

Streets & Squares

The Shah Square

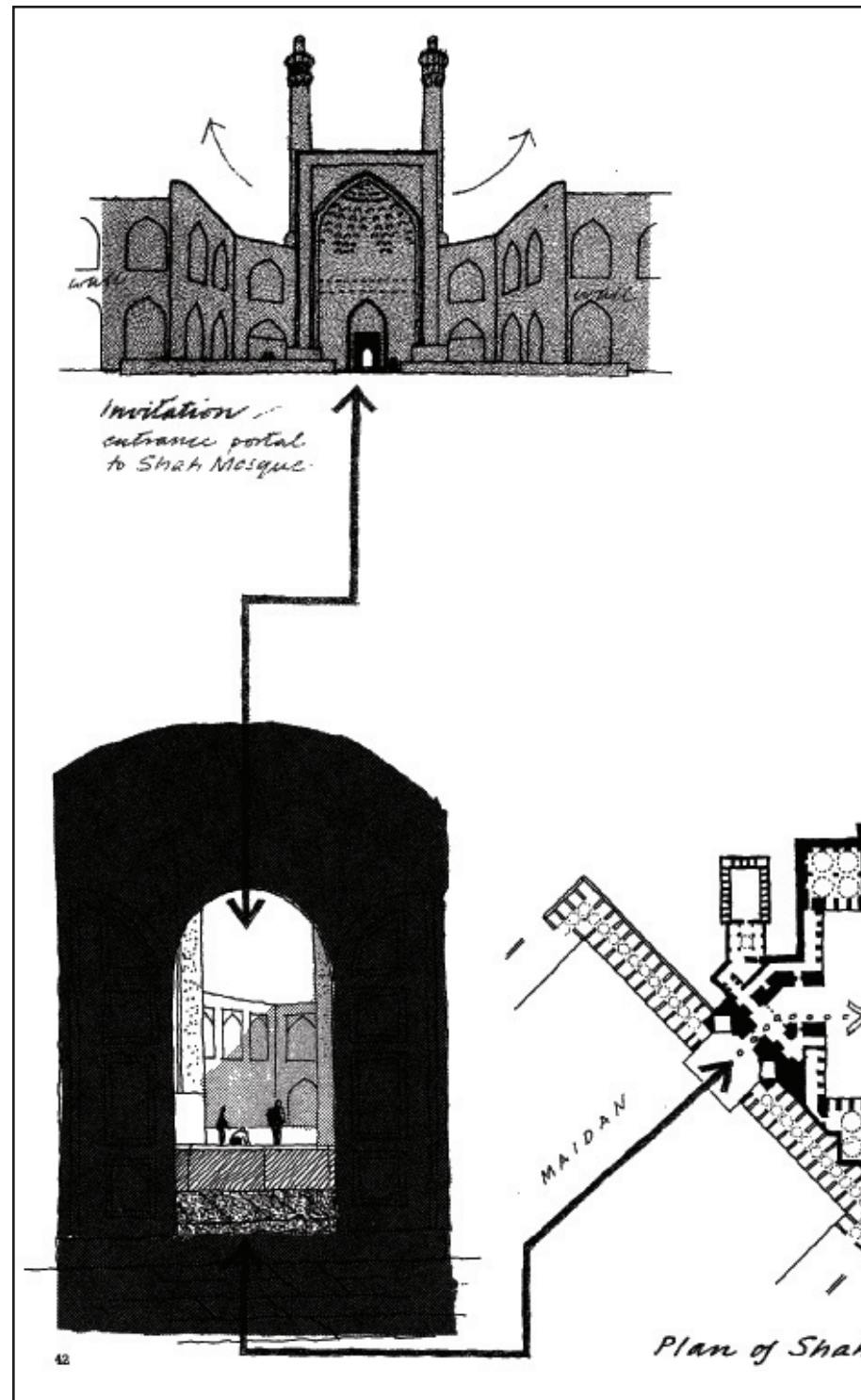
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Built by Shah Abbas I the Great at the beginning of the 17th century, Maidan-i-Naghsh-i-Jahan or Shah square is bordered on all sides by monumental buildings linked by a series of two-storey arcades. The site is known for its Royal Mosque, the Mosque of Shaikh Lutfullah, the magnificent portico of Qaisariyeh, and the 15th century Timurid Palace, Ali Qapu. All bear witness to Persian socio-cultural life during the Safavid era.

A walk through the Isfahan bazaar follows an ancient thoroughfare. The bazaar bursts into the Shah square. To the right, the elevated porch of the Ali Qapu Palace, to the left, the green Lutfullah mosque, and at the far end stands the imposing Royal Mosque. The square itself is vast (532' x 1705'). From square it is apparent that the orientation of the mosque toward Mecca is predictably askew. Upon entering through the hammered silver doors of the grand portal, we discover it is not the mass we saw but space swung a precise quarter turn and defined by planes of yellow, blue and green arabesques staged with geometric virtuosity. This rotation tightens a spatial spring to bring the two empty centers of square and mosque—the profane and the arcane—into tense juxtaposition. Just inside we stand at the hinge of this spatial exchange. It is there that the message of this place becomes more focused. While the physical path to the central open court of the mosque calipers right and left—one invariably turns right to take the short cut—a high arched opening lifted from the floor forces the view in through one on the four traditional / vans, or niches raised to triumphal portal, centered on the opposite sides of the court.

The optical trick is consummated. Silhouetted in the arch is the north-east / van rotated 45 degree, which holds, in turn, glowing open space. Facing us, suffused with light even though it is shadow, stands the primary / van flanked by its minarets in front of the high bulbous dome we viewed across the square from the entrance to the bazaar. We stand at the pivot of constantly swinging but forever frozen apparition-surfaces, rotated and sandwiching glowing volumes of air. The final passage is via a narrowing spiral stair to the bird-cage top of a minaret. The square is rotated to the left. The structure of its stage-set enclosure reveals itself.



A digram showing the entrance to and from the square to the Friday mosque



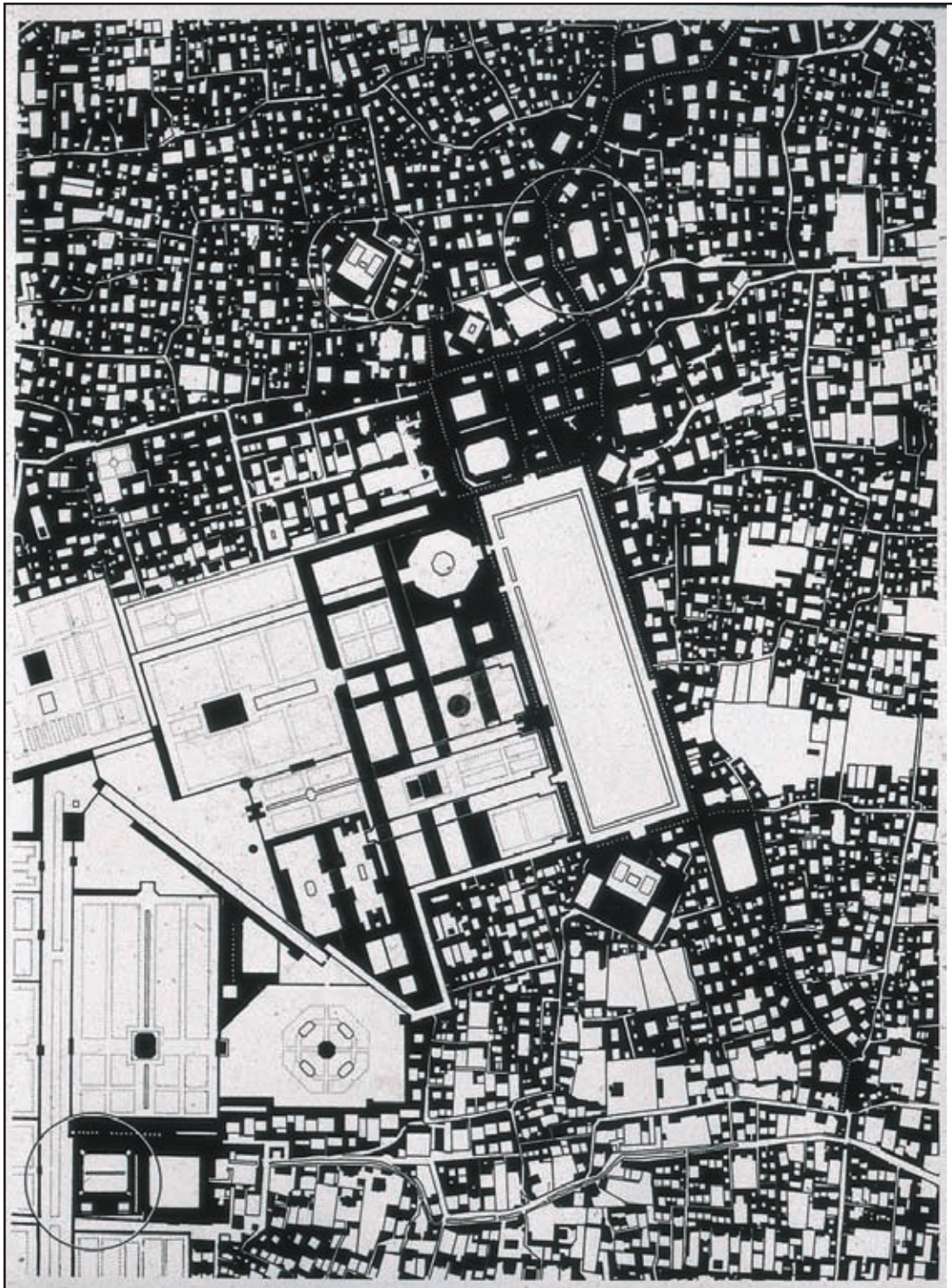
An old drawing showing Shah square



Two storey shops at Shah square



Shah square today: cars passing through



Shah square: Before



Shah square: After

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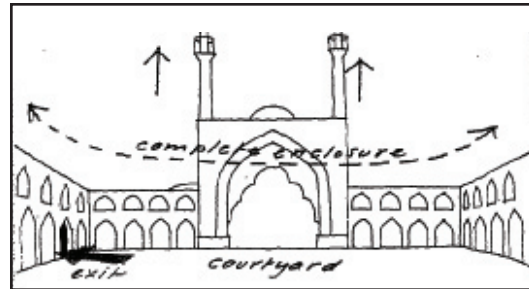
The bazaar snakes its way through the dun rooftops to the distant Friday mosque.. Unadorned windowless mud walls follow narrow twisting streets. More elaborate doorways with decorative surrounds announce wealth or public places. Mosques receive the most pretentious treatment culminating in the silver doors and spectacular half-vaulting of the Royal Mosque.

The most incredible thing about -this square is the whole notion of Persian concept of “the container and the contained”. This concept can be seen in all Persian building typologies that were discussed in the past chapters. The idea of enclosure and feeling contained by a space that here is the Shah square. Here, there is a central courtyard that the whole space is centered on it. Although this is a huge space, all the characteristics of a Persian typological space can be found here. The courtyard is surrounded by four iwans that here represent the four monuments. Entrances to the square are small and the whole square is felt like a huge private courtyard. It is even oriented southeast northwest which is the ideal orientation in Persian architecture. This shows “the sense of unity” which can be seen in all Persian arts, paintings, poems and even carpets.

In the historic development of Isfahan, space is also conceptually northworthy, as the city is the supreme sample of positive space continuity. The square attracted growth towards it by tension and grown from it by extension.



Shah square ton the east side, view of Ali Qapu



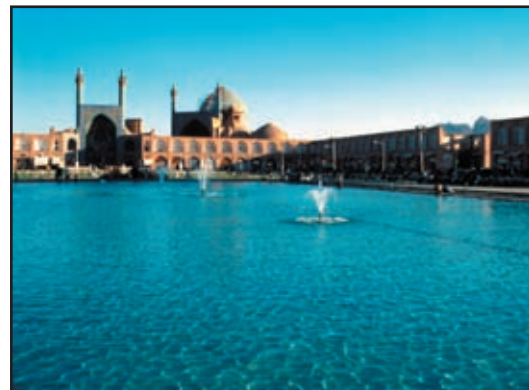
Shah square: Enclosure



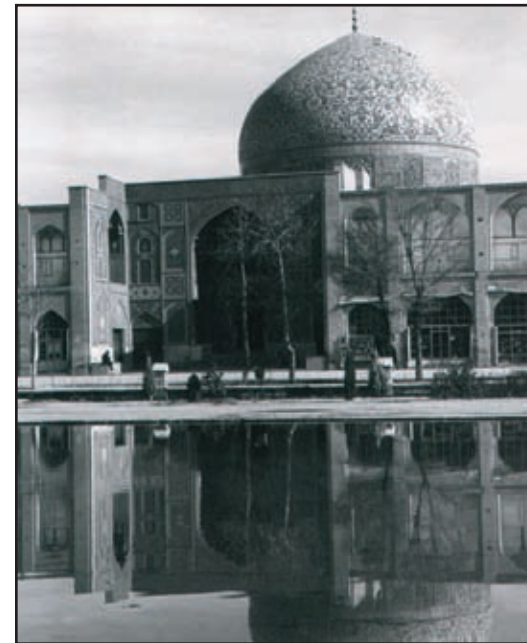
Qaisarieh bazaar entrance on the north side



Shah square today



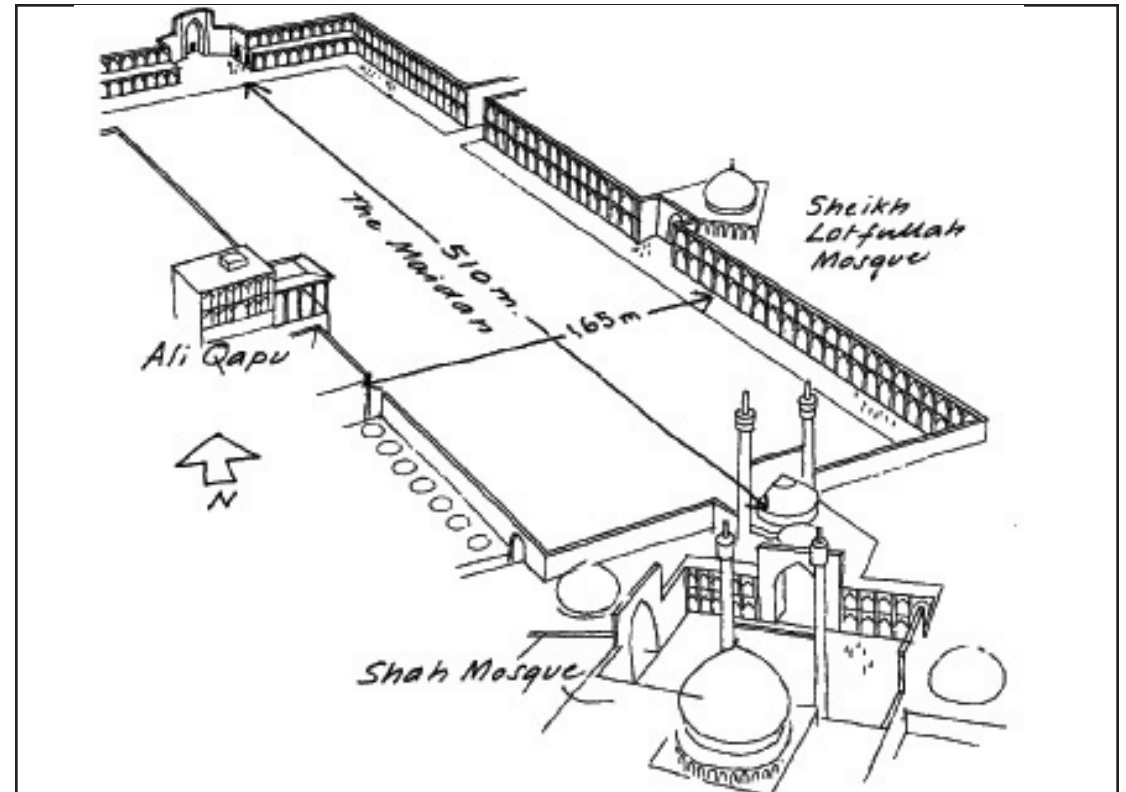
Shah square today



Lotfollah mosque on the west side



Shah square: An areal view





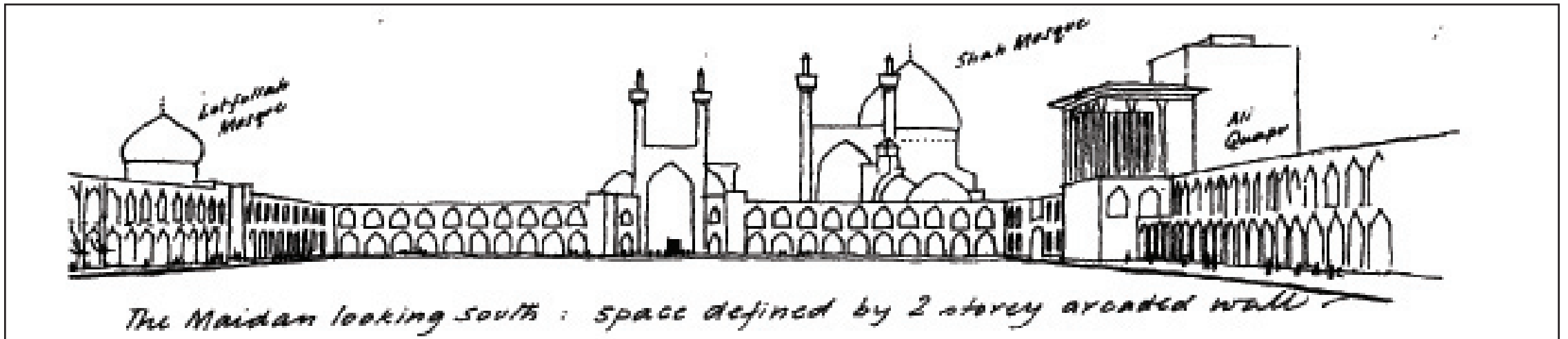
Shah square: An areal view

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Shah square: looking south to the Shah mosque



In Isfahan, street is conceived as positive exterior space of richly varied uses in which traffic of different types co-exists and in which functional and social activities are gathered. The bazaar in Isfahan is an institution that takes place along the street and provides a connector into which mosques, schools, bath houses and a whole hierarchy of public spaces, linear or contained, covered or open, can be integrated. Street forms a strong spine for the coexistence of varied activities, spaces, and types of traffic. Along this spine the bazaar provides continuous activity.

The residential pathways

Street and alleys within the city of Isfahan function as channels for air movement and heat exchange; therefore, they maintain a significant role in establishing the city's climate. In hot arid cities of Iran, wide, straight streets function as channels for hot dusty winds during the day and cold winds at night. Sandstorms blowing over the city flow unimpeded through wide open streets, creating problems for pedestrians. The disadvantage of wide, straight streets are more visible during hot summer days when the air near the surface is heated and rises in funnel-shaped dust currents that blow around the city within the large open spaces.

Narrow streets and alleys, surrounded by tall walls oriented toward pleasant winds, are well shaded during hot summers. The advantages of the traditional pattern are that the streets:

Retain humidity and reduce daily temperature.

Protect the inhabitants against the harmful winds and are open to pleasant winds.

Are shaded and cool during the day and warm at night.

Water through qanats made the life and formation of cities possible throughout Isfahan. At the city scale, water often defined the order of main access networks. In Isfahan, water was also used as a cooling element, often appearing in the form of "jub" running along the streets and center lines of alleys. These also added to the visual appeal of the city. Wherever possible, streets were lined with trees, receiving their water through these "jub"s.

The hierarchy of traditional pathways

The residential quarters are accessible through path systems peripheral to each walled quarter. Normally 13'-0" to 17'-0" wide, these pathways penetrate the encircling walls through gateways, and subsequently disperse into two levels of lanes 6'-6" and 10'-0" in width. Constantly kept in shade by high surrounding walls,

Showing residential pathways tied in fabric

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these paths exist today as cool channels of the pedestrian circulation even in the heat of the summer. Analogous to a leaf blade, the residential quarter is served by a disposition of “veins” that sustain its tissue which, in return, regenerates the whole body. The path system is not orthogonal or concentric but emulates nature in its network of the human body.

Residential areas are connected to bazaar by narrow small alleys which in local language are called: “Kucheh” these wound through residential areas, providing intricate, interesting pattern of access between residences and businesses. They are bordered on both sides by tall walls of residential compounds, uniform in color and texture and usually made of mud mixed with straw. The walls are windowless, with only an occasional door providing an entrance to the compound. Some alleys can be quite lengthy, starting at the bazaar and continuing through residential neighborhoods (occasionally joined or crossed by other alleys) until they reached a city gate or ended at the city wall. More typically alleys ended in the neighborhood center- an open space containing a few shops and public buildings.

Some kuches coming off the bazaar were wider than others. They are called “Gozar” which literally means pathways. A gozar that ran in a straight line was called “Rasteh” meaning a straight lane. Gozars and rasteh had the shape and function of streets rather than alleys. Such streets were joined along their routes by the smaller kuchehs. Usually some public buildings such as baths, mosques, tea houses, etc. were located along these streets. A gozar was often named after an influential person who once lived there. Branches off kucheh were mainly small blind alleys known in local language as “Bonbast”. The residential byways ultimately tended to funnel into the bazaar which then served as the main thoroughfare for the city. The bazaar also provided access to areas outside the city. Its termini were the city gates. To find a house in Isfahan old fabric, a visitor would walk through the bazaar to appropriate gozar or rasteh, and then to the appropriate kucheh and if necessary, go to the bombast on which the destination house was located.

One of the most important things about street pattern in Isfahan is to pay attention to madis which are streams that bring water to the fabric. these were the most important fact of shaping the form of streets and alleys in Isfahan and other Iranian cities. Buildings were shaped along these water streams.

Old streets cut in half by new streets

A madi or water stream

Examples of new streets and highways in Isfahan

A narrow street in the old fabric

Chahar Bagh is the main boulevard of Isfahan. It was built as a part of a larger urban project undertaken between 1596 and 1597 by the Safavid Shah Abbas I. Its name, literally translated as “four gardens”, refers to a popular garden typology consisting of four plots divided by waterways or paths forming a cruciform plan.

The public boulevard is 1,650 meters long and consists of four quadripartite gardens arranged along a north-south axis that slopes towards the south. Each quadripartite unit is composed of two square and two rectangular plots separated by pathways and is located slightly lower than the preceding unit. Together, they are experienced as a single boulevard with a central promenade flanked by axial garden plots. The gardens have since been converted into roadways, with plane trees lining either side. Running along the center of the promenade was a water channel with cascades; the promenade now only features circular flower beds and light posts.

The Chahar Bagh is located approximately 535 meters to the west of the main city square (maidan), and urbanistically serves as the main north-south artery of the city from which all other east-west avenues spring. Between the Chahar Bagh and the Maidan are the royal gardens. Overlooking the northern end of the boulevard is a small glass pavilion. The boulevard continues on the other side of the Zayandeh river, crossed by the Allahverdi Khan Bridge (1602), where the royal gardens of Hazar Jarib are located. Further south, the Chahar Bagh connects Isfahan with Julfa, an Armenian Colony settled during the reign of Shah Abbas.

The Chahar Bagh continues to be an important social gathering place of Isfahan. At its inception, it was lined by palaces and residences of noblemen that faced on to it with open arcades giving views to their private gardens. In 1706-1714, the large madrasa complex of Madar-e Shah was built along the eastern side of the boulevard. Today, it is lined with shops, hotels, and some remaining palaces.

Today the avenue is very much the centre of life in the town. The shops abutting it are the finest, and the principal hotels in the city are situated either on it or adjacent to it. The central reservation is screened from the ever-present traffic although you need to watch out for motor-cyclists, and at dusk it is full of people taking the air and talking.

In the late 19th century the English artist, Sir Robert Ker Porter wrote of the Avenue:

“We passed through the most charming parts of the Chahar Bagh; taking our course along its alleys of unequalled plane trees, stretching their broad canopies over our heads, their shade being rendered yet more delightful by the canals, reservoirs and fountains which cooled the air and reflected the flickering light through their branches. Thickets of roses and jessamine, with clustering parterres of poppies and other flowers embanked the ground, while the deep green shadows from the trees, the perfume, the freshness, the soft gurgling of the waters and the gentle rustle of the breeze, combining with the pale golden rays of the declining sun, altogether formed an evening scene, as tranquilizing as it was beautiful”



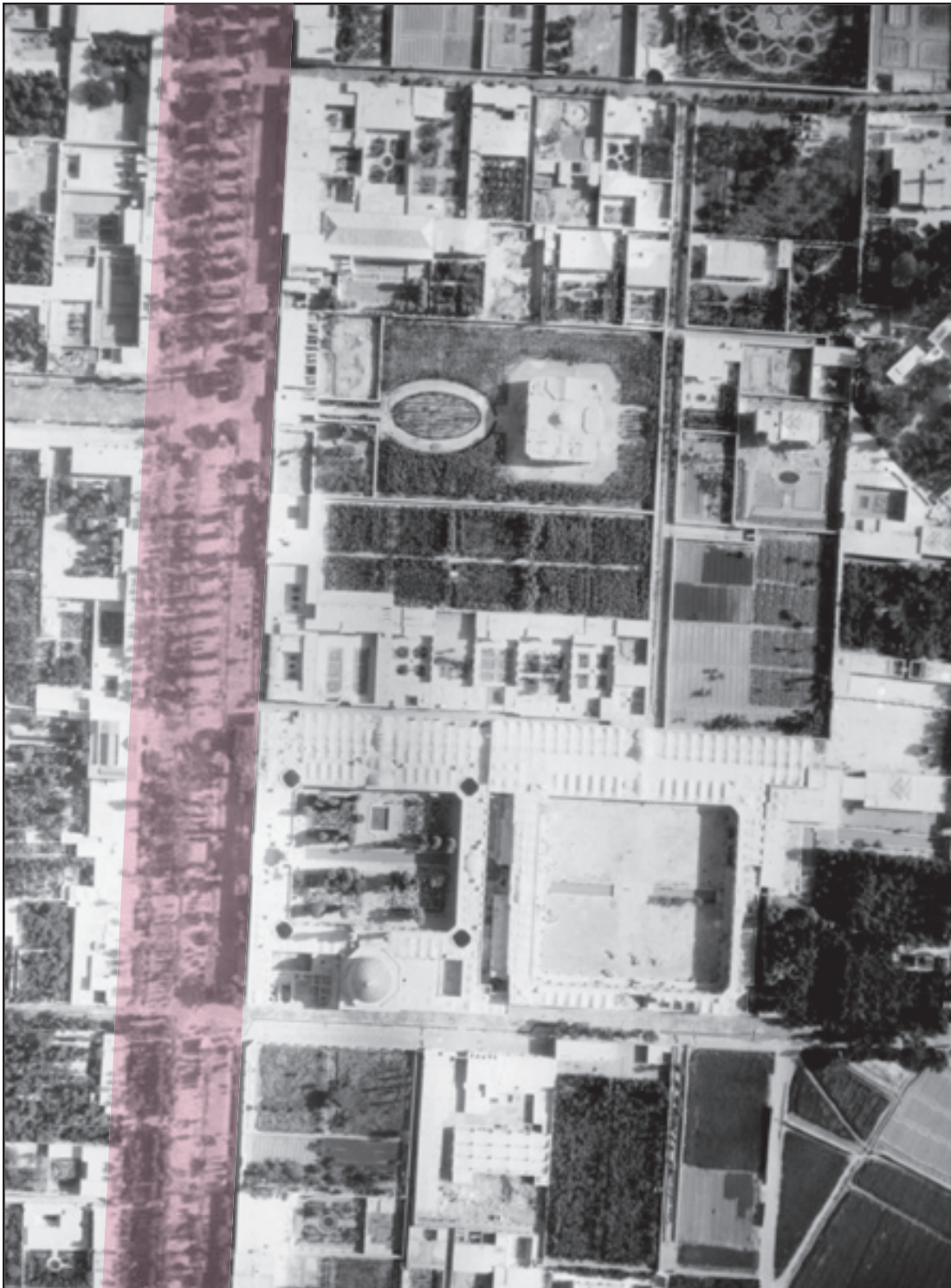
Chaharbagh today

An old drawing showing Chaharbagh

The Chahar Bagh

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Aerial view showing Chahar Bagh in relation to gardens around it.

Khawju bridge as continuation of Chaharbagh

Chahar Bagh in winter

A Brief History

Generally bazaars are divided into three categories based on the period of usage: permanent, periodical and short time markets. The main market of Isfahan is a permanent bazaar, although based on historical documents sometimes there were some short time markets in Shah square (close to the main Bazaar) until the 18th century. While holding these temporary markets, the traders who were mostly foreigners filled all of the space of the square to sell their products.

The first evidence of a bazaar in Isfahan is based on a poet, who wrote that in the bazaar of the city, which is closed to Yahoudieh there are some squares for businessmen, craftsmen and workers. (750 A.D.) After him a famous historian in the tenth century, described it into a long street with some roofed quarters and some non-roofed quarters.

More precise information about this bazaar is available in the texts of Nasir Khusru, the famous Persian poet, which were written during his travels in Iran and Arabic countries. He illustrates one branch of the Bazaar, which is the place of more than 200 bankers. Also he explains that only in this part of the bazaar, named Kutaraz, there were fifty caravanserais. This shows the vastness of the market and the developed trade through Isfahan in the 12th century. The Bazaar of Isfahan consisted of two parts, the old section, which started from the old square, close to the Friday mosque, and the new section, which started from Shah square and connected to the old section.

By the 11th century, after selecting Isfahan as the capital of Saljukid era, the old square had become the center of the city. It had a castle, a drum house, a Qaisarieh and shops selling silk, brocade, materials, precious stones, ivory and many other goods. There were some peripheral markets along the main streets radiating from the old square from at least that time. The 1.5 Km shopping street is still the main street in the bazaar, the longest vaulted bazaar street in the world.

After selecting Isfahan as the seat of Shah Abbas, a new bazaar was designed between the old bazaar and the square. Shah Abbas redeveloped the city extensively and had a number of new bazaars built: the buildings surrounding the Shah square (originally including a large number of coffee houses), both the Hasan-abad and mosque bazaars to the south east and the large bazaar to the north, where the old bazaar was located.

As a result it contains a representative selection of

Periodically markets in Shah square

City and bazaar in 11th century

An axonmetric of bazaar showing section of rasteh

Primary Movement System-The Bazaar

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Islamic secular architecture over the last 500 years. It has about 5 km (3miles) of shopping streets (rasteh), some with brick arches, some with poplar beams, over a hundred caravanserais and sarais, innumerable covered halls (timcheh) and connecting wings (dehliz).

As mentioned, Shah square is surrounded by a layer of shops. Behind these shops there are several parts of the bazaar, like caravanserais and peripheral markets for different businesses. Based on non-documented stories, after the construction of the new Friday mosque, called the Shah mosque and located in the square, Shah Abbas attempted to encourage people to participate in Friday prayer in the Shah mosque, instead of the old Friday mosque.

But most people rejected participation in Friday prayers in the Shah mosque, and for a while there two Friday prayers conducted in Isfahan; one in the Shah mosque and another one in the old Friday mosque. People had not accepted the new square as a city center. Then Shah Abbas decided to donate all the shops around the new square to people under the regulations of waghf which is an Islamic law that allows people to make their property public. In this case nobody was obliged to pay to buy these shops. After that gradually Shah square replaced the old square as the main city center for gatherings, shopping, and participating in Friday prayer.

The old square soon deteriorated into a wood and vegetable market, but the high class retail businesses established themselves where they could expect a good turnover from the courtiers, soldiers and visitors from the nearby Chaharbagh street. The area to the east of the main axis, the Qaisarieh and its extension, the Chitsazha (fabric painters' bazaar), became the most sought-after site.

The bazaar was the backbone of the city. The bazaar was also used as the main street in Isfahan and a place for meeting people, seeing and being seen. This kind of bazaar acted as a real heart of the city. By counting the number of madrasas, mosques and hammams in the Bazaar we can understand to what extent the Bazaar acted as the center of Isfahan. Also there are some other small buildings in the bazaar such as water stores, warehouses and stables.

The most important difference between the old and the new Bazaar is the organic growth of the old section in a linear form and the radial growth of the new bazaar.

Chahar bagh street in 17th century

City and bazaar in 14th century

City and bazaar in 17th century

The old bazaar was developed based on meeting the needs of the society and providing the best accessibility for people in the neighborhood residential quarters, called mahalleh.

Also it should be noted that the reason for the development of the old market into the north was that even before Safavid some residential quarters like Khawju were located in the south and this bazaar was developed as the main street for the residents of Isfahan. Another reason was the Zayandeh River, which was located at the south of new square. As we were told, Safavid Bazaar was carefully designed, in contrast to the old Bazaar.

After Qajar in the 18th century, some bazaars were added to every residential quarter. These bazaars, called neighborhood bazaars, acted as quarter centers. They consisted of a set of facilities, such as shops, hammam (Bathhouses), maktab (schools) as well as commercial activities. They served as large public centers for gathering all of the people to participate in social activities such as religious festivals and making decisions about the quarter (mahalleh) in light of central government.

Linear growth of Bazaar in the Saljukid era

In some historical texts there is written that many of the social and religious ceremonies were conducted in the main bazaar and neighborhood bazaars. It was common to invite a group of merchants to lunch in the bazaar. In this case a sarai or timcheh acted as a ceremonial place.

Unfortunately, in recent years the economic role of the main bazaar has been decreased. The main reason for this phenomena is the import of goods from western countries and establishing many economic complexes on the outside of the Bazaar, which have provided possibilities in all parts of the city to provide their needs without any need to come into the Bazaar.

Some parts of the Bazaar were ruined in the Pahlavid era, when modern streets were designed in Isfahan. Similarly some parts of the Bazaar, especially the lateral rasteh for carpet sellers, which had connected the Bazaar to Chaharbagh Street, have been ruined in recent years.

The Bazaar of Isfahan, like other bazaars in Islamic cities, can be divided into three parts:

1. Rasteh and dehliz, which are the main and peripheral streets and corridors inside the bazaar.

The streets between Shah Square and Chaharbagh Street

The old bazaar, which starts from Friday mosque

Primary Movement System-The Bazaar

2. Caravanserais, which are the economic complexes with stores and places for (residing) housing merchants.
3. Qaisarieh, timcheh and sarai, which are economic complexes without any residential possibilities.

The Organization of Bazaar

All the retailers in the bazaar are grouped according to their wares in separate quarters of the market. "senf" in Persian means a number of people who are involved with the same kind of business or craft in a bazaar. Usually in markets in the Islamic countries, such as the bazaar of Isfahan, these groups of traders with the same craft or business were located in one place. This way, it was very easy for people to find the best products with the best price in a place in a short time. There were several senfs in the bazaar of Isfahan, such as copper-smiths, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and dryers.

The distribution of jobs in the bazaar was based on the following factors:

1. Attraction of products: For example artist's shops were located in the Shah square, because of the high number of tourists who preferred to shop there.
2. Providing security: For example gold merchants were strategically situated close to the Friday mosque in the central part of the city to provide the best security for them. Groceries were located in more far off areas.
3. Compatibility of businesses: The more compatible crafts were located in the same area, for example cereal shops and spice shop.
4. Incompatibility of crafts: The crafts with less compatibility were located in separate parts, for example Blacksmiths and druggists.

The gradation of members in every senf was usually based on their experience. In the bazaar of Isfahan, the chief of each senf, called kadhoda, was elected. Also in every bazaar there were some other positions, called mohtaseb, who were responsible for keeping order in the bazaar. Mohtaseb roamed the bazaar to remind sellers to be honest and fair and also to investigate about clients' complaints about any cheating in trades or the quality of goods. Four important regulations, which should be controlled by the mohtaseb, were cleanliness, noise, crowding of people, and movement of animals in the bazaar.

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central linear circulation space, called rasteh, splendidly domed throughout its length, parallel to which on both sides run the small regular dependent spaces of shops. Between them, at frequent intervals, arched entrances lead to the larger spaces-caravanserais, colleges, bathhouses, shrines, mosques and stores, all tightly connected to the central spine yet each a separate, self-contained world. The intersection of two rastehs is called chaharsuq.

The main rasteh in the bazaar starts from the main entrance of the Bazaar in Shah square, called Qaisarieh, and stretches into the old square. Several peripheral rastehs connect to the main street. These peripheral rastehs act as small bazaars for similar products, such as rasteh for shoemakers.

The rasteh also connects neighborhood residential areas to the bazaar. Through these residential alleys the bazaar is connected to the whole of the city. The number of these routes (rasteh) depends on the development of trade at different areas.

Being closer to the main street always increases the value of peripheral routes. These peripheral rastehs are in an organic form in the old part of bazaar and in a designed form in the Safavid bazaar. While the space of the organic Bazaar is irregular in all directions, the second is characterized by domed structural bays, which are rhythmically organized.

It should be noted that after Safavid the Bazaar developed in an east-west axis, instead of the previous north-south axis. It was basically because of the commercial and tourism values of Chaharbagh Street in Isfahan. It is believed that some of the rastehs and caravanserais of bazaar are added in the later ages based on the commands of some local governors.

Almost all parts of the rasteh in the bazaar are roofed. In some areas close to the old square temporary non-wooden roofs are applied, but most of the Bazaar is roofed by vaulted brick roofs. The height of the roof differs in different parts of the Bazaar. In some places, like in front of Qaisarieh and madrasa or mosques and in the chaharsuq (intersection of two rastehs) the roof is higher than other areas to highlight the importance of these spaces.

1. The old square
2. The Friday mosque
3. Palace
4. Ali mosque
5. Bazaar
6. Shah square
7. Shah mosque
8. Ali Qapu palace
9. Bazaar gateway
10. Lotfollah mosque
11. Garden of Vazirs
12. Chaharbagh
13. Allverdi bridge
14. Khawju chaharbagh
15. Khawju bridge
16. Zayandeh river

Qaisarieh

“Qaisarieh” derived from “kaisara”, a Roman word, was the name given to long roofed corridors in which shopkeepers and craftsmen with the same business show their products. In Isfahan these complexes are also called “bazaarcheh”. The most famous one in Isfahan, which is placed between Shah square and Chaharbagh Street, is called “Bazarche Boland”. This bazaarche is completely separated from the main Bazaar and is designed to enhance the Chaharbagh axes. There are many goldsmiths’ shops and other artistic shops in this qaisaria.

“Bazarche Boland” is located close to the Madar-e-shah caravanserai, which was the most important caravanserai after the 18th century. Undoubtedly one of the reasons of the design of such complexes in Chaharbagh was to give animation to this street and to move the center of city from the old square to Shah Square. It should be noted that Shah Abbas built many gardens in between Chaharbagh and Shah square to make this part of the city more attractive and to connect the new square and Caharbagh together.

A chaharsuq

Sarai and Caravanserai

Sarai is a Persian word, which means “house”. It may be confusing to see two different kinds of buildings in the bazaar of Isfahan that are both nowadays are called sarai. In this bazaar, sometimes people call some caravanserais “sarai”. Here we define both of these names and explain their functions.

Caravanserai, which is considered the most important space in the bazaar, is a hostel for caravans and individual travelers, with provisions for trade. The wholesale merchandise from outside the city is sold here to the retailers in the bazaar, thus the caravanserai acts as a “filter”.

Based on documents there were more than 100 caravanserais in the bazaar of Isfahan after the Safavid era. They were basically designed to accommodate travelers as well as land loads of camels and horses, to transfer them into shops. In some caravanserais shops were also designed. These single or double storied buildings consisted of a courtyard surrounded by several rooms. The rooms in the second floor were residences for travelers and the first floor stores, shops and stables.

There are some differences between sarai and caravanserai in the bazaar of Isfahan:

A Qaisarieh in the Bazaar

A rasteH in the old Bazaar

A corridor between caravanserai and rasteH

The structure of Bazaar in the Safavid part

1. The main difference between sarai and caravanserai is in their size. Caravanserais are larger and with more functions.
2. The location of caravanserais is closer to the neighborhood residential areas than sarais.
3. The main function of caravanserais was to accommodate and host travelers and foreign merchants, but sarais usually served as economical complexes.

The most famous caravanserai in Isfahan is the Madar-e-shah caravanserai, which was built in the 17th century in Chaharbagh Street. Most of the caravanserais and sarais in Isfahan are located nearby the main raste of the bazaar. These caravanserais are placed in both sides of raste or close to the intersection between two bazaars (chaharsuq).

Sarai is a double storied complex of shops with the same business, which are located around a non-roofed courtyard, usually containing a garden. The sarai is attached to the rasteh through a narrow corridor, called dehliz or dalan. There are many shops located in both sides of the dehliz. These corridors act as mini-markets for the products, which are related to the sarai. Every corridor or peripheral rasteh is separated from the main street (rasteh) with a door. By closing these doors at night the security of each part could be guaranteed.

In these double storied complexes usually shops were located in the first floor and factories in the second floor, these stories are connected via a foyer and stairs. In some cases shops are connected to the courtyard through an iwan (veranda) and in some cases there is not any level difference or iwan between the shop and the courtyard.

Most of the sarais are the heritage of the Safavid era and there are a few examples, which belong to the old bazaar. Also some of them were built in the later centuries after Safavid.

Timcheh (Covered halls)

Timcheh is an economic complex, which was designed like sarai but smaller and also often roofed. In timche some shops are located around a courtyard. These timchehs in the bazaar act as shopping complexes for special products. After Safavid, attempts have been made to design timchehs in all bazaars of Iran, especially in the bazaars of Isfahan and Tabriz and some of them are considered as masterpieces of the Safavid architecture. The most famous timcheh in the bazaar of Isfahan

Madar-e-shah caravanserai

Different kinds of "Rasteh" in bazaar

A timcheh

is Malek, which is intended for selling carpets.

There are three kinds of timcheh in bazaar of Isfahan:

1. The most common is a roofed, double-storied space with a square or rectangular courtyard like Atighe-Forousha timcheh for antique shops.
2. A double storied non-roofed or roofed complex, which is very similar to sarai with roofed corridors in front of shops like Malek timcheh.
3. A single storied complex, roofed or non-roofed, like Saadat timche or Karim-e Poosti timche.

Hojreh (Shops and workshops)

Shops and workshops, called hojreh, are simplest and smallest, but they are the most important elements of a bazaar. The shops are located in both sides of the rasteh and corridors. These are mostly double-storied, but in some parts of the bazaar with less importance, these stores are single-storied. The first floor of shops is usually factory or commercial space, while the second floor is usually the warehouse or an office for commercial trades. The area of the shops is between 10 and 25 square meters.

All the shops and workshops in the bazaar are separated from the streets (rasteh and corridors) with steps. This difference between the level of the shop and the street is related to the kind of business and craft inside the shop. For example, the level of shops in some parts is about 15 cm above the route, and in some cases (usually workshops), it is 15 cm lower.

The connection of shops or workshops to the streets is based on their functions. In some parts of the bazaar such as druggist stores or provisions stores, shops are in more contact with customers and people are able to come in and evaluate the quality of products to select. In some other parts such as coppersmith's rasteh, shops are connected to the Bazaar through a long corridor (inside the shop) to increase the safety of the rasteh. In some other parts, like the rasteh for goldsmiths', shops are higher than the level of the bazaar to guarantee the security of the shop.

The value of shops is related to their distance from the main street of bazaar. Closer to the main rasteh, the value of the shop is higher. But in general, the most expensive shops in the bazaar of Isfahan are located around the Shah Square. These shops have two doors; one of them is opened to the square and another one to the internal layer of the bazaar located behind the square.

Old bazaar: Rasteh showing roof lights

A hojre in the Shah square

An example of connecting a caravansarai to bazaar

Schematic section of an organic bazaar

A section through bazaar showing the double height entrance

A hojre in the bazaar of Isfahan