distinguished from its neighbours. If, in addition, the architectural treatment of the corner is highly ornamental and quite distinct from adjacent walls then the image produced is one which impinges upon the eye and the mind of the viewer. Corner types which merge into the background architecture, such as the curved corner, or those that make no positive visual statement, such as the angular corner, do not lend themselves to the type of distinctive decorative treatment necessary for the development of a landmark. The sweeping movement of the tower, piercing the roofline, is the corner type most predisposed to landmark formation. For greatest effect, however, it must be used with care and reserved for special locations.

Developers and architects appear to have rediscovered the street corner. Many recent urban developments celebrate the building corner with a flourish of decoration – the very antithesis of the multitude of neat but characterless acute angles that epitomize the more faceless examples of urban architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. While the new found interest in ornament is to be welcomed, if reproduced at every street corner such exuberance may result in a florid city-scape with no place for the eye to rest and the mind to recover. The overuse of the decorative street corner may in fact reduce its impact in the locations where a landmark is most essential. Where then should the highly decorative corner be used? Alexander (1987) suggests that paths should be articulated at 300 m intervals with a node. This node would seem a reasonable location for a landmark, particularly if it marks the meeting place of two or more important paths. It is important for the main network of paths to be modulated in this way to give interest and to provide the necessary structuring clues for navigation. It would also seem inappropriate for decorative corners of landmark status to be placed closer than three or four streets apart. At a distance of approximately 100–300 m along each main street or pathway there is an opportunity to introduce the towered corner as a landmark feature. The remaining street corners would then take on the less decorative forms of the remaining types of external angles, not without decoration but subdued for the benefit of clarity and the creation of a strong city image.

NON-BUILDINGS AS DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

On a smaller scale, there are also autonomous three dimensional decorative elements, such as obelisks, fountains and sculpture, which decorate the city. Some of these features are either large or distinctive enough to act as landmarks. Examples in Nottingham are the lions in front of the Council House or the water clock in the Victoria Centre both of which act as meeting places for the teenager and therefore constitute important features of this group's mental map of the city.

In the second category of his typology, Zucker (1959) noted that the placement of a monument can be sufficiently strong in its impact to create around it a significant place in its own right. His archetype of a nuclear square relates to an urban space which is given coherence by the 'magnetism' of its monument. Although this spatial type is the most complex concept in his typology, Zucker notes that the aesthetic sensation of what he terms the nuclear square is no less real than the self-contained space of the enclosed or the dominated square. There is the impression of a distinct space. The perception of this space is critically reliant upon a nucleus, a strong vertical accent such as a monument, a fountain, obelisk or, as in the Place de l'Etoile, Paris, a triumphal arch, which is powerful enough to organize the space around it. This vertical accent ties the heterogeneous elements of the periphery into a single visual unit. As Zucker (1959) notes, this spatial unity is not endangered by any irregularity of the general layout or the haphazard position, size or shape of adjacent buildings: the sole determining factor in the perception of the space is the power, size and scale of the central monument. If the square in relation to the size of the focal monument becomes too large then the square loses

its unity. An example of a space too large for its focal monument is Trafalgar Square which is too large and amorphous for Nelson's Column to act as a strong unifying nucleus.

Few autonomous monuments have sufficient presence to create significant urban spaces about them. Most civic furniture acts in harmony with or enhances by counterpoint the streets and squares of the city. Some major pieces of civic furniture may acquire the status of landmark but all, without exception, are used to decorate the city. An important aspect of urban design is to decorate the main urban spaces with appropriate ornaments: urban design is in part the art of furnishing the city and as previously suggested, all development should be judged as an attempt to decorate the city. Some furnishing, such as sculpture or fountains, may be purely decorative, others such as street lighting and seating may also have an important practical function. The emphasis in the following paragraphs is on such decorative elements as general, physical types: it is concerned with their properties and placement, rather than their detailed design.

THE GEOMETRIC PLACEMENT OF CIVIC MONUMENTS

In highly geometric or monumental civic design schemes autonomous three dimensional elements were employed to articulate, punctuate and accent the overall design. Their locations were principally determined by the geometric properties of the layout, particularly the primacy of, and symmetry about, the main axis of the composition. As Morris (1972) notes, throughout the Renaissance and the Baroque several dominant design considerations determined general attitudes to urbanization in all those countries affected by it. There was a preoccupation with: (i) symmetry of design elements to make a balanced composition about one or more axial lines; (ii) the closing of vistas by the careful placing of monumental buildings, obelisks or suitably imposing statues, at the ends of long, straight streets; and (iii) individual buildings integrated into a single, coherent, architectural ensemble, frequently through the repetition of a basic elevational design.

Given the formality of the design in monumental schemes, there appears an inevitable location for any civic monument. The erection of the Obelisk in the Piazza del Popolo in 1589 is an example of this inevitability. The Obelisk was located after the planning of the third of the three radial roads into the square. The angle of this third and 'new' road, the Via del Babuino, was deliberately aligned with the pre-existing Via di Ripetta and Via Flaminia in order to form a focal point. On this focal point the Obelisk was raised. That the actual angles of the other streets are not precisely symmetrical about the Via Flaminia is demonstrated by the design of Rainaldi's two ostensibly identical churches, one of which has a circular plan, the other an elliptical plan. Both are placed in the angles between the streets. In this scheme the apparent inevitability of the location of the Obelisk is maintained despite the contingencies of the site.

Frequently, however, the apparent geometric inevitability of monumental layout has had its origins in the placement of the civic monument itself. It was often the siting of the monument which acted as the stimulus for the 'inevitable' layout that was the result. For example, Pope Sixtus V placed four obelisks in Rome between 1585 and 1590: in what was to became the Piazza del Popolo; on the Strada Felice immediately north-west of Santa Maria Maggiore; in front of San Giovanni in Laterano, and most significantly in front of the then unfinished St Peter's. The obelisk in the Piazza di San Pietro had therefore been placed before Bernini's great plan for the forecourt to the Cathedral (built in 1655-67). In preparing his layout, Bernini had to incorporate the central obelisk erected in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V and also the fountain constructed by Maderna in 1613 (Morris, 1972). It could be argued that Bernini bestowed on