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2.31

**Figure 2.30** Piazza di SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice

**Figure 2.31** Trafalgar Square, London

feature but also upon the power of its modelling or the symbolism of its shape. The walls of the space in contrast take on a secondary role where decoration is subdued. The wall of the hospital emphasizes this almost negative role using *trompe l'œil* to destroy the apparent physical boundary of the square, extending it by the subtle use of false perspective (Figure 2.30).

The amorphous square as the name implies has little or no shape. It may, in fact, be a square in its earliest development, or the buildings that surround a traffic roundabout. In the latter case decoration of any sort is wasted in a position where it will not be seen and in the former only time will tell where if at all, decoration should be used. Zucker cites Trafalgar Square as an amorphous space. He believes that Nelson's Column is not massive enough to hold this great place together (Figure 2.31). To a large extent it is merely a traffic gyratory system. There are, however, small places in the square itself and on its periphery where pedestrians can stop and admire decoration. The area in front of the extension to the National Gallery is such a place and, therefore, the location for a decorative façade. Some would criticize the recent extension of the Gallery as bland and not decorative enough.

The square, like the street, can also be studied in terms of its main function. Cities usually have civic squares, commercial squares and residential squares, each of which exhibit different approaches to decoration. The civic square is where we find the tragic scene as defined by Vitruvius. In the civic square façades are usually restrained and classical, designed to impress. The most important concern in decorating is achieving unity and rhythm. Campidoglio and St Peter's Square are two excellent examples in Rome. Commercial squares, on the other hand, are often examples of the comic scene, displaying exuberance through a variety of decorated façades. Even the most restrained commercial squares display a variety of types and styles of ornament and decoration. Commercial squares are also the squares where decoration is



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more likely to change over time, expressing the fashions of different periods. Market Square in Nottingham is a good example of a commercial square where different approaches to façade decoration and articulation can be seen - classical, whimsical Victorian and unadorned post-war Modern (Figures 2.32 and 2.33). On the other hand, very often, the residential squares, unlike residential streets, tend to display tragic scenes - restrained façades decorated by unity and rhythm of small cues.

Residential squares in London, Bath, Edinburgh and Dublin provide good examples of squares defined by façades that are highly restrained and controlled. Arguably, the bourgeoisie inhabiting these squares preferred classical façades as they would give their homes added status by emulating



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the residences of the aristocracy and civic buildings. In the four cities listed above façades defining the residential squares again use unity and rhythm as the main control for decoration. Classical façades often use large elements and Georgian façades use small elements but the resulting unity is similar. In squares surrounded by classical façades the juxtaposition of trees and buildings often gives the impression of a more human scale, whereas Georgian façades do not require trees to create human scale (Figure 2.34).

## CONCLUSION

The building façade is the feature of the urban realm where the appropriate use of ornament and

**Figure 2.32** Market Square, Nottingham

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