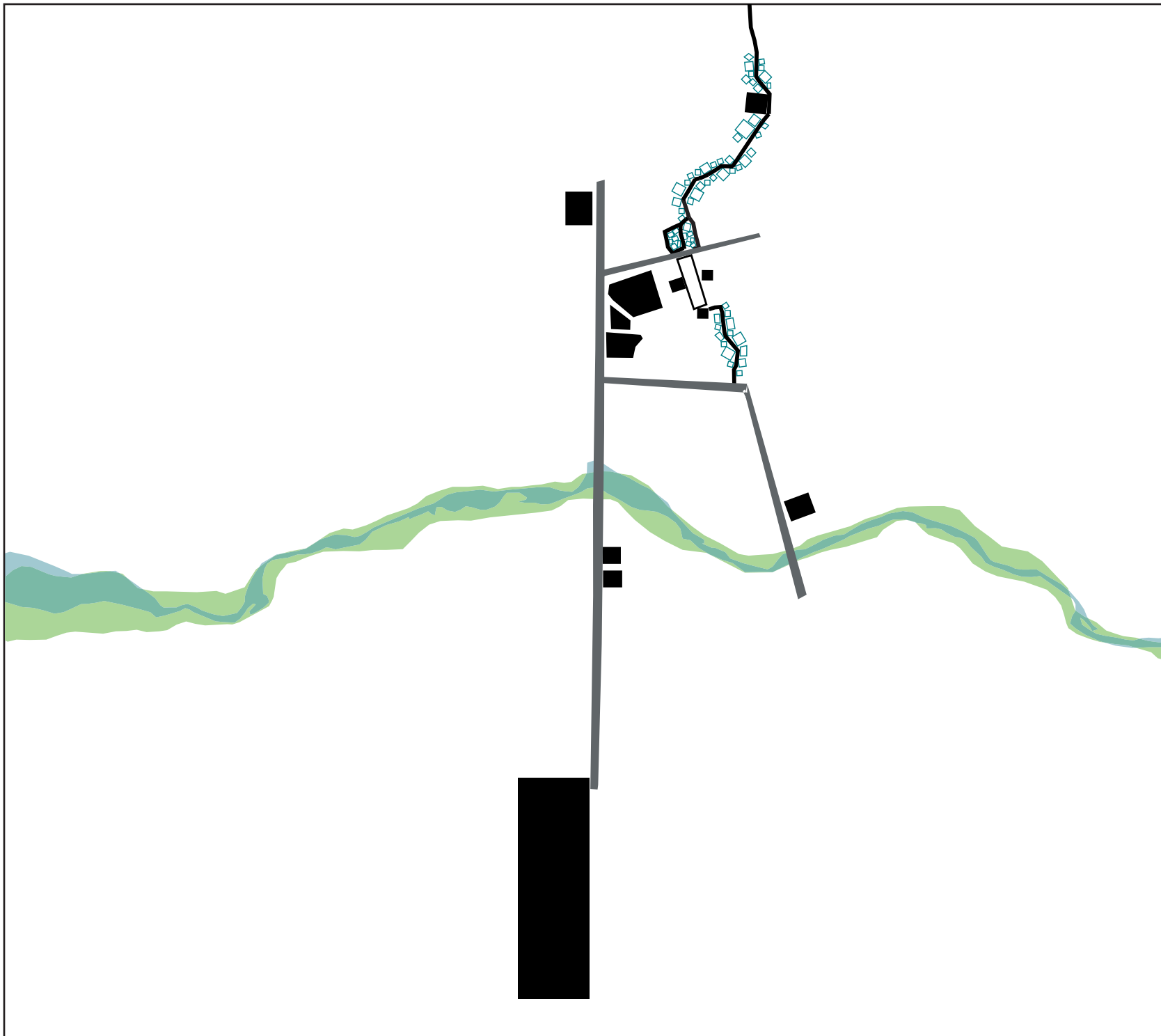


Civic Structure

*The civic structure of the city*

The structure of the city is still largely dependent on the old city. The old civic structure was based on a large organic square which was called the Old Square. The organically shaped square was located where the major thoroughfares converged in the center of the city. The main routes leading from outside to inside of the city transform major characteristics till now. This formation however, is a bit different from other Iranian historic cities, where no major square is the center of spatial organization and the bazaar itself plays this important role. Nevertheless, Isfahan's bazaar remains as one of the best examples of the Eastern bazaars, in terms of character, size and architecture.

In integration analysis the old square is clearly the most integrated place in the city which coincides the geographical center of the city as well. The high level of spatial integration extends from the main square through different branches of bazaar and reaches the gates. The main thoroughfares shape at the same time; residential quarters around them are joined to each other by some secondary routes.

The new square that Shah Abbas made was a copy of this old one. The most important thing about this new square is not the size, but is the very well-thought and well-designed connection of this new urban space with the older structure of the city. The key point in the design of this square is linking it with the main chain of the grand bazaar which extends from the old square in a way that it becomes a part of the overall structure of the city.

The other important decision in the new development of Isfahan was the new street or Chahar Bagh. Unlike most of the old streets of the old Isfahan, this avenue was a wide, straight boulevard with four rows of large trees and a stream in the middle. But unlike most of the Hausmann style boulevards in Paris, Chahar Bagh was not cut through the fabric of the city. The street was the north-south extension of the city toward south where an extensive complex of Safavid gardens were created.

Today, Isfahan still has the old city structure. Although some new things had been added which will add to the civic structure, the station on the north of Chahar Bagh and the university on the south of the river.