

# Landscaping Perspective in the Public Bathhouses, its Elements and its Functions

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**Abstract** | Over the last decades, public bathhouses as the essential spaces in the city have played an important role in the cultural and social context of Iran. Unique architectural features of this public space make it distinguishable from other building in terms of functions. The public bathhouses have long been integrated into Iranian daily life. Thus, it cannot be viewed solely by its physical space, regardless of the meaning and significance of those spaces. Actually, it underlines the necessity of examining public bathhouses from a landscape perspective. Bath as an element of the city, not including its natural functions in sanitation, serve different functions in the structure of society and plays a crucial role in social communication. In this paper, data were collected and analyzed qualitatively. It has been devoted to the specific components of the public bathhouses and its social functions. Further, it is attempted to look at some of the other reasons for the boom in Iran.

**Keywords** | Public bathhouses, Landscape look, Functions.

**Introduction** | Landscape is another kind of place. In fact, landscape makes up the major part of human-landscape interactions in external spaces. The landscape has the nature of the place and it is the product of human experience in space. But the landscape is different from the architecture. Throughout history, Human-landscape interaction has developed a perspective taking in society; within the framework of natural and historical necessities. It doesn't make any differences to us. With all their mental complexity, one being gets in and out of them in the process of going back and forth with nature and the environment. The common color of nature and history can be found in the perspective. The place of spiritual phenomena and it is the result of human experience in a place throughout

the history. Material and meaning are two recognizable but inseparable attributes of a place. A cityscape is the perception of citizens from the city acquired through its symbols. Due to landscape understanding on the presence of the city makes it possible to identify various layers for the perspective (Mansouri, 2010). The landscape serves as a spatial social environment and reflects a cultural image. The media is embodied in the material and imaginative thoughts of various societies (Habibi, 2010).

In the city structure, there are several elements that have clearly defined functions for the community. As one of the elements contributing to the city, collective space facilitates the creation of collective memories. In other words, urban spaces are a common platform where people perform their functions and rituals. Abstract the collective space is identified due to its symbolic characteristics and the occurrence of current

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incidents in them. Further, it brings personal memories into the minds of the individual and society. Capacity in the collective space transforms them into venues for gathering, trading, recreation and entertainment, thus reinforcing memory and collective identity (Ghavampour, 2010).

Bathing and get clean has been a complete answer of all Iranians, but since the beliefs and culture of indigenous people have been deeply linked, it has maintained an unbroken series of behaviors, customs, and traditions, unlike today, only the washing of the body from pollution (Molae Tavani & Gholampour, 2014). 2014 public bathhouses have been one of the most important mass spaces in urban structures. In addition to its main function, , it has been a site for cleanliness and sanitation, and hygiene and its other functions in the community. Its functions are necessarily due to the physical structure of that form having been formed due to its semantic existence. So that it can be claimed that the public bathhouses has the capability to be considered as one landscape which is confirmed, the public bathhouses also have other aspects that must be considered in the management of tourism. To investigate this claim, the functions of public bathhouses in Iranian society have been studied with a landscaping approach to this important element in the Iranian urban community. In this paper, with a paradigmatic approach to this important element in the ancient urban have been studied in society of Iran.

## Research Methodology

In this paper, qualitative data analysis were used to collect data and analysis data, it has been devoted to the specific components of the public bathhouses and its social functions. Data of the different traits were collected using field book and articles.

### Public Bathhouses in Iran

Iranians have long revered water Historians such as Herodotus, Agatrias have highlighted this issue (Soroushian, 1997). Apart from that, purification and ghusl (Ritual purification) for a religious services, it has received much attention among the Iranians (Rahbar , 1995). For holding their religious ceremonies, martyrs need to bath for three days and three nights at certain intervals in order to prepare for religious ritual (Razi, 1992). The importance of the water in Mehr feast has been so high in which Mehrabeha (the place of worship) located in a site where the water passes from its side or near the springs. In Mashadisenâ's ritual, the purity

of body and mind is of particular importance and it has been called as Oshvi. The followers of this creed have always been ordered to wash regarding removing contamination and sin, and temples were built for the angel and guardian of water, Anahita (Mahjour, 2003). In the Zoroastrian religion, the purity of body and its integration with spiritual purity have been important to Iranian (Soroushian, 1997).

The notion of building public bathhouses as a religious along with the importance and necessity of bath and its status has been transmitted to Europe by Iranian immigrants, where the ingenuity of the architects and the wealth of the Roman people is integrated into the public bathhouses which ultimately back to Iran at the time of Kubat (Tabasi & Jafarpour, 2007). In line with historical evidence, the building of public bathhouses has been widespread since Achaemenid times, especially during the Sassanid period (Pyguluskaia, 1988). Taking into account, the specific attention of Islam to purity and the important issue since the introduction of many of worship and purity is Ghusl and purity, the possibility of making a site for taking bath at home for most people, on the other hand, the building of public bathhouses is widespread in the Muslim world (Papadopoulou, 1989).

In Islamic societies public bathhouses have become much more developed and turned into an important part of urban and rural complexes. Moreover, it has been used in different ways in terms of medical, cleanliness, social, quarantine, holding ceremonies, and so on. As such, the number of public bathhouses even exceeded the number of mosques (Fakhari Tehrani, 2000). Considering the various functions of the bath, various specialties, such as poets, doctors, jurists, painters, architects, craftsmen, etc., have consulted in building structure of the bathroom and promoted its development and magnificence (Kiani, 1987). Accordingly, the structural progress of the baths have been made more quickly rather than many other structures. The most important reasons for the emergence and prosperity of the public bathhouses are were:

- Emphasizing various rituals for cleanliness, purity and washing
- Lack of financial support of most people regarding building private bathhouses at home
- Significant income and profits of public bathhouses
- The necessity of public bathhouses near the holy places (Mahjur, 2003).

### Location of public bathhouses

Besides the market, the house and the water reservoir (Ab Anbar), the bath has been one of the four main elements of the Iranian city. Baths used to be built on the ground and in a pit. The roof of some of the baths is about 1 ½ meters above the level of the alley. This tactic, which enabled water of Qanat to transfer into the bathroom, had a heat exchange between the bathroom and outdoor temperatures, in winter and summer at least. Water distribution in different spots of the bath was also carried out by the pressure caused by the difference between the bottom of the bath and the bottom of the water reservoir on the roof. In fact, the soil has been treated as heat insulation. Also, the location of the building on the earth's core increased its resistance to earthquakes (Akbari, Laleh & Shojaee Esfahani, 2003). Building bath should be done in a site where the supply of sanitary water, and the discharge of sewage, and its function and usage (Yavari, 2009). Available studies show that the baths used to be located in one of the following locations.

1. Beside the market: One or several baths used to be built around the seafarers (Mahrabi, 2003) and (Papoli Yazdi, 2009).
2. Middle of the neighborhood: The neighborhoods and villages each had one or several baths (Papoli Yazdi, 2009).
3. Next to the inn. Alongside each gate there was usually a caravan that was considered alongside that bathroom (Kayani, 2007).
4. Next to religious centers: Considering the importance of cleansing before religious practices, baths were built near most religious centers, especially mosques. This is so important that the number of baths in each city is related to its mosques (Osman, 1997).
5. On the main road public: bathhouses are one of the most important cities in the city that were located along main roads (Ghobadian, 2003).

### Elements of Public bathhouses

The public bathhouses were consisted of three main parts of the exchanging room, the Miandar and the gutter which, Furthermore to fulfilling their functional needs, were also responsive to other side activities (Ibn Akhvah, 1981). Furthermore, these three parts, according to the size or smallness and the social function of the bathroom, there are other spaces such as tones, cobblestones, chapels, places of refinement, arches, chalets, and so on. Having

access to water, maintaining the temperature and separating various spaces (clean and foul) are the main prerequisites for creating a complex and various spaces from other buildings in the bathroom (Rashid Najafi, 2010). These buildings are separated from each other so that the temperature and humidity of each space are adjusted to the adjacent space and prevent the risk of a person's disease due to entering a various temperature zone (Kiani, 1987). Furthermore to architecture, the public bathhouses are based on the four main traditions of ancient medicine. Warm, cool, dry and more. Old science has been based on the ontological system in which the material world is composed of the elements of the apple and the health of the human body is also based on the equilibrium of organic matter. Ibn Sina believes that the bathroom structure is like a human being that contains four elements (air, fire, soil and water) and trapping (swelling, bile, soda and blood), and soul (human, animal, and nature). Thus, each of the elements of the bath is designed in keeping with one of the above-mentioned indices (Razavi Burgaee, 2009).

A. Dressing room is a site for the dressing room and preparing for bathing or leaving there. Around the middle space of exchanging room there are platforms or stands for the rest or sitting of the visitors (Ibn Akhvah, 1981). The exchanging room was the most important and beautiful bathroom space, a vast and decorated space with a large dome and a Hows. exchanging room was where the cashier was located and usually barbers were working exchanging room (Mehrabi, 2003) and (Papoli Yazdi, 2009). In this section, various pictures of youth and adolescents and women, or different stories of Shahnameh and mythology, or animal designs such as lion, cow, dragon, pigeon or plant designs such as flowers, plants, cypresses, spruce and grapes on the walls have been revealed (Mokhlesi, 2003). Regular lighting of the exchanging room and its decorations, its basins and fountains, combined with the watercolor, have doubled its sedative effect (Haghparast, 2009). The droplets are cold and dry and are designed to counteract the formation of soda in the body (Razavi Burgaee, 2009).

B. Mian.dar (the space between Sudatorium and hot-house), is designed to be very curved and bent to minimize heat and humidity between these two spaces (Mohammad Moradi & Akhtarkavan, 2008).

C. Sudatorium: Public baths originated from a communal need for cleanliness and washing at a time

(Haghparast, 2009). This air was warm and humid. The pool called Chal howz (pool) was among the reasons that its water was colder and in summer, it was used for swimming (Seyyed Almasi & Seyyed Almasi, 2008). What was happening in the Hows was an activity outside the taking bath cycle. Anyone who wanted to play and swim, used Hows. The presence of stairs in the walls of the Chal howz (pool) Hows has provided a space for sitting children (Haghparast, 2009). The interior of the oven was divided into portions for bath, using loofah, washcloth, and partly for phlebotomy and cupping. Bath in the full bathroom included hot water, cold water and lukewarm water (Mehrabi, 2003). The sudatorium was divided into three spaces in terms of humidity and temperature. In the first sudatorium, it was cooler and more moderate, and it was designed for Phlegm. In this site, customers crank down and were ready to enter the warm atmosphere. The second sudatorium was the main bathroom space and the place for the washcloth and the removal of pustules. The temperament of this house was warmer and more refined, and it was designed for the blood clot in Berne. Finally, the hottest space was a warm, dry place that was designed for Hemoptysis (Razavi Burgae, 2009).

### Functions of public bathhouses

Furthermore, purification and cleaning, public bathhouses have a special place in customs, rituals, rites and other socio-cultural dimensions of Iranian society. So that this important functional space in society is not only a site for bathing, but also a site for the continuation of economic, cultural and social relationships (Dervil, 1985). Public baths have also become incorporated into the social system as meeting places which has taken place regardless of the status of people in the community (Pirnia, 2002). Some of the functions of the bathroom in the Iranian society are as follows.

#### • Cure and treatment

Some of the public bathhouses have been attributed to Hippocrates, a Greek physician. He is known for treatment of the patients who suffered from a spasm, a spasm, cramps and nerve plexus. Hippocrates placed them in a pit of warm water to bring the nerve to a natural one and recovery (Ibn Akhvah, 1981). Taking shower is suggested in the works of many scholars and physicians, and such issues can be found in the works of

Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, Avicenna, Mohammad Kazem Gilani, Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani and Ibn Sattelan Baghdadi (Akbari, Laleh & Shojaei Esfahani, 2011) & (Seyyed Almasi & Seyyed Almasi, 2008). The disease of Amir Mansour Samani and the medical practice of Mohammad bin Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, who recovered by the therapeutic treatment of the bathroom (Nizami Aruzi, 2008). Baths have been very effective in the treatment of some diseases, including rheumatic and arthralgic pains, and some methods of treating traditional medicine, such as Therapeutic phlebotomy and cupping have been taken in the bathroom (Shahri, 1978). On the other hand, the result has been the opening of the pores of the skin and sweating. The bath caused the body to warm itself due to its air and due to its water. In addition, it increased the moisture content of the body (Nasser al-Hakma, 2008). In the Hadith of Imam Reza, the bath is a great benefit of flour moderation, cleanliness of the body, pulling out the pus, and softens the vein and vessel, makes big organs strong, and prevents Nausea and vomiting, and infection (Sufian & Doagoo, 2009).

#### • Leisure Time

In the public bathhouses, moreover, the main purpose of cleaning of the body, the features required for the exhilaration of pleasure, the serenity, and gaiety, and recreation were also taken (Homaei, 2005). For example, due to the fact that some individuals in the summer were swimming baths and have fun in the bath (Seyyed Almasi & Seyyed Almasi, 2008). Furthermore, it has also become incorporated into the social system as meeting places not including their purification. For getting to gather, the right features had also been prepared to spend pleasantly. In the corner of changing room, there were also pleasant site called "Sarchaghkeshi", which was a Coffeehouse of bathhouse, where there was a hookah, also known as the Qalyān, including tea and beverages. Furthermore, there have been some snacks such as plums juice and apricots in the summer, and the boiled Beetroot and its juice in the winter, which customers used.

#### • Religious affairs

Taking bathing is a direct response to some of the religious needs of the people. This has been the case that even the bathroom hours were also has been defined by these needs (Molae Tavani & Gholampour, 2014).

### • Announcement

One of the most important functions of the public information bulletin is giving notification and announcement to people. Baths have been also a site for conversation and communication in addition a site for body wash, treatment and cupping therapy, (Razavi Burgae, 2005). Announcement was only to the locals at the neighborhood. The public bathhouses in bazaar were more significant than other public bathhouses due to the market position and their communication circle was defined at the city level. Further, the Public bathhouses were located in caravanserai's free-ride areas, went beyond this, and information about cities and villages had exchanged near and far within them (Pirnia, 2002). In fact, public bathhouses have played the role of the media and have been one of the broadcasting centers (Papoli Yazdi, 2009 & Dervil, 1985), (Fig. 1)

### • Autism and retirement

retirement and austerity have been the traditions of the mystics and the gnostics. They did this for various reasons, such as removing barriers to accessing the right and gaining access to Intuition (Sajjadi, 2004). The bathroom was one of the places where some of the

mystics went there for retirement and austerity. Most of them sat in a bathroom that was a messy, dull, cluttered environment, and as a result, they enjoyed conquests and esoteric opening. Perhaps, Rumi has spent most of his time on aesthetics and retirement in the bathroom, especially on the coffers and tones. These austerities lasted three, seven, and sometimes up to forty days (Seyyed Almasi & Seyyed Almasi, 2008 & Aflaki, 1996).

### • Acquaintances

The public bathhouses were places where all members of society came from every class and social class. Hence, broad social networks were formed and a starting point for many acquaintances and friendships. It was widespread, for instance, to see a girl and proposal took place in the bathroom. The bathroom was the center of camaraderie, fellowship and friends (Sajjadi, 2003 & Papoli Yazdi, 2009).

### • The promotion of chivalry and Fotowat

Public bathhouse played the role of media. One of the functions of the media has been the promotion of chivalry and fotowat. The rituals and traditions of the bathroom were designed to change this concept. For

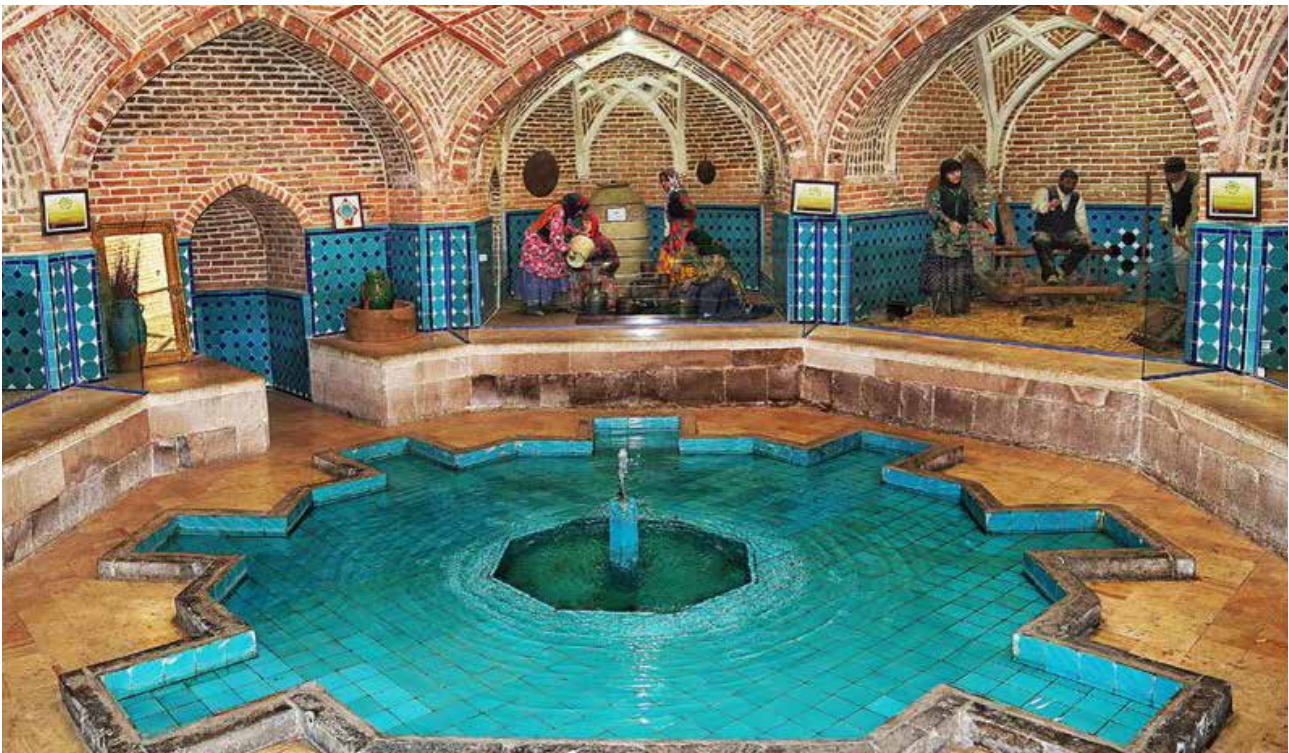


Fig. 1: Qajar bathhouse. Source: mydorna.com.

example, if someone entered the bathroom, in courtesy of the older people who were in the bathroom, a bucket of water was filled and poured over them (Papoli Yazdi, 2009) and (Ghasemkhani, 2011). Or ring the bell at the top of the Master's head, and at the arrival of the knights errant and the generals who had seen victory in the wars. As they all were announced the arrival of a brave man, this honor aroused in youth a sense of courage and brave, which encouraged them to exercise and chivalry and serve the country (Homaei, 2005), (Fig. 2).

• Meeting up with friends and relatives

The bathhouses made it possible for relatives, friends and localities to know about each other. As such, public bathhouses were a site for people gathering in the neighborhood; therefore, people rarely went to the baths of other places (Rouholamini, 2009)

• Ceremony

Public bathhouse has played a vital role in many religious and national rituals, festivals and ceremonies. Prior to each Eid, the public bathhouses were crowded (Ghobadi, 2007). Furthermore, ceremonies were partially or totally held in the bathroom (Karimian Sardashti, 2003). For instance, a maternity bath that

was held for mother, baby and their companions was charged with jubilation. Taking bath, it was performed after complete and healthy recovery and complete removal of the disease. Taking bathing was held for pilgrimages or visiting the elders. Public bathhouses is regarded a site for repentance and forgiving, wedding baths and Hanabond's ritual have also been important events (Haghparsat, 2009 & Javid, 2003). In the towns where the practice of Tatbir in Ashura was widespread, Tatbir were approaching the afternoon of Ashura, and afterwards they entered the bathroom together, which was ready for them.

• Site of Social Communication

Public bathhouses were an important social communication site rather than the specific bathing exercise, have been important social site (Ramezani, 2005). The bathhouse is a gathering place for various people (Fakhar Tehrani, 2000). People should be undressed and naked. Thus, everyone is in the same bathroom, and clothes and garments representing social status (Ruholamini, 2007). Thus, people were placed in the same position as they had in the Doomsday. Having no clothes in the bathroom caused unpretentious externally (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2: Sheshnav historic bathhouse, Tafresh. Source: tafresh1404.com/news/



Fig. 3: Nobar bathhouse. Tabriz. Source: <http://tabrizwalkingtours.com>

#### • Training

Considering the presence of various groups of society and different age groups in the bathroom, this place has been concerned as a very good environment for training. For example, during taking bath, social behavior and attitude, legal issues and ... were taught to their children (Papoli Yazdi, 2009). Or philosophers have considered the bathhouse as an opportunity to accompany the public, in order to upsurge the effect of their speeches among people in society. Therefore, the representations of transcendental, human, religious, and mystical concepts in the form of simple words and general comprehension have been taken away from ceremonies (Tabasi, 2011). Over and above, public bathhouse was going to be long, the scholars used that place to ask and answer the disciples (Rouholamini, 2009).

#### • Encounters of cultures

Public bathhouses were an important place for the clash of cultures (Ibn Akhvah, 1981) and (Haghparast, 2009). This was especially evident in the baths that were created alongside the caravans. People with different cultures in these baths were gathered together and their interaction with each other resulted in the transfer of different cultures.

#### • Reconciliation

They used to go to the bathroom for reconciliation sometimes (Rouholamini, 2009). When the hostility of the two people turned into reconciliation, they went to the bathhouse, as they purged their body and body, to take away the malice from the soul.

#### • Improving family relationships

Public bathhouses were a family-centered balance center. If there was a difference in the family, the effects of this in the bathroom would be determined and remedy (Papoli Yazdi, 2009).

#### • Conducting meetings and conversations

Public bathhouses were one of the most important places for the conversation and different meetings. The patriarches gathered in this place and decided on various issues (Papoli Yazdi, 2009). Economic meetings were taking place in the bathroom, and people continued to enjoy their bathing activity during or after taking bathing.

#### • Shaving, Removal of Androgenic hair

Shaving and cleaning in the bathroom is accepted (Ghobadi, 2007). If only one of the important functions of the bathroom was removal of Androgenic hair of head, shaving, make up and doing Henna, dying facial hair and cedar dressing. A portion of the gutter has been dedicated to doing this (Yazdanparast, 2008), (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Chahar-fasl (four season) bathhouse, Arak. Source: <http://turismtarikhema.org>.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The public bathhouses have been used extensively in the Iranian city. The physical properties of this bathroom are unique and based on the ancient thoughts, customs and traditions in ancient Iran. That is why its physical structure has been influenced by the beliefs of the Iranian people. This reveals that the bathroom has a semantic aspect as well as the physical body. Given the review of the functions mentioned, it is clear that the public bathhouses were considered as one of the most important spaces in the structure of the Iranian city. A site that, other than fulfilling its function of purity and bathing, has had a tremendous capacity to create a social, cultural and even commercial space. A site for community members may consider to get together without restrictions in the classes that are restrictive of communication, a site where visitors, family, and other people.

The public bathhouses have played an imperative role in intra-city and inter-city information. As such, the bath structure and its physical elements were designed in such a way as to enrich the concept as a medium. The relationship between various social groups and communities is the most important requirement for expanding culture in ancient Iran. To fulfill this need, the public bathhouses as a locality with multiple

functions have been considered as one of the most important centers of cultural encounters. The existence of baths in various parts of the city, on the one hand, and ritualistic religious requirements for the use of this site, has contributed to the growth of this. That is why taking bath is not merely a personal function for eliminating body contamination and is defined as a kind of presence in society and social function. In light of this, public bathhouses are also objective mental phenomenon that have been the product of human interaction with their environment.

Landscaping toward bathhouses has not been really under consideration regarding the public bathhouses by historical buildings. In many historical cities of Iran, old public bathhouses were now renovated, with a museum's use, tea-shop, restaurant and ... visitors to domestic and foreign visitors (Fig. 5). The important thing is that most of what is considered in these visits are the physical structure of the bathroom and the introduction of its parts and functions of each sector. In this regard, all aspects of the introduction of location have been prepared. By reviewing some functions presented in this paper, it can be introduced other aspects of this important space to visitors. This can be expressed in brochures, guide signs, explanations of tour guides. It is significant that many



of the previous functions of the bathroom have lost its capability through the changes in technology and culture, which can be attractive to a bathroom visitor, which has played well in old days, urban structures such as public bathhouses, media functions and etc.

The visitor's awareness of the other functions of the public bathhouses will change his perception of the visit and create a different feeling in them. This is, in fact, a manifestation of visually impaired view of the bathroom.



Fig. 5: Haj-Dadash historic bathhouse, Zanjan. Source: <http://citypedia.ir>

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