

I.

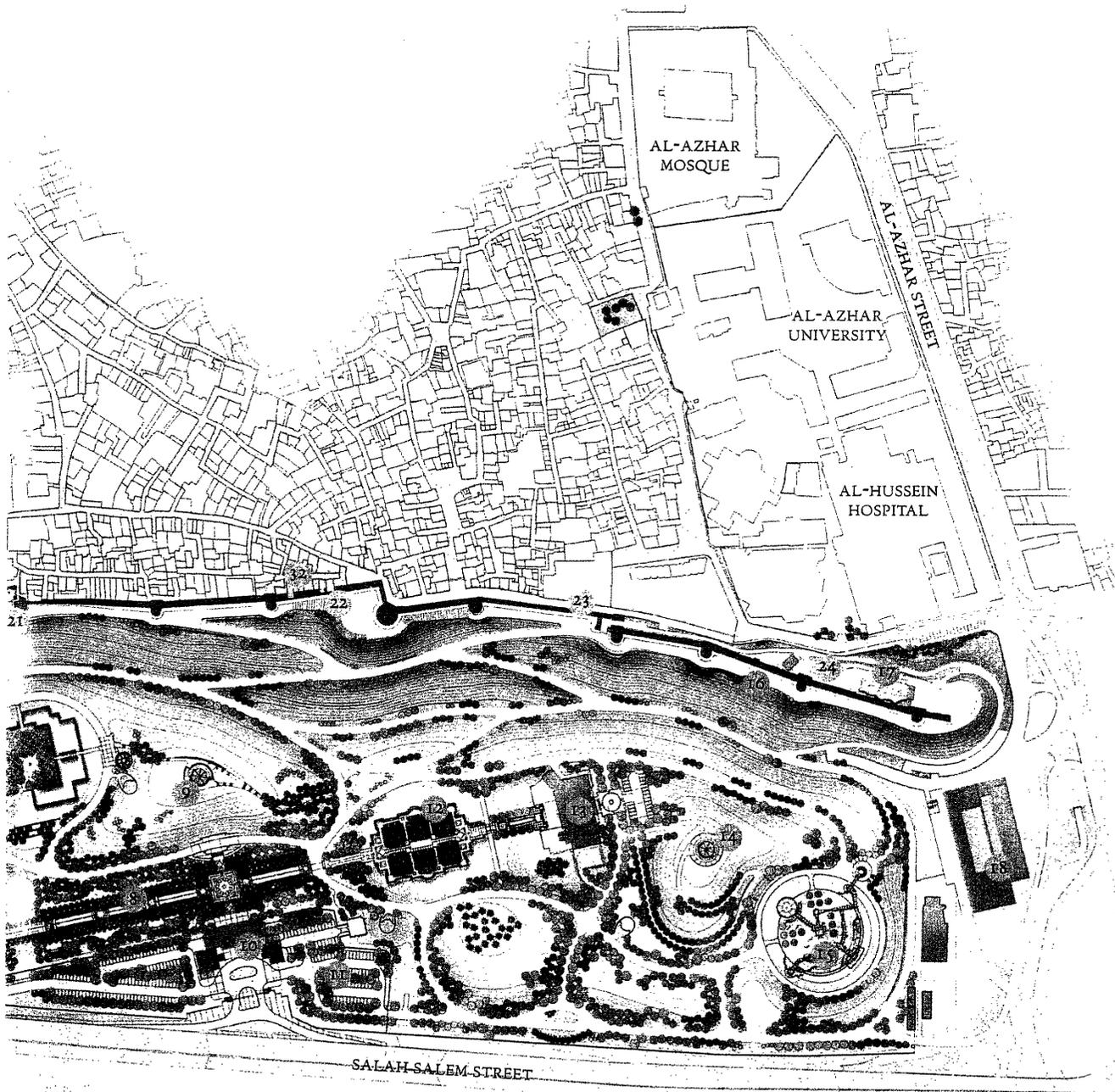
1. An aerial view of the project site shows the topography of Azhar Park after master grading (2000). On the edge of the site is the uncovered, 12th-century Ayyubid city wall and, to the right, the Darb al-Ahmar district. In the distance, two major landmarks can be seen: to the left, Salah al-Din's Citadel and, to the right, the complex of the Sultan Hasan Mosque.

*Azhar Park, Ayyubid Wall and Darb al-Ahmar Programmes*



AZHAR PARK LANDMARKS  
AND FACILITIES

1. Neighbourhood recreation field
2. Park administration office
3. Citadel esplanade
4. Picnic meadow
5. The park orchard
6. Lakeside Café
7. Sunken garden
8. Palm processional walk
9. South lookout point
10. Main park gate at Salah Salem Street
11. Visitor parking
12. Formal garden
13. Hilltop Restaurant
14. North lookout point
15. Children's play area
16. Ayyubid Wall promenade
17. Planned archaeological visitor centre
18. Site of the future Urban Plaza



AYYUBID WALL RESTORATION PROGRAMME  
MAJOR RESTORATION LOCATIONS

- 19. Community gate at Khayrbek Complex
- 20. Pilot project interventions, visitors' circuit and community park gate between Towers 4 and 5
- 21. Archaeological excavations and community park gate at Bab al-Mahruq
- 22. Restoration between Tower 9 and Burg al-Mahruq
- 23. Development of a pedestrian zone and restoration at Bab al-Barqiyya gate
- 24. Archaeological excavations in the north triangle

DARB AL-AHMAR NEIGHBOURHOOD  
ONGOING PHYSICAL INTERVENTION PROJECT SITES

- 25. Development of open space and housing rehabilitation at Bab al-Wazir
- 26. Conservation project at Khayrbek Complex
- 27. Conservation project at Umm al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque
- 28. Housing intervention along the Ayyubid Wall
- 29. Housing rehabilitation in Darb Shoughlan
- 30. Restoration of the former Shoughlan Street School
- 31. Open space development of Aslam Square and Bab al-Mahruq community gate and access corridor to Azhar Park
- 32. Asaad Alley housing rehabilitation



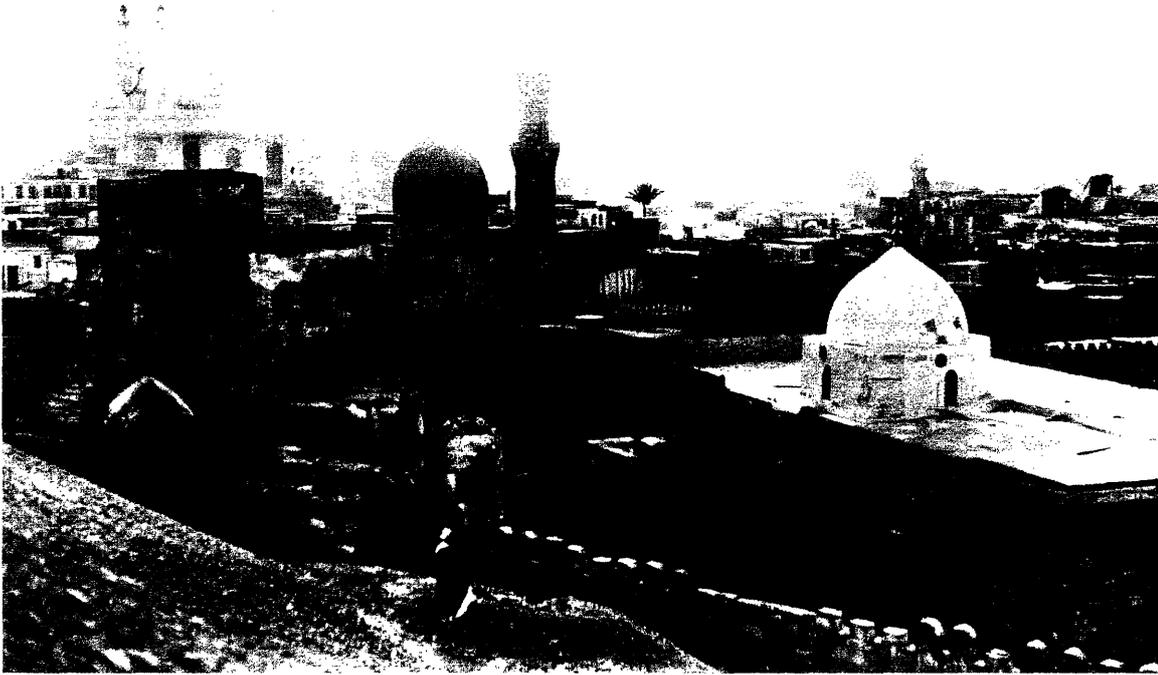
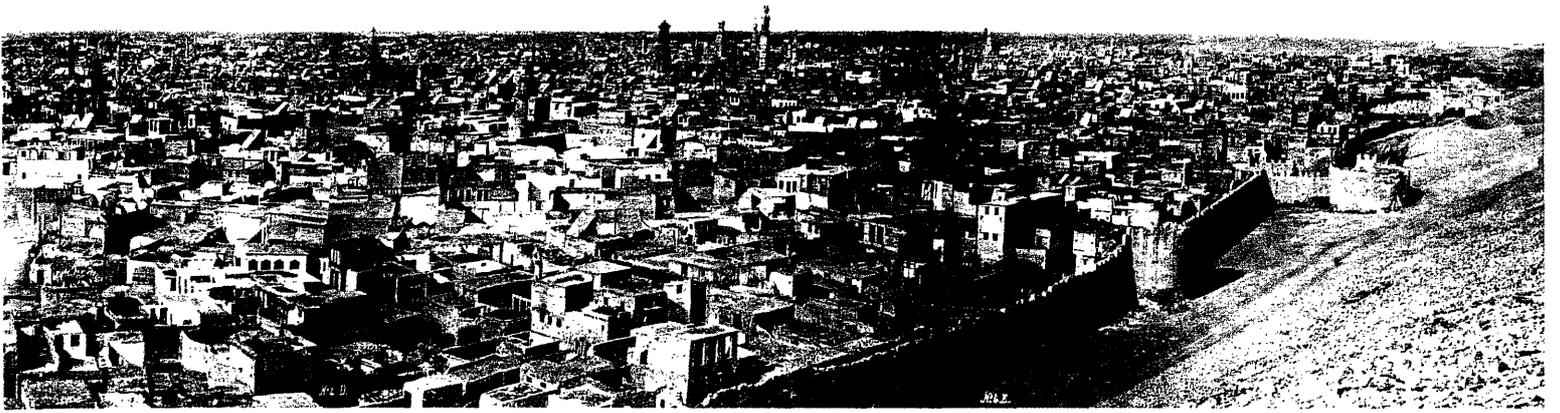
3.



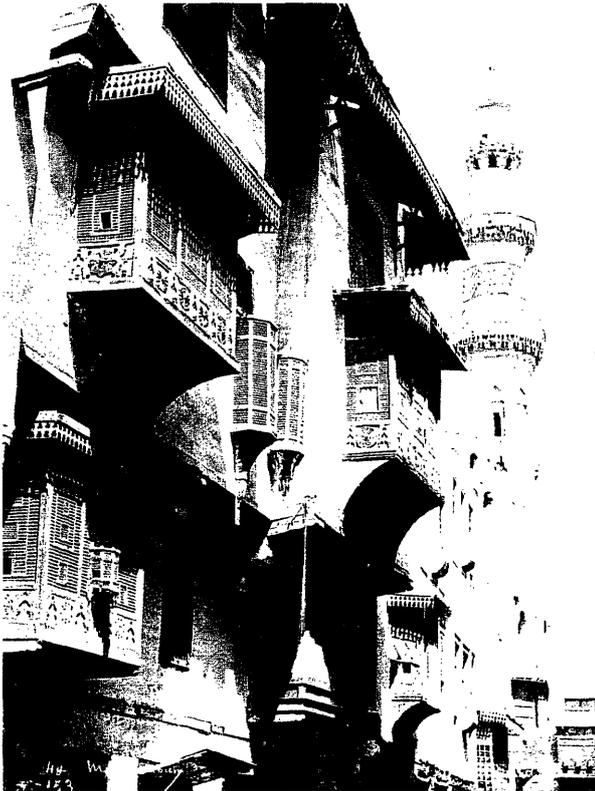
4.

3. A late 19th-century panorama of al-Darb al-Ahmar taken by Pascal Sebah. The image shows a highly urban residential fabric, comprising large mansions as well as smaller houses, built right up to the eastern city wall.

4. A late 19th-century view of the so-called 'Darassa Hills', the mounds of debris that have now been transformed into Azhar Park.



5.



6.

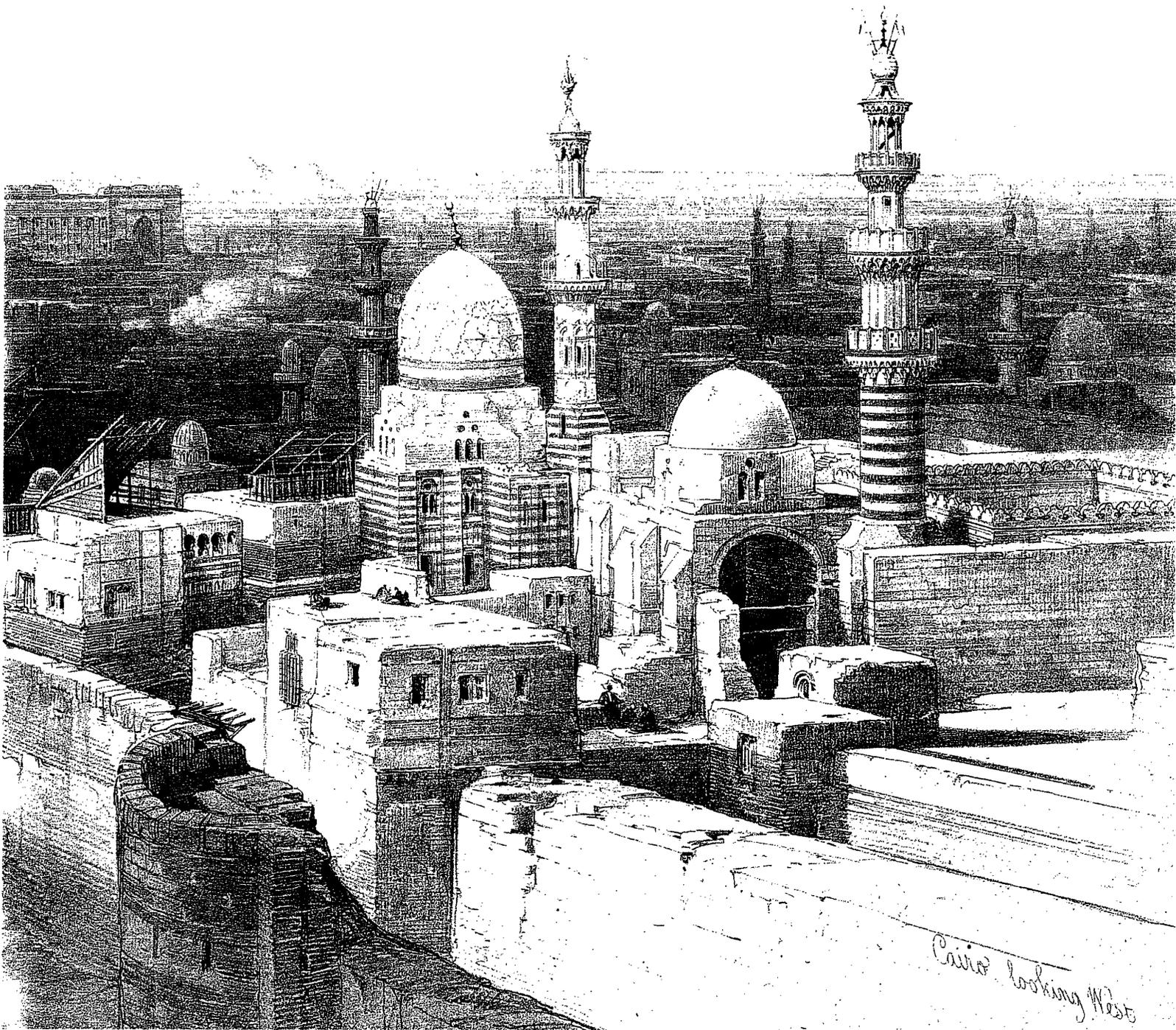
5. An early 20th-century view of what is now the southern extent of Azhar Park, showing the almost-buried Ayyubid city wall, with the Khayrbek and Aqsunqur Mosques in the foreground (left and right, respectively).

6. A view of the Umm al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque (c. 1369) taken by H. Bécharde in 1884, just before the pavilion of its minaret collapsed due to an earthquake. The minaret is being reconstructed by the AKTC as part of a larger project to restore the mosque complex. The image also shows a wealth of late Ottoman residential architecture.

*Following pages*

7. An early 19th-century lithograph by David Roberts showing what is now the southern boundary of Azhar Park. In the foreground of the image are the Khayrbek and Aqsunqur Mosques (left and right, respectively), the former currently being restored by the AKTC. The eastern Ayyubid city wall is also clearly visible.





Cairo looking West



8.

8. Detail of a map of Cairo from the *Description de l'Égypte* produced in 1802, following Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798-1801). This detail shows al-Darb al-Ahmar, even then a dense neighbourhood built right up to the city wall, and the Darrasa Hills, now the site of Azhar Park.



9.



10.

9. Looking to the south over the park site, with the Citadel in the background.

10. The future park site in 1992, before work commenced, looking to the south. In the distance to the left is the Citadel of Salah al-Din and, in the centre, the minarets of the Sultan Hasan Mosque complex.

11. A picture of the site also taken in 1992, looking towards the north-east. In the background is the City of the Dead, with the mausolea of many Mamluk sultans and dignitaries, highlighted by domes and minarets.



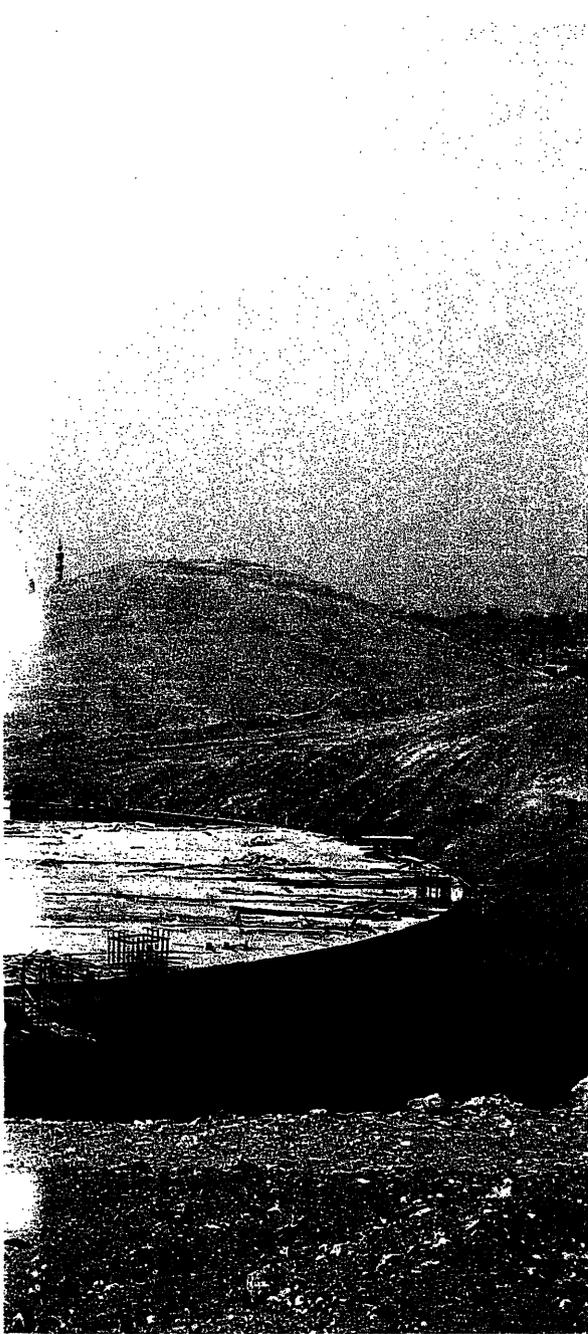
11.



12.



13.



14.

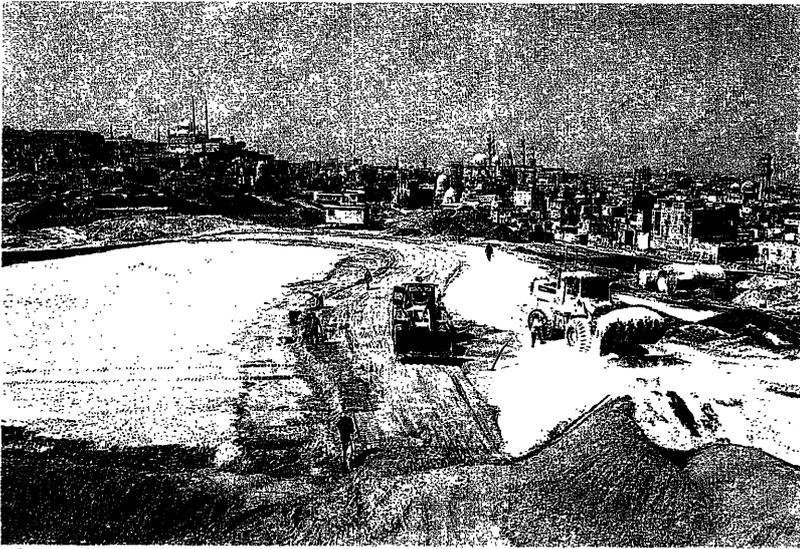
12. The southernmost water tank in 1994, during the final stage of construction. Further southwards, on the left, a view of the Citadel of Salah al-Din with the late Ottoman-style Muhammad Ali Mosque on a spur of the Moqattam plateau.

13. View of the southern section of the site in the early 1990s, when it was occupied as a storage place by a major contractor.

14. Work on the southernmost water tank shows the scale of construction involved.



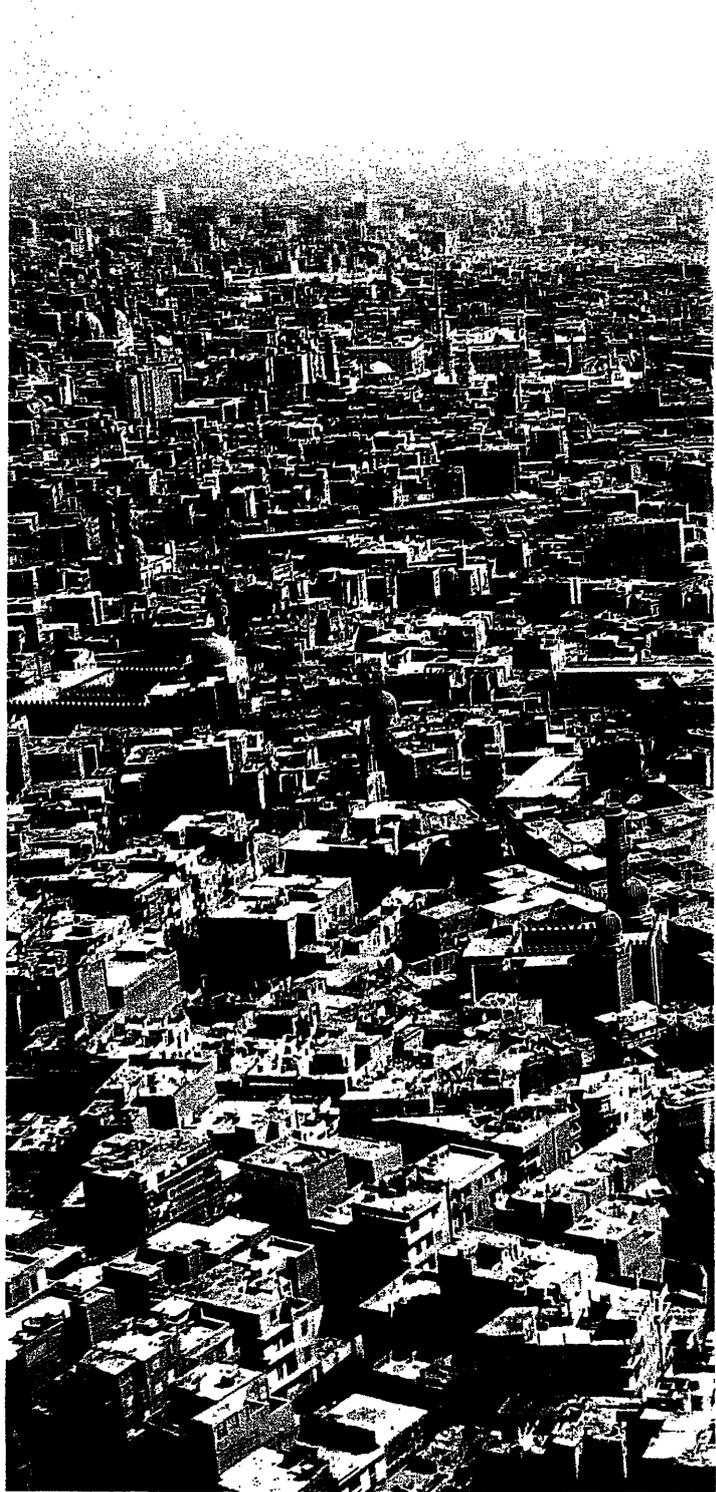
15.



16.



17.



18.



15, 16. The nature of the site of the park required extensive grading and improvement of the soil quality in order to permit planting.

17. An aerial view of the southern water tank in 1999 (seen from the south), being integrated into the emerging new park topography. At the bottom, in the centre, a prototype of typical pavements, pergolas and water features of the future park main spine.

18. An aerial view of Azhar Park taken during the work in 2000. The eastern edge of al-Darb al-Ahmar and the periphery of the Bab al-Wazir cemetery can be seen in the foreground (on the left and right sides of the park, respectively).





20.



21.



22.

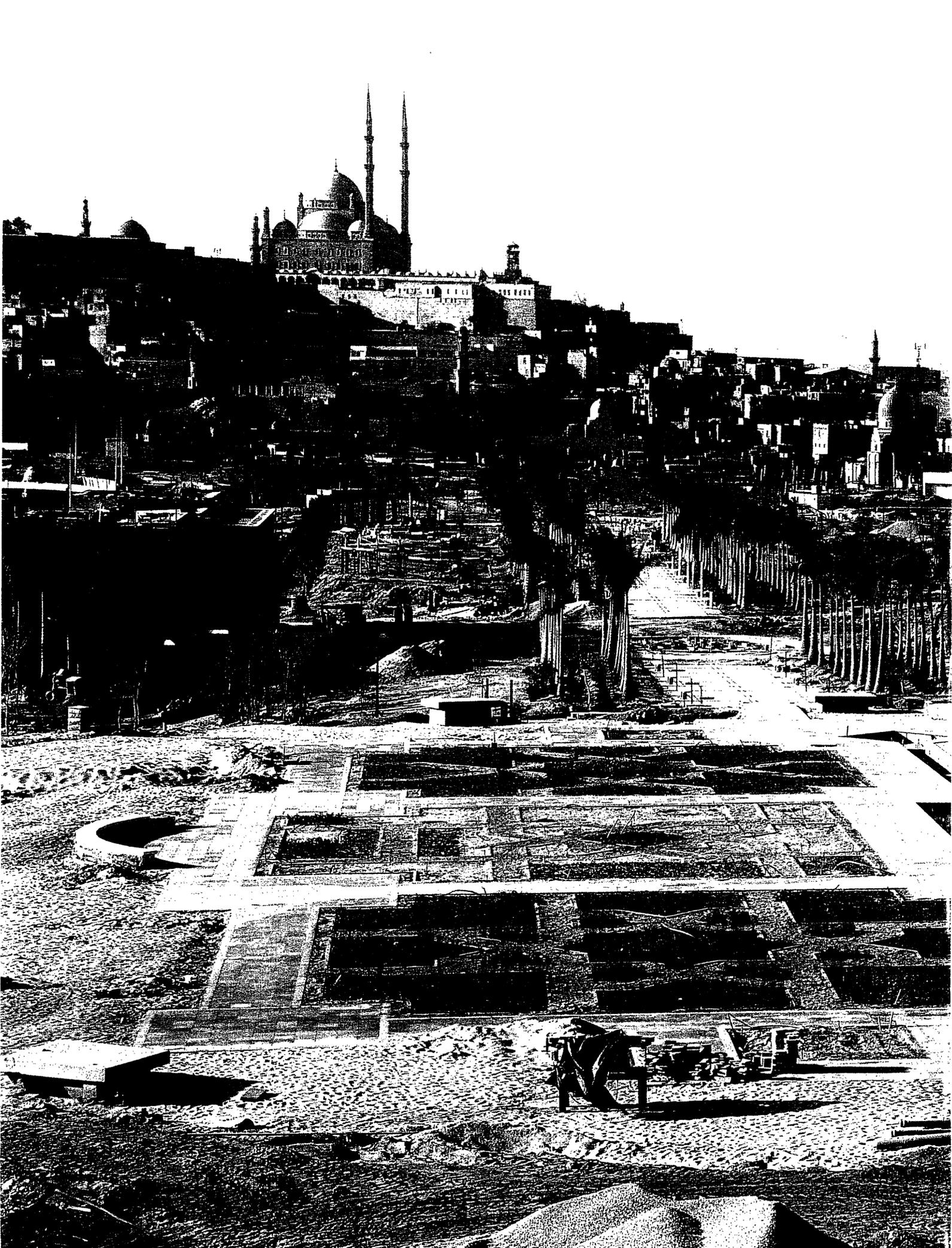
19. Master grading and consolidation of the critical western slope of the future Azhar Park descending towards the uncovered Ayyubid wall. In the background, the silhouette of the magnificent Sultan Hasan Mosque complex.

20-22. The off-site nursery uses sophisticated pump and irrigation methods to propagate plants for the park.

*Following double pages*

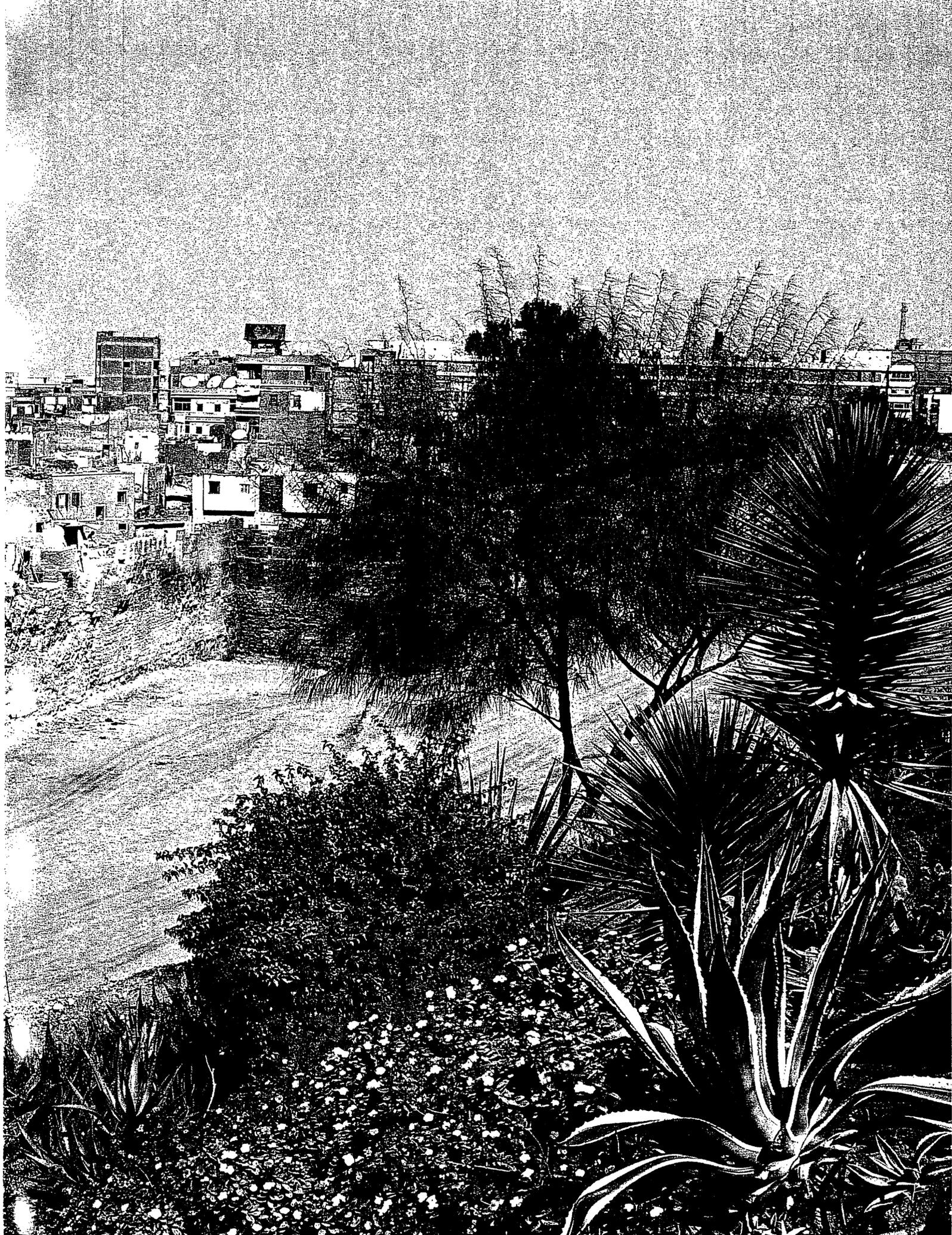
23. A view of the site showing the early work on the main spine of the park with the Citadel in the distance on the left. Plants, pavement prototypes and park fixtures were tested on site.

24. Al-Darb al-Ahmar's physical environment is in poor condition: the Ayyubid city wall and residential buildings behind it clearly emphasise the need for comprehensive physical intervention. A pilot strip of dry landscaping enhances the western slope descending towards the Ayyubid wall.

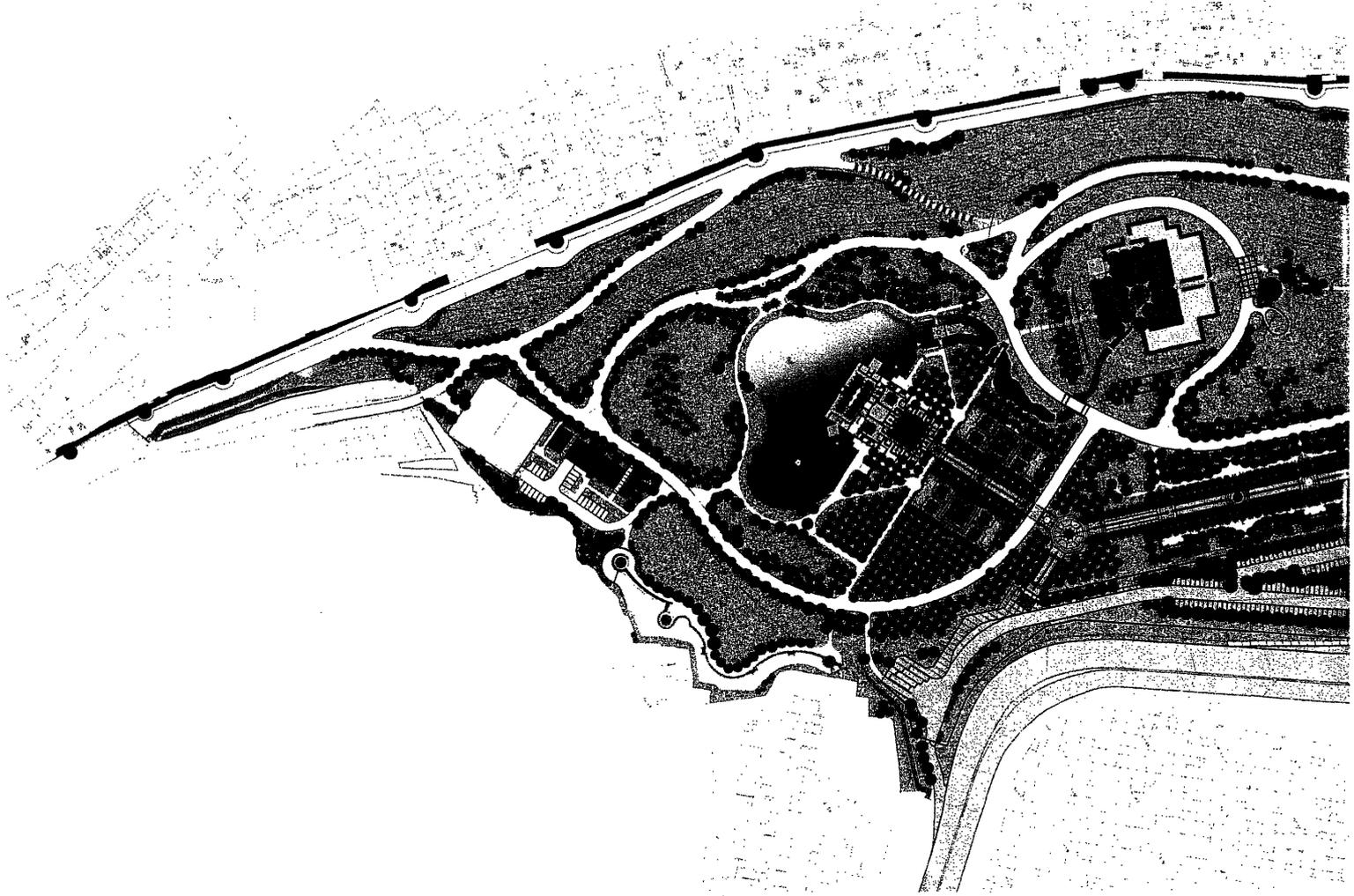




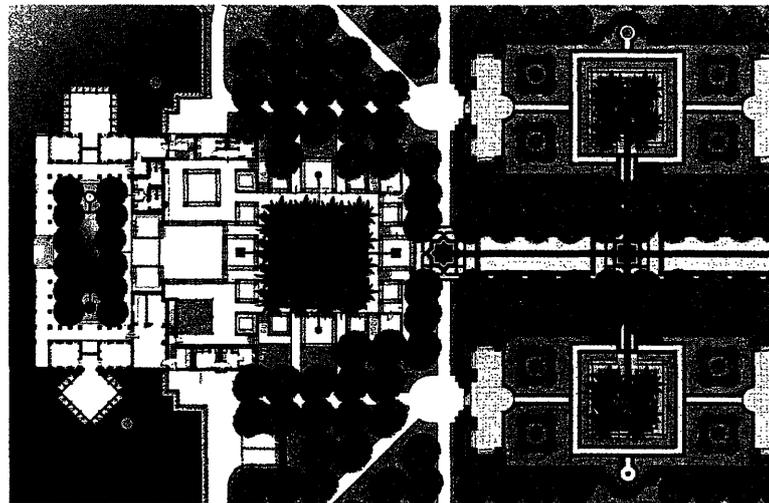




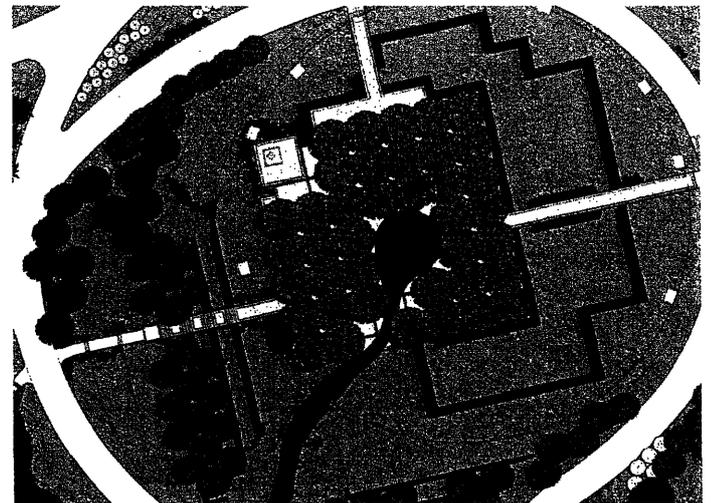
25. The master plan of Azhar Park displaying the various landscaping approaches used, each of which responds to the characteristics of the site. The 'spine' of the plan is the formal axis descending southwards from the northern hill (right) and pointing towards the Citadel. It features a sequence of formal gardens, the most elaborate of which is on the top of the central water reservoir. The spine then turns westwards into the southern lower plain of the site, which leads to the Lakeside Café, offering a spectacular view of the old city.

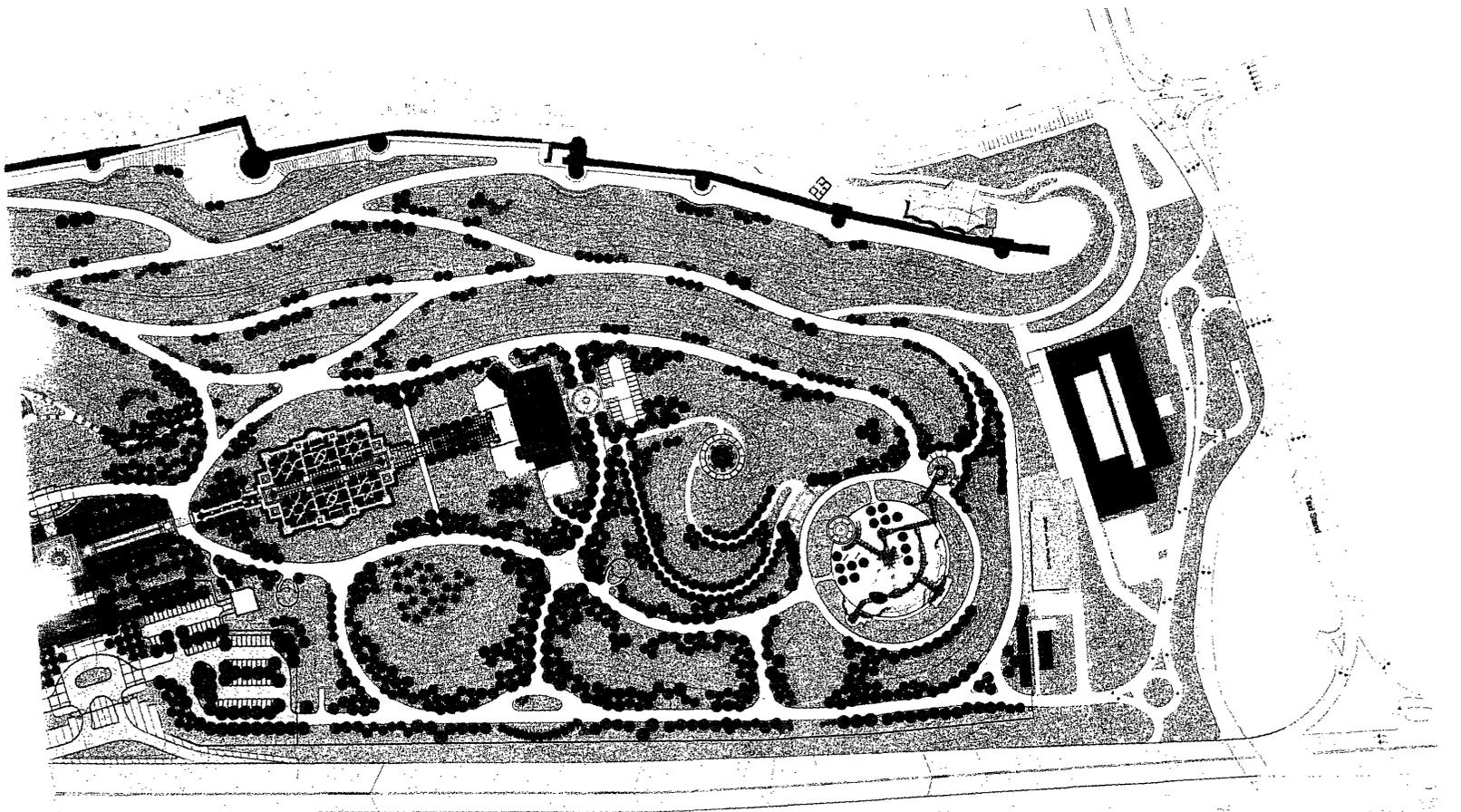


26. Lakeside Café.

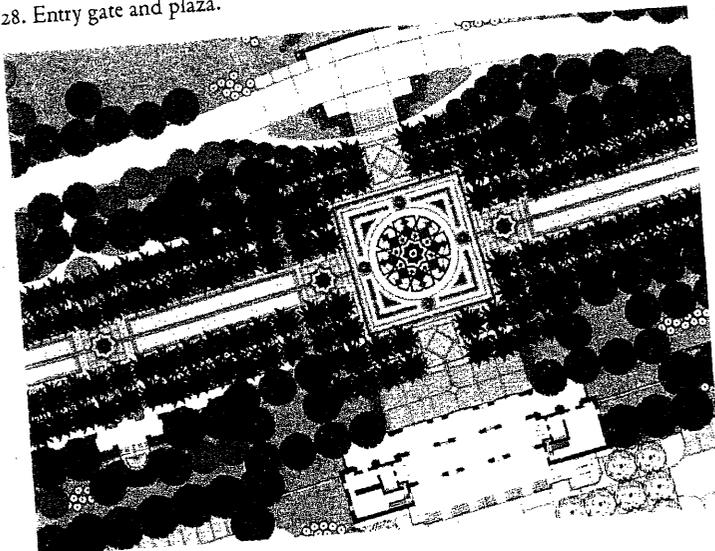


27. Southern viewing platform.

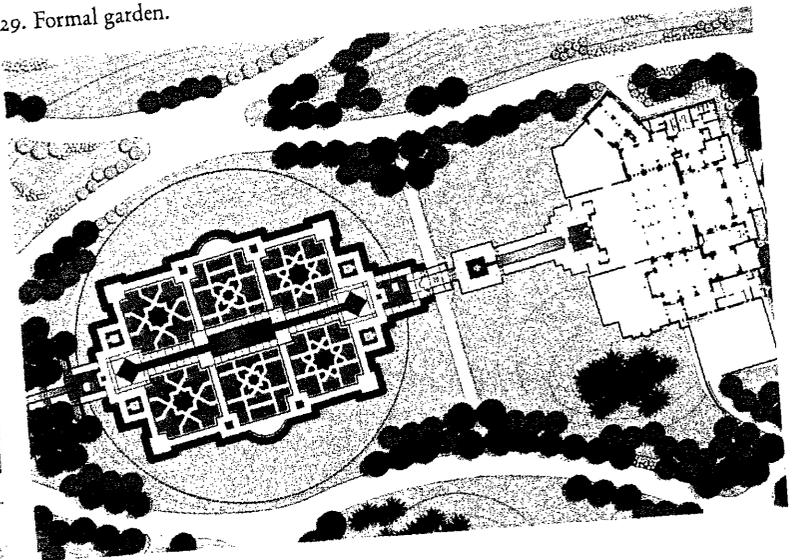




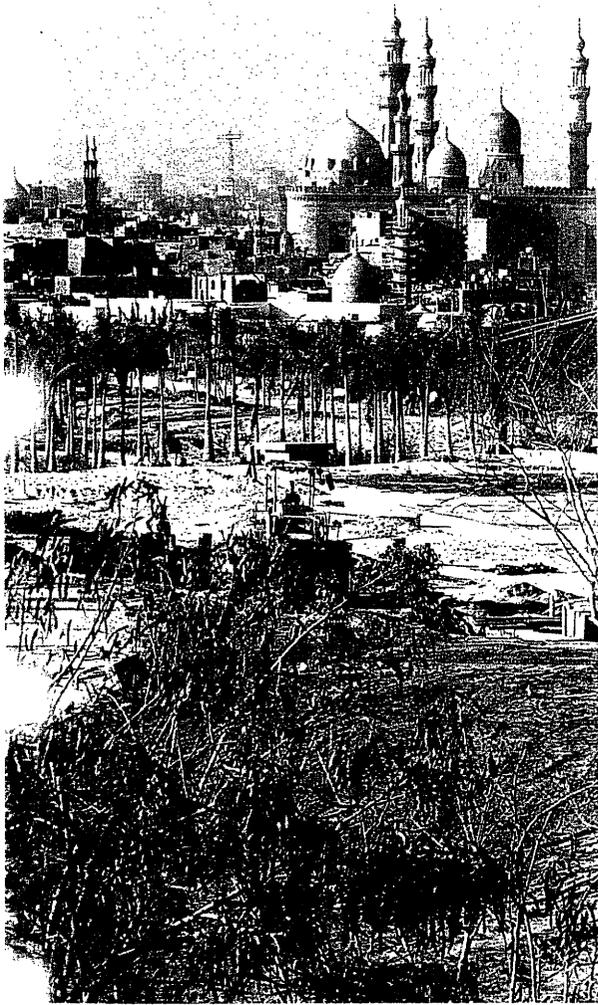
28. Entry gate and plaza.



29. Formal garden.

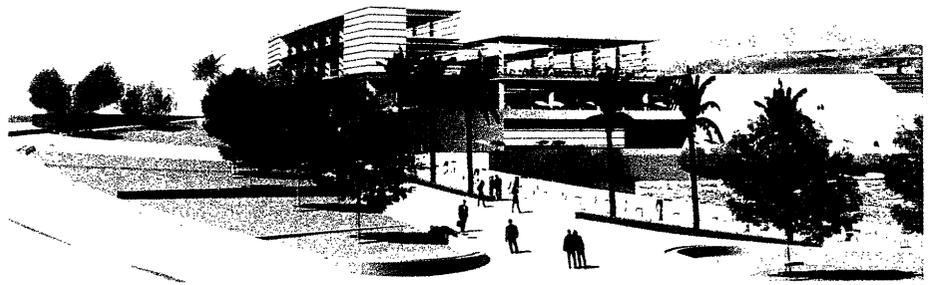






30. The eastern slopes of Azhar Park prior to completion; lush green lawns with spectacular views of the Citadel.

31. Schematic design for the 'Urban Plaza' by M. Tabanioglu, on the northern edge of the park site. This shopping complex and multi-storey car park will generate income for the maintenance of Azhar Park and serve as an extension of the commercial activities further down al-Azhar Street.

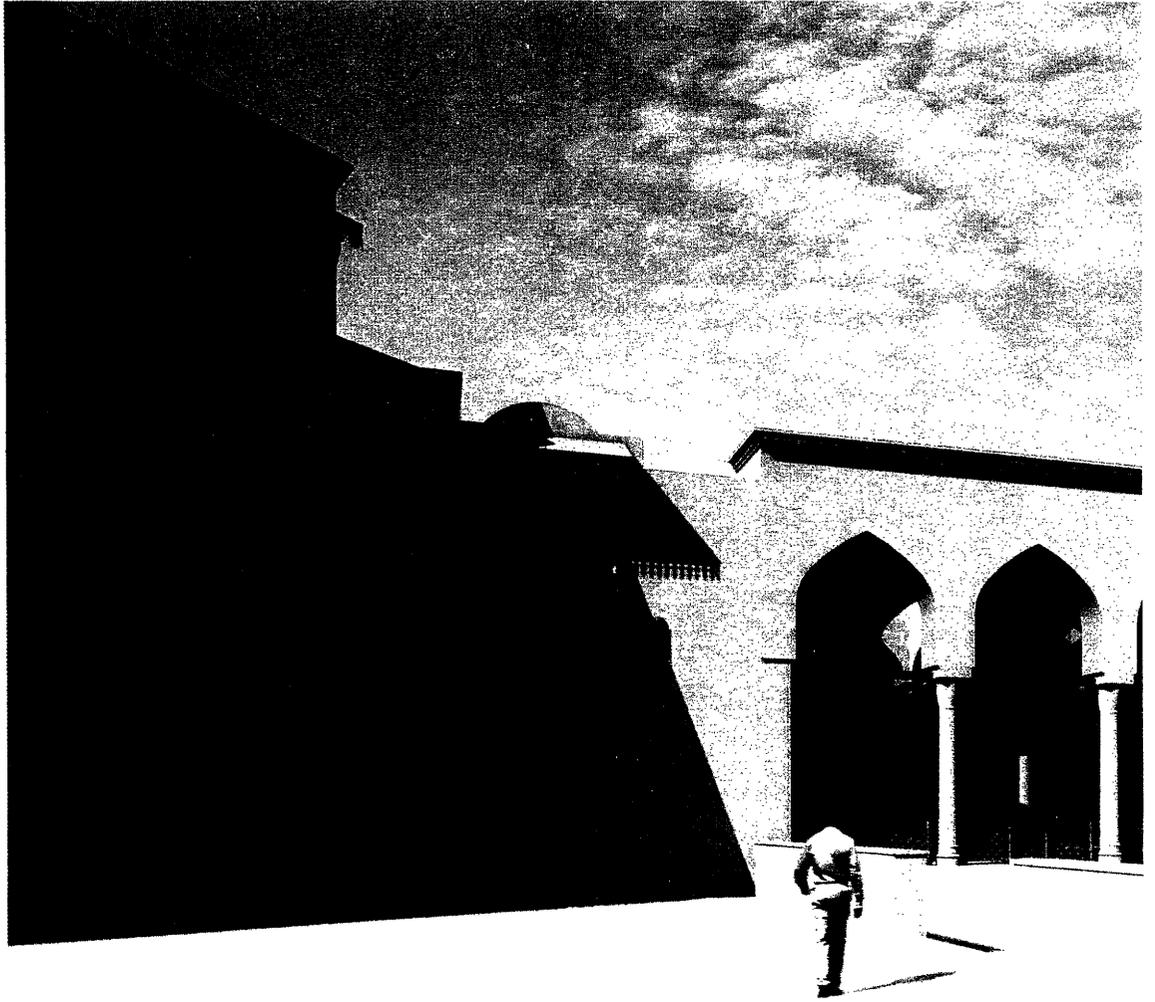


31.

The Hilltop Restaurant, designed by Rami El Dahan and Soheir Farid, is inspired by the architecture of historic Cairo.

32, 35. Computer renderings of the Hilltop Restaurant. The restaurant portico and viewing terrace, *takhtaboush*; two spaces that offer panoramic views of Azhar Park and historic Cairo, and right, the restaurant forecourt.

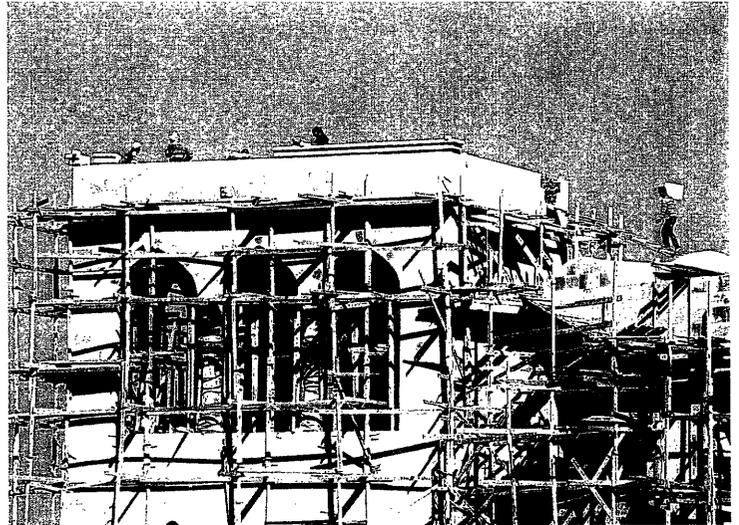
33, 34. Two pictures of the Hilltop Restaurant nearing completion.



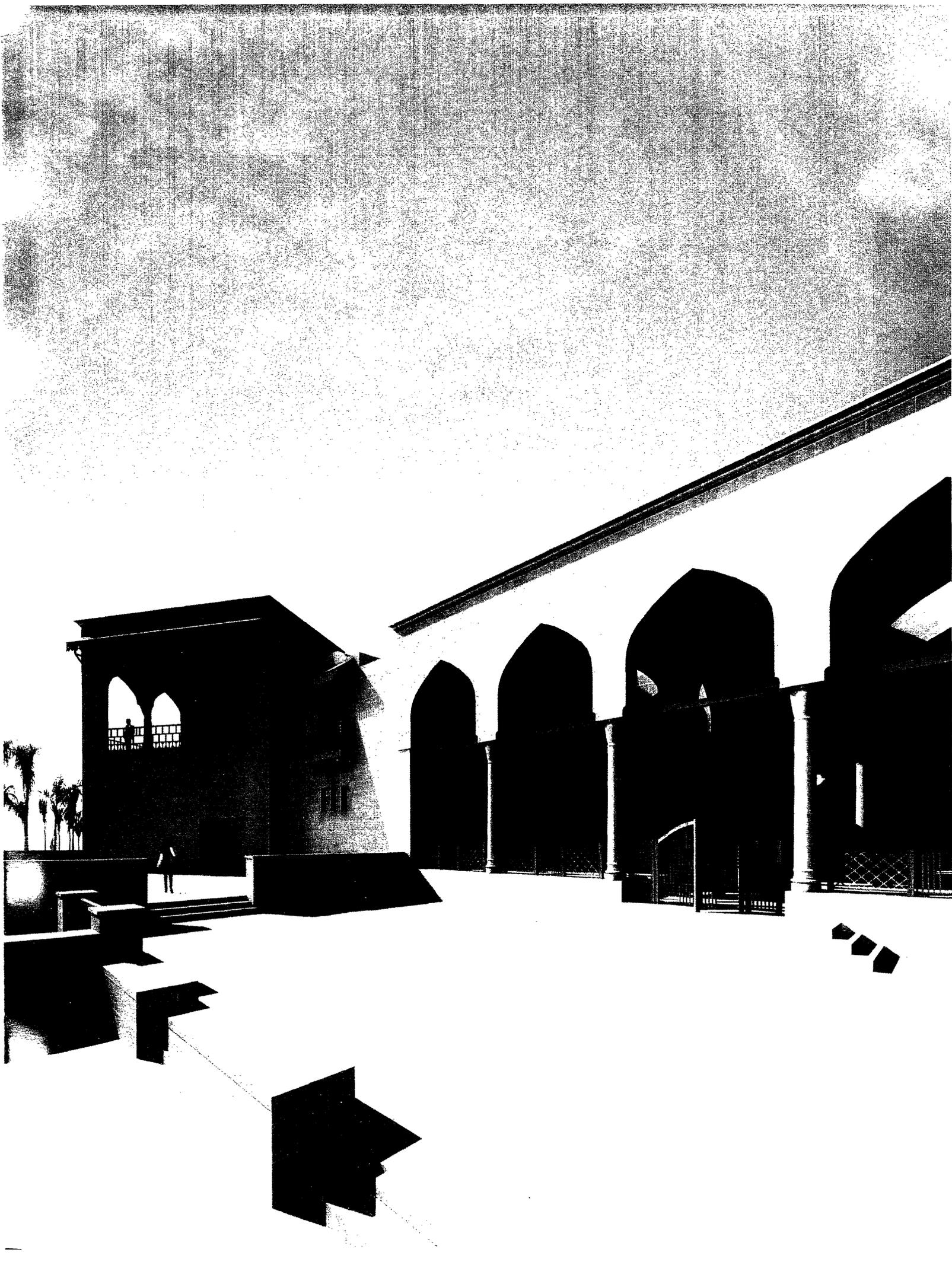
32.



33.



34.



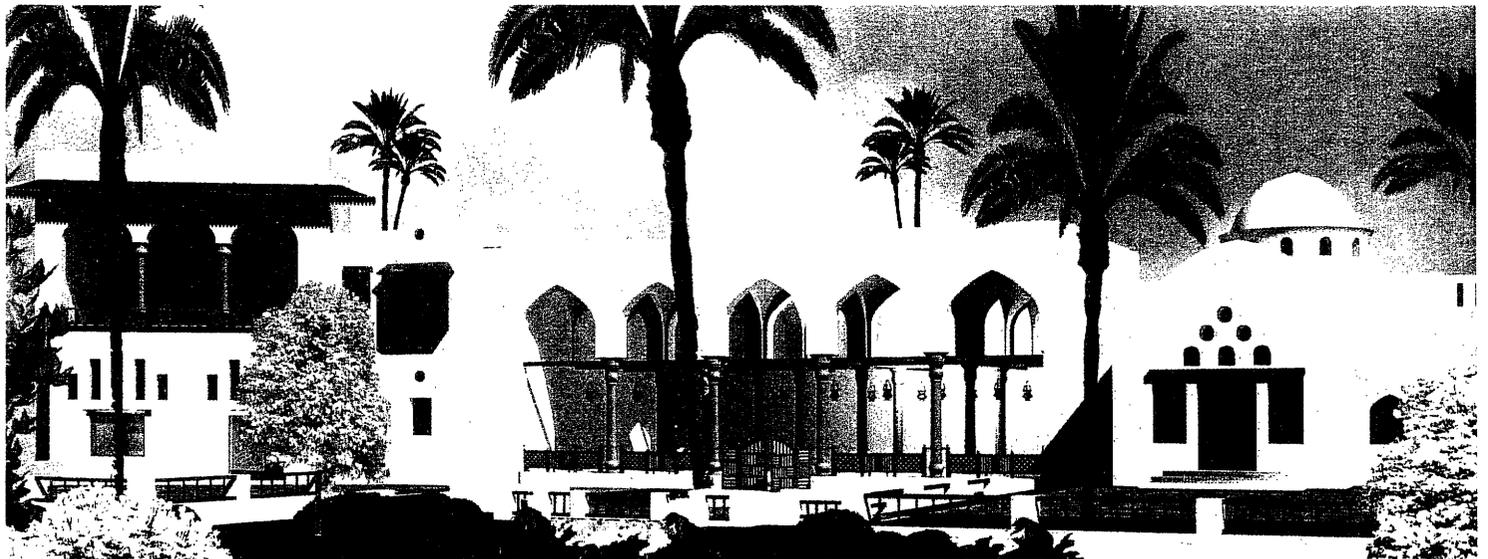




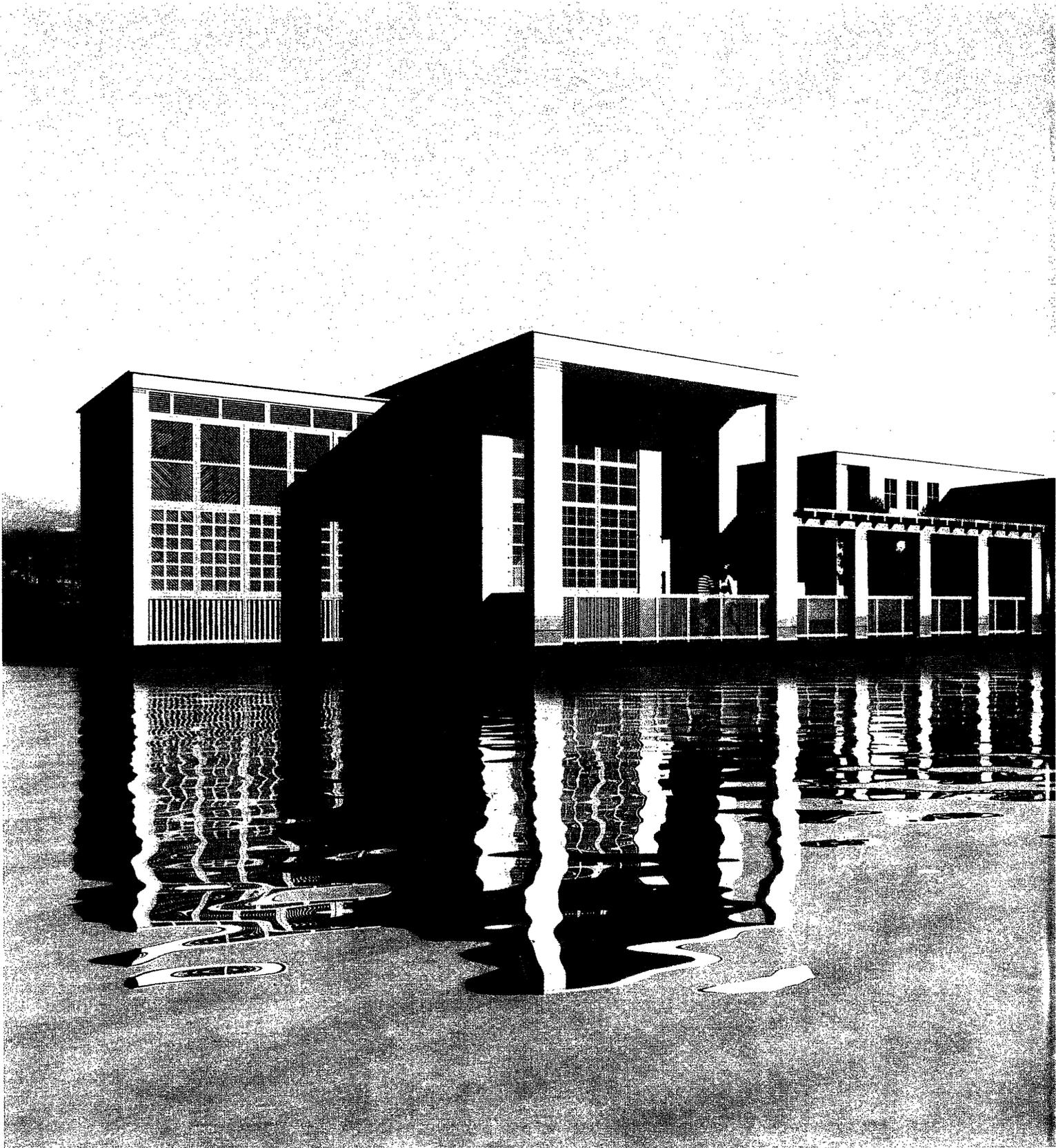
36, 37. Computer renderings of the Hilltop Restaurant forecourt.

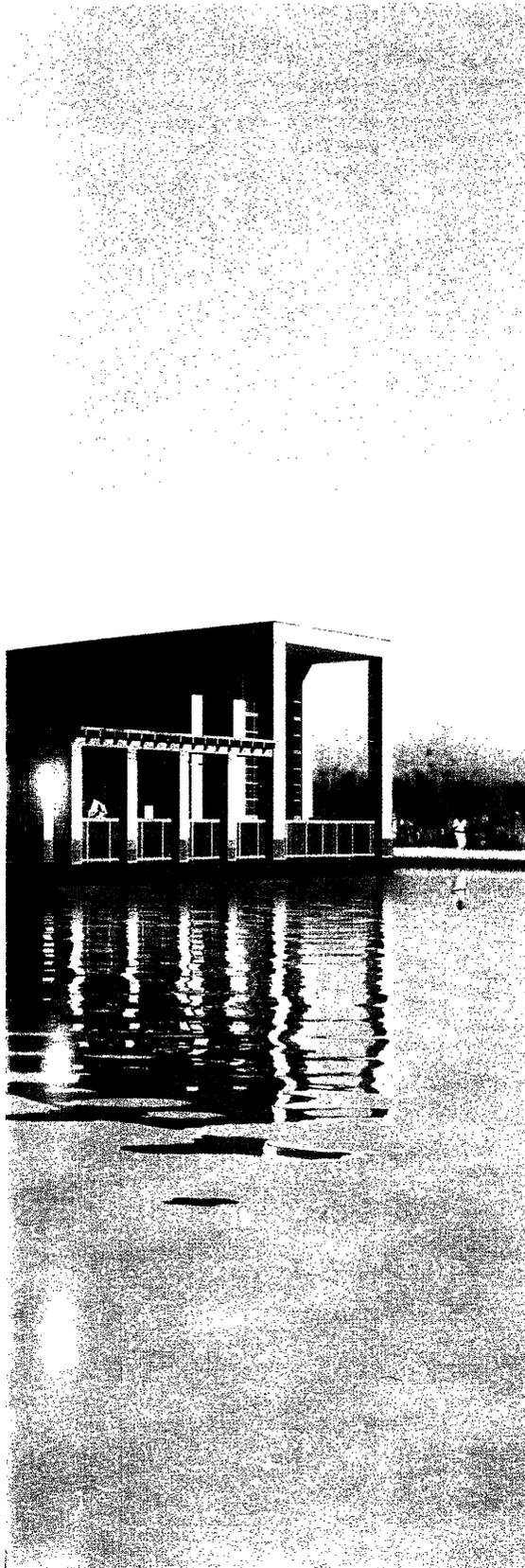
38. Rendering of the restaurant's southern façade by Rami El Dahan and Soheir Farid.

37.



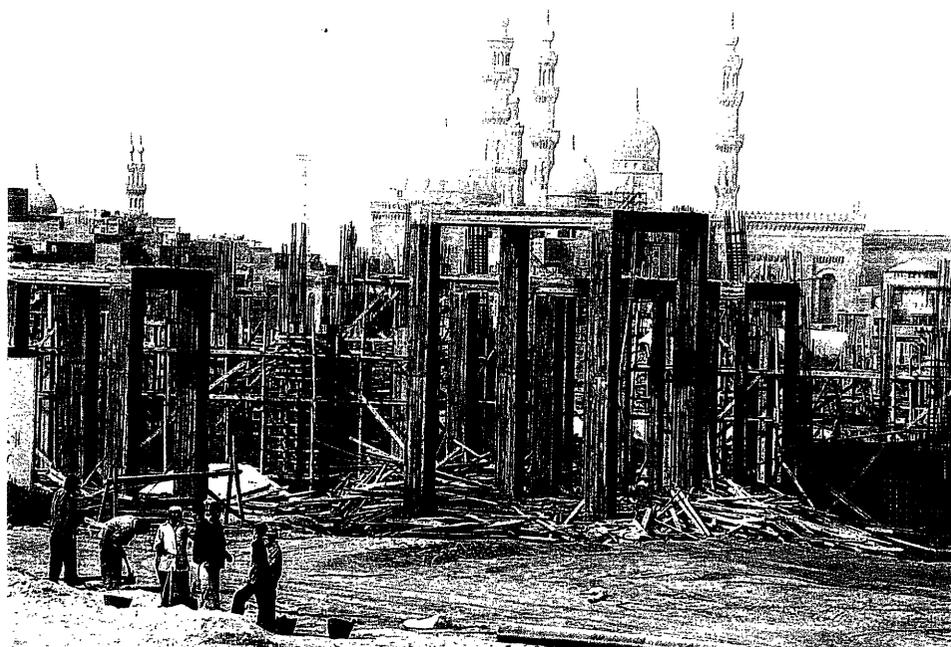
38.





39. Computer rendering of the Lakeside Café, designed by Serge Santelli as a modern-day interpretation of the Fatimid *manzara* (belvedere). The lake seen here serves as a water reservoir for the use of the park.

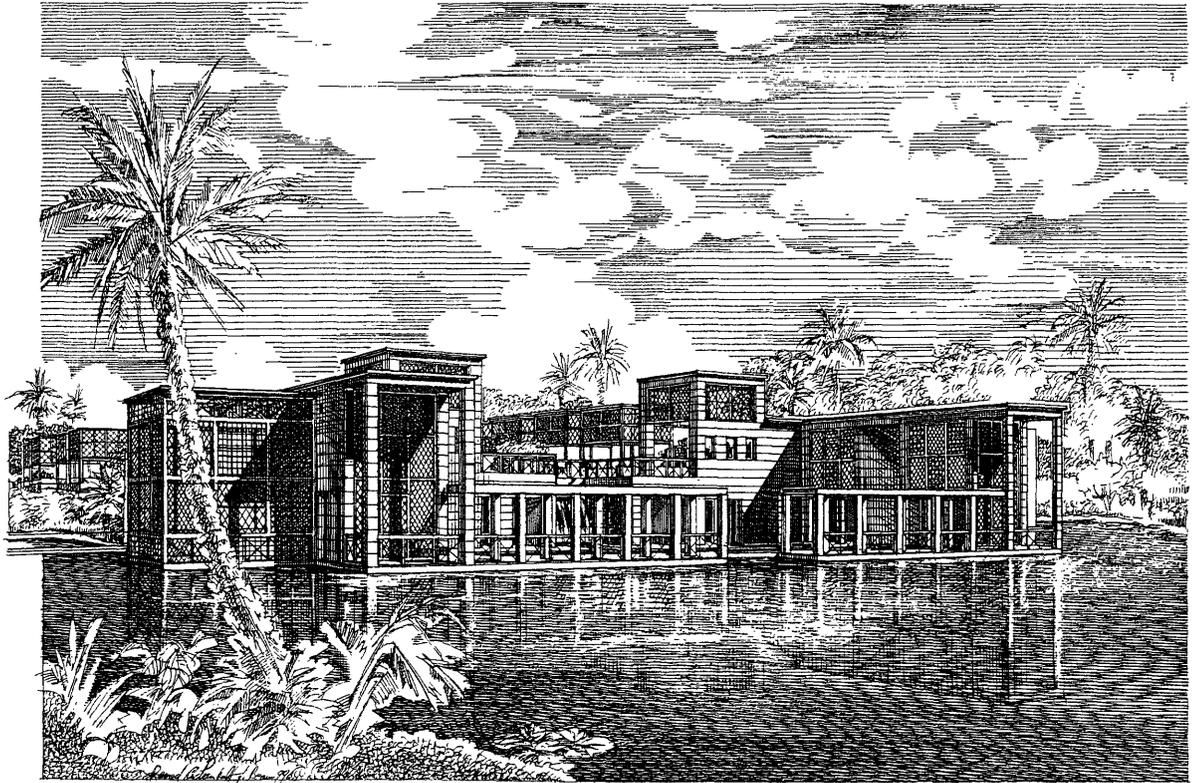
40. Construction of the Lakeside Café with the domes and minarets of historic Cairo in the background.



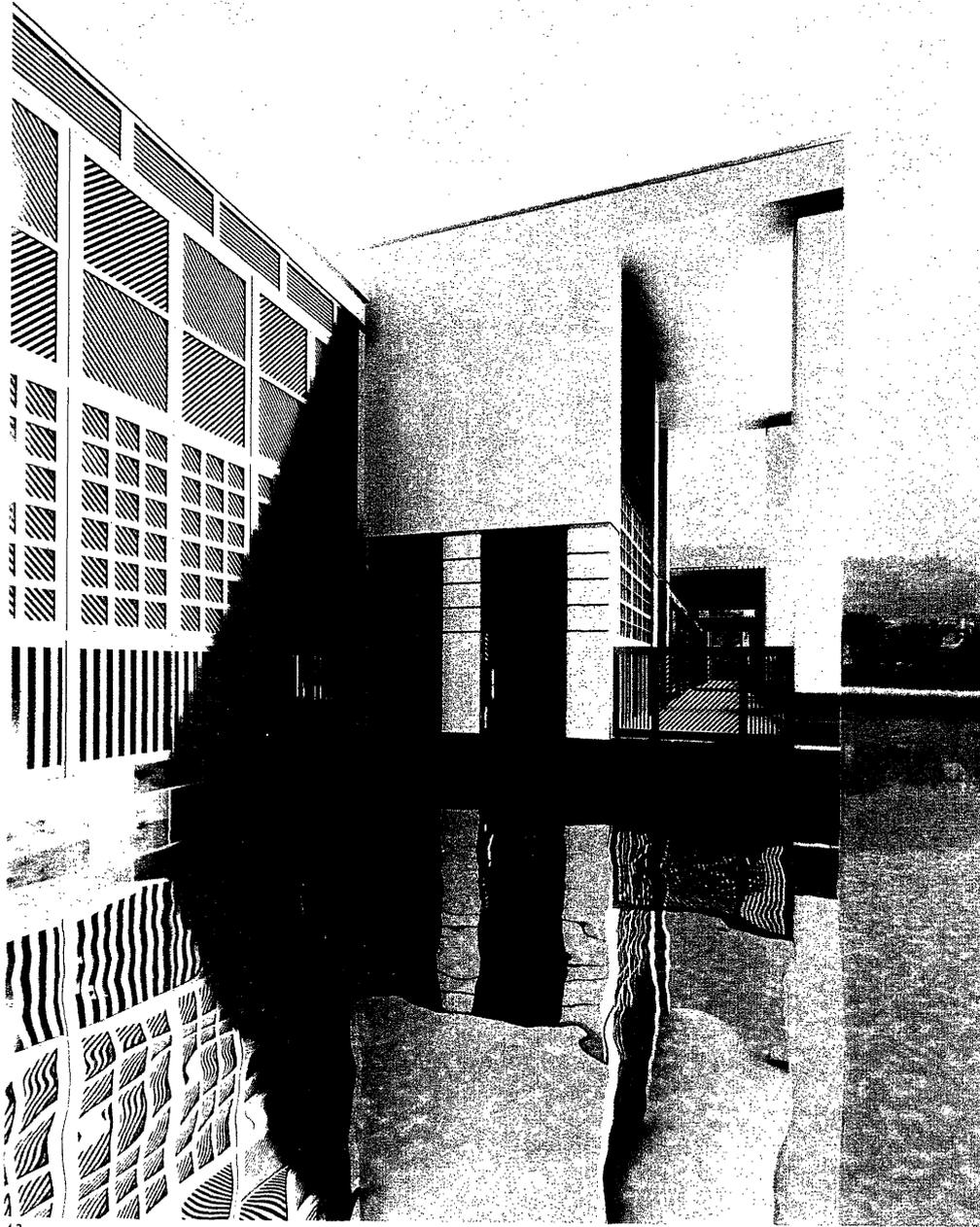
40.



41.



42.



43.

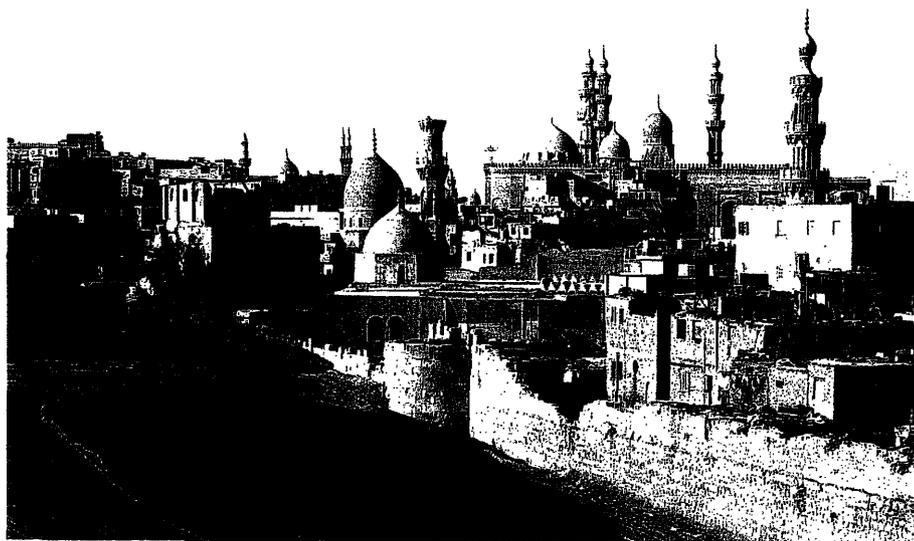
41, 43. Night and day  
computer renderings  
of the Lakeside Café.

42. Perspective of the Café,  
as seen from the lake,  
rendered by Serge Santelli.





44, 45. Two images taken along the western slope of the park looking down towards the Ayyubid wall from within the site.



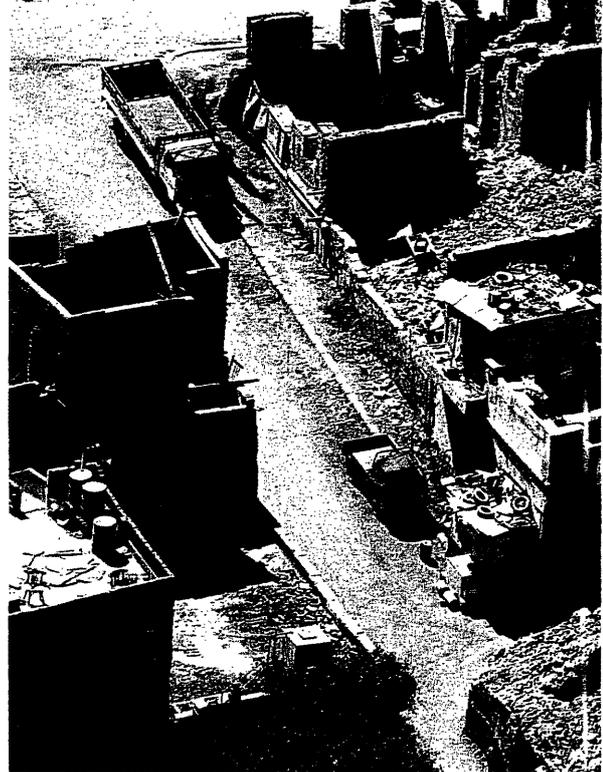
45-



46.



47.



48.

46. The most prominent tower of the Ayyubid wall, Burg al-Mahruq, as it was in 1994, almost totally buried by debris.

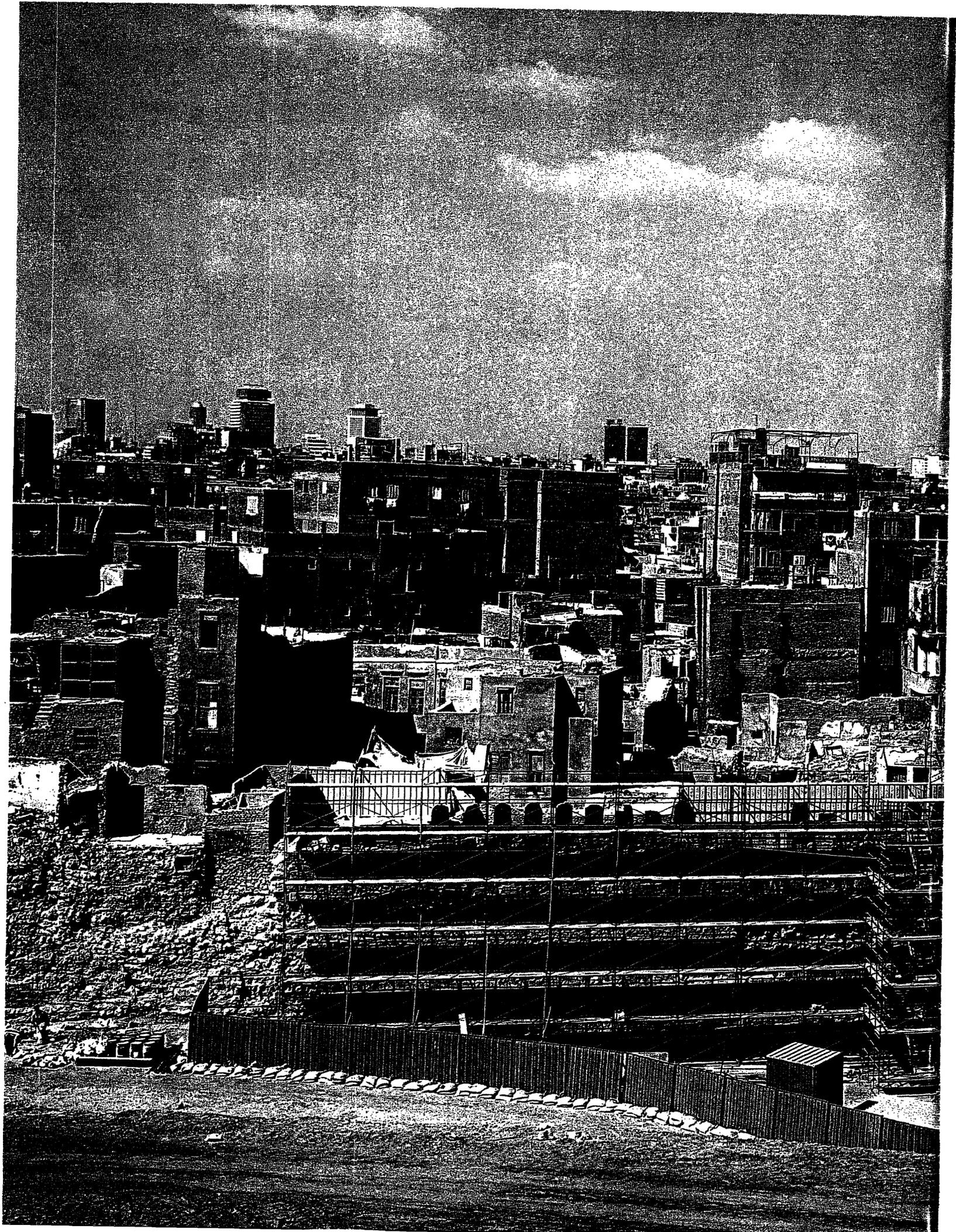
47. Centuries of dumping Cairo's waste outside the eastern city wall led to the burial of the structure under piles of rubble. The wall in 1994, prior to being cleared from rubbish.

48. Aerial view of Burg al-Mahruq and the adjacent urban fabric, after the former was cleared from debris. The road to the left of the tower was constructed on top of the ramparts of the Ayyubid wall and has now been removed, exposing a section of the wall that had been buried for centuries.

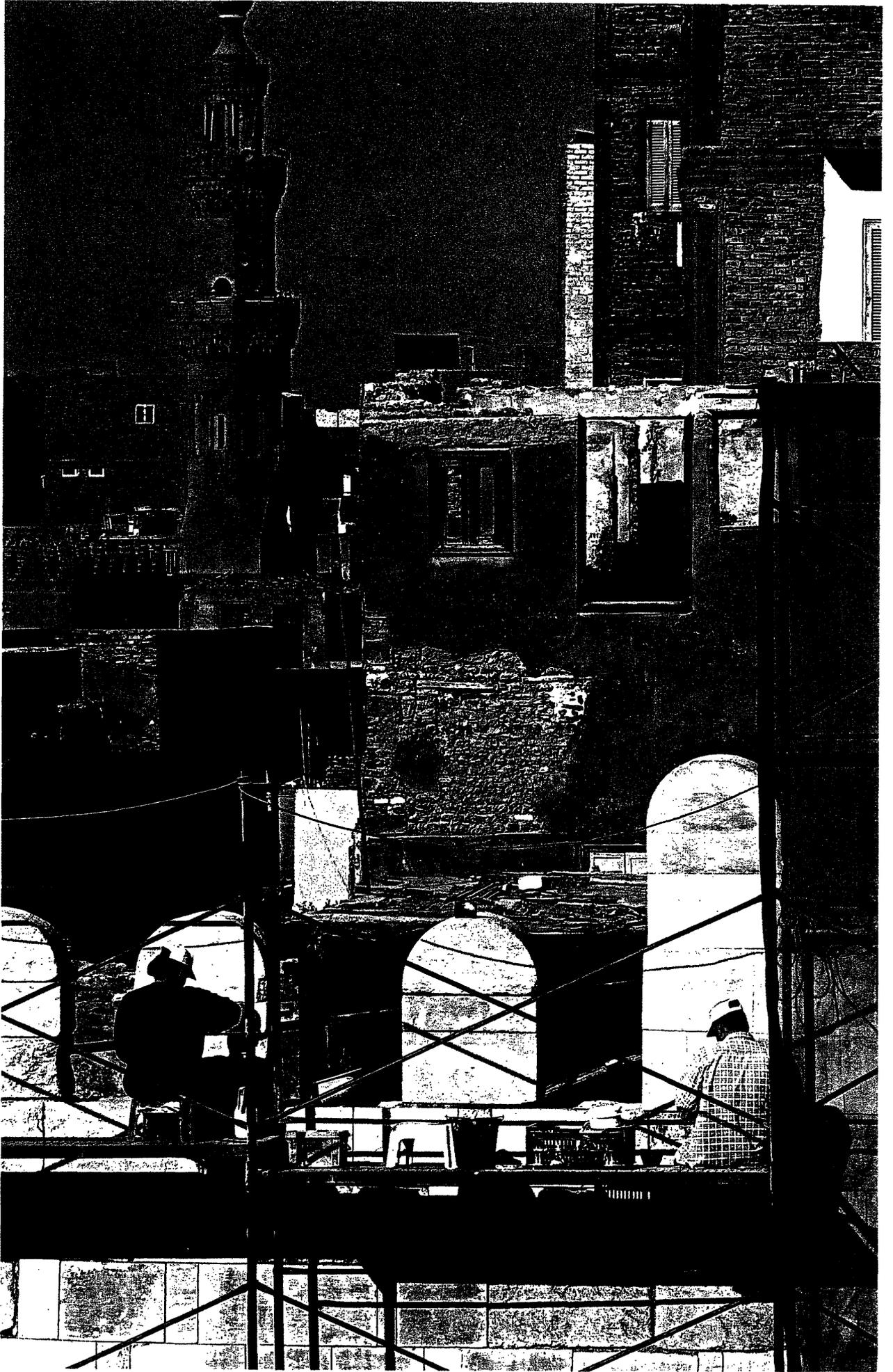


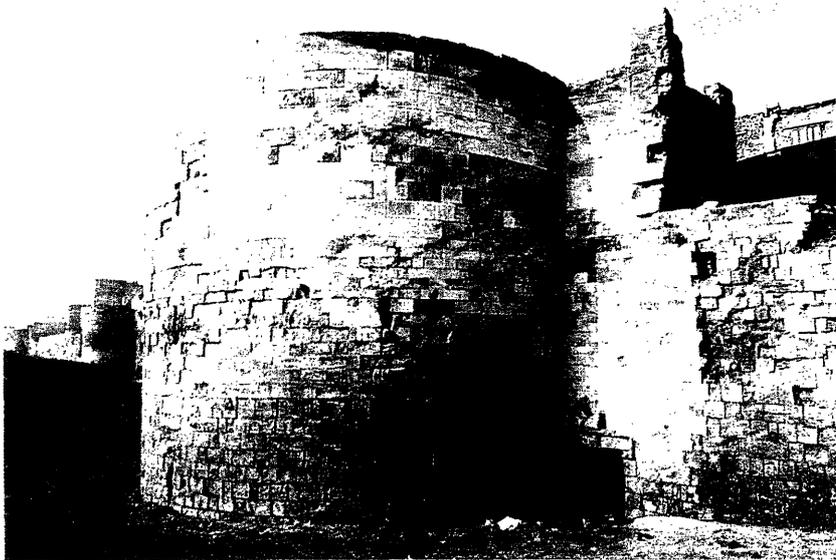
*Following pages*

49. Some sections of the Ayyubid wall, such as this one to the south of al-Mahruq Tower, required extensive conservation work. The extension of houses abutting the wall in the last century led to the loss of some of the wall's rubble core and even its facing stone in parts.









51.



50. Conservation treatment of the Ayyubid wall: repointing the mortar of the crenellations; the Darb al-Ahmar district in the background.

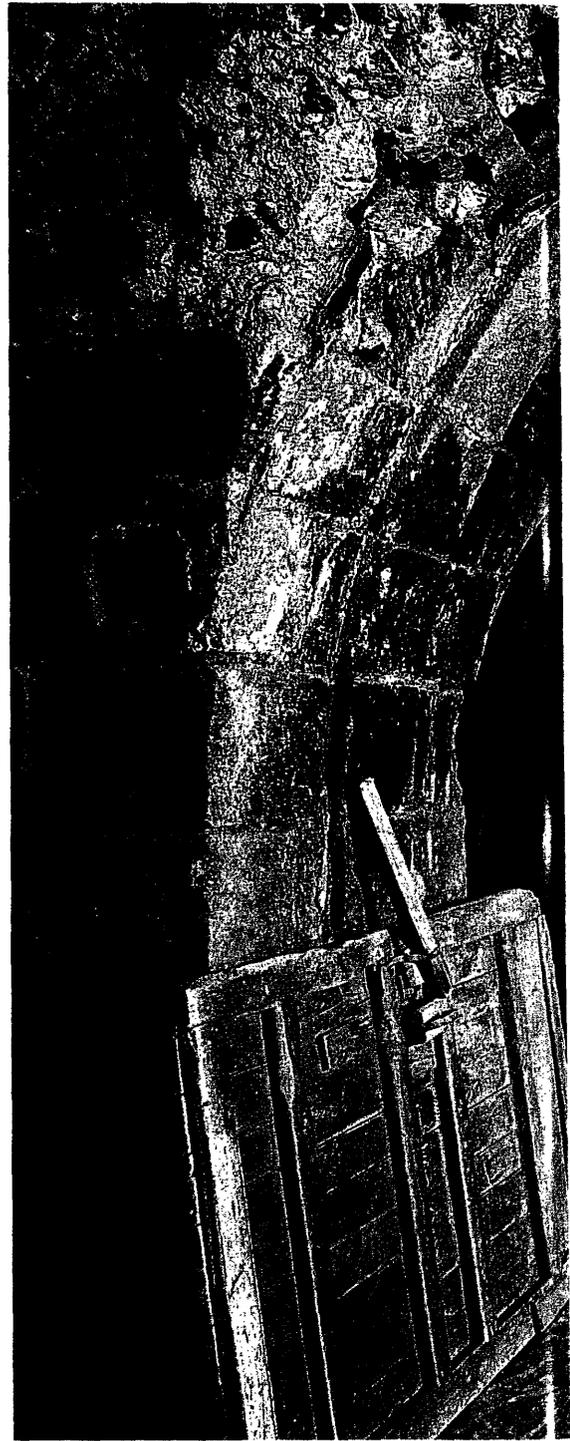
51. Al-Mahruq Tower, a monumental three-storey circular tower constructed at what was probably the north-eastern corner of the Fatimid city, marks the junction between the two distinct phases of the wall's construction.

52. Using the JOS system to clean the original facing stone of the eastern Ayyubid city wall.

52.



53.



54.



53. Archaeological excavations near al-Mahruq Tower.

54. The ground-storey vaults of the Alin Aq Palace, a building constructed alongside the Ayyubid wall in the early 14th century, now being restored.



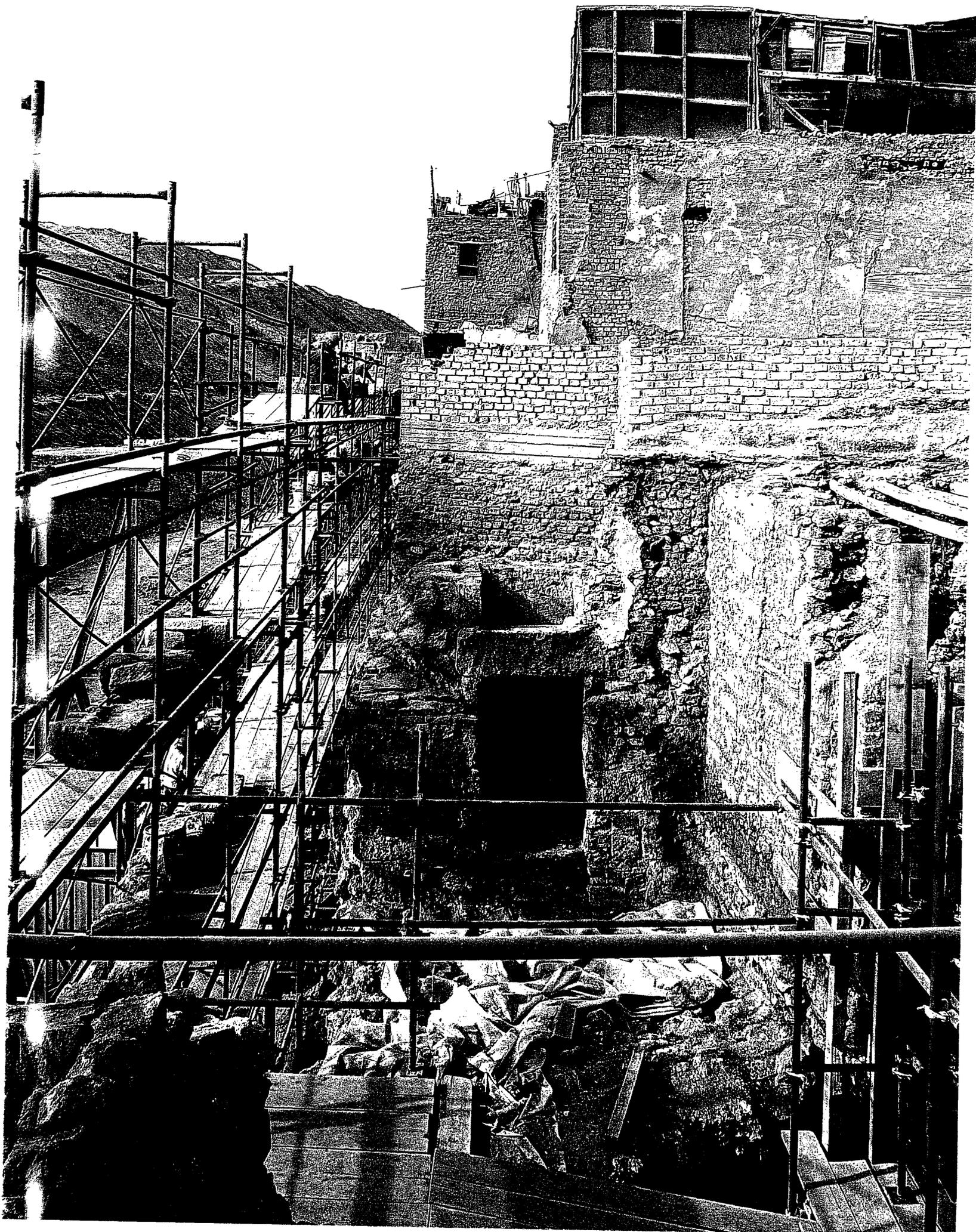
55.

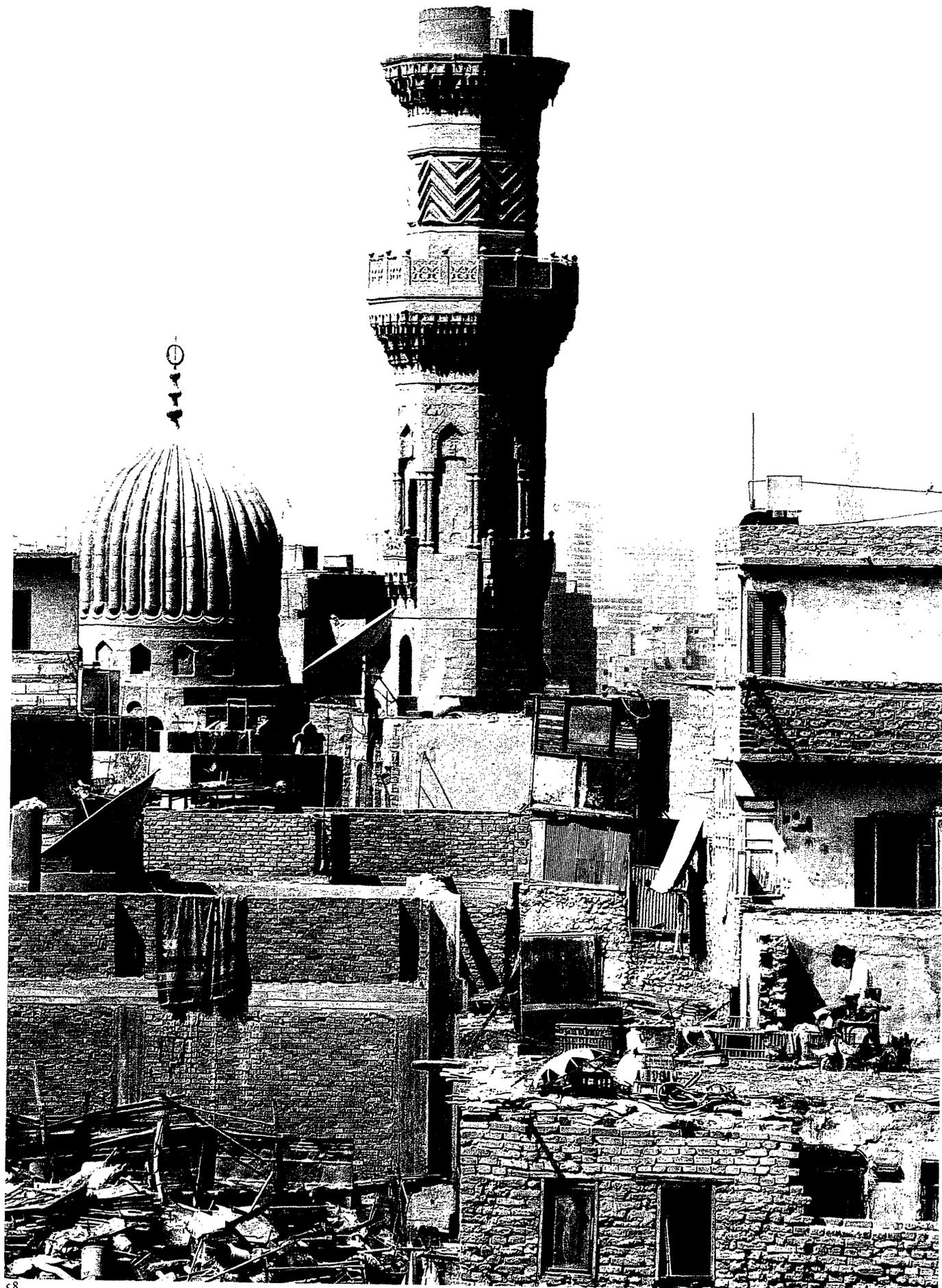
55, 56. Archaeological work revealed the remains of an Ottoman residential structure constructed on top of one of the towers of the Ayyubid wall.

57. Urban expansion in the last century led to the destruction of some sections of the Ayyubid wall to accommodate residential buildings. A conservation policy was developed that would reinstate the integrity of the wall while retaining all sections of the adjacent buildings that did not encroach on the wall itself.



56.







59.



58. Rooftop view of the Aslam neighbourhood in al-Darb al-Ahmar illustrating the dense existing housing fabric, much of which is in poor condition and in need of upgrading.

59. Al-Darb al-Ahmar is located between the famous al-Azhar Mosque (left) and the hills of Azhar Park, visible in the background. Direct pedestrian links exist between the park and the historic spine of Fatimid Cairo, with its many bazaars and old neighbourhoods.

60. Al-Darb al-Ahmar boasts thriving workshops, many of which produce traditional handmade items, such as these lanterns.



61.

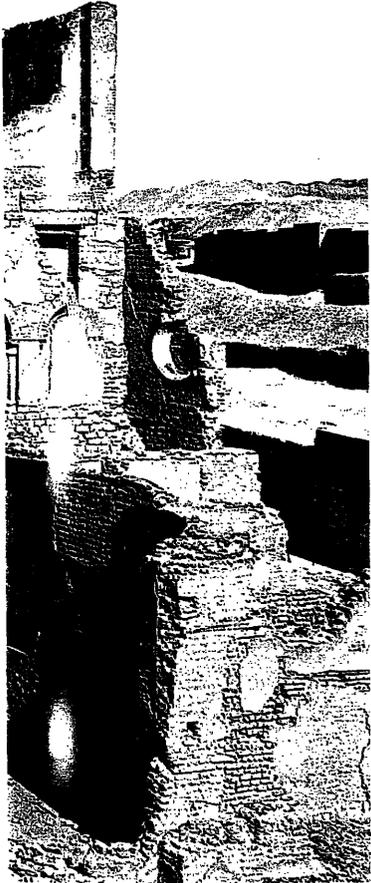
61. The historic character of al-Darb al-Ahmar is best represented in areas where a range of religious and domestic historic buildings still exist alongside each other, such as here, around the mosque of Khayrbek.

62. Restoration work on the minaret of Khayrbek.

63. Reconstructing the top of the minaret of Umm al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque, a process requiring a high level of skill, especially in stonemasonry.

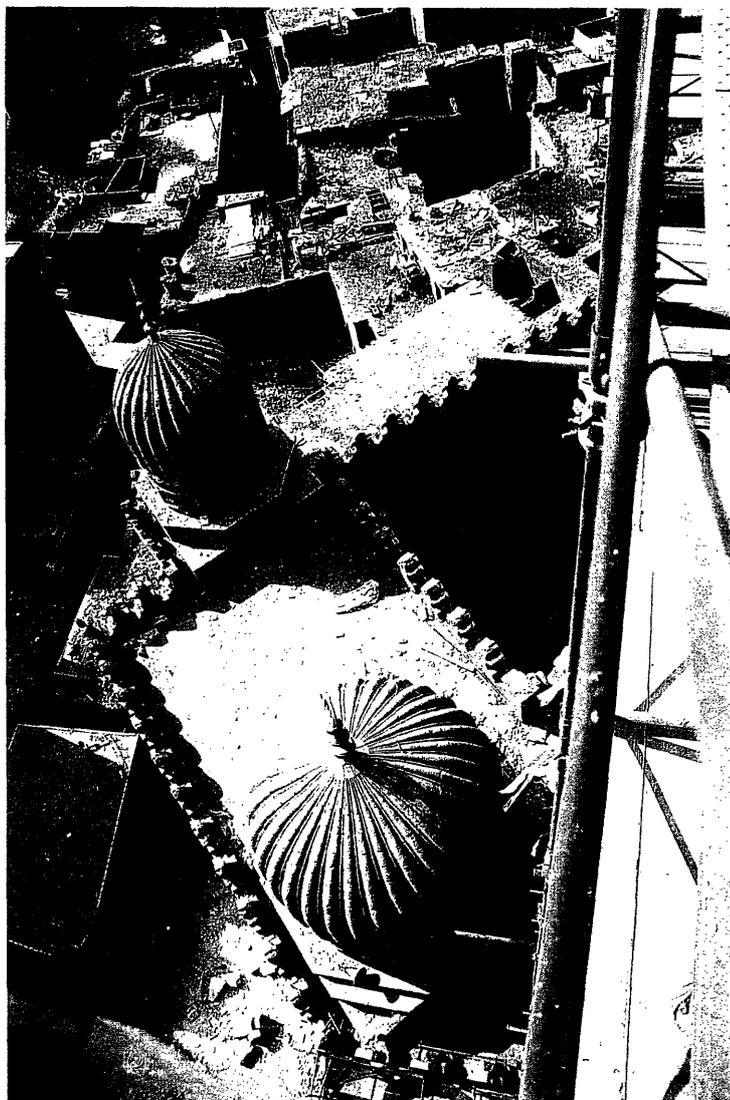


62.





64.

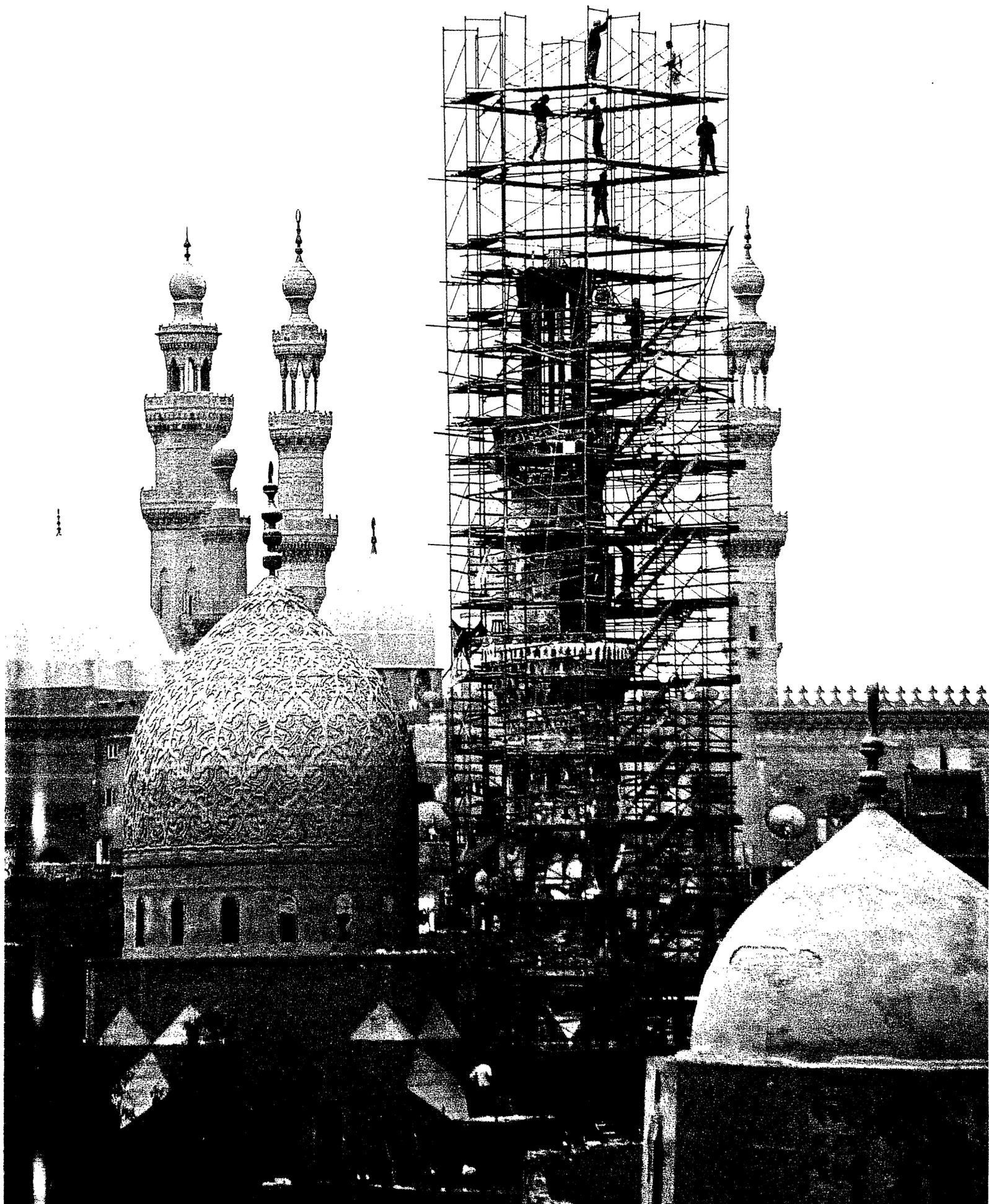


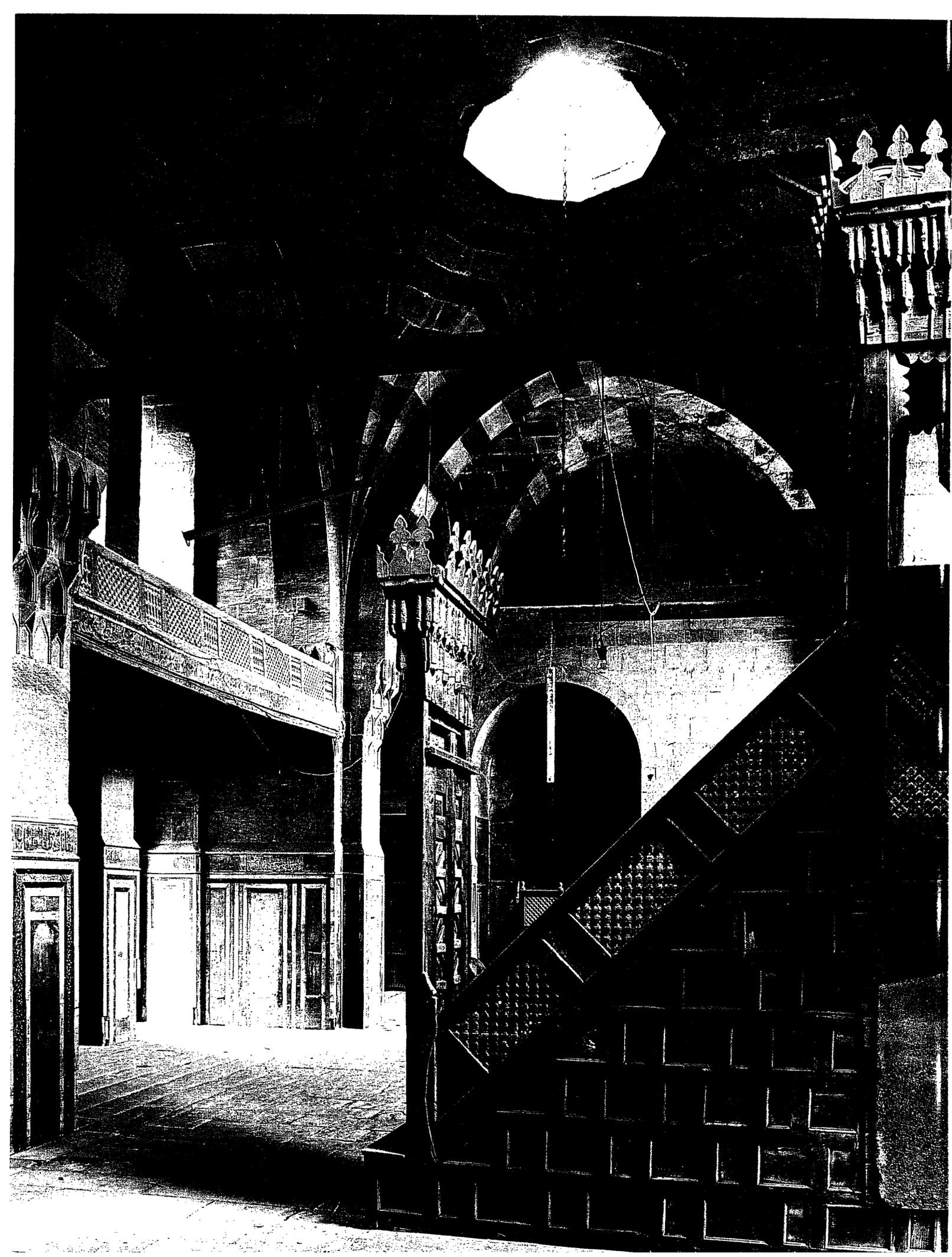
65.

64. The reconstruction of the Umm al-Sultan Shaaban minaret also involved the restoration of damaged sections of the existing portion of the structure – such as the stalactite cornice – a characteristic feature of Mamluk minarets.

65. The mosque of Umm al-Sultan Shaaban, as seen from the minaret. The ribbed stone domes and open courtyard are typical of 14th-century Cairene religious architecture.

66. The mosque of Khayrbek, in the course of the reconstruction of its minaret. As with any major historic metropolis, Cairo is renowned for the sheer number of monumental historic buildings. In the background are the mosques of Sultan Hasan and al-Rifa'i (left and right, respectively).







68.

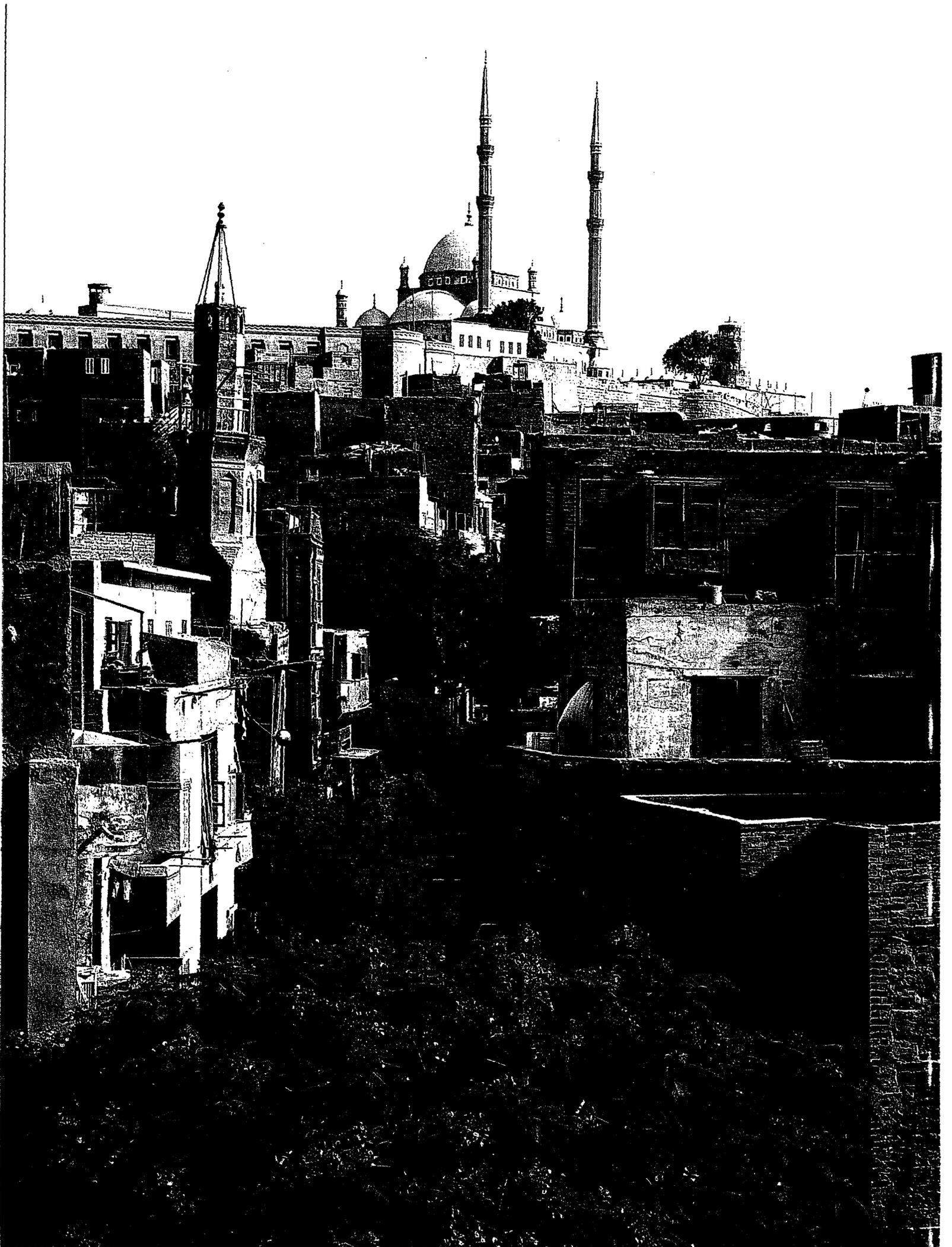


69.

67. The interior of Khayrbek Mosque. The Cairene building tradition used stone extensively. By the 16th century, when this mosque was built, the use of sophisticated stone vaulting was common.

68. Historic Cairo's skyline is punctuated by countless domes and minarets: the reconstruction of the Khayrbek minaret as seen within the larger context of preserving the cityscape of the historic metropolis.

69. Conservation work involved the training of stonemasons to work on historic buildings, a skill much needed in Cairo today.





70. The Citadel, with its Muhammad Ali Mosque, forms the termination point for historic al-Darb al-Ahmar Street, the main spine of the neighbourhood.

71. Participatory discussions with shopkeepers in front of a local vegetable market model, an area under consideration for future improvement.

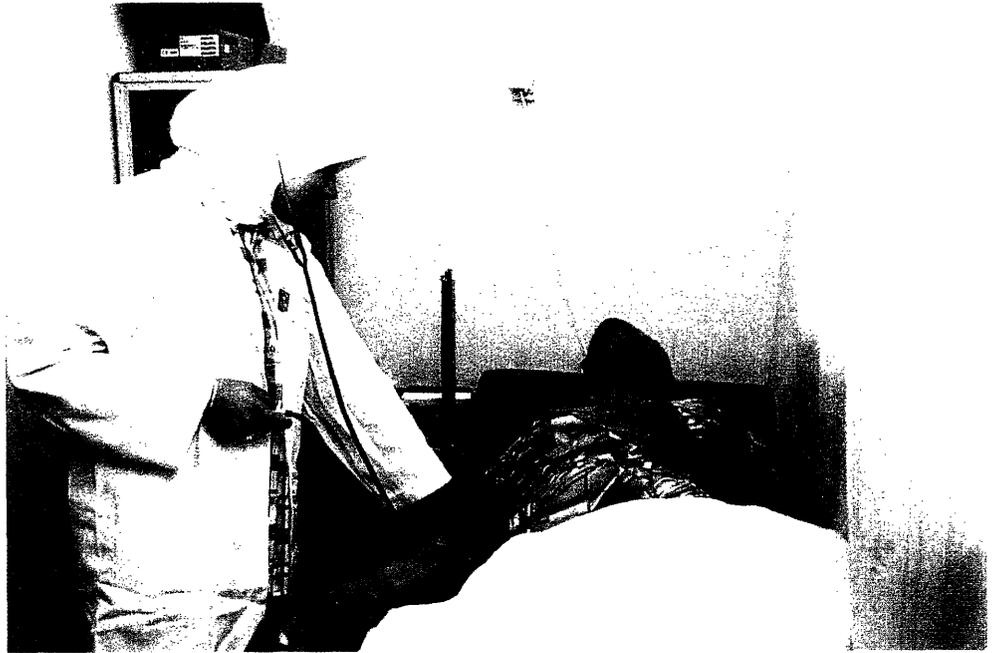
72. One of the events in the programme 'Women Working Together', aimed at offering women a forum for discussion of shared gender issues.



72.

73. The Family Health Development Centre provides professional clinical care and referral services for local residents at an affordable value.

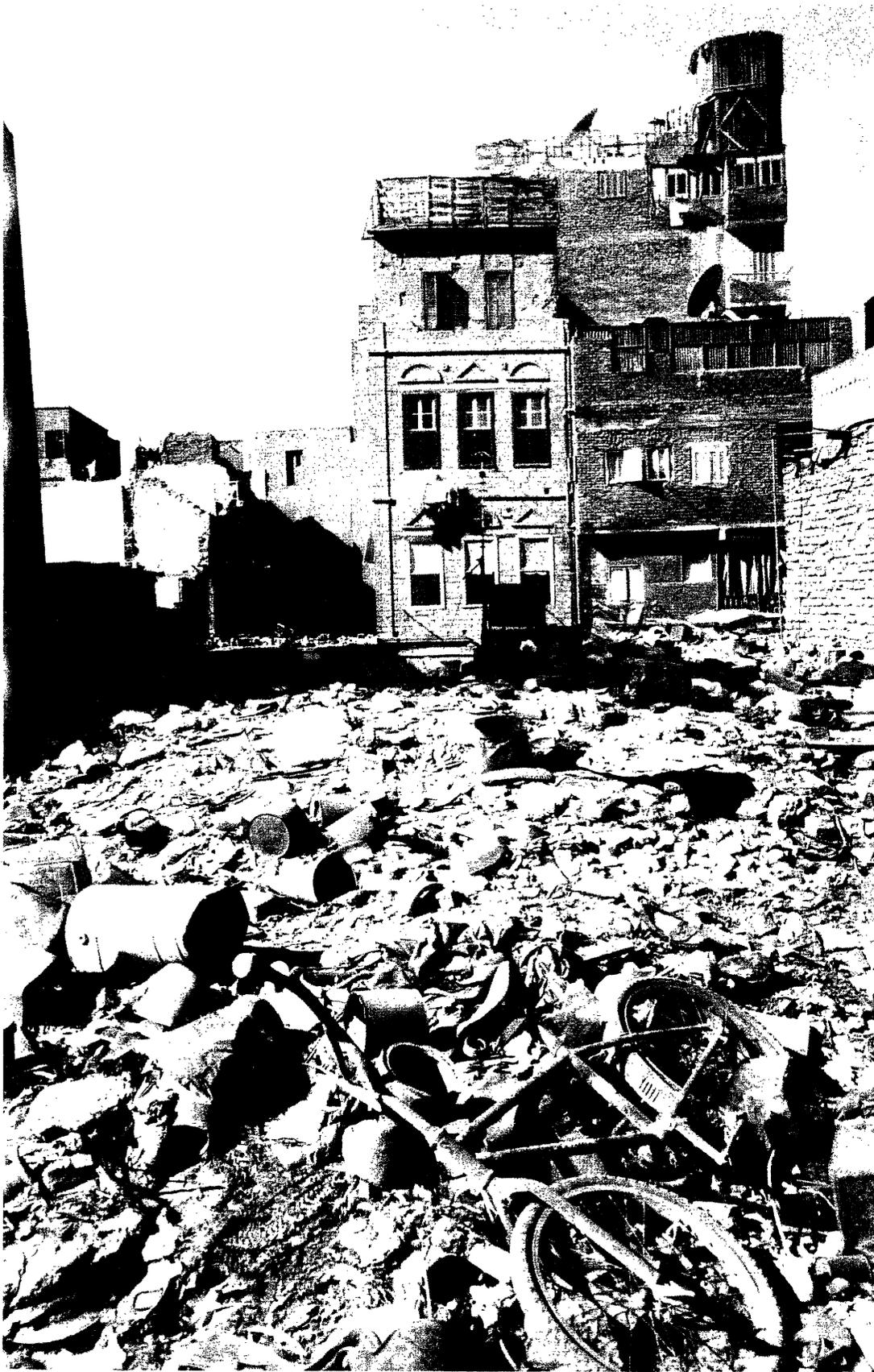
74. Asaad Alley, as seen prior to rehabilitation, exemplifies modern immigration patterns from the countryside, where rural-oriented residents have imposed a new set of cultural values on the urban fabric (see also plate 88).



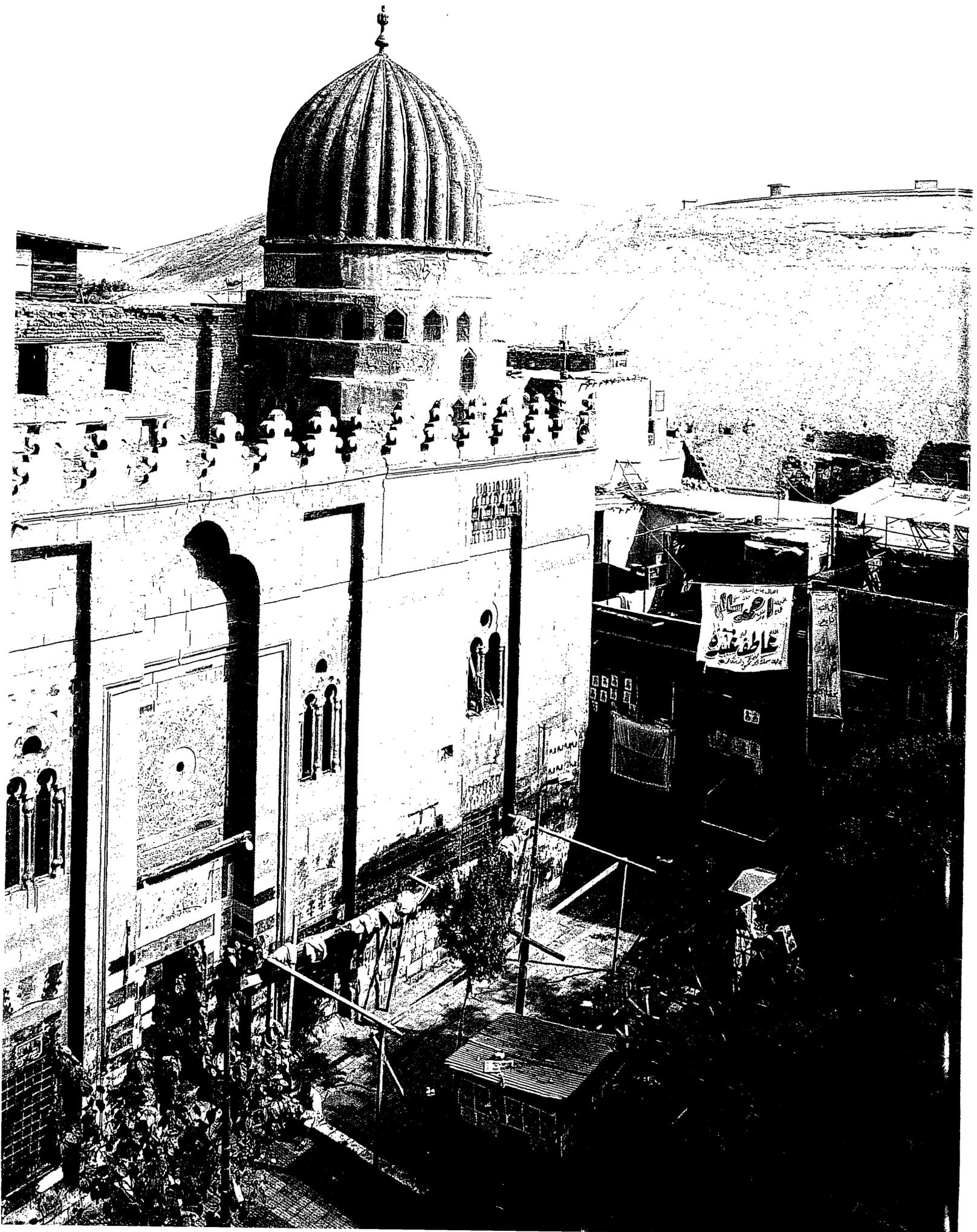
73.



74.



75. Rooftops are often heaped with rubbish. Current solid waste management systems have been unable to cope with the demands for disposal, and residents resort to using all available spaces for garbage. The AKTC is raising awareness and forming partnerships between the community and waste disposal organisations to deal with rubbish removal.





77.



78.



79.

76. The small Aslam Square in front of Aslam Mosque, adjacent to Bab al-Mahruq, one of the historic principal gates along the eastern side of the Ayyubid wall. With the opening of Azhar Park, seen under construction in the background, this old connection, long ago blocked, will be re-established (see also page 192).

77. Local businesses have benefited from the increased business generated by AKTC rehabilitation work. At the same time, many, such as this street tea seller, are eligible to complement that short-term income with longer perspective micro-credit for small enterprise loans that can allow for expansion into proper shop spaces.

78. Most local workshops operate on a small scale and are labour intensive. Few, such as these mother-of-pearl boxmakers employed in wholesale manufacturing for the nearby tourist market of Khan al-Khalili, have the capital required to invest in improving the quality and quantity of their products.

79. Part of the public open space enhancement programme targets reviving small neighbourhood nodes. Besides enduring inappropriate activities, these spaces typically suffer from a semblance of buildings clad with inappropriate materials.

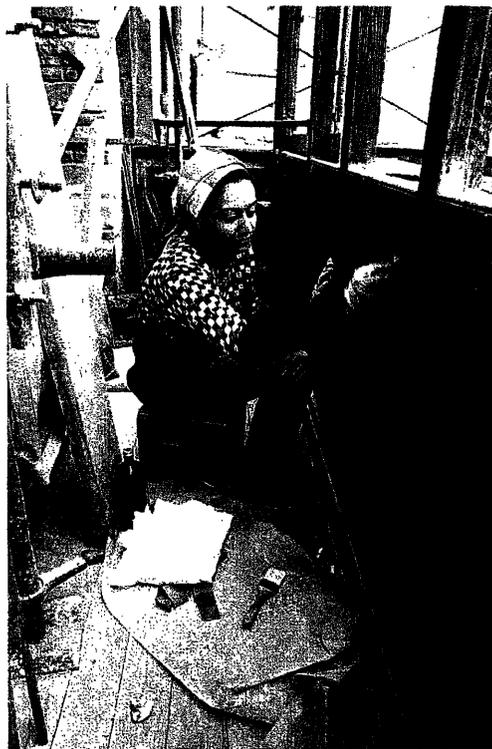
80. Restoration work on the former Shoughlan Street School included a complete cleaning and refinishing of the original balconies.

81. All woodwork for the new school building was fabricated in the Darb al-Ahmar Carpentry Training Workshop staffed by local craftsmen.

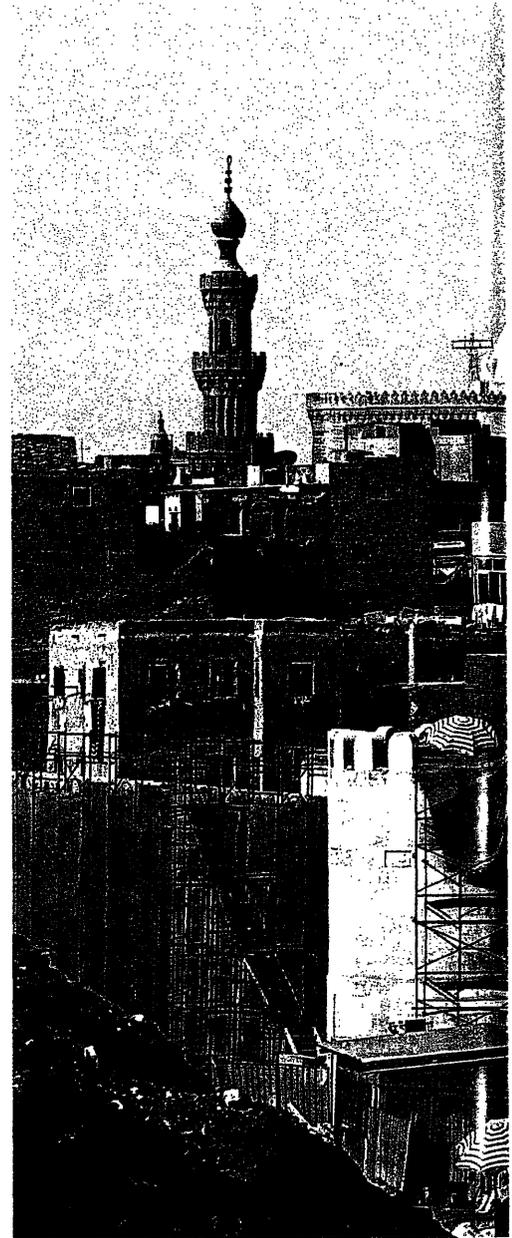
82. Seen before its completion, restoration of the former Shoughlan Street School into a community and visitor centre represents the first major historic building finished by the AKTC. The building, with the Ayyubid wall and Sultan Hasan Mosque in the background, is ideally located near Azhar Park.

83. The north elevation of the former Shoughlan Street School showing the original appearance and colour scheme of the façade. Originally built as a family residence in 1911, the building follows grander European-inspired models from the 19th century.

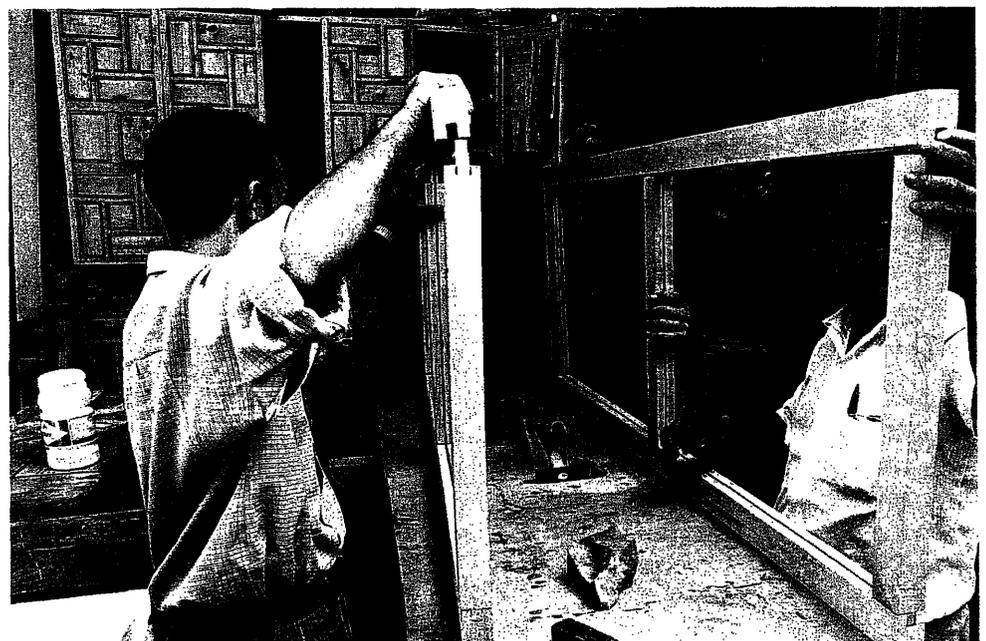
84. A computer rendered model of the front façade of No. 16 Haret al-Sa'ayda, one of the houses currently under rehabilitation in the framework of the Darb al-Ahmar housing programme launched by the AKTC.



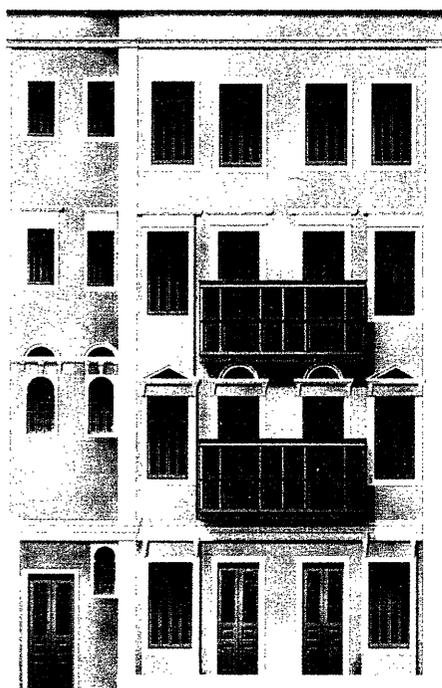
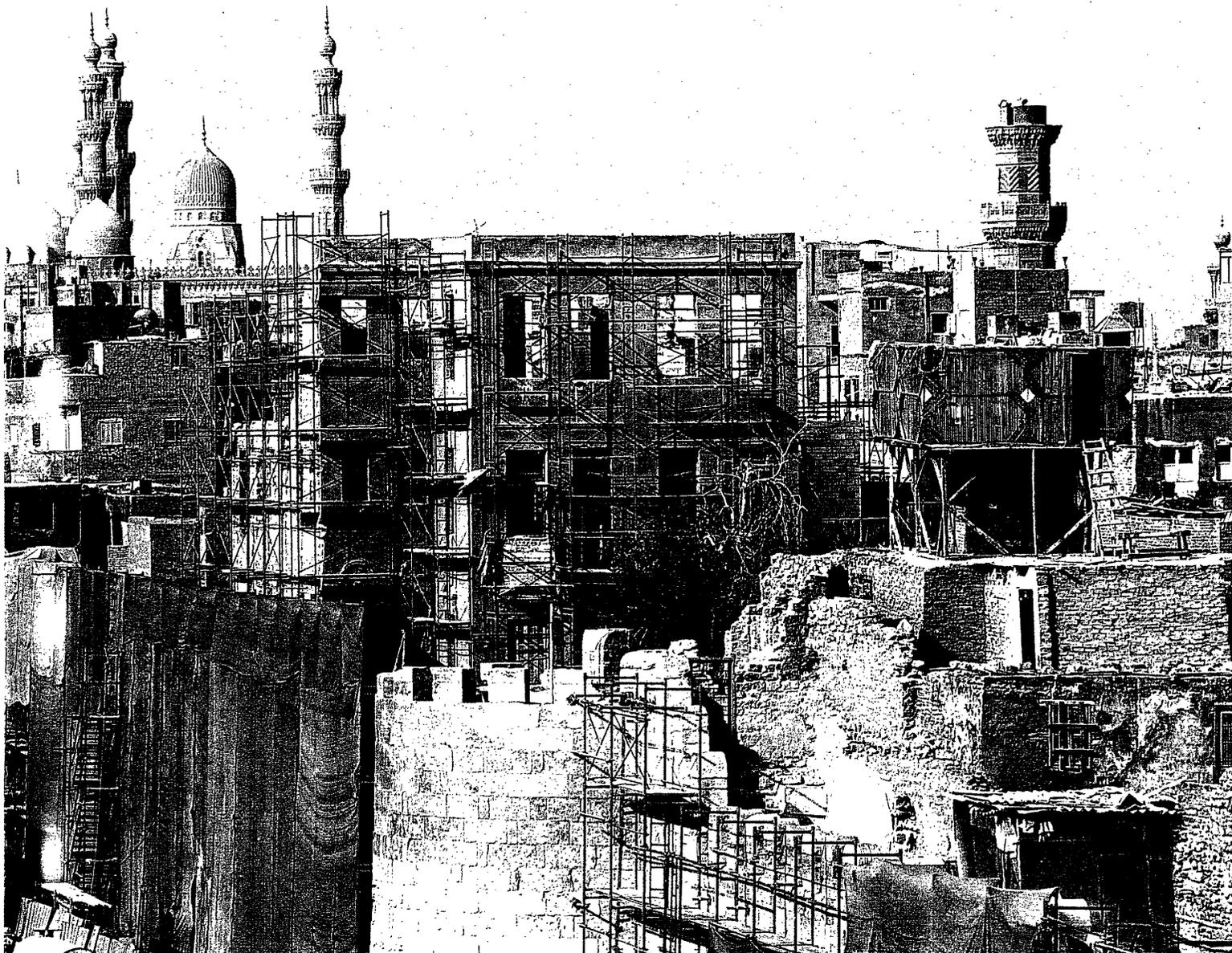
80.



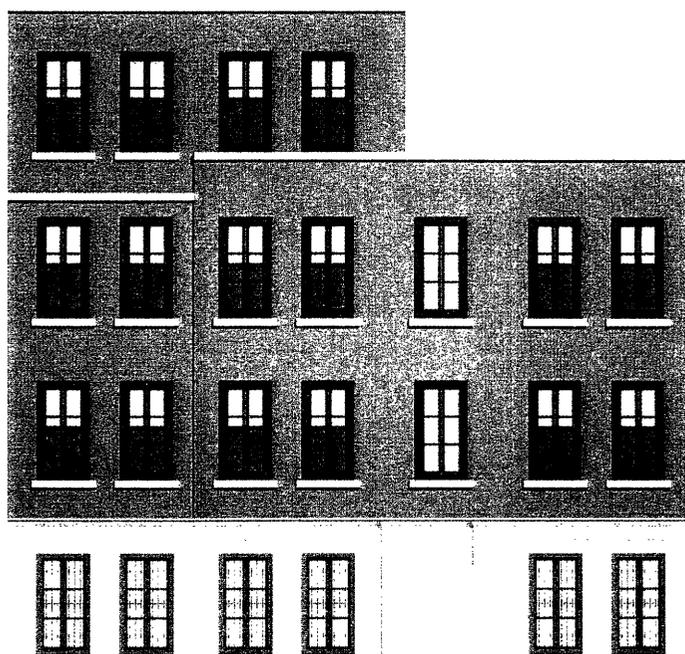
82.



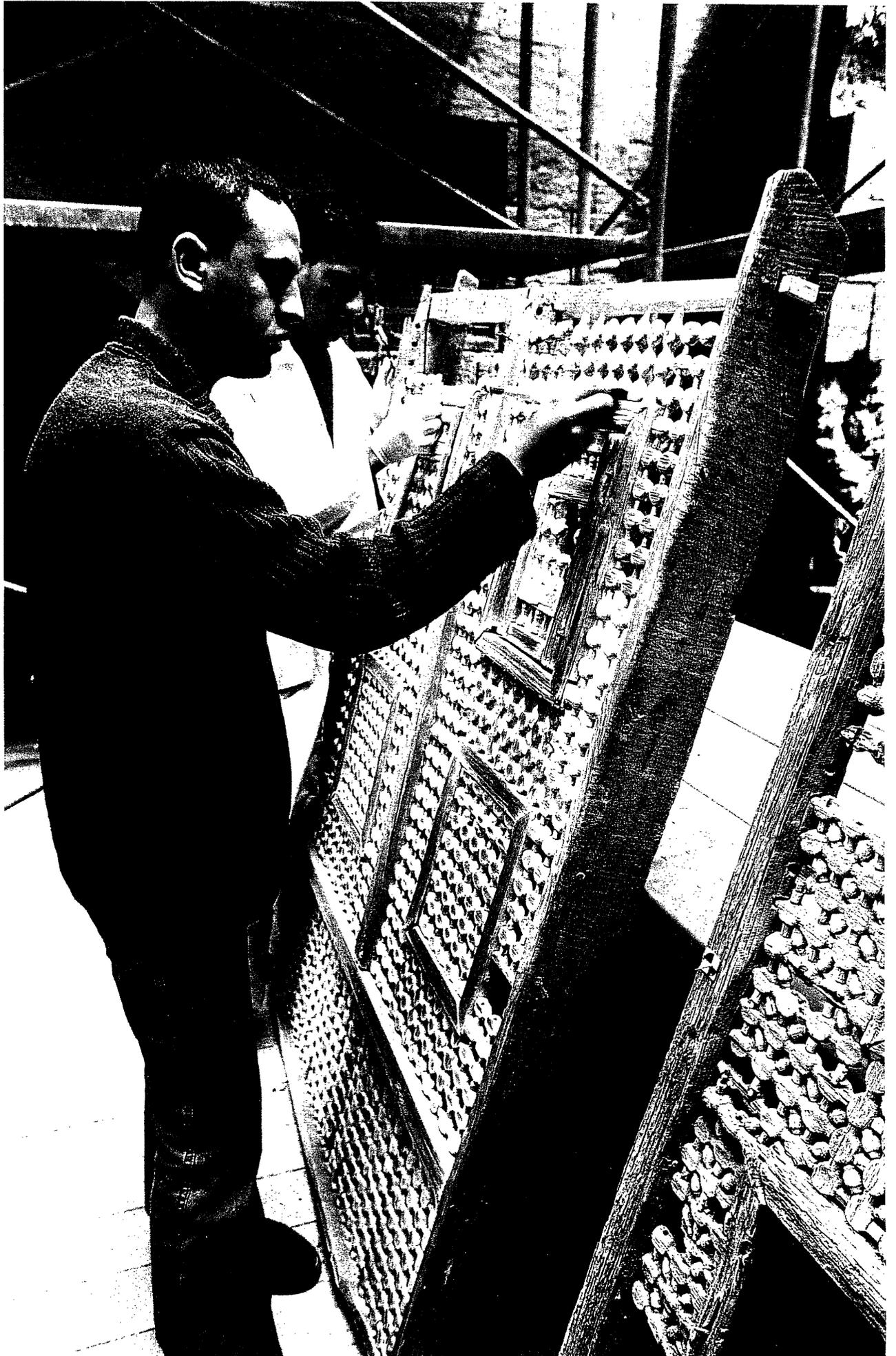
81.

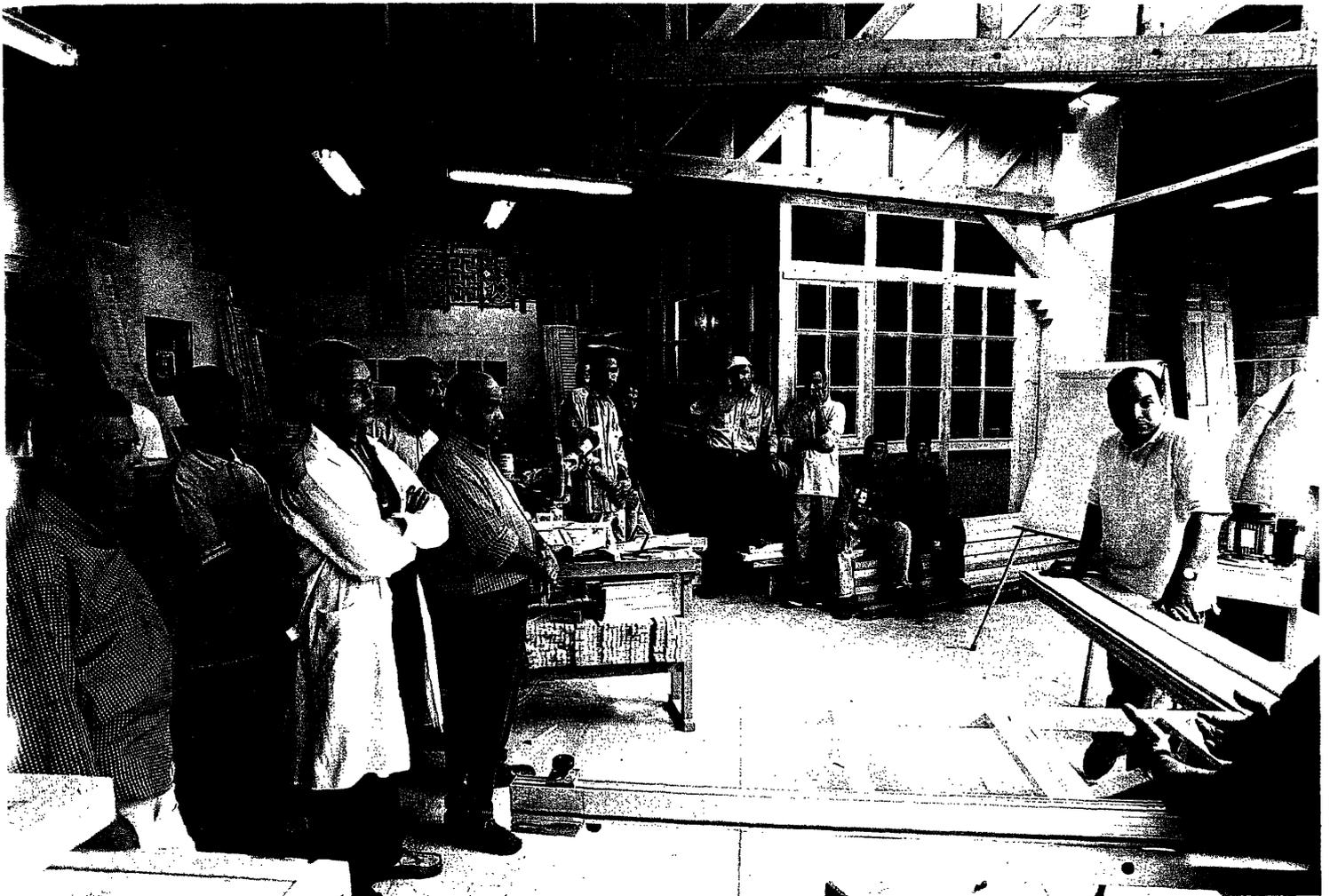


83.

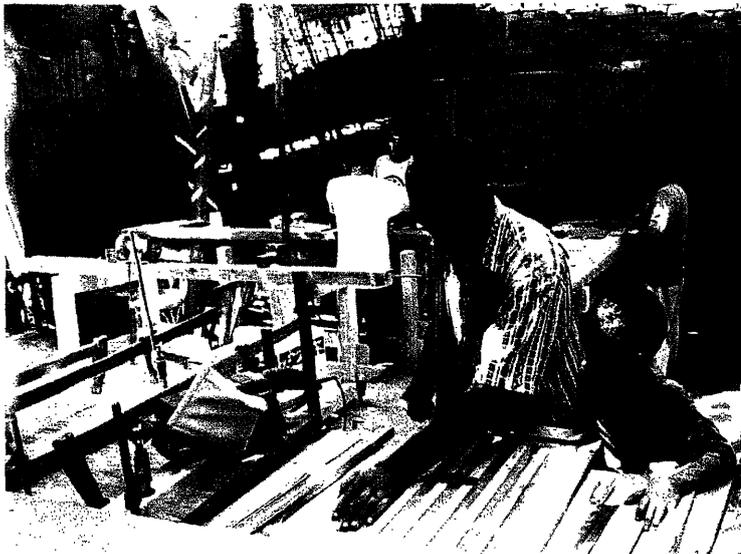


84.





86.



87.

85. A wood conservation workshop was set up on site at Khayrbek to restore the numerous *mashrabiyya* screens found throughout the complex.

86. The training component of the socio-development programme includes the Darb al-Ahmar Carpentry Training Workshop, where local craftsmen have the opportunity to improve their skills and assist in the physical rehabilitation of their neighbourhood.

87. On-the-job training and apprenticeship programmes for local carpenters provide the opportunity to acquire practical skills.



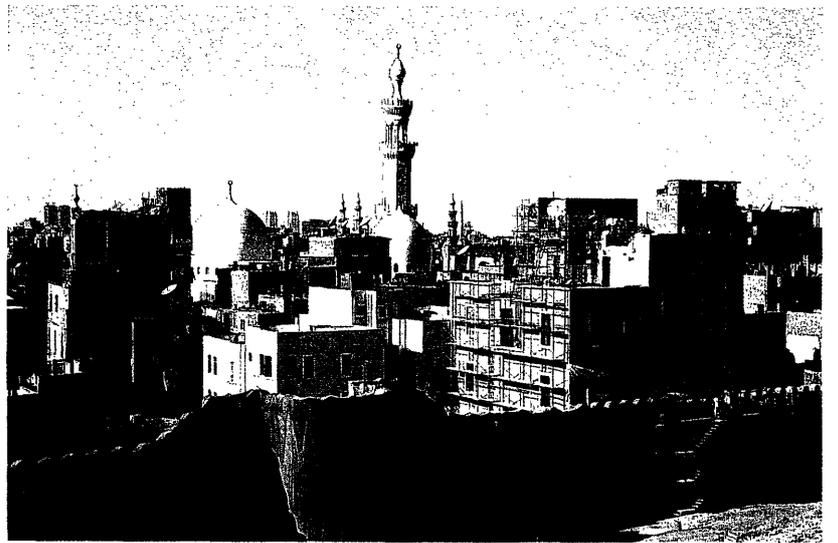
88.

88. Housing improvement projects along Asaad Alley, abutting the Ayyubid wall (see also plate 74).

89. The AKTC housing rehabilitation programme in Darb Shoughlan close to the the school building.

90, 91. Two interior views of apartments in the Darb Shoughlan Street house, now inhabited by local residents.

92. Exterior view of restored houses in Darb Shoughlan Street.



89.



90.



91.



93. An interior stairwell  
of a Darb Shoughlan Street  
house after restoration.

