

buildings is often grandiose and disrupts the existing urban fabric (Figure 1.5). These buildings seldom connect to the actual needs and character of an area nor strengthen its legibility. Economically they usually do not develop the local economy. They may draw in visitors; however, they often only pass through local neighbourhoods that have been blighted or socially changed (Gratz and Mintz, 1998). What is being done to establish the viability of the wider community?

The economic trends of neo-liberalism have increased social polarization and inequality (Hamnett, 1996; Borja and Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2001). While elites need people willing to work for low wages, they do not want them living nearby. Gentrification intensifies polarization and feeds antagonism. The existing population of working class, and sometimes minority ethnic



Figure 1.5
Grandiose architecture and glossy image but not connected to needs of the area and ignores the poor: Petronas Towers, Kuala Lumpur, 1996. (Source: Bob Giddings.)

communities, are either alienated as a remainder community surrounded by affluence or pushed out to somewhere else. New central or prestige area housing does not cater for families or for lower-paid workers. In some cases, tenants of social housing live in estates starved of repairs and investment next door to expensive new flats. Often the new housing is not part of the wider community but is exclusive, in gated developments, which cut existing connections and restrict access to residents (Figure 1.6). City-centre housing should be neither a dormitory for the rich and childless nor an isolated enclave for the privileged. Successful cities should provide a diversity of

Figure 1.6
Gated housing developments are on the increase not only in the UK, but also worldwide: Newcastle and Shanghai. (Sources: Bob Giddings and Pacific Productions.)

