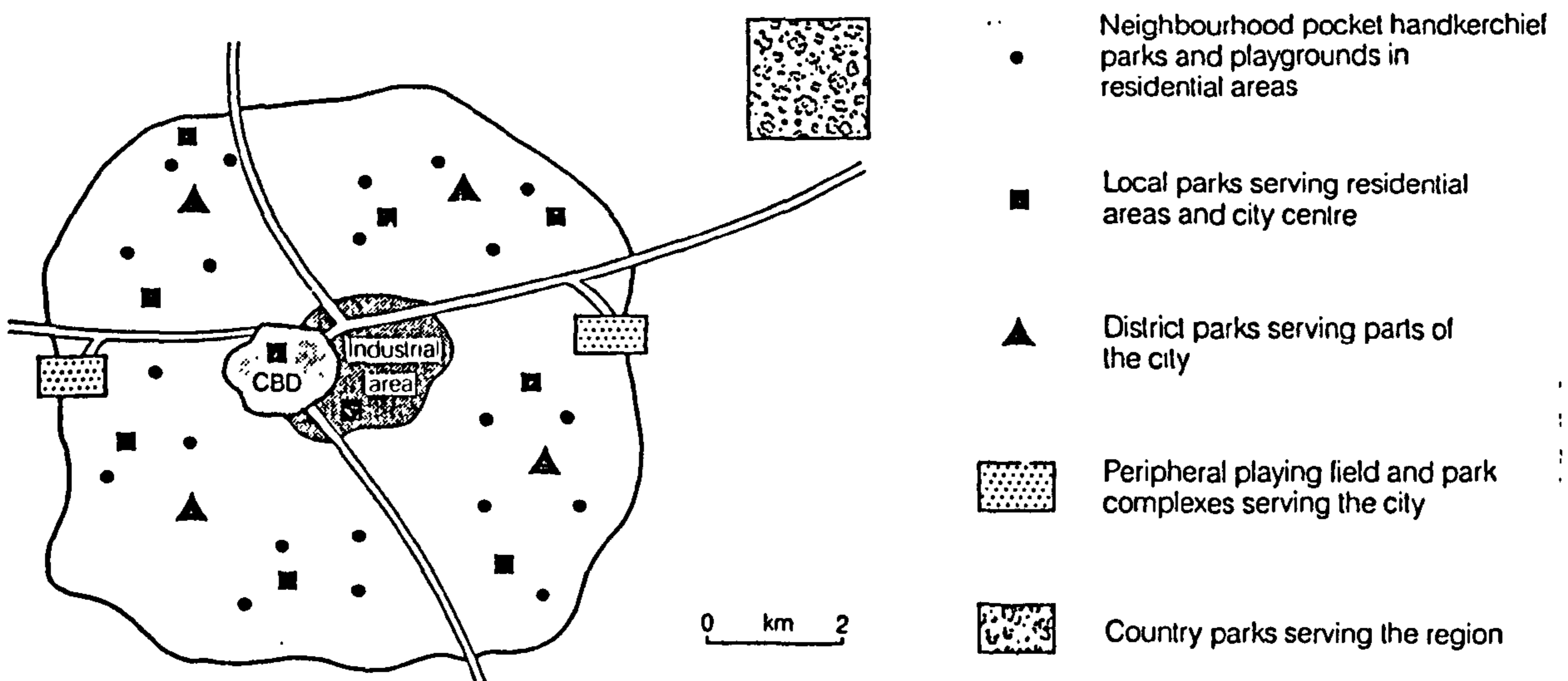


FIGURE 6.8 The idealised system of distributing parks within the urban fabric²³

In examining how the local authority locates and distributes recreational provision among and between urban areas (figure 6.9) reveals that there were no certain landscape standards nor roles that have been followed. The open spaces between different urban structures are the last points to think of after finishing the planning of vacant lands. "A landscape consultant called in afterwards to carry out some specific subsidiary project often has his hands tied by major policy decisions already finalised."²⁴ The result of this is the lack of proper distribution of outdoor recreational parks with regard to an idealised system of distributing urban open spaces to be provided where they are most wanted.

Finally, the distribution of outdoor recreational open spaces should be based on a "green strategy". Turner²⁵ argues that instead of dealing with 'more open space' issues in the traditional way we must regard them as an eternal good as 'the form, quality, and enjoyment of city's structure and environment.' The idea of "Green Strategy" was proposed to enhance London's open spaces. In fact, it is good idea also to be adapted in Saudi Arabia. The green strategy was based on connecting parks and distributing their benefits throughout the city, and to draw the sweetness of the country into the town. The diagrams in figure 6.10 show some theoretical alternatives for the distribution of park space in cities.

In order to achieve a good approach to distribute overall provision, the planners must answer the following questions. *How much open space should a city have?* and *How should it be distributed?* The additional question that landscape planners should ask is: *What uses and what beauties should parks have? How to use the senses and feeling? How to be expressive? How to be creative? And how to be focus on space and the composition of space to regarded it (the space) for its own sake, having its own identity, character and quality to be provided in its proper location?*

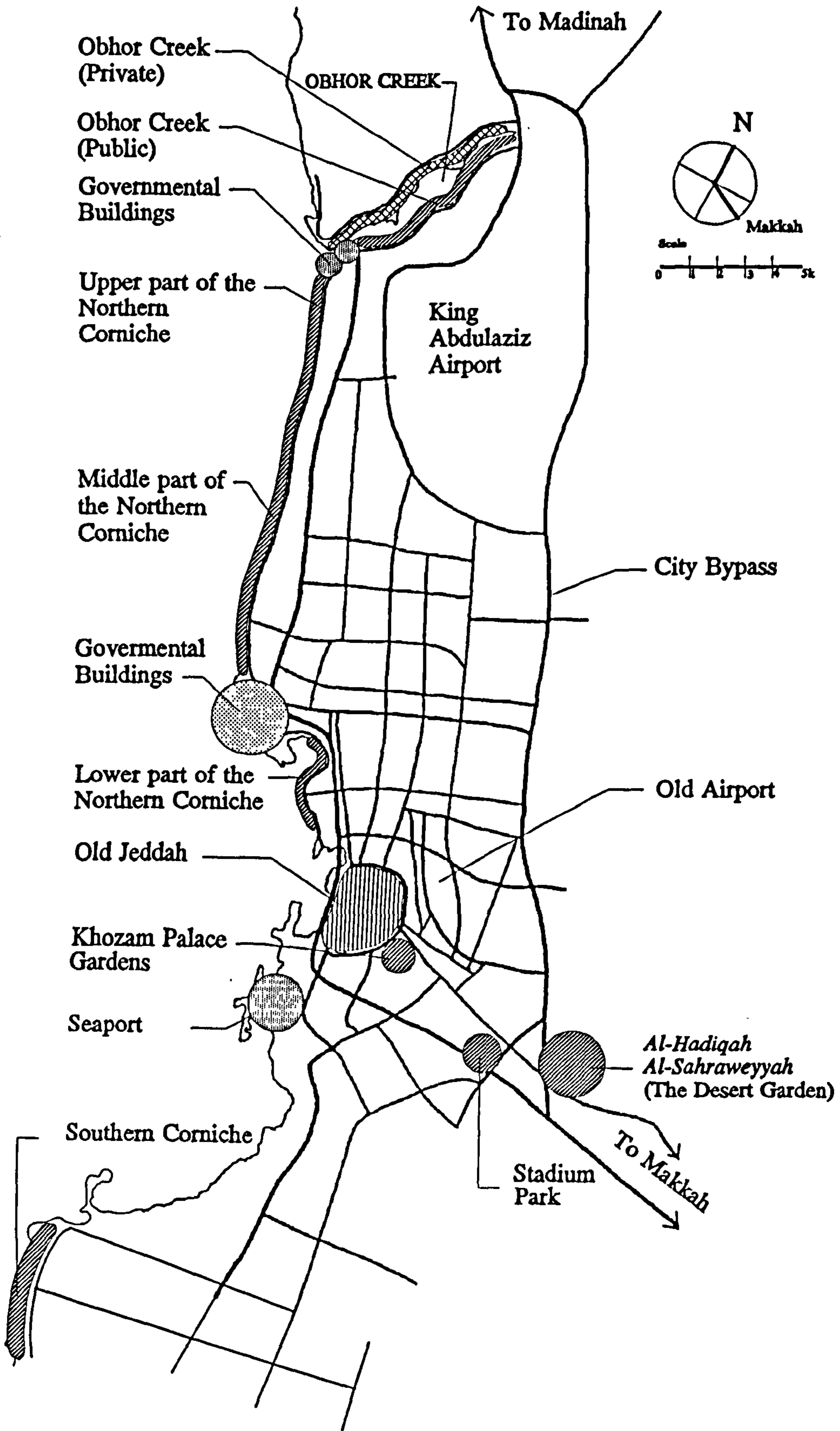


FIGURE 6.9 The distribution of outdoor recreational provisions in Jeddah.²⁶

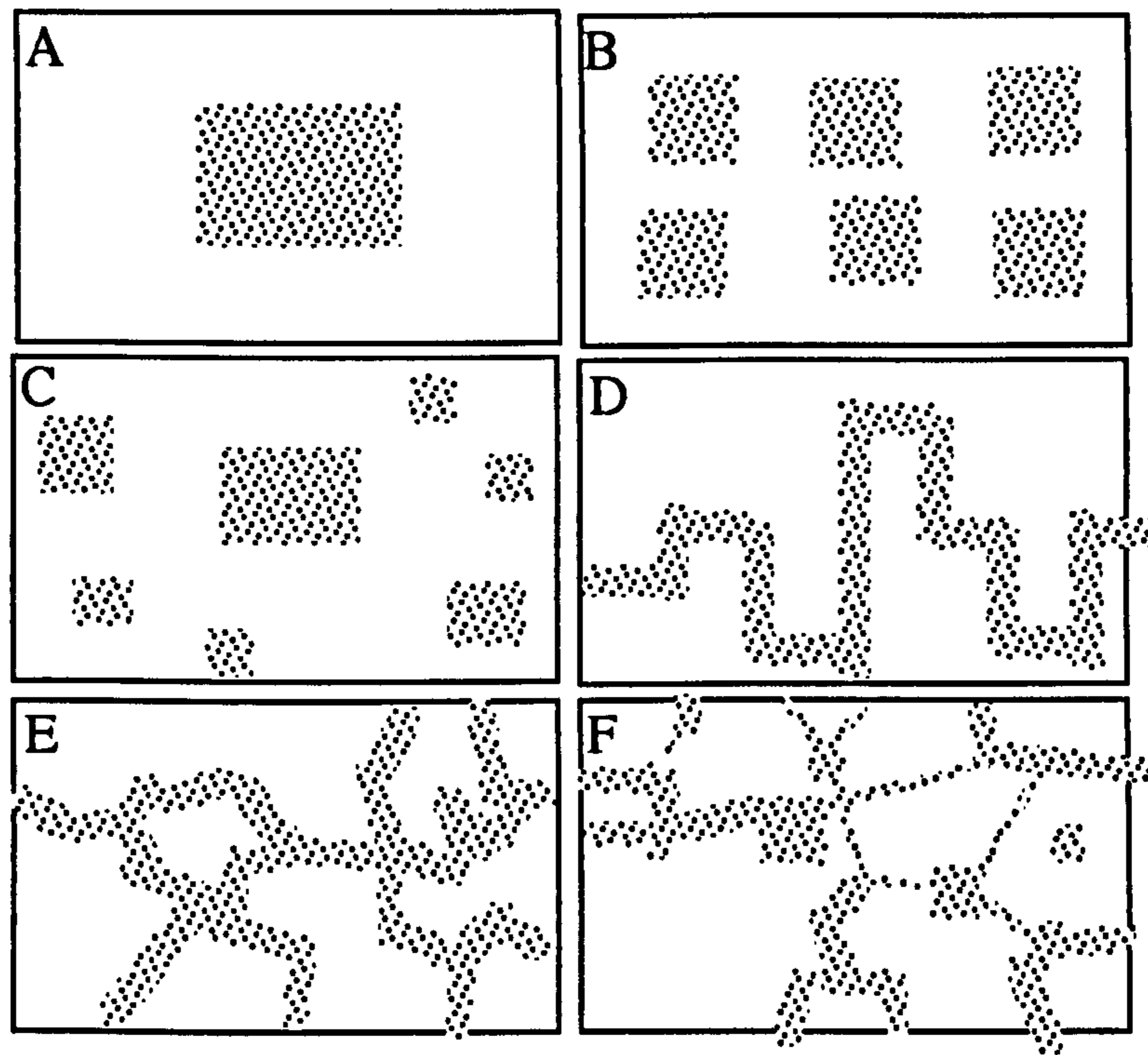


FIGURE 6.10 *Six theoretical alternatives for the distribution of park space in cities. Diagram A shows the policy which was adopted in New York; B represents the residential squares of London, Adelaide or Philadelphia; C shows the Greater London Council's park hierarchy; D shows the 'parkways' which were popular in housing layout during the 1970s; E shows the 1944 Abercrombie Plan for London; F shows a 'green web' of environmentally pleasant space, as in many German and Scandinavian cities.*²⁷

Furthermore the lack of sufficient provisions and the nature of some of the existing design of outdoor recreation areas influence Saudi families to participate in passive rather than active recreational pursuits such as swimming, running, playing and many of related sea-based recreational activities, for both men and women. Unfortunately many families spend much, if not all, of their leisure time sitting, talking, watching and guarding children from the dangers of the traffic flow, or sliding from steep slopes of physical structures (Figure 6.11) such as from rocks of rocky gardens, and from over-looking areas in the mountains recreational areas, for example, of Asir National Park, in the southern part Saudi Arabia. For men, their use of leisure time is slightly different. They can participate in both passive and active recreational games, but inadequate design and lack of provision often limits participation and enjoyment.



FIGURE 6.11 *Danger of sliding from steep rocky structures.*

SITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

IN EXAMINING some of the present sites' layout and their design, some specific problems affect visitors' attitudes and behaviour within particular sites. The size, spatial structure and the overall layout are landscape elements that affect people's leisure patterns. It may be important to see the sea and to find places to play. The beauty of the seaside areas is a major attraction. However many of the visitors may not be satisfied with regard to how the family uses the outdoor spaces. For example, the researcher has noticed that when the area gets too crowded or the seclusion of their families was intruded upon, some families leave the site, and some refrain from participating in active recreational activities while others use the provision at early morning times due to the lack of bachelors and low level of use from visitors. Figures 6.12 to 6.17 give a visual representation of the main site layout recreation and design problems in Saudi Arabia.



FIGURE 6.12 *The use of provision at early morning times because of lack the of bachelors, as well as because of the cooler weather.*

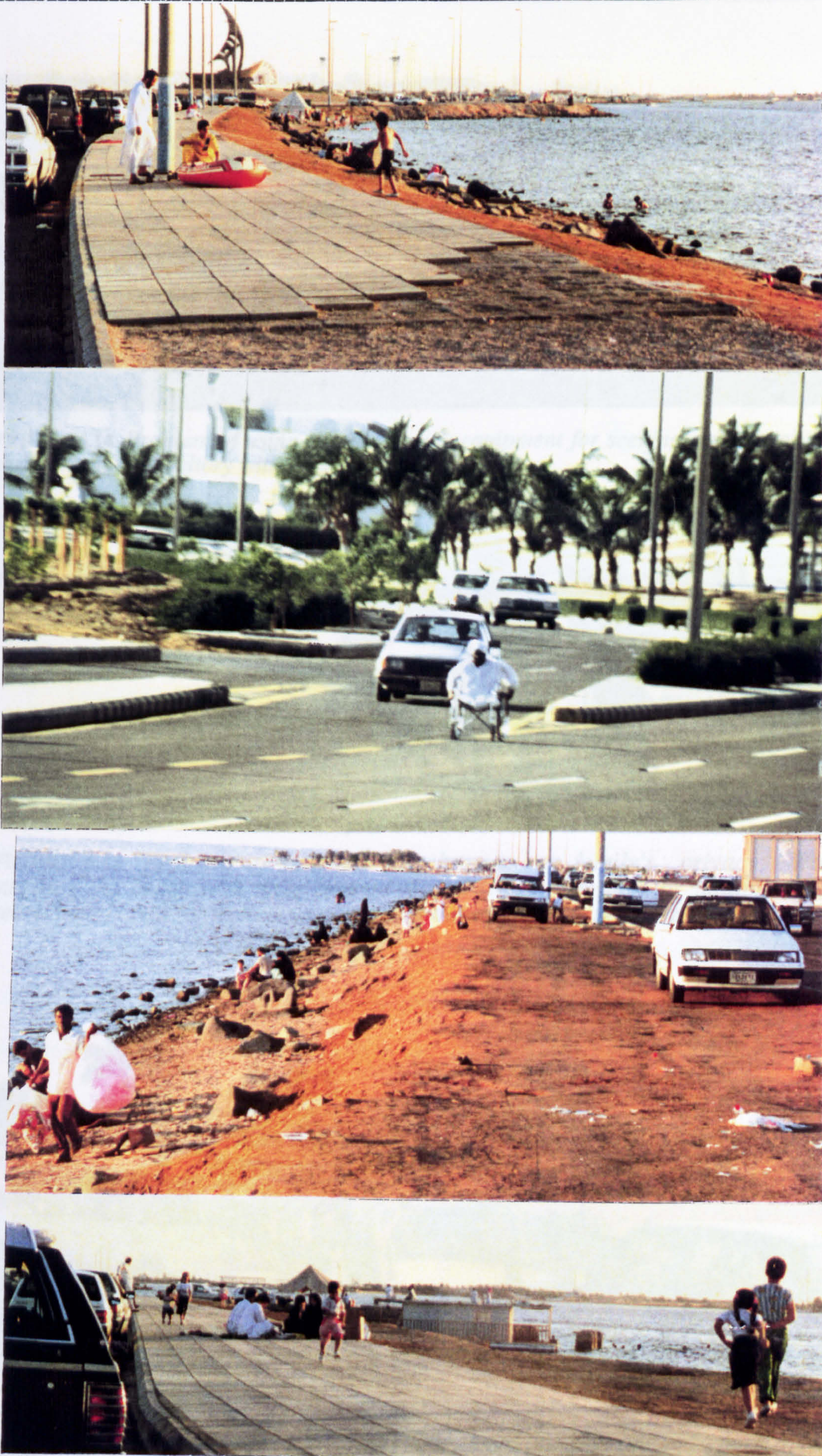


FIGURE 6.13 *The danger of using Jeddah's Corniche pavements for families and their children as well as the lack of recreational facilities for the disabled.*



FIGURE 6.14 *Problem of using children's play equipment for seeking a personal space and the sense of territory within public areas*



FIGURE 6.15 *Problem of salesmen who intrude on family's privacy. Women strolling the beach with their covered Hi jab (veil). The lack of suitable outdoor recreational areas for women's use is among those landscape problems of Saudi Arabia*



FIGURE 6.16 *The lack of adequate public services within some outdoor recreational areas cause the problem of bathing near public streets and exposing some parts of human bodies which are prohibited from an Islamic point of view.*



FIGURE 6.17 *The inadequate design of outdoor recreational areas cause the problem of exposing some parts of human bodies which are prohibited from an Islamic point of view. Women also must lower their gaze as well as men.*

In addition, the previous mentioned problems also result from the lack of adequate landscape standards for site layout and design of recreational areas in many municipalities . "The municipality (of Jeddah) does not have any standards for its recreational services. It has a weak system in choosing sites for providing recreational services and it lacks a stable planning process for recreational services in the City.²⁸

Steward ²⁹ has emphasised this point by showing the difficulties of using unique standards for such activities since these might be successfully achieved in certain areas and times but not in others. That is to say, there is a lack of sufficient standards to organise and carry out the plan according to well formulated environmental principles. Standards are norms which might be established by authority, custom or general consent to be used as criteria and guides in establishing and evaluating a program, leadership, areas, facilities and plans³⁰ which, with regard to Saudi Arabia, were very primitive, or far behind compared to the advanced landscape architectural standards.

Adequate and up-to-date standards will aiding in formulation the layout and adequate design, which in turn might increase people's need for trouble-free recreation areas. However, standards do not represent a constant data base but must have some

flexibility to accommodate different natural or man-made variables such as site features, geophysical locations and socio-economic changes.

Al-Shareef³¹ also argued about the standards and their impact in controlling what happens in urban areas. "The control of urban areas through standard physical layout might, therefore, intervene in human affairs thorough a variety of design and enforcement mechanisms. Also, the traditional search for urban efficiency was intensively criticised by economists who argued that the operation of market forces and the related side-effects were completely ignored. Equally, sociologists argued that over-concern for the physical environment led to relative neglect of the welfare of large sectors in society".

The previous criticisms resulted from the lack of up-to-date and a whole knowledge environmental planning and design body which is important in determining the sufficiency for each type of activity. The contemporary outdoor recreational planning practices have imposed several regulations which ignore peoples' way of life and there is a sign of this in the rejection of some users, which emphasise the inefficiency of these planning policies. The inefficiency of contemporary urban environment policies, and the continued rejection of these policies by the users, is a sign of the need for urban policies which are more reliable and considerate to social aspects.³²

In other words, the existing planning and design process of site layout causing problems. There is an inadequate systematic way of anticipating, or monitoring change related to the outdoor recreation provision of public and private leisure opportunities. There are some governmental agencies that are involved in providing recreation resources for the Saudi people. There are no standards for assessing the need for such services or building such services. Usually these agencies will contract a national or an international company to build the facilities or sites for these recreational services.³³

Lutzin³⁴ defines the planning process for leisure and recreational resources as, "systematic way of anticipating, preventing or monitoring change related to the provision of public and private leisure opportunities. It is a continuous process of change in response to new social values, life-style patterns, technology, legislation, and availability of resources."

From the landscape architectural point of view, the site layout and design of many provisions in Saudi Arabia was less than satisfactory. This is for various reasons such as site selection and layout and design not reflecting functional use. According to Simonds³⁵ the recreational structures or groups of landscape structures might be seen as foreign to their location. "No matter how excellent these structures or how well contrived their plan, the total result is disturbing and unpleasant." It is pointless for instance, to situate a dual-carriageway traffic road for use as a recreational site, with sitting, driving, and promenade areas. The lack of invention or imaginary immaculate landscape design and the sticking to one concept of site layout and design using the same technique and the same standards all over the Kingdom has no meaning and will cause repeated problems on different sites. The primary work of planners is to help fit human activities to the desire to be of the land. Given the facts and a full understanding of the alternatives, reason tends to prevail.³⁶ Outdoor recreational layout and design should be responsive to people's pragmatic needs. Places also must express and affirm the value of each individual with harmony and balance with the natural forces and other living species of the planet. Cooper and Francis have provide a useful set of criteria for successful site layout and design which they call it as "people places"³⁷ as follows.

Criteria For Successful Site Layout And Design

- Be located where it is easily accessible to and can be seen by potential users.
- Clearly convey the message that the place is available for use and is meant to be used.
- Be beautiful and engaging on both the outside and the inside.
- Be furnished to support the most likely and desirable activities.
- Provide a feeling of security and safety to would-be users.
- Where appropriate, offer relief from urban stress and enhance the health and emotional well-being of its users.
- Be geared to the needs of the user group most likely to use the space.
- Encourage use by different subgroups of the likely user population, without any one group's activities disrupting the other's enjoyment.
- Offer an environment that is physiological comfortable at peak use times, in regard to sun and shade, windiness, and the like.

- Be accessible to children, women and disabled people.
- Incorporate components that the users can manipulate or change (e.g., sand play in outdoor recreational areas, raised garden beds in poor lands, interactive sculpture and fountains in urban plazas or outdoor areas that have meaning, purpose and function).
- Allow users the option - either as individuals or as members of a group- of becoming "attached" to the place and caring for it, through involvement in its design, construction, or maintenance; by using it for special events; or by temporary claiming personal spaces within the setting.
- Be easily and economically maintained and managed, within the limits of what is normally expected in a particular type of space (e.g., a concrete park might be easy to maintain but is not what a park is expected to be).
- Be designed with equal attention paid to place as an expression of visual art and place as social setting. Too much attention focused on one approach at the expense of the other may result in an unbalanced or unhealthy place. . . .so that these settings may provide pleasing, comfortable, supportive, functional and beautiful people places.

EXISTING PAVEMENTS

In examining site layout and design many, if not most of the existing recreational facilities seem do not fit all the previous set of criteria nor they met human recreational activities. Walking, sitting, talking and watching others are some main activities that people enjoy in recreational areas. But walking, for example, is very difficult to practised on existing pavements. This is because these pavements were designed with plants in the middle, causing pedestrians to walk on the roads to avoid trees, lamp posts or other obstacles; sometimes people have to walk in front of others sitting on the pavements (figure 6.18). The overall design of pavements was not planed to be as a continuous smooth line for pedestrian movements, with easy accesses for handicapped people. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for wheelchair bound persons to move along the walkway (Figure 6.19). Moreover the existing pavements were designed, mostly, to control automobile movements, or to allocate lighting and information boards or structures, or to cover bare land. Figure 6.20 illustrate some site layout pavements and their design.



FIGURE 6.18 A typical pavement design of recreational provision where the overall design of pavements or side walks were not planted to be for continuous pedestrian movements, with easy accesses for handicapped people. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to wheel chair people to move along side pavements.



FIGURE 6.19 *The difficulty for people, or the handicapped to walk or move on some existing pavements.*

Source: Author. Some site layouts of pavements on their design.



FIGURE 6.20 *Some site layouts of pavements and their design*

PAVEMENTS' WIDTH AND SITTING AREAS IN EXISTING SITE LAYOUT.

G EHL³⁸ has demonstrated the importance of having enough width in the pavements to be able to manoeuvre and walk freely without being disturbed, and without being pushed. He also emphasised the importance of having spaces that are sufficiently narrow and rich in experience and which, at the same time, allow room to manoeuvre. The 'chair -wheels' walking traffic are seldom to be found in most site layouts in Saudi Arabia. That creates various problems such as conflict with cars, with pedestrian themselves, and the uneven ground surfaces cause inconvenience for those who have walking difficulties. The combination of heavy automobile traffic, barriers, and difficult street crossing results in a number of irritating detours and unreasonable restrictions on pedestrian traffic. More pedestrian landscaping of pavements, squares and circulation systems is needed, so that pedestrians can move across the different areas in a natural and leisurely fashion in all directions.

The other problem of site layout and design is the lack of traditional seating facilities with enclosures. People feel more relaxed when they sit on the ground, because of their cultural background and the privacy aspect. There have been some problems of cultural differences and one example of this is the placing of the obligatory American tables and benches in the picnic areas. Saudis however prefer to eat their meals squatting on the ground, so this convenience is not often used for its intended purpose, (though the tables have been used for slaughtering sheep!).³⁹ Privacy is considered to be a major important principle for the Muslim family, especially while the family is outside their home, but unfortunately the design of the parks does not correspond well with this requirement. As a result many of the families sit next to hedges and shrubs that can shield them from other people's eyes. Since privacy is a major concern for Muslim families, failing to maintain it in a park will reduce the number of users.⁴⁰ The overall site layout of several major recreational areas in Saudi Arabia was not divided according to the different users' needs, such as women's areas which maintain the family privacy distance, and the distribution of various areas according to

the function and the users. That is to say, the site layouts and designs were not organised to accommodate the various categories of a typical Saudi society such as the family (father, mother, daughter, and children), single males (bachelors), females (mothers, daughters, and children), and boys (teenagers).

To put it differently, the site layout and design ought to accommodate different groups of users. The question of how to integrate the park with the privacy aspect is a question which will always be raised in all conservative and religious societies. Park and recreation standards are very important data for park planners and designers.

THE SITE LAYOUTS' STRUCTURE

THE SITE LAYOUTS were mostly straight lines, and natural curvilinear circulation and multi-levels are not adequately incorporated in the overall pattern. The sense of mystery was not adequately integrated to give the opportunity for visitors to discover the recreational and park features. Changing levels, hierarchies and order are among those features that were not adequately fitted to the site layout. Mounds, rocks, artificial structures, constructing artificial hills or earth perm, and space articulation enhance the privacy aspect and provide more places to be separated from others. Shrubs, hedges and rocks were not sufficiently provided in most sites and, if they were provided, they were inadequately designed to create a nicely defined screen and secure places. However the enclosure and exposure of areas must be in balance to ensure that sitting or picnic spots are overlooking the site and provide a maximum guarantee of barriers against undesirable things. Moreover many of the existing site layouts showed a lack of prayer areas within easy and near walking distance to encourages people to use the parks and pray in due time in the parks.

Light and dark as a landscape design technique is poorly integrated in site layout. Light should be directed toward the things people watch or do, and not towards people's faces.(Figure 6.21) Controlling the lighting can provide more private areas at night .

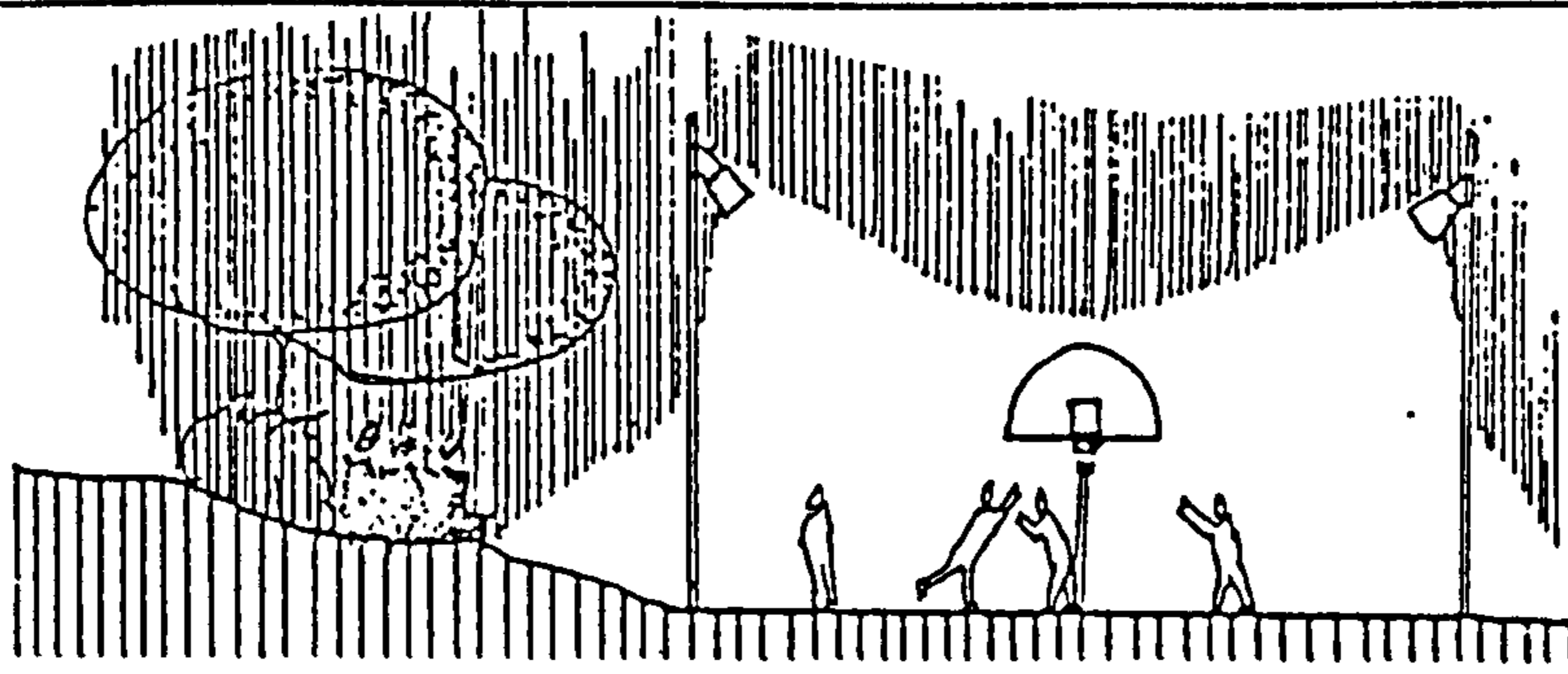


FIGURE 6.21 *Lighting should be directed toward the action or what the people are doing*⁴¹

Picnic and sitting areas often lack the appropriate shade, orientation and greenery features. For example, some "structure" used in Corniche areas where the cast shade is away from the sitting areas. The only shade available under those structure is only at noon times only where the sun is perpendicular in the sky. It is very important to design shelters according to sun-movements from sun-raise until it set, i.e., the treatment of shade must calculate sun angle at all day times, then each shelter must corresponds to sun orientation to provide shade at every moment of the day.

Children's play areas were inadequately located or incorporated within the overall site design. Many play areas were not shaded and were exposed to traffic and pedestrian circulation. Metallic play equipment was provided, and caused some injuries. There were no settings for adults who accompanied the children. "Parents were very upset in most of the parks in Saudi Arabia because the designers ignored their role in the children's play area."⁴² Furthermore, the circulation system was not adequately planned to facilitate different recreational zones. "Linked systems offer circuits around which the child can manipulate himself in a variety of ways and also provide enclosures for more ordered activity. They also offer items which encourage co-operation and graduations in difficulty which correspond with a child's changing capacity level."⁴³

Plants are important elements in the formation of the layout and the design of spaces. They have a significant role in changing the micro-climate, shading, creating soothing effects especially in arid areas and also provide a sense of nature in the city. They should not be used only to create beautiful and geometrical patterns, instead plant can be used to create the "outdoor rooms" and spaces to define territories and personal

spaces. "The basic design concept in most community gardens and urban parks is a geometrical patterns of trees and shrubs. Benches and lighting posts are distributed in the garden following the same rigid patterns without any thought to their function. The result is a loss of both openness and seclusion. Families cannot feel intimacy of the seclusion in which their privacy is difficult to intrude in, nor does the area provide the openness and the facility for other users such as the children to play a basic activity like football. Moreover the movement and sitting of the users is hampered by ditches and uneven surfaces.⁴⁴

In conclusion the site layout and design of a number of Saudi outdoor recreational areas was less than satisfactory because the basic landscape architectural principles were not successfully incorporated in the preliminary design stages. The location, size, and shape of the land ought to be with the nature of the site and to be created with functional purposes rather than as a 'beautification process'.

Quality and quantity are the prime aspect that is to be the aim of the planner. Minimising the different facilities while maximising their quality and quantities might enhance public satisfaction and eliminate degradation effects towards the and cost of maintenance. The site layout and design ought to facilitate the needs of each individual in society, including disabled or handicapped people. The design must assure easy, safe and convenient access, sitting and any special recreational areas should avoid or reduce recreational problems. "Most, if not all, parks in Saudi Arabia follow the classical or architectonic design methods whereby the park is divided into regular geometric shapes. Walkways run in straight lines through the park as if they ran through a military base. For a person walking inside the park, the feeling that he is being forced through the park's walkway network to reach a certain point inside the park is an expected issue. Also, to work with a classical design great thinking and imagination are needed to correlate the design with the local geography. For example, if we propose the existence of a rectangular natural lake and a naturally shaped man-made lake, then by common sense, most people would prefer the man-made lake as a place to spend a holiday. In fact, natural instinct will guide the human to choose the shape that he is more familiar

with. Other than that, people escape from the life of buildings and streets to the parks, looking for a few hours in a beautiful, natural setting."⁴⁵

People's attitudes and behaviour can be considered as a useful indication in reflecting their needs and satisfaction. For example, there are many sitting areas in every park but most of them stay empty all the time. This is because of the desire of visitors to find the most moderate, shaded and protected area. The lack of a particular shape and layout which each different zone has a particular recreational facilities, means that each zone has its own function limiting people to use the site according to their demand. The concept of space articulation, hierarchies and order all have a direct bearing on privacy. The physical actuality of a place, its character and size must be translated into social, physical, functionally comprehensible and easily visualised places. To form the urban spaces for community and privacy issues, the site planning and design ought to consider the urban hierarchy of spaces as a means to satisfy users.

The common considerations and problems which result from site layout and design of most outdoor recreational areas in Saudi Arabia are as follows.

- **[1] The site layout**, in general terms, does not enable people to move about in and linger in spaces. Furthermore those sites were not able to accommodate a wide range of social and recreational activities.
- **[2] Walking and promenading** is a recreational activity which might cause social and physical problems, due to the inadequate design of the circulation system. The poor design of pavements also causes conflicts between people and traffic. "*Whenever people walk, they prefer direct routes and shortcuts. Only very great obstacles, like dangerous traffic, extensive barriers and so on, seem to be able to interrupt this pattern*".⁴⁶
- **[3] The lack of spatial sequences** is the common pattern in Saudi recreational areas. Straight pedestrian routes were not avoided. Winding or interrupted streets were rarely found.
- **[4] Sitting:** The existence of good opportunities for sitting paves the way for the numerous activities that are the prime attractions in public spaces: eating, reading, sleeping, knitting, playing chess, sunbathing, watching people, talking, swimming, socialising and so on. These activities are vital to the quality of public spaces, especially if they also be designed adequately for women's use. Sitting activities in

general take place where the external conditions are favourable, and the sitting locations are chosen far more carefully than are locations for circulation systems.

- **[5] Placement of seating** was not adequately analysed in regard to the spatial and functional qualities of the location, orientation and enclosures. *"Each bench or seating area should preferably have an individual local quality and should be placed where there is, for example, a small space within the space, a niche, a corner, a place that offers intimacy and security and, as a rule, a good micro climate as well."*⁴⁷
- **[6] Orientation and view:** Orientation and view play an important role in the choice of a place to be used. The poor orientation or visual invasion over other areas causes privacy intrusion.
- **[7] Sun and wind direction** will influence people in their choice of sitting places. They need well-protected places which were not adequately provided in most existing layouts. *"A good rule of thumb for a good city or residential environment is that suitable places to sit should be located at regular intervals, for example, every 100 meters (330 ft.)"*⁴⁸
- **[8] Circulation:** should be designed according to the kind of recreational use (active Vs passive) or according to the age and gender of visitors. There was no enough off-street parking so most cars were parked along the main road which causes danger, noise and intervenes between visitors and their privacy.
- **[9] Public utilities and services:** In general many sites lack the vital services such as telephones, bathrooms, drinking fountains, shelter, first aid and emergency bodies which causes inconvenience for visitors.
- **[10] Information:** Most sites lacked sufficient signs, information offices, maps of the site. A posting of all rules and regulations in English and Arabic was urgently needed help people use the provisions.
- **[11] Privacy:** Psychologist Irwin Altman says privacy is a phenomenon of the mind commonly thought to have several states: anonymity (going unrecognised even though in a crowd); intimacy (ascribed to a couple or small group peeling off from others in order to be alone); and the most extreme condition, solitude (being totally free from the observation of others). In the environmental designer's realm, adjusting the physical surroundings to literally shut off or include others. Privacy has been designated by some theorists as another basic need which bubbles within all human beings. So designers should strive to support exactly what the users wish to control. Spatial differentiation is a significant factor in nurturing privacy satisfactions. The more options available, the better the plan.⁴⁹

From examining and evaluating many outdoor recreational layouts and designs the researcher observed that they did not function as they were intended to in the original design. Benches were not used because most visitors sat on the ground. Families were isolating themselves from other visitors by using their cars as a buffer from others at the site. With regard to the nature of recreational involvement most visitors were involved in passive rather than active activities such as socialising drinking tea and watching television. Formal recreation programs and activities were not sufficiently provided at the sites, and there was lack of recreational facilities for women's use.

Al-Shahrani ⁵⁰, who specialised in Landscape Architecture, conducted a detailed social inquiry, the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia, about the existing leisure and recreation patterns and their relationship to open space and landscape design. He concluded that the urban open spaces in Jeddah, as recreational facilities, failed to respond to people's desires and needs. Factors, such as culture and climate, influence people's behaviour and use of the environment and these facilities are ignored in the planning and designing of these places. Foreign planning and design concepts gave priority to vehicular movement and maximised the public domain. Community open spaces and gardens were assumed to be the primary resources for recreation for family members. They have the advantage of being accessible. This is more important if we take into consideration the fact that children, ladies, elders and disabled have no direct access to cars. However, these open spaces were often inadequately designed, maintained and managed which resulted in under-utilisation of valuable assets.

The existing recreation problems in Saudi Arabia are associated with the lack of comprehensively qualified environmental designers who are able to interpret the existing cultural values with the on-going progressing landscape architectural techniques. Often there are discrepancies between the design of the open spaces and the activities practised in them, for example, using an area or a space designed for other purposes as a recreational area, the people use the area between the roads or round about for picnicking. The seclusion and dense planting of these areas made them danger places for sitting in spite of their shade and a little privacy can be achieved.

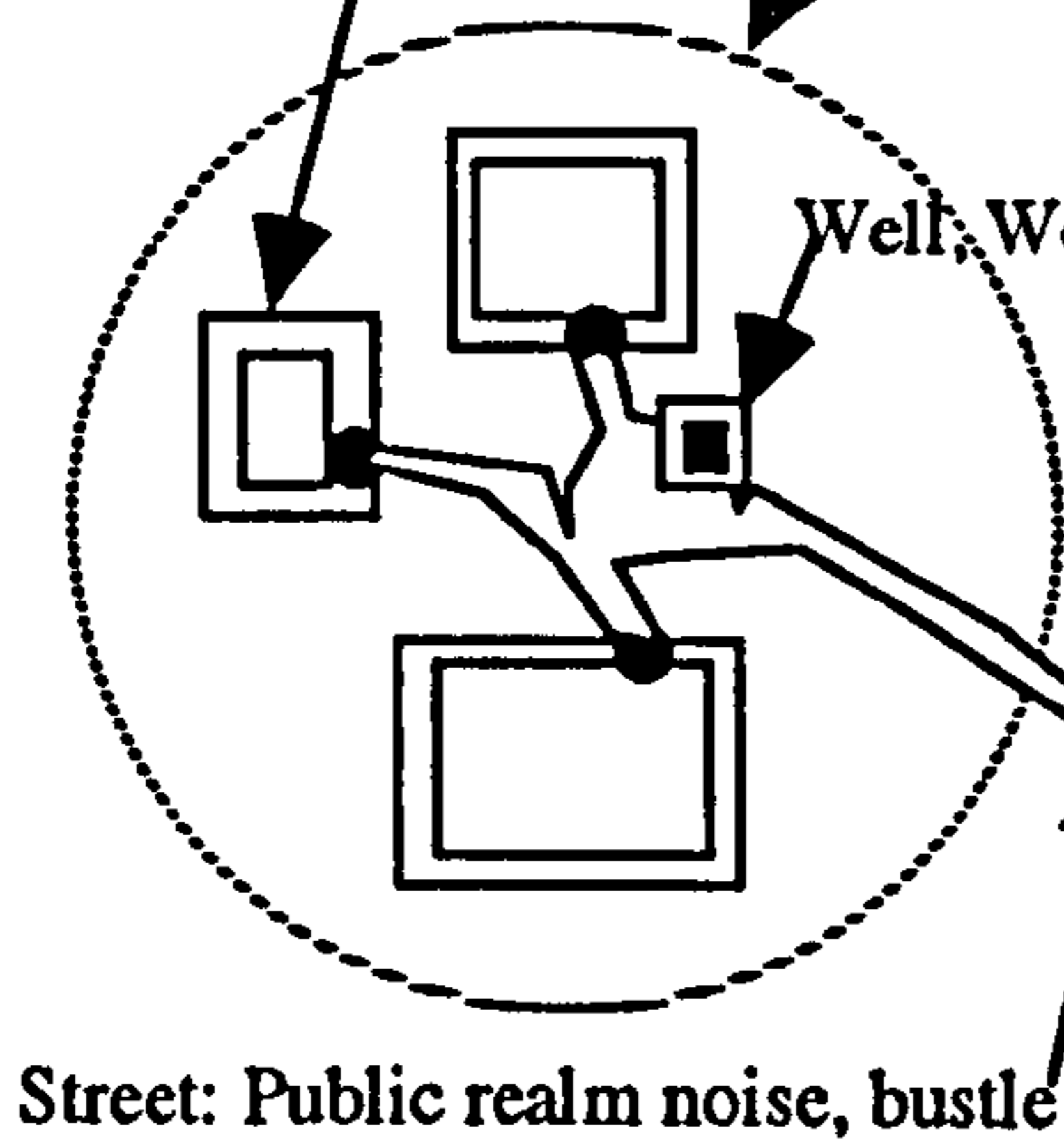
The nature of the problem was how to formulate outdoor recreational provision to meet the physical needs and the desires of the people and their culture. The importance of cultural and social needs is usually overlooked on account of rapid growth and high demands. The problem of recreational planning and design is its reliance on foreign concepts and standards. The contemporary zoning regulation and building codes as well as open spaces planning in most Saudi cities or in most Arab-Muslim cities are regarded as "artificial" and "technical" and therefore devoid of any cultural connotations.⁵¹ The layout of any environmental project ought to consider the existing landscape factors and how people will react to them.

The mobility in the environment must be controlled and accordingly limits to the movements and controls of behaviour to create hierarchical domains of privacy. "Traditionally the right of the individual to privacy extended even to the siting of doorways - not opposite each other, not at intersections, but allowed at dead ends. Contemporary high rise flats in urban Saudi Arabia break most of the established rules of Islamic urban design, allowing little if any privacy between units within the tower blocks, and removing all privacy from the existing units."⁵²

The previous points also apply to outdoor recreational provision. The concept of the new neighbourhoods and the grid-pattern plan created contrasted territories, extreme public and extreme private spaces. The progressive elimination of semi-public spaces was the most significant change. The traditional spatial hierarchy of open spaces has been diminished. In the traditional Muslim environment the hierarchy was based on the domain requirements, not on the size or percentages of bare statistical planning figures. Figure 4.22 illustrates the hierarchy of the urban open spaces during the change of domains, the movement from the market or Suq and mosque (public) through the common spaces (semi-public, semi-private) to the house (private). This type of concept will be an aid in solving some of the outdoor recreational problems.

Larger Group Domain-Ethnic
Clan, or Religious common
space, Semi-Public (Semi-Private)
space

Family-quiet Green
Private Realm



● Marks transition point

FIGURE 6.22 Diagram of house-settlement system in a Moslem town. It illustrates the various domains and the movement from public to private areas . Concepts that are desperately needed to solve the problems of the contemporary outdoor recreational areas⁵³

SITE MANAGEMENT

SITE MANAGEMENT is the manipulation of the developed site to maintain the quality of the resource setting and to rehabilitate it where necessary. Site management is an intensive program whose functions are to protect the site from overuse by recreationists and to maintain a desirable, aesthetic environment in which the activity is to take place.⁵⁴ Protection and renovation are necessary to maintain aesthetic and environmental values associated with developed sites. The aim of site management is to bring together supply and demand to equate resource adequacy and human recreational needs and desires. Its ultimate goal is to enable various user groups

to have satisfying recreational experiences. It co-ordinates the activities and services on the available resource base with the needs of visitors. It is the element that protects the integrity of the recreational opportunity and the resource base⁵⁵. Therefore, Action must be taken to reduce conflict and to maximise the quality of the recreation experience. Jubenville, Twight, and Becker⁵⁶ have described the outdoor recreation management organisation as "an open system" (figure 6.23).

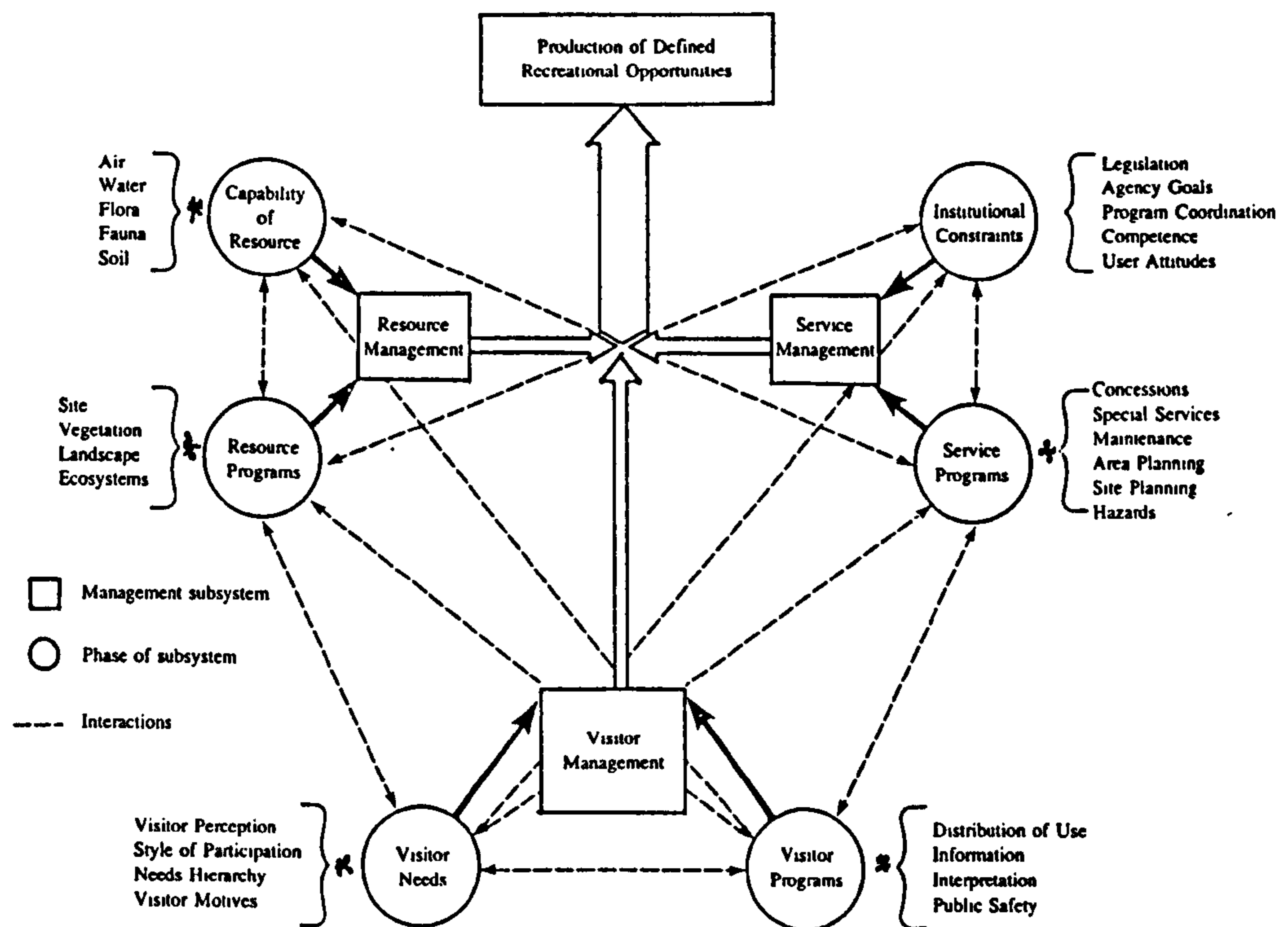


FIGURE 6.23 *The Outdoor Recreation System Model. This model shows the integration and interaction of the subsystems. An asterisk (*) indicates areas where the external environment may affect the operation of the system.⁵⁷*

The function of this system describe the subsystem , this system includes visitor management, resource management, and service management. Visitor management is manipulating the visitor (either voluntarily or otherwise) in order to create a pleasing social environment for the activity. Resource management refers to manipulating the resource in order to enhance the recreational opportunity or protect the site from deterioration. Service management refers to provisioning for certain visitors services within a given recreational opportunity while minimising the queuing associated with opportunity.

According to Jubenville et al⁵⁸ the integration of functions is a difficult process because of the number of possible interactions between all the programs in each subsystem. A diagram of this would create such a maze of lines that we would have difficulty in tracing interrelationships. We must realise, however, that there is an interdependence within the system; that is, a decision made in one program area can have a drastic effect on the other programs. Therefore the manager must consider all the ramifications of a particular decision since the understanding of these interactions will help to manipulate one program to produce a desired outcome in another. "A system model is the only logical approach to managing the natural resource base for recreational use because it simply depicts the highly complex interaction of visitor, resource, and the manager. While all possible interactions may not be fully appreciated, we understand enough to know that the three subsystems are linked together and that any change in one can affect the others. Without that knowledge, we could continually solve problems in one area and possibly cause catastrophies in others."⁵⁹

Site renovation focuses on rehabilitating a deteriorated site. It can be a process which allows the site to recover naturally, or it can be an active process in which specific treatments speed up recovery. The concept in site management is illustrated in figure 6.24

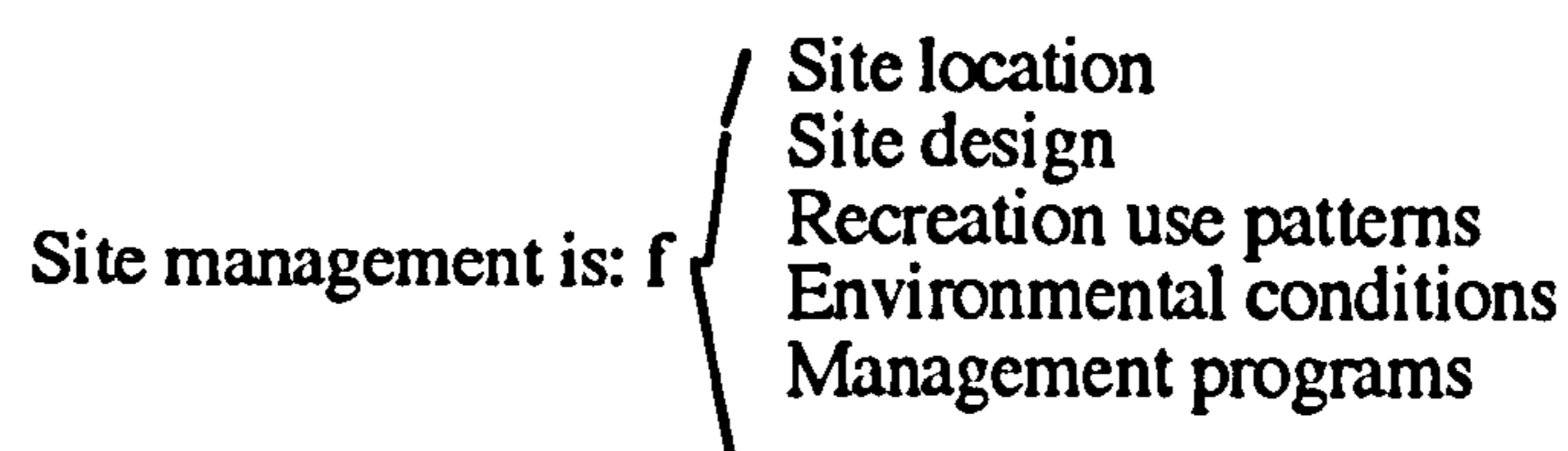


FIGURE 6.24 *Concepts in Site Management*⁶⁰

From previous figure, the site management is a function of proper location. Without this, one might spend inordinate amounts of money to maintain acceptable conditions.

The site management is the manipulation of the developed site to maintain the quality of the resource setting and to rehabilitate it where necessary. Site management is

an intensive program whose functions are to protect the site from overuse by recreationists and to maintain a desirable, aesthetic environment in which the activity is to take place⁶¹. The site management of resource, facilities and users is to achieve the site aims and the assessing of how the site can best be exploited, and how the site is controlled or how to allocate the necessary staff, provide some sort of a service, a cleaning and maintenance team and persons to control traffic and car-parking. Within the management section of the plan it will be necessary to include reference to concessionaires and the terms and conditions upon which they may be allowed to operate and to the organisation and running of specific sections of the total enterprise such as interpretation centres, children's play areas or adventure playgrounds, nature walks and the like.⁶²

The existing site management procedures in Saudi Arabia do not include methods by which the progress of the enterprise is monitored. These might include the setting standards for various types of recreational enterprise and for the performance of the site. In addition, the site management methods might include how to control the visitors and their use of the facilities, their behaviour within the recreational site and to initiate action towards, for example, protecting a particular area from the ravages of over use before rather than after such overuse becomes apparent.

In relating the previous site management suggestions to existing outdoor recreational sites in Saudi Arabia, unfortunately, there is no adequate information or statistical data to show the degree satisfaction with management. From the author's observation, there were some regulations that eliminate certain activities such as 'It is dangerous to swim in this area' and 'No dumping'. Some enterprising management set rules to use the site at certain times for each gender for seclusion reasons. Despite that, the actual picture of many of the existing outdoor recreational sites shows the lack of cleaning of the sites or its public facilities. "The existing parks (in Saudi Arabia) show no response in terms of maintenance. In fact, a lot of money and effort are invested for the first few months, and thereafter the park suffers a slow death. The attitudes of ignoring problems affects benches, railings, walkways, pavements, fountains, playgrounds, light fixtures, and plants. The existing condition shows that the

administration's role has been relegated to occasional maintenance. Other than that, it is not apparent."⁶³

HOW SITE MANAGEMENT MIGHT SOLVE PROBLEMS?

THE MANAGEMENT might help in solving problems and reducing conflicts by co-ordinating the users' needs, site features and by involving different professionals. The management techniques will guide the planning stage to reach the most successful landscape design. It is a very broad subject which includes the management of recreational areas, the number of visits, the water supply, sewage facilities and the development of water areas for boat landing and swimming. "The more attractive and desirable an area, the more likely is use to increase in response to increase intensity of management."⁶⁴

The site management might solve problems that faced visitors. The visitor is the main beneficiary of an outdoor recreation management. The site management offers basic features, including access, facilities, and other accommodations, which are commensurate with institutional constraints, resource limitations, and visitor needs. "Resource management programs attempt to maintain the existing resource base within acceptable limits of change (based on either agency goals, visitor perception, or both). When use exceeds these limits, feedback through the system may indicate a need to reduce the impact by means of a visitor redistribution program (visitor management) which in turn should signal a need to adjust area or site planning, number of accommodations, and services"⁶⁵.

Adequate management will moderate or ease extreme recreational use problems. One such problem is the physical damage to the area where the role of management might be applied, for example, to controlling people from trampling on the vegetation or on soft and hard landscape materials for a good distance in all directions, or by the disposal of people from popular spots to avoid overcrowding.

In outdoor recreational activity, the resource alone has little or no productivity (although it is used) unless it is combined with proper management, capital and labour.

The management is capable of protecting the vegetation. Screening or background shrubs and trees can be shaped to facilitate people's behaviour and attitudes. The management can also protect water bodies for outdoor recreation from being polluted or otherwise damaged. In other areas, for example, management can build or improve water areas by impounding, water regulation, protecting from erosion or by bringing in sand for swimming beaches. The management might also enhance the future provisions by, for example, reclamation of an abandoned stone or gravel quarry. This can sometimes be made into an attractive lake suitable for a variety of water-based recreational activities. The site management could solve many environmental or social problems by, for example, designing adequate access, by building a road, or improving an existing access or providing special access facilities such as boat launching ramps. In short, the management could provide more recreational sites that have more quality and reliable capacity to withstand the overuse and degradation of the landscape.

In fact, some problems might be solved by management or by design or by both. The implication here is that the problem should really be eliminated in initial site planning and design. In recreation management, some of these problems still exist. People seek outdoor recreation experiences on various sites. Yet sometimes, through abuse and overuse, they destroy the very site and opportunity that they so highly value. Their focus is seemingly on the present and not on the future as they destroy one oasis and then move on to another. "In view of spiralling demands and diminishing supply, we must protect our existing resources while trying to innovated increase their use. . .We must take an active role in managing the site to protect the resource and the opportunity now, ensuring that the site is maintained for future generations. . .The site should be designed to handle expected visitor loads and, where necessary, incorporate cultural treatment programs on a regularly scheduled basis from the beginning."⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

O PEN SPACE reserves or parks blend together in a planned network of green open spaces creating an oasis-like setting for recreational purposes.

The enrichment of a variety of facilities for recreation and leisure time use must be an integrated system within the framework of local environment and culture. These must be based on sound cultural, ecological, sociological, bio-physical, environmental and economic foundations which facilitate people's way of life and their behaviour and attitudes as controlled by their faith. Otherwise many problems will emerge as a result.

Recreational problems result from inadequate planning and design of the outdoor environment. The imbalance between quality and quantity in response to people's demand led the authority to increase recreational provision but most of provision lacks quality. The overall provision is not sufficient to facilitate each type of activity. Distribution is also inadequate and influences people to concentrate in some areas while others stay empty. That created the problem of over-use and under-use which causes environmental degradation and social tensions as well as the wasting of valuable urban open spaces.

The site layout and design of most outdoor recreational provision was not adequately shaped to satisfy the desire of the people in terms of adequate opportunities or facilities. The layout created the following problems.

THE LAYOUT PROBLEMS

- [1] The site layout and design of most existing provisions has been done by foreign professional consultants who have no adequate background about the desert and Muslim culture which led to poor design concept that did not reflect the local tradition and environment.
- [2] Inappropriate site selection and design which caused problems of lack of shade, privacy, harassment, safety and exposure to climatic factors;
- [3] The lack of adequate site management which is important to control, organise and carry out landscape plans to facilitate visitors according to a well-balanced system between the people and their environment.

- [4] The problem of mixture between men and women as a result of the lack of freedom of movement and inadequate circulation which interferes with the person and the territory of the other.
- [5] The absence of essential services and facilities.

The western modern influence must be adapted to fit the locality and to be within traditional and Islamic design modes. There is a need for a proper method of design which achieves the best landscape design and fits with the traditions and behaviour of Saudi society. "The urban park is to become another building block in the Saudi culture under the wise leadership of the government and rulers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."⁶⁷

With regard to site management and its related problems to the outdoor recreational facilities, the management and maintenance of many of the existing areas were insufficient and might be considered as poor. The lack of maintenance affects the overall structure and landscape elements of the provision, such as the furniture of the parks (benches, play equipment, pavements, erosion and cleaning). In terms of management, many of the outdoor recreational resources in Saudi Arabia have no public toilets or enough appropriately located rubbish bins. The management level is more critical, for example, usually some planted areas and gardens are irrigated by the sewage smelly water which deters people from using the garden. The issues of management, maintenance and resource allocation which are a necessary accompaniment of more comprehensive and effective meeting of the needs, requires more studies. These issues are related to the size, quality, location of facilities, traditional influence and design modes, privacy, shade, safety and utilisation of open space in relation to users, providers and managers.

The existing recreation resources need to be evaluated to assess their impact in leisure patterns. The construction of basic data relating to recreation resources and leisure based activities will be quite useful for assessing the patterns of demand and public participation, and will provide tangible landscape data. The success of any research to be undertaken is to know how to fit the right pieces together (Figure 6.25).

"Mistakes will continue to occur. The only real mistake, however, the only one you should not accept, is perpetuating the errors of those who have gone before you."⁶⁸

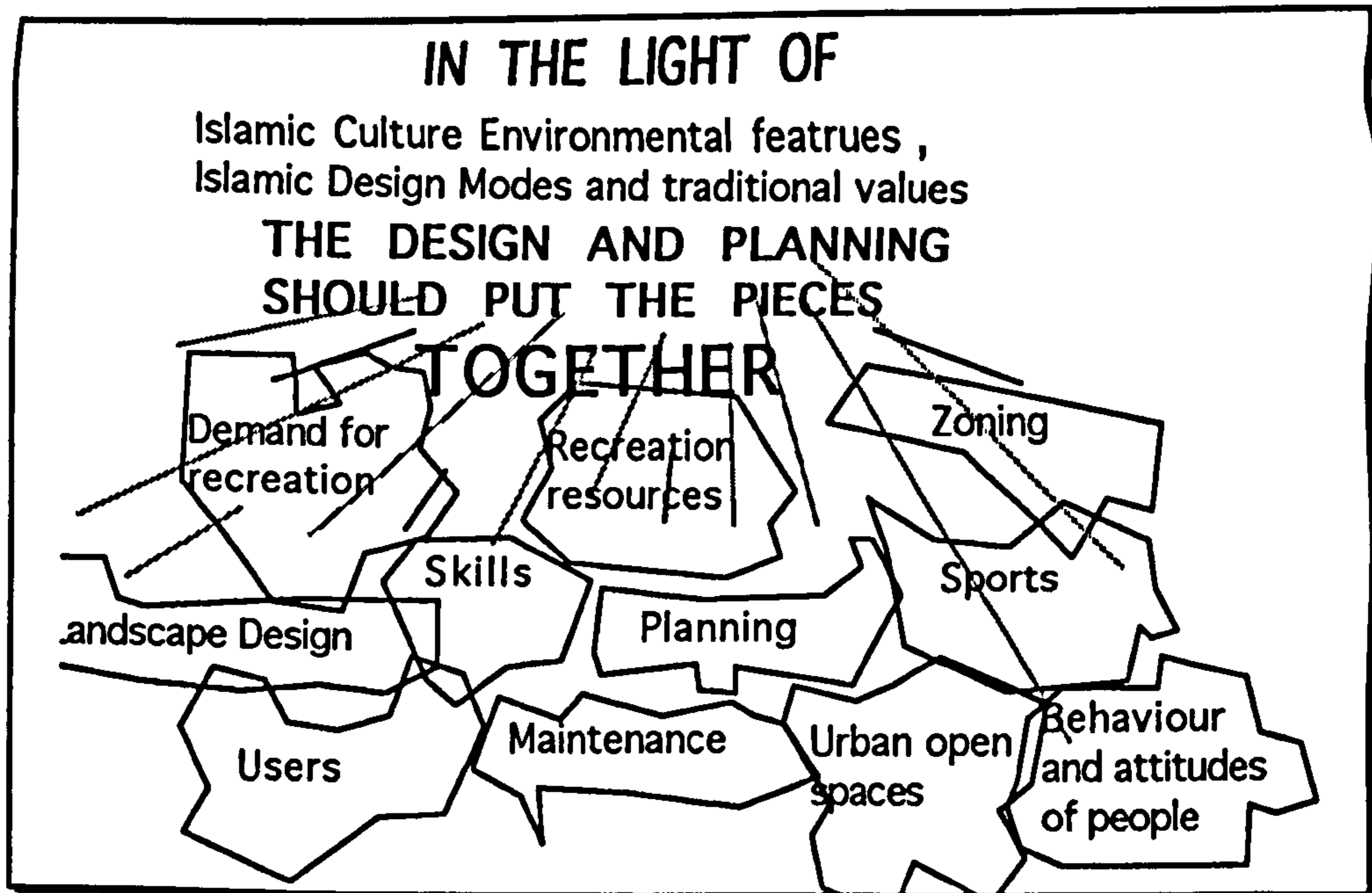


FIGURE 6.25 Many if not all existing recreational problems and all other environmental design issues will be solved and avoided by "Putting the Pieces Together".

The potential of parks to shape and reflect social values is still by no means fully appreciated or understood. Those with an interest in the character of urban life should seize on parks as one of the vehicles for the development and enjoyment of the visitors, and debate about parks should revolve around local culture and environment. Action requires decisions, and there is no universal formula for deciding how broadly based a decision-making process should be.⁶⁹ Therefore each of the landscape elements, hard or soft, of the outdoor recreational urban provisions represents part of landscape architects' strategy for enhancing the moral and social way of life, so that today, as in the past, the citizen visiting a recreation site is subject to an accumulated set of internal moral lessons from his culture. The following chapter will explore how the Jeddah's Corniche (as the Case Study) responds to the previous mentioned points as well as to its role, characteristics, problems and its outdoor recreational and leisure patterns.

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