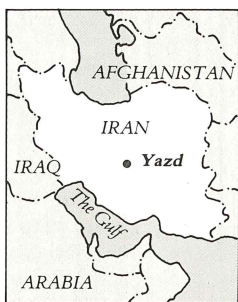


Ghafouri House, Yazd



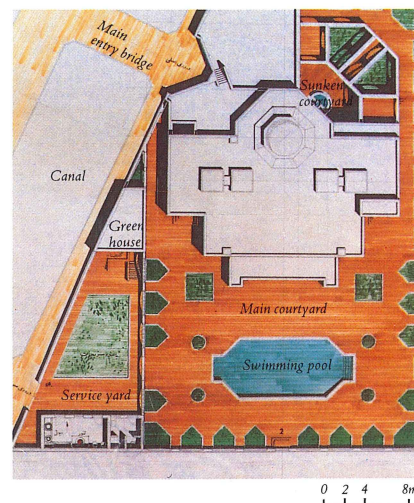
Project Data

Architect: Sath-o-Sanat,
Mahmoud Dadmanesh,
principal
Client: Mr. Ghafouri
Location: Yazd, Iran
Site area: 1530 square metres
Built area: 1150 square
metres
Completed: 1986

Text by F. Essalat,
R.I.B.A. Documents
courtesy of the
architect.

The Ghafouri House in Yazd — a city built on the edge of the Great Desert in central Iran and rich in traditional Iranian architecture — is an essay in trying to regain the values of an architecture well suited to this environment, in not only addressing the hot and arid climate, but more importantly, in developing a language of design appropriate to the way of life in a very traditional city.

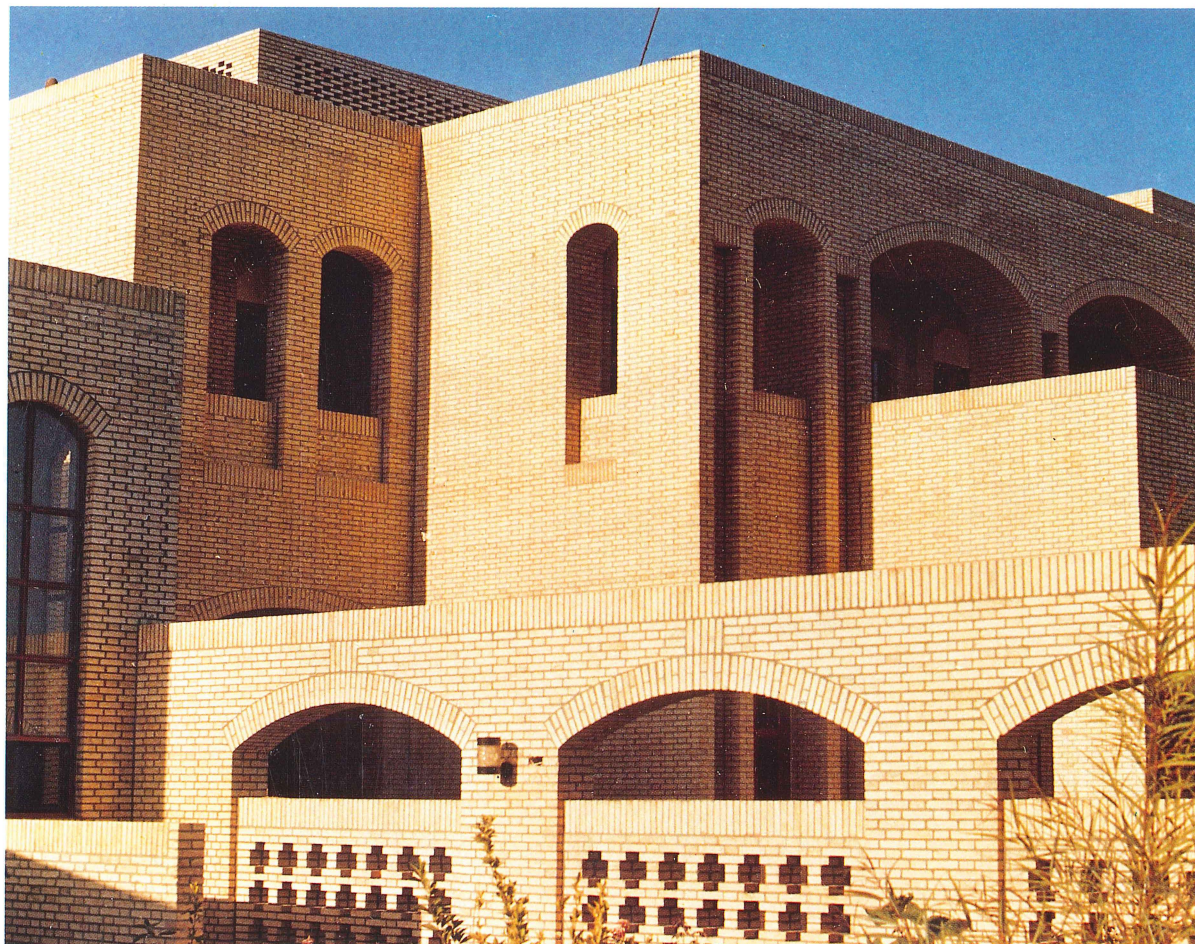
The plan of the house, like its older models is geometrical and symmetrical, with all the major rooms facing south, the optimum orientation for this kind of climate. The entry to the house is through a small, double vestibule which affords privacy from street traffic and provides a halting — space before entering the central space of the house — the two-and-a-half-storey *hashti*, or Octagon. This space, recurrently used in court houses of Iran over the past centuries, serves as a fulcrum device at entries and along corridors to affect a change of direction within a rectilinear geometry. Here too the purpose remains the same,



but in this instance the space is turned inside out, the circulation happening on the outside rather than within the *hashti*, leaving this space to soar upwards towards the light filtering in from above. The central drama of the house lies in the *hashti*, which dominates the interior from every vantage point. All movement

Above: Plan of the house on its site.

Below: View of the house from the service yard.



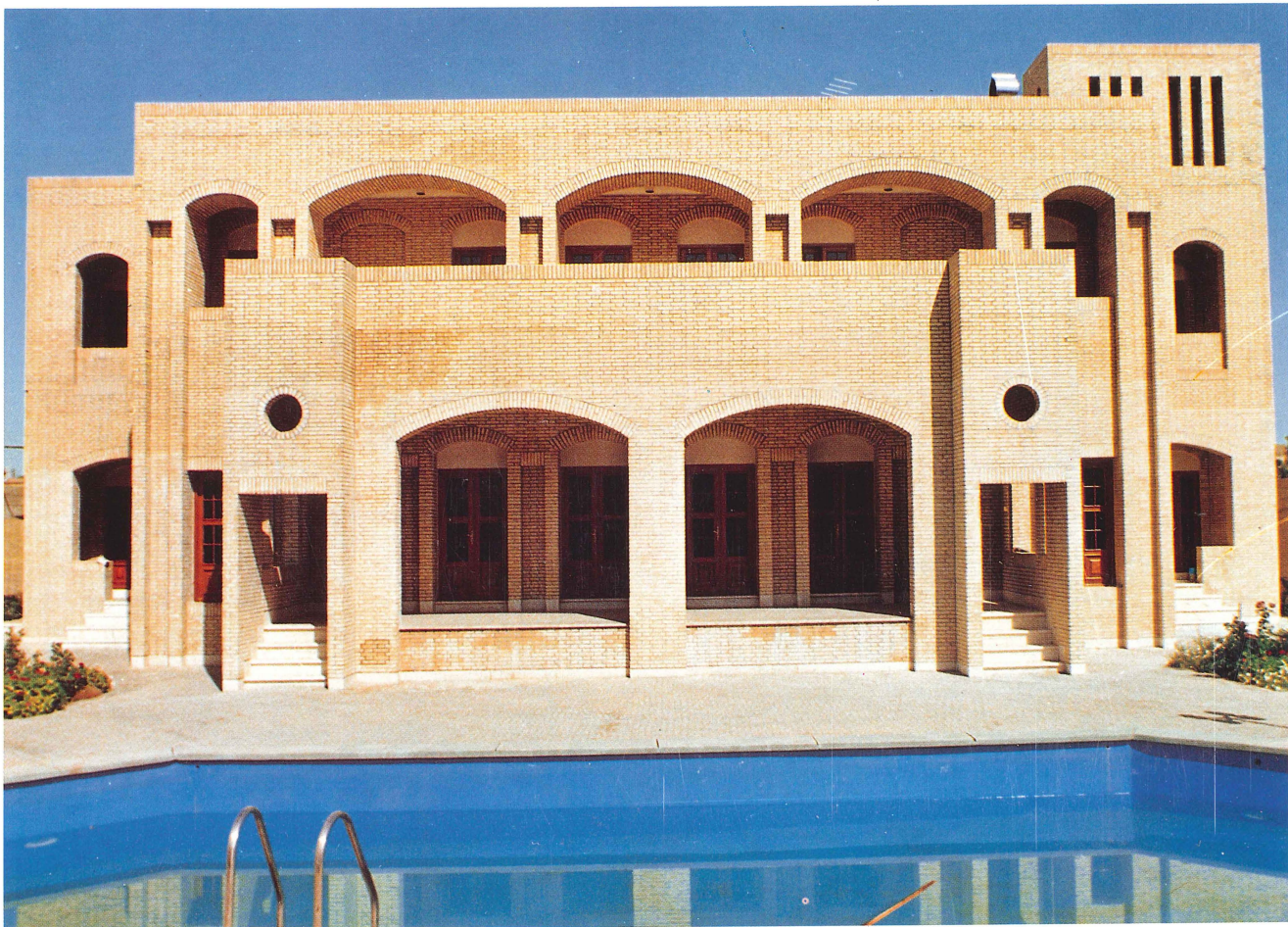
back and forth, or up and down, takes place in the light of this volume, marking the passage of the day.

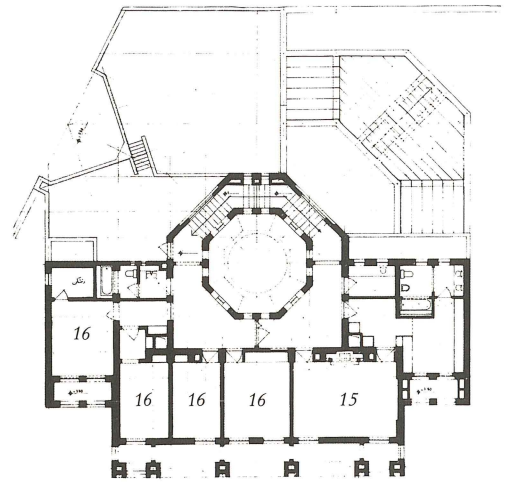
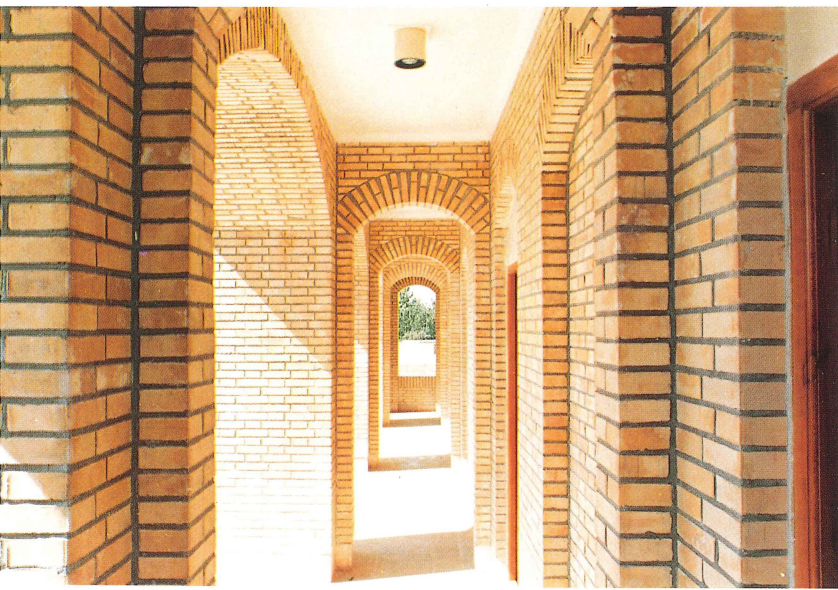
The inclusion of a cool basement for summer retreats is another design element reused with effect in this house. An elaborate structure of free-standing walls and terraces creates a shaded, lower courtyard and houses the exterior stairs down to the children's playroom and the *hosekhaneh*, where a bubbling fountain makes this den a refuge from the heat outside.

The frontal *iwans* facing the main courtyard shade the windows and provide formal reference to typical architectural elements of Iranian origin. The interplay of open spaces defined by arches and pierced walls of brick, the layering of space and wall masses, and the pervasiveness of the geometry, are all reminiscent of the rich formal language which pervades traditional Persian architecture, and which here, is shown to be as relevant as it has always been.

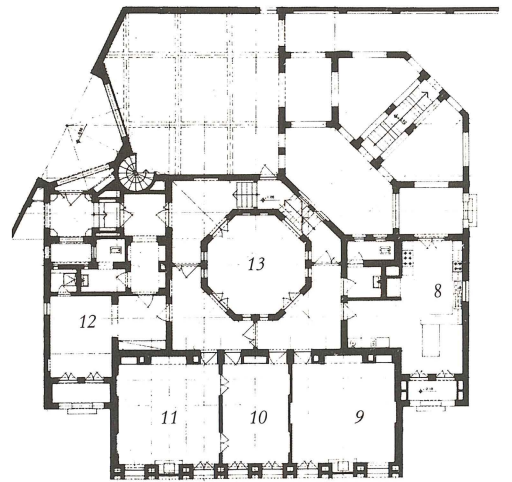
Right: Looking upwards from basement level at the facade of the stairs inside the house.

Below: South elevation of the house.

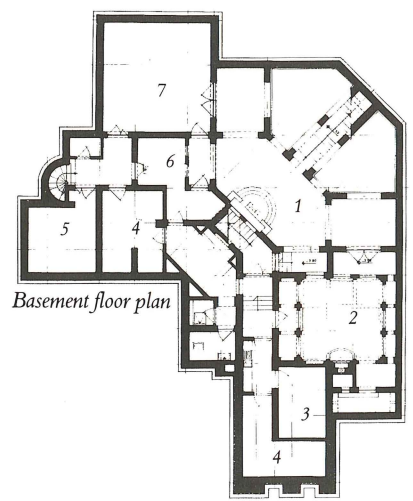




First floor plan



Ground floor plan



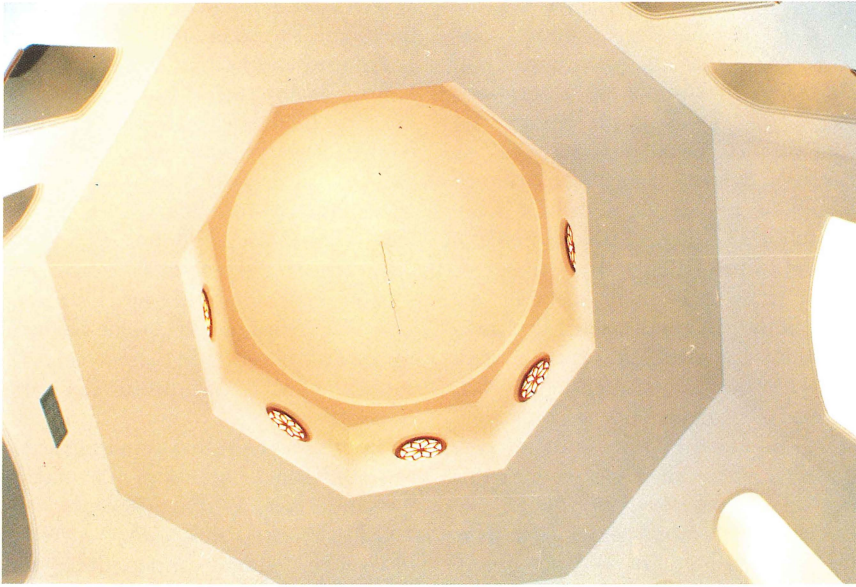
Basement floor plan

1. Courtyard
2. Persian room
3. Maid
4. Store
5. Plant room
6. Laundry
7. Play room
8. Kitchen
9. Living
10. Dining
11. Salon
12. Guest bedroom
13. Hashi
14. Parking
15. Master bedroom
16. Bedroom



0 1 3m

Left, above: Arcade on the first floor level overlooking garden and pool.
 Left: View through brick arcades above the sunken garden.



Above and left: Hashti dome and skylight over the central hall (octagonal).

Left, below: Corridor on first floor overlooking the void of the hashti, or central octagonal hall.

Bottom, far left: View of the stairs from the first to second floor, following the walls of the octagonal hashti.

Bottom, left: View of the houz-khaneh in the basement of the house.



Mr. Dadmanesh obtained a Master of Architecture degree from Teheran University in 1970. After a year with the firm D.A.Z. and a much longer period at Aratta Collaborative, he opened his own practice in Teheran in 1986.

