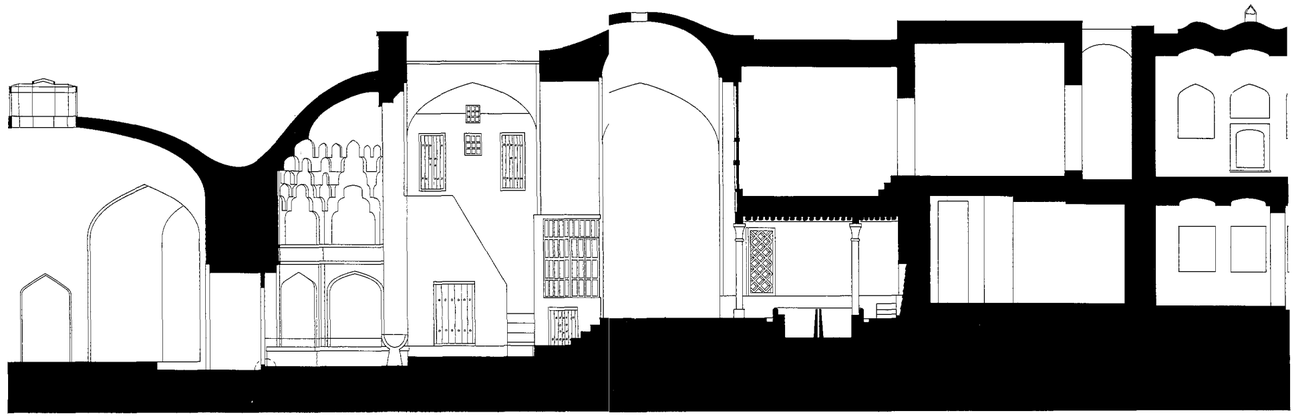
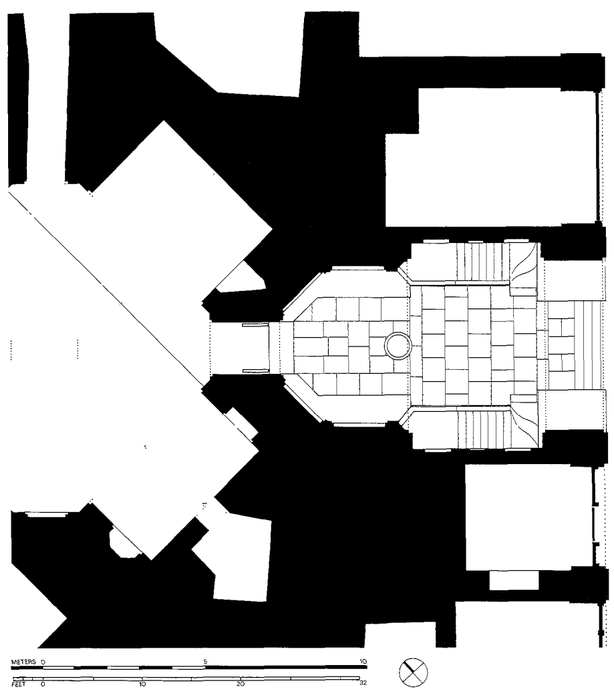
BAZAAR: AMENITY

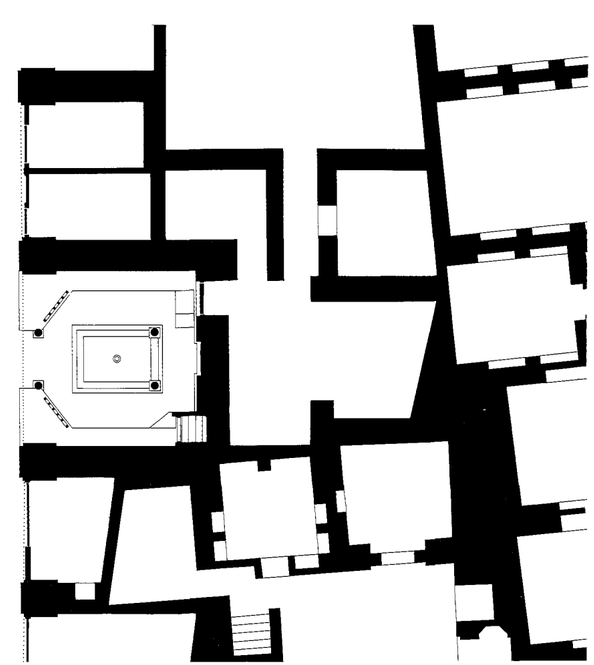
ISFAHAN

The Isfahan bazaar is the commercial "backbone" of the city Because of its pleasant micro-climate all year round, the bazaar is also used as the city's "Main Street": meeting people, seeing and being seen

The pious institution of *Waqf* endows, not only mosques and other religious buildings with the income of donated bazaar stalls, but also maintains public fountains and hygenic amenities The fountain across from the Jarchi Mosque is a good example of this principle at work



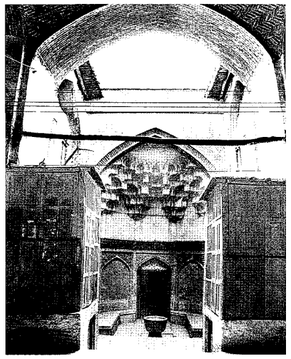




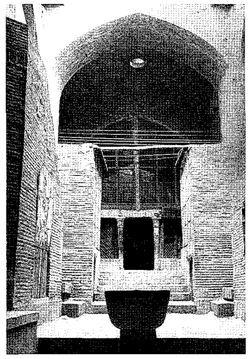
Plan and east-west section through Caravansarai-I-Gulshan, a public rest place with a fountain, the main bazaar, the entry to the Mosque-I-Jarchi and the mosque itself

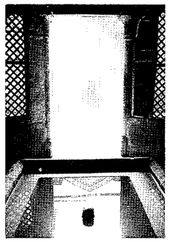
BELOW: Visual sequence from fountain to mosque

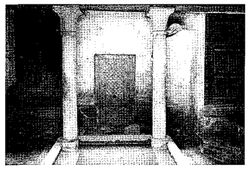
BELOW: Shadowy bazaar space intersecting the light-filled space of the mosque-fountain dialogue

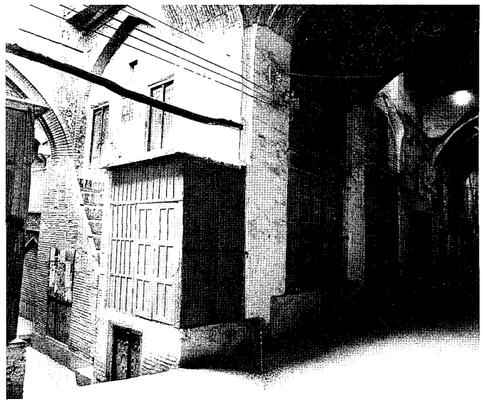


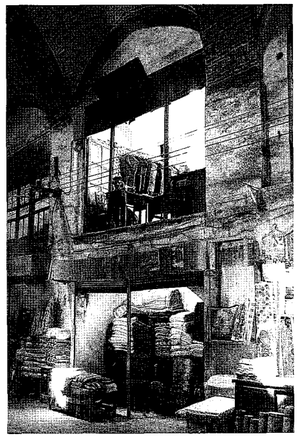
BELOW: Visual sequence from mosque to fountain The bazaar, which runs transverse to the mosque-fountain axis, seems negated



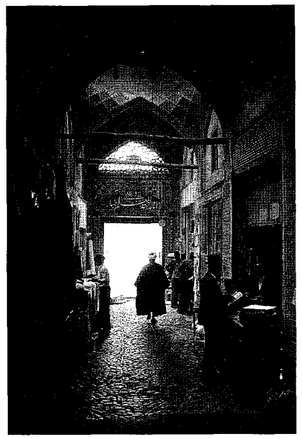




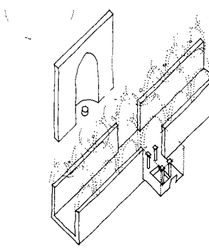


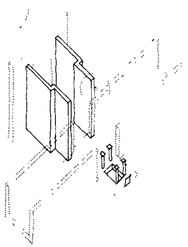


ABOVE: Typical bay of main bazaar with vending stall below, lit by the oculus of the dome, and the workroom above, lit by a window in the wall The difference in character of the lighting reinforces the impression that the lower floor is dug out like a cave while the upper floor is open to the bazaar as well as the outside The interior bays dictate the rhythm, and all kinds of conditions can occur adjacent to the bazaar



ABOVE: Connection from main bazaar to Caravansarai-I-Gulshan allows for development of a mini-bazaar





ASPECTS OF FORMAL STRUCTURE:
The axial relationship between the public rest place with fountain and the mosque entrance is qualified by a number of formal, experiential and implicitly cultural characteristics, explicated in two diagrams (right)

1 Even though both the mosque and fountain are pious institutions *Waqf* one larger than the other, their relationship to one another is not obvious because the bazaar dominates the entire spatial experience This condition existed at the time when the mosque was first built

2 With the later physical connection of *mosque iwan* to bazaar, a spatial continuity between mosque door and rear wall of fountain room is created (marked by an inclined plane symbolizing, with its fish scale surface, a small waterfall)

3 There is a contrast between the relative formality of *mosque iwan* (form and decoration) and fountain place (form and fine sculptural treatment of its principal elements: waterfall plane, fountain, columns) and the pair of connecting stair walls, inserted in a vernacular manner This contrast helps to maintain the original face-to-face relationship intact while adding a new element: a well-defined forecourt to the mosque, open to the sky

4 The illusionary disappearance of the otherwise dominant bazaar-corridor, when viewed along the fountain-mosque axis, is in large measure due to the fundamental imbalance of the two spaces off the bazaar It is a subtly calculated imbalance, achieved by the orchestration of formal and experiential elements in a way that the axial relationship acquires a clear thrust from waterfall plane to mosque door The spaces "telescope" from low, closed, cool, dark, and grotto-like to high, roofless, warm and light-flooded; two columns "jump" forward out of the pool as the stairs ascend toward the arch of the *iwan*, toward even more light

5 Fountain room and mosque entry thus become one coherent whole The domed bay of the bazaar which connects them also separates them as one moves through the bazaar