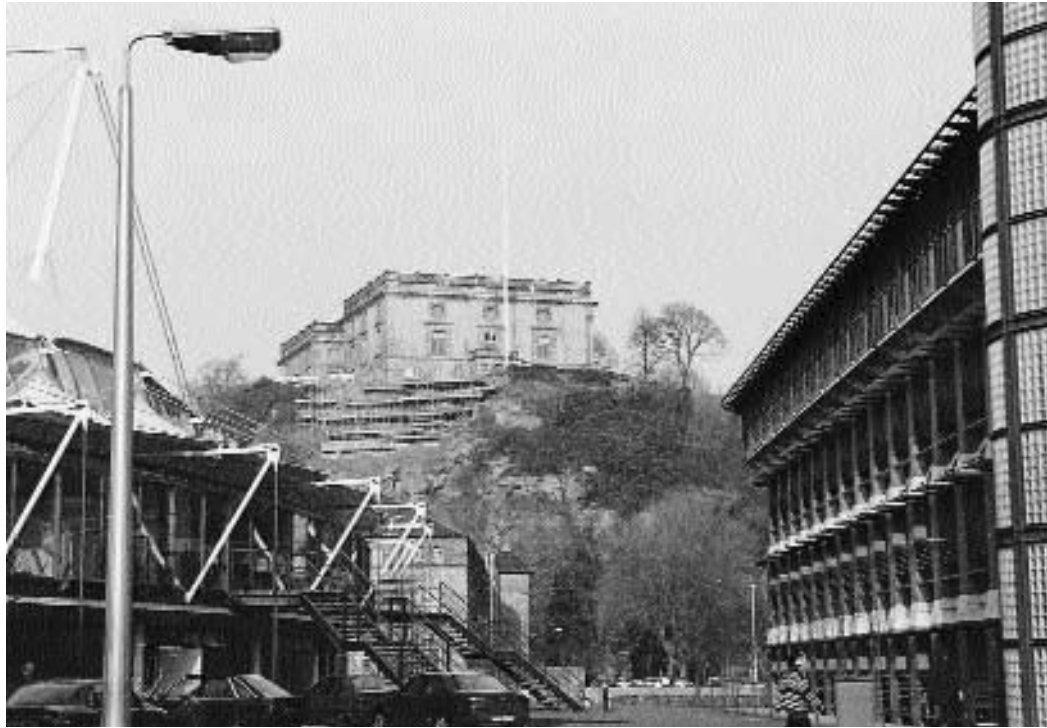


Figure 3.28 Castle Rock, Nottingham.



whether by foot, bicycle, bus or car. Paths are the routes we take to move about in the city. The need to reduce the use of the private motor car will inevitably increase the importance of the network of pedestrian routes. It is these networks of pedestrian paths which form the distinctive images of districts and quarters in the city. Memorable paths, or those paths which evoke a strong image in the user, are often of a distinctive form and clearly modulated. The memorable path has important places and landmarks along its length.

Nodes are focal points of activity, such as the junction of paths, meeting places, market squares or places of transport interchange. According to Alexander, interesting and lively paths have nodes of activity at a maximum distance of 300 m along their length.¹⁵ A city, town or village usually has a centre

which is probably the most important node, if not in terms of activity then as a symbol for that place. A good example of a symbolic city centre is Market Square in Nottingham which is no longer the main shopping focus for the city and its region as a result of a decision to move the market away from the Square in the 1960s. But it is here in Market Square that Nottingham Forest, recently the most successful city football team, returned victorious to present its trophy to adoring fans. It is here, too, beside the sculpted lions which flank the steps beneath the Council House Dome, that young people arrange to meet. Market Square with its fountains, formal paved garden and seating, is the focus for celebrations such as those which occur on New Year's Eve when throngs gather in front of the Council House, the headquarters of the City Council. Other impor-



Figure 3.29 Castle Rock, Nottingham.

tant nodes occur on routes as they enter the city or one of its main quarters. The gateway to the city is traditionally the place where travellers rest, where markets develop and where controlled entry to the city is maintained. Piazza del Popolo has been, as we have seen earlier, Rome's northern gateway for nearly 2000 years and is a model for such entry points to city or quarter. The perceptual study of place should aim to establish the distribution and location of nodes. Equally important for the study, however, is a classification of nodes by type, function and relative importance.

Landmarks are points of reference which are experienced at a distance. They are three-dimensional sculptural objects in contrast to nodes which are places to be entered and experienced from within. Landmarks can be natural phenomena such

as Castle Rock in Nottingham or important buildings or monuments such as the dome of Nottingham's City Council House. Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, London, is a typical city landmark. The landmark is often a feature used in giving directions to a stranger. The landmark may, therefore, not always be the great monument but be something much more commonplace, such as an oddly shaped shop window or a small but highly visible street fountain. Discovering the wealth of small-scale landmarks is one of the functions of the perceptual study. It is the intricate nature and complexity of these perceptual clues which give to a place its interest and vitality (Figures 3.28 to 3.31).

The city is organized into quarters or districts each having some identifying characteristic. The district is a medium- to large-scale section of the