



Figure 6.9 Arch of Constantine, Rome

in Place Stanislas, Nancy and the equestrian statue of the Grand Duke Ferdinand on the axis of the Church of Santissima Annunziata in the Piazza Della Santissima Annunziata, Florence (Figure 6.8). Perhaps less well known is the monument at the centre of the main square in Villa Real, Portugal. Here the insistent pattern of the floor draws the eye to the centre and the vertical column which strengthens the spatial composition of the square in the same fashion as the equestrian statue in the Campidoglio.

CIVIC MONUMENTS AS DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

In the Town Planning Review between 1911 and 1915, S. D. Adshead wrote a series of articles on the decoration and furnishing of the city. Adshead dealt with what he called 'non-utilitarian furnishings with which we embellish our Parks and Towns', for

example monumental arches, fountains and clocks. In addition he also dealt with features 'which essentially utilitarian in their purpose, if well designed and carefully placed can add enormously to the stateliness and beauty of the street.' These were utilitarian furnishings such as lamp standards, tall lighting standards, masts and flag poles, shelters, refuges and protection posts, and trees. Many of these were a result of the more widespread appearance in cities of that period of motor cars and other motorized transport.

THE MONUMENTAL ARCH

There are three main types of monumental arch. The most well known is the Triumphal Arch which is of mainly Roman origin, though there are similar features in trabeated form dating back to the cities of Pharaonic Egypt. Second there is the arch used as a portal: its main function however, has often been a defensive structure in the city wall. Another tradition in Europe for this feature of city architecture is the walled cities of medieval times. The third and final monumental arch is the temporary structure erected to celebrate a particular event.

The 'Arc de Triomphe' as a feature of the European city, has its origin of form and placement in the world of Ancient Rome (Figure 6.9). The reasons for its erection were as a symbol commemorating conquest, colonization and victory at war. It was also used to commemorate great engineering or architectural feats. The arch used for any of these purposes was usually placed at the termination of an avenue or important path, on the crown of a hill, a meeting place or node, and at the entrance to some great architectural or engineering construction such as a bridge.

Adshead (1911a) states that the Roman monumental arch was regarded as a pedestal for statuary and sculpted reliefs. The earliest monumental arch had one opening and was later developed to the now familiar form of a large central arch flanked by two smaller subsidiary arches. The form of the triumphal pedestal with single arch is best



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displayed by the one built in memory of Trajan at Ancona to celebrate the restoration of the harbour. Good examples of the three-arched triumphal pedestal are Constantine's Arch and the Arch of Septimus Severus both in Rome. By far the greater number of Roman triumphal pedestals consisted of one central arch with most of the rest of the surface decorated with sculptured bas-reliefs. The top of the pedestal was surmounted by statuary and memorabilia usually from wartime exploits. The whole triumphal arch would have been used to record a particular account of a historical event which had provided an opportunity to decorate the city with an imposing monument. One of the best known more recent examples in the Roman triumphal arch tradition is the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, erected at Place de l'Etoile to commemorate the victories of Napoleon. In Britain the triumphal arch is best



6.11

represented by the one on Constitution Hill by Decimus Burton and by the Marble Arch both in London (Figure 6.10). The All-India War Memorial by Lutyens for New Delhi is in the tradition of Rome and its placement on the main axis of the plan for the city follows the usual pattern of location for such monuments.

Medieval Europe was rich in examples of city gateways (Figure 6.11). The prime function of such arched openings in city walls was one of control, mainly for defence but often for the protection of the city market and its commercial interests. The arched opening in the medieval city did have other functions of an aesthetic origin: it did for example, symbolize the entrance or city threshold and thus the city itself. The origins of this celebration of the threshold can be traced to Hellenic Greece and to Greece during Mycenaean times. The propylaea at

Figure 6.10 Marble Arch,
London

Figure 6.11 City gateway,
York