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Figure 4.17 Street scene, Rothenborg

Figure 4.18 Canal scene, Amsterdam

towns in the middle ages and is made up from a series of gables facing onto the street or square. The third is a product of the Renaissance, consisting of a horizontal ornamental edge to the building frontage. The fourth type is found in baroque building groups and advocated by the Beaux Arts movement. In this type, the roofline on both sides of the space steps up to the climax at the head of the plan.

Buildings in the medieval street had the long axes and ridge lines at right angles to the frontage. Storage was often in the roof space. It was serviced by a pulley beneath the ridge and above a shuttered door in the gable wall. Since plot sizes were relatively small, between five and eight metres, the gables fronting the street or square were sufficient to set up a rhythm and were close enough together to present a roofline of interest. Visual interest was strengthened because of the organic growth of the street, the variety of bay sizes and the different heights of buildings along the length of the street. Rothenborg is a delightful example of the medieval roofline, where a great variety of gable size is nevertheless part of a greater unity of style, colour and



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material (Figure 4.17). The canal frontages of Amsterdam, with their variety of Dutch gabled properties, present this type of skyline over a large area of a bustling city centre (Figure 4.18). In the nineteenth century this medieval style roofline was adopted for larger scale office and warehouse blocks. It was sometimes used with a monotonous rigidity saved only by a wealth of detail. On occasions, however, the medieval roofline was used in the nineteenth century, with great sensitivity, by architects such as Watson Fothergill of Nottingham (Figure 4.19).

The Renaissance roofline returned to simplicity; its simplicity, however, was quite different from that adopted in this century by the Modernists. The models for the Renaissance roofline are to be found

in the early Palace buildings in Florence. Buildings such as Palazzo Medici Riccardi and Palazzo Strozzi terminate with a great overhanging cornice supported on ornamental brackets projecting from a decorative frieze (Figure 4.20). The viewer is left in no doubt that the building ends in a profusion of decoration, including a deep shadow line, a deliberate exploitation of the Italian strong light. The insistent horizontal lines of the Uffizi buildings, terminating in deeply overhanging eaves, enclose the Piazza degli Uffizi in a manner typical of this roofline style (Figure 4.21). In later examples the cornice may be surmounted by a balustrade and further cornice, or ornamental attic wall. Distinctive shaped rooflines were reserved for the gabled front of the church or its domed crossing.

Baroque rooflines emphasize movement. The regular line of the roof is broken with towers and chimneys, and, in the case of Castle Howard, with



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Figure 4.19 Castle Road,
Nottingham

Figure 4.20 Palazzo
Strozzi, Florence

Figure 4.21 Piazza degli
Uffizi, Florence