

The Rehabilitation Proposal for Seied Golesorkh Street¹

by Ludovico Micara

Abstract: Seied Golesorkh Street is one, the most recent, of the new “cut” streets, at least until 1977, in the historic city of Yazd. The text and images describe the urban redevelopment project of Seied Golesorkh street, an intervention aimed at designing the new road front, but, taking inspiration from the availability of new areas resulting from the demolition, it is committed to provide for new services.

Keywords: Seied Golesorkh Street, demolitions, historical textiles, reconstruction.

The cutting of new streets in the Iranian historical cities has been a very widespread urban intervention during the last century. We can distinguish two different moments in which those planning operations have been carried out. The first one occurred during the modernization period launched by Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925–1944) to provide access into the historical dense and compact fabric. The second moment, more recent, characterized the 50s and the 60s of the 20th century, before the principle of conservation and restoration was acknowledged not just for monuments but also for historical centres. On the one hand, continuous porticos and shops healed with unifying elevations the wounds produced in the fabrics by the first cuttings. On the other hand, more recent demolitions are easily recognizable by the casual reconstruction of the new borders of the street, or by the still present demolished buildings and houses, with their interior spaces and courtyards, once jealously hidden, exposed to indiscreet sight of people.

The consequences of these cuttings on the Iranian historical urban fabrics are twofold. The first is the interruption of continuity of

1. This text was written in 1977 for the Yazd Master Plan and has since been published in B. Albrecht, A. Magrin (a cura di), *Esportare il centro storico*, Fondazione La Triennale di Milano, Milano 2015, pp. 356-357.

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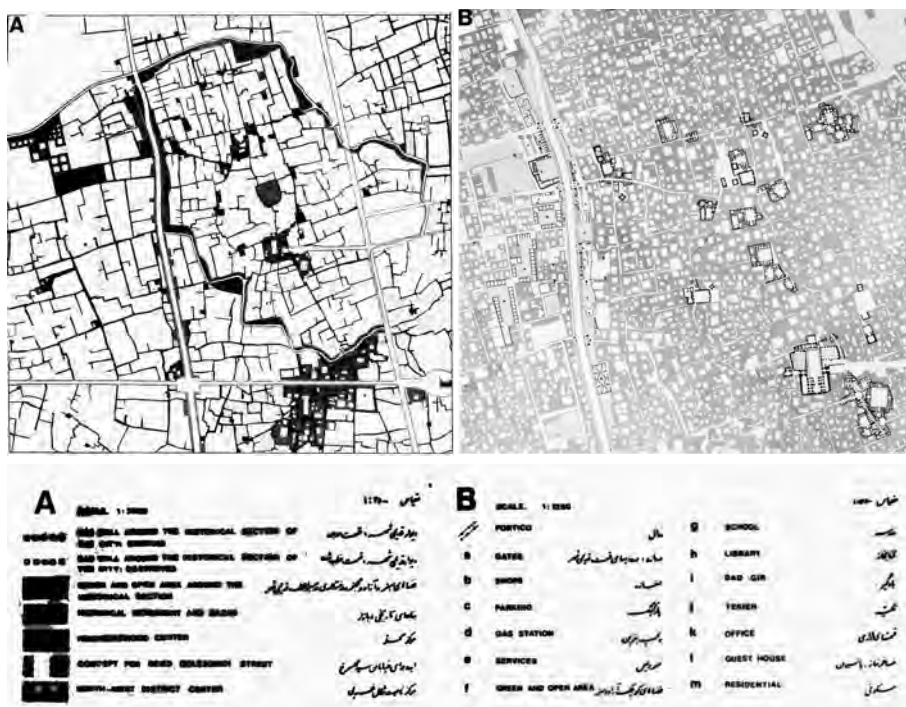
the streets. As a result, the connections between the house, the cluster of houses, the quarter (*mahallah*) and the main line (*rasteh*) of the *bazaar*, with its *caravanserai*, *timcheh*, and the related *hammam*, *madrassa* and mosques, are cut. The strong unity and integration of the traditional historical fabric is broken, without any new urban reference model. The second effect is that the *bazaar* loses its relevance as commercial centre of the city to the advantage of the new streets, where it is possible to reach shops by car. In addition to losing its commercial function, the *bazaar* also loses its characteristic of being the most important public space of the city.

Seied Golesorkh Street is one of the new streets cut in the old city of Yazd. Its position along the western border of the historical centre, close to ancient urban walls, makes that space not just a solution to a mobility infrastructural problem, as originally conceived, but a good opportunity to provide the historical centre with due public utilities, that it would be impossible to place into the dense and compact urban fabric. The cutting of the street in the present fabric in fact not only destroyed houses and buildings, and broke off the connection paths between the old centre and the suburbs, but produced many left over spaces and a larger deterioration area.

The purpose of the rehabilitation project is therefore not just to define the façades of the new street, but to exploit the ruined areas in order to arrange some facilities for the old centre and to connect them to the historical paths as well.

The new urban elevations have been designed as one- or two-level porticos, built with precast components, combined following various patterns. Such porticos are interrupted by large gates, which define the accesses to the historical centre, and are accompanied by shops, parking lots, gas stations, public gardens and facilities as library, school (*madresseh*), *tekieh* (small squares as theatres for performing dramas, i.e. *taziyeh* in the Persian mourning period, *moharram*), and cool meeting places, dug into the ground (*zirzamin*) and ventilated by tall wind towers (*bad ghir*).

To re-establish the lost continuity of the urban fabric is the objective of the project, in order to integrate the traditional public spaces of the old centre to the new ones resulting from the rehabilitation of the street cuttings.



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