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Figure 1.3 The Nolli Map of Rome, 1748.

it is possible to speculate on what it is. The functions afforded by the pattern are very different from that provided by Double Bay in Sydney (see Figure 1.5).

The Functions of the Physical Public Realm

Conceptually, the functions afforded by the built environment have not changed over the millennia. What has changed is what its users, policy-makers and designers consider important. Designers seldom consciously include more than a limited set of the potential functions that the built environment can serve in their analyses and designs. The world is too complex for every function of built form to be considered simultaneously. The same patterns of the physical public realm, either as surroundings or as objects, will, almost certainly, serve different functions for different people. One of the major functions of the components of the built environment is as a financial investment. All designers know this but it is seldom clearly articulated as a function of buildings in architectural theory. Architectural critics seldom write about it.

Many urban development decisions are made on fiscal grounds. For banks and other lending institutions, and for their owners, buildings represent an investment on which they hope to make a profit. The public realm, in this case, is only important to the extent that it affects investment decisions. Property developers may, however, voluntarily or under public coercion use their own funds to improve those aspects of the public realm that their developments affect or that affect their developments. Public agencies may use tax income to improve the public realm created by buildings in order to increase the value of properties and increase the inflow of tax revenues. These revenues are then used to support other governmental activities. For architects, landscape architects and sculptors