To stroll down Ibn-e-Sina Avenue is like walking through a bombed city. The bulldozer has sliced through bazaar routes, caravanserais and houses, exposing to view the remains of richly decorated interiors (see pp292 and 300). Our proposals for remedial action are simple: a screen wall two storeys high, an arcade in front, accommodation for commercial activities behind. The arcade provides shade and a strong architectural form which is immediately recognisable as belonging to the street. The upper storey of the wall, while making it possible for a first floor to be added at a later date, is a scale-giving device without which the arcade would look puny. What happens behind the wall depends on the space available: a deep workshop, a shallow store which can spill over into the arcade, or just the wall tight against existing buildings. In other words we propose a formal front and a loose back adaptable to variable site conditions.

Use has been made of the considerable difference in ground level between the new providing the shops with semi-basements for storage and, where the amount of land available is sufficient, small split-level car parks, accessible from the back and concealed from the street, like the other accommodation, by the screen wall.

The construction proposed is load-bearing brickwork covered with the traditional mud and straw rendering. Steel would only be used in tension, and in combination with jack-arches, for the roof over the shops and car parks. The domical vaults of the arcade would provide a challenge to the excellent brick craftsmen who still exist in every town and village.

Cross section of Ibn-e-Sina Avenue with proposed arcade and commercial development lining both sides.

Elevation of part of proposed arcade.
Ibn-e-Sina Avenue today, 1, its street frontages shattered by the demolition and, 2, the arcaded street which it could become. 3, brick craftsmen at work in a village. The complete lack of any definition at the edges of Ibn-e-Sina Avenue, 4, could be made good by the construction of an arcade which would provide shade for the pedestrian and a formal front to the street, 5.