

Establishment of Inn

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Abstract: After considering the reasons of development of Inn, we have addressed the history of establishment of Inns in Achaemenid and before that, during Parthian, in the early Islamic, Seljuk, Il-khanid and Safavi eras. Then, we have described the function, architecture and elements of Inn. In the following, the classification of Inn into Inns of the mountainous region, those of the region bordering the Persian Gulf and Inns with yards in the central regions of Iran are presented.

Key words: Inn • Elements of Inn • Plan of Inn • Climate

INTRODUCTION

Iranian architecture has been famous since ancient times. For travelers' rest, Iranian constructed buildings along the roads between towns. These buildings had different names including Inn, robat, sabat, langargah, mehmankhaneh, khan, descareh and carbat. Inns are important buildings in Iranian traditional architecture. Their construction has a long history in Iran, which is corresponding to the history of establishment of goods trade among the different regions of the Persian Empire and trade with other countries. The plans of Inns are usually rectangular or of square shape, with a prominent unplanned gateway and walls and sometimes with wind towers at their ends. Establishment, evolution and extension of Iranian Inns in different eras were influenced by social, economical and religious status and the foundation of the architecture was based upon the traditional methods as well as the common architectural system of the era. Considering the frequent travels of traders, merchants and other travelers, Inns played an important role in commercial deals and Inns provided services such as a place to rest, supplying water for travelers and, keeping and caring pack animals, as well as maintenance of trade safety along the routes. Of the architectural elements of Inns, we can mention to rooms for travelers, place of keeping animals, alcoves and the court, wind towers, the entrance heaters, room for guards of the Inn, Water storage and toilets. The Iranian Inns within the towns or outside the towns and in the mountainous regions, coasts of the Persian Gulf and central parts of Iran had fairly different shapes.

Definition of Inns: Inn is a place or building in which a caravan accommodates. The word is a combination of "caravan", that is a group of people travelling together and "sarai", which means home or place; both of the words originated from Pahlavi.

Reasons for Establishment

First We Address the Reasons of Establishment of Inns: One of the main reasons was the necessity of travelers to rest along long routes. Need for a shelter to keep the goods and life of travelers as well as to keep pack animals of caravans was another reason. Another major reason was the necessity of accommodating travelers in population centers to provide the possibility of trading [1-3].

History of Inns in Brief: The history and basis of Inns in Iran goes back to the era of Achaemenid or even before that. However, there is no evidence of constructing Inns before the Achaemenid. According to texts, during the Achaemenid, 110 Chaparkhaneh or Inn was constructed along the route of Susa to Sard. It was possible to pass this way in three months, but chapars (postmen of that time) passed it in one week. No architectural works of Inns of the Achaemenid era have remained. During the Parthian era, Inns were made of bricks and adobes and with square or rectangular shape, that are mentioned in theories of Wolfram Kleiss and Kiani. The Parthian Inns had probably porch around the main axis and the rooms and resting places were located around the court. During the Sassanid era, the construction of Inns and connecting routes expanded. The remaining of Inn architecture of this era is significant. Some of the most important ones

include Darvazeh gach, Deir-e gachin and Robat-e Anushirvan. In this era, whenever there was a strong government, construction of Inn, as a service to people, was considered as a responsibility of the government that made the trade routes safer and led to economical prospect of the country. The most ancient remaining Inn in Iran is of the Ghaznavid era, called Robat mahi or Chahe and is perhaps the building constructed by the award of the Ghaznavid king by the office of Ferdowsi. During the Seljuks, architecture of Inns included the method of building with four balconies. Regarding the stability of the Seljuks era, several Inns were built. Following the Safavids, the highest number of Inns was built in the Seljuks era. In the era, the quality of construction and decorations was so important and many beautiful Inns were built; the best sample of which is the Robat Sharaf Inn [1, 2, 4, 5]. During the Il-khanids and the Timurids the diversity of Inns increased and polygonal and round plans also established. During the Timurids, since European feared from Timur and the Ottoman Empire, the Iranian foreign affairs expanded and many traders including Marco Polo traded along the Silk Road. Travelling of traders across Iran led to construction of Inns in Marand, Jolfa, Sarcham in Azerbaijan, Anjireh in Yazd and Panj in Khorasan. The Safavid era can be considered as the golden age of Inns. In the era, there was a great variety of Inns and many beautiful ones were constructed [1, 2, 4, 5].

Functions of Inns: Since ancient times, Inns had many different functions. One of them is providing a place for travelers to rest after passing different and impassible routes. Another function was to provide the place for carrying out the religious riots of travelers. Travelers in different caravans talked about different topics. Moreover, Inns were the place of keeping and taking care of animals as well as unloading and keeping the goods and changing horses for chapars. Other functions of Inns were providing a place for selling and changing the goods of caravans and buying the essential stuffs of travelers and meeting the basic requirements of travelers such as providing water and defending caravans against thieves and robbers [1, 2, 4].

Architecture of Inns: In various eras, architecture of Inns had different forms. The forms were based upon the establishment of three barriers. The first barrier had a defensive function and their entry place was only a protected opening. The second barrier was for keeping pack and riding animals or keeping the goods of caravans

in Inns. The third barrier surrounded the internal part of the Inn, which included the rooms and living places. In the center of Inns there was a large yard with a crescent bench for unloading of goods. The variations and innovations were in the manner of access to different barriers, the methods of construction of corners, decorations, services and spaces of the building. Since the concepts of architecture remained unchanged, it is not possible to evaluate the architecture of Inns for each era and the changes did not only depend on the time, but also the climate conditions, servicing elements and the local geographical conditions. The connections between the rooms were different in early and later eras. In the early eras, rooms were directly connected to the yard, but later the balcony was added to the architecture. Inns were built within towns or outside them, but they were different with each other in some aspects. The Inns within towns were mainly built in two stores, but Inns located outside towns had two stores only in the entrance section. The Water storage of Inns were located in different places. In desert areas, the Water storages were insider the Inns, while in regions bordering the Persian Gulf, the Water storages were outside the Inns [1-4].

Architectural Elements of Inns: There were different elements in a Inn. The major element was the travelers' rooms. They were mostly located around the yard or the building. In its final form, the travelers' rooms consisted of the balcony and veranda in front of them. The front veranda was a suitable place for short talks with limited number of people. Each room had also a shelf and a hearth and the hearth of the veranda was larger and deeper. The walls of rooms were made of bricks and were tuck-pointed. The rooms in Inns did not have door. The roofs of the rooms were Colombo vaults to be resistant against earthquakes, without requiring any special care. The size of the rooms were 3.2×3.2 m. The ceilings of the room that belonged to the head of a caravan were higher, since they were larger in size [3]. The place of keeping animals was usually behind the rooms, which was a factor of making the rooms warmer in cold nights. In some Inns, animals were kept in the yard. Horses and camels could not be kept at the same place, since horses do not like the smell of camels. Thus, a separate place, called shotor khan, was built for camels. Sometimes, travelers tied their horses besides the veranda, in the center of the Inns and the cribs of camels were higher in the stalls. There was a roofed bench in the loading place, where the owners of animals talked with each other at night and tied the animals near it. There were some stores and stands in the

corridors of Inns provide some needs of travelers such as cereals, wheat and flour. Some examples of such Inns are Deir-e gachin in Tehran and Mahyar along the road of Shiraz-Isfahan. The alcoves were located above the entrance and along the main axis of the building and were mainly reserved for rich people, heads of caravans, or respected peoples. In some cases, the sections of rich and ordinary people were totally separated [3]. Corridors were the parts which provided access to the place of keeping animals and their entrances were usually located in corners or beside the main balcony. Another important element was the yard, with the highest functional diversity and could be used as a place for unloading goods, rest of travelers in warm summer nights, keeping animals and taking care of them, as well as talking. Wind towers were used in Inns in desert areas. They were devised in front of the building entrance; such as the ones in Zein- al din in Yazd and Jokar in Tabas. Wind towers were used in Iran since ancient times. They were made according to the regional climate and the wind direction. Regarding the wind direction, they could be built in quadrangular or octagonal forms and were mostly in rectangular shape. In regions bordering seas, wind towers were made just as a tunnel opposite of the sea wind direction [3]. In Inns of frigid areas, fireplaces were more important and were located in the stall, at a great height behind the rooms. It seems that fireplaces in stalls, just as the grates, have a long history. The structure of grates was the same as furnaces. The fireplace was similar to a tunnel specified for removal of the ashes. Above the fireplace, there was a frame to prevent infiltration of smoke into the room and the vent holes were devised in the vault of the fireplace [3]. The entrances of Inns were usually built between two towers. The entrance place was the only two-store part of the building in the Inns outside the towns. In the eras with lower road safety for caravans, the side and entrance towers played a role in defense and the building was more or less similar to a castle. In a corner of the Inn, there was a stairway to the roof and the people could reach the towers by the roof. Below the towers and in the loading place, toilets were built [3]. The rooms for the owner and guards of an Inn were mainly located in the corners of the yard and under the side towers or near the entrance. Some Water storage were built in the cities of arid areas that are beautiful works. From the architectural viewpoint, the Water storages that were constructed in flats were so simple; similar to those built in urban area and were similar to simple roofed pools. On the one side, there was a stairway which goes down in water, so that people could take

water even when the height of water was very low. The water of Water storages was supplied with rainfalls [3]. The Water storage of Inns generally located in the central part of the yard. To supply water, each Inn had a servant and when the weather was cloudy, he cleaned all water canals, so that rain went to the Water storage through water canals. Sometimes to fill Water storage, some very long canals were built to supply water. Examples are Deir-e gachin or Ein-al Rashid Water storage, with sometimes slightly salty water [1-4].

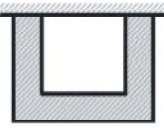
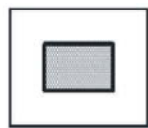
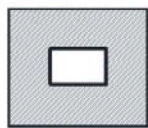
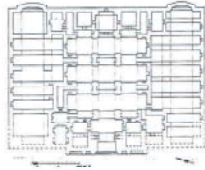
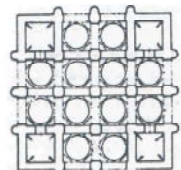
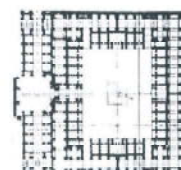
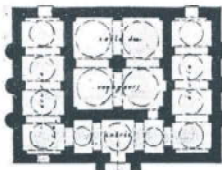
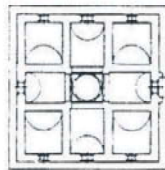
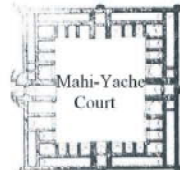
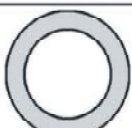
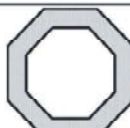


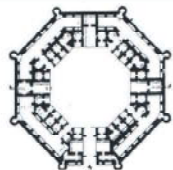
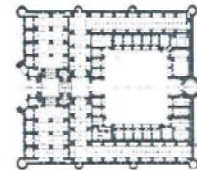
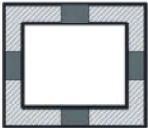
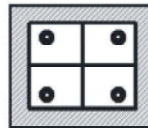

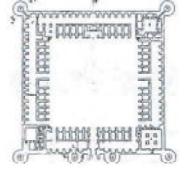
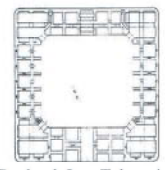
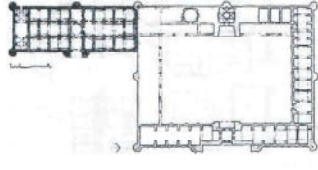
Classification of Iranian Inns: The Iranian Inns were built in different forms according to climate conditions and different needs of travelers. They were mainly classified into three types: those of the mountainous region, the Inns in regions bordering the Persian Gulf and the Inns having yard in central parts of Iran.

Inns in Mountainous Region of Iran: In mountainous regions, due to severity of cold, the architecture protects travelers from outdoor natural condition; by having several fireplace or grates in rooms. These Inns generally have vaulted rooms with some stalls in the same row. Sometimes, resting rooms were only columned halls. Most of such Inns have remained from the Safavid era. Some examples to note are Shebli in Azerbaijan, Imam zadeh Hashem along the Ab-Ali road and Gaduk in Firoozkuh [4] (Table 1, Fig. 1).

Inns in Regions Bordering the Persian Gulf: Such Inns did not have central yards and were a quadrant building with a cross-shaped room in the center and side rooms. They were generally constructed on stone benches and, to be ventilated all rooms opened to outdoor. These Inns were weaker with respect to their defending ability and their entrance gates opened to all directions to direct fresh and cool air in the building. Thus, they were mostly constructed during the Safavids, because of the relative peace of the era. An example can be found in Ghale pahlu along the Bandar Abbas road (Table 1, Fig. 2).

Inns of the Central Region of Iran (Table 1, Fig. 3): The Central Region Inns Are Categorized into the Following Six Groups:

Round Inns: In spite of some limitations, they reflected the elegance in the plan. In spite of the external round shape, they were built polygonal inside. Some examples are Ganj Ali khan (Robat Zein-al din) in Yazd and Zireh along the road of Kashan-Natanz [3-4] (Table 1, Fig. 4).

Fig 1- Inn in mountain region 5%	Fig 2- Inn in edge of Persian Gulf 10%	Fig 3- Inn in central regions, 30%
Spot or Environmental 	Court around the building 	Court in the building 
 Gaduk Inn, Firuzkooch city Safaviyeh age	 Abbasi Inn, Bushehr city Safaviyeh age	 Yazd-Khast Inn, Shiraz city Safaviyeh age
 Imamzadeh Hashem Inn, Abali city Safaviyeh age	 Yungi Inn, Bandar-Abbas city Safaviyeh age	 Robot-Mahi Inn, Mashhad city Ghaznavi age
Fig 4- Circular, 2%	Fig 5- Multi sides, 3%	Fig 6- with two verands, 15%
		
 Zizeh Inn, between Kashan and Natanz cities Safaviyeh & Ghajar age	 Deh-bid Inn, Shiraz city Safaviyeh age	 Sang-Bast Inn, Mashhad city Safaviyeh age
Fig 7- with four verands, 20%	Fig 8- with hall, 10%	Fig 9- Inn with miscellaneous plans, 5%
		
 Deyr-e-Gachin Inn, Tehran City Sasanian age	 Deyhook Inn, Tabas city Ghajar age	 Robot-Gash Inn, Ardebil city Safaviyeh age
Table 1- Division of Inns based on history and continent		

Polygonal Inns Having Yard: The polygonal Inns having yard in the central part had octagonal form, but their general system was usually with four balconies. The buildings were symmetrical from inside to outside and because of their polygonal shape, their defense was easier. In these buildings, at the sides of each edge, there were two round towers. Some beautiful examples are Khan khoreh along Abadeh-Shiraz road and Robat anjireh along Yazd-Tabas road (Table 1, Fig. 5).

Inns Having Two Balconies: These Inns were established according to multi-balcony Inns. They had two balconies along the entrance axis. These Inns had a great variety in terms of different aspects and thus can be further categorized into subgroups. Various examples can be specified with respect to corridors for animals behind the rooms and presence of columned hall in the corners (Table 1, Fig. 6).

Inns Having Four Balconies: This is the dominant form of Iranian Inns and had a greater variety. Most Inns that were built during the Safavi had four balconies. A balcony ended to a high façade and the opposite balcony was either the place specified for the head of caravans or a particular room for the owner of the caravan. The two other balconies were the mosque and a place for gathering and talk of people. In such buildings, the related services were usually provided at the four corners or as a small market along the symmetry axis or outside the building (Table 1, Fig. 7).

Inns with Columned Hall: Inns with columned hall were commonly used as stall. The general system of such buildings could be with two or four balconies. The most important examples are Khatun abad and Askar abad near Tehran. Moreover, there are some examples in the mountainous region of Iran (Table 1, Fig. 8).

Inns with Miscellaneous Plans: Inns with miscellaneous plans deserve noting with respect to their diversity. They reflect the elegance and initiatives of Iranians in matching space and function in different conditions. A good example is the beautiful Robat Zein-al din Inn along Yazd-Kerman road. Shah Abbas ordered Ganj Ali khan to construct it. In its construction, geometry and holy numbers were used, for instance five towers, 12 balconies and 14 rooms. Decorations are so beautiful and the rooms are not similar to each other. From the external view, the building is round and internally it is constructed in a dodecagon shape. In the internal space, half-octagonal and octagonal, octagonal and half-octagonal and

rectangular shapes, round corners and other shapes were used. Geographical conditions, specific requirements, distances and type of routes and the considered function were the reasons of diversity of Inns with miscellaneous plans. These can be separately evaluated [3,4] (Table 1, Fig. 9).

CONCLUSION

Construction of Inns in Iran has a long history. The employed plan and architecture reflect the elegance compatible with requirements and climate conditions in different regions of the country. Considering the diversity of Inns and their different functions and also the elements and types of Inns, by reconstruction and renovation of some of them, they can be used for tourists and travelers to expand tourism industry in the country. Moreover, the concepts and methods used in their structure and making use of climate conditions can be adopted in design and architecture of inns along the routes. Repair and reconstruction of their structures and development of tourist attractions can expand tourism industry of the country. Furthermore, by providing the chance for students to visit Inns along the description of professionals of the field, the potentials of students in architectural design can be extended. Besides scientific advancements in transportation, technologies, communication and the speed of access, all functions of Inns in the past, which were according to the requirements of environmental conditions, are provided by air, earth and sea fleets as well as modern and well-equipped complexes. In such complexes, security is provided with advanced equipments such as electrical controls.

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