

## Designing the Vernacular Bazaar for Reinforcing the Urban Identity (Case Study: Shiraz City)

Mahdi Bonjooei

Department of Art & Architecture, Fars Branch, Art Institute of Higher Education, Iran.

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### ABSTRACT

Urban spaces and the facades and physical elements of the city are the best things to lead us to a direct understanding of the city and whatever happens in it. Citizens interact with such spaces and find common points with other citizens. They experience the common events and a joint image is formed in their minds. The results of these common experiences and images can be called the identity of the city in the minds of its residents. The urban open spaces (i.e. the urban places for shopping, recreational activities, visiting, and gathering without any barrier at any time) are very effective on the formation of the collective identity between the citizens and on the solidarity of the urban identity. In case of Iran, a clear representation of such spaces can be found in the traditional bazaars. Iranian bazaars are the public attractiveness of the cities that call the people to come and spend their time. The Iranian old cities have been mainly commercial and merchandised cities and thus the bazaar used to be the backbone of the cities. The role of bazaar will be understood more clearly when we see that the main elements of the city, including the squares, mosques, schools, public houses, etc. were built beside the bazaars. The main subject of this research (i.e. traditional bazaar of Shiraz City) is located in Shiraz city, Fars Province of Iran. The main reason for choosing Shiraz is the fact that it is hold as the heart of Iran, i.e., between North, South, East, and West. Thus the potentials of the city can be conducted in a right commercial way.

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### 1. Introduction

The conversion of the villages to the cities and the formation of the new cities have not a long history in Iran. However, the development of the urbanism has been accelerated in recent few decades so that the number of the Iranian cities is coming to be one thousand; but with regard to the quality, almost all Iranian cities have several structural problems and fundamental shortages in the urban infrastructures. Among these problems, the identity crisis is considered as one of the most important social and cultural challenge of the contemporary cities. This is while bazaar used to be an important factor for the urban identity in the history of Iran and it used to provide a desirable environment for the Iranian citizens. In studying the historical performance of the Iranian urban bazaars one can see a deteriorating process because the performance of these places has been gradually weakened. In this research we attempt to introduce the needed theoretical foundations for the creation of local and traditional bazaars. These foundations include two aspects: first the high performance of the bazaars for improving the economic level of the citizens, and then its performance and role in the improvement of the urban identity. Indeed the objective of this study is to fulfill the mentioned performances in form of a single plan. In other words, the objective of this study is to compensate the shortage of the commercial spaces in Shiraz City and to meet the needs of the local people for having commercial, servicing, and recreational suitable spaces on one hand and to organize a part of the Shiraz urban fabric that suffers from

the physical disorders and shortage of the urban facilities on the other hand. In such a center, the recreational and green spaces along with the commercial spaces have an intelligent interaction through which we can create a useful interaction between the citizens and people who use those spaces.

### 2. Literature review

#### 2.1. Defining the identity

Perhaps the psychology is one of the few fields of the human knowledge that offers a relatively clear definition of the concept of identity. In psychology, the identity is considered as one of the characteristics of the human personality. By definition, the identity is a sense that any human being feels about the continuity of his/her mental life and the unity that he/she feels about his/her mental situations against the ever-changing conditions of the external world (Kleine Berg, 1993).

#### 2.2. The components of the urban identity

In order to know the identity of any city we have to know the components of its personality. The components of the personality of a city -like the components of the human personality- have two dimensions: (1) objective or physical, and (subjective or mental). These dimensions are separated through three environments: natural environment, artificial environment, and human environment. If having prominent and exclusive characteristics, the variables of each of the components play the role of the identity index. In order to investigate the identity of any city, we have to discover and realize the exclusive and prominent characteristics of the variables of natural, artificial and human components.

The natural component includes the variables such as the mountains, deserts, rivers, hills, etc. The artificial component includes the variables such as the buildings, urban blocks, neighborhoods, streets, roads, squares, etc. And the human component includes the variables such as the language, religion, literacy, local beliefs, rituals, etc.

From the qualitative values, the identity elements can be classified in three groups: positive elements, negative elements, and neutral elements. An identity element is positive when it possesses the special abilities and it can positively useful for the life and meaning of the city. An identity element is negative when it possesses a negative aspect so that not only it lacks any useful characteristics or special condition for the development and preservation of the valuable interests of the society and nature, but it even would cause the destruction and ruin the environment. For example, if a part of the city is socially notorious for addiction, this notoriety will be a negative human identity component.

### 3. Similar cases

#### 3.1. Ganjali Khan Complex

Ganjali Khan Complex is one of the Iranian architectural masterpieces. It is a Safavid-era building complex, located in the old center of city of Kerman. Ganjali Khan Complex is indeed the milestone of the Kerman Bazaar. The Complex was built by Ganjali Khan who governed Kerman, Sistan and Kandahar provinces from 1596 to 1621 under Safavid Shah Abbas I. It was originally built by Ganjali Khan and completed by his son, Alimardan Khan. This beautiful complete and valuable complex has been designed by the master Sultan Mohammad Yazdi. The whole complex is devoted to Imam Reza and Astan Quds Razavi. The complex is composed of a school, a square, a caravanserai, a bathhouse, a water reservoir, a mint, a mosque and a bazaar.

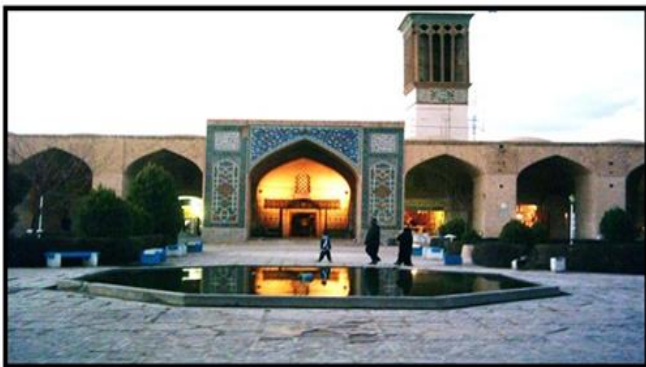


Fig 1. A view of Ganjali Khan Complex in the city of Kerman.

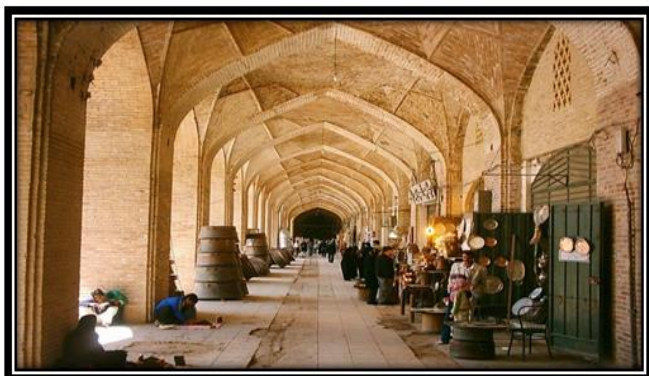


Fig 2. A view of Ganjali Khan Complex in the city of Kerman.

The bazaar of the Ganjali Khan Complex has been formed along the entrance gates of the city and it has been considered as the city center to play an important role in the spatial and physical structure of the traditional city. The roofed bazaar of Kerman has two main streets intersecting each other to form the square of the bazaar.



Fig 3. A bird-view of Ganjali Khan Bazaar in the city of Kerman.

Ganjali Khan Complex is the heart of the city. The placement of the Complex confirms its central position in the city of Kerman.

#### 3.2. Qeysarieh Bazaar of Lar City

Located in the heart of Iranian city of Lar, Qeysarieh Bazaar has played an important role in the formation of the physical fabric of the Old Lar. The placement of the Palace opposite to the bazaar in this spatial composition can show the historical ties between the government and the commerce. This bazaar has been built like a cross while it has preserved its form and shape in recent four centuries. Some researchers believe that the historical bazaar of Lar city roots back to pre-Islamic Iran while some other researchers trace its history back to the beginning of Islamic Iran. The plan and construction of the Qeysarieh Bazaar has been so beautiful and splendid that it had attracted many governors of the Iranian plateau and the foreign merchants of the Safavid era.



Fig 4. A historical picture of Qeysarieh Bazaar in the city of Lar.



Fig 5. A view of Qeysarieh Bazaar in the city of Lar

One of the interesting points about the design of the Qeysarieh Bazaar is the direction of its streets. These specific directions would be affected by the natural conditions (especially the warmness of the weather), the direction of the wind, or it would be affected by the religious sacred points such as the direction of the Qibla. Qeysarieh Bazaar is not only the central core of the city of Lar, but it is the focal point of trade for a vast part of the south Iran. Moreover, it is a valuable marketplace for the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf and central Plateau of Iran.

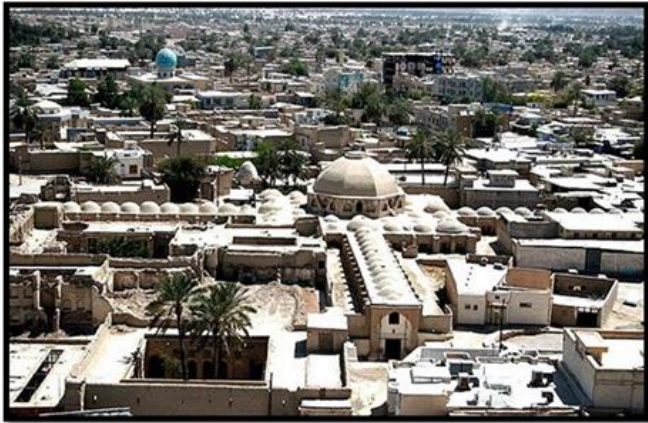


Fig 6. A general view of the Qeysarieh Bazaar.

#### 4. Methodology of the research and the specifications of Shiraz

The methodology of this research is qualitative while the research questions are answered descriptively. In this research we have relied on the library documents and resources of the libraries of scientific centers such as the universities and research institutes, internet resources, and field studies using the questionnaire and interview with the local people and authorities.

Shiraz is one of the main cities in Iran, and also famous as cultural capital. The main subject of this research (i.e. traditional bazaar of Shiraz City) is located in Shiraz city, Fars Province of Iran. The main reason for choosing Shiraz is the fact that it is hold as the heart of Iran, i.e., between North, South, East, and West. The northern areas of the Shiraz Valley are surrounded by the relatively short mountains along the valley. Shiraz is located at an altitude of 950 meters above sea level. From the meteorological point of view, Shiraz region has a hot and dry weather mainly affected by the Mediterranean masses.

#### 5. Introducing the site and its general characteristics

##### 5.1. Principle considerations in designing the commercial centers

- Attracting the elements of the commerce and trade
- Accessibility of the customers
- Servicing

The placement of any shop is directly affected by the final potentials of that business. The efficiency of the business will be increased by the more traffic of the side-walkers in front of the shop. The sidewalks have to be designed in a way from the parking lots to the shopping places that make the customers stop in front of the main shops. Proper connection to the parking lots (and the public transport terminals and stations) is a fundamental element of such a design. The parking space of the staff and sellers has not to be common with the parking space of the customers. The maximum distance between the customers' cars or bus station and the main stores has not to be more than 200m. Moreover, the access to the parking space has to be fast and easy.

##### 5.2. Characteristics of the space

- Internal circulation
- Middle enclosures
- Marketplaces
- Services

The horizontal and vertical circulation is a vital factor in designing the bazaar because it relates both to the buyers and the commodities. The horizontal circulation includes the pathways of shopping from within the market toward the vertical circulation which includes the elevators and escalators within the stores. These vertical circulations have to be suitable enough to attract the customers to pass the highest possible spaces and to encourage him to visit other floors. The main middle enclosure has to be an attraction for the customers and makes a good long-standing memory for them. Most bazaars have a splendid enclosure with exciting characteristics such as the glass domes, a combination of the lights and fountains, statues, etc. Usually the marketplaces and vaults that conduct the visitors toward the main enclosure have to create a sense of intimacy and calmness. The final goal is to attract the customers to the shops.

##### 5.3. Standards of designing the commercial complexes

- The height of the floors
- Entrances
- Exits
- Capacity of the corridors
- Showcases
- Escalators
- Stairs

The height of the floors in the big flats is 4-5 meters and in the small flats it is 3 meters depending on the type of the services. In a building whose useful flat area is more than 1500 m<sup>2</sup>, all yards have to have the entrance and exit. The entrances and exits have to be far from each other if possible. The width of the doors for each 100 m<sup>2</sup> has to be equal to 0.30 of the pure width. In the upper floors, the width of the door has to be equal to the width of the stairs. The movement limit is equal to 0.3 p/m. Here the p/m is indeed the abbreviation for *person per square meter*. In case of the higher density of the population, the people are not able to move in their normal speed and even they cannot exceed the slow persons. The acceptable population density for designing the people-circulated areas is equal to 1.4 p/m. The showcase is a part of any store for displaying the commodities or a glass window for shops of shoe, clothes, jewelries etc. or as open showcases for the fast foods, groceries, greengroceries, etc.

The logical relationship between the bottom and height of the stair is obtained by the following equation:

$$2H + B = 62 \text{ - } 65$$

Where  $H$  is the value of the height of stair, and  $B$  is the value of the bottom of stair.

In the external walls with the outward exits, each of the upper floors has to have two series of stairs, each of which with 25m distance from the other one. Moreover, the rooms have to be built at a distance less than 15m to one of the stairs.

##### 5.4. Important issues to be considered in designing the shopping centers

- The shape of the plan
- The design of the external façade
- The main components and parts of the complex
- The internal façade of the shopping center
- Materials

- The lighting of the complex
- Desirable air conditioning
- Signings and graphical plans

The collection of different services and facilities in a single place leads to the design of 2- or 3-floor shopping centers. Such a design has made the architects to create different plans all of which attempt to shorten the distance that the buyers have to move from one part to the other. The external façade has to be designed in a unified form using one or two type of material in the whole composition of the building. The main entrance of the shopping complex and the central yards is very important. These elements have to be beautiful and splendid enough to attract the buyers. The existence of the canopies, signaling columns, or a special wall in the entrances and the perspectives with the trees, fountains, and artistic elements are very effective on providing a vital and attractive environment.

The marketplaces and central yards have to create a very interesting and attractive environment for the visitors. The main elements of this new environment have to be so exciting and favorable that leads to a sense of satisfaction in the buyers and visitors. The materials have to be chosen based on the aesthetic points. The materials of the floors and walls have to be more durable so that they require less protection and repair. The lighting of the complex has to be sufficient and light, so that it affects the people and helps creating an interesting and relaxing space. The source of the lighting can be installed in the ceiling arches in order to increase the beauty of the complex. Moreover we can use the decorative pendants, chandeliers, architectural forms and specially designed walls and the column lights in order to make the lightings more effective. Apart from the internal lighting of the complex, we have to pay enough attention to the lighting of the external façade. This can be fulfilled using the projectors, ring lightings, statue plans and canopies. This method and type of lighting is usually the substitution of the huge signals of the shopping center. On the other hand, the lighting of the parking space is very important because the space of the parking has to be completely bright.

Graphics is a very important tool in designing the shopping center. The limits of using the graphic art in the shopping centers includes the external signs, symbols, entrances, different special signs in the internal entrances of the shop. These graphic signs and forms allow the buyers to find their way and being conducted to different places of the complex.

The distance between the columns in designing the bazaar has to be studied carefully because it has a controlling effect on the sales and make it as the shopping units. If the columns are close to each other, the distribution of the spaces will face several problems. Moreover, the closeness of the columns will threaten the situation of the sales. In deciding the distance between the columns the designers have to consider the standard specifications.

Usually the shops are built based on the ratio of 3-5 or 4-6. Of course the width of 3m for the shops is very small while the big shops would have a width up 24m. Thus the 6m distance between the columns seems desirable. In case of the smaller shops, if the distance between the columns is 9m, we can provide more flexibility. If one of the columns stands on the ridge of the shop, it would be more difficult than (for example) the back columns stand behind. Although the composition of the columns and their distance (with respect to both their length and depth) has to be similar, but usually

the depth distances are more than the length distances. For example, if the distance is equal to 6m, then it would reach to 12, 18 or even 24m in depth. In this case we have not use the partition as the loaded wall but we have to build it with special materials in a way that they can be moved and reused easily. The suspended ceilings have to be matched with the services and stairs respectively. Considering the mentioned points and the shape of the plan, it seems that the best type of the construct is the concrete one because the type of the plan forces us to have different intervals. The concrete construct is able to cover the spans that are higher than 6m. Of course in this process we have to consider some specific rules and principles.

## 5.5. Spaces of the project based on the need assessments

### 5.5.1. Theatre

The planned theatre for the complex contains three main parts as follow:

- Reception, including the entrance, reservation, and main hall
- Main hall of the audiences
- Scene, including the main scene of the theatre

Different parts of the theatre can be more complete or more compact depending on the capacity and dimensions of the theatre. For example, a big theatre requires some spaces such as the administration department, decoration, light control room, sound control room, etc.; but in a small theatre we can omit some of these parts or combine some of them in each other. Considering the position of the theatre in this area, we predict that the complex needs a theatre with the capacity of 800 persons. Thus according to the mentioned point, the whole area of the theatre will reach to 2060 m<sup>2</sup>.

### 5.5.2. Recreational spaces

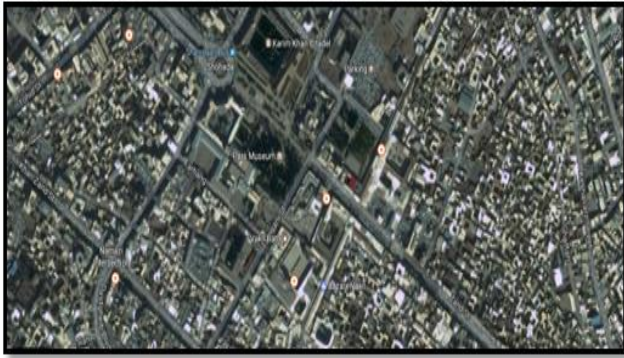
In this complex, an amusement park has been planned for different ages. Another recreational space of the complex is the hall for computer games. The area of these halls will be different depending on the number and types of the games. In a preliminary estimation, we would need a hall with the total area of 6000 m<sup>2</sup>.

### 5.5.3. Commercial spaces

This complex will have a regional and cross-regional function. Since there is no supermarket in the adjacent neighborhoods, it is predicted that the residents of the near neighborhood refer to the complex for supplying their routine needs. Thus the covered population for the commercial spaces of the complex includes the population of the region plus a considerable part of the population of adjacent neighborhoods. The nature of the commercial marketplaces and the commercial complexes of the Shiraz City show that most commercial spaces of the city are dispersed in different districts of the city with mere urban functions. Hence, since the Shiraz bazaar is going to play a trans-urban role, it is argued that an area of approximately 3Ha has to be assigned to the commercial spaces out of the whole available spaces.

### 5.5.4. Green spaces

The suggested area for the green spaces in the comprehensive plan of the Shiraz Bazaar is equal to 0.7 m<sup>2</sup>. Thus in regard to the defined population of the region that is equal to 64,000, the total area of the green spaces and parks will reach to approximately 2.1Ha.



**Fig 7. Aerial image of the site.**



**Fig 8. Aerial image of the site.**

Finally, we have to consider sufficient parking lots for such a huge complex. In this regard, a total area of 2Ha has been assigned to the parking space of the bazaar.

## 6. Conclusion

The people of each city (apart from the size of its population) mentally require a city with an exclusive face, symbols, priding sign and elements associating with their culture and history, so that they make their memories with vital symbols preparing the social events and reinforcing their solidarity. If so, the citizens will enjoy living in their city, feel beneficial there, respect their living place, attempt to participate in improving their environment, and will not abandon their city for one reason or another. Thus in this research we intended to use the potential and realized commercial capacity of Shiraz City in order to reinforce the identity of the city. In this regard, we suggested a plan for a Bazaar Complex. Such a complex is indeed a trans-regional place for the integration of different land uses. Based on their functional and physical characteristics, the facades and urban spaces are the first and most important factor of creating the identity for the city. We used such a point to design a bazaar with a face inspired by the local elements derived from the main concepts of the traditional Islamic bazaars at a large scale and in wide collective urban spaces in order to create a symbol for the identity of Shiraz City. The signs and symbols are the potential carriers of the meaning. Since almost all residents of Shiraz City have an Islamic-Iranian culture, thus we emphasized on the Islamic-Iranian elements, symbols, rites, and functions in planning the Bazaar Complex. In this complex, the recreational and green spaces work along with the commercial spaces to make an intelligent combination through which we can cause a useful interaction between the people who visit and use the complex. The special attention to the open spaces, movements, rotations, visions, the presence in the public closed and open spaces, and exposing the activities of the operators and practitioners for the visitors

and showing the dynamism and vitality of the complex are all considered in the project.

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