Source: Mansfield (1990)

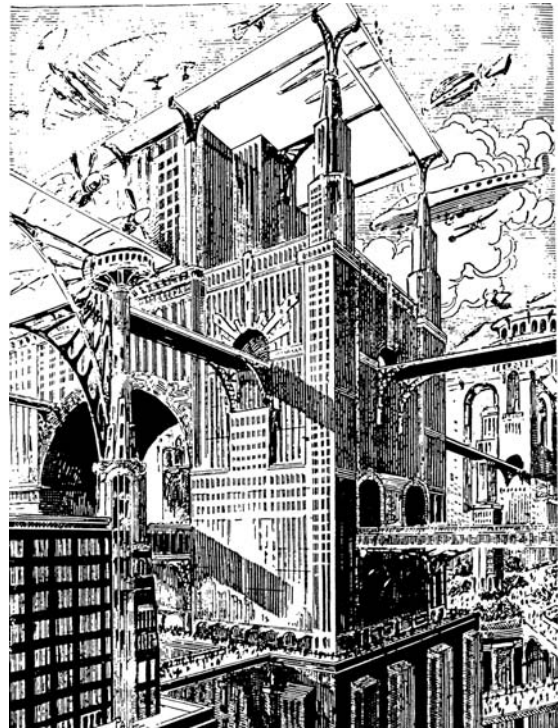Source: Mansfield (1990)

(a)   (b)

Figure 11.10   Two early twentieth century speculations on the twenty-first century city. (a) A 1911 image and (b) a 1928 image.

technological changes will come in surprising forms. If we design to allow for change, will that suffice? Or will present patterns of building and demolishing suffice? Will arcologies, as Paolo Soleri suggested, be the future generic urban design model for cities and their precincts? Science fiction writers seem to think so. We do know that past predictions of what our present world would be like have been way off the mark (see Mansfield, 1990, for examples; see also Figure 11.10).

The answer generally given to questions about the robustness of urban designs is that if the design has a strong idea behind it, it will survive changes in political attitudes and fiscal crises. The plan finally adopted, for example, for the Universidad Central de Venezuela in Caracas did not have the power, the boldness, behind it of the original proposal (Figures 7.27a and b). As a result it has afforded so many departures from it for the original design idea to be lost. Strong ideas do not have to be bombastic but they do have to have a powerful driving logic behind them. Battery Park City's design ultimately did (see Figure 11.11). Perhaps it is this lack of a mind-capturing logic that is lacking in the World Trade Center site design. There is no strong central idea to the scheme; it is a fragmented scheme and will most likely be implemented as such.