Figure 6.20 Clock monument, Newmarket
Figure 6.21 Fountain, Castle Howard, Yorkshire

6.20

6.21

the post-mounted clock based upon the street lighting standard, 'high tech' concept or playful ornate sculpture, such as the musical clock in Nottingham's Victoria Centre, are more likely sources of ideas for the clock monument of today.

WATER IN THE CITY

Water has an elemental quality which gives it great symbolic meaning when used as a decorative feature in the city. Water together with trees and the canopy of the sky above reminds us of the wildness of nature. Water in the city links the citizen to his or her deep roots to mountain range, spring, gurgling brook, deep chasm and mighty waterfall. Since the origin of cities, man has used water not only for essential purposes but also for display. The bringing of water to the city was often a great undertaking, involving the building of a giant aqueduct, or the digging of vast systems of canals, using an immense labour force.

Water is an essential attribute to every urban landscape. Few cities can claim to be artistically embellished without the use of water in their streets, squares and parks. Ancient Rome was a city of fountains while villas in and around Rome and Florence dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries still captivate the visitor. There is no comparison between these models from history and our own meagre efforts this century. For example, Nottingham's two pools in front of the Council House are poor descendants of the fountains in the Villa D'Este outside Rome. Water can be used in a city to convey a number of different moods and impressions. It can be used as still pools, waterfalls, jets, fountains, bowls or with sculpture (Figure 6.21).

Quiet, still waters place a mirror before the city. Holland possesses some fine urban canalscapes where we see the actual city and its mirror image in the long still stretch of water. The quiet Moghul parks of northern India are a world apart from the bustling activity of nearby Srinagar, Kashmir: the gardens descend the easy slope from reflecting pool

to reflecting pool, separated only by small tumbling falls; the lovely garden structures surrounded by and reflected in the pools add to the charm and serenity.

The turbulent gushing qualities of the great waterfall are captured in the water garden of Villa d'Este. The frenetic activity of the fountains, jets and cascading water recreates the sense of visual and aural turmoil of nature's finest waterfalls. The visual quality of water depends upon its reflection of light. The droplets from falling water and the ripples they cause on the surface sparkle, while reflecting and refracting the light into a myriad of pinpoints of brilliance and colour. Also important to the visual quality of water are its sounds as it splashes and gurgles. These sounds, together with the spray and the pinpoints of bright, cold light, bestow upon water a special place in the hot polluted city – the quality of cooling is particularly welcome, civilizing and decorative. This is particularly true of moving water, whether it is the thunderous waterfall or the gently moving stream directed down the slope and agitated from side to side by a decorative sculpted channel. For pure visual excitement, however, no greater sight can be imagined than the great water jet capturing, as it soars 60–90 m, the power of nature's geyser. The city of Geneva attempts to capture this effect with a water jet in the lake decorating the central area.

Water in the street or square is not normally associated with the torrent and only in cities such as Venice or Amsterdam does water take on the function of large reflecting pool. The small still pool and larger-than-life water display are both normally reserved for green areas within or without the city boundaries. The fountain is probably the most appropriate water sculpture with which to decorate the street and square. The fountain has many forms and is therefore difficult to analyse in terms of design principles: 'fountains, which of all works of art that contribute to the furnishing and equipment of the fully-developed town, are most intangible and least amenable to the recognised laws of proportion, grammatical analysis, and the restrictions of style' (Adshead, 1912c). The fountain varies from the bowl, the simplest form of sculpture with water, to the great Baroque composition with figures, jets and falls, such as the Fontana di Trevi, erected by Clement II in 1735 from designs by Niccolo Salvi. The distinctive architectural form of the Trevi has given to the fountain a reputation that raises its profile to one that symbolizes Rome, a compulsory sight for all visitors, a landmark of truly international significance (Figure 6.22).

Figure 6.22 Trevi Fountain, Rome

As Adshead (1912c) notes in placing a fountain, whatever form it may take, 'careful consideration should in the first instance be given to the contours of the site. The natural position for a fountain is not on the heights and plateaus of the park and of the city but in the cups, in the hollows and in the plains.' The fountain designed as a water jet is a translucent and diaphanous object and in the narrow confines of an urban scheme it is not appropriate as its pivot or centre. Adshead cautions that 'where surrounded by architecture the fountain is better designed primarily as an architectural feature