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LANDMARKS, SCULPTURE AND FURNITURE

6

INTRODUCTION

There are two main aspects of city ornament. The first is the design and ornamentation of the two dimensional planes enclosing the network of streets and squares. This aspect of city ornament has been considered in previous chapters. This chapter deals with the second aspect of city ornament; the design and use of three dimensional objects, both buildings, major civic monuments and the more utilitarian elements of street furniture. The first decorative category, city spaces, falls within Lynch's definition of path and node. The second category, major three-dimensional objects within civic space fits most appropriately the definition of city landmark (Lynch, 1960). The distinction between these particular decorative elements is not exclusive and the boundary between typologies is not precise. For example, landmarks can take the form of a distinctive treatment of a wall surface, where two surfaces meet at a corner or where the roofline of a street elevation terminates in a distinctive and dramatic fashion. Conversely, city paths and nodes are frequently enriched with three dimensional objects, some of which act as landmarks.

There are two types of landmark. There is the purely local landmark which is visible from restricted locations. These are the points of reference by which we give directions to strangers in the locality. They are the 'innumerable signs, store fronts, door-knobs, and other urban detail, which fill the image of most observers' (Lynch, 1960). Without this rich array of local detail the urban scene would be greatly impoverished. The second type of landmark has city-wide relevance: it is a major point of reference shared by a large population. All landmarks share similar qualities. Unlike the street or square the observer does not enter into a landmark; they are external and usually a simply defined three dimensional object, a tower, dome or hilltop. Perceptually the form of a landmark is such that it is possible to single it out as an element or group of coherent elements against a background landscape of repetitive detail. The city-wide landmark is typically seen from a distance and from many angles, usually over the tops of or between lesser buildings. Both landmark types are important in creating a stimulating image for the observer and in assisting with the reading and understanding of the urban realm. In addition to these practical reasons for landmarks, they have an important role