6.23

Figure 6.23 Fountain, Piazza del Commune, Assisi
Figure 6.24 Fountain, Piazza SS Annunziata, Florence

6.24

adorned with sculpture from which may gush forth water as falls or jets.' Good examples of this type of fountain are to be found in the Piazza Navona, Rome. The fountain, as Sitte (1901) points out, should not take a central position, it should be to one side as in many medieval cities. Particularly good examples can be seen in the Cathedral Square, Perugia, in the main square in Assisi and Piazza SS Annunziata, Florence (Figures 6.23 and 6.24). Adshead argues that something more tangible than a mere jet of water is needed as the pivot of an architectural group; the fountain should be a satellite to the more robust elements of the scheme. The importance of this principle is well illustrated in the Piazza Obliqua in front of St Peter's, Rome, in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, and in Trafalgar Square, London. Cabot Square in London's Canary Wharf contradicts this principle by placing the fountain at the centre of the square (Figure 6.25).

The simple bowl can lift water above eye level without resource to great pressures. The water can then tumble by gravity from bowl to bowl. The bowl itself is a lovely shape and can increase the feeling of water through noise and movement without great volumes of water or costly sculptural compositions. It is probably the bowl or combination of bowls with small fountain that is most appropriate for modern needs of water in the city street and square.

URBAN SCULPTURE

The use of statues for city decoration has a long and distinguished history. Despite this long history there are no infallible rules for the placing of statuary.

There are, however, some general principles to guide the arrangement and distribution of sculpture in cities. Being definitive about these principles has been made more difficult by the social changes which have occurred since the First World War. The changes include public attitudes to art; rapid, almost frenetic stylistic changes in art; changes in acceptable subject matter for public art; changes in architectural styles which omitted sculpture from its design repertoire; and changes in materials and construction methods for sculpture.

There are three main traditional types of statuary: (i) the single figure, (ii) the group and (iii) the equestrian statue. The single figure is problematic as a decorative feature in the contemporary city. In the Western world's age of democracy, it seems inappropriate to decorate the city with heroic figures of Gods, dictators or allegorical figures of some sentimentalized mythical or jingoistic past. Alternatively, placing a statue of a valued citizen poses a problem of scale. Even a group of such figures can look out of place. For example, the group of figures in Market Square, Nottingham, is totally lost and out of scale in the large arena of the main city square (Figure 6.26). Placing the group in a tub of daffodils does not assist a clumsy setting. A similar group of figures placed in a much smaller space behind Liverpool Street Station, London, is much more successful (Figure 6.27). The informal placing of statuary suggested by Sitte and outlined earlier may be a useful guide for the placing of small scale sculptures. The small scale pedestals for busts and statues found in the squares of Portugal, described earlier, may also be a useful model.
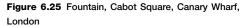

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6.26

Figure 6.25 Fountain, Cabot Square, Canary Wharf, London

Figure 6.26 Sculpture, Market Square, Nottingham