

*Jaquelin T. Robertson*

Many of us at this conference are what I would have to call cultural or technocratic mercenaries, hired intellectual "guns" who move about the world from one country to another giving counsel, doing "quick studies," relying on accumulated knowledge, on too-weak data and too little experience and too often only on intuition; overprogrammed, rushed, and beneath it all, dreadfully unsure of ourselves and our various medicines and recipes. Yes, mercenaries, without uniforms or guns, but potentially just as lethal. Travelling medicine men.

As international consultants we are in the business of translating, transplanting and transforming cultural systems for people often strange to us, most of whom we will neither see nor know. We have to move ahead carefully, very carefully, step by step, always at risk, trying to understand before we know and without even the results of our work that generally come long after we are gone.

For me, at least, it is an awesome responsibility . . . this consulting in foreign lands. Once the headlines have gone, one is left only with one's naked best judgment and one's doubts. Yet we continue to do it, because it is our trade, and because rightly or wrongly, we feel we have something to offer (hopefully we do).

The interesting fact, I think, that has emerged from these discussions, one I was concerned with before I came here, is that the architect/planner's view of the city, and the kind of physical models and intellectual models and processes that he engages in are changing in a very radical way described very well by Janet Abu-Lughod. The legitimacy of the so-called Western model is being challenged by those people who have been forced, or have chosen, to import it. My guess is that just about the time the Western model becomes slightly more relevant, it will be thrown out altogether. An irony of sorts.

Charles Correa was absolutely correct, Corb did get a lot from India and there is an enormous amount to be learned in this reverse influence. What working in an Islamic country will do to Western con-

sultants may be as important in the long run as what Western consultants bring rightly or wrongly to Islam. And being a Western consultant, I am most interested, in a very selfish way, in what I'm getting, as well as what I am trying to give.

I grew up for part of my life in China, and was, by choice and by inclination, an Orientalist in university. Too, I have always been enormously interested in politics. It is therefore impossible for me to conceive of architecture and planning without thinking of it first as having very diverse cultural sources, and second, without thinking of it as being directly involved with politics.

Architects must come to grips with economics and politics, with the way in which laws are written, if in fact they are to have any effect on changing the way the world is built. As a result, I probably worked with almost every income stratum, every power group and interest group that exists in the United States.

I started working with block associations in East Harlem in the Bronx. I spent almost two years of my life creating community planning boards in New York City, so that localities could have some leverage against a seemingly insensitive central authority, and ended up as a Development Director for the City of New York in the Planning Commission, where I was indeed representing the central authority and spending a lot of time trying to fend off the planning boards that I had created. Just desserts. I suspect.

For this reason, I felt both frustration with and sympathy for bureaucrats the world over. It's a hopeless task. However, we will have to work with them and we will have to try to understand them as well as their problems. I sense in nearly all conferences of this sort an absolute disdain for bureaucrats, their processes and their mentalities. I can tell you from the other side of the table, consultants often look absolutely frivolous and foolish, because they don't understand resources and what can be done.

The comments below, then, and the distributed article concerning the planning

and design of Shahestan Pahlavi, are given with real reservations in hopes that they may help us to a better understanding of ourselves, our clients' cultures, our methods and our prejudices, all problems common to our calling.<sup>1</sup> They are made without arrogance and with the expectation of your critique, disagreement and help.

It is also fair to say that although we are talking here about Islamic environments, the problems of planning and urban design have certain generic similarities the world over. Our persuasions, backgrounds, sensitivities and perceptions will, more than anything else, explain the differences. Modernizing secular societies in the Islamic world may well, in a very short time, share more in common with their established Western prototypes than many of us want to believe. Certainly, this trend toward the internationalization of large cities, while not predetermined, is indeed already established. The job of protecting older emerging cultures against surface Westernization that is changing the prototype may well have to be undertaken in the West.

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#### **Some Conceptual Problems in City Design: Art and Implementation**

Town planning is often said to be an art rather than a science. This statement reflects the realization among planners that their field's basic concern is to translate a society's values into an improved environment. To achieve this, planners need a basic understanding of how people's environmental needs have been met in the past, and what opportunities exist for meeting them today. While this must be analyzed in a highly rational manner, a final judgment requires the mixture of experience and imagination that is defined as art. Its contribution to society can be readily seen in the great achievements of Shah 'Abbas in Isfahan, Pope Sixtus V in Rome, John Nash in London and Baron Haussmann in Paris. In these instances an artistic response to a city's needs was combined with a genius for city

building: the ability to carry out plans on a large enough scale to influence the character of the city.

These examples of great city building transcended the basic requirements of their cities and devised a strong symbolic and cultural setting for their citizens. They became the stage on which their cultures acted out their histories, settings for fantasy, wish, ceremony, aspiration and art. Today's master plans often fail to provide for these basic human amenities and are only concerned with physical infrastructure and the meeting of codes. Such plans cannot become home for their resident communities, and their lack of urban amenities has brought a growing rejection of the idea of cities altogether. Without art and a relentless aspiration to quality, cities fail in some fundamental way to serve those who use them. Perhaps one of the least recognized aspects of what has come to be called "the urban crisis" is this qualitative one: a failure to acknowledge the spiritual and cultural content of cities by not weaving into their fabric special non-utilitarian environments of high design quality and symbolic settings.

In preparing the plan for Shahestan Pahlavi we have, therefore, given as much emphasis to developing an aesthetic and symbolic base for the new centre as we have to setting land uses and housing densities for the new centre. We were committed to creating a beautiful city centre which would give twentieth century Iran a national centre of the high quality that Isfahan contributed to the sixteenth century. We believe this to be a proper goal of town planning. It is not achieved through the application of densities of traffic mixes alone, but also requires a passionate and continuing commitment to design excellence. This has meant that urban design and landscape architecture have been as important to the plan as economic and computer modelling. A balance of this type is needed because the latter techniques, though useful planning aids, have yet to produce on their own any aesthetically satisfying environments.

Unfortunately, the field of town planning has not had a great impact on the design

of cities, with the exception of the instances of successful city building mentioned above and a few others. One reason for this is that strong economic, social and political forces lie behind the usual pattern of piecemeal development that shapes urban growth around the world. Unplanned growth of this sort is the rule rather than the exception, simply because it is easier and cheaper than growth which is managed according to an overall planning and design concept. Clearly, if a planning concept is to be devised and, subsequently brought into being as a built environment, manpower, money and time are required. Most governments have yet to recognize that these and other resources are warranted by their ultimate benefit to society.

Another reason for the shortage of successful town plans has been a tendency in the planning field to put aside the lessons of the past and to emphasize fashionable but untested new ideas. A number of plans, for example, are dependent on such an intricate mixture of innovative building and transportation technology that it is doubtful they can actually be built stage by stage. Other plans are so restrictive of building heights and densities, in keeping with the present unpopularity of tall buildings among planners, that few developers have shown an interest in investing. Still other plans have proposed vast, multi-use projects in modest residential areas. These plans, too, are often exercises in futility because they are inappropriate and create insoluble relocation problems.

We believe that certain sets of planning ideas and responses have proven over time to be more successful than others. Just as in human relations, certain types of conduct have grown to be accepted universally over the years. In any plan, determining the precise balance between new ideas and old ones is difficult. But, like the balance between urban design and scientific planning techniques, this second balance also needs to be struck. Such a recognition is receiving new attention among planners today, for a mixture of old and new concepts is a time-honoured technique for combining what went before with what is

to come. This is a simple acknowledgment that the past and future are interdependent. No longer do most planners seek to establish a "brave new world" with no reference to the past. This is not so much because it has been found impossible, but more because such experiments have proven inhumane and undesirable. In the words of Sir Winston Churchill, "If we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future."<sup>2</sup> In fact, a future without a past would be very bleak indeed. Much of the rhetoric of the "new architecture" fails to recognize this simple reality.

Our approach in the plan for Shahestan Pahlavi was, therefore, to address present-day problems in a realistic way, in keeping with our belief that the most effective way of planning for the future is to try to deal as successfully as possible with the present. This is because a specific and creative response to a real and pressing problem often reveals a broad range of future investigations and actions. The great historical examples of city building mentioned above have resulted from relatively deterministic attempts to come to grips with broadly understood needs, both at a functional and an aesthetic level. For this reason, utopian visions of future cities, although entertaining and sometimes even inspiring, are misleading and inescapable ways of living.

In this plan everything we advocate has been tested and proven successful in use elsewhere. This approach is based on the professional conviction that important projects like Shahestan Pahlavi should not be a guinea pig for planners' fancies. We have reintroduced and utilized as many time-honoured Iranian techniques as seemed appropriate and practical.

This is consistent with our belief that plans must be based on a very sure sense of how to get from the "here" of today to the "there" of tomorrow. Such a trip must face a large number of hard choices of policy because a plan's goals and destinations are always influenced by the means proposed to achieve them. It is in the refinement of these means that new routes are opened. Specifically, this means

that an urban design plan, as opposed to a traditional master plan, will carry with it recommendations about fixed and rather detailed physical systems (e.g., a specific street grid). The layout of these systems will limit the plan's long-term flexibility to some extent. But, precisely because they are specific, they will act as an early test of the more general principles of the plan. And quite often this effort to solve detailed problems will open the way to a better understanding of the larger issues.

Since ideas about cities, and how best to plan them, change more rapidly than they can be built, a careful distinction must be made between which aspects of a plan must be flexible and which need not be. This is because certain schemes are more susceptible to modification than others; yet, there is always a point beyond which a scheme cannot accommodate further changes. A specific arrangement of land uses, transportation corridors and buildings must be decided upon. Thus, although one can talk about indeterminacy in planning, it is by definition impossible to build an indeterminate structure for a plan. Most successful plans strive for flexible and resilient structures, however.

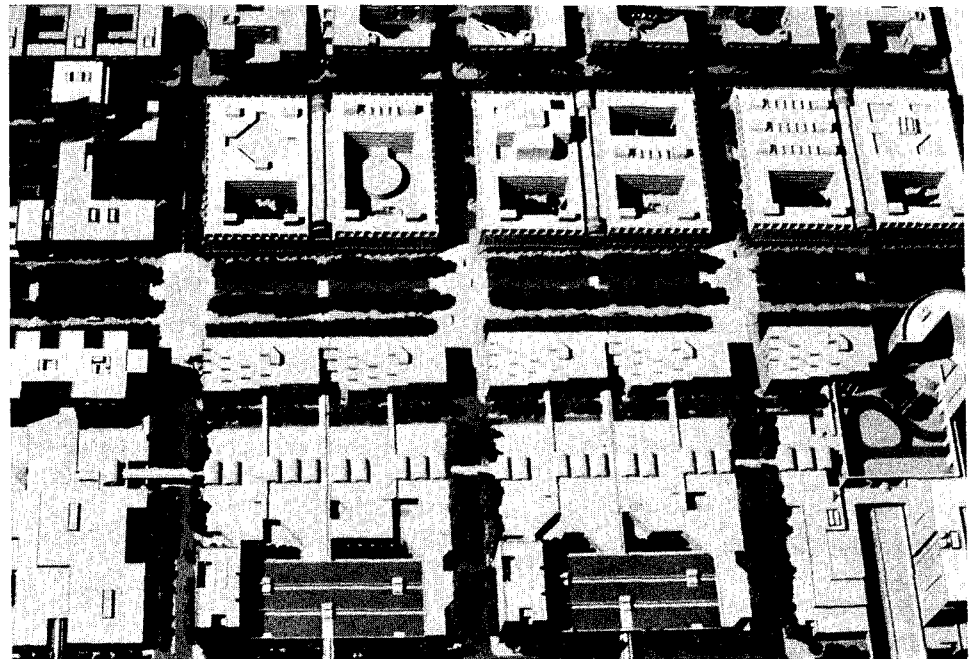
Town planners are not only re-examining the past and thinking about the meaning of flexibility. They are also attempting to narrow the gap between planning and actual city building. The unfortunate tendency in the recent past has been to separate the research aspects of planning (e.g., the assessment of goals and the gathering and analysis of data) from the design and implementation processes which follow. As a result, the goals and data utilized in defining a plan's intent have not benefited from a testing against the realities necessary later to turn the plan into a course of action.

Recommendations removed from the responsibility of implementing them are usually quite different from those intended for direct action however. In order to put ideas to work, their design requirements and means of implementation must be considered as primary data, just as important as statistics relating to such matters as employment, housing density,

movement or age structure. Thinking about "how" should start concurrently with thinking about "what." Planning without these crucial considerations of design and implementation becomes academic, and plans formulated without them are generally crippled from the start. It is, therefore, greatly advantageous to prepare a master plan or set of development controls while preliminary design and development is actually underway. This allows planning assumptions to be tested against a real model. Such a process is, after all, like life itself: a continuous, incremental, adaptive response to circumstances. And, in order to keep the plan current after it is printed and presented, the mechanism for changing it must be contained in the instructions.

A close relationship between planning, design and implementation has fortunately existed throughout the planning of Shahestan Pahlavi. To start with, a strong architectural and city building tradition exists in Iran. Today, Iranians are showing

a growing sense of the relevance of this tradition to current urban conditions. In addition the planning brief for the new centre was not only to produce a master plan for 554 hectares of open land in the very middle of the capital, but also to make a detailed urban design for the project's entire central area, complete with models and preliminary architectural designs. This required that we constantly test our disposition of land uses and our transportation corridors against three-dimensional design requirements. To this comprehensive programme was added the necessity of laying out a road system which could be started immediately in coordination with the construction of a city-wide metro system. Grading of the site and the new roads actually began six months after our arrival in Tehran. It was based on preliminary plans drawn up in four months and amended and refined afterwards. Shahestan Pahlavi, therefore, consisted of a planning-design-development project all in one brief.



*Shahestan Pahlavi project, Tehran city centre, Iran: view of the model*

*Photo: J. Robertson/Llewelyn-Davies Associates*

We welcomed this challenge. The resulting plan, we feel, has a rigour that would not have been possible had the work been removed in time and place from actual development.

Shahestan Pahlavi is envisaged as serving three different roles simultaneously: a national centre befitting Iran's capital city, a model community built to meet growing North Tehran's need for a coherent centre and a transportation centre capable of deflecting the city's traditional northward growth to the Tehran Comprehensive Plan's proposed development corridor stretching east and west of the city. The plan for the new centre responds to the great opportunity of its vast, vacant site by proposing a carefully organized multi-use complex. Included among the uses will be government and commercial offices, retailing, hotels, housing and cultural and community facilities. They could ultimately amount to as much as 5,130,000 square metres of floor space. The publicly and privately developed components of the centre will be positioned so that each section has a mixture of both. This will help avoid the sterility associated with the government office areas of most world capitals after dark.

Shahestan Pahlavi's main employment and commercial centre will be built as a linear "spine" above the metro line soon to be constructed north-south through the project site. This will maximize the ability of commuters to walk to their offices from the metro stations; in so doing, it will allow an alternative to the use of the automobile. Apartment buildings will be located next to many of the office buildings in the spine to encourage people to live close to work. The spine will be structured by handsome tree-lined boulevards and squares, which will provide a suitable background for public ceremonies.

Beyond the spine will be vast areas of landscaped parkland to help relieve the city's shortage of recreational space. Six residential neighbourhoods will be located between this parkland and the boundary of the project site. They, and the apartments in the spine, will house some 36,000

persons in a variety of housing types catering mainly to families. Local schools, shopping areas and other community facilities will serve these residents. The quality of these planned neighbourhoods will set an example for the new communities being planned elsewhere around Tehran.

Shahestan Pahlavi will be Tehran's first centre which will bring together living, working and visiting in an attractive setting emphasizing pedestrian movement over auto traffic. The new centre's government institutions and ministries, its many monuments, fountains and landscaped areas will give Tehran a level of public architecture commensurate with the city's mounting world importance.

But the master plan for Shahestan Pahlavi has not been formulated as an academic plan destined for bookshelves, but as a working document capable of creating the new centre that Tehran so clearly requires. It is not immutable and will (and should) be continually amended. By providing a flexible framework within which changes can take place, the plan will furnish the local development corporation with a realistic guide for coordinating the building of the new centre. Thus, the plan could establish a rational basis for development decisions. Introducing such a process to development in Tehran, especially at its new focus of growth, will be one of the plan's most important contributions; for the successful execution of the plan in an orderly fashion will carry with it a strong force of example for the satellite communities that are being planned around the city. If the plan is abandoned and Shahestan Pahlavi is developed piecemeal in accordance with market pressures rather than as a coherent community, there will be little likelihood that the other planned new communities will be able to withstand these pressures. At stake, then, is the entire scheme of compact, multifaceted centres proposed by the Tehran comprehensive plan as the basis of the city's logical future development.

Shahestan Pahlavi's success will, therefore, be critical if the spread of the city is to be

contained in these desired centres. They in turn will help make rapid public transportation feasible; and such a system, as we have noted, will be the prerequisite for a shift away from the private car. Finally, Shahestan Pahlavi will give Tehran and the nation both a precinct of high amenity and a ceremonial centre with which all citizens can identify. It will symbolize Iran's rapid progress toward becoming a leading industrial nation and world power. It will also demonstrate new commitment to quality development. In its achievement, Shahestan Pahlavi can reflect the highest aspirations of Iranian culture and perhaps provide the country once more with a capital that can elicit the admiration of travellers the world over, like Isfahan in the sixteenth century. Shahestan Pahlavi offers Tehran more than the chance to become just another large capital; it affords an opportunity for greatness.

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#### **The Notion of Great Cities: Recurring Motifs**

All cities are different and reflect their time, place and the culture of their builders. But not all necessarily exhibit the physical qualities which make them memorable or recognized throughout the world as great cities. The development of Shahestan Pahlavi can transform Tehran's image to one of the world's major capital cities: conversely, it could all too easily become a mediocre Western-style twentieth century development like the new downtown areas of too many North American and European cities. Equally, it can be a collection of fine individual buildings by eminent designers which fail to come together to form a meaningful whole.

Various simple yet fundamental physical characteristics are common to the central areas of some of the world's best-loved cities: Rome, Peking, Paris, London, New York, Bath, Edinburgh, Isfahan, Amsterdam, Savannah, St. Petersburg, Chicago and Munich. Such cities emphasize an order for the whole: blocks and streets, squares and courts come together to form

a dense and interrelated pattern of buildings and circulation routes. This produces an urban design context made up of a limited number of standard units. Together, they form a larger whole in a variety of different ways, but which have a certain self-sufficiency in themselves.

There also exists in such cities a greatness and variety of scale and an overlying hierarchy in the arrangement of the main uses and communications networks, yet a flexibility to move these uses within the system. Between component sub-areas there is a combination of "tight" and "loose" fit, and the urban texture is dense enough to provide short walking distances so that pedestrians can move easily and in comfort from one place to another.

The buildings in great cities have a consistency in their design and materials, in which variety is obtained by imaginative use of a limited number of themes. Quality in city design derives from the nature and memorability of spaces between build-

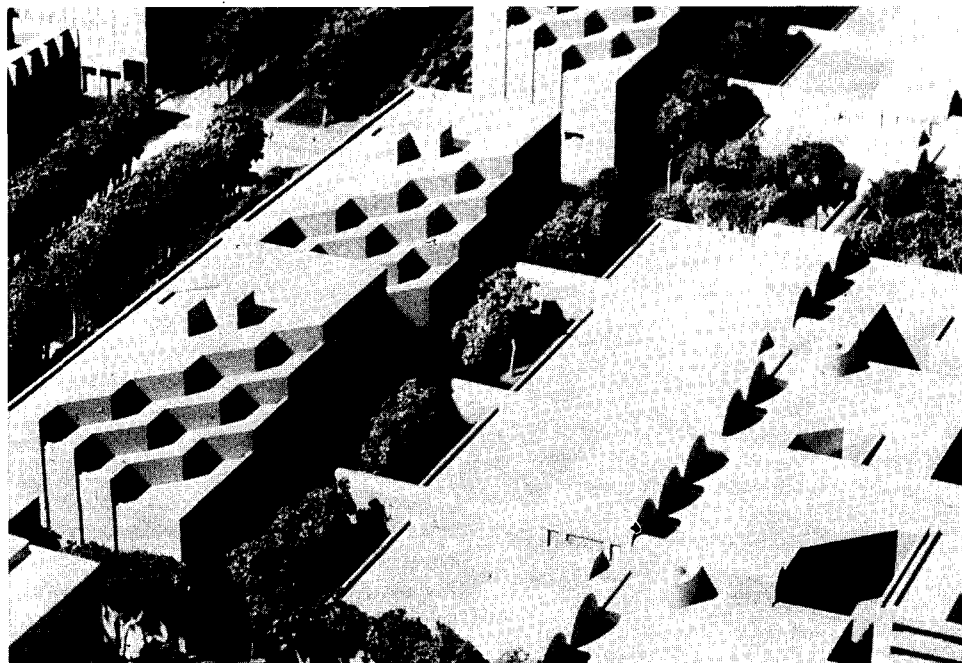
ings as much as from the buildings themselves. The street is the city's major public forum and its careful definition and design is the major element of urban design. The special buildings on such streets are selectively designed and placed. Overall there is an imaginative exploitation of the special natural characteristics of the site, and an emphasis on a generous and flexible circulation system that is not fixed in any one mode. Finally, the designers of great cities—Sixtus V, Michelangelo, Sir Christopher Wren, Peter the Great, Baron Haussmann, John Wood, James Oglethorpe and John Nash—have all shown a common approach which must characterize the design and implementation of Shahestan Pahlavi: a relentless dedication to putting design ideas to work.

However, in addition to their physical qualities, great cities are also characterized by a variety and mix of uses and activities in any one area, as opposed to the modern principles of horizontal separation of use

and activity. It is precisely the appeal of choice, of being able to live, work, recreate, shop and even find solitude in a single area that has given to many great cities their peculiar dynamism and their popularity. This mixing of the sacred and profane in a natural way has led to cities which people both love and enjoy using. Such a mix of uses—private commercial development, as well as public institutional building, and day and nighttime activities—has been a foremost goal in the design of Shahestan Pahlavi.

Persian architecture and city building has a continuous history of over six thousand years. During this timespan, the country has produced a range of notable urban developments from simple tea-houses and exquisite gardens to some of the grandest and most beautiful buildings and spaces to be found anywhere in the world, of which the most famous are Persepolis and Isfahan. As important, if not as well known, are the great desert towns, large and small, where truly indigenous principles were developed and refined over the centuries. Shahestan Pahlavi must be a part of this continuing tradition.

Historical Persian precedent is relevant to Shahestan Pahlavi at three levels: the city structure, the building form and scale and the surface enrichment. The form and organizational structure of the town and city have, to a considerable degree, been shaped by the hostile and arid nature of much of Iran's terrain, whether mountain ridges, plain or desert, and by the climatic conditions prevailing throughout the country. Thus, cities such as Yazd took on the contrasting form of walled oases in which water, landscape and narrow passageways (*kūches*) were key contributors to a more comfortable and softer environment. The orientation of the circulation system aimed to ameliorate the harsh climatic conditions, while harnessing any favourable elements. Long streets helped to distribute cooling breezes through the city, while the shorter ones were placed to dispel hot winds. Narrow passageways and arcade systems were used to provide shade from the afternoon sun.



*Shahestan Pahlavi project, Tehran detail of the model*

*Photo J. Robertson/Llewelyn-Davies Associates*

But there were also legitimate aspirations to ceremony and grandeur. In terms of greatness of organization, Isfahan is the supreme example of an urban continuity equal to such other world cities as Rome, Leningrad, Paris and London. It has many lessons for Shahestan Pahlavi.

Similarly, individual buildings have been shaped not only in response to those unique conditions of place and purpose, but also by a formal, symbolically meaningful and complex family of geometries. These geometries spring from the very heart of the mathematical and spiritual genius of the culture and act both as practical ordering devices and as symbolic reference systems to the spiritual world beyond. In no architecture in the world is the language of pattern and geometry more crucial than in Iran.

At the scale of the building, or building group, several themes other than this overlying geometric order are evident. The pervasive small spaces, both internal and external within the larger structure, reflect a concern with a human scale and, in some places, with privacy. This is further evident in the use of small units for doors and windows. Indigenous building types include, in addition to the jewel-like mosque with its formal forecourt (*eyvan*) and courtyard, the courtyard house, the caravanserai, the theological college (*madrassa*), the bath (*hāmmām*) and the warehouse (*sarāi*).

Building forms evolved from a principal intention to provide a comfortable environment. The dome allowed easy cooling of its surface by the winds and ensured that the intense rays of the sun would only be directed on any part for short periods of time. Roofs and walls enclosing houses had their backs to the sun, and were excluded from *eyvan*, the open area facing the courtyard, which was an essential part of the living area. In certain areas wind towers (*bādgirs*) were devised to catch favourable breezes and direct them into living spaces. Today's concerns are not so different and many of the elements of Shahestan Pahlavi are developments of these traditional solutions.

At the level of surface enrichment, examples of exquisite tiling, plaster-work, wood-carving and other types of detailed decoration abound. Colour and pattern are used selectively and therefore to the most dramatic effect: to establish a level of symbolic reference, to give a sense of coolness, to reduce apparent scale or to enrich a key building in an otherwise monochrome townscape (the obvious example being the mosque complex). As mentioned above, these patterns were not only based on highly sophisticated numerical systems which offered a great variety of proportional relationships and geometric configurations, but were also understood to have rich symbolic content. The patterns were, thus, a reference system at many levels, both real and abstract, for artist and public alike. In becoming an intermediary or translator, the craftsman responsible for architectural enrichment held a special and honoured tradition in Iran. That tradition should be maintained and strengthened to the degree possible, and the development of Shahestan Pahlavi provides an excellent opportunity for helping re-establish certain Persian craft industries, especially those associated with paving, tiling and brickwork.

In such a rich historical context, however, there is an obvious danger of superficial pastiche. Shahestan Pahlavi must provide, instead, a contemporary response to the same influences of climate, topography, native materials and vegetation that are more subtly Iranian and less self-conscious in the process.

To acknowledge the desirable historical precedents outlined above, while accommodating the scale and nature of uses appropriate to a city centre in the present century and beyond, will not be easy. This problem is not peculiar to Shahestan Pahlavi. New buildings, for functional, economic and technical reasons, tend to be larger in bulk and height than traditional ones. Furthermore, they are often less adaptable to change of use and the accommodation of multiple uses than their predecessors.

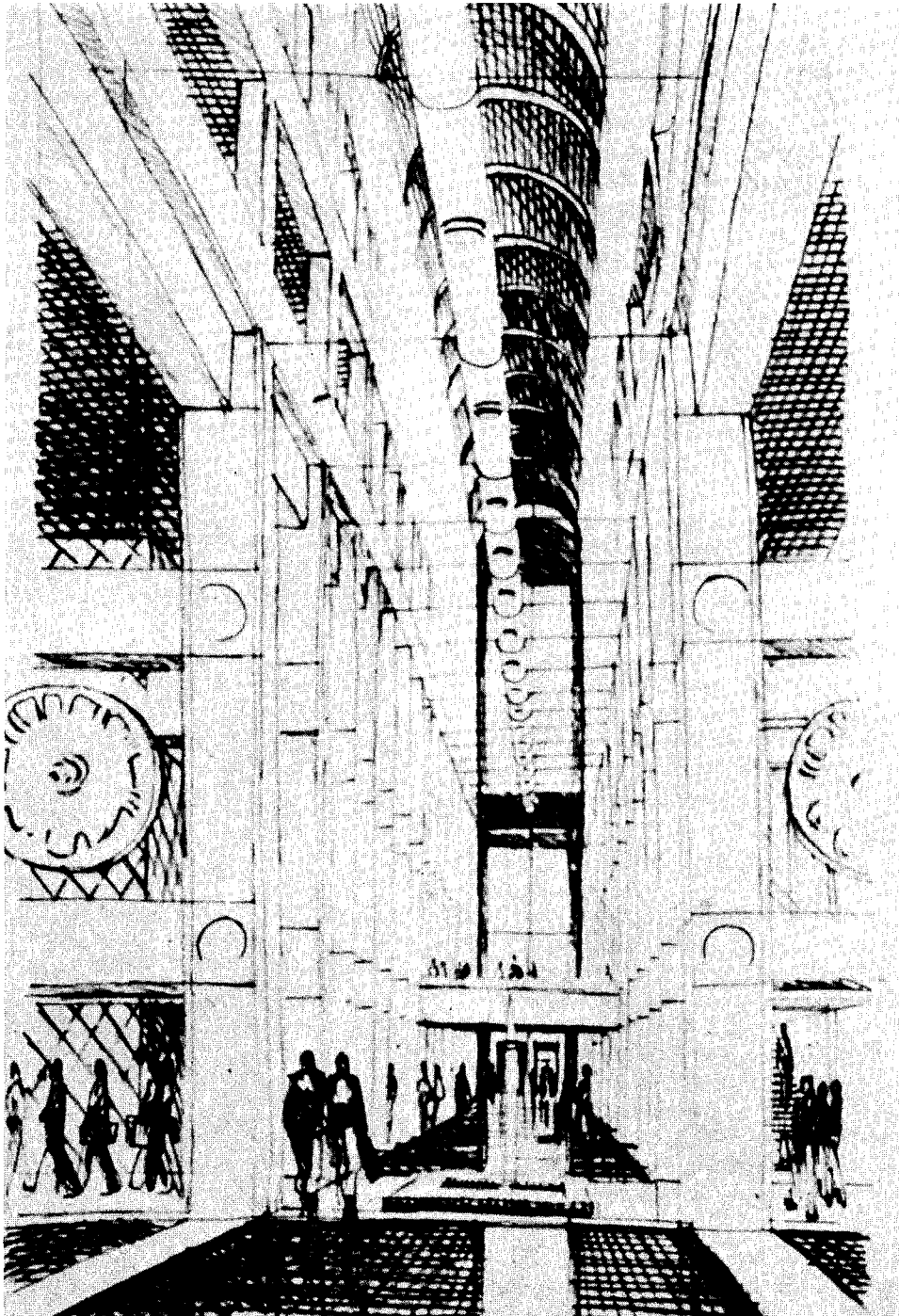
The influences of economics, modern tech-

nology and present-day modes of living and business, as well as those of architectural fashion, have created a style of building which tends to give modern cities a remarkable similarity the world over. Shahestan Pahlavi, in its conception, design and execution should avoid the automatic ersatz Western or "international" solutions. It must resist the destruction of traditional values by seeking to maintain those qualities which make Iran and its people unique and by drawing on the great tradition of Persian architecture and building design. At the same time it must take full advantage of the possibilities offered by materials such as reinforced concrete, steel and glass which the builders of older cities did not have.

Given the existence of a heavily extended construction industry and a shortage of basic building materials, the search for essentially Iranian solutions must not be negated by the superficial attractiveness of imported industrialized building techniques. Nor should design solutions be proposed which depend upon the import of a capital-intensive building technology when Iran possesses both labour and labour-intensive building technology.

Invariably, modern buildings rely to an increasing extent on air conditioning and, as a consequence, fuel and energy costs are high. The minimization of energy consumption is yet another cogent reason for the use of the traditional courtyard building, whenever possible, in preference to the Western-type tower or slab building. This is not to say, however, that Shahestan Pahlavi should not accommodate high buildings. It must be remembered that much of the visual character of the new centre will derive principally from what is perceived by the visitor or resident close to ground level. Thus, the street level and first few floors of all buildings should come together to form a rich carpet composed of pedestrian scale elements: arcades, glimpses into garden courts, trees, flower beds, patterned paving and tiling, façades, entrances, steps. Above this carpet, larger, bulkier or higher elements can be located, and indeed, these are appropriate in certain locations.





*Shahestan Pahlavi project, Tehran: drawing of interior space*

*Photo: J. Robertson/Llewelyn-Davies Associates*

The newer uses will also be more acceptable if, as far as possible, they are built of traditional materials. Brick is the most well-known building material of Iran. It is quick and simple to use. By its mass, it protects building interiors from the intense summer heat. In view of the current shortage of bricks, similar advantages might be obtained by the use of reinforced, load-bearing block-work. Moreover, the extensive scale of construction envisaged at Shahestan Pahlavi would make the development of a special "Abbasid block" a practical and appealing possibility.

Finally, the overall plan for Shahestan Pahlavi should avoid features which militate against achievability, such as placements of land-use and communication routes in complex single purpose or inextricably close relationships.

Three main elements are thus essential in a design oriented towards a successful realization. First, a clear and comprehensive framework and organization must be devised to which the many and various public and private agencies involved in implementation can easily relate. Second, a series of simple design rules and principles should be developed. Last, there must be consistent and passionate commitment to quality and to project completion by the city's leaders; no great city has been realized without the support of strong men.

#### **Design and Context**

There are a number of general themes, some seemingly contradictory, which underlie the design:

- Search for order and comprehensibility
- Accentuation of contrasts
- Spatial variety and continuity
- Connection to the existing city
- A mix of uses
- The achievement of an early sense of maturity
- Ease and choice of movement
- Reinforcement of the natural terrain and amelioration of a severe climate through building and design

- Accommodation of the automobile and the pedestrian
- The development of realistic design controls
- An avoidance of "science fiction" (the use of tested systems)
- The recognition of how the development process and the budget affects both the shape of the plan and the schedule of implementation
- Flexibility to accommodate change
- Emphasis on physical beauty, most particularly on landscaping and views

Architecturally, an attempt has been made to evolve a rather limited vocabulary of details, forms and organizational schemes, as well as materials for all the public buildings, for two reasons. First, this simplifies the design and building process and begins to create a harmony between different buildings. Second, such a similarity of architectural details has characterized Iranian building from earliest times. The vocabulary includes shape and proportion of windows, doors and other large openings; the soffits, columns and piers of arcades; skylights and roof domes or vaults, as well as the treatment of paved areas and flat roofs.

The way in which natural light is introduced into climate-controlled areas in the middle of blocks, the atria of the ministry prototype and City Hall, as well as the vaulting of the galleria, has been carefully studied so as to minimize heat loss/gain and at the same time mark passage of the day for those inside. Major circulation routes, as in traditional Iranian bazaars, are always top-lit and give access along the route of passage to open landscaped courts.

The ceremony of entry to all major public buildings is accommodated in open courts or plazas, and the lines between public and private areas physically emphasized by the architecture. For example, passage from outside public space to inside private space is handled by means of intermediate transition space, or "lock," designed to prepare the senses for the change.

Generally, large areas of glass at the sur-

face of buildings are avoided altogether, except in isolated cases on the north side of certain buildings facing Shah and Nation Square (e.g., the hotel and City Hall) where the reflecting quality of the glass is seen as an ideal mirror to the backdrop of the mountains. Most windows are small and recessed or otherwise protected against the sun by some form of *brise-soleil* or *jalousie*. Major corridors or galleries are designed to aid in cross-ventilation in all but the most extreme months of the year.

Exterior surfaces are of reinforced brick or block with special coloured surfaces in the form of tiles applied on the inner surfaces or flanking walls of openings, a kind of makeup, like eye shadow or, as in the case of buildings around Shah and Nation Square, on major roof forms and parapets as the previously mentioned "headdresses" that give identity from a distance to important buildings. This highlighting and informing through the use of colour is traditional, and seems as appropriate to a modern city as to an old one. Landscaping is given a major architectural role throughout, with trees and water being seen as the major shapers and softeners of outdoor space.

We have tried in this plan to avoid reshaping Iranian culture so as to make it fill any preconceived notions of twentieth century technology or town planning theory. Instead, we have attempted to reinforce and strengthen unique and relevant aspects of Iranian civilization through the use of modern technology and theory. In that sense, our role has been as much custodians of continuity as innovators; and we feel that the test of the new centre being recommended is that it not only be modern, but also recognizable and usable by Iranians.

Tehran needs, and richly deserves, a handsome and functional city centre. This plan is intended to show how such a centre can be achieved and how it might be designed to become the symbolic focus of contemporary Iranian culture. Achieving Shahestan Pahlavi, the next step, will be a test of that contemporary culture.

## Reference Notes

<sup>1</sup> "Shahestan Pahlavi: Project for a new centre for Tehran," *RIBA Journal* LXXIV (4), pp 136-147 (1977)

<sup>2</sup> Speech delivered to House of Commons, June 18, 1940