

Revealing Iranian Old Architecture by Looking at the Recognizing Sepahsalar Caravansary and Amirieh Castle in Damqan

Shilan Rasouli^{1,*}, Mohammad Hassan Talebian², Eskandar Mokhtari Taleqani²

¹Islamic Azad University, Faculty of art and architecture, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

²M.A in restoration and renewal of historical buildings and fabrics

ABSTRACT

One of the valuable monuments of Iranian architecture is caravansary and castles established from the old times due to different reasons and military, economical, geographical, religious and etc and they are developed gradually in different periods (Pirnia, Mohammad Karim, 1991) historical spaces of Iranian caravansaries have beautiful models of architecture delicacies that are valuable and considerable. Different kinds of patterns, brick works, space decorations and models such as entries, Iwans and Hojre and ShotorKhans. The role of Caravansaries and castles in old Iranian architecture is not structural but it has its special meaning. In this article we introduce one of the caravansaries located in Silk Road and a beautiful example of Qajar architecture in Iran are shown called as Sepahsalar Caravansary located in Amirieh of Damqan in Semnan province and brief introduction of Amirieh castle related to that period and it is consisting of Iranian residential castles.

KEY WORDS: Caravansary; castle; Amirieh; Damqan; Semnan.

INTRODUCTION

Historical resources of Akhmanids history are the basis of Caravansaries. Since Achamanid some buildings related to road such as Caravansaries, bridge and ravine are not discovered but indeed, its different and equipped ways of that era were not without these installations. Specially, old historians wrote about the existence such buildings Herdot admired the comfort provide for the comfort of the passengers and called midway inns "Rastathmos". The Persian word of it is not clear and it is possible that this word means Stathmos station and normally the distance of stathmos was as one day walking about 4, 5 Farsang (Kiani, Mohammad Yusef, 1983). In Ashkanid era, this issue is of importance and in most of the roads namely Silk Road some buildings are created like Caravansary. In Sassanid era due to great economy of Caravansaries as 4 Iwan and it was made of construction materials of stone, lime and gypsum. In Islamic era due to various reasons of military, economy and religious the construction of Caravansary was along with the buildings such as mosques and schools and their map and two-Iwani and 4-Iwani was common. In Safavid era creation of intercity Caravansaries was developed and each was trading location of a special good and these buildings were built by circle and octagonal map. In Zandie, Afsharie and Qajar era they were made of 4 Iwani map and brick and adobe. The word "Caravansary" is the combination of "Caravan" as the group of passengers and Saray meaning house and place. Both Caravan and Saray are the combination of Pahlavi Sasanid (Dehkhoda).

Researchers including Pop believe that Caravansaries in Iran are a big victory for Iranian architectures and in nowhere of the world, special architectures characteristics cannot be seen (Kiani, Mohammad Yousef, 1983).

About castles we should say that their role is not less than Caravansary in Iran architecture. But generally, Iranian castles are including two types of residential and military castles and the second type has important role during wars. The first types are remained less and the discussing castle are for the first type.

Studied zone

Amirieh city is one two parts of Damqan town, Damqan town as the capital of Damqan city about 400 years ago due to its special location was capital of Ashk Sevom and Tirdad Ashkani (249 p.m) and it was the capital of Qoms state capital since first Roman century. Damqan in the past due to settlement of a group of Moqan in this city is called Moqan village that is changed to Damqan gradually.

*Corresponding Author: Shilan Rasouli, Department of Architect, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Central Branch, Tehran, Iran.
Email: Shilanrasouli@yahoo.com



Aerial photo of Amirieh city (Google. 2009)

City of Sad darvazeh* (Damqan) is one of Sassanid capitals and they had excellent position in Omavian, Abasian, Taherian, Samanian, Sarbedaran and Deilamian (Baniasadi, Ali, 1995), Amirieh city is located in 23 km of the south of Damqan and 3km of the south of Tehran-Mashad road and are located in the northern part of Kavir plain. Its location is $36^{\circ}22.5'$ to $36^{\circ}2'$ northern latitude and $54^{\circ}7'$ to $54^{\circ}9'$ of eastern longitude. This section is bounded to Mehdi Shar of Semnan and Kiasar of Mazandarn from North, the central part of Nain of Isfahan from the south, the central section of Damqan from the east and to the central part of Semnan from the west. This city is with the area of 4 km.sq and it has 1700 m altitude of sea level. Of all the villages of Amirieh, 66 villages are with residents. In this section 53 villages are using travelled way and 31 villages are consisting of Asphalt way. Amirieh is a desert region with saline soil.

City development trend

Historical past of this zone dates back to Qajar era and villages Amirabad, Dolatabad, Sidabad, Soleimanabad, Deze and Toyedarvar are of important points and some villages were considered of Mirza Mohammad khan Sepahsalar estates. Amirieh city was constructed by Amir Sepahsalar son-in-law of Nasser al-din Shah. Sepahsalar in his trip passing from Tehran-Mashad road (Silk road) remained in the western side of Amirieh city, due to great plain and flat area of current Amirieh required Qanat excavation. Then by gaining water to attract work force, Amirieh castle was constructed and then other buildings such as Beautiful Caravansary of Sepahsalar was made. It was mentioned that in Amirieh castle some people will live. Before the formation of Amirieh city, a village called Dezaj was in the southern end of current Amirieh and by formation of this city the residents of that village migrated to Amirieh and Dezaj village is changed into farm and garden today. Also in the south west of Amirieh in the distance of about 500 m a castle called Esmaeil Abad is located in the city center of Amirieh and old people call this place Esmaeil Abas (Keshavarz, Ali Asqar, 1991).

- As Amirieh city (Previous Amirabad village) was created by Amirsepahsalar, Amirabad name is removed and it is mentioned as Abadi amir or a village built by Amir Sepahsalar. Also the name of Sepahsalar Caravansary was from its name, thus, the name of Abadi and Caravansary shows the construction of city and Caravansary is made by Amir Sepahsalar.

- In Orumieh city in addition to Sepahsalar Caravansary, there is historical castle of city. The city texture is consisting of old houses. This can be observed in house and internal texture of Amirieh residential castle. In spite of the fact that in internal parts of the castle forming city central core we see the houses are constructed by modern materials and in some cases even the designed allays of castle lost their primary dimension due to more emphasis in reconstructing the buildings. But walking in the texture of this village and people life and neighborhood connections defines this issue clearly and connection of people with traditional characteristics and cultural-historical models, the texture is not destroyed and by good planning all these attitudes and cultural backgrounds are directed in protecting and reconstructing them.

* Sad-darvazeh was called by Greek Hectam Police and it should be said that despite all things others believed this city didn't have 100 gates and this name was due to the fact that at that time, Greek called every big city by this name. For example Moazamtab city as the capital of Egypt and Calious in 28 BC as it was destructed and called similar to this name.



Historical texture of Amirieh castle (Source: Writer)



View of Amirieh residential castle alleys (Source: Writer)

Amirieh historical castle

Amirieh is consisting of a residential castle and consistent with this castle, the city growth is developed according to it and its direction in the western and north western direction. In recent years some constructions are done in historical texture of the city and this is due to heavy and heterogeneous interventions with city historical texture by changing the village to the city. This castle as it was said was built by Amir Sepahsalar son-in law of Naser al-din Shah Qajar. Historical castle of the city is including two overlapping castles and between internal castle and outer fort, there is a path close to the internal fort and they are close to the houses in the castle. This path is formed as a strip with the same shape with the castle and the people passed this path to have access to their houses. Considering the evidences and reviewing old aerial photos is evident that the villages formed in the castle were as designed inside the castle but organic forms of cal de sac alleys branching from the main path and the border in the houses show neighborhood relations and border of residential houses. Generally, two kinds of materials are used in construction of castle: 1- Mud materials including adobe and mud mortar 2- wood



The layers of Amirieh historical castle (source: writer)

1. Residential space in the first layer (Central core of castle)
2. Residential space in the second layer (intermediate layer of castle)
3. Residential space in the third layer (Outer core of castle)
4. The main entry space and castle market
5. Additional spaces of mosque and outer room in the north west of the castle
6. Spaces of the existing towers in the outer fort and intermediate fort of the castle
7. Corridors spaces between castles layer and its surroundings



Plan of Sepahsalar Caravansary in Amirieh texture (Source: Writer)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research at first general properties of the building including castle and Caravansary is reviewed and then by a total to partial approach the structures and structural spaces and construction technology is considered and finally by concluding these details we determined the characteristics of residential castles architecture.

Caravansary of Sepahsalar Amirieh

This Caravansary is located in historical- trade path going from Azerbaijan to the center and then to Khorasan. Passage of time and destruction of previous functions of Caravansaries destroy the importance of this building due to wearing out, destruction and worthlessness and above all, decreasing functional values of the building and all these factors have made us to forget it.

- The building of Sepahsalar Caravansary was constructed by Amir Sepahsalar son-in-law of Nasser al-din Shah at the same time with the formation of Amirabad in Qajar era and this date is mentioned in different resources. The analysis of the general form of Caravansary clarifies that this Caravansary is of later Caravansaries using architectural models of its period. But no source or inscriptions are in Caravansary to refer to its construction.



Internal space of Sepahsalar Caravansary (Source: writer)

- Interventions in Caravansary building was general and it was not in a way to change its total architectural structure but considering the separation of Caravansary there are interventions between different people as closing doors or creating retaining walls between the spaces without the intervention in the structure of the building. In midhall there are different walls to separate the space.



Caravansary entry (Source: Writer)

- The name of the architecture of this building is clear and in Caravansary building and historical documents nothing is mentioned about the architecture of the building but Caravansary building was done by Amir Sepahsalar son-in-law of Naser al-din shah and Caravansary was made under his supervision. Even according to the local news it is said that when Caravansary architecture heard about the death of Amir Sepahsalar, dropped his brick and released the construction of Caravansary as it was no one to pay the construction money.



View of internal space of Caravansary (Source: Writer)

As it is clear from the name of Caravansary and it is called as Amirabad Sepahsalar Caravansary and is called as this name in historical documents and registration documents of Cultural heritage organization, the sponsor of this Caravansary was Amir Sepahsalar.

- In the past besides the ways in the middle of villages and cities, some buildings are made for passengers comfort such as Caravansary, Ribat, Sabat and port, etc. Amirieh Caravansary is of Caravansaries built in the center to east path for establishment and comfort of passengers and Carvanian and in the eastern side of the path is related to Damqan Caravansary and to Qushe Caravansary from the west side (Keshavarz, Aliasqar, 1991)

- Amirieh Caravansary was used as a Caravansary to give service to Carvanian and by developing the use of new vehicles such as car, train and etc its role is weak and gradually it was forgotten. Later, wise people of the village used Amirieh Caravansary as public convention center and holding special religious rituals and some rituals as Moharam mourning and etc held in its midhall. Local people recognize this building as Ribat and the mourning festival in it was forgotten by building Hoseinie and other mosques in the city. This location now is changed into the place for holding animals and barn and even the place to hold horses at a time. Today, Amirieh Caravansary despite different ownership by them is given to a place for holding animals and its surrounding hojre was dedicated to other activities by its owners from the eastern side.

- Amir Abad Caravansary is of 4 Iwan midhall and its composing spaces show a total stype of midhall Caravansaries. Having Ivanche in front of hojre and special spaces of keeping horse and camel are the characteristics of late Caravansaries observed in this location. Amirieh Caravansary is located in the city center of Amirieh, its dimensions 67.60*74.30 m (5022.68 sq.m) and midhall dimensions 36.12 m*36.12 (midhall=1300 sq.m). this Caravansary is with 4 Iwans and Shahneshin Iwan height reached 5.70 m. Caravansary is consisting of 24 Hojre and in three eastern, northern and western sides there is Shotorkhan. The building entry distance from its opposite street is about 10 m and entry of Caravansary is distinct with simple decorations of brick work and wooden door from the adjacent buildings. After entering the building we go to Hashti space having two access ways to the roof and we reach to the direct path to midhall of Caravansary. Shahneshin Iwan of the building is located on the

main zone of the building (opposite to the entry) and two eastern and western Iwans are built with the same dimensions.

- Entry overdoor: The building over door as its remaining is a façade with two two-story height and the second floor is released unfinished. The evidences of the building show that around the building entry in outside the building two platforms are located in two sides of the entry, being destroyed today. The walls around the entry are going outside from each side as 2.35m and this outcrop of the surround joints are not seen in the similar Caravansaries. The entry door to the building is a wooden door with two leave with two knockers and from the bottom the door can be locked. The entry width is 4.62 m and its width is 2.46 m, the height of the highest point of entry overdoor is 6.29m and the doorway is with the height of 3.60m.

- Entry Hashti: Entry Hashti with 7.30m longitudinal diameter in four main sides placed in two entry and crossing zones, it has four arches with the height of 4.15 m. Of 4 sides of Hashti by two doorway opposite to each other there are some stairs to have access to the roof and it is highly probable that these two spaces are used to give food, etc to the passengers and some people were in this place to sell or exchange the goods the passengers need daily.

- Midhall: Having access to midhall after passing the hall is separated from Hashti and is without cover today, the length of this hall is 9.40 m and there is a platform with low depth and the height of about 1 m around it. Sepahsalar Caravansary midhall is with the dimension of 36*36 as square the angles are connected in the angles with the angle of 45 degree. Each of these angles are with the length of 30.35 m. around midhall in each angle, there is one Iwan and 6 Hojre.

Iwans: Sepahsalar Caravansary is of 4-Iwan type and its northern Iwan is Shahneshin Iwan and two eastern and western Iwans are used for gathering of people and mosque. Arch of iwans are of master arch and the height of arch point to the bottom of platform of Iwan is 5.70 m. Span of each of Iwans is 4.20 m and the depth of each is 6.20 m.

Hojre: Sepahsalar Caravansary is consisting of 24 Hojre located equally in 4 fronts of the building (in each front, 6 Hojre). There is one platform and *Ivanche* in front of each Hojre and inside the holes of each of these platforms there is cooker for cooling and inside each of them there is central heating. The size of Hojre is 3.10*3.85 m (about 12 sq.m)



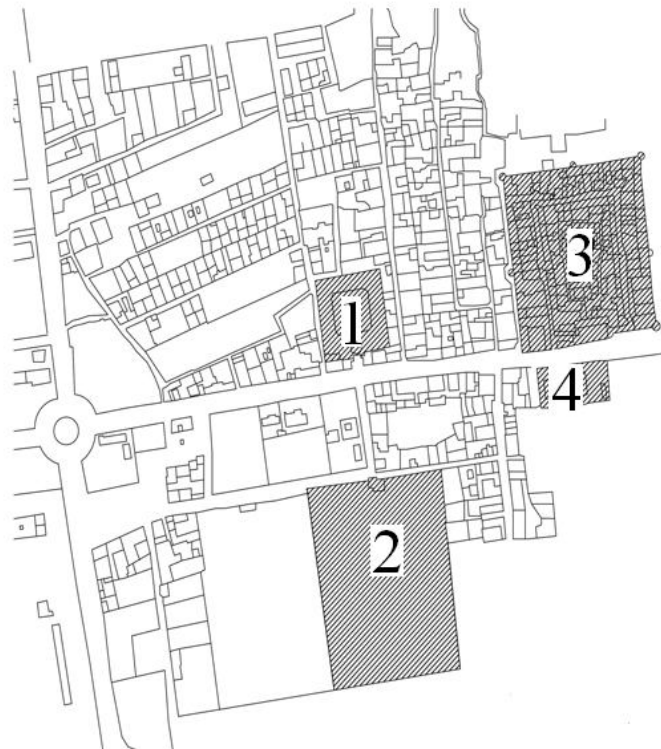
Caravansary Hojre (Source: Writer)

Quay and Shotorkhan: Quay of Caravansary is located in the corners of Caravansary and it is possible to have access to *Shotorkhan* located behind HOjre. The dimensions of quays is 13.94*13.75 m(about 191 sq.m) and it is almost square. Shotorkhans are located by connection with quays behind *Hojre* and Caravansary *Iwans* and in three eastern, northern and western fronts.

Service spaces: In the southern angle of Caravansary some parts are created as service spaces and these spaces including two small rooms in two angles of northeast and southwest of Hashti, two rooms in two sides of eastern and west side of Hashti and two long corridors in two sides of entry and behind eastern and western side of Hashti are not accessible and some of them are owned and even some constructions are done in them and in the west side, ceiling and walls collapse blocked the access way to these parts.



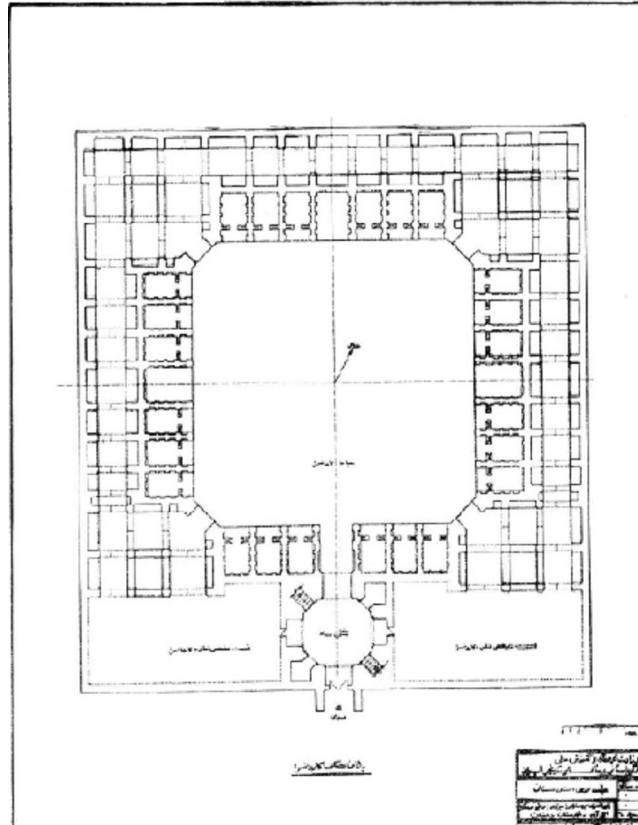
Introduction of Caravansary spaces (Source: Writer)



1. Sepahsalar Caravansary
 2. Qajari garden
 3. Historical residential castle of Amirieh village
 4. Qajari House (For the daughter of Naser-al-din Shah)
- Location of Plan of Caravansary and historical castle of Amirieh in city texture (Source: writer)

1-4 numbers show the location of Amirieh Sepahsalar Caravansary and Amirieh castle in Amirieh city texture

- Historical documents of Caravansary are including the plan written in the book of Iran Caravansaries provided by Volform Clais and Mohammad Yusef Kiani, however the general drawing of plan in this building is correct, the southern angle of the building behind *Hojre* in this drawing is not clear and it is not drawn.



Caravansary: Sepahsalar (Amirabad)
Geographical location: Damqan
Type of plan: 4 Iwani
Date: Qajar
Decorations: Brick
Construction materials: Stone and brick
Registering historical monuments:.....
Plan of Sepahsalar Caravansary (Kiani, Yusef, 1983)

The damages in both buildings are including environmental and peripheral damages such as not observing border, new constructions specially around castle, destruction of buildings and visual damages such as the lack of form conformity and the shape of the adjacent buildings with Caravansary, high difference between materials used in the buildings around Caravansary with the materials used in Caravansary structure, not observing height and proximity border with Caravansaries, limiting view to Caravansary with the existing external factors in the city and also architectural and structural damages of moisture, earthquake and materials wearing that are discussed separately.

Conclusion

The main thing that should be considered is that a building is not living as a separate identity and independent from structural- urban, social, economical, cultural, ecological and environmental textures and the things relating the building to a bigger environment are different (Felamaki, Mohammad Mnasur, 2008).

Historical buildings are formed gradually to meet different requirements by people. These environments- as public fields, semi-public and private- were including human activities in the past reflecting the traditions and beliefs and latent knowledge in the societies and its good recognition can help us to know the importance of the

depth and quality of the places people living in them. The importance of the historical buildings and cultural values and structural in them created some conditions to create different interventions with different approaches, ranging from museum protection to modern changes and cause some changes in these kinds of buildings and textures. But the important thing here is protecting heritage values as unique examples of them in the previous life and it is unfortunately it is less observed in the plans from private and public institutions. Thus, reasonable views about protection and restoration of these historical buildings should be considered. Considering the spatial organization of different parts of a building and protecting this organization is the other necessary items in reconstruction of a building. The new plan should be selected and being located in a way that at first avoid destruction of spatial equations of the current building and in the next stage a plan should be presented to act as previous use in terms of spatial access. This fact in addition to more familiarity with people with spatial access of a building is considering respecting toward archetecura structure and it is also respect of the designer toward architecture and supporter of the building. Indeed, mentioned Amirieh castle beside recognition of Amirieh Sepahsalar Carvansay was for this aim. It is clear that Amirieh castle and Sepahsalar Caravansary is in public historical buildings in terms of history and value and unfortunately, less attention is taken to national treasures and their protection. But it should be considered that any building whether small is our cultural heritage and we should respect them to observe the historical dignity. Our recognition should be in a way that each historical period should include in conformity with life methods and spatial and technical operation of that period and accordingly today operation and our interventions should be correct, organized and consistent with historical monuments. But we shouldn't ignore the capabilities of future generations for similar actions and not give them the related opportunity. It is clear that any viewer by seeing these constructions and their construction method and their combination with the surrounding space is influenced. This fact exists that these examples of buildings are remained in the current time less than any other era. Indeed, protection or reconstruction of these historical buildings can have crucial role in intruding Iran old architecture and making other nations familiar with our noble culture and art.

REFERENCES

1. Keshavarz, Aliasqar, 1991, History and Geography of Damqan
2. Falamaki, Mohammad Mansur, 2008, reconstruction of historical cities. Seventh edition. Tehran University.
3. Pirnia, Mohammad Karim, 1991, Road and Ribat, Cultural heritage organization and Armin publication.
4. Kiani, Yusef, Mohammad, Volfram Clais, 1983, the list of Iran Carvansaries, Tehran, National organization of protection of archeological monuments. Vol.1.
5. Baniyadi, Ali, 1995. Semnan province view. Semnan governor office. 1ST vol.