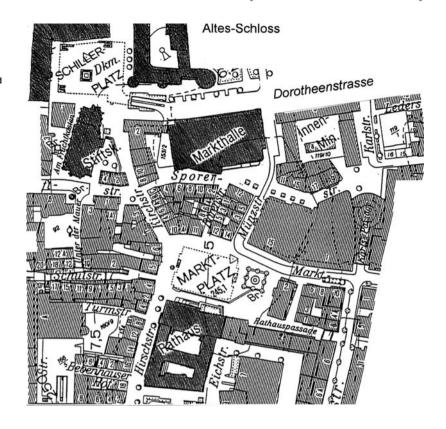material for a symbolic and collective community memory. The layouts, landmarks and public spaces all contribute to each city's distinctive sense of identity (Figures 1.2 and 1.3).

From cities to urban sprawl

The last two centuries have seen a transformation in cities from being relatively contained, to widespread urban sprawl. This has been a worldwide phenomenon. The strengthening of international capital has led to the concentration of economic power in a number of global centres of finance and highly

Figure 1.2
The city as a layout of landmarks and public spaces – the symbols of local governance, sustenance, spiritual fulfilment, justice and permanence – each with interconnecting squares: Stuttgart, 1990. (*Source*: City of Stuttgart.)

specialized services, such as London, Frankfurt and New York (Sassen, 2001; Smith, 2002). The decisions taken in these global cities, as seats of government, international markets and the locations of many corporate headquarters, are often of greater significance than decisions taken by governments at a regional or even national level. At the same time some older industrial cities such as Detroit and Manchester have seen their influence dwindle as manufacturing becomes less important (Sassen, 2001; Smith, 2002). As production has moved location or closed down, there has been a trend of population migration away from the cities to the suburbs, smaller towns and semi-rural areas (Turok, 1999).

The combined actions of economic power and planning have undermined the importance of distinct spaces and landmarks that originally contributed to the establishment of the character and spaces of cities. Many urban patterns and traditional connections have been weakened or lost, slashed by mega redesigns that ignored centuries of evolution. Cities have been scarred by major road networks, which occupy large areas of land, fragment and blight neighbourhoods destroying local