

# ISFAHAN CITY OF TOURISM, HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

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AA. 2012-2013







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# 1. Territory Introduction - Iran

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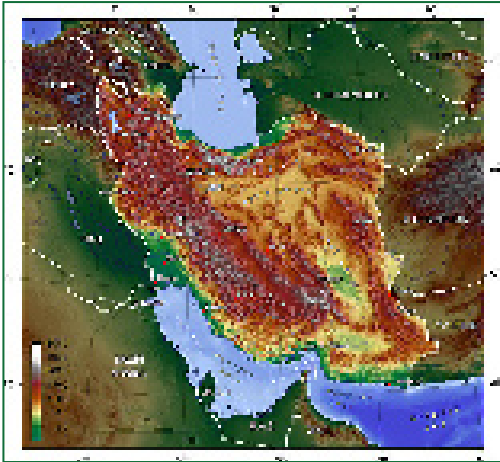
## Iran



Situated: Western Asia  
Area: 1,648,195 Km<sup>2</sup> (18th)  
POPULATION: 76,923,300 (17th)  
DENSITY: 45/Km<sup>2</sup>

Known as Islamic Republic of Iran, and culturally named Persia, or Iran, is a country split between the Central Eurasia and Western Asia. The unique location of Iran in the world allows for additional cultural value, having a footing in Asia, and Eurasia. With a population of over 76 million people, it is known as the 18th largest country worldwide, held by the capital, Tehran, which is also the biggest and most populated city in Iran. Because of the diversity of the country, the culture that resonates has richness in architecture, culture, philosophy, trades and economics, and of course art and design. Shia Islam is the official religion and Persian is the official language, however there is a substantial Armenian community. The culture is heavily influenced by the Islamic sectors, with unique Persian differences. Greater Iran is also home to one of

## Topography of Iran



Iran is the eighteenth largest country in the world, with an area of 1,648,195 km<sup>2</sup>. Its area roughly equals that of the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Germany combined, or somewhat more than the US state of Alaska. Iran lies between latitudes 24° and 40° N, and longitudes 44° and 64° E. Its borders are with Azerbaijan (611 km) (with Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave (179 km) and Armenia (35 km) to the north-west; the Caspian Sea to the north; Turkmenistan (992 km) to the north-east; Pakistan (909 km) and Afghanistan (936 km) to the east; Turkey (499 km) and Iraq (1,458 km) to the west; and finally the waters of the Persian

Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the south. Iran consists of the Iranian Plateau with the exception of the coasts of the Caspian Sea and Khuzestan Province. It is one of the world's most mountainous countries, its landscape dominated by rugged mountain ranges that separate various basins or plateaux from one another. The populous western part is the most mountainous, with ranges such as the Caucasus, Zagros and Alborz Mountains; the last contains Iran's highest point, Mount Damavand at 5,610 m, which is also the highest mountain on the Eurasian landmass west of the Hindu Kush.

The northern part of Iran is covered by dense rain forests called Shomal or the Jungles of Iran. The eastern part consists mostly of desert basins such as the Dasht-e Kavir, Iran's largest desert, in the north-central portion of the country, and the Dasht-e Lut, in the east, as well as some salt lakes. This is because the mountain ranges are too high for rain clouds to reach these regions. The only large plains are found along the coast of the Caspian Sea and at the northern end of the Persian Gulf, where Iran borders the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab (or the Arvand Rūd) river. Smaller, discontinuous plains are found along the remaining coast of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.





## Climatic of Iran



Iran's climate ranges from arid or semiarid, to subtropical along the Caspian coast and the northern forests. On the northern edge of the country (the Caspian coastal plain) temperatures rarely fall below freezing and the area remains humid for the rest of the year. Summer temperatures rarely exceed 29 °C. Annual precipitation is 680 mm in the eastern part of the plain and more than 1,700 mm in the western part.

To the west, settlements in the Zagros basin experience lower temperatures, severe winters with below zero average daily temperatures and heavy snowfall. The eastern and central basins are arid, with less than 200 mm of rain, and have occasional deserts. Average summer temperatures exceed 38 °C. The coastal plains of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman in southern Iran have mild winters, and very humid and hot



## Provinces and cities of Iran



Iran has one of the highest urban growth rates in the world. From 1950 to 2002, the urban proportion of the population increased from 27% to 60%. The United Nations predicts that by 2030, 80% of the population will be urban. Most internal migrants have settled near the cities of Tehran, Isfahan, Ahvaz, and Qom. The listed populations are from the 2006/07 (1385 AP) census. Tehran, with a population of 7,705,036, is the largest city in Iran and is the capital. **Tehran**, like many big cities, suffers from severe air pollution. It is the hub of the country's communication and transport network.

**Mashhad**, with a population of 2,410,800, is the *second largest Iranian city* and the centre of the Razavi Khorasan Province. Mashhad is one of the holiest Shia cities in the world as it is the site of the Imam Reza shrine. It is the centre of tourism in Iran, and between 15 and 20 million pilgrims go to the Imam Reza's shrine every year.

Another major Iranian city is **Isfahan** (population 1,583,609), which is the capital of Is-

fahan Province. The Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The city contains a wide variety of Islamic architectural sites ranging from the 11th to the 19th century. The growth of the suburban area around the city has turned Isfahan into Iran's second most populous metropolitan area (3,430,353).

The fourth major city of Iran is **Tabriz** (population 1,378,935), the capital of the East Azerbaijan Province. It is also the *second industrial city of Iran after Tehran*. Tabriz had been the second largest city in Iran until the late 1960s and one of its former capitals and residence of the crown prince under the Qajar dynasty. The city has proven extremely influential in the country's recent history.

The fifth major city is **Karaj** (population 1,377,450), located in Alborz Province and situated 20 km west of Tehran, at the foot of the Alborz mountains; however, the city is increasingly becoming an extension of metropolitan Tehran.

The sixth major Iranian city is **Shiraz** (population 1,214,808); it is the capital of Fars Province. The Elamite civilization to the west greatly influenced the area, which soon came to be known as Persis. The ancient Persians were present in the region from about the 9th century BC, and became rulers of a large empire under the Achaemenid dynasty in the 6th century BC. The ruins of Persepolis and Pasargadae, two of the four capitals of the Achaemenid Empire, are located in or near Shiraz. Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and is situated 70 kilometres north-east of modern Shiraz. UNESCO declared the citadel of Persepolis a World Heritage Site in 1979.

## Isfahan Province:



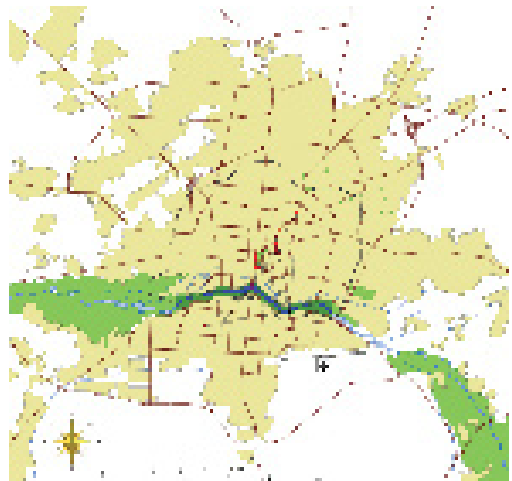
Isfahan Province is one of the 30 provinces of Iran, which holds its capital city of Isfahan. Located in the center of Iran, the province of Isfahan covers an area of approximately 107,027 km<sup>2</sup>, and has the renowned river, Zayanderud River, that runs through it. Agriculture is also rich in the province surrounding the city of Isfahan itself, including growth of rice, pomegranates and molasses. The province experiences a moderate and dry climate on the whole, ranging little in temperature between summer and winter months. The city of Isfahan however experiences an excellent climate, with four distinct seasons. In addition, Isfahan, and its surrounding province are famous for their Islamic architecture, with many beautiful boulevards, covered bridges, palaces, mosques, and minarets. This led to the Persian proverb "Isfahan nesf-e jahan" (Isfahan is half of the world).



## Isfahan City

Isfahan is the third largest city in Iran, after Tehran and Mashad, with a total population of 3,430,353, which makes it Iran's third most populated city according to land density, and second in terms of land coverage. Isfahan is located on the main north-south and east-west routes crossing Iran, and was once one of the largest cities in the world. This gives Isfahan a great cultural and historical platform, which flourished from 1050 to 1722, particularly in the 16th century under the Safavid dynasty. It also became the capital of Persia twice, for the second time under the Safavid dynasty. Today, the city still stands with much of this history to tell the story of its past, and retains much of its past glory. One such example of this is the main piazza of Isfahan, The Naghsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan is one of the biggest city squares in the world and an outstanding example of Iranian and Islamic architecture. It has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The city also has a wide variety of historic monuments. Added to the square is the famous craft market or bazaar, that still sells many old trades: Persian Carpets, spices, various original crafts, textiles, among many old skilled artisanal products. The most renowned, however, is the Persian Rug and traditional carpet: usually have ivory backgrounds with blue, rose,

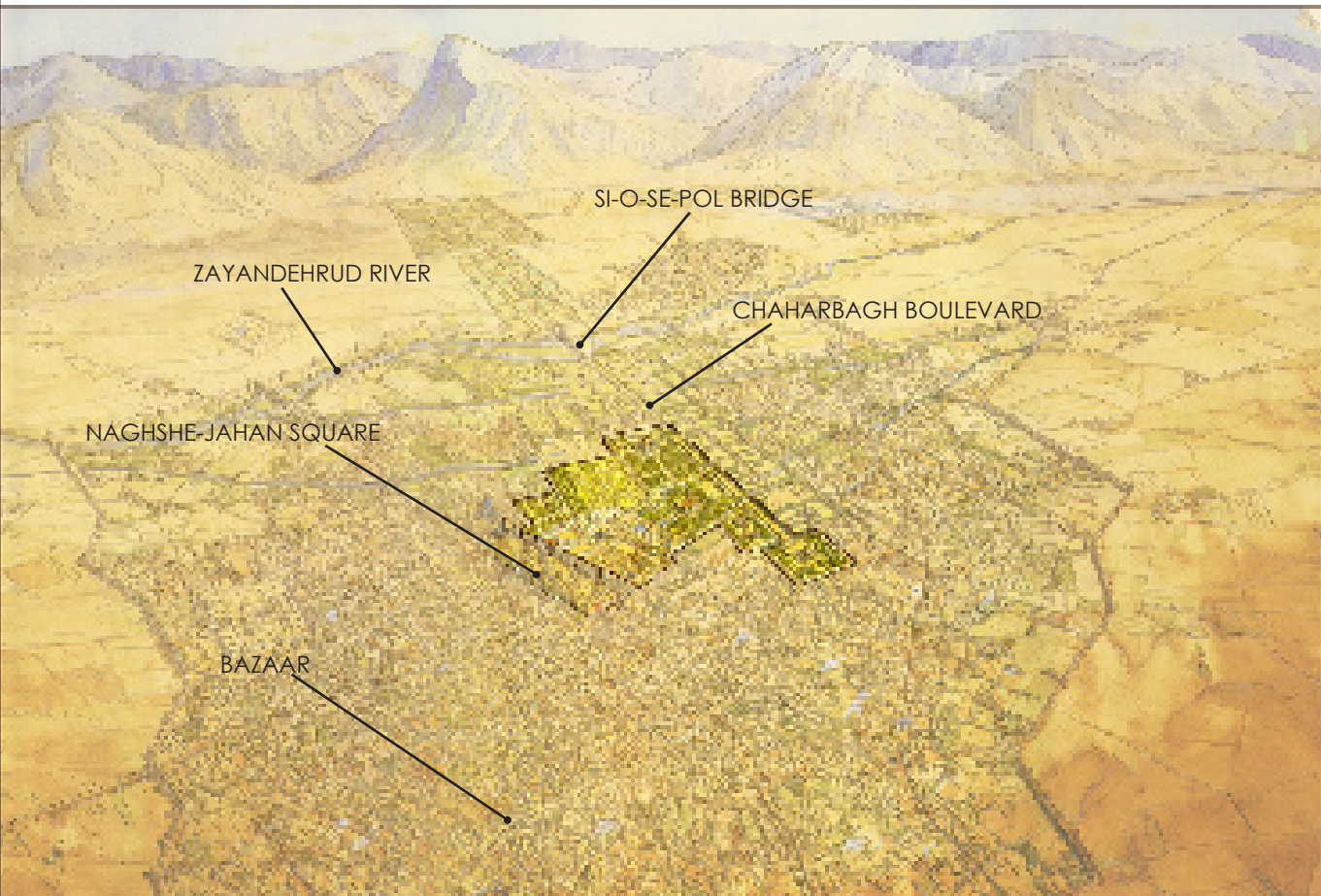
and indigo motifs. Rugs and carpets often have very symmetrical and balanced designs. They usually have a single medallion that is surrounded with vines and palmettos and are of excellent quality. Another asset to the city of Isfahan, is nuclear experimental reactors as well as facilities for producing nuclear fuel (UCF). Isfahan has one of the largest steel-producing facilities in the entire region, as well as facilities for producing special alloys.







17th century drawing of Isfahan by J. C. Galvin



## 2. Brief History of Isfahan

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Isfahan is one of the oldest cities in Iran, and dates can be tracked back to the Palaeolithic period. Isfahan fell temporarily under the rule of Arabs until the Abbasid era, attended to by Al-Mansur.

In the 10th century, under the Buwayhid Dynasty, Isfahan regained its importance and status. In the reign of Malik Shah I of the Seljuk dynasty, Isfahan was again selected as capital and commenced another golden age.

The Golden Age of Isfahan arrived in the 16th century under Shah Abbas the Great, who conquered it and made it the new capital of the Safavid dynasty. During the reign of Shah Abbas I, who unified Persia, Isfahan reached its pinnacle. In its heyday, Isfahan was one of the largest cities, with a population of over half a million. Also there were 163 mosques, 48 religious schools, 1801 shops and 263 public baths.

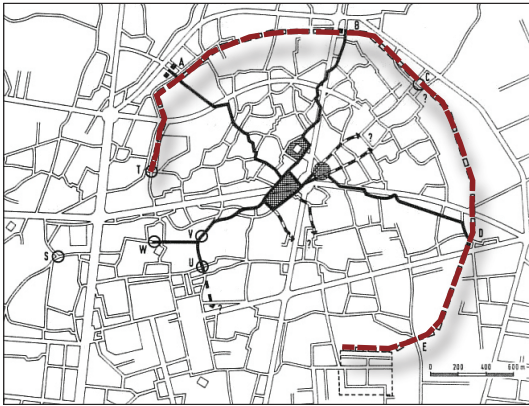
In 1722, following the defeat of the Safavids, Afghans raided Isfahan after a long siege, which left much of the city in ruins.

Isfahan's wealth originated in its role as a chief waystation along the trans-Asia trade route (such as the Silk Road). Such land trade dwindled as the cheaper sea routes increased in popularity for transporting commodities between Asia and Europe.

Today Isfahan, the third largest city in Iran, produces fine carpets, textiles, steel, and handi-crafts. Isfahan also has nuclear experimental reactors as well as facilities for producing nuclear fuel (UCF). Isfahan has one of the largest steel-producing facilities in the entire region, as well as facilities for producing special alloys.

## City Growth During Centuries

11 Century



- Establishment of:
- Main Commercial Center
  - City Walls
  - Main Street of Bazaar

14 Century



- Establishment of:
- Main Commercial Center
  - City Walls
  - Auxiliary Street of Bazaar

17 Century



- Establishment of:
- Main Commercial Zones
  - Construction of congregational mosque
  - A Network of interconnecting street of Bazaar



## Making of the city: Isfahan Before the 17th century

The city gained its prominence again from its unique central location in the country. Being located at one of the important branches of the Silk Road, this location is one of the most accessible places in the Iranian Plateau. The second advantage of the city was of course Zayandeh-Rood (the Birth-giving River). For a country that most of its cities suffer from shortage of water supplies, forcing them to bring water from tens of miles away by digging chains of interconnected wells (Qanats), a city with a permanent supply of water is an exception. This is why this city has always been so attractive to people and rulers.

According to historical sources, such as traveller's memoirs, the city started from three close locations: The ancient Jay, Yahudieh (Jewish settlement) and Ispahan or Isfahan (Gaube, 1978). These three settlements merged long time ago and created a single city, which has been recognised in its entirety since at least 1400 years ago.

The city started its great reputation since it was chosen as the capital of the great Seljuk Empire. Seljuks, who practically ruled a huge chunk of Asia in 12th and 13th century, turned the city into the most important city of the country. The northern part of the city, which is packed with great buildings and monument dates back to this era.

The structure of the city in this period (Figure 1) was based on a large organic square, called Meydane-Kohneh (or the old square). This organically shaped square was located where the major thoroughfares converged in the centre of the city (Browne 1976b). The main routes leading

from outside to inside of the city transform into to the major branches of the grand bazaar, a pattern which has preserved its major characteristics until now. This formation, however, is a bit different from other Iranian historic cities, where no major square is the centre of spatial organisation 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.



The map Isfahan in Safavid period (16th Century). The older part of the city, which used to be the limits of the older capital is shown by the dotted boundary.

## Transformation of Isfahan during the Safavid period (16th and 17th centuries): the tale of a perfect city

The main transformation of the city starts in 1597, when Shah Abbas, the Safavid king moved the capital of his huge kingdom to Isfahan. With the assistance of his adviser and town planner, Sheihk-Bahayee, he not only made Isfahan worthy of a capital again, he expanded the city far beyond its old borders. A large number of new building and urban spaces were established, but more importantly, a great work of urban master planning occurred in this period. Although the major goal of urban development in Isfahan in that era was to enlarge and modernise the city, the planners of Safavid Isfahan did not decide to build a new city outside the old one. The method of abandoning the old towns and creating new ones has been practised from the ancient periods until now, though not as widely as the other approach, which attempts to work on the old, enhance and develop it further.

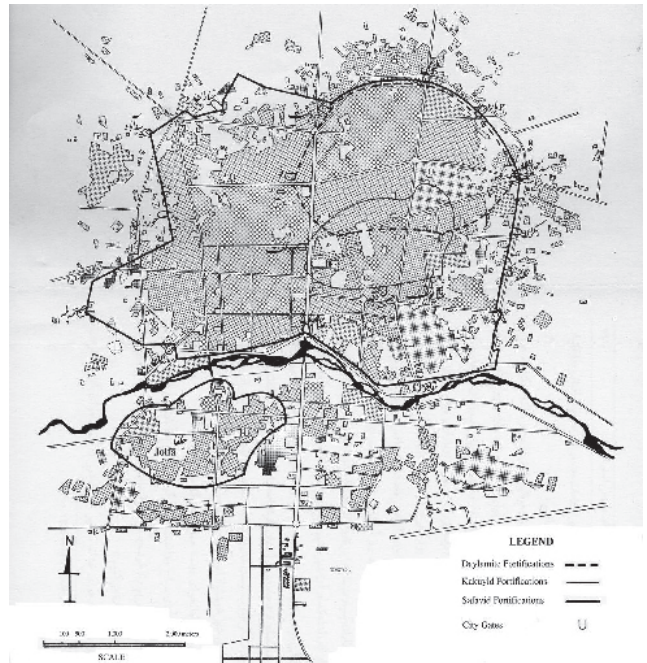
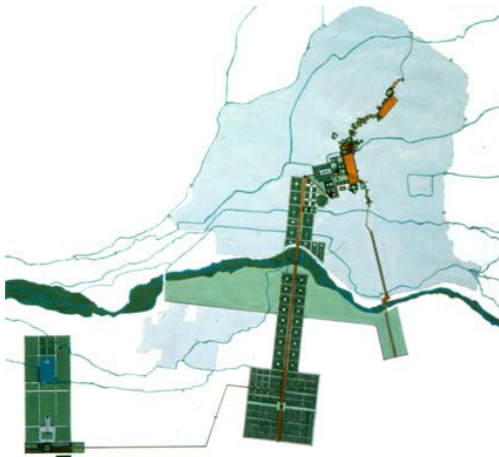
The first and most important act of town planning in this period was the creation of a new square: Naghshe-Jahan Square (World View Square). This extraordinary square was an enormous 510 by 165 metres rectangle enclosed by rows of shops and four magnificent monuments. But the most important thing about the square is not its size. The more important point is the very wellthought 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 part of the overall structure of the city. Although the Safavid king always wanted to

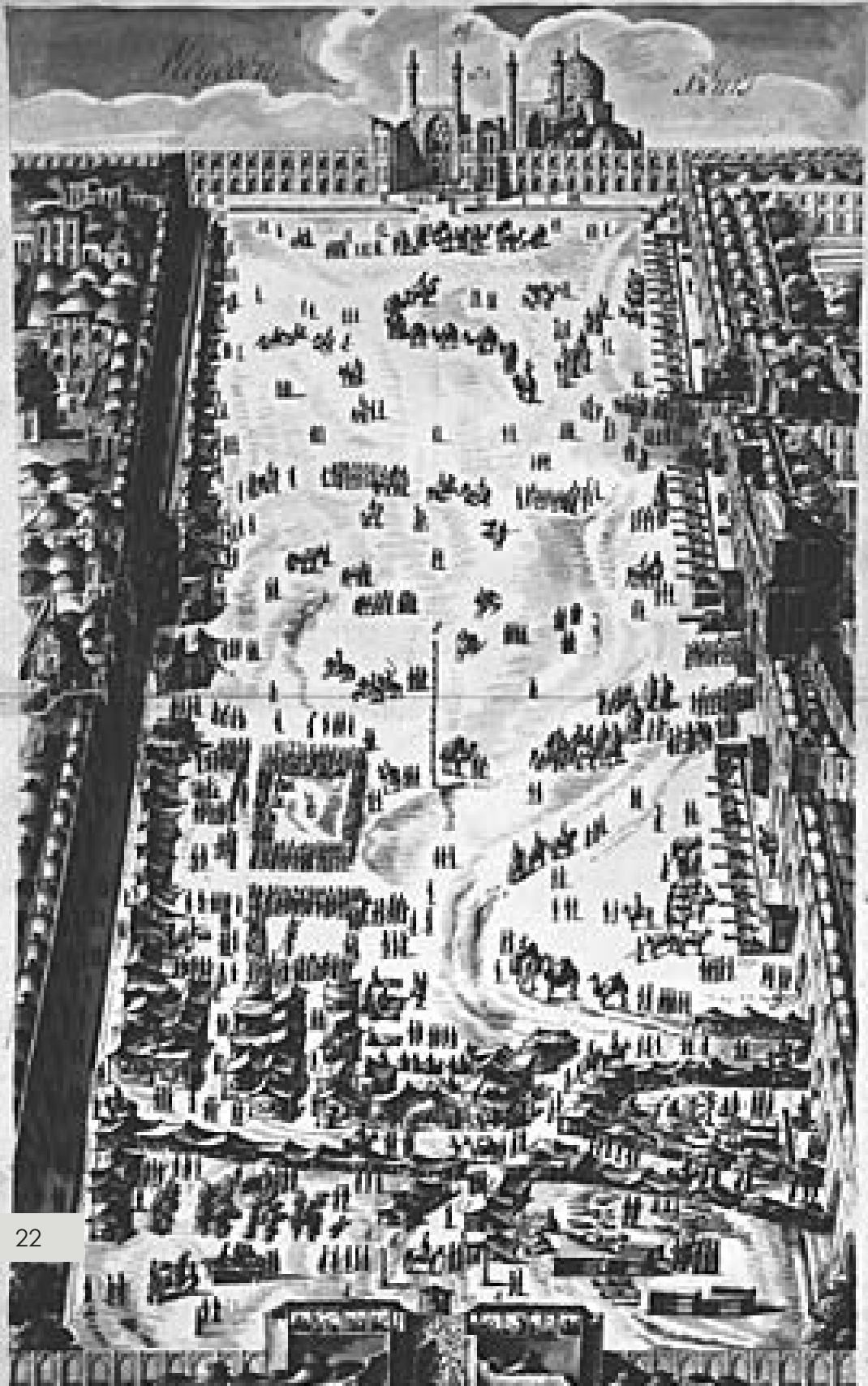
give more significance to his new square, the design of the square never undermined its relationship with the rest of the city.

The second important decision in the development of Isfahan was the creation of a new street, Chaharbagh (or Four Gardens). Unlike most of the old streets in 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 Haussmann style boulevards in Paris, Chaharbagh was not cut through the fabric of the old city. This boulevard was created as a north-south extension of the old city, continuing to the south, where an extensive complex of Safavid gardens was created. The glorious bridge of Sio-seh-Pol across the river Zayandeh-Rood was used to connect Chaharbagh to the south of the river. The intension behind this bridge was to create a city on both side of the river. A parallel bridge further east completed this idea by extending another major thoroughfare of the city to the south. The third undertaking of the plan for renewal of the capital was the creation of a rectilinear grid around the northern Chaharbagh for new residential developments and governmental places. This part of the city was planned to accommodate the new residents needed for the important people of the capital. The fourth endeavour of urban planning in this era was the admirable renovation of the water distribution system of Zayandeh-Rood's through creation and enhancement of a network of little and large streams, called "madi" in local dialect. These streams, which were responsible to bring water to where it was needed in the city, had inevi-

tably a clear morphological effect on the structure of the city.

Therefore, the essential structure of Isfahan in the Safavid period can be described by two major axes of development: first, the north-south axis alongside the old backbone of the city, which was formed alongside the main chains of the bazaar and extended through Chaharbagh Avenue to the south of the river; and second, the east-west axis alongside the Zayandeh-Rood river and its artificial branches, or madi's. Where as the first axis of development shaped the built environment in Isfahan, the second axis provided the natural element and its influence on the urban life.





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## Modern Master planning and Architecture in Isfahan: the tale of a new city

The issue of rapid modernisation in Iranian cities, based on driving modern avenues through the old fabric of the cities and extending them outside the old cores, has been addressed in other studies (Karimi, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002). These studies have shown that this type of intervention in the old cities has created the configurational isolation of the old cores and destruction of its traditional structure, which has led to full deterioration of the historic centres in the 20th Century.

Modern master planning in Iran started in 1950s and 1960s. Before this era the act of road building was heavily on the agenda in different cities, but these acts did not follow any predetermined plans. The decisions were rather casual and based on the time and location. The need for masterplans started to emerge when cities grew enormously, and when the country was introduced to the achievement of the Western planning methodologies. This leads to a comprehensive programme of producing masterplans for all cities. Under the country's Third Development Plan (1962-68) master plans had to be commissioned for all major cities. Iranian consultants were to associate with a European or American partner and, in absence of any local equivalent, to adopt the standards and regulations of foreign cities. These masterplans had three important outputs: road network, landuse, and building density or heights. Through the control of these three elements, the masterplans attempted to achieve their initial goals.

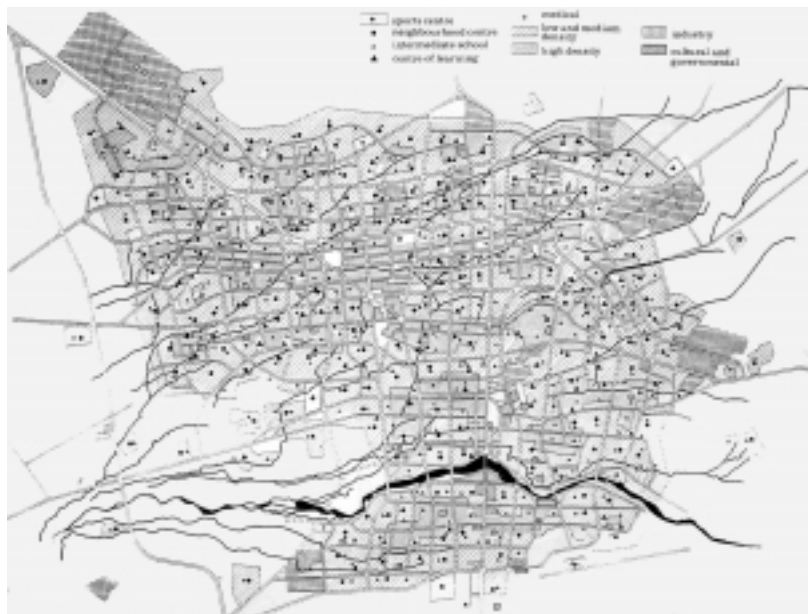
After the first programme of road building in Isfahan, a comprehensive plan was

produced by E.E. Beaudouin, a French architect and planner who had studied Isfahan as a Roman Scholar and published a special issue of *Urbanisme* on Isfahan, in collaboration with Organic Consultants, an Iranian architectural and planning firm (Cantacuzino, 1976).

The plan produced by these planners was outrageously radical. A rectangular grid of roads designed for cars has been superimposed on the older grid without slightest regard to the historic evolution and older patterns of growth. For someone unfamiliar with Isfahan, there is no way to understand anything about the character of the city before this master plan. The only thing that can be vaguely recognised from the Safavid period in the plan is Chaharbagh Avenue, which stands as important as the other streets in the grid. The great Naghshe-Jahan square and the bazaar area appear as two simple polygons.

High densities have been suggested for the new streets frontages and each rectangular urban block has been given a neighbourhood centre, a learning centre and some school.

In reality Beaudouin and Organic's plan comprehensive plan was not fully implemented. Only some of the major streets proposed by this plan were built and a full rectilinear grid was never achieved in the city. However, this masterplan created enough harm to the structure of the city already damaged from the early acts of road building in 1920s and 30s. New streets created by this plan together with the ones created before were enough to influence the whole integrity of the city.



The comprehensive masterplan of Isfahan produced by E. Beaudouin and Organic Consultants



In order to measure the effects of the new master plan, axial analysis has been used again to analyse and evaluate the changes. Two maps have been used for the analysis. The first map is the city around 1980 (not shown) and the second one is the most updated map of the city. The results from both analyses are similar and signify the following results.

- The superimposed modern grid becomes the superstructure of the city and all modern streets become radically more integrated than the rest of the grid.
- The old and Safavid structure of the city vanish dramatically. The old and new squares, and their urban connection loses its significance and neither of the old thoroughfares is recognisable on the map.
- Chaharbagh Avenue, is the only street from the past that retains its strength. The extensions of the street to the north and south have added to the integration value of the street.
- The Safavid developments in the south of the old city also become a very important part of the city. It seems that the integration core of the city has shifted from the old centre to Chaharbagh and its surroundings.



The result of the comprehensive plans, as shown by the axial analysis, is the relative destruction of the old structure. Only Chaharbagh Avenue seems to have held its place, however, even this has to be considered with caution. The role of Chaharbagh, which was an extension to the old centre, has dramatically changed. Being highly over-emphasised, this central street shifts all the energy and life of the rest of the city towards itself. This definitely has an expense for the city: an overcrowded and congested Chaharbagh, and a deserted old commercial centre. With further development of the city along its modern street, it seems that even Chaharbagh cannot function as a city centre. The street is too long and the supporting grid only exists in Safavid areas. The urban blocks created by the modern streets are very huge to form any centre. Therefore, as it can be observed in existing Isfahan, the centre of the city is gradually defusing linearly shifting more the significance for the historic centre.

A new master plan for the city was prepared by Naghshe-Jahan-Pars Consultants about 20 years ago. Very different compared to the first masterplan, this master plan has a much more realistic and sensitive look at different issues. The acceptance of the historic structure of the city and efforts to harmonise with it are positive points of the new master plan. Continuing the past in this plan is understood as huge extensions of the historic core and other major developments, which if implemented, would isolate the historic centre more than now.

Axial analysis of existing Isfahan (2002), showing the measures of spatial integration (global integration). The darkest line on the map has the most and the lightest line has the least integration value.

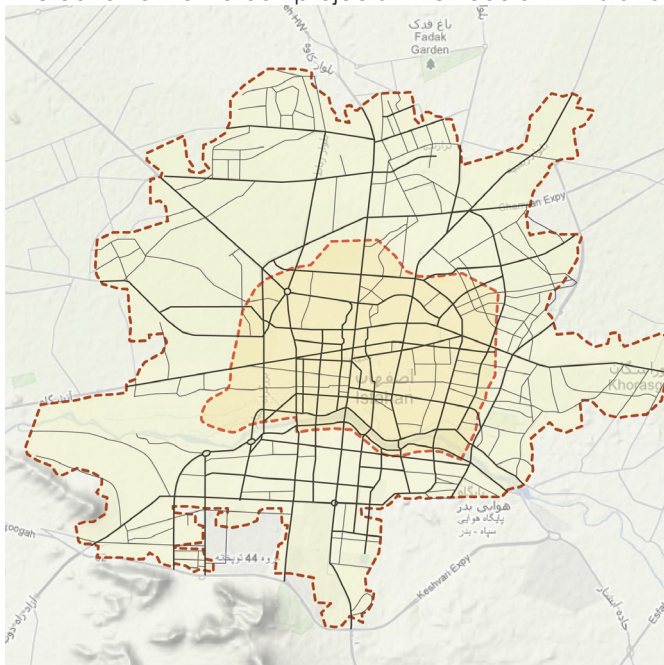


## Current issues in Isfahan

The Safavid gardens of southern Isfahan began to vanish after the fall of Safavids, but they continued to exist up to 80 years ago, when a movement for industrialisation of the country started. Some Industrialists chose the gardens of Chaharbagh-e-Bala area (i.e. the extension of the Chaharbagh Avenue to the south of the river) for building their textile factory sites. These factories, which replaced some gardens in this area, created themselves a new urban formation in Isfahan and were in use until about 20 years ago (Fagih, 2002), when the textile industry in Isfahan and other Iranian cities totally declined. Losing their importance as industrial centres, these factories with their valuable architecture and large sites have become highly attractive for new residential and commercial developments in southern Isfahan. On the other hand, these sites carry great potentials to be used for the creation of new urban projects which could

preserve the factory sites, complement the old structure of Isfahan and make it a much more attractive city.

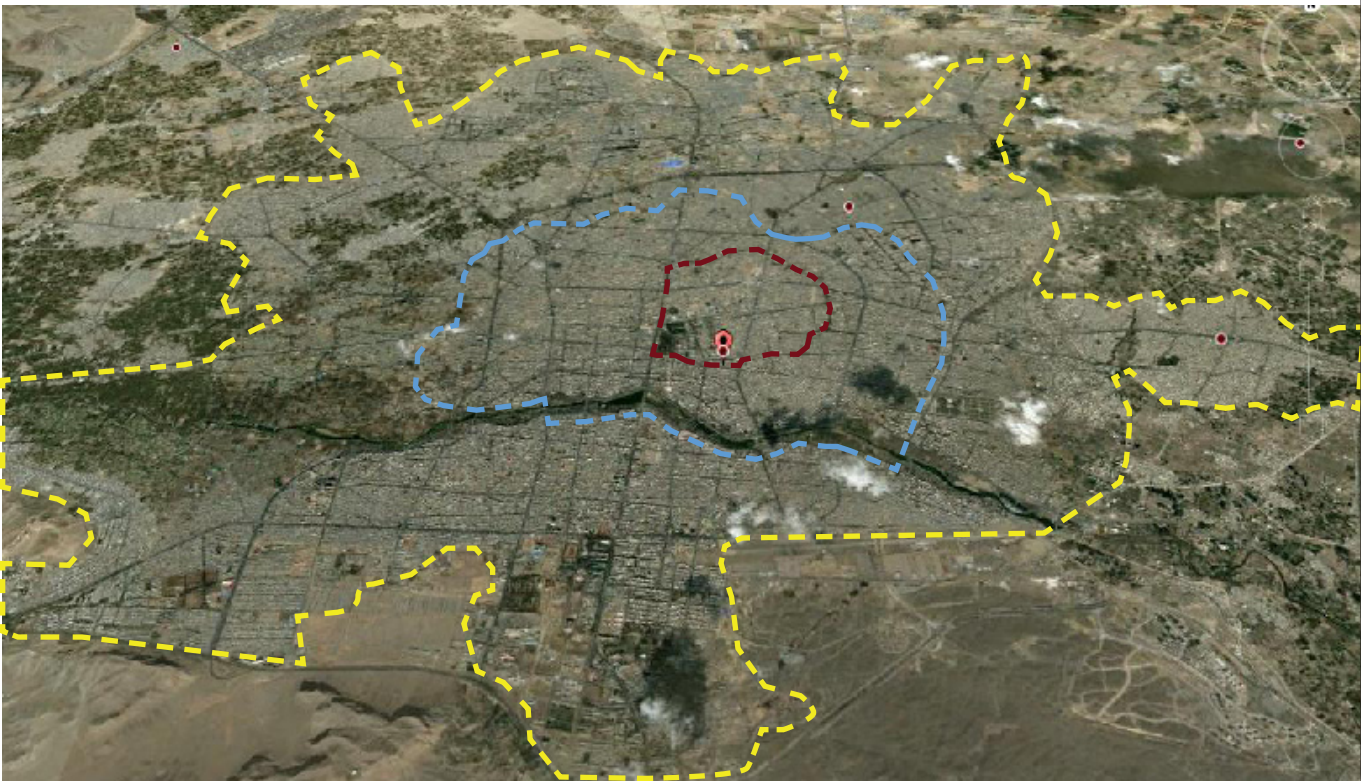
In the last comprehensive plan of the city, this potential was recognised and an important urban focal point was proposed to be built in this area by combining the site of old factories and other available sites. This proposal, however, never materialised, and instead a campaign to transform these sites to residential/commercial developments was initiated by owners or sponsors of the factories or by others who had realised the economic potentials of these sites. Unfortunately, except one or two factory sites, the other ones have been massively reshaped. Most of the valuable industrial buildings were demolished, and some new developments are rising that have no values or contribution to the role that Chaharbagh-e-Bala area can play in Isfahan.



## Conclusion

A comparison between the old master planning and Architecture of Isfahan in the 17th Century with its 20th century reveals that on 17th century planning and architecture was a thorough understanding of the once existing urban mechanism. In spite of all ambitions and needs for a different Isfahan, the old planners managed to preserve the harmony with the older city. This was achieved, the space syntax analysis showed, through two key strategies:

continuation (and not interruption) of the old grid; and following the organic lines of natural elements and environment. In contrasts are the modern master planners and architects of the city. Lack of objective understanding of the past, rush for modernising the city as soon as possible, use of alien methods of planning, and confusion of the authorities and designers are all the reasons for the failure of the modern master plans and architecture in Isfahan.

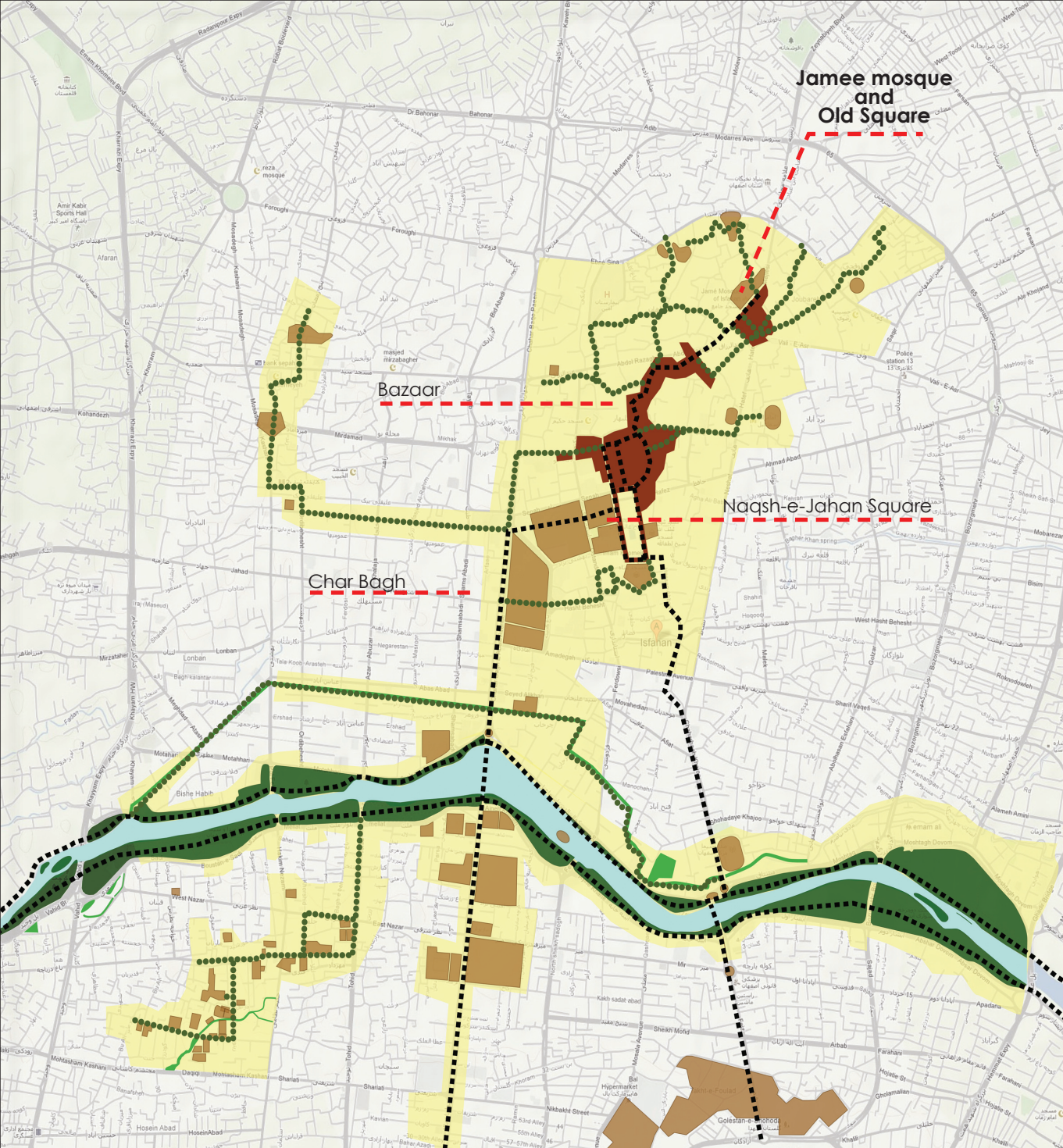




## 3. Old Texture of Isfahan City

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**Jamee mosque and Old Square**

**Bazaar**

**Naqsh-e-Jahan Square**

**Char Bagh**

**Bagh-e-Hezar Jarib  
(today's Isfahan University stands)**

- Historical Buildings
- Bazaar
- Old texture of the city
- River Bank
- Zayandeh Rud River
- Main Streets (Axes)
- Secondary Streets

The cultural and historical axis of Isfahan in fact acts as the core of the city. This axis begins from the **Jamee mosque and Kohneh Square (old square)**, which forms the Seljukian city center and runs up to the location of **Bagh-e-Hezar Jarib of Safavid period**, in place of which today's Isfahan University stands.

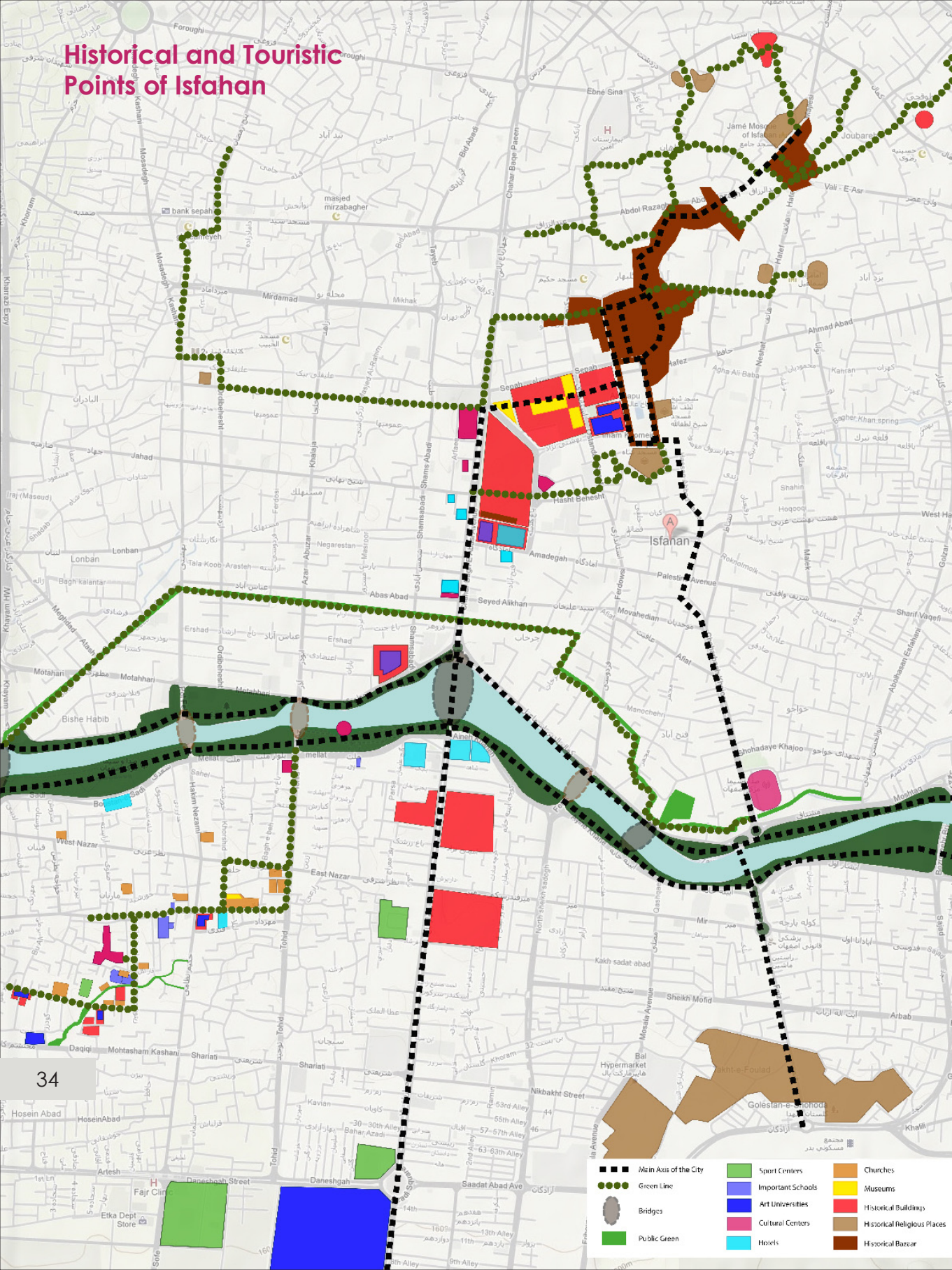
This axis passes across **Bazaar, the complex of Naqsh-e-Jahan Square**, City's heart in Safavid period, and **Char Bagh**.

The historical axis that has evolved during a period of more than 1000 years has always acted as the main structure of the city and comprises examples of architecture and urban planning of all different periods of Isfahan history.

**The important task of new urban planners and architects of the city is to ensure the identity, internal congruity, homogeneity and functional efficiency of this axis in compliance with Isfahan's architecture and urban values.**

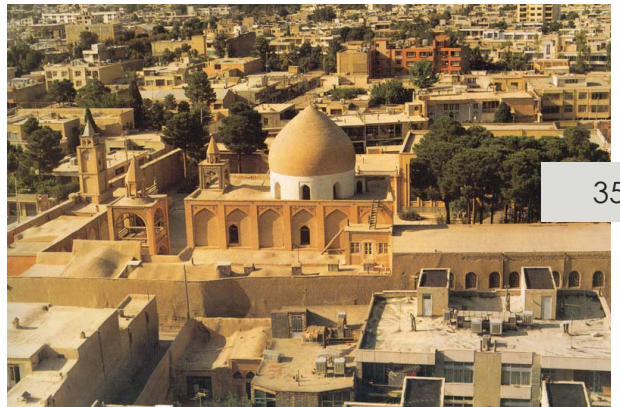


# Historical and Touristic Points of Isfahan



- Main Axis of the City
- Green Line
- Bridges
- Public Green
- Sport Centers
- Important Schools
- Art Universities
- Cultural Centers
- Hotels
- Churches
- Museums
- Historical Buildings
- Historical Religious Places
- Historical Bazaar



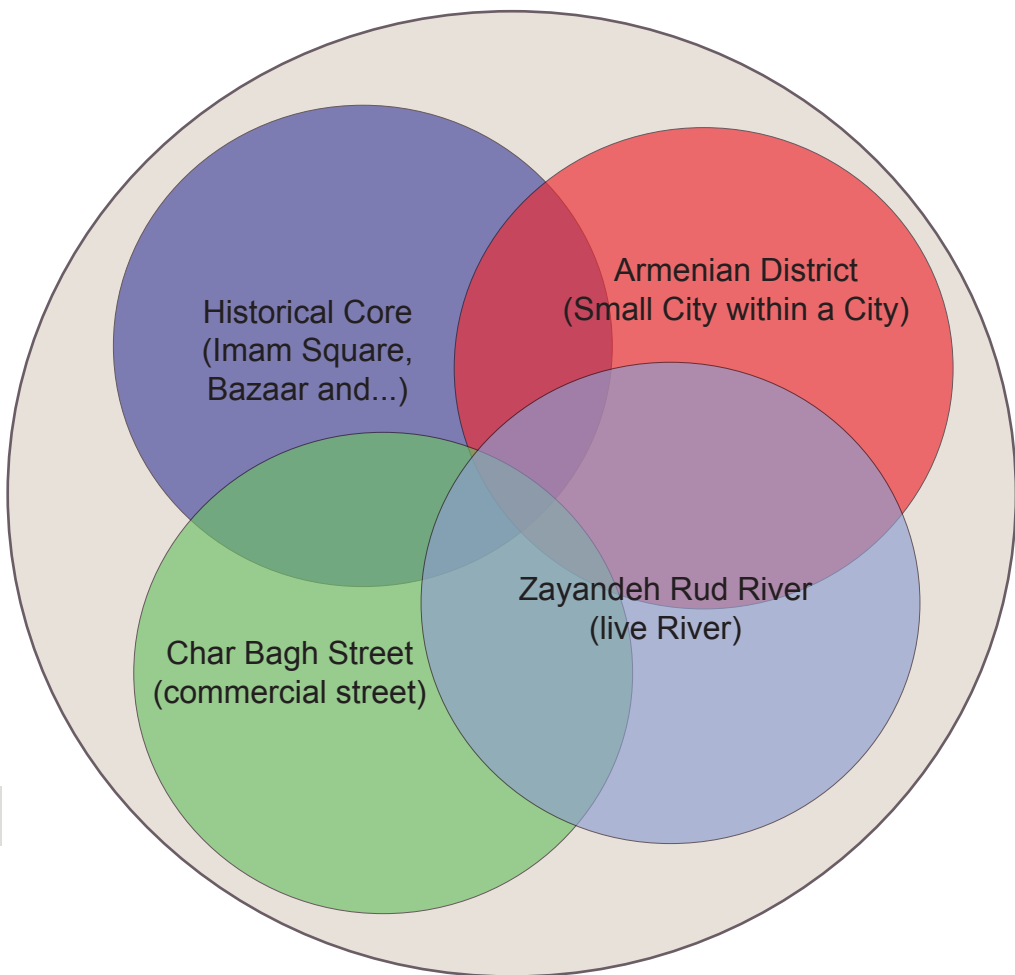


## Connection between different Zones from 17th century till now

Aim of Safavid shah was:

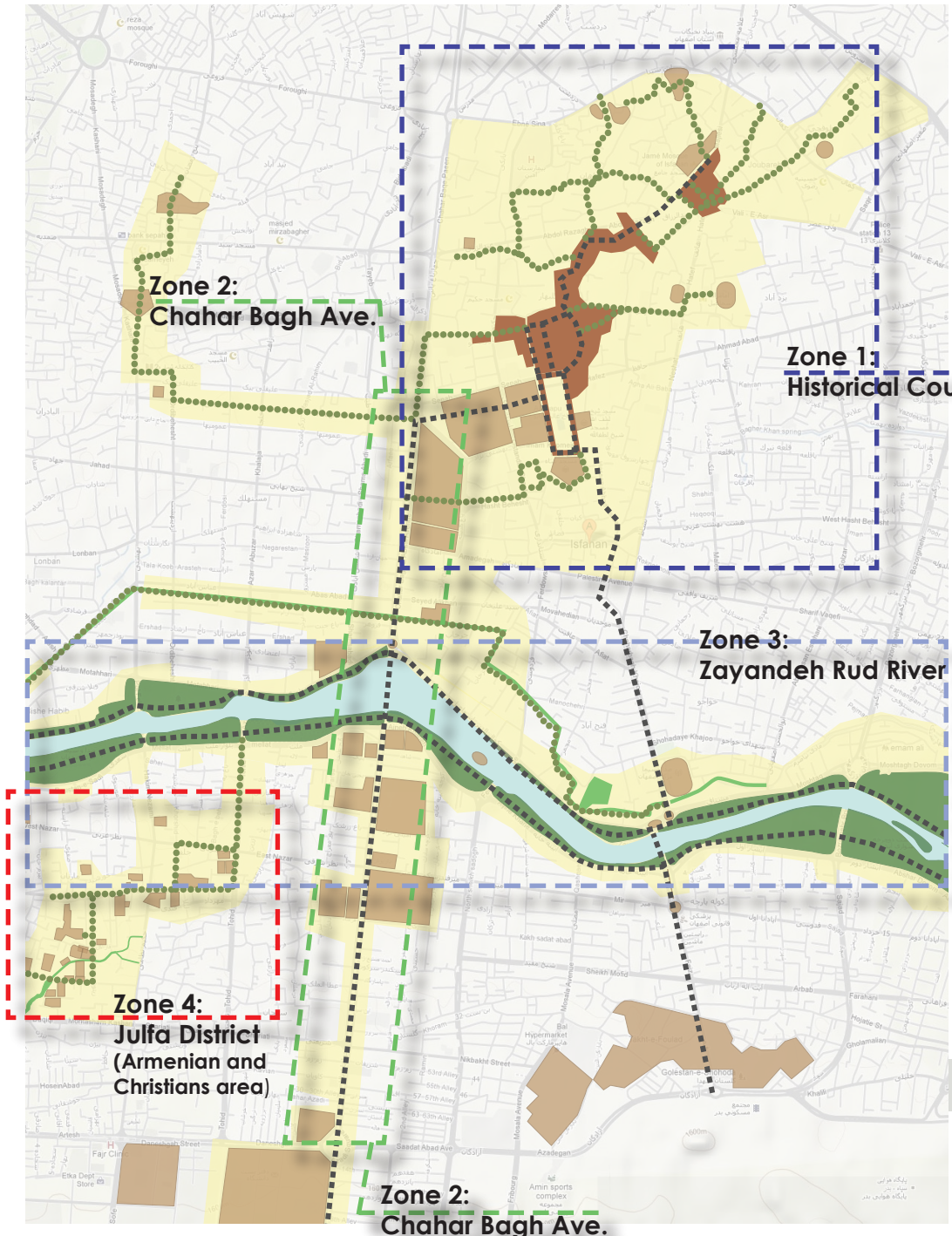
1- Connecting Historical Center(northern city) to southern city (new commers /Armenian zone) by Char Bagh Boulevard.

2- Connecting Charbagh Boulevard to southern city by 33 Pol Bridge on the Zayandeh River.

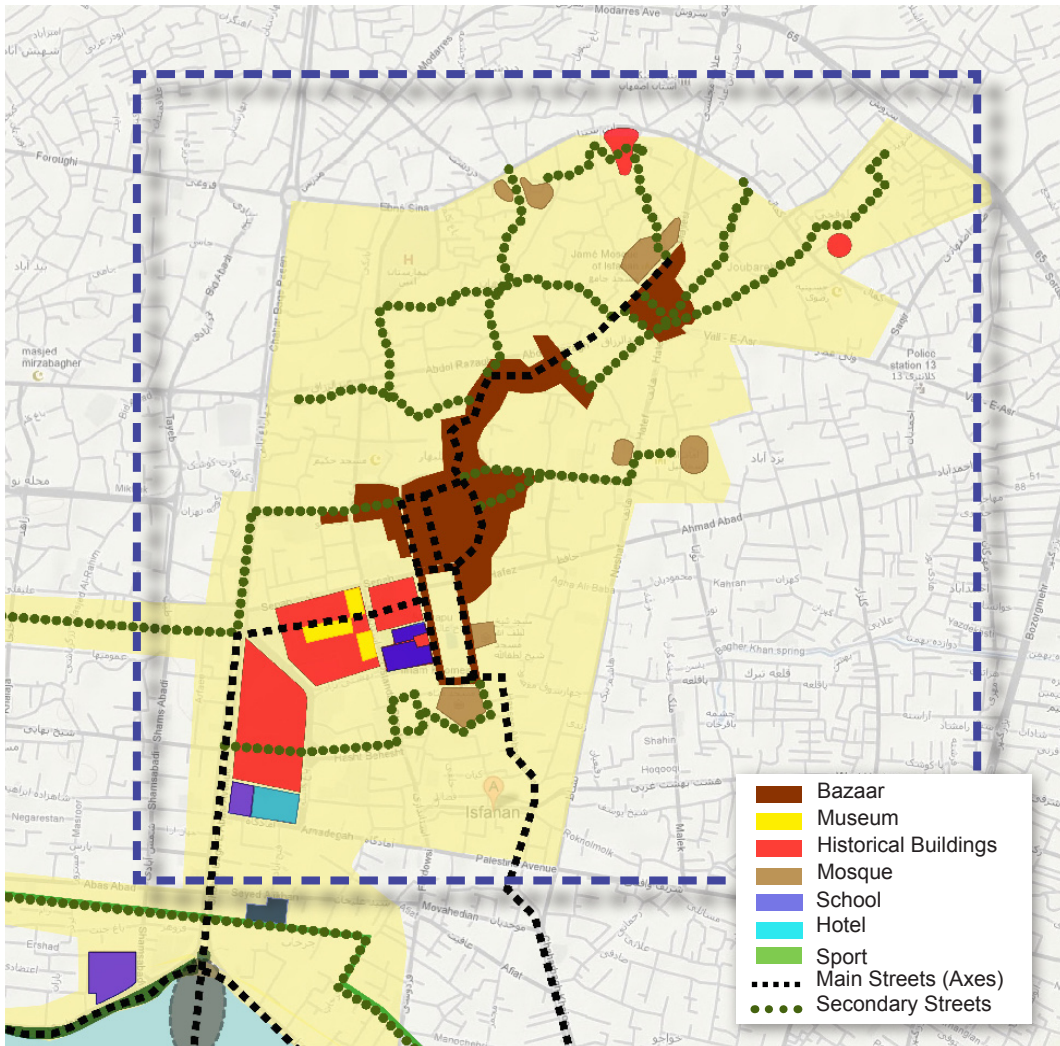




# Zone Devisions of Isfahan City



# Zone 1: Historical Core of the City Old City of Isfahan and New part of 17th century



## History

The Safavid monuments for which Isfahan is famous were commissioned by Abbas I after 1602. Military victories between the years 1590 and 1602 had confirmed Abbas's capacity as an empire builder. More capital and labor were put into bridges, roads, and caravanserais to build and facilitate trade. Abbas I was now ready to supplant the city's past and construct a pristine arena of Safavid rule outside the historic center. He established his "new city" in Isfahan to the south of the old city center, to which he transferred the imperial household; merchants and artisans relocated there as well. In the design of the new city, Abbas mobilized certain elements of the architectural past to generate a new Iranian imperial identity in the name of Safavid religious, commercial, and political ideals.

The center of the new city was a magnificent new maidan (510 x 158 meters) exultantly called the "Design of the World" Maidan (Maidan-i Naqsh-i Jahan). Its design united all of the facets of the Safavid polity into one spatial diagram: worship (the Shah Mosque), commemoration (the Mosque of Sheikh Lutfallah), sovereign administration (the Imperial Palace), and trade (Qaisariya Bazaar).

The grand scale and inorganic mathematical order of the new city implied that the values embodied in the old capital had been surpassed and supplanted by Abbas's priorities: religious tolerance, capitalism, state Shiism, Sufi reverence for saintly teachers and concern for the welfare of

the masses. The new maidan turned its back on the old center, creating instead an alignment with the new Chahar Bagh Avenue (1596-1602) and the multi-ethnic, multi-faith sacred sites and suburbs south of the Zayandeh River. The latter included Hindu cremation platforms, a Zoroastrian cemetery, and the suburbs of New Julfa (for silk-trading Christian Armenians) and Abbasabad Chahar Bagh (for Tabrizi war refugees). Many new bridges were built linking the northern city with the southern suburbs. Operable flood gates on the lower level of the Khwaju Bridge (1650-51) celebrated Safavid technological control of nature, while on the upper level social amenities such as a promenade and pavilions invited passers-by to linger and enjoy the view of the river -- source of the city's pleasure and prosperity. By designing the avenue, bridges, and streets of the suburbs in alignment with the orthogonal layout of new city, the designers succeeded in embedding Abbas's ideology inescapably into the fabric of urban life.

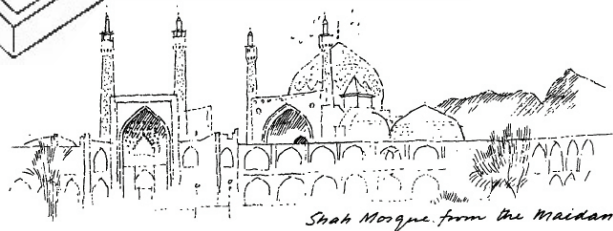
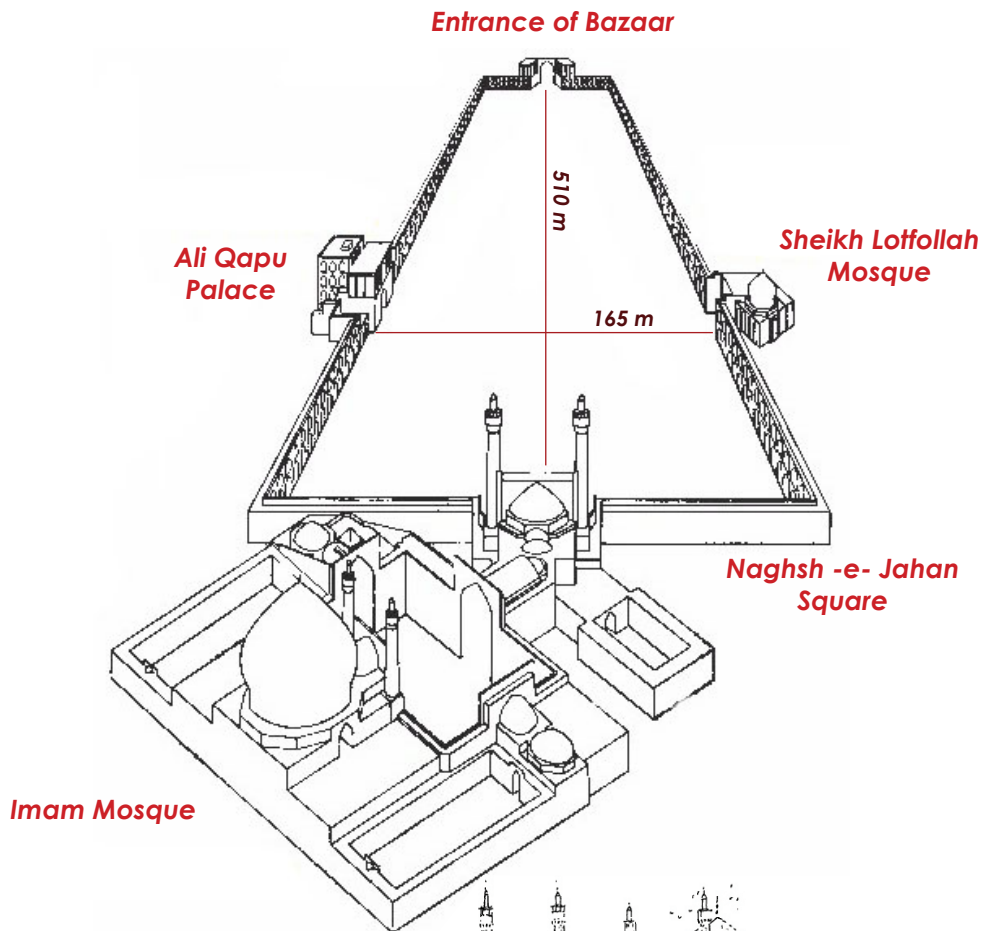




## Historical Core of the City - Naghshe Jahan Square



Shah Mosque and the surrounding buildings of Naghshe Jahan Square, Tehran, Iran, 1650-1660



Shah Mosque from the Maidan

### **Naghsh-e-Jahan Square,**

"Image of the world" was constructed between 1598 and 1629, it is now an important historical site, which welcomes the Imam Mosque.

The square is surrounded by buildings from the Safavid era.



### **Ali Qapu Palace,**

It is located on the western side of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square opposite to Sheikh Iqbal mosque, and had been originally designed as a vast portal. It is forty-eight meters high and there are seven floors, each accessible by a difficult spiral staircase. In the sixth floor music room, deep circular niches are found in the walls, having not only aesthetic value, but also acoustic.



### **Imam Mosque (Masjed-e Shah),**

Standing in south side of Naghsh-e Jahan Square.

Its construction began in 1611, and its splendor is mainly due to the beauty of its seven-colour mosaic tiles and calligraphic inscriptions.

The purpose of this mosque was for it to be a public.

### **Sheikh Iqbal Mosque,**

standing on the eastern side of Naghsh-e Jahan Square.

Construction of the mosque started in 1603 and was finished in 1618. It was built by the chief architect Shaykh Bahai, during the reign of Shah Abbas I of the Safavid dynasty.

The purpose of this mosque was to be private mosque of the royal court.





## Historical Core of the City - Bazaar

Earlier, Isfahan Bazaar consisted of two parts, namely the old section, which revolved around the old square close to the Friday Mosque and the new section, which started from Naqsh-e Jahan Square and extended till the old section.

In the 11th century, after selecting Isfahan as the capital of Seljuk Dynasty, the old square became the center of the city. It had a castle, a drum house, the royal residence and shops selling silk, brocade, precious stones, ivory and other goods.

There were some peripheral markets along the main streets radiating from the old square. The 1.5-km-long street shopping street is still the main street in the bazaar (the longest vaulted bazaar street in the world).

After Shah Abbas selected Isfahan as the seat of power, a new bazaar was designed between the old bazaar and the square.

Shah Abbas redeveloped the city extensively and ordered the construction of a number of new bazaars, including those surrounding the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, both the Hassanabad and mosque bazaars to the southeast and the large bazaar to the north where the old bazaar was located.

As a result, it contains a representative selection of Islamic architecture over the last 500 years. It has about 5 km of shopping streets, some with brick arches, some with poplar beams, over a hundred

caravanserais and innumerable covered halls and connecting wings.

As mentioned, Naqsh-e Jahan is surrounded by a layer of shops. Behind these shops there are several parts of the bazaar, like caravanserais and peripheral markets for different businesses. Based on non-documented stories, after the construction of the new Friday Mosque, called the Shah mosque and located in the square, Shah Abbas attempted to encourage people to participate in Friday prayer in the Shah mosque, instead of the Grand Mosque.

However, most people refused to participate in Friday prayers in the Shah Mosque, and for a while Friday prayers were conducted at two places in Isfahan (in the Shah Mosque and in the Grand Mosque).

When people did not accept the new square as a city center, Shah Abbas decided to donate all the shops around the new square to people under the regulations of endowment. As a result, nobody was obliged to pay to buy these shops.

Gradually Naqsh-e Jahan Square replaced the old square as the main city center for gatherings, shopping and participation in Friday prayer.

### Developments

The old square became a wood and vegetable market, but the highclass retail businesses established themselves as they could expect a good turnover from courtiers, soldiers and visitors from the nearby Chaharbagh Street. The area to the east of the main axis, the royal residence and its extension, the fabric painters' bazaar, became the most sought-after



site.

By counting the number of schools, mosques and baths in the bazaar, we can understand to what extent the bazaar acted as the center of Isfahan. The bazaar also had cisterns, warehouses and stables. The most important difference between the old and the new bazaars is the organic growth of the old section in a linear form and the radial growth of the new bazaar. The old bazaar was developed to meet

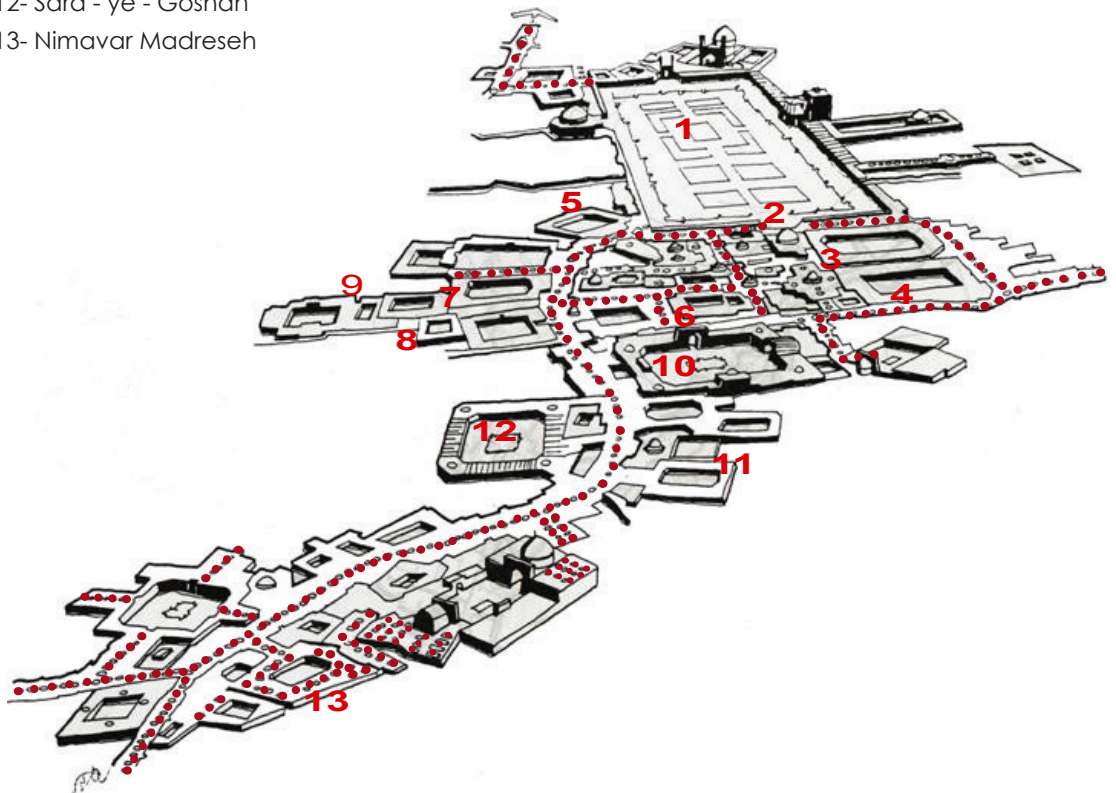
the needs of people for goods in residential quarters.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the economic role of the main bazaar has declined. The main reason for this phenomenon is the import of goods from Western countries and establishment of shopping centers outside the bazaar, which have made it possible for people to get all necessary goods in all parts of the city without going to the bazaar.



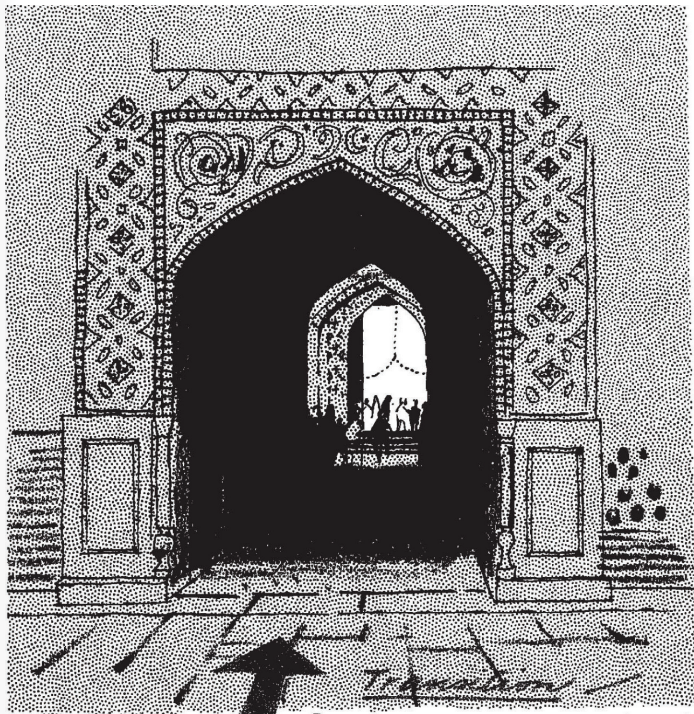
Plan reproduced from 'The Sense of Unity' by Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar. University of Chicago Press, 1973.

- 1- Naghsh - e - Jahan Square
- 2- Qeysariyeh Portal
- 3- Chahar - su - ye - Bozorg
- 4- Caravanserai - ye - Shah
- 5- Mullah Abdollah Madreseh
- 6- Timche - ye- Malek
- 7- Jadde Kuchak Madreseh
- 8- Jadde Bozorg Madreseh
- 9- Caravanserai Nou
- 10- Sadr Madreseh
- 11- Jarchi Mosque
- 12- Sara - ye - Goshan
- 13- Nimavar Madreseh

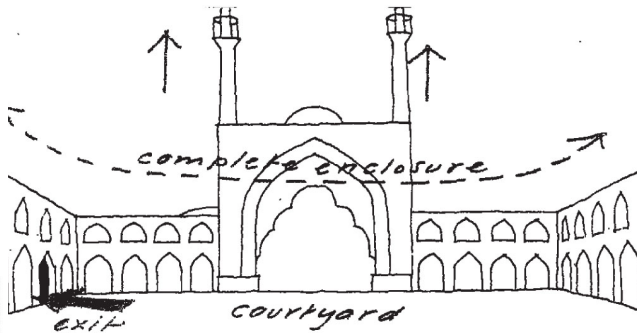






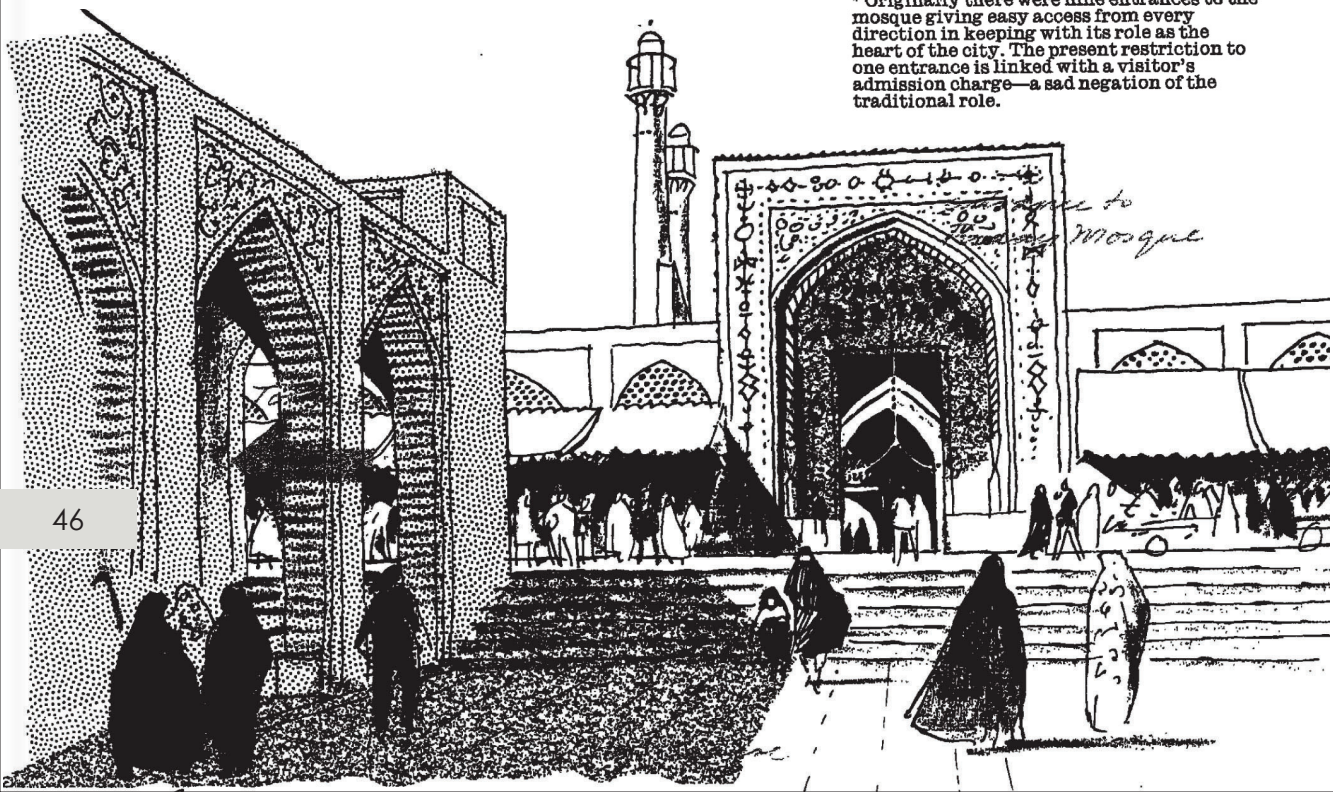


*Transition*  
 Passage to Outside World  
 from courtyard of  
 Friday Mosque - brass  
 chain at far end  
 defines threshold.



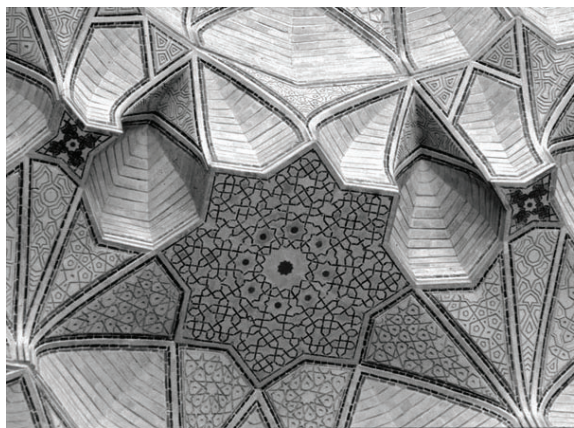
Our route begins at the Friday Mosque, 1-4, an appropriate starting place since this great monument, nearly a thousand years old, is perhaps the most memorable building in Isfahan. A spatial masterpiece in itself, its essence is a spacious open court flanked by walls of delicate blue tiling and abutting a maze of dimly lit earth-coloured prayer halls. These are roofed by splendid Seljuk brick domes on a forest of massive columns. Between the serene stillness of the mosque and the busy outside world, and clearly defining the transition, lies a dark, arched passageway, 1, striped by bands of sunlight and ending in a brightly lit archway.\* Beyond is a small square lined with open stalls, a gathering place in front of the mosque, 2. Then at right angles an arched entrance funnels you straight into the north-south movement system of the

\* Originally there were nine entrances to the mosque giving easy access from every direction in keeping with its role as the heart of the city. The present restriction to one entrance is linked with a visitor's admission charge—a sad negation of the traditional role.





# Friday Mosque



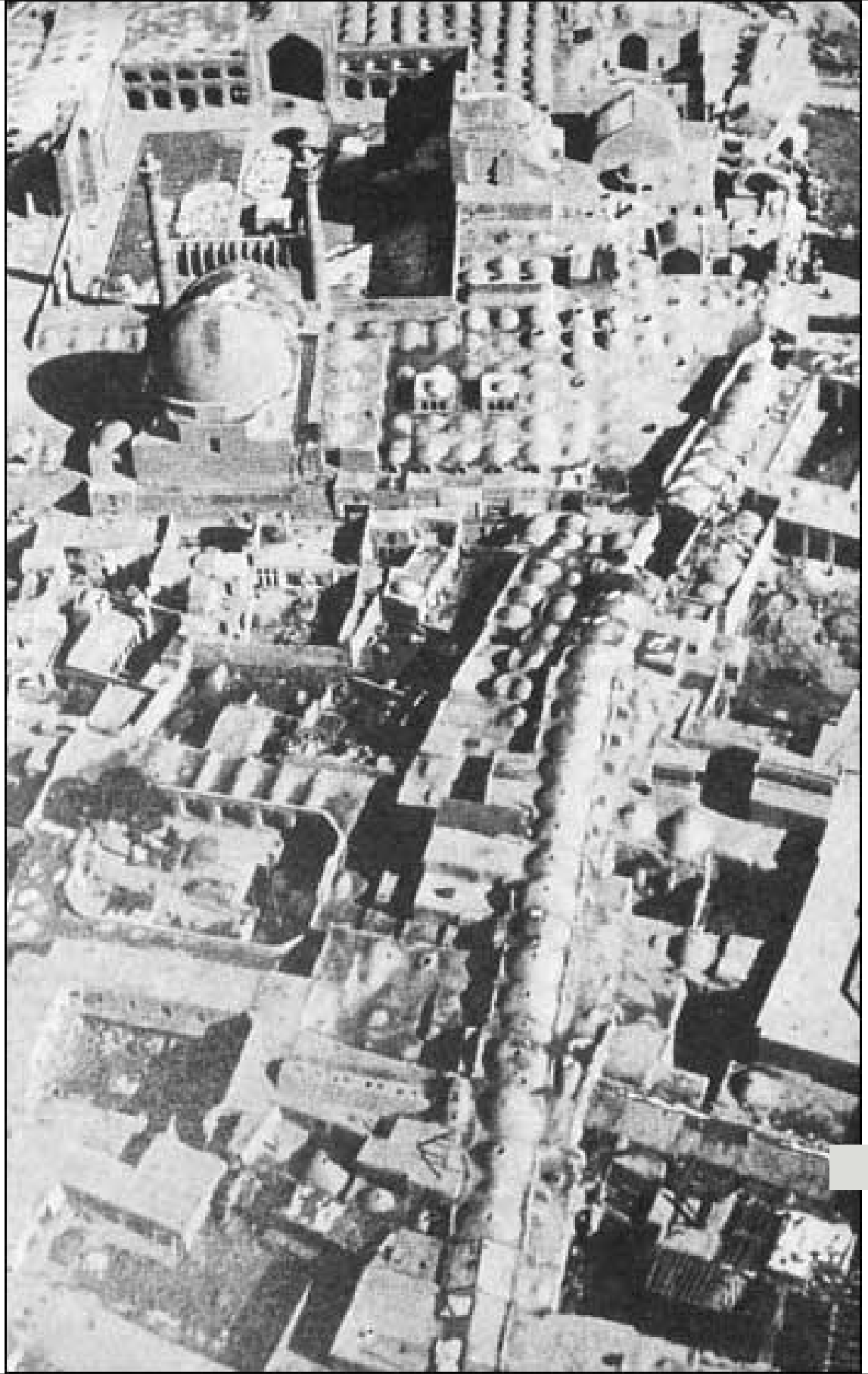




### Friday Mosque

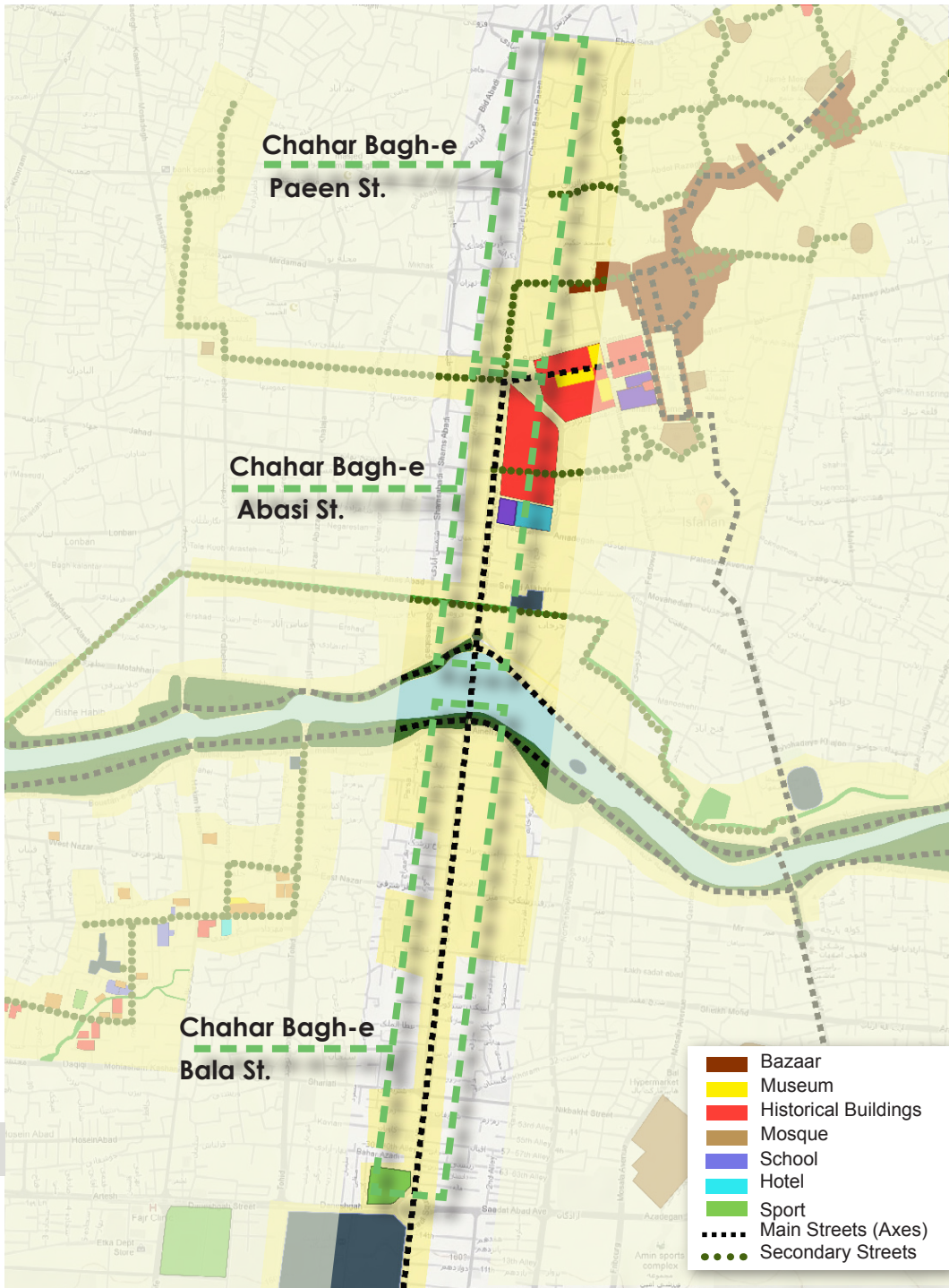
looking Friday Mosque with the Bazaar rout(foreground) traced by the continous line of brick domes.







## Zone 2: Chahar Bagh street, Historical and main Axis of the City



## History

Chahar Bagh is the main boulevard of Isfahan, Iran. It was built as a part of a larger urban project undertaken between 1596 and 1597 by the Safavid Shah Abbas I. Its name, literally translated as "four gardens", refers to a popular garden typology consisting of four plots divided by waterways or paths forming a cruciform plan.

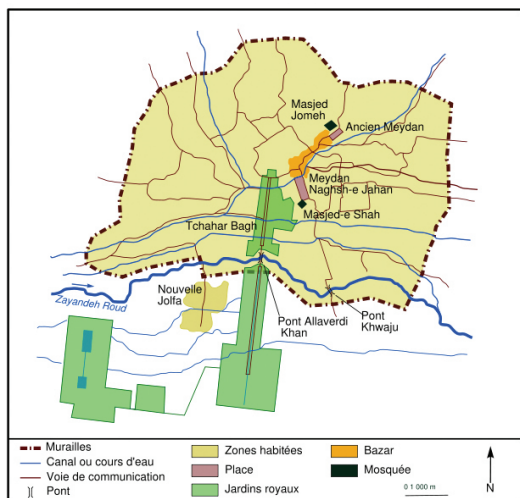
The public boulevard is 1,650 meters long and consists of four quadripartite gardens arranged along a north-south axis that slopes towards the south. Each quadripartite unit is composed of two square and two rectangular plots separated by pathways and is located slightly lower than the preceding unit. Together, they are experienced as a single boulevard with a central promenade flanked by axial garden plots.

The gardens have since been converted into roadways, with plane trees lining either side. Running along the center of the promenade was a water channel with cascades; the promenade now only features circular flower beds and light posts.

The Chahar Bagh is located approximately 535 meters to the west of the main city

square (maidan), and urbanistically serves as the main north-south artery of the city from which all other east-west avenues spring. Between the Chahar Bagh and the Maidan are the royal gardens. Overlooking the northern end of the boulevard is a small glass pavilion. The boulevard continues on the other side of the Zayandeh river, crossed by the Allahverdi Khan Bridge (b. 1602), where the royal gardens of Hazar Jarib are located. Further south, the Chahar Bagh connects Isfahan with Julfa, an Armenian Colony settled during the reign of Shah Abbas.

The Chahar Bagh continues to be an important social gathering place of Isfahan. At its inception, it was lined by palaces and residences of noblemen that faced on to it with open arcades giving views to their private gardens. In 1706-1714, the large madrasa complex of Madar-e Shah was built along the eastern side of the boulevard. Today, it is lined with shops, hotels, and some remaining palaces.



Shah Abbas I was the king who changed his capital from Qazvin to Esfahan and decided to pour all the countries artistic wealth into that central spot which has been dubbed for centuries "Nisfi Jahan" or "Half the World". The chief architect of this task of urban planning was Shaykh Bahai (Baha' ad-Din al-'Amili), who focused the programme on two key features of Shah Abbas's master plan: the Chahar Bagh avenue, flanked at either side by all the prominent institutions of the city, such as the residences of all foreign dignitaries, and the Naqsh-e Jahan Square ("Exemplar of the World").

Chahar Bagh Street is divided in 3 part:

**Chahar Bagh Paeen:**

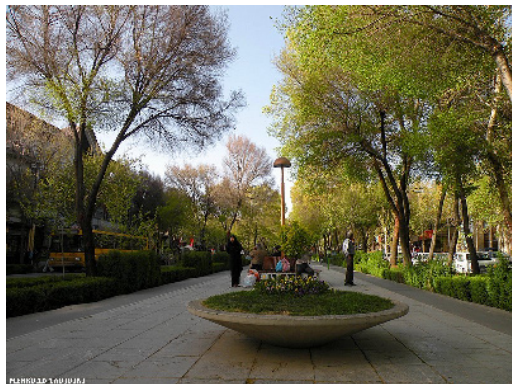
This part of Chahar Bagh is from Shohada Square to Takhti Junction.

**Chahar Bagh Abbasi:**

This part of Chahar Bagh is from Takhti Junction to Northern 33 pol at Enqelab Square.

**Chahar Bagh Bala:**

This part of Chahar Bagh is from Azadi Square to southern 33 pol.



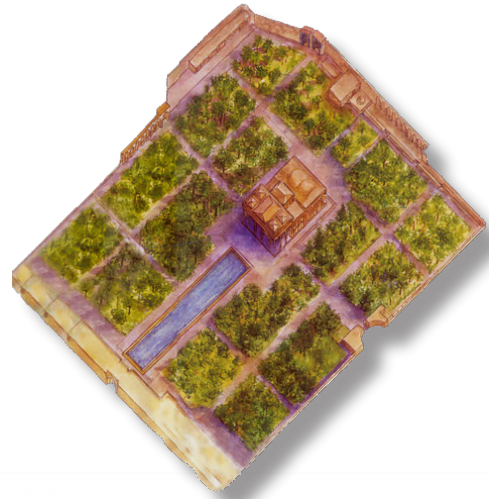




## Historical Core of the City: Building, Garden and Museum

### Chehel Sotoun (Forty Columns)

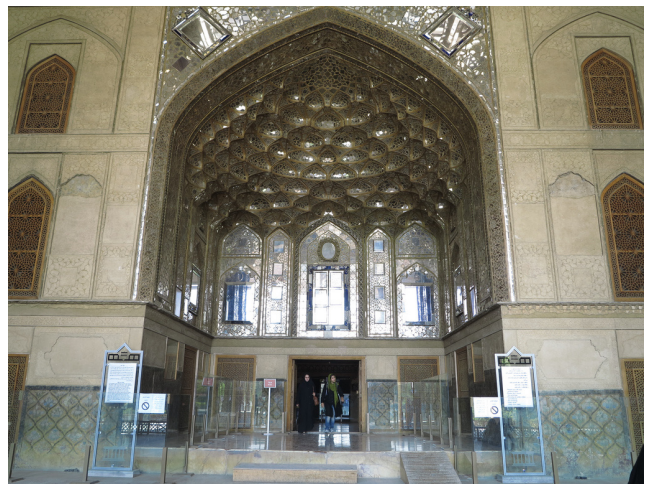
Is a charming pavilion in the middle of a park at the far end of a long pool, built by Shah Abbas II to be used for the Shah's entertainment and receptions. In this palace, Shah Abbas II and his successors would receive dignitaries and ambassadors, either on the terrace or in one of the stately reception halls. The name, "Forty Columns" was inspired by the twenty slender wooden columns supporting the entrance pavilion, which, when reflected in the waters of the fountain, are said to appear to be forty.



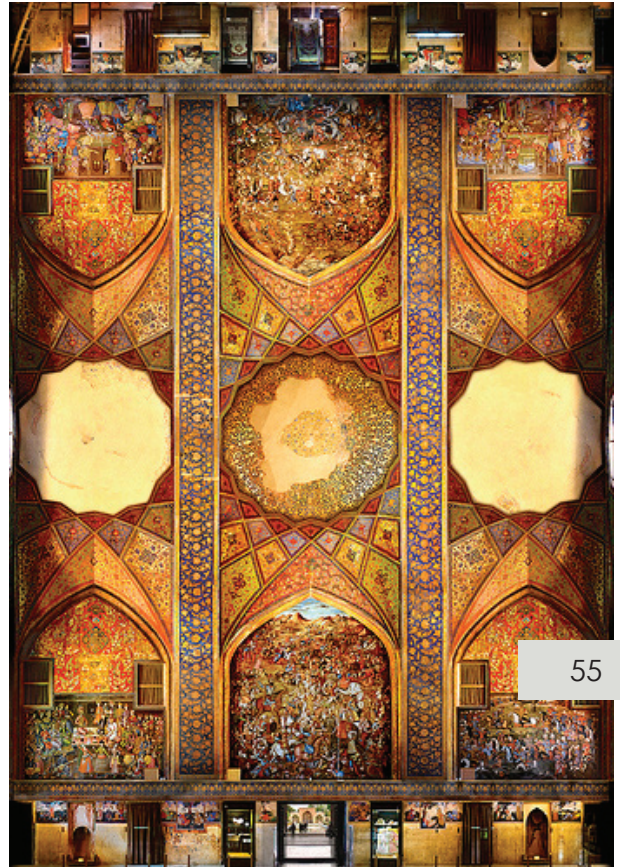








- Shapes and Paintings of vaults inside of the palace
- Wall paintings
- Entrance to the Chehel Sotun Palace



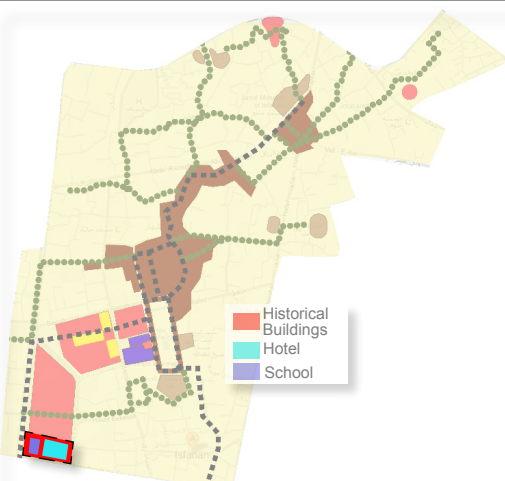


Night life of chehel sotun









## Historical Core of the City: Building, Madras, Hotel and Restaurant

### Abbasi Complex

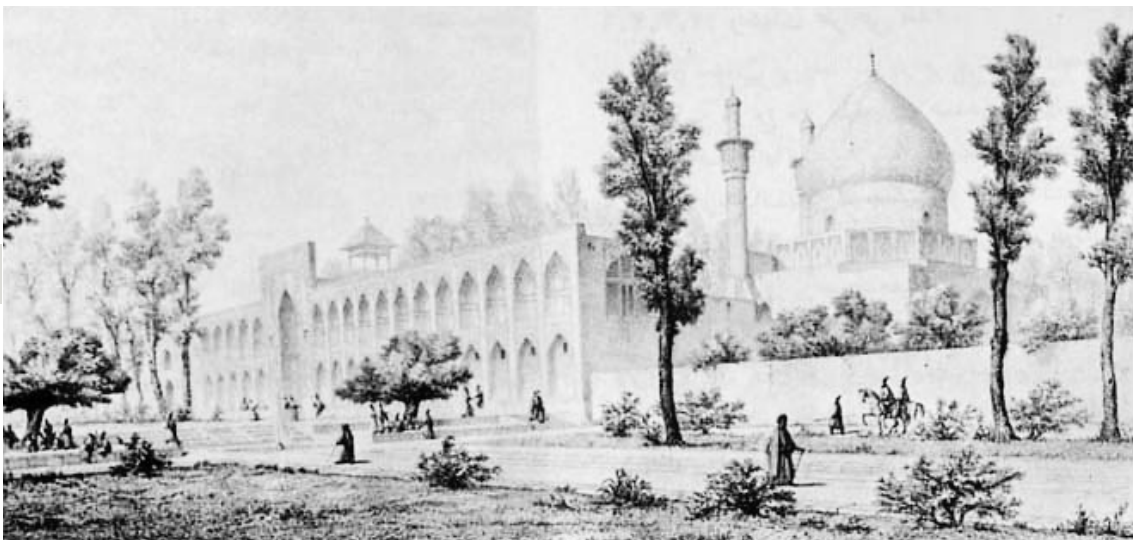
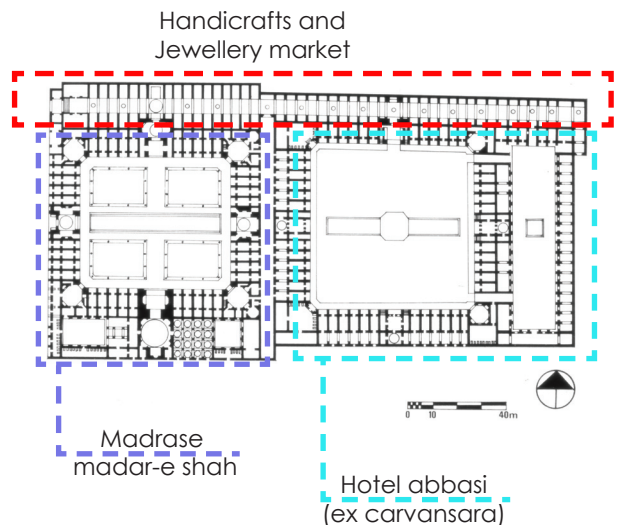
Among what has remained from the age of the Safavids, there still exists a school, bazaar and caravansaray complex which sparkles like a piece of jewelry at the side of Chahar Bagh street.

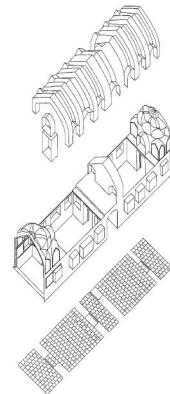
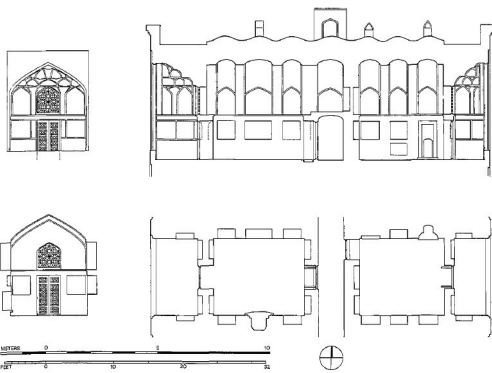
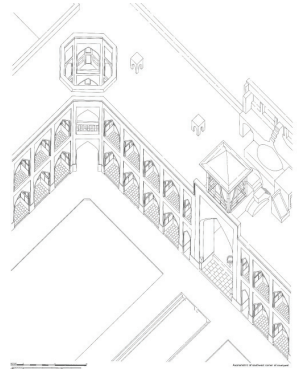
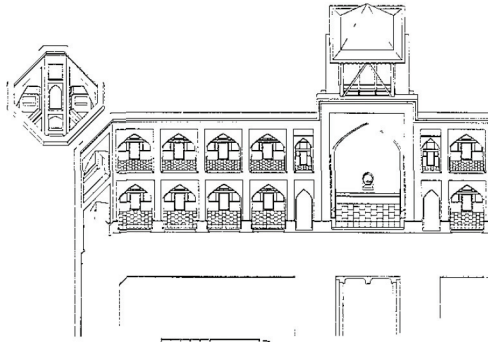
This complex was built at the time of king Sultan Hossein of Safavids about 300 years ago. King Soltan Hossein attributed this magnificent complex of building to his mother. That is why; it is called "the school and caravansaray of Madar-shah" (which means king's mother).

Top-end Hotel Abbasi replaced the caravanserai initially commissioned by Shah Sultan Hosain I (r. 1694–1722) upon his erection of Madrased Chahar Bagh.

The caravanserai was initially built and entangled in a complex financial system of grants and taxes intended to sustain the Madrased and maintain its financial integrity in a seminal act of financial engineering.

The courtyard is designed with a fountain pool in the middle, four garden designs and a view over the Chahar Bagh Madrased dome.







In reconstruction of the caravansaries, the main attempt has been to preserve the general shape. Madar-Shah caravansaray likewise owns a square courtyard in the middle, each side of which amounts to eighty meters. In reconstruction of this caravansaray, this dusty courtyard has changed into a garden imbued with plants and colorful flowers. A stream flows through this courtyard, which is called Farshadi stream. At each side of this courtyard is located a verandah at the two sides of which are aligned two-storey chambers.

In reconstruction of the caravansaries, the main attempt has been to preserve the general shape. Madar-Shah caravansaray likewise owns a square courtyard in the middle, each side of which amounts to eighty meters. In reconstruction of this caravansaray, this dusty courtyard has changed into a garden imbued with plants and colorful flowers. A stream flows through this courtyard, which is called Farshadi stream. At each side of this courtyard is located a verandah at the two sides of which are aligned two-storey chambers.

Simplicity and strength of this building with its open pleasant area is reminiscent of the glory and grace of Naghsh-e-Jahan square which is

the precious treasure left from the Persia of the Safavids periods.

At this time, according to the suggestion of Andre Goddard who was then the counselor of Archeology Bureau, Iran Insurance Company came to save the monument. The company consented to the alteration of the caravansary to a hotel and approved of the plan of the hotel building which was later called King Abbas hotel (1336 A.H).

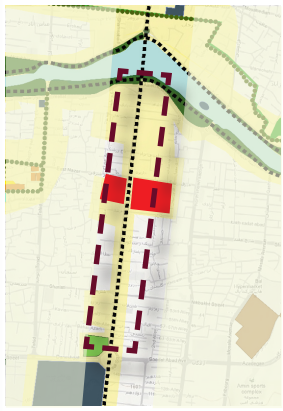
In this way, not only was a valuable historical monument saved but also the memory of its first use as the lodging of the passengers and tourists was preserved in the new form it assumed. Besides, a scenic and elegant space was provided for the tourists in such a celebrated city as Isfahan. Now, the gurgling of water and the color of Persian gardens, images from the grandeur of Islamic architecture, the eloquent artistic designs carved on the forehead of the lofty walls and verandas, the landscape of the picturesque turquoise dome of Chaharbagh Madresseh are images which are printed on the minds of the guests as such that these images can hardly ever be consigned to oblivion.











## Chahar Bagh-e Bala Ave.

In the early 19th century, 10 major companies were formed in the suburbs Zayanderud, which three of them on the north bank of Zayanderud and the rest on the southern river bank.

These factories were very good examples of Industrial Architecture of Isfahan in that period. Now most of them was destroyed and some of them restored and changed their functions .

## Rysbaf Factory

One of the last examples of industrial architecture, dated on Pahlavi I period.

To save its fragmentation and degradation, the implementation of a regional museum is in the pending.

Factory "Rysbaf" located on the southeastern side "33Pol bridge" in the gardens of "Etemad" and "Hatem Beyg", the land area is over 69 thousand square meters and was constructed by two architects, "Motamedi" and "Shunman" German engineer. The construction was started on 09.11.1311, with an initial capital of 314 thousand dollars and was registered in July 1313.



## Former Wool Factory - Secretariat of City Council Action

Following the establishment of new industries in Iran during first Pahlavi kingdom, textile factories were established in big cities. Mansion of the Wool industry is one of the this factories situated in Chahar Bagh Avenue and the former Barberr Garden (Gardens of the Safavid era) was created. Now it only remains office building, this building has two floors, the first floor contains ten rooms and two halls (Hall entrance on the north and south of the cornea). The stairs to the second floor to find the middle of the building, including plaster, mirror work and paintings that are elegant and beautiful in your own way. The flowers and leaves and fruits tore is very prominent, and in the elegance have been created and colored. The base plasters are in Persian style and plasters on the crown of mirrors are in western sty.



### Exterior Pictures





Interior Pictures





### Zone 3: Zayandeh River and Bridges



- \* The word ZAYANDE in Persian means GIVING LIFE
- \* Starts from ZAGROS mountains in WEST
- \* Flows from WEST to EAST 400 Km
- \* Gives water to central Iran (Isfahan and Yazd)



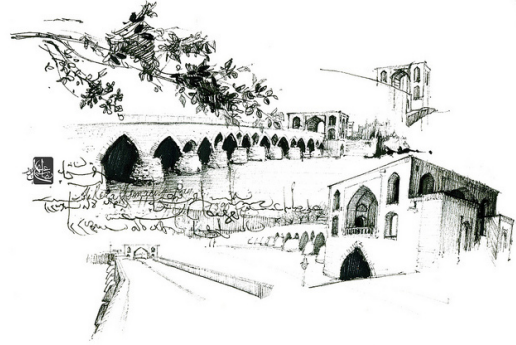


Zayanderud River is a large, 400 km long river that is positioned on the plateaux of Isfahan, Iran. It runs from the top of the he Zagros Mountains and flows easterly, and ends in the Gavkhouni swamp, which is a seasonal salt lake, on the Southeast sector of Isfahan. The Zayandeh river has significant flow all year long, unlike many of Iran's rivers which are seasonal. The river has significant value because of its position through the city, and by the presence of the many historical Safavid era bridges that span the river, and flows through many parks. The river has a wide source of history and surrounding culture. For example, People have lived on the banks of Zayandeh River for thousands of years, and traces back to an ancient prehistoric

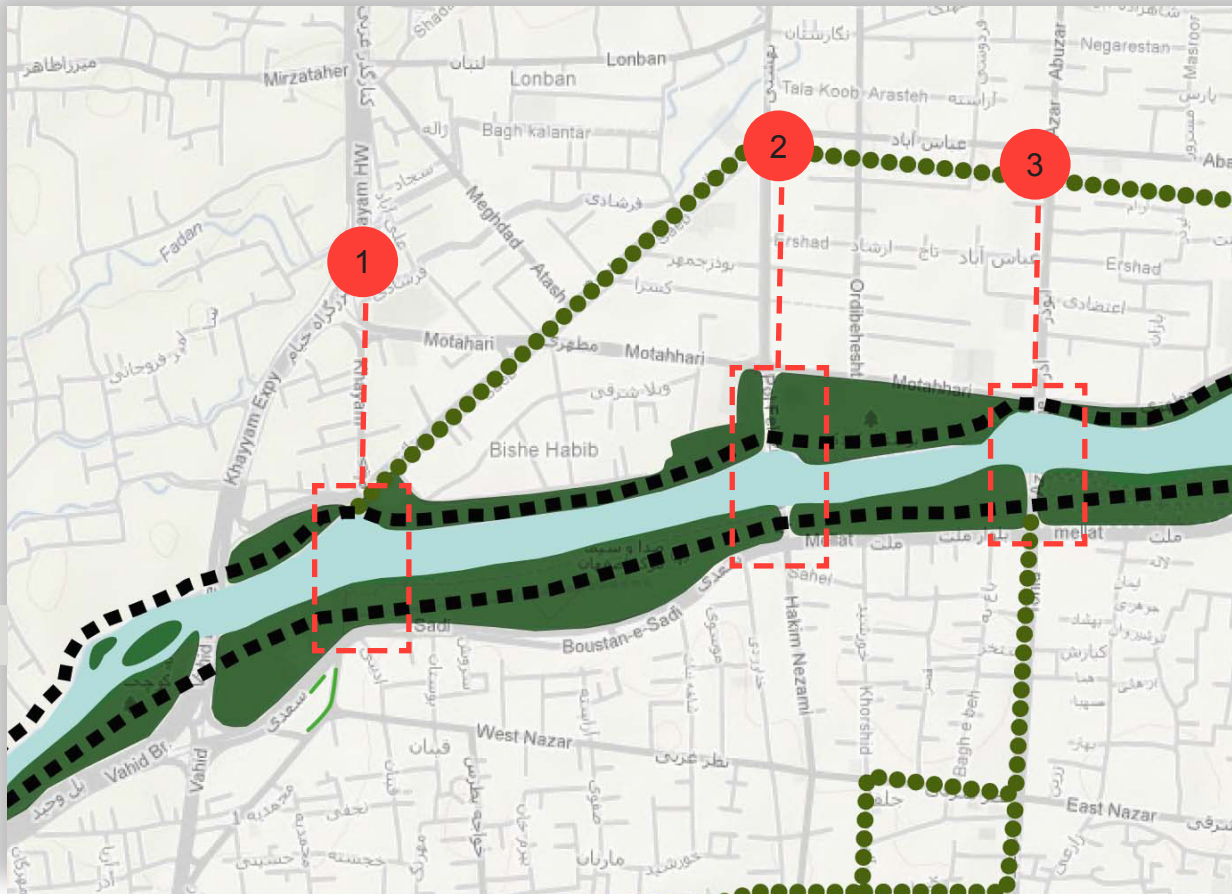
community of culture and richness since the 5th millennium BC. This community is better known as the Zayandeh River Civilization, that have lived on the banks of Zayandeh River for thousands of years, but they have only been proven from excavations examined from the banks. This richness in historical and cultural heritage is evident in today's river banks. The Water from the Zayandeh River helped with the growth of both population and economy, and in turn, helped to establish Esfahan as an influential center of Iran. As a result, the water has given the famous green landscape to the river banks, in spite of it being in the middle of the desert.

## Bridges:

The bridges over the river include some of the nicest architecture in Isfahan. The oldest bridge is the "Pol-e Shahrestan," which was probably built in the 12th century during the Seljuk period. Further upstream is the "Pol-e Khaju," which was built by Shah Abbas II in 1650. It is 123 metres long with 24 arches, and it also serves as a sluice gate. The next bridge is the "Pol-e Jubi." It was originally built as an aqueduct to supply the palace gardens on the north bank of the river. Further upstream again is the Si-o-Seh Pol or bridge of 33 arches. Built during the rule of Shah Abbas the Great, it linked Isfahan with the Armenian suburb of Jolfa. It is by far the longest bridge in Isfahan at 295 m.

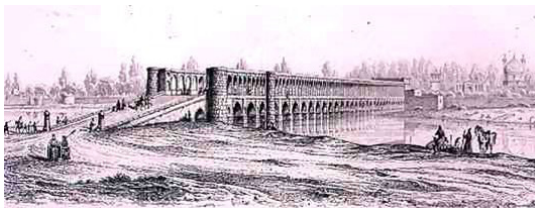


Shahrestan Bridge - built in the 12th century

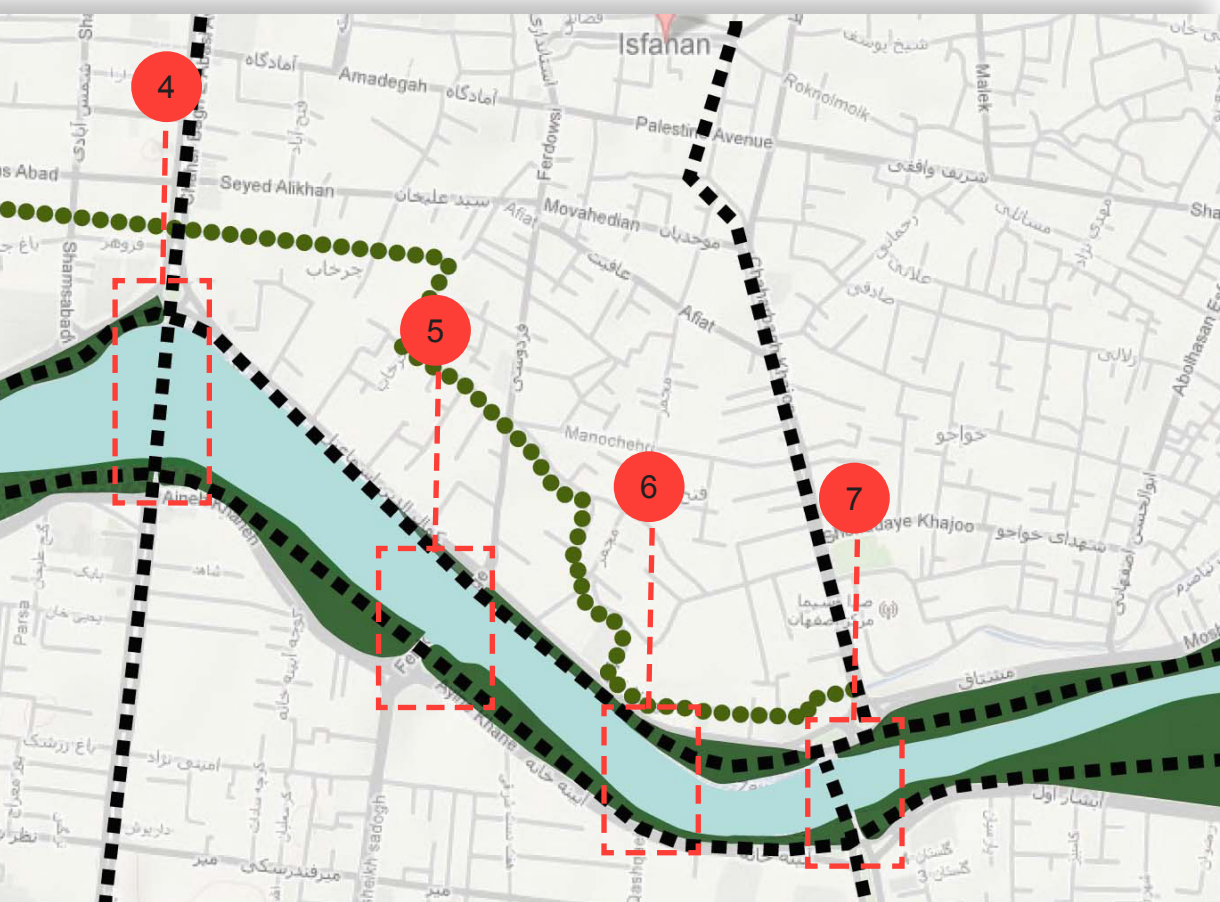


From 16 bridges along the river 7 of them are inside of Isfahan city, which day are:

- 1- Marnan Bridge
- 2- Felezi Bridge
- 3- Azar Bridge
- 4- Siose Pol Bridge
- 5- Ferdowsi Bridge
- 6- Choobi Bridge
- 7- Khju Bridge



Top & middle: Khaju Bridge from two sides  
Bottom: Siose Pol Bridge







### 1- Marnan Bridge

- Built in: 1599 Safavid period
- Planned and constructed by an Armenian administrator of Armenian district in Isfahan.

### 2- Felezi Bridge

- Built in: 1956
- The first metal bridge in Isfahan with concrete structure.
- Car Pass bridge



### 3- Azar Bridge

- Built in: 1976
- Car Pass bridge

### 4- Siose Pol Bridge

- Means 33 Bridge or the Bridge of 33 Arches)
- A pedestrian bridge
- Total length: 297.76 m
- Width: 13.75 m
- Longest span: 5.60 m
- One of the most famous examples of Safavid bridge design.
- Commissioned in 1602 by Shah Abbas I from his chancellor Allahverdi Khan Undiladze, an Iranian ethnic Georgian, it consists of two rows of 33 arches. There is a larger base plank at the start of the bridge where the Zayandeh River flows under it, supporting a tea house.





## 5- Ferdowsi Bridge

- Built in: 1976
- Car Pass bridge



## 6- Chubi Bridge

- Built in 1665 (Safavid era)
- A pedestrian bridge
- Length 47 m and 4 m Width
- With 21 arches

It was built during the reign of Shah Abbas II to irrigate and inter-relate the king's gardens on both sides of the river. The bridge and the two parlours within were for the exclusive use of the shah and his courtiers. Nowadays the parlours are being used as tea houses.



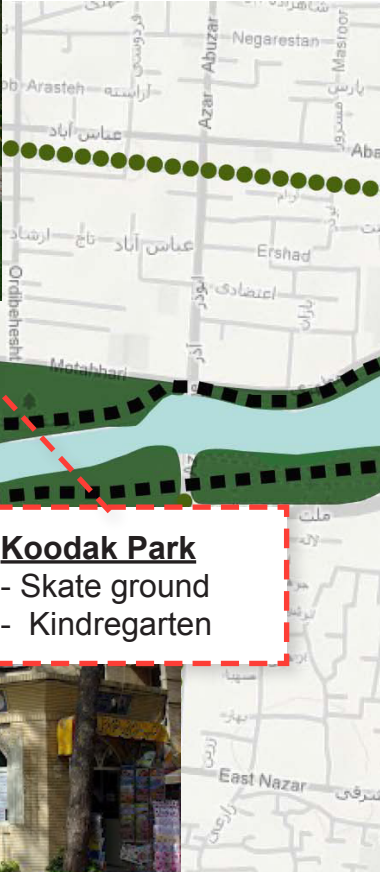
## 7- Khajoo Bridge

- Built 1650 (Safavid era)
- A pedestrian bridge
- The finest bridge in the province of Isfahan
- Serving as both a bridge, and a dam (or a weir)



- It links the Khaju quarter on the north bank with the Zoroastrian quarter across the Zayandeh River.
  - It served a primary function as a building and a place for public meetings.
  - This structure originally was ornated with artistic tile works and paintings serving as a teahouse; In the center of the structure, a pavilion exists inside of which Shah Abbas would have once sat, admiring the views.
- Today remnants of a stone seat is all that remains of the king's chair. The whole has rhythm and dignity and combines in the happiest consistency, utility, beauty, and recreation.

## Zayandeh Rud River: North River Bank

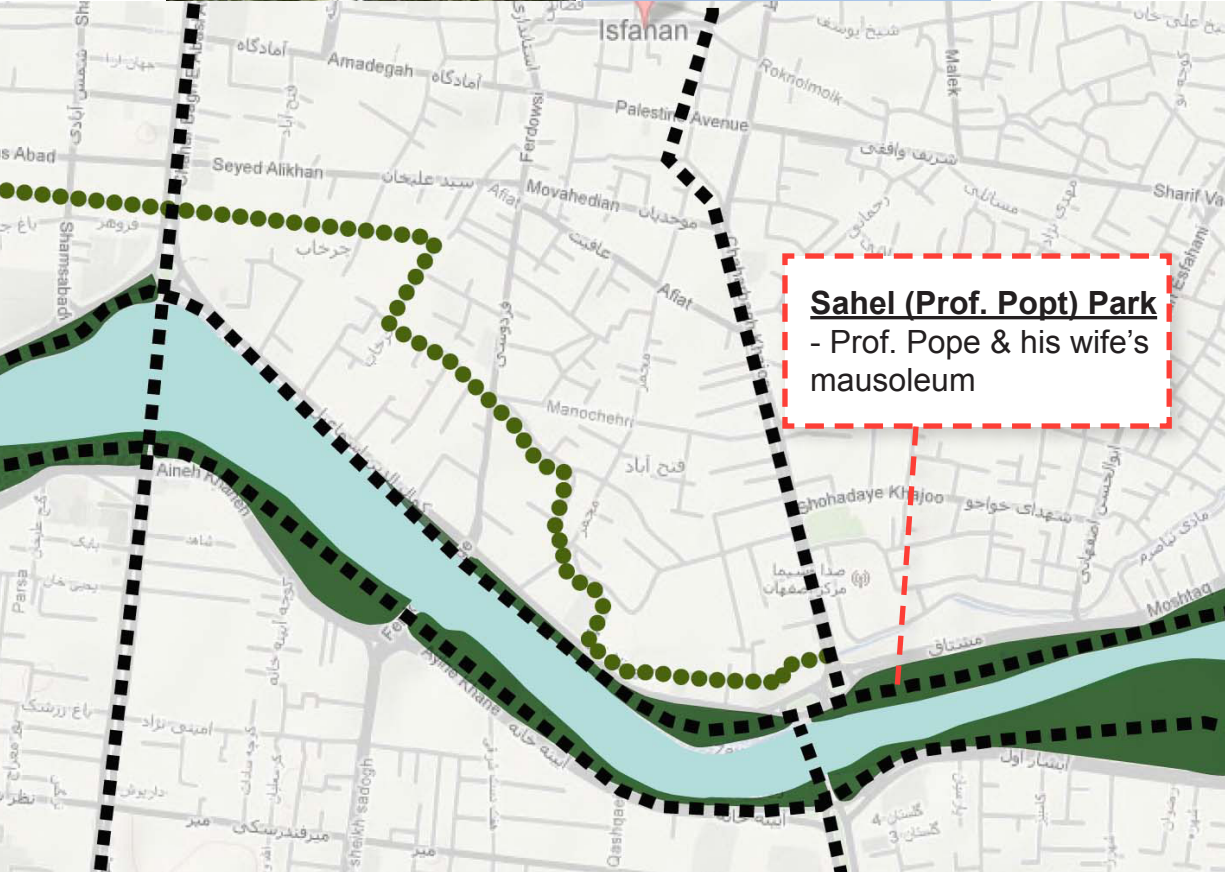


**Habib Park**

**Koodak Park**  
- Skate ground  
- Kindergarten

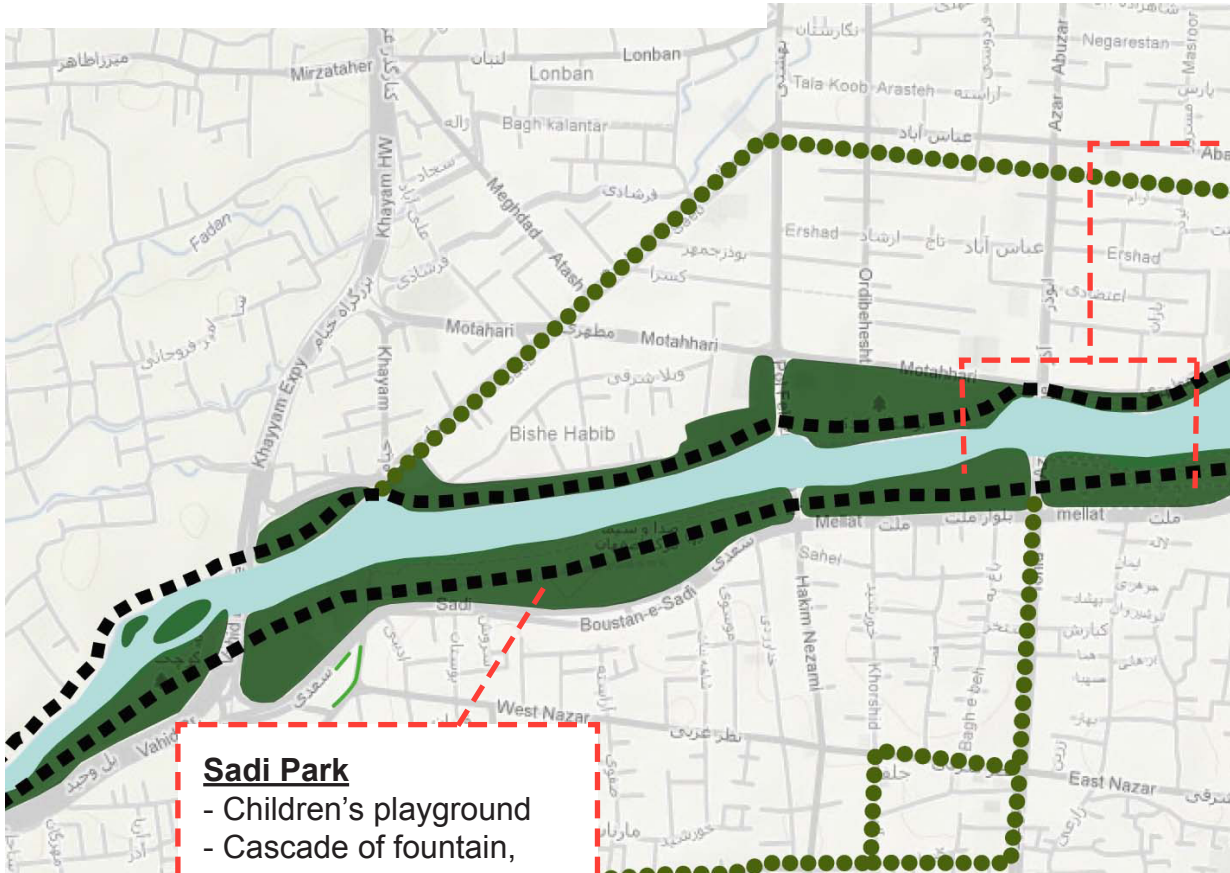






**Sahel (Prof. Popt) Park**  
 - Prof. Pope & his wife's  
 mausoleum

## Zayandeh Rud River: South River Bank

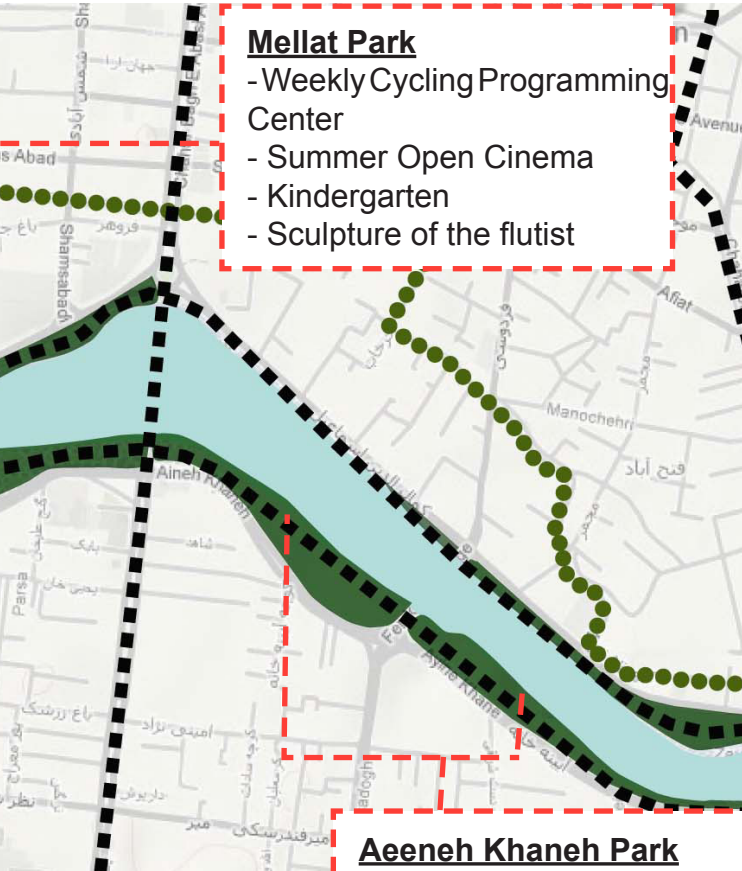


### Sadi Park

- Children's playground
- Cascade of fountain, Sculptures
- Praying room
- TV Organisation







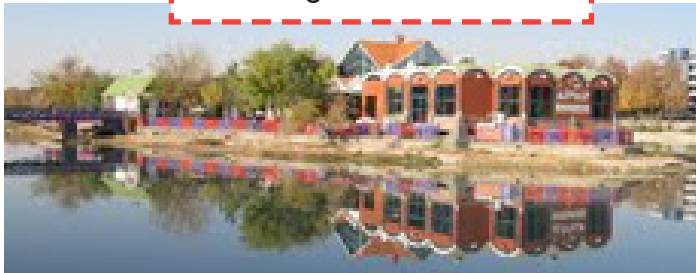
**Mellat Park**

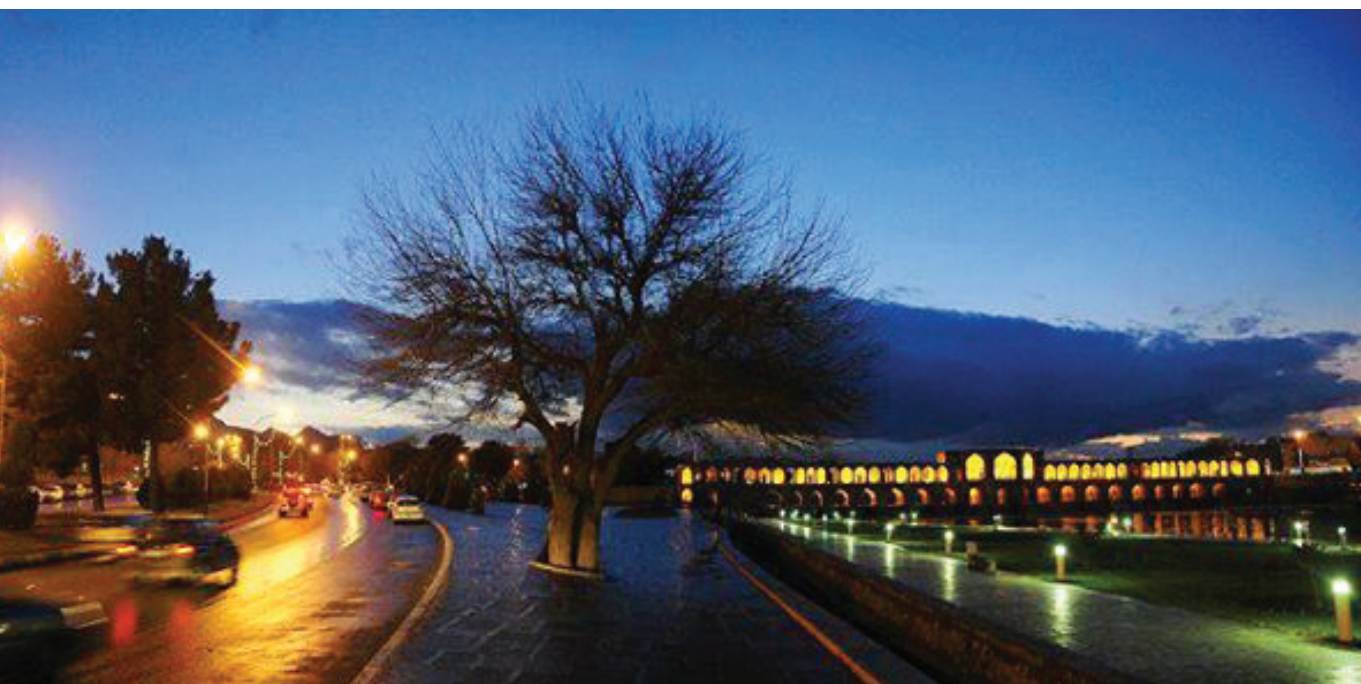
- Weekly Cycling Programming Center
- Summer Open Cinema
- Kindergarten
- Sculpture of the flutist

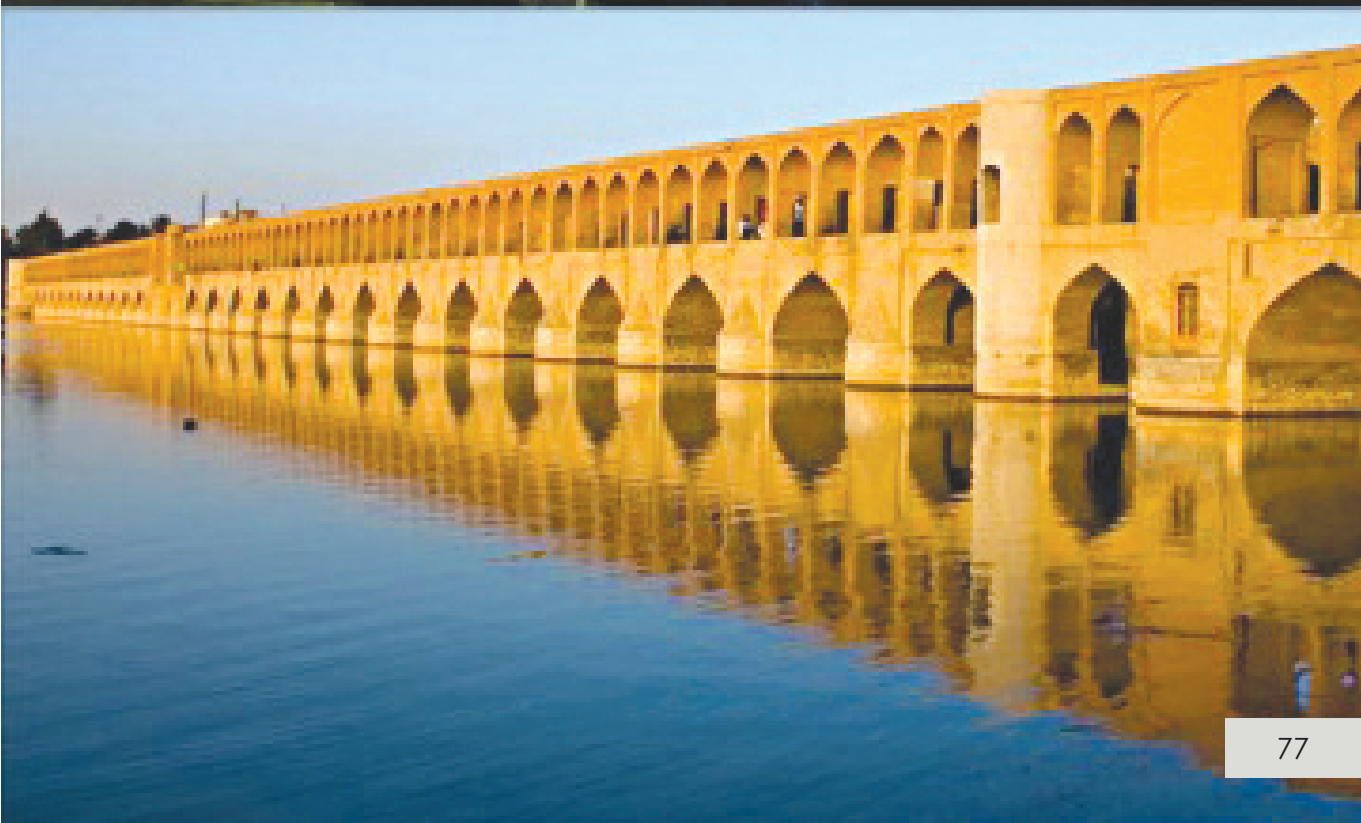


**Aeneh Khaneh Park**

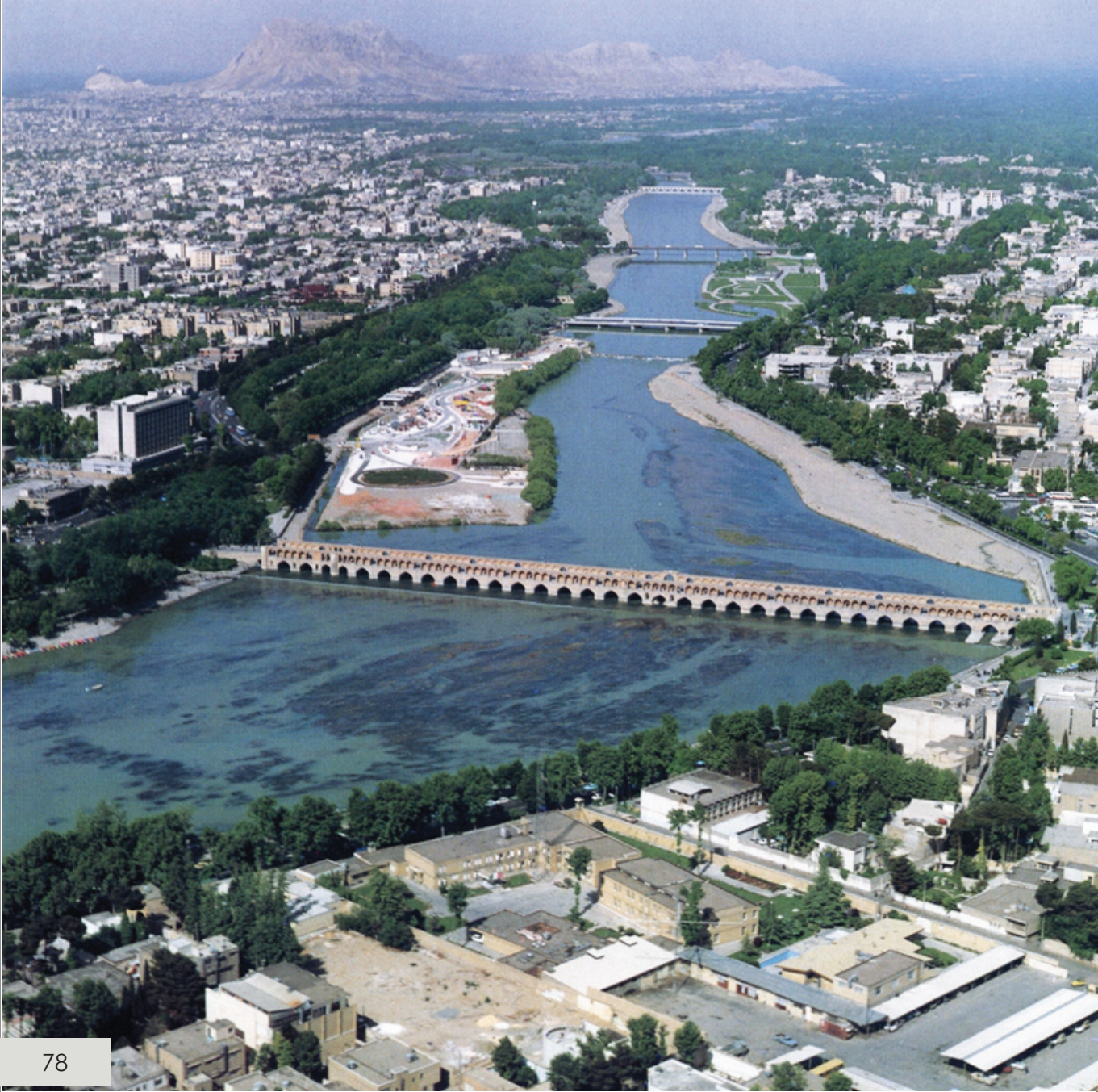
- Games Iland
- Child's Play ground
- Skating Center



















## History:

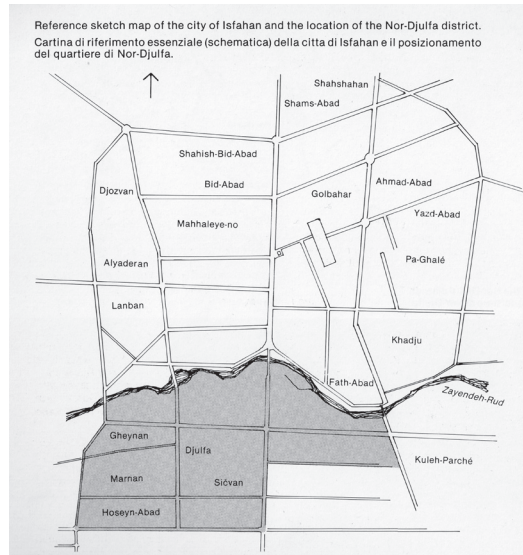
New Julfa is the Armenian quarter of Isfahan, located along the south bank of the river Zayandeh River.

In 1606 it was established as an Armenian quarter by edict of Shah Abbas I, the influential shah from the Safavid dynasty. Over 150,000 Armenians were moved there from Julfa (also known as Jugha or Djughha) in Nakhichevan. Iranian accounts state that the Armenians came to Persia fleeing the Ottoman Empire's persecutio; European and Armenian accounts state that the population was moved by force in 1604 and their hometown destroyed by Shah Abbas (Baghdiantz, Herzig, in Kévonian). All accounts agree that, as the residents of Julfa were famous for their silk trade (Kévonian, Baghdiantz, Herzig), Shah Abbas treated the population well and hoped that their settlement in Isfahan would be beneficial to Persia.

Over the next few centuries, New Julfa became the hub of "one of the greatest trade networks of the early modern era", with outposts as far east as Canton, Surabaya, and Manila (Bhattacharya) and as far west as Cadiz, London, and Amsterdam, with a few merchants traveling across the Atlantic or Pacific oceans to Acapulco or Mexico City.

New Julfa is still an Armenian-populated area with Armenian schools and at least twelve churches, including Vank Cathedral, the Church of Bethlehem at Nazar Avenue, Saint Mary church at Julfa Square and the Yerevan church in the Yerevan parish. Armenians in New Julfa observe Iranian law with regard to clothing, but otherwise retain a distinct Armenian language, identity and culture. The policy of the Safavids was

Reference sketch map of the city of Isfahan and the location of the Nor-Djulfa district.  
Cartina di riferimento essenziale (schematica) della città di Isfahan e il posizionamento del quartiere di Nor-Djulfa.



View of the town of Julfa circa 1887

very tolerant towards the Armenians as compared to other minorities.

Popular with young people in Esfahan, it is experiencing considerable growth compared to other districts.

## Small City within a City

This small area of the city has its own facilities, like:

- Churches
- Historical houses
- Schools
- Clubes
  - Sport
  - Art and Culture
- Resturants and Coffee stores
- Commercial Centeres





## Churches

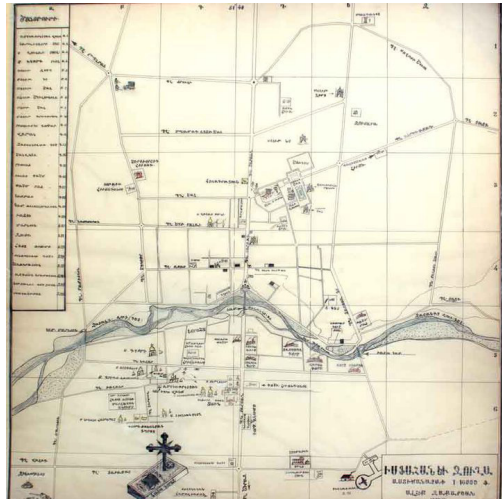
The majority of churches in Iran that possess historical and artistic value were built around the eighth century A.H. or the 14th century AD, and the period thereafter. Of course, this does not mean that there were no churches existing in the country before that period.

During the reign of Shah Abbas, the Safavid king, his sagacious policies caused a sizable number of Armenians from Armenia and Azarbaijan to transfer and settle in Esfahan and other regions of Iran. A place called Jolfa was built at the banks of the Zayande-rud River in Esfahan and became the residence of these migrating people. Consequently, churches were erected in that town.

After the death of Shah Abbas the First, his successor, Shah Abbas the Second, also paid close attention to the welfare of Armenians and more churches were erected in Jolfa. The influx of many Europeans during the reign of the Qajars led to the flourishing of other churches, in addition to those that were constructed previously. A number of these edifices have lasted and acquired architectural and artistic significance.

### Historical Churches at Jolfa of Esfahan:

The most important historical church in Iran is the old cathedral, commonly referred to as the Vank (which means "cathedral" in the Armenian language). This large building was constructed during the reign of Shah Abbas I and completely reflects Iranian architecture. It has a double-layer brick dome that is very much similar to those built by the Safavids. The interior of the church is decorated with glorious and beautiful paintings and miniature works



Old map of Isfahan and the position of churches.

that represent biblical traditions and the image of angels and apostles, all of which have been executed in a mixture of Iranian and Italian styles. The ceiling and walls are coated with tiles from the Safavid epoch. At a corner of the large courtyard of the cathedral, offices and halls have been built to accommodate guests, the Esfahan archbishop and his retinue, as well as other important Armenian religious hierarchy in Iran. The church compound also includes a museum that is located in a separate building. The museum displays preserved historical records and relics, and the edicts of Iranian kings dating back to the time of Shah Abbas the First. It also contains an interesting collection of art work. Esfahan has other historical churches, the most important of which is the Church of Beit-ol Lahm (Bethlehem) at Nazar Avenue. There are also the Saint Mary church at Jolfa Square and the Yerevan church in the Yerevan area.

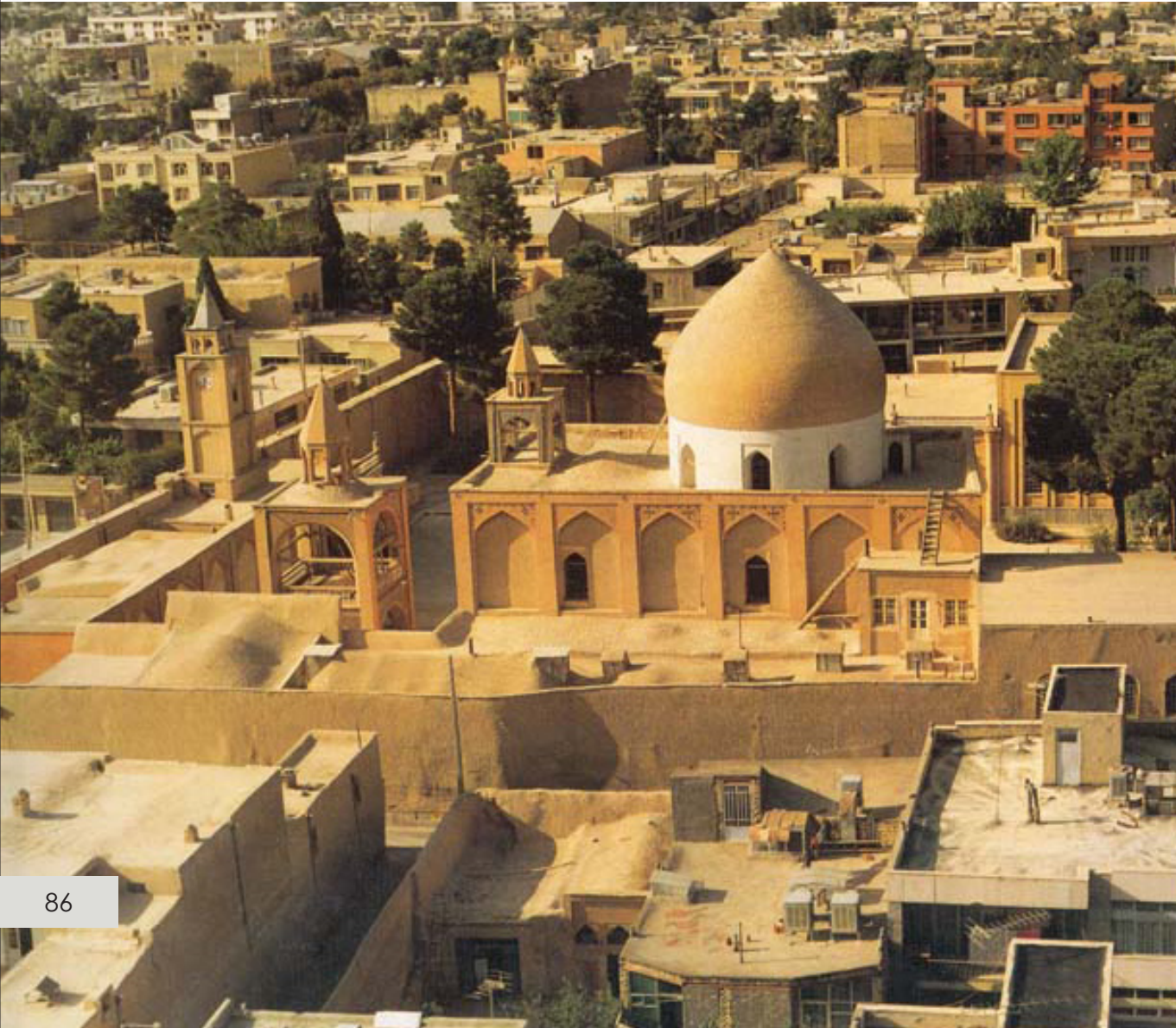
There are about 13 churches in Esfahan's Jolfa district.



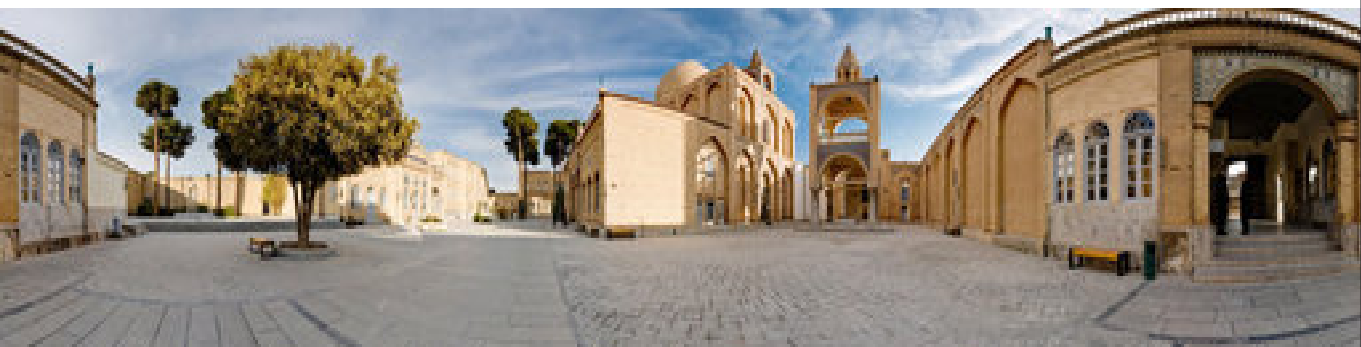
## Vank Cathedral - History:

Vank Cathedral was one of the first churches to be established in the city's Jolfa district by Armenian deportees settled by Shah Abbas I after the Ottoman War of 1603-1605. The varying fortunes and independence of this suburb across the Zayandeh rood and

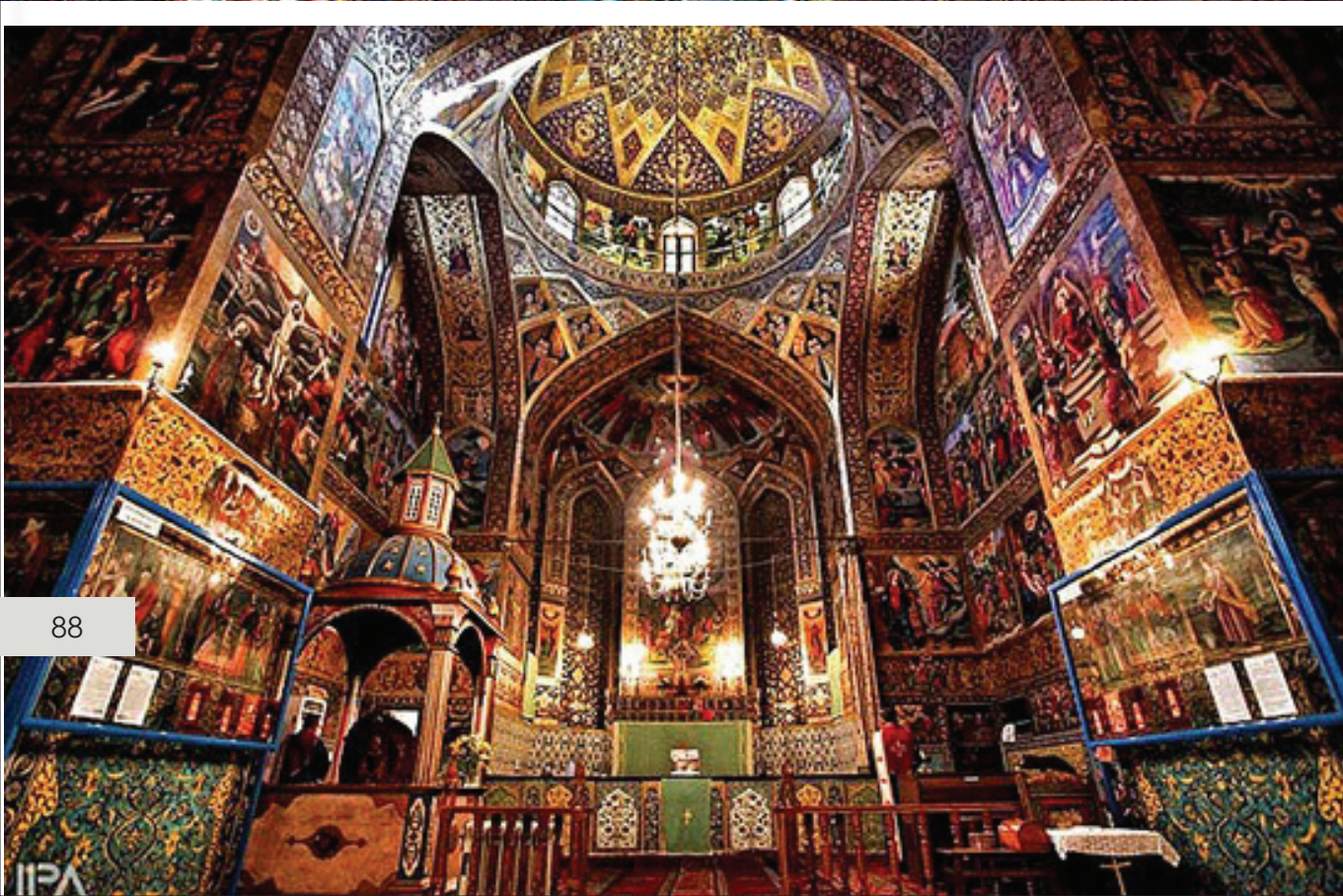
its eclectic mix of European missionaries, mercenaries and travelers can be traced almost chronologically in the cathedral's combination of building styles and contrasts in its external and internal architectural treatment.













## Inside Ornamentation of Church :

The interior is covered with fine paintings and gilded carvings and includes a wainscot of rich tile work. The delicately blue and gold painted central dome depicts the Biblical story of creation of the world and man's expulsion from Eden. Pendentives throughout the church are painted with a distinctly Armenian motif of a cherub's head surrounded by folded wings. The ceiling above the entrance is painted with delicate floral motifs in the style of Persian miniature. Two sections, or bands, of murals run around the interior walls: the top section depicts events from the life of Jesus, while the bottom section depicts tortures inflicted upon Armenian martyrs by the Ottoman Empire.

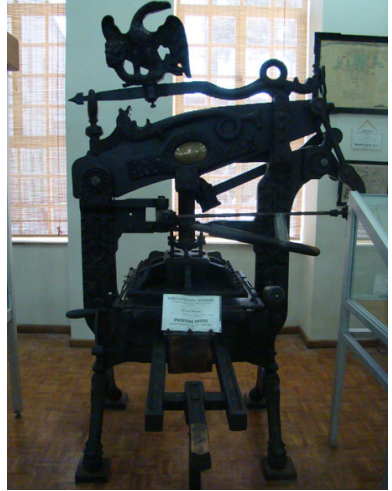
The courtyard contains a large freestanding belfry towering over the graves of both Orthodox and Protestant Christians. A tile work plaque inscribed in Armenian can be seen by the entrance to the cathedral; graves are also placed along the exterior wall before the entrance, with inscriptions in Armenian. In one corner of the courtyard is a raised area with a memorial to the 1915 Armenian Genocide in Turkey. Across the courtyard and facing the cathedral is a building housing a library and museum; outside of this building are several carved stones showing scenes from the Bible.





## Vank Museum:























All Saviors Monastery as seen from the balcony of Arax's home  
(pencil, 1940, 8x12 cm, sketched in Arax's memory book)



## Armenian's Schools:

Armenians of Julfa still had not left the hardships of forced migration, due to their ethnic traditions established first school next to the church. School of Julfa, who initially founded the theological teaching of languages and technical writing pay, with the efforts of Bishop Khachatur Ksaratsy (d. 1646 CE).

### Armenian schools in different periods

Story of buildings, like the people who live in them was changed in different phases and periods of good times and bad.

These schools have been changed several times, to mix boys and girls or separated.

Armenian schools of Julfa currently under spiritual and financial support of the Armenian educational Council are continuing to educate childrens in both Armenian and Persian languages , and includes the following centers:

1. Narek Kindergarten
2. Armen Kindergarten
3. Armen Girl's Primary School
4. Armen boy's Primary School
5. Kananian Girl's Midd and High School
6. Katarinian Boy's Midd and High School





## Historical Buildings:

### David house - Art University

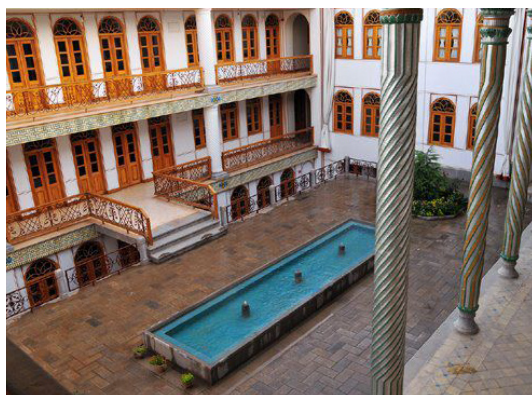
Isfahan University of Art is in Isfahan, Iran. It operated under the name of Farabi University before 1978, then it became a campus of the University of Art (based Art University in Tehran). It was separated and became independent in 1999. The university owns some of the greatest houses in Isfahan, mostly of the Safavid period. The university's buildings are spread out over the city, most of which are old historic sites such as David House, Martha Peters House, Haratian House, Sookiaas House, Haghghi Hous, France school and Ayyoubi and Melal House.

The university offers degrees in painting, handicrafts, carpet design, architecture, restoration and urban planning.



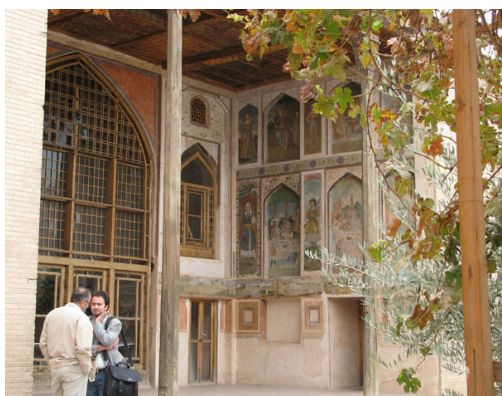
## The Priest House:

The "Priest's House", one of the very few houses remained in Julfa, has been built with Safavide style, and stands in Sangtarashha (masons) Alley of Tabriziha Quarters of Isfahan. This historical house belonged to Gargin Haranian, the honorable priest of Julfa who died in September 1940 and was buried beside the belfry of Vank church. After renovation, the cultural, touristic residential complex of the " Priest's House" with it's charming simplicity and eye-catching beauty is ready to receive those interested in Iranian architecture, and the ancient houses of Julfa of Isfahan.





## Ex-French School - Current Art University





## Armenian Sport, Cultural and Entertainment (Ararat) Club:

The club was established in 1944 by a group of Armenian-Iranians. They named the club after the famous mountain of the same name. The club was run by an Armenian athletic organization and was one of few clubs in Iranian football to have its own private stadium and training facilities. It was heavily supported by the Armenian minority in Iran, but was also loved by many non-Armenian Iranians.

Cultural Division's mission is to teach our cultural heritage to the youth and promote high quality cultural events and programs in the community.

### The goals are as follows:

- Promote Armenian culture and language
- Provide the opportunities for youth to get introduced to different aspects of art, culture and sport by high quality courses.
- Promote artists.

### General activities:

- Sport (Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Ping Pong and Running)
- Wedding, Ceremonies and Parties
- Cultural Courses: Sing, Dance, Theater, Embroidery
- Scouting
- Play ground for Childrens
- Open air resturant
- Temporary Bazaars





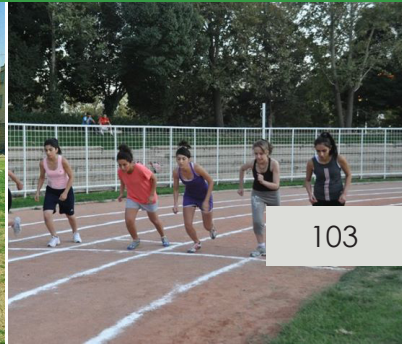
## CULTURE



## SCOUTING



## SPORT







# Review and identification of tourism potentials of Isfahan using SWOT model

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**Keywords:** Tourism; Natural potentials; historical attractions; Isfahan; SWOT model

**Introduction:**

In today's world, humans need rest and recreation more than any time. Recreation and fun are vital to reduce physical and mental stresses caused by working day and night. Travel and leisure have become a serious necessity since the 17th century. Human has always thought about visiting the new lands. Creation of IT, cultural, social, political, and economic infrastructures has caused tourism phenomenon an undeniable reality. Traveling with various incentives is one of the necessities of life in the 21th century. So, a current has come to existence which sweeps the national and international boundaries. Special look to tourism industry indicates that it creates a series of cultural, economic, social, and environmental effects and changes in each country. The approach of tourism towards geographical areas has created significant impacts in tourism destinations. Common behavior of human groups that have geographical and spatial dimensions and reflections of this behavior can affect geographical environment. Comparative studies on tourist attitudes and policies play an important role in national development of each country. Tourist movement between geographical areas as tourism destinations involves an exchangeable business. This industry has created a large economic process in cooperation with organized capitalism. Consequently, tourists achieve one of their most critical needs which is leisure activities. Nowadays, tourism has become one of the most job providing and profitable service industries. Tourism

organizing in one place is a critical and scientific necessity, since tourism planning involves understanding the behaviors of tourists in a place. Many believe that local communities and geographical areas are the central core of tourism destinations and a successful and healthy plan is an appropriate criterion to measure the success of tourism industry. Unique geographical and historical capabilities of Isfahan caused this region to be considered as one of the most attractive tourism destinations domestic and foreign tourists.

Emphasizing on history and culture of Isfahan, this paper aims to describe the available evidence. The study of strengths of this area and literature, processing their content, information and data collection from internal and external resources, and the use SWOT model helped us to come to a conclusion. Isfahan is one of the most attractive areas of Iran. SWOT model was used in this study to analyze the results. Firstly, the current situation and the past trends including the role and importance of tourism, tourism attraction and tourism development bottlenecks were reviewed by descriptive analysis of statistics related to the topic and then some issues such as development strategies of local and foreign tourism, credit policies, and administrative, executive, educational, research, and cultural investment were discussed.

**Theoretical foundations:**

Tourism is studied with certain diversity by experts and researchers due to its interdisciplinary features. The distance was

emphasized in tourism and tourists were divided according to their distance from home. America's National Commission on Tourism 1973) defines domestic tourism as all trips that their distance is more than 50 miles except business trips. From the perspective of geographers, tourism is defined as the time to rest and do leisure and recreational activities which require overnight absence (Burkart, A., & Medlik, S. (1989)). This includes any activity such as travel planning, going to destination, accommodation, return, and even reminiscence of travel. World Tourism Organization (WTO) has proposed technical and comprehensive definitions of tourism which are based on differences in perspective and approach to the visiting places and parameters affecting tourism and also different perceptions of the concept of tourism. According to WTO, tourism is the activity of people who leave their home for leisure, work or other reasons and accommodate in the destination there for one consecutive year. WTO also defines domestic tourism as the travel of native people who travel within the borders of their country for less than 12 months for different reasons except business. This organization also defines international tourism as the travel of people to a foreign country for at least 12 months for different reasons except business. From a sociological perspective, tourism is a series of relationships that a tourist develops with people living in that area in his/her temporary accommodation. Honzicker Cruyff believes that tourism is the development of a series of relationships as a result of travel and accommodation of a non-indigenous people without permanent stay and employment in a place (Kotler, P., Bowen, J., and Makens, J., 1996). From a systematic and holistic view, tourism is

a set of phenomena and relationships arising from mutual interaction between tourists, capital of host governments, host communities, universities of host countries, nongovernmental organizations in the process of attraction, transportation, reception, and control of these tourists and other visitors. The review of previous research on tourism industry indicates that limited but remarkable classical and academic studies have been carried out. The process of scientizing tourism was started from the 1960s. Tang and Rochanoud (1990) ranked top 32 countries. The results of this study showed that weather, natural attractions, social position, cultural situation, and life expanses are the most important factors in attractiveness of tourism destinations and trade facilities, transaction, and proximity of destination are less important, from the view of the respondents (Heath, E., Wall, G., 1992). Cloverdon (2002) studied the performance of tourism industry in developing countries of south of Africa and possible outcomes caused by effective factors in development and its obstacles. He used statistics of tourists in south of Africa and descriptive statistics method to evaluate and compare tourism industry in these countries. Prof. Ehlers Descartes, lecturer of Geography Institute of Philips University of Germany, studied the touristic structure and importance of Imam Square of Isfahan and effects of this industry on the growth of Isfahan. Alireza Esmaeilian, in the Journal of Research and Economic Policies, introduced tourism attractions of Isfahan and evaluated the capabilities of this industry. This study calculated the amount of employment in the accommodation, transportation, visited places, and existing



markets and proposed policies, general strategies, and executive strategies in order to overcome the current problems of this industry.

### **Materials and methods:**

Library findings and theoretical foundations of research were collected by content analysis method.

Tourism potentials and attractions of Isfahan were studied using a combination of survey, descriptive, and analytic methods. Data were collected using interview, observation, and questionnaire. Questionnaires were handed out among 300 foreign tourists in Isfahan's hotels in 2011. SWOT model was used to analyze the obtained data and propose a strategy for tourism development. According to this model, an analysis aimed at evaluation of environmental opportunities and threats and strengths and weaknesses is needed. In fact, analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment and analysis of opportunities and threats in the external environment are discussed. According to studies done on internal and external environment of the area, a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats was prepared. Then, priorities were determined by asking the ideas of foreign tourists and finally appropriate strategies were proposed to reduce weaknesses and threats and enhance strengths and opportunities. Isfahan has a surface of 15263 Km<sup>2</sup> and is 1570 m above sea level. Isfahan which is placed in the center of Iran consists of 6 counties, 19 villages, and 14 cities and has a population of 1986542 people. Relative population density of this area is 123 persons.

Historically, this area has been a bridge

between lowlying parts of the East of Iranian plateau and western mountainous lands and has long been a haven for the frostbitten coming from West and those tired of dry and hot air of East. The position of Isfahan plain in the deserts of central Iran and central mountainous block and the importance of its particular communicative situation in the Central Iranian Plateau have associated the history of this area with the history of Iran. Isfahan has been shining on the darkness of human civilization for centuries with a wealth of art and culture and the shining of its minarets and tiles has caused the admiration and wonder of the world. Historically, Isfahan is the place where art, technology, and spirituality were created in. Natural attraction such as deserts, Zayanderud River from origin to catchment, Gavkhouni Swamp, Sofeh Mount, protected areas, sand dunes, and etc alongside cultural and historical attractions including mosques, minarets, churches, historic bridges, dovecotes, squares, fire temple, the large market, historic schools, traditional architecture, and unique crafts annually attract thousands of domestic and foreign tourists to this area. Central position of Isfahan and being the intersection of north, south, west, and east and having a good network of roads, highways, railroad, and international airport have caused Isfahan to be the host of a huge number of domestic and foreign tourists every year. Daily traffic from all parts of the country in this area has made Isfahan an important passage intersection. A brief reference to the natural, cultural, and historical capabilities and potentials of this area is presented here. Zayanderud River is one of the largest rivers of Iran which flows from west to east and is the main cause of

River is one of the largest rivers of Iran which flows from west to east and is the main cause of verdure and fertility of this region. After a 360-km journey through mountains, valleys, plains, orchards, woods, marshes, and farmlands, Zayanderud reaches its tomb in Gavkhouni Swamp and is the only river that does not end to the sea. Sides of the river are a lovely place to rest for travelers, tourists, and local residents. More than 28 bridges have been constructed on the river that besides the beautiful landscape, many of these bridges have an ancient history which attracts tourists. Gavkhouni Swamp is the catchment of Zayanderud River and a protected treasure of natural and cultural landscapes of the past. Touristicaally, Gavkhouni Swamp is interesting for both ecotourism enthusiasts who are in search of pollution-free and fresh air and tourists who love pristine natural landscapes of desert areas and observation of stars in desert nights. This swamp is a good recreational place and has interesting fields for research. Unique plant species, salt marshes, animal species, glider flight, camel riding, motorcycling, and wilderness hiking are some attractions of this area. Isfahan city, located in the center of this area and the heart of Iran, is a historic city that its monuments and architectural style has a global reputation. After Tehran and Mashhad, Isfahan is Iran's third populated city. Isfahan is known by different titles such as "Half of The World", "Paradise", "Museum of the Middle East", and the best, most comprehensive, and most prosperous region of Persia, according to Nasser Khosrow, a famous tourist. Valuable historic collections of Isfahan include the oldest and most valuable monuments which are architecturally unique. Isfahan has a high

capacity to attract international tourists in order to present a better understanding of the history, culture, and natural environment of Iran to the world. Naqshe Jahan Square had been one of the world's largest square in the 17th century AD. Jean Chardin, a French traveler, called this square the most beautiful square of the world. This square was a place for official ceremonies, Friday market, playing Polo, and so on during the Shah Abbas Safavi. European travel writers and tourists have written as lot about the greatness and functions of Naqshe Jahan Square. Sheikh Lottollah mosque, situated on the eastern side of Naqshe Jahan Square, was the exclusive mosque of Shah Abbas family. This mosque is the most beautiful valuable architectural, artistic, and religious masterpiece of the world. The dome of this mosque is 32 meters high and its construction took 17 years. Qeysarieh portico is located at the main entrance of Great Market and north of this square. Since this portico was inspired from a building in Kayseri city of Turkey, it is called this. This complex is considered one of the attractions of Isfahan. Ali Qapu ((Turko-Persian word for Imperial Gate) mansion is a building which had been originally the entrance of State House of Safavids. Its height is 36 meters and has 6 floors. Ali Qapu Palace is located on the west side of Naqshe Jahan Square with a area of approximately 1800 m<sup>2</sup>. Churches are other tourism attractions of Isfahan. Armenians have lived in Iran from very past and mostly and most of them are living in the neighborhood of Julfa in Isfahan. They have constructed many churches for their ceremonies prayer. Vank Cathedral is one of the oldest and most famous of them. Building materials and architecture of this

church is different from stone churches of Armenia. The building of this church was built by local materials and raw clay. The dome of church is circular and like the dome of mosques. There are 8 windows around the dome that images of the creation of Adam and Eve, eating the forbidden fruit, and the death of Abel can be seen between them. This church today is more a cultural-religious complex and tea house, library, museum, and offices have been created there. Vank Cathedral is one of the most beautiful and famous churches of the world and one of the most spectacular tourism attraction of Isfahan that clearly demonstrates the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups in this city. Dovecotes are another tourism attraction of this area. Dovecotes were built by farmers in the desert for pigeons to rest in. There were more than 3000 dovecotes in this region but in 2011 only 300 of them were identified and 65 of them has been recorded in the national index of cultural and tourism heritage. Dovecotes were built for many reasons such as keeping pigeons away from farms, the use of pigeon's droppings as fertilizer, and preying on harmful insects. They are artistic masterpieces and were built by clay, straw, and salt which were resistant against heat and cold and also were thermal and sound insulation.

#### **Typology and type classification of tourists that visit Isfahan:**

Due to favorable natural condition, being located in the geographical center of Iran, ability to communicate with other parts of the country, and cultural and civilization manifestations, Isfahan has long been a good place to attract tourists. Throughout the history, Isfahan has repeatedly been the

capital of Iran and now is an architectural treasure that magnificent works of historical period's especially Islamic civilization can be seen in a corner of it. These buildings and attractions are the resultant of some arts like tiling, brickwork, plasterwork, woodcarving, decorative arts, painting, calligraphy, etc. There are a variety of tourism attractions in this area. Historical, artistic, and religious attractions and natural landscapes have been combined in such a way that is unique in the country. According to previous studies and considering environmental condition and capabilities of Isfahan areas, 10 touristic categories are active in this area that will be briefly described (Figure 2). Some believe that Isfahan is the kiblah of historical and cultural tourists, because Isfahan is a collection of historic buildings with architectural styles of various historical periods. Historic monuments, religious buildings, traditional architecture, historic cemeteries, museums, palaces, mosques, churches, and old houses are some of these attractions. Those who travel to know about culture and civilization of nations and see cultural patterns, rituals, traditional economic activities, architectural styles and visit the museums are called cultural tourists. Numerous university students, many museums, theaters, cinemas, population diversity, special local dishes, souvenirs, and unique handicrafts are some features that attract many historical and cultural tourists to Isfahan (Table 3). In urban tourism, travel and movement of people is intended to gather information, gain experience, meet the wishes that are the incentives of travel. This can include visiting a historical site like a mosque or church, attending a fair or a scientific, athletic, and artistic festival, or travel in order to enjoy places such as



parks, a new monument, and watching a sporting event. Isfahan is one of the Iranian cities which have a global reputation. Isfahan city, the center of this area, is adopted sister of 15 cities of the world due to cultural conditions. Isfahan has been introduced as the cultural capital of the Islamic world by Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Shores of Zayanderud, numerous parks and gardens, four-season weather, and beautiful landscapes attract many tourists from all parts of country that travel to this area for rest and doing leisure activities. Additionally, due to the central location of Isfahan and as thousands of passengers from north, south, west, and east pass through this area every day, they usually have a layover in this area to rest and visit tourism attractions of Isfahan. Large populations of people that sometimes reach a few million visit this area at different time and in all seasons, especially during March, April, and May. Desert hiking is one of the types of ecotourism in Isfahan. A large part of this region is covered by desert. These areas have the potentials of ecotourism and geotourism. Nowadays, these attractions have a lot of fans in the world. Unlike physical violence, deserts have extraordinary potentials such as moonlit nights, starry and smooth sky, ability to produce clean energy, and so on which have made deserts an appropriate place for excursion and scientific trip for nature lovers. Walking on the desert soil is the easiest sport that can be enjoyable. Bicycling, motorcycling, camel riding, skiing, and Rally racing are sports that have many strong supporters in this area. Existence of several centers for specialized and super specialized health care and medical and laboratory equipment have promoted

health tourism in Isfahan. Existence of Alzahra, Dr. Shariati, Kaveh, and Milad hospitals and also construction of a large Health Town promise the development of health and medical tourism in this region. Historical-religious monuments from the reign of Safavids era, mosques and religious schools, and Armenians churches have given a special cultural and religious diversity to this area. This ethnic diversity and cultural and religious richness provide a variety of capabilities to adopt an appropriate strategy in order to organize different aspects of religious tourism which is a kind of cultural tourism. Takhte Foolad Cemetery is the second important cemetery of Islam world, because of it has a very old history and the tombs of many famous philosophers and mystics are located there. This cemetery has an area of 175 Km<sup>2</sup> and is located in southeast of Isfahan. It was recorded as an historical-religious monument in the national index of cultural and tourism heritage in 1996. Several books have been written about Takhte Foolad Cemetery.

## Results

### **-Evaluation of tourism income for the area:**

Costs that are paid by tourists, including the cost of meals, recreation, accommodation, local transportation, sightseeing, tours, internet, telephone, and souvenirs are like the export of goods and services to the country of tourists which is calculable as invisible exports and increase national income. Many countries acquire large incomes from tourism and tourism's share in national income is growing in some countries. Tourism revenues in an area can be calculated by different methods which depend on statistical data. Tourism income

depend on statistical data. Tourism income of Isfahan in one year is calculated in this paper. Total amount of money spent by tourists or the income of suppliers of tourist services besides the request to use accommodations, restaurants, recreation centers, historical monuments, transportation, and so on.

Revenue from tourism is calculated using the following equation

$$X = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 + \dots + X_N$$

Each of these variables is one of the above capabilities. Although this calculation is not free of error, incomes were calculated by this formula in order to present a defensible conclusion of tourism revenues.

1- Income from accommodation (hotels and guesthouses): According to available statistics, more than 90% of foreign tourists were staying in hotels and guesthouses of Isfahan in 2010. The income of this part was calculated 33600000 dollar.

2- Income from the purchase of souvenirs: If 50000 tourists (from 75000) arrived in Isfahan in 2010 have bought souvenirs (about 500 dollar), an income of 5000000 dollar must have been obtained.

3- Income from visiting tourism attractions: If any of the 75000 foreign tourists have visited tourist attractions for 5 times, 375000 tickets are sold and the revenue obtained from this part is 11250000 dollar.

4- Income from food: Foreign tourists have paid almost 7 dollar for both lunch and dinner meals which exceeds 2940 million dollar during the occupancy.

5- Income from transportation: If it is supposed that any of 75000 tourists stay in Isfahan for one week and if transportation cost for each person a day is 35 dollar, income obtained from this part will be

18375000 dollar.

So, the following equation includes all income of tourism in a year in Isfahan:

$$X = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 + \dots + X_N$$

$$X = X_1(33600000) + X_2(5000000) + X_3(11250000) + X_4(29400000) + X_5(18375000) = 61040000$$

## Discussions

### - Analysis of findings:

The results of this study show that 75% of the respondents have a university degree and 70% of them were more than 40 years old. About 78% of tourists stated visiting historical and architectural monuments as their first incentive of their travel. So, this hypothesis that cultural and historical potentials attract many foreign tourists to Isfahan has been confirmed. Naqshe Jahan complex, Vank Cathedral, Isfahan Bazaar, and shores of Zayanderud are mostly visited by visitors. From the perspective of tourists, the facilities provided in tourism sites were investigated 45% favorable and 40% unfavorable. 52% and 45% of the respondents evaluated the accommodation facilities favorable and unfavorable, respectively.

Travelers and tourists visiting Isfahan include 50% European, 18% from the Middle East, and others were from other parts of the world. More than 52% of tourists had planned a more-than-2-week trip which is a positive point. About 35% of tourists have traveled to Isfahan more than once. More than 90% of tourists had no problems with the police. More than 80% were satisfied with the behavior of local people. 72% have stated that they like to travel to Isfahan again. Travel agencies and friend and acquaintances were the information resources of 35% and 30% of tourists, respectively.

**- Analysis using SWOT model:**

SWOT model assesses opportunities, capabilities, weaknesses, and threats. This assessment is derived from strategic planning of Harvard model which is applicable in both public and private sectors.

According to this model, which emphasizes on capabilities of an organization, strengths and opportunities should be used to overcome weaknesses and threats. Emphasis on opportunities and strengths as the most important factor to achieve an effective strategy overcoming shortcomings and minimizing threats is the most positive aspect of this model.

Analysis based on this model is a brief summary of the strategic analysis. External environment (opportunities and threats) and internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) are studied in this model. Recommendations and operational solutions for proper use of tourism potentials of Isfahan are proposed by prioritization of strategic issues.



**Table 1: Analysis of tourism potentials (internal factors) of Isfahan using SWOT model**

<b>weaknesses</b>	<b>Strengths</b>
Lack of scientific and expertise planning	Central position of Isfahan
Seasonal dryness of Zayanderud	High natural potentials
Intense migration to Isfahan	Unique historical potentials
Inadequate accommodation and welfare facilities	Ethnic and religious minorities and churches
Weak information systems	Unique handicrafts
The need for reconstruction and restoration of monuments	Gavkhouni Swamp and deserts
Inconsistency between decision makers and enforcement agencies	The historic city of Isfahan
Low quality and high price of handicrafts	Grand Bazaar in Isfahan
Inconsistency in historical part of city	More than 300 dovecotes
Low qualitative and quantitative capacity of facilities	High physical and financial safety
Lack of trained and skilled manpower	High level of culture and hospitality of people
Vague objectives and policies of executive officials	Zayanderud River
	Land and air transportation
	Big steel industries
	Being adopted sister of 15 cities in the world
	Birds, flowers, and butterflies gardens

**Table 2: Analysis of tourism potentials (external factors) of Isfahan using SWOT model**

<b>Threats</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Tremendous and non-normative growth of urbanization	Government assistance and support in investment
Loss of old part of Isfahan city	Much enthusiasms for travel to Iran
Loss of quiet atmosphere of region	Easy access to Isfahan from all parts of the country
Environmental pollutions	Global reputation of Iran's and Isfahan's art and culture
Improper exploitation of the bed of Zayanderud	Cultural, artistic, and scientific festivals
High density of population in this region	Increased private sector investment
Instability and multiplicity of prices	Construction of appropriate highways, railway, and airport
Fuel rationing	Development of appropriate ways to access areas
High cost of domestic tours	Deployment of trained guides
Cynicism towards tourists	Introducing tourism as a scientific subject
Negative propaganda against Iran	
Seasonal drought of Zayanderud	

**Table 3: Matrix of strategic analysis of tourism potentials of Isfahan using**

Strategies for utilizing opportunities to eliminate weaknesses	Strategies for utilizing the strengths to take advantage of opportunities
<p>Conducting studies and scientific research on tourism                      Reducing or eliminating the strict rules of tourists' entry                      Training courses for tourist guides                      Avoiding improper administrative and disciplinary treatments                      Appropriate advertising in abroad through Iran's executive agencies especially Cultural attaché of embassies                      Establishment of an agency to attract tourists in cultural department of all embassies                      Review the services provided to foreign tourists                      Changing the negative views to tourists                      Unified decision making and serious accountability</p>	<p>Reconstruction, maintenance, and restoration of monuments                      Providing conditions for cultural tourism                      Holding cultural, scientific, and athletic festivals                      Exploiting the potential of natural attractions                      Ecotourism potentials of deserts                      Ecotourism potentials of Gavkhouni Swamp                      Benefiting from the increased motivation of people to travel                      Enjoying the beautiful landscapes                      Planning for low-momentum tourism                      Securing investment in tourism sector                      Easy and cheap access                      Creating incentive for travelling again                      Desert tourism facilities</p>

**Table 4: Matrix of strategic analysis of tourism potentials of Isfahan using**

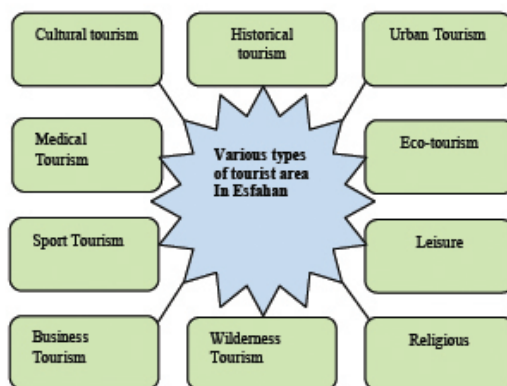
Reducing weaknesses to avoid threats	Using strengths to avoid threats
<p>Paying attention to the capacities of historical, cultural, and architectural sites                      Reducing environmental pollution in the area                      Introducing the capabilities of Isfahan through internet, television, and satellite                      Allocation of funding for tourism development                      Discussing tourism as a scientific subject in the academic centers                      Supporting the tourist agencies and private institutions                      Efficient management between agencies involved in Tourism                      Pathology the way the local communities deal with tourists</p>	<p>Avoiding unnecessary construction around the historical sites and the river shore                      Removing the cultural effects of negative advertisement of competitors                      Treating tourists with hauteur and generosity                      Serving tourists as guests                      Diversification of tourist services in order to satisfy the tourists                      Preventing the uncontrolled growth of prices of goods and services                      Preventing any physical and mental cause of insecurity</p>

**Table 5: Matrix of SWOT model of tourism potentials of Isfahan**

<p><b>SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p><b>Opportunities</b>                  Government assistance and support in investment                  Much enthusiasms for travel to Iran                  Easy access to Isfahan from all parts of the country                  Global reputation of Iran's and Isfahan's art and culture                  Cultural, artistic, and scientific festivals                  Increased private sector investment                  Construction of appropriate highways, railway, and airport                  Development of appropriate ways to access areas                  Deployment of trained guides                  Introducing tourism as a scientific subject</p>	<p><b>threats</b>                  Tremendous and non-normative growth of urbanization                  Loss of old part of Isfahan city                  Loss of quiet atmosphere of region                  Environmental pollutions                  Improper exploitation of the bed of Zayanderud                  High density of population in this region                  Instability and multiplicity of prices                  Fuel rationing                  High cost of domestic tours                  Cynicism towards tourists                  Negative propaganda against Iran                  Seasonal drought of Zayanderud</p>
<p><b>Strengths</b>                  Central position of Isfahan                  High natural potentials                  Unique historical potentials                  Ethnic and religious minorities and churches                  Unique handicrafts                  Gavkhouni Swamp and deserts                  The historic city of Isfahan                  Grand Bazaar in Isfahan                  More than 300 dovescotes                  High physical and financial safety                  High level of culture and hospitality of the people                  Zayanderud River                  Land and air transportation                  Big steel industries                  Being adopted sister of 15 cities in the world                  Birds, flowers, and butterflies gardens</p>	<p><b>Competitive strategies</b>                  Reconstruction, maintenance, and restoration of monuments                  Providing conditions for cultural tourism                  Holding cultural, scientific, and athletic festivals                  Exploiting the potential of natural attractions                  Ecotourism potentials of deserts                  Ecotourism potentials of Gavkhouni Swamp                  Benefiting from the increased motivation of people to travel                  Enjoying the beautiful landscapes                  Planning for low-momentum tourism                  Securing investment in tourism sector                  Easy and cheap access</p> <p><b>Creating incentive for travelling again</b>                  Desert tourism facilities</p>	<p><b>Diverse strategies</b>                  Avoiding unnecessary construction around the historical sites and the river shore                  Removing the cultural effects of negative advertisement of competitors                  Treating tourists with hauteur and generosity                  Serving tourists as guests                  Diversification of tourist services in order to satisfy the tourists                  Preventing the uncontrolled growth of prices of goods and services                  Preventing any physical and mental cause of insecurity</p>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b>                  Lack of scientific and expertise planning</p>	<p><b>Revised strategies</b>                  Conducting studies and scientific research on tourism</p>	<p><b>Defensive strategies</b>                  Paying attention to the capacities of historical, cultural, and architectural sites</p>
<p>Seasonal dryness of Zayanderud                  Intense migration to Isfahan                  Inadequate accommodation and welfare facilities                  Weak information systems                  The need for reconstruction and restoration of monuments                  Inconsistency between decision makers and enforcement</p>	<p>Reducing or eliminating the strict rules of tourists' entry                  Training courses for tourist guides                  Avoiding improper administrative and disciplinary treatments                  Appropriate advertising in abroad through Iran's executive agencies especially Cultural attaché of embassies                  Establishment of an agency to attract tourists</p>	<p>Reducing environmental pollution in the area                  Introducing the capabilities of Isfahan through internet, television, and satellite                  Allocation of funding for tourism development                  Discussing tourism as a scientific</p>



<p>agencies</p> <p>Low quality and high price of handicrafts</p> <p>Inconsistency in historical part of city</p> <p>Low qualitative and quantitative capacity of facilities</p> <p>Lack of trained and skilled manpower</p> <p>Vague objectives and policies of executive officials</p>	<p>in cultural department of all embassies</p> <p>Review the services provided to foreign tourists</p> <p>Changing the negative views to tourists</p> <p>Unified decision making and serious accountability</p>	<p>subject in the academic centers</p> <p>Supporting the tourist agencies and private institutions</p> <p>Efficient management between agencies involved in Tourism</p> <p>Pathology the way the local communities deal with tourists</p>
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**Figure1: Various Types of Tourist in Esfahan**



# 5. Project Strategy

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**Requalification**

## Keywords



***We do not want to leave  
Isfahan.***



Someone would always approach you with a friendly chat or an offer of help.



We are constantly pleasantly surprised by the friendliness of the Iranian people.



It is traditional Persian cuisine. There are the usual kebabs and fragrant rice.



In many stores you can see craftsmen at work.



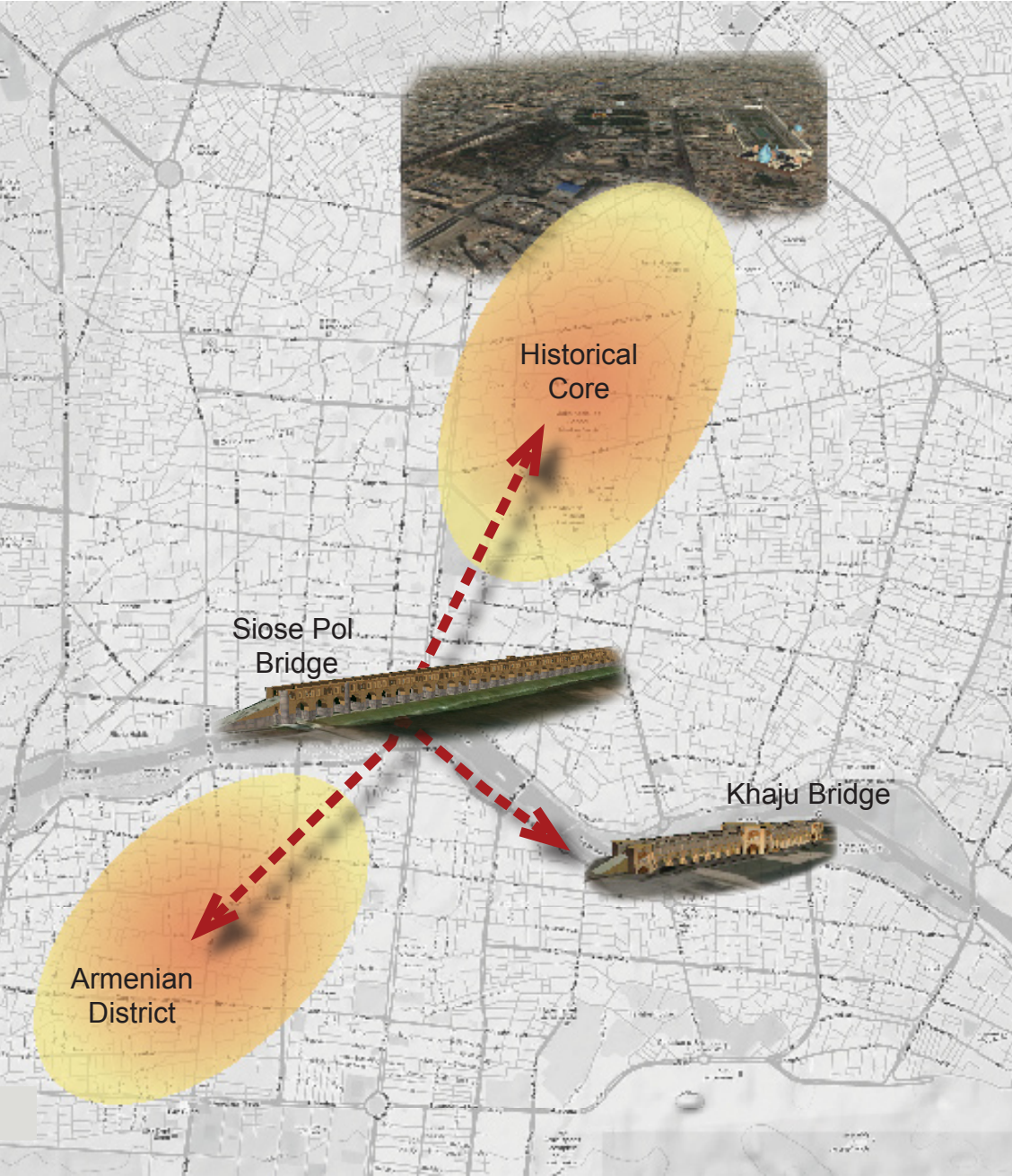


Isfahan is well known for its particular Art and Architecture that people love to visit and go back in time but it is the time to set out to attract more people through a realistic framework by transforming Isfahan City into the preferred historical and cultural place of the Central Iran.

By creating a clean, green, safe city that pays homage to its storied history, the new Isfahan City's Tourism District program will offer a wide range of attractions and experiences for all ages.

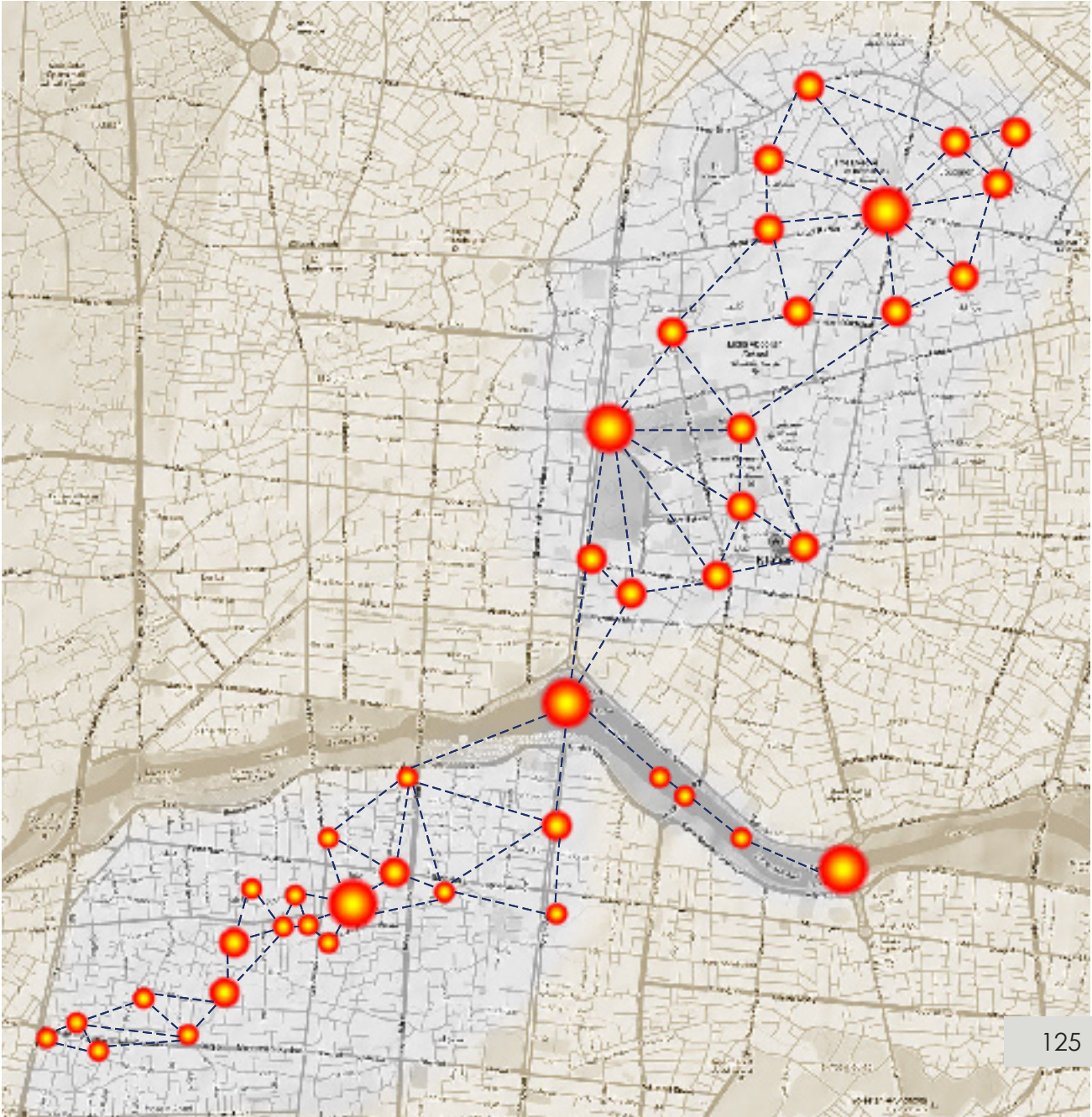
By promoting a strategy for redevelopment, phasing, and district-wide improvements, the program will serve as a catalyst for Isfahan City's economic and social uplift.

# Project Line





# Connections and Tourism Attraction Points





With new programs of Tourism and attractions established with financial, social and environmental sustainability, the Isfahan City will be able to deliver different activities which will attract new visitors.

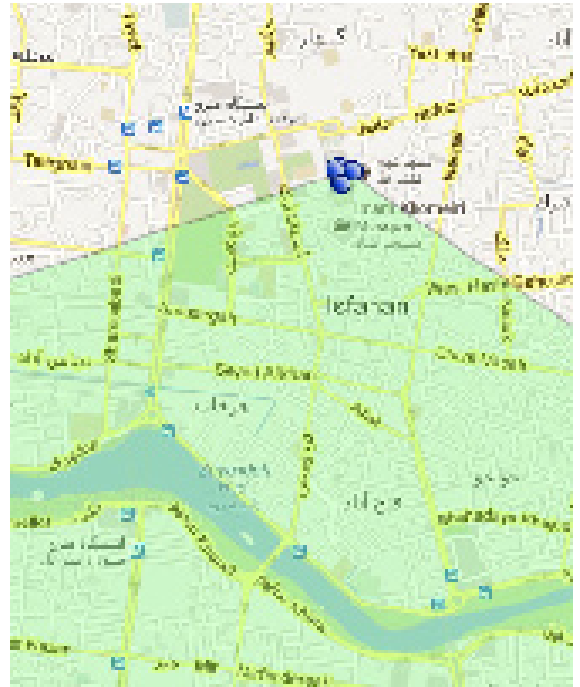
Isfahan City Tourism District program is a comprehensive and strategic framework to propel the city forward into the international arena. with the new program city vision will breathe new life into this historical contest and reinvent the city as a desirable place to live, work and visit. The Tourism Program sets out to deliver compelling, yet realistic redevelopment strategies that will serve as catalysts for increased tourism, attracting visitors to experience the unparalleled offerings of year round events and attractions.

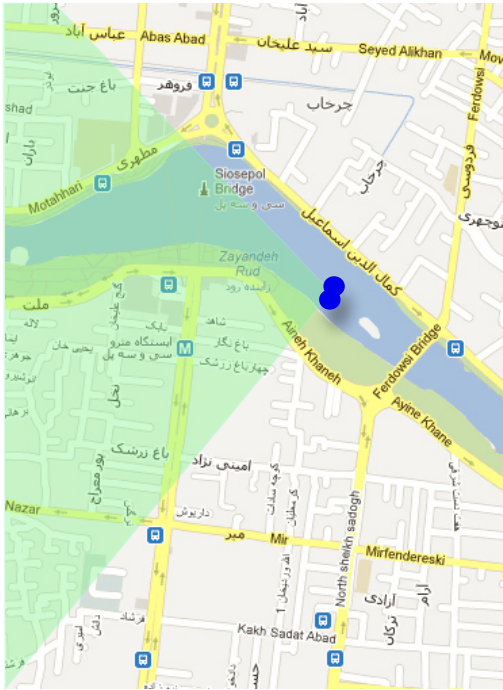
The Tourism District Program needs introducing innovative and inspirational new elements of attraction. Two major concepts essential to the plan revolve around Experiential Visioning and Urban Regeneration, creating excitement, identity, cohesion and connection among distinctive places. The guiding principles will offer locals and tourists an ever-changing and memorable new destination.

## City and Art

Attracting more people in massive numbers is the goal of the Tourism and Attractions Program. More people will provide a revenue-generating catalyst for future redevelopment. The new Isfahan City will engage a broad audience that seeks a youthful state of mind with high energy and excitement.

1000 families will be invited to visit the open space exhibitions which are exhibited by local and foreign artists and will experience by themselves how to create an artifact.



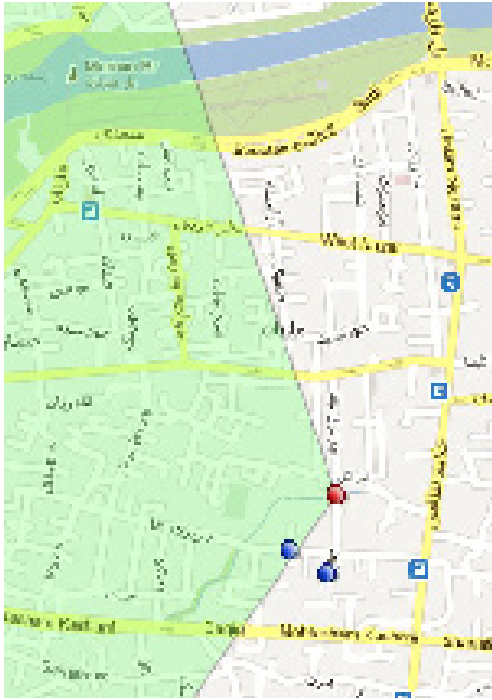


## Experiential Visioning

Intended to enhance the city's inherently unique qualities, this program highlights Isfahan City's magical river axis setting as a place of escapism with lots of views across the River and River bank, complemented by Bridges, Bird's garden, Flower's garden, Children's Island, Tea Houses, a historic one-and-only Boardwalk, Hotels, and prominent streetscapes, all activated by new generations of visitors – city dwellers, families, young professionals, leisure-seekers and entertainment enthusiasts.

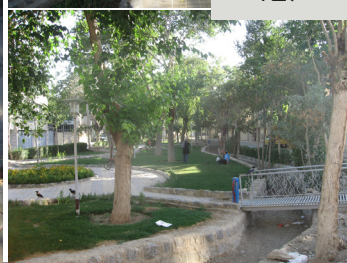


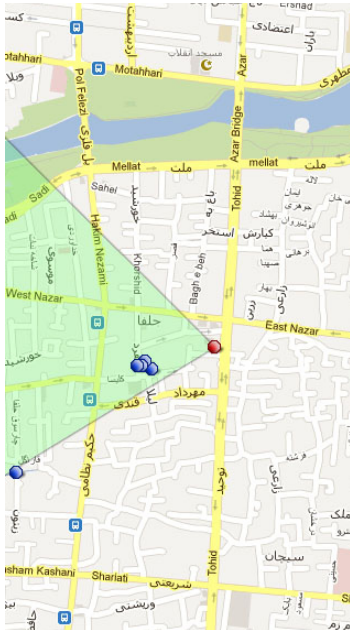




### Pedestrian activity

Reinforcing street life and pedestrian activity within the City is one of the major objectives of the program experiential vision. The result will be a new pedestrian-oriented district in and around the core areas emphasized by a heightened sense of discovery and refinement that substantially contribute to the resort experiential quality of Isfahan City.





## Events for hidden places

As a means for future and sustained redevelopment, the Tourism and Attraction Program framework responds to the emotional desires of the various visitor audiences so the place comes alive once again through an authentic experiential sequence of intervention concept that reflect the past attraction of the city.

**culture days** Sept. 27, 28 & 29, 2013  
events, restoration & celebration

Special open day for:  
*St. Mary Church*

History and Culture go hand in hand. What better place to celebrate Culture Days then at the *St. Mary Church*

