

Home and Furniture:
Use and Meaning of Domestic Space, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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A Thesis Submitted to
CARDO
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah,
the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

To whom my life is difficult without,
my mother and my wife

ABSTRACT

Saudi society is undergoing dramatic social transformation, brought about by rapid industrialisation and massive urbanisation. In this period of haste, home environments have experienced significant changes. There was a strong temptation by architects to pick Western houses designs off-the-shelf and by occupants to furnish their houses with modern imported furniture. A surplus economy made such 'shopping' possible. But while the Saudi society was transforming it would be an over simplification to term it 'Westernising'. The new home environment leads us to question: how does modern furniture relate to the present-day Saudi family? Does modern furniture hinder or support Saudis' cultural values and identity? The aim of this study is to identify the influence of the use and meaning of modern furniture on the home environment in Jeddah.

The study examines the home environment as a system within which constituents communicate continuously to reach different stages of compatibility. People communicate to furniture by using it and shaping its form, and furniture communicates to people by conveying how it is used and what it stands for (meaning). A model of nine stages has been developed to identify the possible relationships between form, use and meaning. The model is then used to analyse the relationship between occupants and furniture in both the traditional and contemporary home environment.

The methodology of the study is qualitative. The data collection includes in-depth interviews with older women who lived in the traditional houses of Jeddah and housewives in contemporary houses, house floor plans, site and museums visits, a literature review, statistical data of furniture and appliances imported to Saudi Arabia, and other data related to social changes in Saudi Arabia.

It has been found that traditional furniture was highly compatible with use, values and occupants' expression of identity. Modern furniture was introduced mainly for its meaning function and was incompatible with cultural values. Because cultural values have resisted change, some traditional furniture is still used and new local furniture was developed. This has led to an increase in the number of rooms, as some are used to express identity while others are used to maintain activities driven by traditional values.

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Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, by His will the completion of this thesis is made possible; and may His blessing and peace be upon His prophet Muhammad.

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*Sameer Akbar
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
INTRODUCTION	1

CHAPTER 1

The Influence of Use and Meaning on Form

1.1 INTRODUCTION	7
1.2 HOME ENVIRONMENTS AS SYSTEMS	7
1.3 COMPATIBILITY AND INCOMPATIBILITY	9
1.4 USE, MEANING AND VALUE	10
1.5 SYMBOLIC OBJECTS	12
1.6 VIRTUOUS OBJECTS	13
1.7 A MODEL OF OBJECT'S GROWTH	14
1.7.1 Example 1: Minarets	17
1.7.2 Example 2: Male Headgear	18
1.7.3 Example 3: Forks	19
1.7.4 Example 4: Wedding Cakes	21
1.7.5 Example 5: Bedouin Utensils	21
1.7.6 Example 6: Bedouin Women's Veil	25
1.7.7 Example 7: Military Uniforms	26
1.8 DISCUSSION	26
1.9 CONCLUSION	29

CHAPTER 2

The Influence of Form on Use and Meaning

2.1 INTRODUCTION	33
2.2 IDENTITY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CULTURES	33
2.3 POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF HIGH CONSUMPTION	35
2.3.1 Determinism and Possibilism	36
2.3.2 Culture Core	39
2.4 CRITICALITY	40
2.5 SOURCES OF CRITICALITY	41
2.5.1 Mobility and Immobility	42
2.5.2 Integration with Interior Architectural Design	42

2.5.3 Type and Amount	44
2.5.4 Formality	44
2.6 CONCLUSION	46

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION	49
3.2 SOCIAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	49
3.3 OBJECTIVES	51
3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	51
3.5 QUALITATIVE	52
3.6 CHOOSING THE CITY OF JEDDAH	53
3.7 FIELDWORK	54
3.7.1 Traditional Home Environments.....	54
3.7.2 Transitional Home Environments.....	57
3.7.2.1 Imported Furniture	57
3.7.2.2 Morphological Growth of Home Interior	58
3.7.2.3 Socio-Cultural Change in Saudi Arabia	59
3.7.3 Contemporary Home Environments.....	60
3.7.3.1 Demographic Data and Home Activities	62
3.7.3.2 Activities and Furniture of the Home Interior Space	62
3.8 ANALYSIS	63
3.9 CONCLUSION	64

CHAPTER 4

Context and Traditional Home Environment in Jeddah

4.1 INTRODUCTION	67
4.2 URBAN CONTEXT AND CLIMATE	67
4.3 URBAN CONTEXT AND SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES ...	69
4.4 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ROLES	71
4.5 COMPATIBILITY OF CONTEXT AND HOME	72
4.5.1 Buildings	72
4.5.2 Doors	73
4.5.3 <i>Dhaleez</i>	74
4.5.4 <i>Murakkab</i>	75
4.5.5 <i>Kharijah</i>	76
4.5.6 Hierarchy	77
4.5.7 Stairs	78
4.5.8 <i>Rowshan</i>	80
4.5.9 Rooms' Width and Colour	83

4.5.10 Decorated Items	83
4.6 SOCIAL FACTORS FOR THE TEMPORARY USAGE OF ROOMS	84
4.7 COMPATIBILITY OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND COLLECTIVISTIC EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY	85
4.8 CONCLUSION	86

CHAPTER 5

Traditional Home Environments

5.1 INTRODUCTION	89
5.2 FURNITURE	89
5.2.1 Floor Covers	89
5.2.2 <i>Tawaweel</i> and <i>Liyanat</i>	89
5.2.3 <i>Madafi'</i> and <i>Masanid</i>	90
5.2.4 Built-in Shelves	91
5.2.5 <i>Karaweet</i>	91
5.2.6 <i>Takhtat ashshai</i>	93
5.2.7 Tea Tables	94
5.2.8 <i>Tabliyyah</i> and <i>Maddah</i>	95
5.2.9 <i>Saisam</i> Box and <i>Sahharah</i>	95
5.3 INTERIOR SPACES	96
5.3.1 Ground Floors	97
5.3.1.1 <i>Maq'ad</i>	100
5.3.1.2 <i>Makhlawan</i>	100
5.3.2 Intermediate Floors	101
5.3.2.1 <i>Suffah</i>	101
5.3.2.2 <i>Majlis</i>	102
5.3.2.3 <i>Moakhkhar</i>	103
5.3.2.4 <i>Bitalma</i>	103
5.3.2.5 <i>Mabeet</i>	104
5.3.3 Third Floor	107
5.3.4 Roof Terrace Floor	108
5.4 CRITICALITY	109
5.5 COMPATIBILITY	111
5.6 CONCLUSION	112

CHAPTER 6

From Traditional to Modern

6.1 INTRODUCTION	116
6.2 THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION: LATE FORTIES AND EARLY FIFTIES	116

6.2.1 RESIDENTIAL TYPES	118
6.2.1.1 Post-traditional	118
6.2.1.2 Villas	120
6.2.1.3 Apartments	123
6.2.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances	125
6.2.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment	127
6.2.3.1 <i>Saloon</i>	127
6.2.3.2 Master Bedroom	129
6.2.3.3 Multi-Purpose Room	129
6.2.3.4 Kitchen	130
6.2.3.5 Bathroom	130
6.3 THE SECOND TRANSFORMATION: LATE SEVENTIES	132
6.3.1 Residential Types	135
6.3.1.1 Villas	135
6.3.1.2 Apartments	136
6.3.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances	137
6.3.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment	141
6.3.3.1 <i>Saloon and Majlis</i>	144
6.3.3.2 Living Room	146
6.3.3.3 Bedroom	147
6.3.3.4 Kitchen	148
6.3.3.5 Bathroom	148
6.4 THE THIRD TRANSFORMATION: LATE EIGHTIES	149
6.4.1 New Supportive Spaces	150
6.4.2 <i>Baturmah</i> or Arabic Seating	152
6.4.3 Neo-Traditional Furniture Style	153
6.4.4 Classical Western Furniture Style	154
6.4.5 Marble Floor	155
6.5 COMPATIBILITY	155
6.6 CRITICALITY	157
6.7 CONCLUSION	157

CHAPTER 7

Contemporary Home Environment

7.1 INTRODUCTION	161
7.2 FLOOR LAYOUT	161
7.3 ENTRANCE HALL	163
7.4 GUEST ZONE	166
7.4.1 <i>Saloon</i>	167
7.4.2 <i>Majlis</i>	174
7.4.3 Dining Room	175
7.4.4 Bathroom	178

7.5 FAMILY ZONE	179
7.5.1 Living Room	179
7.5.2 Multi-Purpose Room	182
7.5.3 Kitchen	182
7.5.4 Master Bedroom	183
7.5.5 Bathroom	186
7.6 HOUSE 10	187
7.7 CONCLUSION	192

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 INTRODUCTION.....	196
8.2 RECAPITULATIONS.....	196
8.2.1 Traditional Furniture.....	196
8.2.2 Modern Furniture.....	197
8.2.3 Social and Physical Consequences.....	200
8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH.....	202
8.4 CONCLUSION.....	204

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC WORDS AND MEANINGS	206
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Saudi Arabia: a Background.....	208
Appendix 2 - Structured Interview.....	211
Appendix 3 - Historical Background of Jeddah.....	217
Appendix 4 - Domestic Chores in Traditional Houses.....	219
Appendix 5 - Building Materials.....	221
Appendix 6 - Components of the <i>Murakkab</i>	222
Appendix 7 - Crafts in Traditional Jeddah.....	223
Appendix 8 - Background of the Nasif House.....	224
Appendix 9 - The Influence of the Urban System on the Home Environment.....	230
Appendix 10 - The Ten Case Studies of Contemporary Homes.....	231

BIBLIOGRAPHY	242
--------------------	-----

THE MODEL OF COMPATIBILITY.....	251
---------------------------------	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1	
Front page figure - A Bedouin woman veil.....	5
Figure 1.1 - The compatibility of form with use.....	10
Figure 1.2 - A Spanish box	12
Figure 1.3 - A decorated gate of one of the traditional houses in Jeddah	13
Figure 1.4 - The compatibility of form with utility and identity	13
Figure 1.5 - The compatibility of form with cultural values	14
Figure 1.6 - The model of compatibility	16
Figure 1.7 - The Corniche mosque minaret (1980s) and the Hanfi mosque minaret (1732) in Jeddah	17
Figure 1.8 - Components of a headgear	18
Figure 1.9 - Some options for arranging headgear	19
Figure 1.10 - A decorated thousand year old Saxon edged-pointed knife	20
Figure 1.11 - <i>Dallah</i> and <i>fanajeel</i>	21
Figure 1.12 - Holding many <i>fanajeel</i> with one hand while pouring coffee...	23
Figure 1.13 - Serving Arabic coffee in a Bedouin tent	24
Figure 1.14 - Bedouin men eating From a two metre plate	24
Figure 1.15 - A Bedouin women wearing veils that differ in practicality and symbolism	25
Figure 1.16 - Developments in military uniforms	26
Figure 1.17 - View of a main street in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	26
 CHAPTER 2	
Front page figure - Bonham house, Santa Cruz County, CA. USA.....	31
Figure 2.1 - Total imports by millions of Saudi Riyals	36
Figure 2.2 - A house designed by Stern, East Hampton, New York, 1970 ...	42
Figure 2.3 - Ground floor plan and elevation of Eagle House, Mitcham, Surrey, 1705	42
Figure 2.4 - Ternisien House, 1926, Le Corbusier	43
Figure 2.5 - Murray House, Cambridge, MA, USA, 1973.....	43

Figure 2.6 - Bonham house, Santa Cruz County, CA, USA.....	44
CHAPTER 3	
Front page figure – The researcher with two informants in the Preservation Department of old Jeddah.....	47
Figure 3.1 - Number and aspects of cases in relation to research strategies...	52
Figure 3.2 - Qualitative analysis as a circular process.....	64
CHAPTER 4	
Front page figure - The house of Al-Baghdadi. Source: Pesce, 1977: 56....	65
Figure 4.1 - Old Jeddah.....	68
Figure 4.2 - Aerial photograph of Jeddah in 1940.....	68
Figure 4.3 - A section through an alley.....	68
Figure 4.4 - Air circulation due to wind velocity.....	69
Figure 4.5 - Air circulation due to convection.....	69
Figure 4.6 - An outdoor sitting platform.....	70
Figure 4.7 - An outdoor sitting bench.....	70
Figure 4.8 - Some doors of Jeddah's traditional houses.....	74
Figure 4.9 - The ground floor plan of <i>Al-Jukhdar</i> house.....	75
Figure 4.10 - A <i>murakkab</i>	76
Figure 4.11 - The <i>kharijah</i> in <i>Noorwali</i> House.....	77
Figure 4.12 - The hierarchy of relationship between the indoor and the outdoors in <i>Noorwali</i> house.....	78
Figure 4.13 - <i>Saqqah</i>	78
Figure 4.14 - <i>Zeer</i>	78
Figure 4.15 - The less the number of landings is the longer the view.....	79
Figure 4.16 - A two way options in the stairs.....	79
Figure 4.17 - Stairs in the ground floor plan of <i>Ba Haroon</i> and <i>Ashsharbatly</i> houses.....	79
Figure 4.18 - A <i>shubbak</i>	80
Figure 4.19 - Different sizes and styles of <i>rawasheen</i>	81
Figure 4.20 - Women's discussion while sitting in their home <i>rawasheen</i> ...	81
Figure 4.21 - Plan and section of a <i>rowshan</i>	82
Figure 4.22 - A <i>rowshan</i> used as a bed.....	82

Figure 4.23 - <i>Rawasheen</i> covering the building facades.....	83
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CHAPTER 5

Front page figure – A carved door of one of Jeddah’s houses.

Source: Pesce, 1977, 53.....	87
Figure 5.1 - <i>Tuwalah</i> and <i>Lianah</i>	90
Figure 5.2 – <i>Midfa’</i> and <i>Misnad</i>	91
Figure 5.3 - <i>Karaweet</i> and built-in shelves.....	92
Figure 5.4 - The cultural reason of the high <i>karaweet</i>	92
Figure 5.5 - The freedom of sitting positions on the <i>karaweet</i>	93
Figure 5.6 – <i>Takhtat ashshai</i>	93
Figure 5.7 - A little tea table.....	94
Figure 5.8 - An example of a <i>saisam</i> box... ..	96
Figure 5.9 - Ground floor plans of different traditional houses in Jeddah.....	98
Figure 5.10 - Ground floor plan, Nasif house.....	99
Figure 5.11 - <i>Tawaweel</i> arranged in a <i>maq’ad</i>	100
Figure 5.12 - First floor plans of different traditional houses in Jeddah.....	102
Figure 5.13 - An example of a <i>majlis</i> with a high and continuous <i>karaweet</i> . /	102
Figure 5.14 - A built in basin in <i>bitaalma</i>	103
Figure 5.15 - First floor plan, Nasif house.....	105
Figure 5.16 - Second floor plan, Nasif house.....	106
Figure 5.17 - Sections in the <i>majlis</i> and <i>makhlawan</i> of Nasif house.....	107
Figure 5.18 - Third floor plans of different traditional houses in Jeddah.....	108
Figure 5.19 - Third floor plan, Nasif house.....	109
Figure 5.20 - A living area in a Turkish house.....	111
Figure 5.21 - A traditional Moroccan sitting area.....	111

CHAPTER 6

Front page figure - The reception room on the second floor of Nasif house..	114
Figure 6.1 - A post-traditional house in Jeddah.....	119
Figure 6.2 - An old villa in Jeddah (c. 1960).....	121
Figure 6.3 - Villas built in the sixties.....	122
Figure 6.4 - Villas built in the seventies.....	122
Figure 6.5 - An example of apartments during the fifties.....	124

Figure 6.6 - Three examples of apartments.....	125
Figure 6.7 - An external view of a shutter window.....	127
Figure 6.8 - The reception room on the second floor of Nasif house.....	128
Figure 6.9 - An example of a wardrobe (1950s).....	129
Figure 6.10 - An example of a television when it was introduced in the late sixties.....	129
Figure 6.11 - The prevailing standard size of the modern bathroom.....	131
Figure 6.12 - Squatting on the traditional toilet seat and sitting on the modern toilet seat.....	131
Figure 6.13 - An article that advice allocating a special room for every In the family.....	133
Figure 6.14 - A door hanger distributed by McDonald's.....	133
Figure 6.15 - A villa in Prince Fawwaz project built in the late seventies....	135
Figure 6.16 - An example of people's desire to identify themselves through by unusual facades.....	136
Figure 6.17 - Two examples of the apartments of the eighties and nineties...	136
Figure 6.18 - Total weight of imported all types of wooden seats to Saudi Arabia.....	137
Figure 6.19 - Total weight of imported sanitary equipment to Saudi Arabia.	138
Figure 6.20 - Total number of imported refrigerators to Saudi Arabia.....	138
Figure 6.21 - Total number of imported washing machines to Saudi Arabia..	138
Figure 6.22 - The total number of residential construction permits by the municipality of Jeddah.....	139
Figure 6.23 - The total number of imported air-conditioners to Saudi Arabia.	141
Figure 6.24 - The total weight of imported decorated glass items to Saudi Arabia.....	142
Figure 6.25 - The total weight of imported vacuum cleaners and parts to Saudi Arabia.....	143
Figure 6.26 - An external view of an aluminium window.....	143
Figure 6.27 - Examples of different forms of curtains.....	144
Figure 6.28 - Suites known locally as <i>klaseeki</i> introduced during the eighties.	144
Figure 6.29 - A suite of high number of chairs in a <i>saloon</i>	145
Figure 6.30 - An advertisement for <i>baturma</i>	146
Figure 6.31 - Television cupboards in the living room.....	147
Figure 6.32 - A modern kitchen.....	148

Figure 6.33 - An advertisement of a local company for a bathroom.....	148
Figure 6.34 - Floor plans of villas built in the nineties.....	151
Figure 6.35 - A floor plan and perspective of a living area in a villa.....	152
Figure 6.36 - Different styles of <i>baturma</i> or Arabic seating.....	153
Figure 6.37 - Windows fixed with faked <i>rawasheen</i> in one of the residential projects in Jeddah.....	153
Figure 6.38 – Neo-traditional furniture.....	153
Figure 6.39 - An advertisement for a master bedroom.....	154
Figure 6.40 - An entrance tiled with marble.....	155
CHAPTER 7	
Front page figure – The <i>saloon</i> of House 9.....	160
Figure 7.1 - Spatial relationships in the contemporary villa.....	162
Figure 7.2 - The entrance hall of House 6.....	164
Figure 7.3 - Reception hall of House 7.....	165
Figure 7.4 - The entrance hall in House 10.....	166
Figure 7.5 - Protecting the privacy of the housewife in the kitchen during men visits by adding a screen, House 3.....	166
Figure 7.6 - The <i>saloon</i> of House 1.....	167
Figure 7.7 - The guest zone of House 10.....	168
Figure 7.8 - The <i>saloon</i> of House 7.....	169
Figure 7.9 - A complete sitting suite.....	170
Figure 7.10 - A coffee table in the middle of a small <i>saloon</i>	170
Figure 7.11 - The <i>saloon</i> and adjacent room of House 4.....	171
Figure 7.12 - An oriental octagon extension of the <i>saloon</i> in House 6.....	172
Figure 7.13 - An oriental octagon guestroom advertised in a local interior design magazine.....	173
Figure 7.14 - A mantelpiece in the <i>saloon</i> of House 3.....	173
Figure 7.15 - A <i>majlis</i> furnished with sitting platform in House 8.....	174
Figure 7.16 - A <i>majlis</i> in House 6.....	175
Figure 7.17 - Dining rooms of Houses 2 and 7.....	176
Figure 7.18 - The conversion of the dining room to a bedroom in House 5...	177
Figure 7.19 - A multi-purpose room used for sleeping.....	177
Figure 7.20 - The washbasin area next to the guest bathroom.....	178

Figure 7.21 - Bathrooms in the guest zone.....	178
Figure 7.22 - The living room in House 2.....	179
Figure 7.23 - The living room in House 6.....	180
Figure 7.24 - Different television arrangement according to the rooms they are located in.....	181
Figure 7.25 - The integration of the dining suite with the architectural layout in House 8.....	181
Figure 7.26 - A multi-purpose room in House 1.....	182
Figure 7.27 - Kitchens.....	183
Figure 7.28 - The master bedroom and its small living room in House 6.....	184
Figure 7.29 - Built-in bedroom cupboard in House 7.....	185
Figure 7.30 - A bathroom in the family zone, House 5.....	186
Figure 7.31 - A Jacuzzi in the bathroom of the master bedroom, House 6...	186
Figure 7.32 - A washing machine in a bathtub in House 4.....	187
Figure 7.33 - A floor plan of House 10.....	188
Figure 7.34 - A large plant made by the tenant of House 10.....	188
Figure 7.35 - The office in House 10.....	189
Figure 7.36 - The office in House 10.....	190
Figure 7.37 - <i>Saloon</i> 1 in House 10.....	191
Figure 7.38 - The replacement of the suite with a new one in House 9.....	192

APPENDICES

Figure A1 – Map of Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries.....	208
Figure A2 - The total number of constructions in the private sector in Saudi Arabia.....	211
Figure A3 - Population growth in Jeddah.....	217
Figure A4 - The urban growth of Jeddah.....	218
Figure A5 - A <i>murakkab</i>	222
Figure A6 - Ground Floor Plan of Nasif House.....	225
Figure A7 - First Floor Plan of Nasif House.....	226
Figure A8 - Second Floor Plan of Nasif House.....	227
Figure A9 - Third Floor Plan of Nasif House.....	228
Figure A10 - Perspectives of Nasif House.....	229
Figure A11 - Floor plan of House 1.....	231

Figure A12 - Floor plan of House 2.....	232
Figure A13 - Floor plan of House 3.....	233
Figure A14 - Floor plan of House 4.....	234
Figure A15 - Floor plan of House 5.....	235
Figure A16 - Ground Floor Plan of House 6.....	236
Figure A17 - First Floor Plan of House 6.....	236
Figure A18 - Ground Floor Plan of House 7.....	237
Figure A19 - First Floor Plan of House 7.....	237
Figure A20 - Ground Floor Plan of House 8.....	238
Figure A21 - First Floor Plan of House 8.....	239
Figure A22 - Floor plan of House 9.....	240
Figure A23 - Floor Plan of House 10.....	241

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 6

Table 6.1 - The increasing number of imported <i>saisam</i> boxes in Saudi Arabia.	126
Table 6.2 - The increase in number of imported electrical home appliances in Saudi Arabia.	126
Table 6.3 - Number of Rooms per Household in Jeddah, 1971 and 1978. ...	134
Table 6.4 - The increasing number of wooden furniture factories in Saudi Arabia.	139
Table 6.5 - A comparison between the increase of wooden chairs imports in Saudi Arabia and the increase of residential permits in Jeddah.	139

CHAPTER 7

Table 7.1 - The accessibility of guests according to their types (relatives or friends and males or females) to the home interior spaces.	162
Table 7.2 - The rating of informants as to the degree the rooms represent them to others.	163

INTRODUCTION

The researcher's background, as a citizen of a society that has been undergoing dramatic social transformation brought about by rapid industrialisation and massive urbanisation, and as an architect witnessing debates and arguments in regard to tradition verses modernity, have provided strong reasons for choosing this research topic.

The transformation of the built environment in Saudi Arabia during the last fifty years has been characterised by mixtures of alien forms and facades. The home environment, the place where family members spend most of their time, was no exception. During this period, home environments have gone through tremendous changes. There was a strong temptation by architects to pick Western houses designs off-the-shelf and by occupants to fill their houses with modern imported furniture. A surplus economy made such 'shopping' possible. But while the Saudi society was 'modernising' it would be an over simplification to term it 'Westernising'. Modern villas and apartment buildings now standing over and around what was once the 'indigenous' Saudi houses lead us to the overwhelming question: how do they relate to the present-day Saudi family? How well do they respond to the socio-cultural demands of their occupants? Do they hinder or support Saudis' cultural values and identity?

In response to these and other similar questions many studies have been conducted.¹ However, no single study has been devoted to investigating the changes in the most important cultural place for people – home interior. Exploring the home to find out in what aspects the influx of modern furniture has influenced people's values and identity should be a significant contribution to the studies of 'tradition and modernity' and 'environment and behaviour' in Saudi Arabia.

¹ The early studies about the modern built environment in Saudi Arabia were done on the late 1960s and the 1970s mainly by foreign companies, architects, and governmental offices, for example Doxiadis Associates (1977), Fathy (1966/72), Hansom (1968), HUD International (1977), and M+R International (1971). More research started in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to the increasing number of Master and Ph.D. Saudi research students. Baleelah (1975) was amongst the first who criticised the improper design of the modern built environment in meeting the needs of local cultural values. Some later studies have given more in-depth view on this problem by relating the formation of the traditional built environment to Islamic teachings, for example Al-Hathloul (1981), and Akbar (1984). Other studies have examined other issues such as governmental policies and municipal regulations, for example Eshmawi (1983), Fadaak (1984), Al-Farra (1985), Salagoor (1990), cultural values, for example Bahammam (1987), Al-Soliman (1991), historical development, for example Kurdi (1980), Kilical (1986), Khan (1981), Jomah (1992), and housing development, for example Mofti (1981), Talib (1983), Hariri (1986), Al-Harbi (1989) Al-Afghani (1990).

The system theory is used as an approach for looking at the home environment. This means that the home environment is considered as a system composed of constituents each of which is continuously communicating with others to reach a high level of equilibrium (Hicks, 1994). Within the home environment system people communicate with furniture by using them and furniture communicates with people by conveying meanings. Therefore describing activities in relation to settings (a technique used in dramaturgy), and interpreting the meaning of form in relation to their underlying structures (a technique used in semiotics) as regards furniture and interior spaces are essential in this research in exploring how the home environment operates as a system.

Before discussing the home environment, seven objects in Chapter 1 are analysed within their contexts to identify possible patterns of relationships between use, values, identity and form. This produced a model of nine stages of compatibility that trace the cultural growth of objects in traditional environments. In Chapter 2 the emphasis is directed to the home environment and issues that relate to the introduction of new objects to a system are discussed. The debate between determinists and possibilists, as two opposite mainstreams in assessing the influence of material culture on nonmaterial culture, is reviewed. Defining some aspects of form that may influence the use of space has led to the development of the concept of space criticality. The model of compatibility and the concept of criticality are then used as analytical frames to analyse the home environment in Jeddah.²

Chapter 3 deals with the research methodology. After describing a general framework of research methodologies, the researcher discusses the reasons for choosing the qualitative approach. Strategies, implementation and difficulties during the fieldwork are then discussed. In the last part of this chapter the two approaches of data analysis - dramaturgy and semiotics - are briefly discussed.

The data of the fieldwork are illustrated, discussed and analysed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Before exploring the traditional home environment in Jeddah, the compatibility of the context, which includes climate, urban pattern and social structure, with the home environment is discussed in Chapter 4. The emphasis is then directed in Chapter 5 to the compatibility and criticality of furniture with the home interior spaces. The first part

of this chapter deals with the use, value and meaning significance of the furniture. The influence of these furniture features on peoples' use, values and identity in the home interior spaces is explored in the following part. An analysis of a complete traditional house is made in the last part of the chapter.

The transition of the home environment from the traditional to the contemporary is discussed in Chapter 6. There are three transitional periods that the home environment has gone through in Jeddah. Within the discussion, which involves many societal changes and their influence on the home environment during these periods, emphasis is always put on the introduction of the new types of modern furniture, and the morphology and use of interior spaces.

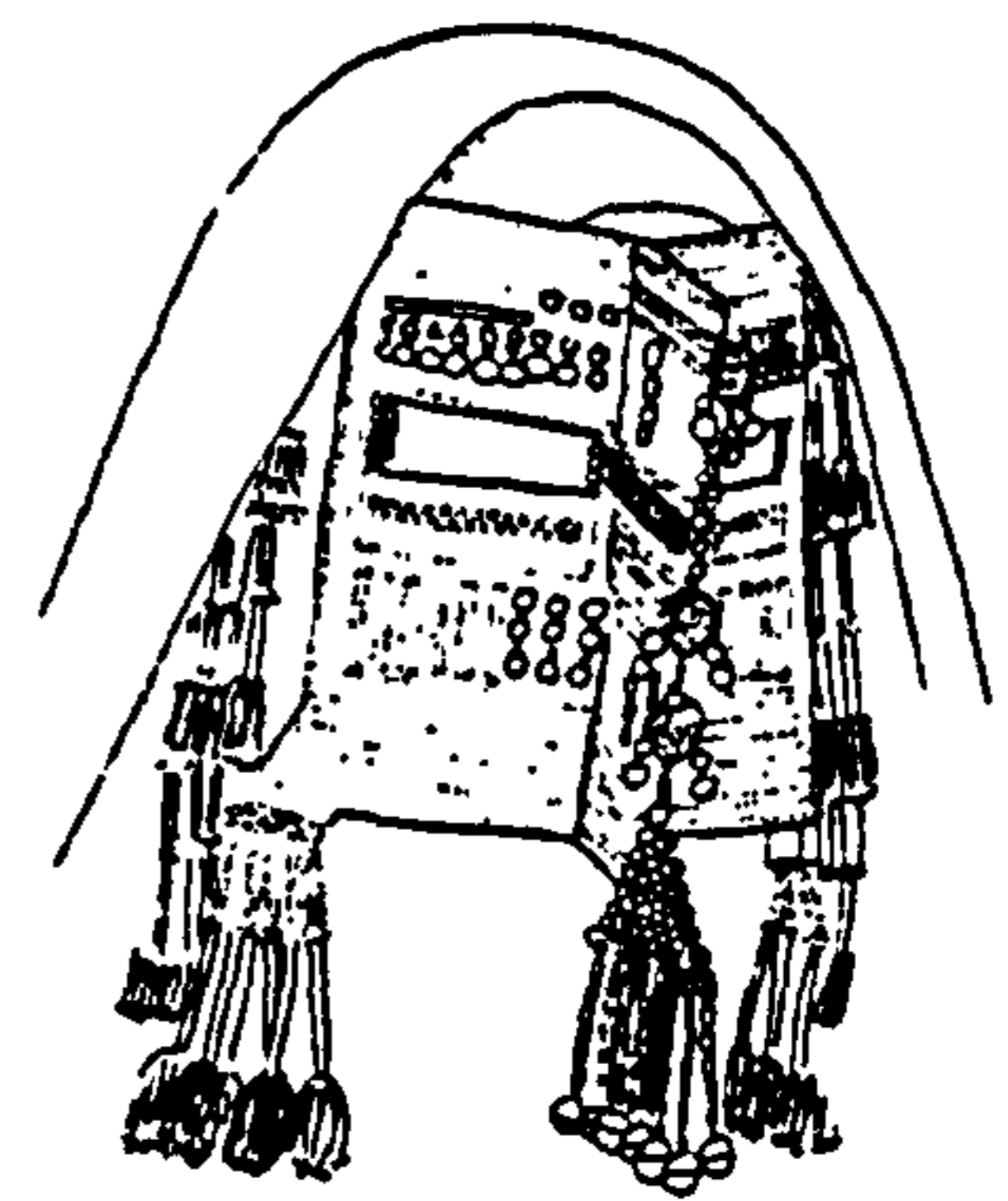
Chapter 7 deals with the contemporary home environment. The interior spaces of ten case studies, three villas and seven apartments, are drawn in detail, their usage is described and their compatibility and criticality are analysed. Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter, in which the findings of the thesis are recapitulated in relation to some theories of cultural change.

The topic of this research fell between different fields of studies including consumerism, semiotics, interior design, acculturation and media studies. It is important, therefore, to define the scope of the study. In Chapter 2 some studies about the influence of advertising on the meaning of industrial design objects and how that encourages people towards more consumption are reviewed. The review aims to highlight the function of the market in introducing new objects into the home environment. However, because the scope of the research is to explore the influence of modern furniture on the home environment and not industrial design on furniture, it is enough to make a primary investigation about the activity of the modern furniture market during the fifties and sixties in Jeddah. It is also not within the scope of this research to find the relationship between television, video and radio and the family, which is the interest of media studies.

² For a brief description of Jeddah and Saudi Arabia see Appendix 1.

The term 'interior design' is purposely avoided in this research because it implies designing interiors, a realm that is not part of the research. It is not within the scope of this research to recommend any design criteria for the home environment.

This research is partly semiotic because it makes an essential assumption that objects have meanings that stand for something else or for a hidden structure, and it is necessary to understand the meaning of objects to interpret situations or hidden structures. Because semiotics is not involved in the relation of the meaning of objects to the behavioural responses of people, which is part of this study, dramaturgy is also partly involved.



CHAPTER 1

The Influence of Use and Meaning on Form

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 HOME ENVIRONMENTS AS SYSTEMS

1.3 COMPATIBILITY AND INCOMPATIBILITY

1.4 USE, MEANING AND VALUE

1.5 SYMBOLIC OBJECTS

1.6 VIRTUOUS OBJECTS

1.7 A MODEL OF OBJECT'S GROWTH

1.7.1 Example 1: Minarets

1.7.2 Example 2: Male Headgear

1.7.3 Example 3: Forks

1.7.4 Example 4: Wedding Cakes

1.7.5 Example 5: Bedouin Utensils

1.7.6 Example 6: Bedouin Women's Veils

1.7.7 Example 7: Military Uniforms

1.8 DISCUSSION

1.9 CONCLUSION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of objects in the process of cultural continuity and change was not given enough attention in studies. However the growing number of material culture studies shows the increasing attention given to this subject. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the role of objects during their different stages of life in meeting the utilitarian and cultural needs of users. During the slow process of cultural change objects go through a life span beginning with invention or adoption, passing through stages of different forms and eventually being abandoned.

This chapter will examine living environments as systems within which constituents (users and objects) are continuously changing and interacting with each other in order that the systems maintain a state of equilibrium. To investigate any living environment, it is necessary to find how its constituents communicate with each other. People communicate with objects by using them, and objects communicate with people by indicating how they should be used and by conveying meanings. For a system to achieve equilibrium, some of its constituents should maintain the survival of others; i.e. be compatible with others. All possible relationships between use, meaning and form as well as the level of compatibility among the three constituents at every stage are illustrated in a model developed in this chapter. The model is then used to help in the analysis of minarets, headgear, forks, wedding cakes, Bedouin utensils and Bedouin women's veil.

1.2 HOME ENVIRONMENTS AS SYSTEMS

Home environments are complex systems. This complexity is the representation of a continuous interaction of many variables of human life such as values and norms, climate, topography and all the objects¹ that constitute the home environment. All of these variables are continuously interacting integrally with each other. In order to investigate any home environment, it is necessary to look at it as a system (Dovey, 1985; Duncan, 1981; Lawrence, 1987; Rapoport, 1969, 1977; Werner, 1987).

¹ The word "object" here refers to a physical object. It should be noted that the word "object" in social science could mean a physical as well as a social object. People develop social objects to communicate properly among themselves (See Hewitt, 1994: 62).

After World War I, Malinowski introduced to anthropology the concept of looking at cultures as systems. He argued that all aspects of culture are interconnected and if one constituent in the system is changed the whole system could change. The system functions to satisfy particular biological or psychological needs, such as the need for food, sex, shelter, security, or prestige. His ideas have greatly influenced anthropology and are known as functionalism (Hicks, 1994).

Radcliffe-Brown developed a similar theory to Malinowskian functionalism, known as structural-functionalism.² He described cultures as systems that function to maintain social structure (Hicks, 1994). “Structure refers to a system with relatively enduring pattern, and function refers to the dynamic process within the structure” (Vago 1980: 44).

In sociology after World War II, Parsons developed what is known as the system theory in which he said that the different constituents of any system always interact to meet certain goals, which should increase the level of equilibrium within the system.³ “Societies or social systems are said to be in equilibrium when the forces acting within them are balanced and the society is consequently stable” (Abercrombie, 1988: 89).

The previous theories were historically influenced by concepts from the biological sciences. In biology, the structure of an organism means the relatively stable arrangement of relationships between the different cells, and the function of the organism means the activities of the various organs in the life process. An important concept which comes out of this analogy is how each constituent of a home environment, like constituents of an organism, contribute to the survival and maintenance of the whole (Vago, 1980). Therefore what concerns this study from these theories is how objects communicate with cultural values and contribute to their survival.

The home environment as a system consists of architectural shell (floors, walls and ceilings and the size and number of openings on these surfaces), objects (tables, chairs,

² The origins of this modified functionalism lay in the work of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, but it was popularised by the English anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown (Abercrombie, 1988).

³ There are four functional needs (known as AGIL) for every system to meet: “adaptation, the need to relate to environment by taking resources from it; goal attainment, the setting of goals for the system; integration, the

beds, carpet, curtains, tiles, cushion, wardrobes, cupboards, lamps, plants, etc.), other components of the physical environment (degree of temperature, humidity and light) and 'people's activities and values. All of these constituents are involved in a continuous process of communication through which the system functions to maintain a higher level of equilibrium.

1.3 COMPATIBILITY AND INCOMPATIBILITY

For a system to achieve equilibrium, all of its constituents should be continuously communicating and adjusting to maintain their mutual survival. If two constituents are maintaining the survival of one another that means they are **compatible** with each other. If one constituent is maintaining the survival of many constituents, this means that its compatibility is high. If one constituent hinders the survival of other constituents, this means that it is **incompatible**.

Bernard (1972) said that ceremonial architecture such as war memorials could have at least three different types of functions.

First, it may ... have symbolic functions - to express certain social values and sentiments, and also to strengthen them. This function for the present generation, as against the past one which is memorialized, is too often not appreciated by those who have been planning war memorials. Second, it may have aesthetic functions--to appeal to our socially-conditioned standards of taste and beauty. And, third, it may have utilitarian functions - to serve as an instrument for the achievement of certain proximate social purposes and limited ends. (Bernard 1972: 330)

Bernard argued that the three functions could be achieved but with different priorities. An aesthetic aspect of a memorial place must not offend those who want their sentiments symbolised. The utilitarian function as well should be practised in a manner that coincides with the same set of values that establish the symbolic meaning of the memorials. If the utilitarian and symbolic functions which refer to a set of values are compatible and occur in one memorial place, the set of values is enhanced and contributes to the solidarity of the society. If dancing is an important national expression of patriotism but, at the same time, is against (incompatible) symbolising sentiments in war memorials, dancing at a site of a war memorial place could lead to conflicts within that social system.

maintenance of internal order; latency or pattern maintenance, the generation of sufficient motivation to perform tasks" (Abercrombie, 1988: 78).

1.4 USE, MEANING AND VALUES

People communicate to objects by using them. 'Use' has various meanings in literature. Architects and planners consider it as synonymous with 'function'. In this research use does not mean function because function does not necessarily indicate the use of an object. Furthermore, according to Rapoport, the term function is disassociated from cultural meanings. He pointed out that it should be distinguished between four aspects of activities:

the activity itself, how it is carried out, the way it is associated with other activities into activity systems, and the meaning of the activity. Typically, "function" has been identified only with the first-the manifest or instrumental aspects of activities. (Rapoport, 1988: 318)

Since cultural values and meanings always influence people's daily uses of objects, using the term function instead of use could be misleading. Therefore the term function in this research will be mentioned only to refer to the role of objects, i.e. to say, for example, symbolic function rather than symbolic role.

The primary reason for inventing objects (except objects for art purposes) is to serve people's utilitarian use, such as moving, dressing, cooking, eating, sleeping and dwelling. Francescato argued that "communication relies on use, that meaning stems from use. And, of course, use- that is "to house", not

"to communicate" - is the original reason for building houses in the first place" (Francescato, 1993: 41). Petroski also confirmed that "every artifact is somewhat wanting in its function, and this is what drives its evolution" (Petroski, 1993: 22). Therefore using an object to meet a utilitarian need is the first force that shapes form (Figure 1.1). The object at this stage will be called in this research as a **practical object**.

As time passes and people use objects, these objects change to meet, in addition to utilitarian uses, cultural needs. Continuous communication updates objects to keep up with the dynamic and changing cultural needs of users (Studer, 1993). Barthes, cited by Francescato (1993), described how the process of using an object becomes an act of communication through time. If a newly invented object was found to be useful, in order for its usefulness to spread among people, it must have some signs to be identified with in relation to its function. These signs accumulate and may not only inform users

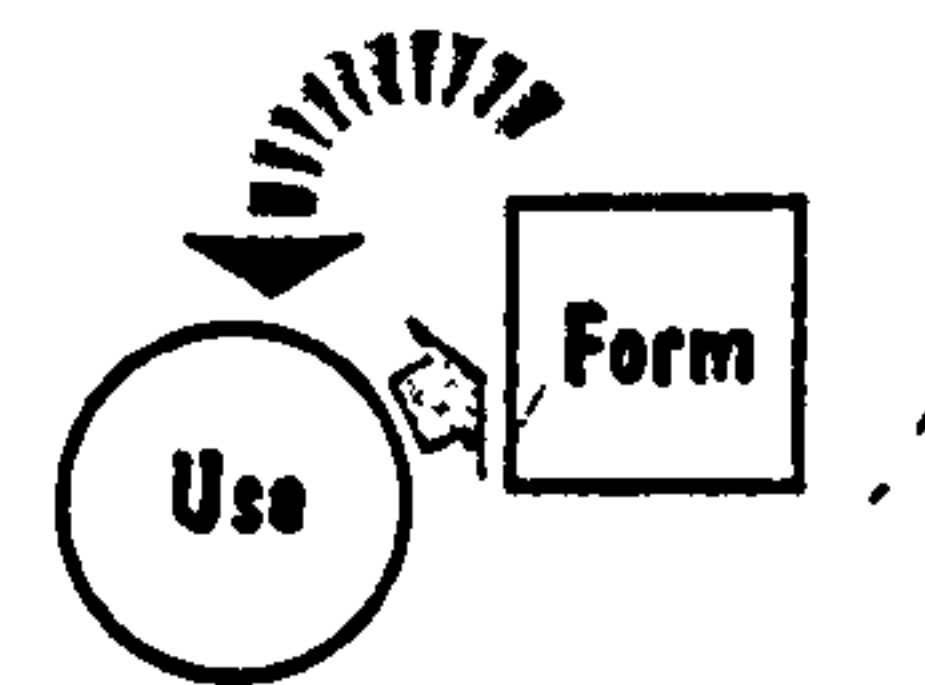


Figure 1.1 – The compatibility of form with use.

of how the object should be used, but also inform them of how important the object or its owner is in the society.

There are three symbolic means through which culture is transmitted, language, actions and objects. The flag is an object that symbolises a country and saluting is an action that symbolises loyalty to the country (Hicks, 1994). What concern us here are uses and objects that relate to everyday home environments. Dismantling of the symbolic role of the physical environment into three levels should help here, Rapoport (1988). The three levels are:

- 1) “High-level” meaning related to cosmologies, cultural schemata, world views, the sacred.
- 2) “Middle-level” meanings related to identity, status, wealth and power.
- 3) “Low-level” meanings related to everyday activities such as seating arrangements and physical boundaries and a like, which communicate to users how to perform their activities in respect to certain values such as privacy.

Hick’s example of the flag and saluting are categorised in what Rapoport considers high-level of meaning. The low and middle levels of meaning relate to our study more than the high-level of meaning.⁴ Objects that convey identity of social status, power, and wealth are considered in the middle-level. Objects that support uses which are influenced by values are considered in the low-level.

Therefore the function of an object in cultural transmission and continuation will be related to its ability to:

- 1) symbolise or identify someone or something else, such as wealth, status and power (middle-level);
- 2) and support or hinder a value of an activity, such as privacy (low-level).

⁴ Therefore the high-level of meaning will not be considered in this study.

1.5 SYMBOLIC OBJECTS

It has been already pointed out in this chapter that practical objects may gain symbolic functions after being used. We need to discuss in more detail how this process takes place. Gombrich (1992) explained that it is man's nature to exercise his power over objects. It is as if plain objects (practical) invite man to modify, articulate decorate them. Decoration may start with parts that need to be seen more frequently for utilitarian function. Speaking about a Spanish box (Figure 1.2) Gombrich stated that "What we need for visual comfort, however, is to gain an easy grasp (mental or physical) of the way a thing is put together. We want to see where the lid begins or where the vessel can be held" (Gombrich, 1992: 165). Thus the handle is accentuated to attract the attention of people's eyes to ease the use of the box. Another function of accentuation is the visual comfort. To achieve this comfort people accentuate objects in spaces or parts of objects according to what Gombrich called 'structural articulation'. The edge of the Spanish box lid is decorated more than other parts to differentiate it from the body of the box.

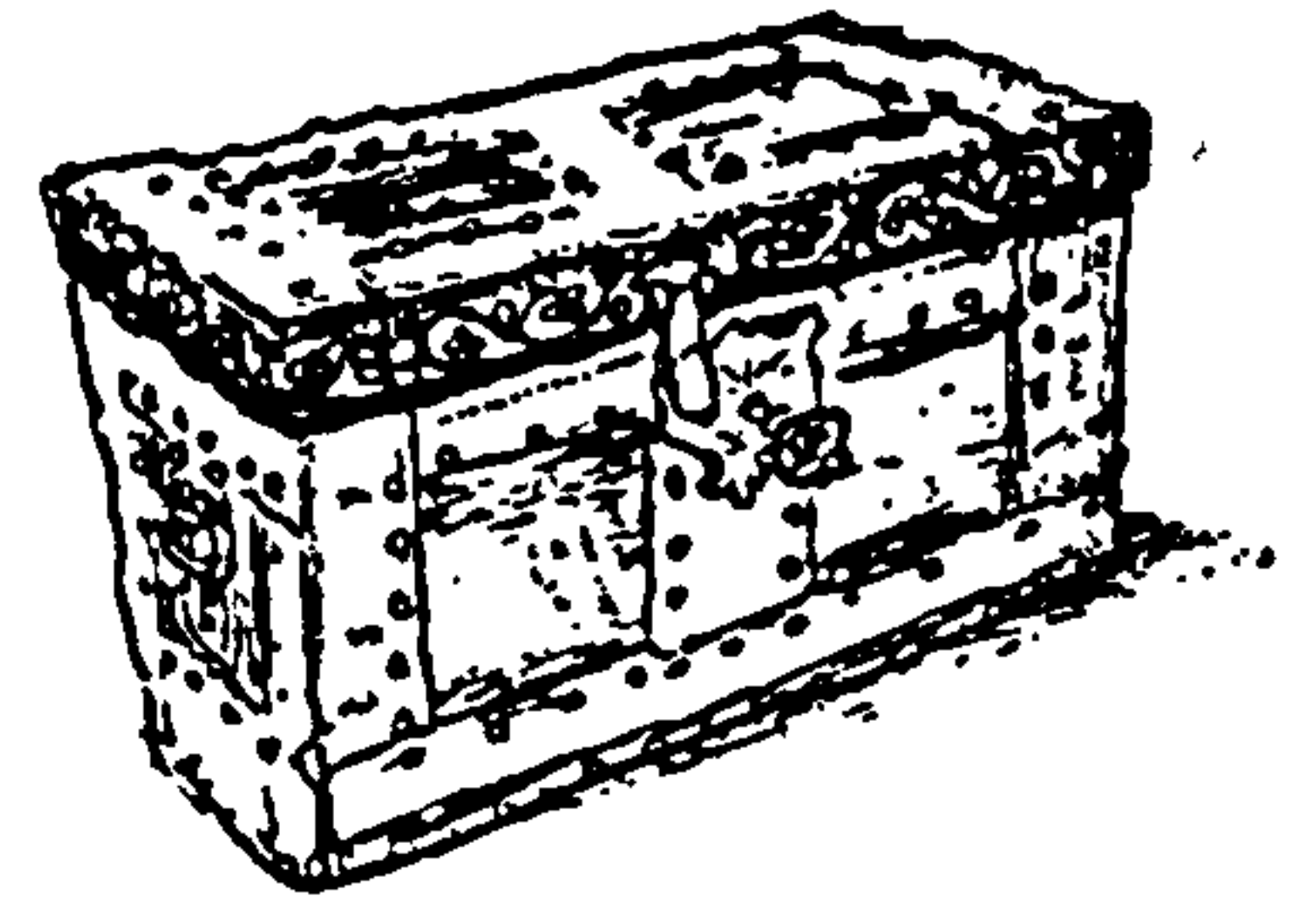


Figure 1.2 – A Spanish box
Source: Gombrich, 1992: 165.

The function of decorating objects is not limited to visual comfort and structural articulation. "There are many examples in the history of decorative art in which structural articulation leads to further ornamental articulation without our being able to say exactly where one ends and the other begins" (Gombrich, 1992: 165). What drives objects for further decoration is people's nature to express their identity through objects. The function of a door is to let people pass from one place to another (utilitarian). Doors were accentuated (Figure 1.3) by decoration to inform visitors that this is the opening from which the domain of the occupier is accessible. As time passes and gates are seen more frequently than other objects, they become means to communicate the occupier's status (identity) (Figure 1.4). Similarly here it could be impossible to determine when the door gained the additional role of conveying its owner's identity.

Objects that are accentuated by their owners and seen by others, such as doors of houses, convey owner's identity, even if he does not intend to, because "it is the nature of the human mind to impose order on the world by working through form" (Rapoport, 1990: 83). It is inevitable that people consciously or unconsciously define others to know how to deal and behave with them. Reciprocally people would be keen to represent themselves as they wanted and not to be misunderstood or categorised in a social status different from what they wanted to appear. Therefore it is an essential assumption in semiotics that cultures have underlying structures and that the signs are manifestations of them (Feldman, 1995). Based on the previous discussion, accentuated objects that are seen by people towards whom the owner observe maintaining an identity, for example guests, inevitably represent him. These objects are called **symbolic** in this research.⁵



Figure 1.3 – A decorated gate of one of the traditional houses in Jeddah.
Source: Pesce, 1977: 119.

1.6 VIRTUOUS OBJECTS

Eating differs from one culture to another even though it is universal and biological. A key factor in these differences is the differences of cultural values that influence the way people eat. For example, some Muslims believe that eating on the floor is an act of respect to food, which is a bounty of Allah. Some also believe that eating in groups increase the latent blessing of Allah on food. These values, after frequent use of utensils, eventually shaped the form of these utensils. Some Muslims spread on the floor a sheet of cloth or plastic on which large plates are arranged.

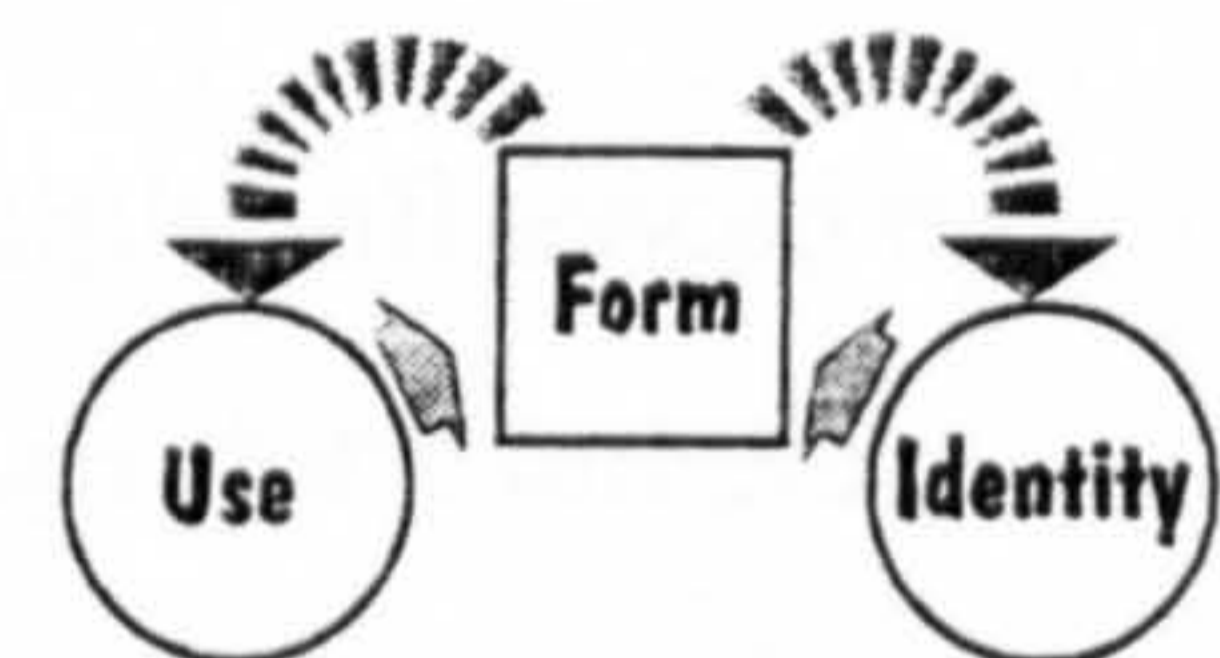


Figure 1.4 – The compatibility of form is with utility and identity.

⁵ It should be noted here that it is not part of this research to find out what sort of identity these objects stand for, i.e. status, income, personality, etc.

Reciprocally there is a relative dependence of cultural values on the form of objects even though these values have been key factors in shaping these objects. Utensils began as practical objects, i.e. fulfilling a utilitarian use, and now they support the continuation of cultural values. Utensils maintain the sense of a group, the relationship between the members of the group and the meaning that users value food differently from other cultures (Figure 1.5). In describing such objects in this research, they will be called **virtuous** objects.

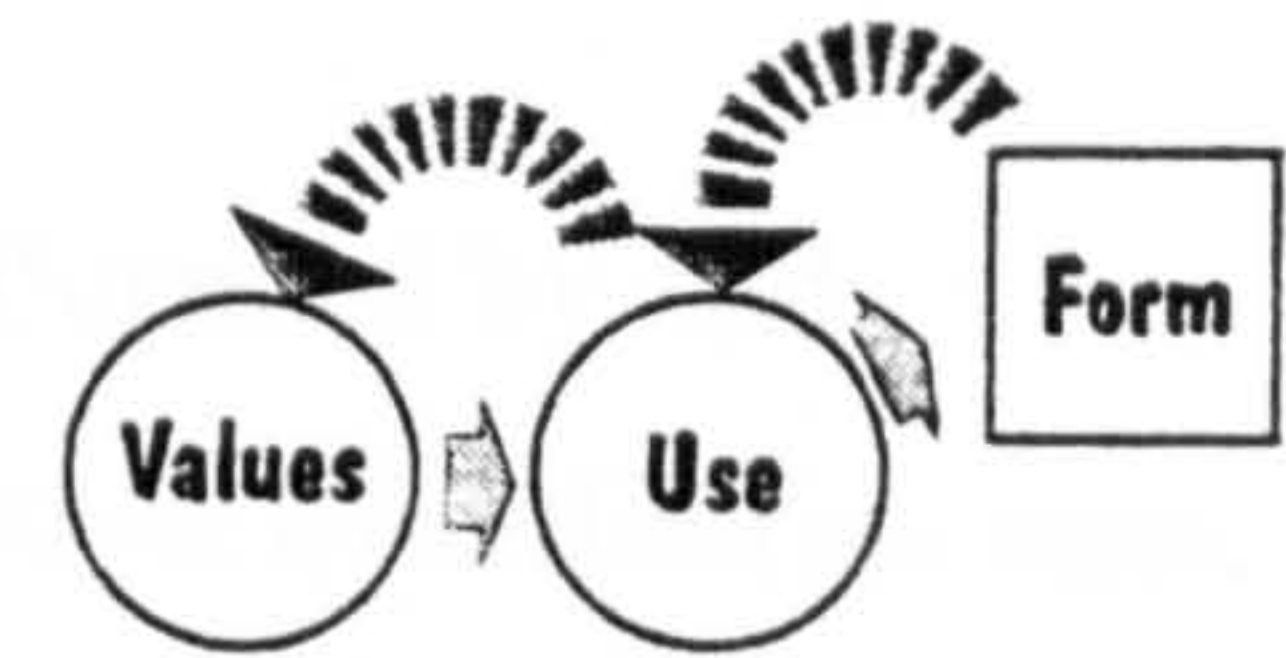


Figure 1.5 – The compatibility of form with cultural values.

1.7 A MODEL OF OBJECT'S GROWTH

Before discussing some examples that should explore the function of objects in cultural continuation describing a model (Figure 1.6), which has been developed by the researcher to trace the range of possible relationships among the interacting constituents, utility, values, identity and form, during the development of objects, should be helpful.

- Stage 1 (no compatibility) is when objects are not used and do not mean anything to people, for example a rock in the desert.
- Stage 2 (low compatibility) is when the form of an object is mainly influenced by and maintains a utilitarian activity with no regard to user's values, for example a computer diskette.
- Stage 3 (high compatibility) is when:
 - a. the form of an object is influenced by and maintains use driven by cultural value, for example narrow alleys in traditional Islamic cities; or
 - b. the form of an object is influenced by and maintains the utilitarian use and stands for something or someone else, i.e. conveys users' identity, for example decorated knives and forks.

Objects' forms in these two stages play an important function in cultural continuity.

- Stage 4 (very high compatibility) is when the form of an object is highly compatible and fulfils all functions of A and B in Stages 3. The object's form in this stage plays a very important role in cultural continuity.

- Stage 5 (low compatibility) is when the form of an object is mainly symbolic and influenced by and maintains users' identity and does not meet any utilitarian use, for example neck ties and paintings.
- Stage 6 (incompatibility) is when the form of an object is influenced by and maintains users' identity but impractical, i.e. hinders the survival of utilitarian uses, for example headgear in the Arabian Peninsula.
- Stage 7 (incompatibility) is when an object's form is influenced by and maintains users' identity but hinders the survival of an activity that is driven by value.
- Stage 8 (high incompatibility) is when an object's form does not stand for anything and is not used.
- Stage 9 is when the object is abandoned, for example headgear in some countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Syria.

It is not necessary that when objects develop they go through all stages. Some objects may jump from Stage 2 to Stage 6. Some may start at Stage 3A. Some may start at Stage 2 and never transfer to another stage. It is not necessary also that if the form of an object is categorised to be in Stage 5, for example, that it is never used. It could be used rarely, and the primary reason for its possession is to express identity. The following seven examples (minarets, headgear, forks, wedding cakes, Bedouin utensils, women's veils, and military uniforms) should illustrate the model.

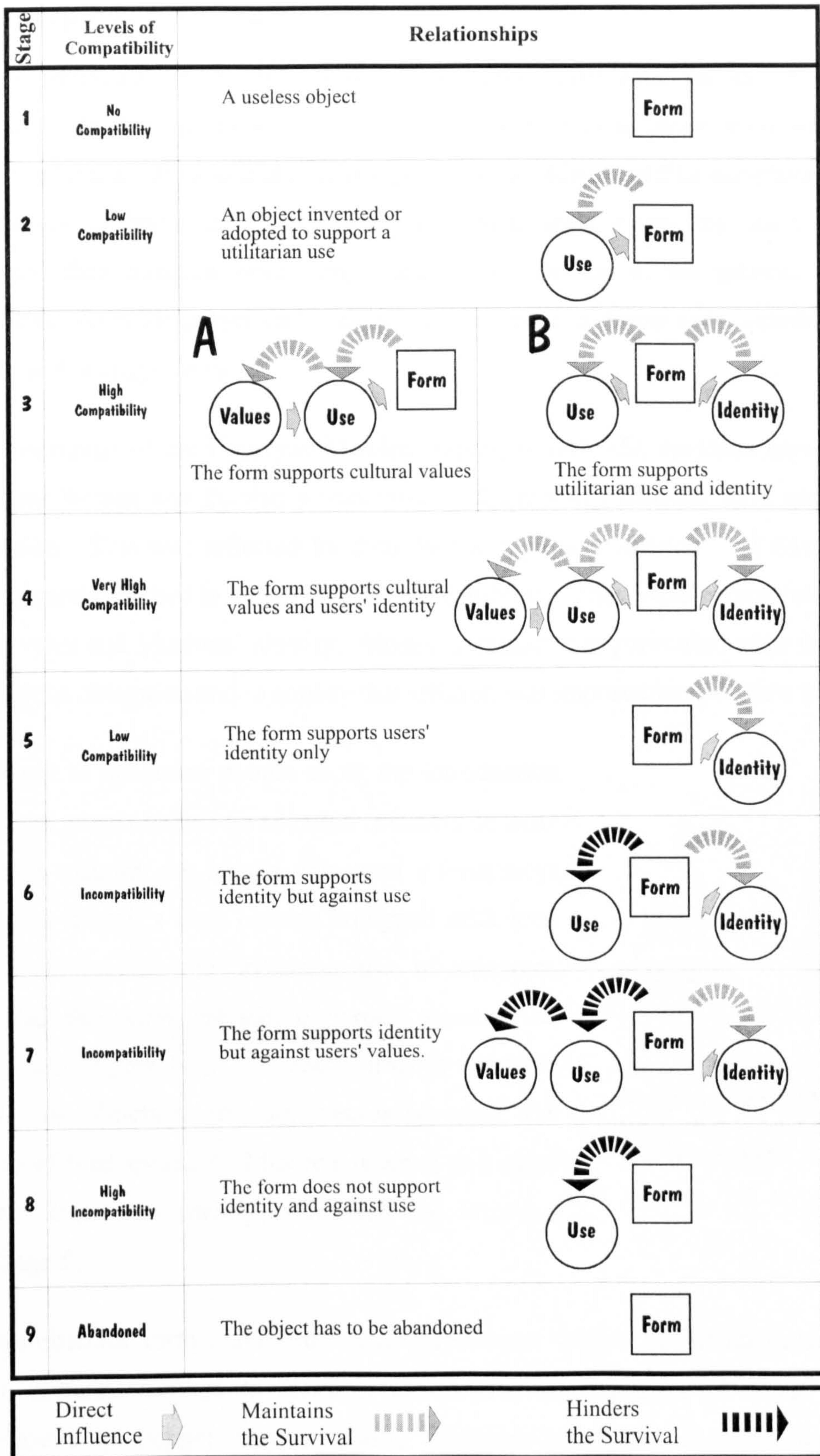


Figure 1.6 – The model of compatibility. (For ease of reference an additional copy of this figure is on the last page of the document).

1.7.1 Example 1: Minarets

The form of minarets passed through stages of relationships with use and meaning. First it was established to allow a man to call for prayers (use driven by a religious value) from a high location so that as many people as possible could be informed about the introduction of prayer time. It was established to meet a use that has a value. Mosques and their minarets were simple and plain. On top of the minaret was a platform from which the prayer caller calls. At this stage minarets were virtuous, i.e. compatible with a religious value.

Since the beginning of the Umayyad Muslim empire, in 661 AD, mosques have been influenced by Roman and Persian architecture. Minarets in particular have attracted more attention. This was reflected by their increasing ornamentation. At this stage (Stage 4) minarets reached to a high level of compatibility. They were compatible with a religious value and Muslims' identity. Mosques, minarets in particular, were used to fulfil a religious obligation and to convey that religion was important in people's life.

Now in regard to informing people about the introduction of prayer time, prayer callers do not need minarets because loud speakers magnify the human voice and inform more people. Even though a long column equipped with loud speakers could replace the utilitarian use of minarets, platforms and decoration are still important elements on minarets' forms (Figure 1.7). Minarets' forms in regard to their utilitarian function are not necessary after the introduction of loud speakers. Minarets reached to a stage where their forms are mainly influenced by religious identity (Stage 5).

If the non-utilitarian forms, platforms and decorations, hinder utilitarian uses, this means that minarets reached to Stage 6, i.e. became incompatible. If these non-utilitarian forms no longer have symbolic functions and simultaneously against utilitarian uses or cultural values this means that they are highly incompatible (Stage 7 & 8), which will lead to their abandonment (Stage 9).

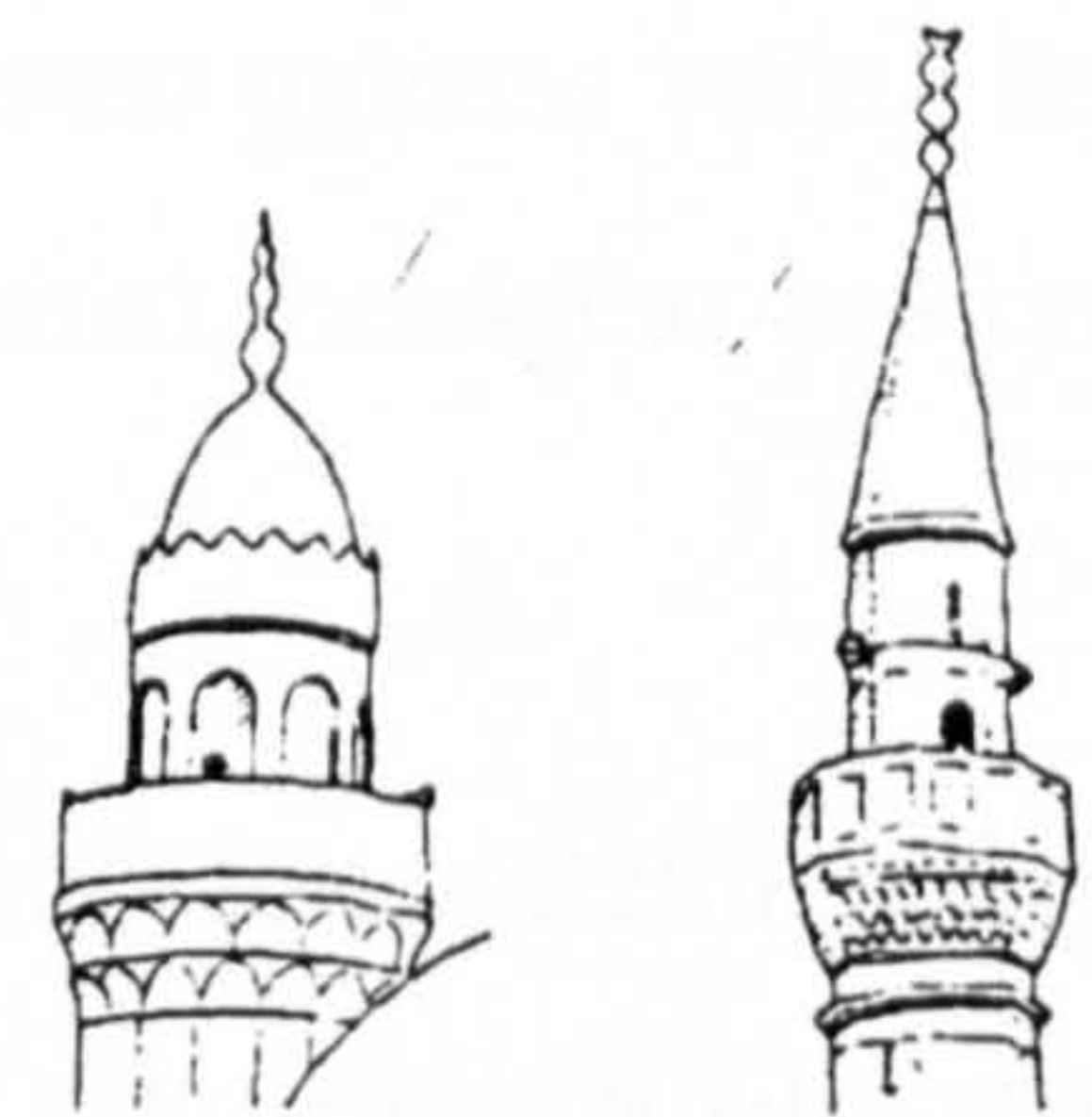


Figure 1.7 – The Corniche Mosque minaret (1980s) and the Hanfi mosque minaret (1732) in Jeddah.

1.7.2 Example 2: Male Headgear

Headgear⁶ (Figure 1.8)⁷ is part of the formal costume in the Arabian Peninsula. It is very compatible with desert weather. By putting its centre on top of the head, the triangular headcloth will have two ends large enough to

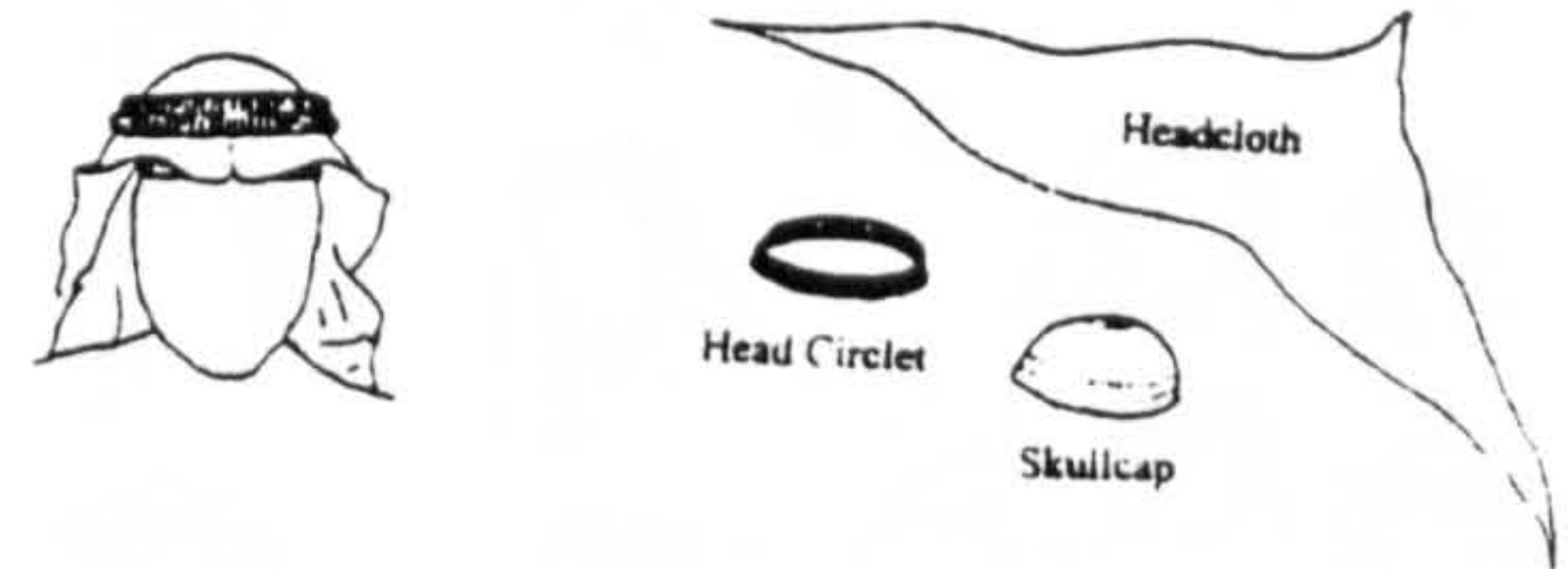


Figure 1.8 – Components of a headgear

wind about the face in case of sandy winds. It also protects the head and the neck from the scorching sun and works as an insulation by trapping air within its folds, allowing the wearer to retain moisture and a bearable temperature (Ross, 1994). Thus the function of the headgear was utilitarian (Stage 2). Now even though people move around the city in air-conditioned cars and all streets are paved which diminishes the amount of sand on the air, men still wear headgear whenever they leave their houses.

A strong reason for the survival of the headgear in Arabia is its flexibility to express different meanings such as young vs. old, formal vs. informal, rich vs. poor, and active vs. lazy. It also enhances men's appearance by giving them different options which best suits their faces and personalities (Figure 1.9). After being practical, headgear has now become only symbolic.

Keeping the headgear in the desired position needs relatively continuous attention from the wearer. It also needs to be taken off and replaced before and after each purification, which includes wiping the head with water, before Muslims five daily prayers. Headgear maintains identity but hinders freedom of movement. Therefore headgear in the Arabian Peninsula is considered in Stage 6.

⁶ It is beyond the scope of this research to identify when headgear was first developed historically. However, wearing something on the head has been common in most pre-modern cultures. North American Indians wore birds' feathers, Pharaohs wore headdresses, men in the Middle East and India wore turbans. These different forms of headgear vary in their utilitarian and symbolic functions. For example, the North American Indians' birds feathers seems symbolic rather than utilitarian, whereas the Arabian headgear was initially utilitarian rather than symbolic.

⁷ The headgear is composed of three parts, the skullcap, known as *kufiyyah* or *tagiyyah*, the headcloth, known as *ghutrah* or *shumsgah*, and the head circlet, known as *'igsl*. The skullcap is made of white cotton and worn under the headcloth. The headcloth is a large square cloth folded diagonally into half to form a triangle. The function of the head circlet is to forbid the headcloth from slipping.

This is not to say that if objects gain meaning they inevitably lose their utilitarian function. Objects may lose their utilitarian function if other objects were introduced and fulfil the same function more efficiently. The headgear started as a practical object, through time it has become symbolic.



Figure 1.9 - Some options for arranging headgear

It was the custom both in Iraq and Syria to wear headgear, but now this has mostly been abandoned (Stage 9). Why was wearing headgear abandoned in these countries and not in the Arabian Peninsula? The model shows that before the object is abandoned, it goes through an incompatible stages (Stage 6, 7 & 8). Unlike headgear in the Arabian Peninsula, headgear in Iraq and Syria no longer fulfils men identity, i.e. reached to a high level of incompatibility, and therefore was abandoned. As a result a complex process of acculturation⁸ through contacts with other cultures, men adopted different ways of expressing identity.

1.7.3 Example 3: Forks

Due to the need for hunting, cutting meat and cooking, sharp flints and long and sharp pointed sticks were invented by prehistoric people. After the discovery of iron and bronze, from the sharp-edged flint for cutting and sharp-pointed stick for spearing evolved the sharp edged and pointed knife which was used for both functions. This knife has been used widely for centuries as a tool, weapon, cooking and dining utensil. As a dining utensil it was efficient in cutting, but not in holding the food, especially meat. There was a need to have a knife with two tines instead of one to prevent meat from rotating during cutting. This led to the development of forks. With the introduction of the fork as an efficient holder of food, the pointed knife disappeared from dining tables. The two tines of the fork had to be some distance apart in order to prevent the meat from rotating, and because small loose pieces of food slipped through the space between the tines and thus could not be picked up, the three tined fork was

⁸ Acculturation is "... the process by which important changes take place in a culture as the result of contact with another culture" (Hicks 1994: 47).

developed. More tines were added and forks of five and even six tines were introduced. However those with five and six tines forks were too wide for peoples mouths and therefore, the four tined fork has become the standard (Petroski, 1993).

In Petroski's description of forks' evolution, it is noticed that using knives in a more complex way led to the development of forks and, as a result, the disappearance of the sharp edged and pointed knives. During this development, utilitarian use was the main force controlling form (Stage 3A). The fork is considered to be in Stage 3A and not 2 because the use of dining utensils is influenced by cultural values. In other cultures chopsticks or fingers are used instead. The origin of chopsticks came about because people in the Far East used to eat as groups from large pots. They had to use long sticks instead of fingers to pick up the food because food in large pots keeps its heat for a long time (Petroski, 1993). Even though they may not eat in groups today, they still use chopsticks. On the other hand, some Arabs consider eating with utensils and not fingers to be disrespectful to the food, which is a bounty from Allah.

There were early indications that utensils were decorated (Figure 1.10). The decoration of edged and pointed knives did not hinder their performance. In modern times, many silverware patterns are made for fashion rather than utilitarian purposes. Some silverware patterns are highly engraved and used for dining as well as for displaying the status of their owners. Some others go so far in rounding and tapering the tines that is almost impossible to pick up food. The expression of owner's identity controls the form in some contemporary silverware and hinders their use (Stage 6).

When silverware serves use, which is driven by Western cultural values, and conveys identity, it is considered highly compatible, Stage 4. The same silverware is not considered highly compatible if used in the Arabian culture because fingers have

been the compatible tools for eating for centuries. Many Arabs now may not sense the values that originally drove eating with fingers, and many Chinese now may not sense the values that originally drove eating with chopsticks. Therefore there is not an incompatibility between eating with knives and forks and contemporary cultural values. Forks are considered in Stage 2, or Stage 3B if they are decorated to convey identity.



Figure 1.10 - A decorated thousand year old Saxon edged-pointed knife
Source: Petroski, 1993: 5.

1.7.4 Example 4: Wedding Cakes

Charsley (1992) argued that wedding cakes started to meet a utilitarian function, to be eaten at the wedding party (Stage 2). Through time, wedding cakes gained so strong an attention equal to that directed to the bride. Wedding cakes have become with two or more tiers,⁹ thick icing and decoration. The thick icing and decoration have made them difficult to be cut and eaten. The form is determined by the display function and hinders eating (Stage 6). The form maintains the survival of the identity of the bride's and groom's families and is against the utilitarian function. Charsley concluded that:

use may therefore affect form where very basic human motivations are involved, but more commonly it is in the opposite direction that causation works here: forms suggest possibilities for use. (Charsley, 1992: 120)

Thus utilitarian use initiates meaning on form which may not eventually support the original utilitarian use. The object develops a new cultural function in the society. This change continues as long as the user is using the object. Once the user, for any reason, stops using the object which still has a symbolic function, it becomes a symbol as the case of conserved old monuments, such as old mosques and churches, and in an extreme case, the pyramids (Stage 5).

1.7.5 Example 5: Bedouin Utensils

The Bedouin utensils are good examples through which to explore the development of objects in a culture relatively isolated from external forces for centuries. This has given plenty of time for the different constituents of the Bedouin social environment to communicate and maintain the survival of each other.

Due to their harsh weather, deserts are usually low populated. This has led the Bedouin to move in groups as tribes to protect themselves from strangers while searching for water. This constant movement in a harsh dangerous environment has made hospitality towards guests highly valued (Al-Rabaiah, 1974). The

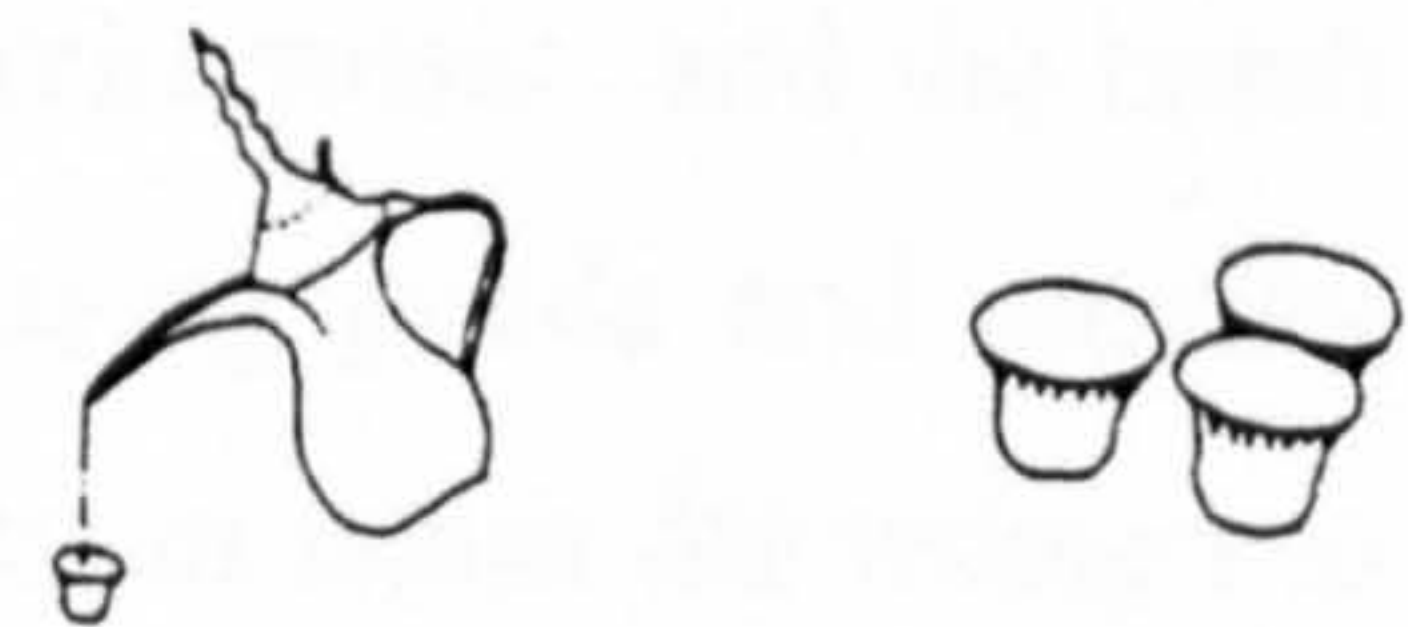


Figure 1.11 – *Dallah and fanajeel.*

⁹ One of the reasons for the number of tiers could be due to the need to increase the size of the cake so that what is left from the party could be sent to those who could not attend.

guest area in the tent is always open and directed to have full shade. Once a guest enters the tent, the host starts preparing the Arabic coffee.

A dug out shallow hole, *wujar*, where the open fire sits is the centre around which coffee is prepared. The preparation of coffee starts by placing a set of three coffee pots, *dallah* (Figure 1.11), next to the open fire. The host pours the coffee beans onto a shallow long-handled iron pan, *mahmasa*, which he holds just above the flames. When the beans are roasted they are left to cool before being pulverised with a pestle in a mortar called *mahbash* or *najr* (Beaumont, 1994; Dickson, 1949). Pounding the coffee beans is an important part of the preparation. The host should pound not only to pulverise the beans but also to amuse his guest with the musical rhythm of the pounding (Beaumont, 1994). The musical sound is also considered to be an invitation for the host's neighbours to come and join the occasion (Al-Dajani, 1994). Pounding the coffee beans has become an expression of hospitality. A Bedouin sheikh, experienced financial hardship and was forced to sell his iron mortar and replace it with a wooden one, which did not produce as loud a sound as the iron one. He, then, wrote a poem describing his sadness at the loss of his ability to invite his neighbours by pounding and thus express his hospitality (Al-Youm, 1996). The iron mortar contributed to the survival of the user's expression of hospitality (Stage 3A).

The freshly ground coffee is added to the largest of the three *dallahs* and boiled. Meanwhile cardamom seeds are pulverised and added into the second *dallah*. The second *dallah* is then filled with the boiled coffee. Finally, the coffee is poured into the third *dallah* which is the most engraved and shiny one. Starting with the most important guest, the host serves all the men.

The long distances between Bedouin camps, the dangerous environment, and the harsh weather have made men, and not women, responsible for buying goods and moving around to inquire about good pasturelands. It is also forbidden in Islam for women to travel alone without a closely related adult male. Therefore men who have been doing this task through centuries became like newsagents and storytellers. Because it is important to pay close attention to the person talking, it was necessary not to disturb him by any way. If every guest were to say "no more coffee" to the host, this would disturb the speaker. Therefore, an interesting way of expressing "no more coffee" was developed. If a guest wishes to refuse more coffee, he must jiggle his empty cup, *finjal*,

from side to side, indicating to the host that he has had enough. It is considered a violation of Bedouin etiquette to express sufficiency verbally.

The form of *dallah* is good for boiling the coffee on a fire or live coals and also for serving. The base of the *dallah* is wide to collect as much heat as possible while the handle is high to protect the hand of the host. The handle is not on top of the *dallah* because the pulverised coffee beans need to be added inside the *dallah* and stirred which is done through the top cover. The pouring spout is long with a narrow end because the Bedouin coffee cup *finjal* is very small. If the spout end were wide, the coffee would easily splash out of the *finjal*.

The reason the *finjal* is very small may be due to the need to keep the served coffee hot at all times. If the *finjal* was as big as the modern cup, the coffee would get cold more quickly. A second reason might be due to the length of time necessary to prepare large amounts of coffee simultaneously. Usually Bedouin guests come in groups. The quantity of coffee would not be adequate to serve guests with modern cups.

A third reason could be to express the hospitality of the host by giving the expression that he is always busy replenishing the coffee, standing all the time and going backward and forward to refill the little *fanajeel* (plural of *finjal*). It is considered a violation of Bedouins' etiquette if the host fills the *finjal* right up. The *finjal* should be filled not more than a quarter full. This etiquette increases the number of fills per guest. The least a guest should drink is three fills. To accept less than three refills is considered an insult to the host.

The continuous movement from one side of the tent to another to replenish the little *fanajeel* and to serve newcomers quickly led to the development of a unique way of holding and filling them (Figure 1.12). Even though, the host may have to serve many visitors simultaneously, trays are not used for serving. When the number of guests is high, the host holds in his right hand as many *fanajeel* as possible¹⁰ and pours the coffee

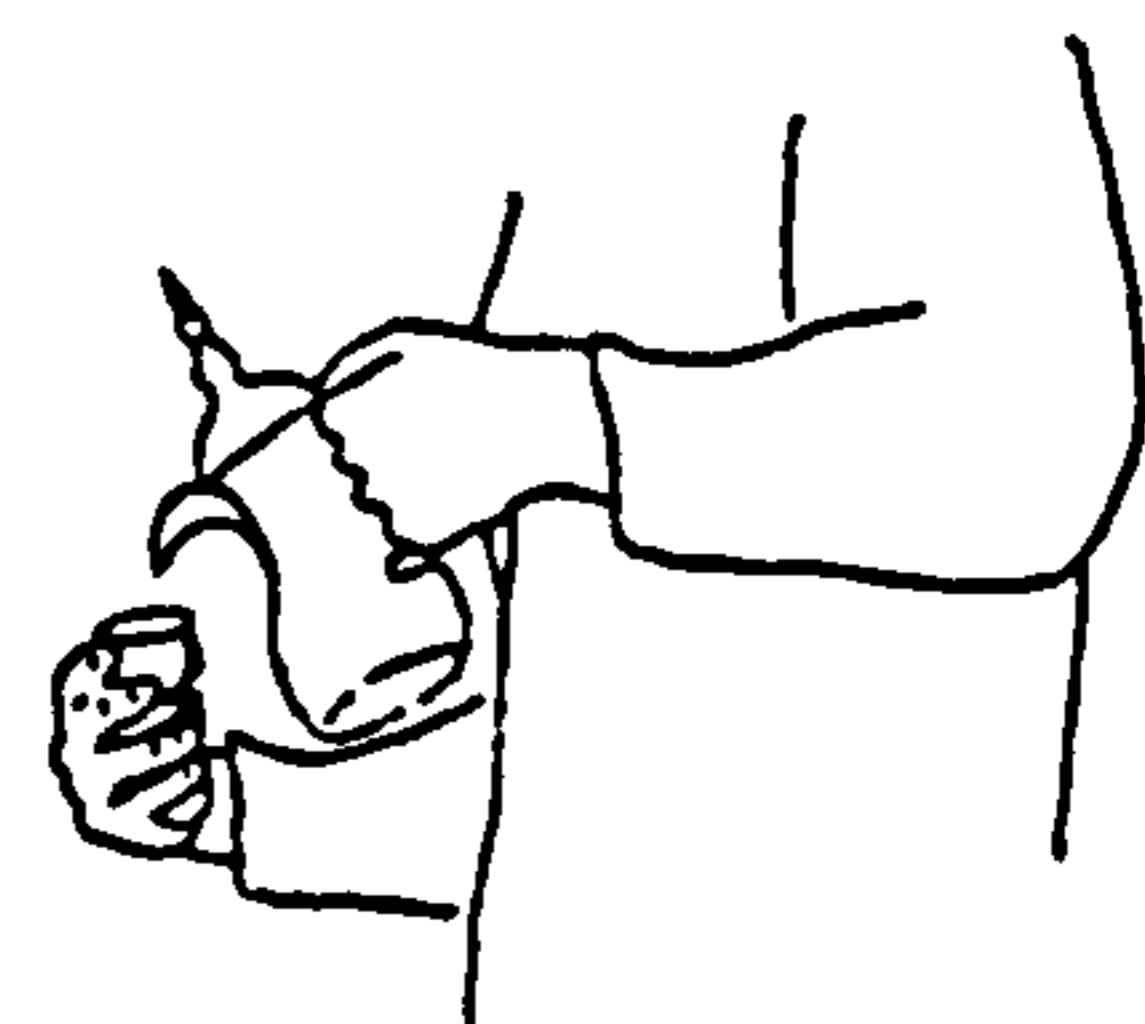


Figure 1.12 - Holding many *fanajeel* with one hand while pouring coffee

¹⁰ An expert of serving Arabian coffee, Mr. Bakhit (62 years old), was proud that he had never heard of anyone apart from himself who could carry thirty *fanajeel* in his right hand (Okaz, 1995).

in front of each guest. Carrying the empty *fanajeel* on top of each other has been a strong reason that they were made without handles.

The frequent movements backward and forward during serving coffee and the need to have as little furniture as possible have led Bedouins not to use tables (Figure 1.13). Since there are no tables, and the ground beneath the rug is usually not flat, the small size of the *finjal's* base and its wide top leaves no options to the guest other than holding it.



Figure 1.13 - Serving Arabic coffee in a Bedouin tent

The mortar, *dallah* and *finjal* are practical and virtuous, i.e. compatible with uses through which the host expresses his hospitality. This represents Stage 3A where compatibility is high.

One of the incompatible objects in the Bedouin social environment is a two metre diameter dish used on special occasions (Al-Dajani, 1994; Weir, 1990). As mentioned above, hospitality has always been a strong means for Bedouin to express themselves to others. One way by which Bedouins express hospitality is to slaughter a large number of sheep and serve them simultaneously (Figure 1.14). The need to express their hospitality has led some Bedouin to develop these huge dishes even though their large size and heavy weight cause problems while travelling (Stage 6). If one day the Bedouin find another way of expressing their hospitality (Stage 8), the huge dishes will be abandoned (Stage 9).



Figure 1.14 – Bedouin men eating from a two metre plate.

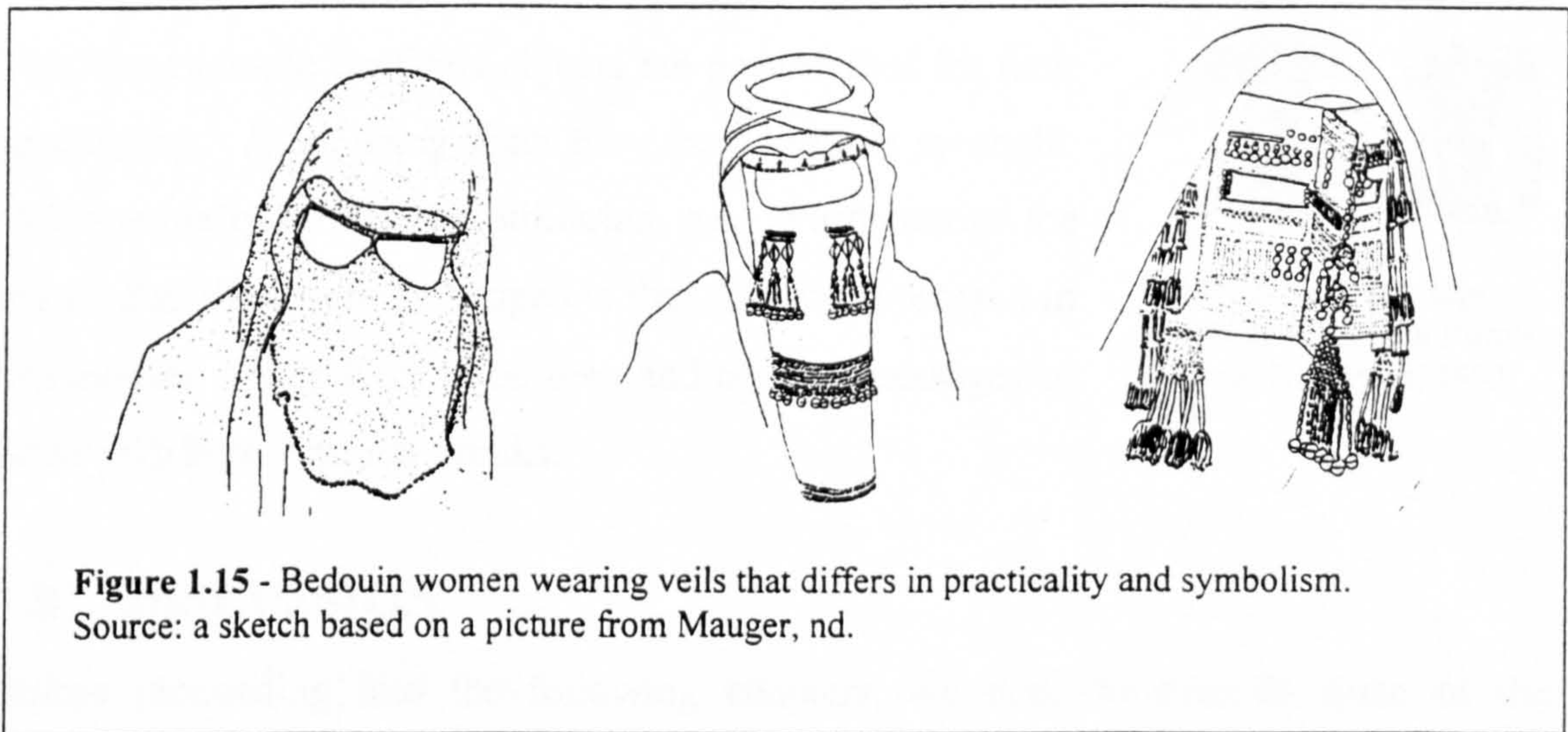
Source: Weir, 1990:27.

The curtain which divides the men's section from the women's section is beautifully decorated most frequently on the men's side. Unlike the men's section, the women's section is more practical and less symbolic. Cooking utensils, heavy baggage of rice, flour, dates, salt, sugar, quilts, water-skins, looms and many other tools which support

the daily activities of Bedouin life are all located within and around the women's section (Dickson, 1949).

1.7.6 Example 6: Bedouin Women's Veils

The function of a woman's veil is to hide her face from the sight of unrelated relative men.¹¹ Looking at a woman without necessity is prohibited for unrelated adult male relatives in Islam. Thus the veil is supposed to fulfil this religious value. It should be simple not to hinder women from fulfilling their daily chores. The veil started in Stage 3A of compatibility where wearing the veil means that looking at women faces is prohibited (value).



The function of the woman's veil in Bedouin culture seems more than meeting this religious value (Figure 1.15). Through time and frequent use the form of some Bedouin veils has become a means to express a message which could be of social status, wealth, tribe, etc. (Stage 4).

This additional symbolic function, which attracts the eyes' attention, contradicts the primary function of the veil, to deter the visual intrusion of unrelated men. This is a strong indication that objects that are located in a frequently seen location are most probably used to communicate identity.

¹¹ In regard to the Islamic teaching about the veil, Muslim scholars are divided in their interpretations of the Koranic verses and the saying of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some argue that women are obligated to

1.7.7 Example 7: Military Uniforms

Koenig, cited by Gombrich (1992), stressed that objects' functions change from practical to display. The original lining of military uniforms (Figure 1.16) to prevent buttonholes from tearing was gradually spread with patterns over the whole tunic. The extreme examples of these uniforms were eventually unsuitable for combat, he concluded.

Many of the features of uniform which appear to serve purely decorative purposes owe their origin to very practical considerations in earlier warfare. The splendid ceremonial uniforms of prekhaki days with all their gold braid and their shining buttons can be seen as the deposits of a long development which transformed a utilitarian outfit into a ritualistic object. (Gombrich, 1992: 227)

This last example confirms objects are needed first for their practicality. After using them they may become symbolic and eventually hinder the utilitarian use. Furthermore the reason that they were developed is that they were dressed in ceremonies. They were to be seen and convey messages of pride or different military ranks.



Figure 1.16 – Developments in military uniforms. Source: Gombrich, 1992: 228

1.8 DISCUSSION

Before proceeding into the following chapters, we need to exclude some of the irrelevant meanings of identity in this research. An object, space or a built environment could have an identity by repeated patterns of forms (Alexander, 1979) even if these forms are only practical. For example when a street post lamp is repeated in a space (Figure 1.17) the space will be identified with this pattern of repetition. The identity that concerns us in this research is not perceived images as a result of repeated



Figure 1.17 – View of a main street in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Source: Stacy International, 1991: 106.

cover their hair and bodies in front of unrelated men, other scholars, especially of Saudi Arabia, argue that women's faces must be covered too.

patterns. It is limited to images that people perceive about others when they see their objects and spaces.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that system theories are influenced by biological science. However it is not possible to verify whether a social system is in equilibrium, as biological scientists try to do, for at least two reasons. First as Altman, in a dialectical analysis of home environments, said:

... , we do not assume that social systems strive toward perfectly "balanced" relationships between individual and societal forces. A great range of possible relationships exist, any of which may be quite viable, as long as some amount of both oppositional processes exists in the system. (Altman, 1981: 287)

In other words, there could be endless forms of equilibrium of social systems, the same as the case in biology where there are endless different forms of living organisms that are in equilibrium. Since there is no fixed form of equilibrium, it is difficult to verify whether or not a social system is in equilibrium.

Second, it is possible in biological science to determine whether a living organism is in equilibrium because biology deals with physiological forces that can be measured. In social systems, as Turner pointed out "Quantitative methods cannot describe the relationships between things, people and nature- which is just where experience and human values lie" (Turner, 1982: 62). In a social system where constituents include users' values and meanings, it is impossible to measure levels of values and meanings of forms and consequently claim that the social system has reached a certain level of equilibrium. Therefore verifying whether or not a social environment is in equilibrium is not considered in this study.

The objects discussed above have been shaped through time to maintain the survival of not only utilitarian needs, which were the primary reason for their invention or adoption, but also the survival of values and identity of whom they represent. There is a cultural process that develops the morphology of some objects towards greater compatibility with people's values and identity.

When time passes and more useful objects are invented, some of the already existing objects may lose their utilitarian significance, yet still they survive because of their symbolism. Men in the Arabian Peninsula, for example, have not suddenly abandoned headgear just because it is not compatible with free movement or the new climate

provided by air-conditioning units. Although men's headgear is impractical, it fulfils an important symbolic function (Stage 6). Men still depend on headgear to express themselves. As long as they do so, the headgear will exist until other objects or means, hairstyle for example, fulfil the symbolic function of headgear. People are not willing to abandon objects just because they do not meet utilitarian needs. The identity that people need to convey to others is a strong cultural reason for the existence of objects.¹²

The question here is why some objects become means of expression and others remain utilitarian. In the beginning of this chapter, it was that to achieve a visual comfort we have to gain an easy grasp of the way a thing is put together and therefore some parts of it are more accentuated than others Gombrich (1992). However some of the examples discussed before are decorated even though they are not supposed to be grasped by the observer. If the object or part of it is accentuated because it needs to be seen frequently, reciprocally frequently seen objects may be accentuated to achieve visual comfort and expression of identity. Headgear is more noticeable than any other item of clothing. Minarets are seen more than any other element of the mosque exterior. Wedding cakes, being always set in front of the bride and the groom, are seen more than any other food on the table. When an object is seen frequently it is more likely to be used to convey identity.

The form of the human face is a good example. The main functions of the mouth, nose and eyes are utilitarian, eat, breath and see. In addition to the forehead and eyebrows they are seen more than any other body part and are very good in expressing emotions-anger, sadness, happiness, etc., which are meanings. Because the human face is always looked at in interpersonal communication, no other part of the human body shows emotions like the face.

Before ending this discussion we need to mention its significance to the furniture in the home environment. People cannot dwell without objects that support their utilitarian needs and values. This is an important function of furniture in the home environment.

¹² There are many examples that could be used in support of this argument. For example, in the mosque interior, the *mihrab* from which the *imam* leads the prayer is looked at more than any other object. The *mihrab* eventually became the most decorated element of the mosque interior. Another example is the mantelpiece of the fireplace in colder climates. When the fireplace was the only source of warmth in the house and, consequently all the family members gathered in one location, the form of the mantelpiece gained more decoration through time. Now, even though modern technology made it possible for each room to be heated using other methods there is no practical need for getting together in front of the fireplace, the form of the mantelpiece continues to be highly decorated in many English houses.

On the other hand, furniture has a symbolic function, which is widely discussed in literature, for example (Good & Suchsland, 1970; Duncan, 1982; Amaturro et. al., 1987; Thompson & Davis, 1987; Smith, 1993). For example Smith pointed out that:

furniture plays a very important part as an indicator of social status. The more hierarchical the society, the greater the emphasis on this particular role, so that questions of convenience or comfort are often entirely usurped by it. Indeed, furniture is only marginally less important than clothes and personal adornments as a means of conveying this sort of information. (Smith, 1993: 9)

Therefore furniture's practicality, virtuousness and symbolism in the home environment is a subject that involves many of the previously discussed issues.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Seven examples were given in this chapter to illustrate the development of objects in relation to use and meaning. A model of nine stages of compatibility was developed. It has been found that objects maintain the survival of people's utilitarian and symbolic needs in different levels. Some objects pass through different stages of compatibility according to their required functions. Some objects need to be compatible with uses driven by values (virtuous), others need to be compatible with users' identity (symbolic), and others need to be only practical. Every object has a certain function and consequently a certain level of compatibility with other constituents in the living environment.

The model is useful in relating the morphology of objects to their compatibility with other constituents. It is useful in capturing the dynamics of objects' development, explaining why and when they remain in one stage or move from one stage to another. It helps to explain why people abandon certain objects such as headgear in many Islamic countries.

The objects discussed above were invented or adopted and controlled by the users before the industrial revolution. The process of communication between people and objects changed after the industrial revolution when professional designers, not users, have become in control of the form of objects. It has been argued in many studies that the form of industrially designed objects is determined by the market process. The question still to be answered is: how industrially designed objects, such as modern home furniture, influence use and meaning of home environments, which has been

already compatible with traditional furniture. Issues related to this question will be discussed in Chapter 2.



CHAPTER 2

The Influence of Form on Use and Meaning

**PAGE
NUMBERING
AS ORIGINAL**

- 2.1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2.2 IDENTITY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CULTURES**
- 2.3 POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF HIGH CONSUMPTION**
 - 2.3.1 Determinism and Possibilism
 - 2.3.2 Culture Core
- 2.4 CRITICALITY**
- 2.5 SOURCES OF CRITICALITY**
 - 2.5.1 Mobility and Immobility
 - 2.5.2 Integration with Interior Architectural Design
 - 2.5.3 Type and Amount
 - 2.5.4 Formality
- 2.6 CONCLUSION**

under varying aspects or conditions" (Rapoport, 1982: 10). This definition clearly explains the process of expressing identity in traditional cultures.

The expression of identity in modern cultures seems different. Habraken (1985) distinguished between two types of morphologies. The first is prevalent in traditional cultures where users produce objects, that is **making**. The second is prevalent in modern cultures where professionals such as architects and industrial designers produce objects, that is **designing**. Habraken argued that when users have immediate interaction with objects, the form of objects would be different from those designed by professionals. The difference between making by users and designing by professionals has been the main cause for the different appearances of forms.

An important difference between the two morphologies described by Habraken is that users make objects to use them while professionals design objects to sell them. The exploitation of design by manufacturers to increase their profit has been widely addressed in industrial design studies. Many of these studies asserted that new styles are invented to increase consumption and consequently activate industries.

Rybczynski (1986) mentioned that cabinet makers in London in the eighteenth century had to innovate different forms of cabinets to keep up with the increasing competition in the market. Heskett (1980) attributed innovation in industrial design to the attempt to attract customers when competition increases. Whiteley said: "Consumer-led design in a market economy goes far beyond the idea of meeting human needs: it seeks to create and constantly to stimulate human desires" (Whiteley, 1993: 3).

If products are manufactured only to meet utilitarian needs (Stage 2 of compatibility) the consumption will be less than if they are manufactured to convey meanings (Stage 3B or 5). To stimulate consumers to buy more than what they need in regard to utilitarian needs, manufacturers relied on advertisements. The function of advertisements has been to attach lifestyles (identities) to industrially designed objects so that customers have a sense of purpose for buying these products. Vestergaard observed that there are two processes of meaning-transmission in advertisements. Briefly, the first "is to picture the commodity juxtaposed with an object or person whose possession of the quality is obvious to the reader." The second process completes the first "by insisting or implying that the value transferred to the commodity will be

governmental open market policy and may be the market process discussed earlier¹ has made Saudi Arabia a strong consumer society. These factors are probably among the strongest forces that have been influencing home environments in Saudi Arabia.

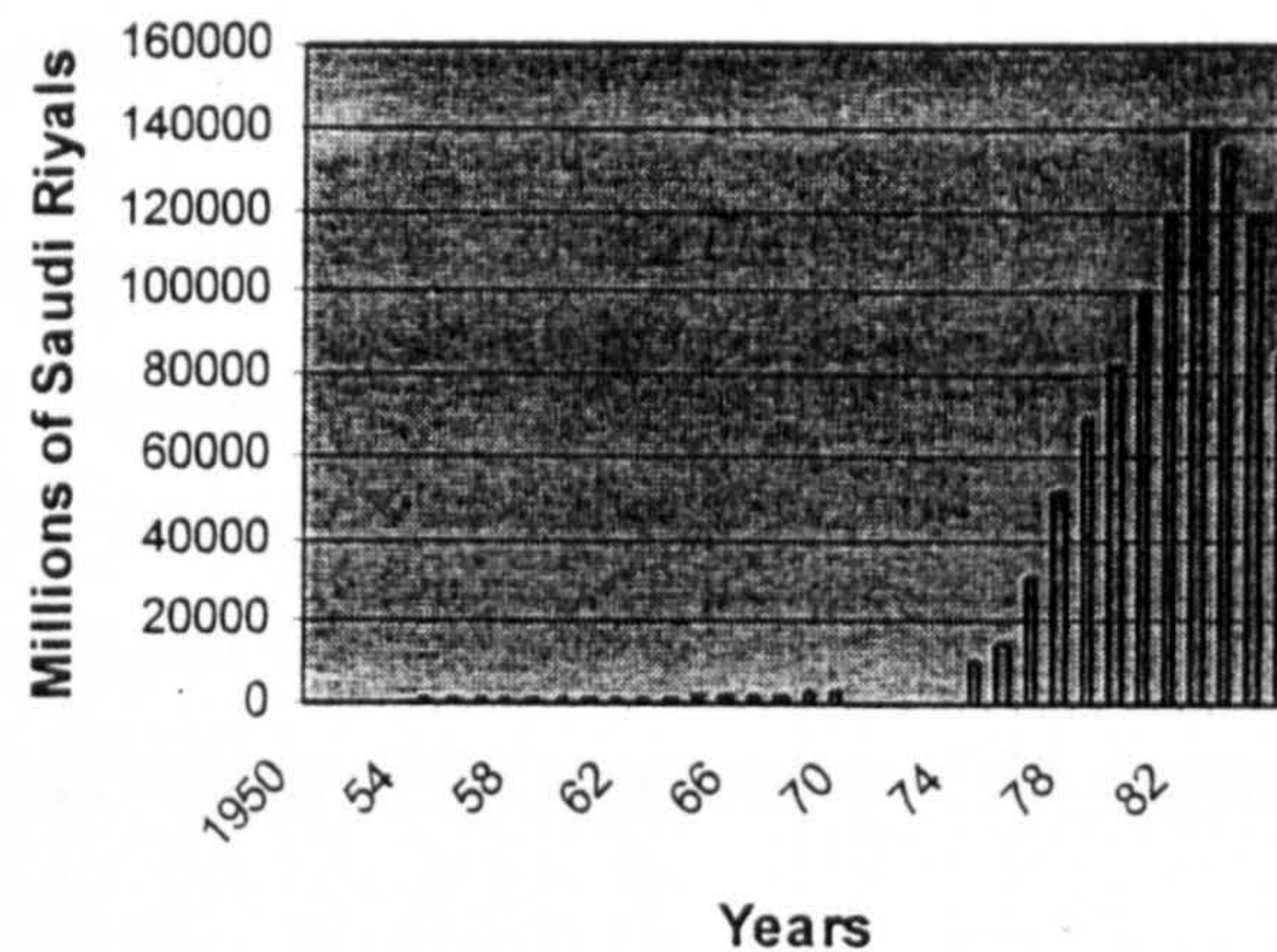


Figure 2.1 – Total imports by millions of Saudi Riyals.

Source: Based on the Annual Statistical Report of the General Organisation for Social Insurance, Saudi Arabia, 1985.

The question here is: since use is always interrelated with values, does this discussion suggest that modern furniture has influenced people's activities and consequently their values? In other words, does furniture transfer from Stage 5 to Stages 3A and 3B? To deal with this question two different bodies of studies that have two different opinions will be discussed.

2.3.1 Determinism and Possibilism

There have been many theories that claim that factors other than the free-will of people such as social structure, economic structure, technological change or genetic characteristics determine social phenomena (Abercrombie, 1988: 67). These theories are described as deterministic. McNeill describe them:

... it is hardly surprising that such theorists as Marx and Durkheim followed this approach in their studies of the social world. Positivist sociology, like positivist natural science, assumes that there are laws that govern the operations of the social world, and that use of the appropriate methods of analysis will uncover these laws. They can then be described in

¹ The Saudi furniture market will be discussed in Chapter 6. At the moment it is assumed, based on the literature review, that the Saudi market encouraged Saudis to consume more than they need in meeting their activities.

an objective and value-free way. Social behaviour and events are seen as the result of external pressures acting on people, who are relatively passive in their response to such pressures. Predictions about the social world can be made, and this makes possible a certain amount of social engineering. (McNeill, 1992: 116)

Marxist sociology is considered by many as an economic determinism "in which all social phenomena are explained in terms of the economic structure or relations of production" (Abercrombie, 1988: 67). Thus according to Marxist sociology controlling the economic structure or relations of production will shape people's culture.

On the other hand possibilists argue that people are not passive but active and more independent than determinists claim. Weber's study of the emergence of capitalism in western Europe is considered possibilistic. He claimed that "Calvinism was the independent variable that was present in Europe and absent in China and India, and was one of the important causes of the appearance of the dependent variable of capitalism" (McNeill, 1992: 61).

A determinist view also existed in anthropological studies. Ogburn, cited by Griswold (1994) claimed that when material culture, such as home, factories, machines, raw materials, manufactured products, food stuffs and other material objects, changes, "the nonmaterial culture, which includes practices, folkways, and social institutions, must change in response" (Griswold, 1994: 61).

Similarly in architecture determinism exists and can be defined as:

an assertion that architecture has a direct and determinate effect on the way people behave. It implies a one-way process in which the physical environment is the independent and human behaviour the dependent variable. It suggests that those human beings for whom the architects and planners create their designs are simply moulded by the environment which is provided for them. (Lawrence, 1983b: 14)

In a study of two elite groups, traditional and modern, in Hyderabad, India Duncan (1981), classified the social structure of traditional cultures as collectivistic and modern cultures as individualistic. These two types of social structures expressed their social status differently. Because members in traditional cultures stay loyal to the group they belong to, "the most efficient type of status-seeking is through group-oriented display, such as parties, weddings, etc..." (Duncan, 1981: 38). Having big parties and weddings

by inviting many people and spending extensively on food were the means to fulfil the social status.²

On the other hand he asserted that in modern individualistic cultures, identity is influenced by market products, which convey messages of personal life styles. Due to contacts with Western ideas and goods members of the new elite group expressed themselves differently. Modern home interiors in Hyderabad have become showcases to express individualistic identity. This, he argued, contributed to dissolve the sharp edge between the public zone and the private zone of home interiors. Because industries produce many different types of products for many different activities in the house, not like traditional homes, almost all spaces of modern home interiors have become means to convey household identity. The new way of conveying identity has led householders to allow visitors into most spaces in the house which weakens of the sense of the household's privacy.

Under individualism status-seeking is manifested through a dependence upon objects to affirm identity, and it is this very dependence upon objects, especially the house, to affirm identity which modifies the privatisation of the home, for it opens the private world to outsiders. (Duncan, 1981: 51)

Duncan also added that "with this opening up of the private realm the traditional segregation of man and women decreases" (p. 53). Duncan's attribution of the decreasing segregation between man and women and the weakened sense of privacy to the dependence upon objects is parallel to the deterministic view. Inkeles, cited by Duncan (1981), went further by arguing that if developing countries are to become industrialised, then they must change their attitudes and become Westernised.

Rapoport, as a possibilist in regard to the physical environment, explains that "the physical setting only provides possibilities, not imperatives, and it is man - not site or climate - that decides" (Rapoport,³ 1969: 42). He pointed out that societies can become industrialised without losing their identity if they maintain their culture core which, he described as:

² The researcher's neighbour in Saudi Arabia had a strong relationship with members of his tribe *Qahtan*. When he had a new born baby, he invited over 60 men for this occasion. He had to use the roof of the apartment building as a reception because his reception room could not take this number of guests.

³ Rapoport's approach in his book *House Form, and Culture* (1969) was parallel to the possibilist approach. He explained that because primitive cultures were non-physical, moral, religious, ritual, and myth directed, they considered their internal spiritual needs more than their external physical needs even though they were of low and subsistence economy. Therefore meanings have strongly shaped their buildings.

those elements essential to the identity of the group both to itself and to others - and hence to its continuity. There are also peripheral elements. Not only is it important to be able to distinguish between core and peripheral elements - one needs to identify those elements of the built environment which are supportive of the core cultural elements. (Rapoport, 1994: 24)

Parallel to Rapoport's opinion, Dovey argued that both individualistic and collectivistic identities could occur simultaneously within homes. The "personal and the social are inextricably interwoven; that representation of identity in the home stems from both social structure and our quest for personal identification within it" (Dovey 1985: 40). In other words, the identity of a certain culture could have local and foreign values simultaneously. The local could be the core and the foreign could be the peripheral. Pratt (1981) in her study of values of women in two elite groups in Canada, particularly their attitudes to their homes, found that in an advanced capitalist society individualism and consumerism are not inevitable consequences of industrialisation even among the affluent. Dovey's and Pratt's studies means that industrialisation does not necessarily lead to Westernisation, i.e. the possibilist view.

Loyd (1981) found that despite the woman's movement and the increasing number of women employed outside the house in contemporary America, a woman's place is still thought to be at home. The resistance of women's social role, the mass consumption of home furniture and appliances which were intended to make home daily tasks easier, and the market media message that the "ideal woman" should be an efficient home manager have changed women's perception of their home interior from a container of a family and a work place to a status symbol. The introduction of home furniture and appliances strongly changed the quality of home interiors, yet they could not change women's social role which may then be a culture core; rather they changed the way women expresses their identity which could be considered culture peripheral. Her study also supports the possibilist view.

2.3.2 Culture Core

The concept of culture core needs to be more specifically defined. What determines whether an element is part of a culture core or not? Furthermore culture cores differ from a society to another. For example Goldstein, cited by Hicks (1994), argued that the reason polyandry prevails in Tibet is because "productive farmland is scarce, yet much of the population depends on farming. If a farmer with a small plot of land and several sons divided his land among his sons, none of them would wind up with a plot

big enough to support a family” (Hicks, 1994: 152). The immorality of polyandry is definitely part of the culture core in most if not all other societies. If polyandry was immoral in Tibet in the first place and it became acceptable only to conform with the physical factors, the claim of determinists is, then, true and physical factors can alter even culture cores. The case of Tibet could support the determinist argument if polyandry was immoral in the first place, which could be impossible to verify. Because it is impossible to prove such argument with any certainty, and certainly beyond the scope of this research, instead of using the concept of culture core a more precise concept will be considered.

There are two fixed sources of teachings for Muslims, the Koran and the Hadith (teachings of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him). Privacy is a fundamental human need; however its degree and ways of maintenance differ from culture to another. Privacy for Muslims is a religious obligation. Privacy of family members to outsiders and of women to men not closely related are stated in the Koran and the Hadith. Because the Koran and Traditions are fixed sources of guidance to Muslims, privacy will be considered as a culture core in this study.

There are secondary values resulting from many social circumstances in addition to Islamic teachings. For example the extended family members living together was developed to fulfil a religious teaching and to support each other financially. In Islam observing good and continuous relationship with relatives is an obligation, which could be fulfilled in many ways; however there is no Koranic verse or a Tradition that directly command Muslims to live as an extended family in one building. Thus such secondary values are not considered culture cores in this research.

2.4 CRITICALITY

Even though Rapoport rejected the determinist view, he acknowledged that “the more forceful the physical constraints, and the more limited the technology and command of means, the less are non-material aspects able to act. However, they never cease to operate” (Rapoport, 1969: 58). The form of an igloo, for example, is strongly determined by the forcefulness of cold and windy weather and lack of construction material. The options for other forms for the igloo are limited which eventually limits

the freedom of use. To illustrate the relationship between the influence of external physical forces and form, Rapoport introduced the concept of criticality.

In problems of flight, a rocket has higher criticality than an airplane, because it is more severely constrained by technical requirements; slow speed airplanes have more degrees of freedom, i.e., lower criticality, than rapid ones (compare the variety of forms in the 1920's with the relatively few forms of present day jets). A pedestrian path has much more design freedom than a freeway, which is constrained by passing distance, sight distance, radii, curves, size in relation to location, and many other technical considerations. (Rapoport, 1969: 59)

Because it was made to achieve a specific function efficiently, that is carrying travellers quickly and safely for long distances by air, the exterior form of the aeroplane is mainly controlled by aerodynamic design principles. The long and narrow exterior form has limited the options of interior design. Therefore designers of the aeroplane interiors have to be practical and consider only the necessary activities. Travellers are supposed to be seated for safety reasons, accordingly, the interior of the aeroplane is designed to limit the number of passengers' activity options except for sitting. If they always move around, it would be impossible for the flight crew to serve meals and help passengers as necessary.

An aeroplane needs to have the amount and type of furniture exactly suitable to the limited activities. The criticality of the aeroplane interior is high because it limits activities to a few. Thus it is concluded here that high criticality means specific use of space.

2.5 SOURCES OF CRITICALITY

Furniture as means of supporting activities has an important role in influencing space criticality. A house designed by Stern (Figure 2.2) is used as an example here.⁴ No two rooms are alike in shape. Every room is specified for the activity for which it was designed and furnished. The furniture organisation, amount and type in each room are to support specific activities. The following are some furniture features that limit the number of activities in the space.

⁴ This example is extreme in its irregularity of spaces. However it is selected to highlight the issues.

2.5.1 Mobility and Immobility

The interior of aeroplanes is furnished with fixed furniture for safety reasons. Another advantage of having fixed furniture is to limit the number of activities and the way they are done. For example, it is not possible for someone to turn his seat to have a discussion with someone at the back or change its position to a complete horizontal position to sleep especially in the economy class. We can go one step further and imagine if everyone can carry his/her seat and arrange it the way he/she desires. The aeroplane would not carry as many passengers as required in the small, narrow and long space nor the flight crew would manage in performing their tasks. Thus the fixed furniture limit people's activities and their mobility should increase the options for space use.

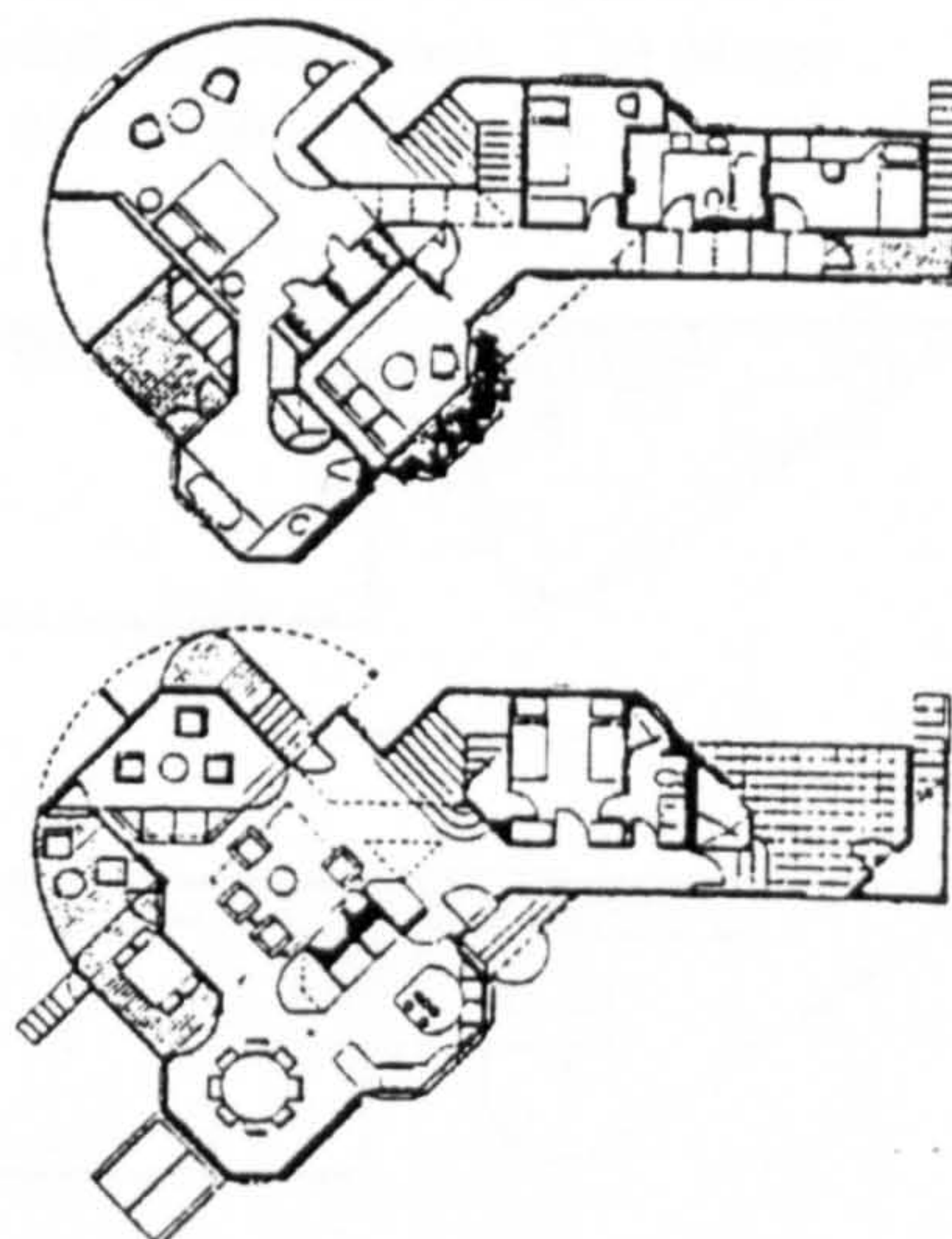


Figure 2.2 - A house designed by Stern, East Hampton, New York, 1970.

Similarly in the home interior, if the furniture in one room is heavy to move to another room, for example a master bedroom set, it will be difficult to use the room as a living room or a guest reception room. The question here is: what is the relationship between furniture mobility and specific use of space in traditional and contemporary home environment?

2.5.2 Integration with Interior Architectural Design

Rybczynski mentioned that in pre-modern architecture the architect was primarily concerned with the form of the building from an aesthetic point of view. He did not have much consideration of mechanical matters, such as plumbing, or interior functioning of spaces. Once the architect finished his job of

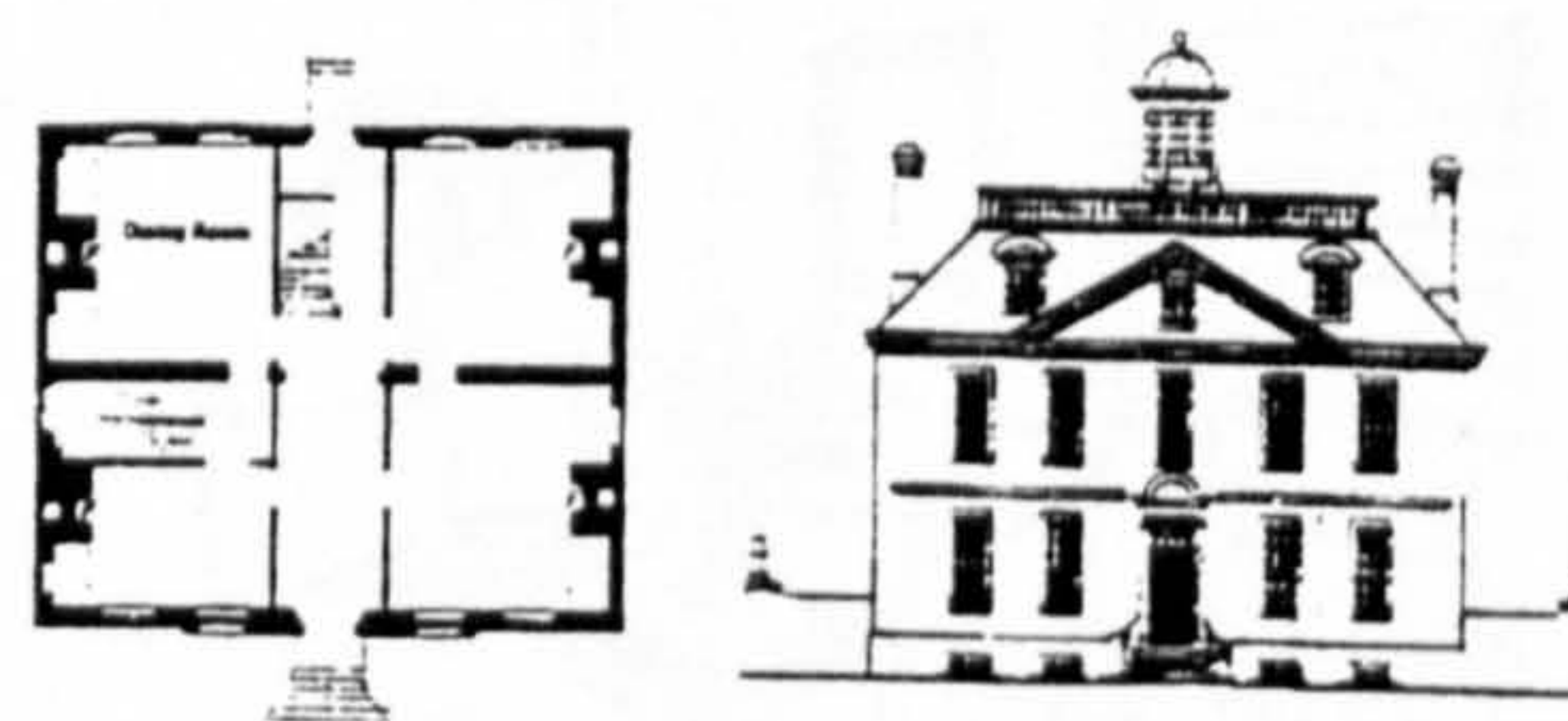


Figure 2.3 - Ground floor plan and elevation of Eagle House, Mitcham, Surrey, 1705.
Source: Barley, 1986: 211.

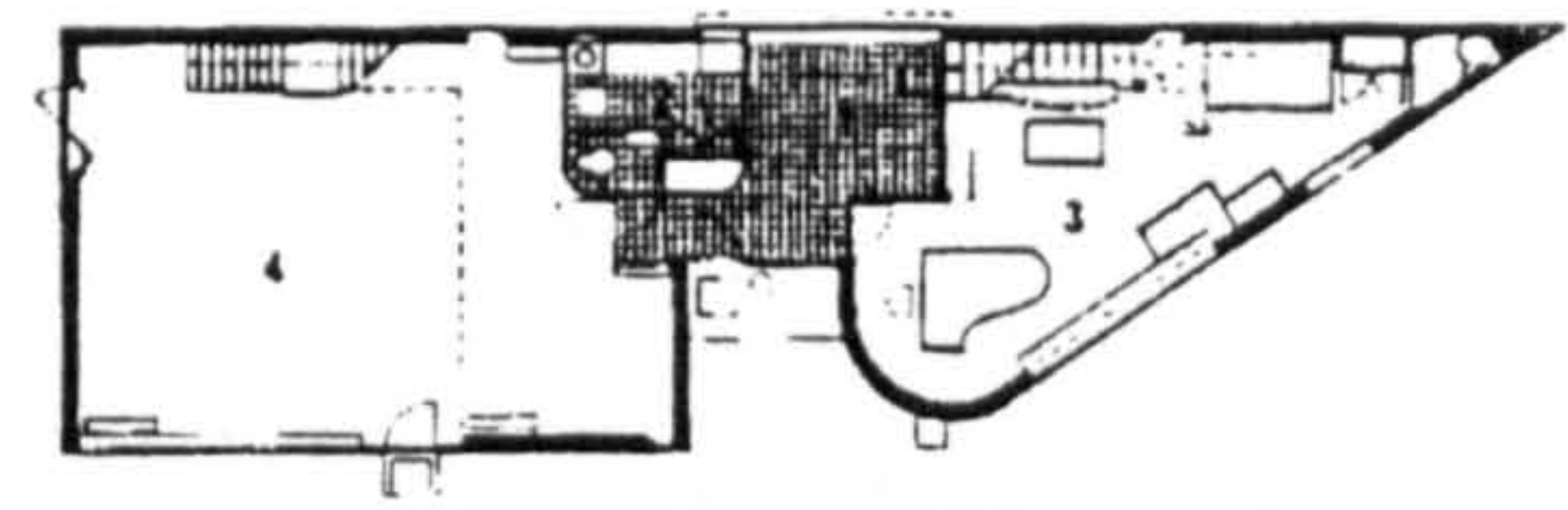
designing the house, the owner had to go to the upholsterer to determine the detailed arrangement of the interior spaces (Rybczynski, 1986). The rectangular house plan and the similarity of rooms' sizes, shapes and windows (Figure 2.3) shows that furniture was not a priority in architectural design. The clear separation between architects'

designs and upholsterers arrangements has been greatly diminished with the introduction of modern architecture. Architects have taken control of many aspects of production including furniture.⁵

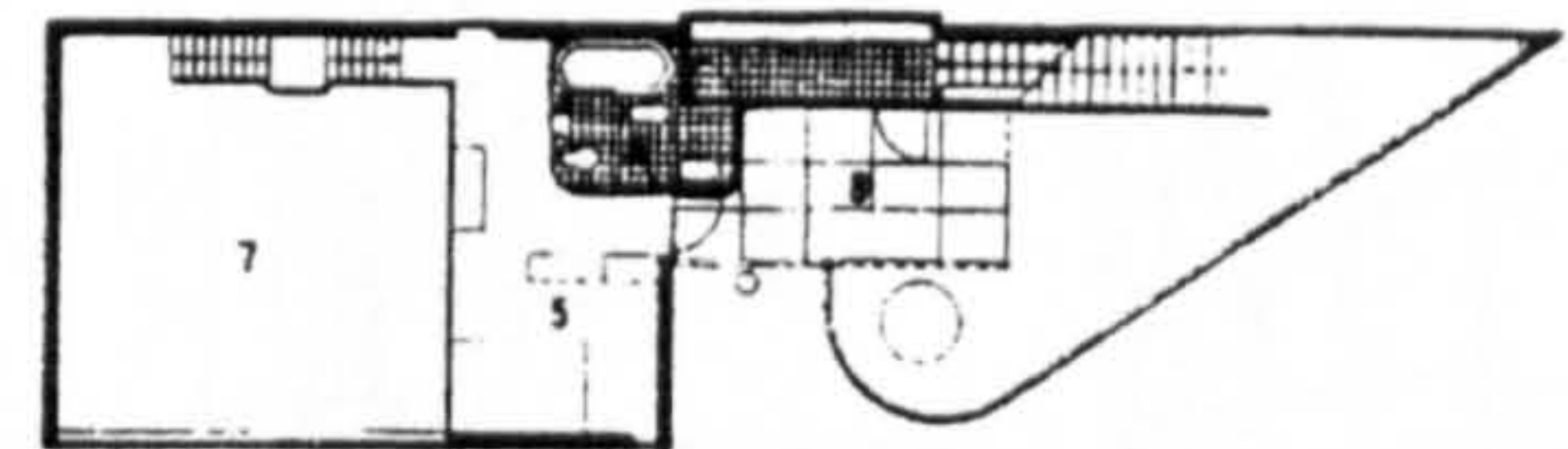
Architects, certainly from the eighteenth century onwards, have exercised an enormous influence over the way in which furniture has developed, insisting that there ought to be a unity between interior architecture and the objects placed within a given space. The names of Robert Adam and Charles Rennie Mackintosh are only two of the many that come to mind in this connection. (Smith, 1993: 14)

When the architectural design of a room integrates with its furniture, it would be difficult to move the furniture from one room to another because the integration intended by the architect would not be fulfilled. For example, in Ternisien house (1926) by Le Corbusier (Figure 2.4) the triangular living space is distinctive from other spaces in the house. The only position possible for the piano in the living room is that suggested by the architect. The layout of the room is integrated with this particular arrangement of its furniture. Figure 2.5 also shows an integration of a mirror dining table with an arched lighted ceiling. Moving the dining table to another location even inside the same room would lead to the loss of the unique experience of eating on that environment.

An extreme case is the bad experience of a rich client who asked an architect to design his home interior. Every item of furniture and ornament was carefully thought out and fitted into complicated composition. The result was a home interior "prohibiting the owners of the



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

Figure 2.4 - Ternisien House, 1926, Le Corbusier.

Source: Dunster, 1985: 27.



Figure 2.5 - Murray House, Cambridge, MA, USA, 1973.

Source: A sketch based on a picture in Moore, 1974: 223.

⁵ An extreme case in which architecture and furniture integrated was manifested in Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion bathroom unit. It was designed in 1938 and was an entirely prefabricated appliance room (Smith, 1993).

house from making even the slightest alteration; forcing them to choose even their slippers according to the architect's instructions, and to refuse any gift that may spoil the prepacked equilibrium of the domestic objects" (Lampugnani, 1993).

The question here is: what is the integration between furniture and architectural layout in traditional and contemporary home interiors? Does this integration or lack of it influence the criticality of space?

2.5.3 Type and Amount

There are some types of furniture that suggest specific uses. Smith argued, "but more often there will occur a fine differentiation within a given category, so that a piece of furniture acquires its definitive form through being designed to meet a single, utterly specific and highly specialized need" (Smith, 1993: 8). If the furniture is like the seating described above, to accommodate the many different activities at home may require many types of furniture. Accordingly each room will have a specific activity according to the furniture it is furnished with. The variety of furniture design available in the market provided this option to the people.



Figure 2.6 - Bonham house, Santa Cruz County, CA, USA.
Source: A sketch based on a picture in Moore, 1974: 57.

An example of a modern house, Figure 2.6 shows a living room with three different types of seating, beside the high glazed wall on the right side, on the floor, and in the enclosed seating area adjacent to the main living area. Every set of furniture suggests one way or style of sitting. The question here is: does the amount and type of furniture influence the criticality of space?

2.5.4 Formality

Mobility and integration with the architectural layout, discussed before, are physical features that may assign activities into specific spaces. However people's behaviour is shaped by social situations, or settings, more directly than physical forms, Goffman (1990). "In other words, *it is the social situation that influences people's behavior, but*

it is the physical environment that provides the cues" (Rapoport, 1990: 57). Every setting has cues that people understand and act in accordance with. Understanding cues is a prerequisite for behaving according to cultural decorum. This happens when individuals associate certain cues of settings, in which furniture play an important role, with certain rules of behaviour. In describing the function of dining table in the process of acquiring a decorum, Visser wrote that the dining table

... is also a constraining and controlling device, a place where children eat under the surveillance of adult. In families which are too poor, or who live in a space too confined, to possess a table where everyone can sit down together, mothers complain that it is impossible to control their children during meals. (Visser, 1992: 54-55)

What concerns us here is the decorum that leads to limited number of activities. Gombrich described formality as submitting to strict rules. He noted that "The graduands in their processions, the soldiers on parade, the committee seated on the dais, the judges on the bench must observe formality, they must not only submit to the rules but they must also be seen to submit" (Gombrich, 1992: 229). A common feature of the examples cited by Gombrich is that acting freely is against a formal setting. Thus a setting that has cues, from which understood rules limit the number of activities, will be called a formal setting.⁶

The question here is what are the physical cues that enhance the formality of a setting. It is impossible to give a precise answer to this question because people of different cultures, even of different ages, perceive physical cues differently. Understanding the meaning of a setting, for example formal or informal, requires knowledge about its rituals and actors. However there are many examples from different cultures that indicate the association of a cue with a meaning, for example height with power (Rapoport, 1990). Likewise there could be some cues that we can suspect they enhance the formality of a setting. Symmetry and emphasis on uniforms add to the soldier's formality (Gombrich, 1992). Similarly men wear headgear in the Arabian Peninsula and ties in many countries to express formality. In fact wearing headgear in a symmetrical arrangement is the habit of ministers and princes in Saudi Arabia. Thus it will be explored in this research if symmetry and emphasis by decoration add to the formalities of the home environment settings.

⁶ The concept of formality has been used by Visser (1992), Goffman (1990), Rapoport (1990), and Gombrich (1992) with a relatively similar meanings. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, some meanings of formal are: "used

2.6 CONCLUSION

The discussion in Chapter 1 focused on one direction of objects' development, that is when the form of objects is influenced by people's use, values and identity in traditional cultures. In this chapter the opposite direction, i.e. the influence of form on people's use, values and identity, was discussed. The discussion started with exploring the role of professionals in shaping the form of objects and introducing them into people's everyday lives by advertisement.

The influence of form on people's values is a controversial issue. Determinists argue that the physical environment shapes people's values. Possibilists claim that as long as people's culture core is maintained, they can use adopted objects in many ways without losing their values. Two concepts, criticality and formality, that will be used to analyzing the relationship between the physical environment and people's use and identity in the home environment were defined. The discussion raised many questions that need to be answered.

or done or held in accordance with rules, convention, or ceremony (formal dress; a formal occasion), ... in accordance with recognized forms or rules."



CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Fieldwork

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.2 SOCIAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

3.3 OBJECTIVES

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.5 QUALITATIVE

3.6 CHOOSING THE CITY OF JEDDAH

3.7 FIELDWORK

3.7.1 Traditional Home Environments

3.7.2 Transitional Home environments

3.7.2.1 Imported Furniture

3.7.2.2 Morphological Growth of Home Interiors

3.7.2.3 Socio-Cultural Change in Saudi Arabia

3.7.3 Contemporary Home Environments

3.7.3.1 Demographic Data and Home Activities

3.7.3.2 Activities and Furniture of the Home Interior Space

3.8 ANALYSIS

3.9 CONCLUSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

One book that the researcher found very useful in providing an understanding of social research and its goals and relating the different methodologies with this common understanding is Ragin's book *Constructing Social Research* (1994). Before explaining the three main different types of research methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, and comparative) and when and why to choose any type, Ragin developed a framework of understanding social research. Within this framework he has explained the goal of each methodology. After giving a brief description of Ragin's framework, the research objectives and the reasons for choosing qualitative methodology are discussed. A wide range of data collection during the fieldwork is, then, explained. The last part of this chapter deals with data analysis. The analytical frame, the model of compatibility, falls into two theories of analysis, semiotic and dramaturgy. Both theories and their assumptions are briefly explained.

3.2 SOCIAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

According to Ragin, social research is a dialogue between representations (explanation of social life) and social life (data) using tools (theories and ideas that have been accumulated through time) in different degrees. The aim of this dialogue is to improve the representations of social life so that they represent actual social life as precisely as possible. This could be achieved by identifying order and regularity in the complexity of social life. In order to do that there are different methodologies, each of which is specifically suited to certain social representations.

If the researcher wants to test a theory through an analysis of social life, he develops an analytic frame which enables him to develop a methodology. The analytic frame is the way of seeing social life and the process of identifying it is known as *deduction*. Thus the researcher needs first to identify the analytic frame. Next, he has to collect data about the phenomenon. The researcher's next task is to make sense of this data by relating it to the analytic frame that initially directed the collection of data. To make sense of the data collected, the researcher constructs what Ragin called an image. This process of making sense of data is known as *induction*.

If the data collected does not provide an image that can be understood by the initial analytic frame, this means that either the analytic frame needs to be changed or modified or the data does not represent social life. In such situations the researcher goes back to redefine the analytic frame and starts the process again. This process continues until the analytic frame explains the image. The interaction between analytic frames and images is known as *retroduction*.

The interaction between images and analytic frames may differ significantly from one research project to another. "In some research frames are fixed at the start of the study, while in others they may be either flexible or fluid and change in the course of the investigation" (Ragin, 1994: 74). The question that arises here is: what makes the researcher go for induction, deduction, or retroduction?

If the theory that the researcher starts with has such strong evidence in the social life being studied that he can hypothesise that particular variables could be correlated, then starting with a fixed frame is recommended. Usually fixed frames correlate few variables and are most compatible with quantitative research. This is a deduction process.

On the other hand, if there is no theory and one needs to be established, it is recommended to start without a frame. This approach is usually used by anthropologists. In order to analyse and understand a culture which may be totally different from the culture of the researcher, it could be misleading to establish an analytic frame that is inevitably influenced by the researcher's culture. This is an induction process and usually conducted through participant observation technique in the fieldwork, i.e. highly qualitative.

If there is a theory which is not supported by much evidence and there could be a lot of variables to be considered, constructing a hypothesis could be premature. In this case it is recommended to start with a fluid analytic frame, which means retroduction. Here as well fluid frames are most compatible with qualitative research.

An important key factor in selecting a research methodology is time. Qualitative tools of collecting in-depth data, such as in-depth interviews and participant observations, are time consuming. This usually forces researchers, especially with limited time, to select few cases. Quantitative research, on the other hand, can make use of many cases

because measuring two or three variables can be done quickly through, for example, a questionnaire.

Before discussing what methodology will be used in this research, based on Ragin's framework, it is necessary first to list the research objectives.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

To explore the issues raised in Chapters 1 and 2 the following two main objectives are need to be achieved:

- 1) Explore the compatibility of furniture with use, values and identity in traditional and contemporary home environments. What is the difference and does it relate to the introduction of modern furniture?
- 2) Examine the relationship between furniture features, such as mobility, accentuation and integration with architectural layout, and criticality in traditional and contemporary homes.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using Ragin's framework, we find that the concept of compatibility discussed in Chapter 1 and the concept of criticality discussed in Chapter 2 are considered analytic frames. Both concepts were developed after a discussion and a process of deduction from the literature and personal observations by the researcher. They, as two analytic frames, are ways of seeing the role of objects in maintaining cultural continuity and usage of space in home environments.

During and after the fieldwork, the researcher should make sense (construct images) of the data collected. If the data does not make sense or cannot be understood by the two concepts, the researcher has to redefine the two concepts and/or collect more data. This process of retrodution is done until the researcher make sense of the data.

3.5 QUALITATIVE

According to Ragin, what differentiates quantitative methods from qualitative methods is not numbers and words. Quantitative methods are usually used when there is a fixed hypothesis that covariates two or three variables. In this study, it could be misleading to correlate one or two factors through a fixed analytic frame, especially if we consider the complexity of the home environment, which is influenced by many factors (Dovey, 1985; Lawrence, 1987; Rapoport, 1969, 1977; Werner, 1987). A quantitative methodology that correlates a few variables will not unfold data that needs in-depth inquiry, such as space meaning for example. The more the aspects of information needed from each case study the more the methodology will be qualitative (Figure 3.1). Therefore it is important to devote the time of the fieldwork to a small number of cases to maintain a high level of validity¹ rather than correlating a few variables by implementing quantitative methodology.

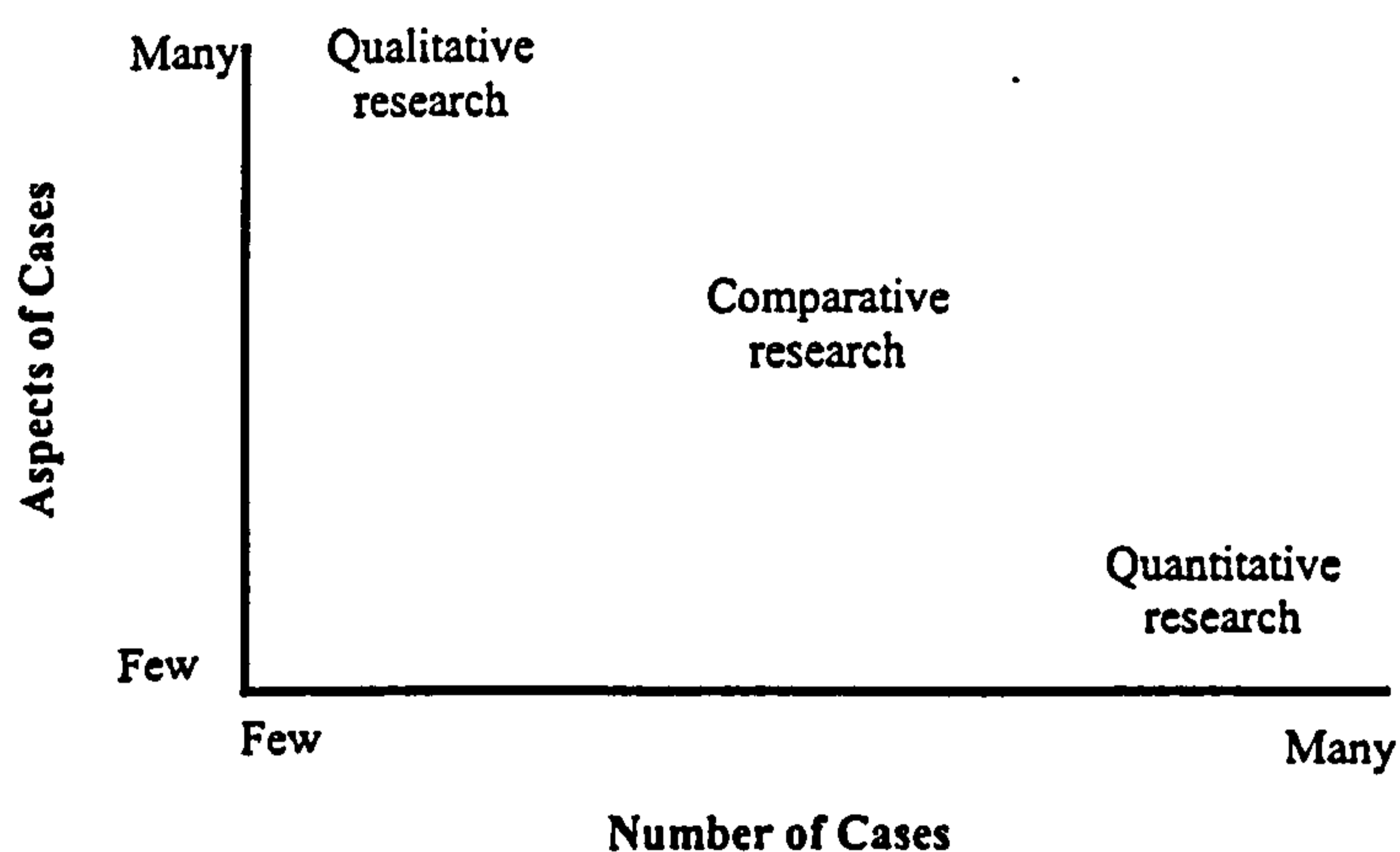


Figure 3.1 – Number and aspects of cases in relation to research strategies.
Source: Ragin, 1994: 49.

The methodology of this research is influenced also by the shortage of studies of home environments in Saudi Arabia.² Home environments in Saudi Arabia have been always treated as a secondary issue even by housing studies. To establish as complete image as possible it is important to implement a methodology that is highly ethnographic. Flexibility in allowing the researcher to deal with any new variables found during the

¹ "Validity refers to the problem of whether the data collected is a true picture of what is being studied. Is it really evidence of what it claims to be evidence of?" (McNeill, 1992: 15)

² The only study, other than this one, concerned about home interiors in any of the cities of Saudi Arabia is not completed yet. It is about the home environment in Al-Hasa, by M. Al-Naim.

fieldwork is needed. The research should be open as much as possible so that it does not overlook any important variables.

Finally, testing a hypothesis through a quantitative methodology is avoided because the model of compatibility is not fixed. The model is a tool of seeing the cultural role of objects. It is an analytic frame that could be developed or adjusted even in future research to provide better understanding of the relationship between objects and people. "Above all the imposition of concepts or theories prior to the collection of data should not be permitted, but the data should suggest the principles for structuring the analysis" (Lawrence, 1983a: 463). Thus the objective of the fieldwork is to explore and analyse the function of furniture in the home environment and not to test the validity of the model.

There have been some quantitative studies that related certain aspects of identity such as age and education (Bernard, 1991), income (Amaturo et. al., 1987), lifestyle (Good and Suchsland, 1970), social class (Jin, 1993) and personality (Osborn, 1988) to certain aspects of home interiors such as furniture arrangement, colour and style. However these studies were synchronic only. There has been a criticism that since built environments grow slowly within their contexts of social, economical, political and cultural forces, which are changing continuously, "the design and use of domestic architecture cannot be understood solely by a synchronic investigation, such as observation and documentation by fieldwork" (Lawrence, 1983a: 467).

3.6 CHOOSING THE CITY OF JEDDAH

The location of Jeddah near Mecca and the fact that it is the largest seaport in the peninsula lead to three features that the researcher considers important to this research. Firstly, imported goods have been arriving in Jeddah before any other city in Saudi Arabia. People in Jeddah have been exposed to a variety of goods more than most, if not all, cities in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, the exposure of people in Jeddah to other cultures suggests that they have been more open to other cultures than other people in Saudi Arabia. Such openness is needed to maximise the accessibility to home interiors during the fieldwork. Thirdly, trade as a main source of income was well established in Jeddah. According to Lackner (1978) this was the reason that the bourgeoisie rose first

in Jeddah (Lackner, 1978). These three features also suggest that Jeddah has been a city of consumer culture more than any other city in Saudi Arabia.

3.7 FIELDWORK

The researcher spent the last four months of 1995 conducting fieldwork. However the data collection was not confined within this period only. Whenever, before or after the fieldwork, he found information in newspapers, magazines, governmental publications, or books he collected them. During family visits he carried a camera and whenever a certain use of furniture or activity in a space happened that could be relevant to the study he recorded them by taking notes and photographs.

The data collection will cover three periods, traditional, transitional and contemporary. The traditional period is defined here as the time when the lifestyle was dependent on traditional means of living, such as natural ventilation, local construction materials, and animal transportation. These means were abandoned with the establishment of governmental projects and the rise of per-capita income in the forties as a result of the oil discovery in Saudi Arabia. The transitional period is defined here from the end of the traditional period until the contemporary in the early nineties.

3.7.1 Traditional Home Environments

To develop as complete an image as possible about the traditional home environment, data about climate, social occasions, daily home activities and chores; architectural layout and furniture, family structure and social relationship have been gathered. There are three main sources.

1) **Literature:** The climate, urban fabric and houses architectural layout and relationships have been given considerable attention by studies, such as Khan (1981), Al-Lyaly (1990) and Jomah (1992). In regard to furniture and use of space in the home environment little was discussed. The researcher also found, in the Documentation Centre in the School of Architecture of King Abdulaziz University, some reports of undergraduate students which depended on the previous studies.

2) Museums: This source of data was valuable for understanding traditional home furniture. *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum in Jeddah was established in 1984 and has collections of home interiors from different cultures and a large collection of Islamic artefacts from many Muslim regions including Hijaz. Another museum (*Um Alqura*) is located in Mecca and much smaller. The researcher spent time in both museums. The visit to *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum was very useful. The museum has three rooms of traditional home interiors of Jeddah furnished with traditional furniture. The value of the visit to *Um Alqura* museum was in the interview with the owner (Mr. Khojah) who described traditional life and recounted stories that described some aspects of the daily life in Hijaz region.

3) Interviews: Having known the physical features of the home environment (architectural layout and furniture), the significance of interviews is to know the social and cultural features (use and meaning). In-depth interviews were conducted with eight informants.³ The female informants were contacted through relatives and friends. Because the researcher cannot conduct interviews with unrelated adult women, his wife, as fieldwork assistant, helped in this.

Before beginning the interviews, the researcher explained to the fieldwork assistant the theoretical issues and the description and names of all furniture and spaces that he knew about from the literature. It was necessary that she understood the theoretical

³ The informants were from different levels of income and lived in different sizes of houses. Nobody refused to give the interview when they were asked. In fact all the informants seemed to enjoy speaking about the past. They indicated their willingness to give more interviews. The informants were:

- 1) Mr. Mahmud Abu-znadah: was met by the researcher in the Preservation Department of Historical Jeddah.
- 2) Ms. Badriah : is around 80 years old, lived in a building of nine storeys and from the middle income. Each storey had three family compartments. The compartment was a section for one family. It varies in size and number of rooms.
- 3) The third informant is 56 years old, lived in a three storey building, and was from the middle income.
- 4) Ms. Zainab Al-sharbatly: is around 60 years old, from the high income and lived in a 120 year-old traditional building for 25 years before leaving for a modern house.
- 5) Ms. Badriah Al-ashram: lived in two traditional buildings before moving to a modern one.
- 6) Mrs. Badriah Fitaihi: is 45 years old, from the middle income, lived for 15 years in a traditional house before getting married and moving to a modern concrete apartment building.
- 7) Dr. Abdullah Nasif: is around 60 years old, from the high income and has lived in one of the most beautiful houses in Jeddah. His family continued living in the traditional house until the mid seventies even after most Saudi families left to the suburbs of Jeddah.
- 8) Mr. Saad Al-Haddad: is around 60 years old and has been an owner of one of the oldest architectural offices in Jeddah. He started his office during the fifties.

background of the subject because the interviews were directed as necessary by asking open-ended questions.

The informants were asked open-ended questions about the use and significance of furniture and spaces in their traditional home interiors. During the interview the fieldwork assistant also had with her the volume of illustrations from *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum. Names of all traditional furniture and home interior spaces were mentioned to them. They were also asked to describe their daily activities and home chores. Activities of important periodical social and religious occasions at home were described too.

It was proposed to use a cassette recorder to record the interviews. Two women relatives advised against this because recording an informant's voice would make her less likely to speak freely. Therefore it was decided to jot down short notes which reminded the fieldwork assistant about the complete comment when she transferred the information to the researcher. Once the interview was done, the fieldwork assistant explained in detail all answers to the researcher, who wrote them out in detail. When there were further inquiries by the researcher, the fieldwork assistant phoned the informant and asked for clarifications. There were recurring patterns of answers. There were some differences in the use and name of spaces and also some contradictions in their answers, which had to be resolved and clarified by further questions.

The interviews were informal. Informants brought tea, coffee, nuts and cakes and occasionally dwelled on unrelated issues. When time was not enough, which happened with two informants, another interview was arranged.

The researcher interviewed the three male informants. Finding male informants was not as easy as female informants. The researcher approached six in total and three acted as if they were busy. Men's description of the home interior was less than women's description. Therefore more interviews were conducted with women than men. One of the male informants (Mr. Al-Haddad) has not lived in Jeddah's traditional houses. However meetings with him were very insightful because he has a long experience, as an architect in Jeddah, with the housing development since the traditional period until the contemporary.

After knowing the form of furniture, use and location from *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum and informants' description and the architectural layout it was important to construct as complete an image as possible of the home environment. The researcher managed to find an informant (Dr. Abdullah Nasif) who was willing to be interviewed and lived in a house that is still not demolished or at least drawn in plan. The floor plans of his family's traditional house were shown to him and was asked to describe the activities and the furniture of each space. The researcher drew the data on the floor plans and arranged with him a second appointment, in which the informant was shown the floor plans with the furniture. He made a few adjustments and agreed to the final arrangement of furniture.

3.7.2 Transitional Home Environments

The emphasis on this period will be on the factors that changed the home environment. There are three types of data needed: amounts and types of imported modern furniture, morphological growth of the home interior and soico-cultural changes.

3.7.2.1 Imported Furniture

The researcher had four sources of information about this data:

1) **Governmental publications:** The Ministry of Finance publishes records about imported goods starting from the year 1962. As time passed the Ministry developed more categories of imported goods including furniture. Unfortunately furniture categories were not based on their functions (master bedroom set, dining room set, etc.) as the researcher needed. For example, all types of wooden chairs and sofas including those that could be converted to beds were considered one category. This category also did not differentiate between home and office furniture. However the researcher collected as much data as possible that could be useful in this research as will be seen in Chapter 6.

2) **Commercial sources:** The researcher managed to interview three storeowners.⁴ They were asked about the types and amounts of furniture that were first imported.

⁴ 1) Mr. Al-Nabulsi started his business in the early fifties. 2) Mr. Abu-Asoud started his business in the early seventies. 3) Mr. Qurashi started his business in 1985.

They were also asked about the nature of the market, i.e. were there any competition and advertisements. It was difficult to arrange meetings with many storeowners who refused to show their records for confidentiality reasons.

3) Review of advertisements in magazines and newspapers: A review was done of the oldest local newspaper (*Okaz*) and magazine (*Al-Yamamah*). A sample of five issues of *Okaz* and two issues of *Al-Yamamah* were reviewed every six months to monitor home furniture advertisements.

4) Informants' Experience: Informants who were interviewed about the contemporary home environments (which will be discussed later in this chapter) were asked about the dates of purchasing furniture and appliances for the first time or renewing them. During the interview a timetable was filled in Appendix 2, Part C.

Foddy (1994) argues that the ability to recall an event appears to be related to its salience and date. The more the event is salient and recent the better the chance to remember it is. Therefore one technique that he suggested was to recall a high salient event and try to remember if the low salient event was before or after. He also suggested that informants would be more accurate if they recalled in a backward chronological order.

These two techniques were implemented. The first, which involves using high salient events to start with, was very useful in helping the informants to recall the less salient events. However the second technique, which involves the backward chronological recalling, was unsuccessful. Informants found it very difficult to remember events this way. The forward chronological recalling was much easier. The fieldwork assistant did not insist on using the backward technique because it would elongate the interview and could have led to frustrating the informant.

It has been found that they did not replace their furniture immediately in response to new furniture in the market; rather they waited until they moved to new houses.

3.7.2.2 Morphological Growth of Home Interiors

The growth of Jeddah, like other Saudi cities, is influenced by municipal planning. Municipalities construct the infrastructure of large areas that are planned to be future

neighbourhoods. The plots of a neighbourhood are then distributed to Saudi citizens. Even though many built on their lots once they received them, many others did not, either due to financial difficulties or due to planning for future investment. This has always caused a gradual growth in many neighbourhoods. This should ease the selection of house plans throughout the years from one neighbourhood. It is necessary to confine the sample to one neighbourhood because home interiors may differ in size according to their locations in different neighbourhoods.

The municipality of *Al-Aziziah* neighbourhood was selected for three reasons. The first and most important is that *Al-Aziziah* neighbourhood has witnessed the transformation of Jeddah city since its expansion in the early fifties. Secondly, the archive department, where maps are kept, of this municipality is much better organised than the archive departments of other municipalities. Thirdly, accessibility to the archives of this municipality was easy because a former colleague of the researcher worked in this municipality.

Floor plans of villas and apartment buildings were collected starting from the early seventies. Floor plans of houses which were built before 1970 were not available in *Al-Aziziah* municipality. The researcher had to go to the oldest municipality (Al-Balad) for old floor plans. The records of this municipality were not complete due to dampness experience. However the researcher managed to get two floor plans of villas that were built in the sixties.

There was also another source of floor plans. The researcher contacted three of the oldest architectural offices in Jeddah. One was already closed. The second apologised for not co-operating. The third (Mr. S. Al-Haddad) provided copies of some old floor plans designed by his office. He described to the researcher many of the stages that the home environment went through starting from the traditional houses.

3.7.2.3 Socio-cultural Change in Saudi Arabia

The introduction of television, the introduction of home maids, the increase of travel abroad, lifestyle magazines, the increase of income and so on, could have influenced home environments. To find out about this, many books, studies, newspapers and magazines issues in the libraries of King Abdulaziz University and Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry were reviewed.

3.7.3 Contemporary Home Environments

This part of data collection was to develop as complete an image as possible about the furniture, architectural layout, use and identity in the contemporary home environment. The best technique for collecting this type of data is participant observation. It is, however, impossible in Saudi Arabia for a householder to permit a researcher (male or female) to observe the family at home due to the strong sense of privacy. The other option is the structured interview technique.

Part of the home privacy is due to the home being mainly for women, who are supposed not to be seen by non-closely related adult males. Usually it is more acceptable for a strange woman to enter the private zone of a house than a strange man in the Saudi society. When men and women are invited simultaneously, men are hosted in the guest room or the garden and women in the living room, which is located in the family zone. Household privacy is less against women than men. Therefore it was more convenient that the fieldwork assistant conducted the structured interviews rather than the researcher.

Another advantage of having the interviews conducted by the fieldwork assistant was that housewives know more than their husbands about their home interiors. Saudi women spend most of their time at home. Daily household tasks such as caring for children, cooking and cleaning make women in charge of the home interiors.

It is impossible for someone to agree to such interviews just by being contacted by a stranger in Saudi Arabia. Even if it is manageable, Hoffman whose research was concerned with hospital directors, cited by Hammersley (1995) found that in-depth interviews are more informative if informants were selected based on social ties. It was proposed, therefore, that the informants would be approached through relatives and friends. This was designed to increase the trust of subjects in the researcher and his wife. Consequently female and male relatives and friends were asked to find Saudi households who had spent at least ten years in Jeddah, and the longer the better.

Before conducting the fieldwork, it was assumed that finding households willing to be interviewed about their home activities or the taking of photographs of their home interiors, would not be a problem. The researcher thought that he would have some flexibility during his fieldwork to decide if he needed to select households from

different social and income categories. However it soon became clear that the strong sense of family privacy limited the number of case studies. In fact, some relatives refused to be interviewed when they knew about the taking of photographs of their bedrooms. Objections came mainly from men.

It is interesting to note here that from all of the 10 case studies no single case was contacted successfully through a male household. It was clear that when the request for an interview was made from a female relative or friend to a housewife the probability of acceptance was higher than if the request was made to a husband. This could be because men seemed to be more sensitive in regard to the privacy of their homes, and consequently they refused the request immediately when it came from a male relative or friend. In one case study, which will not be discussed due to its incompleteness, the housewife agreed to be interviewed without consulting her husband assuming that he would not object. After the interview, the fieldwork assistant was contacted by the housewife and was asked to at least refrain from mentioning the name in the thesis.

The reluctance of some non-relatives to be interviewed and the willingness, on the other hand, of close relatives to be interviewed made the researcher concerned about the degree of openness of non-relatives. The attention of the fieldwork assistant was, therefore, brought to this issue. If she found some difficulty in getting the housewife to dwell and speak freely, the fieldwork assistant informed the researcher. Another case study will not be discussed due to the difficulty the fieldwork assistant found in encouraging the housewife to dwell on describing home activities.

It was soon found that relatives dwell more than non-relatives on their use of space. This openness of relatives encouraged the researcher to include close relatives in the study. When informants trust the fieldwork assistant, they speak freely. The openness of informants is very important in regard to collecting data about the private zone of the home environment.

On the assumption that reasonable reliable and rich information about complex phenomena is more useful than defective data in large quantity, what has been found practical is the purposive sub-sampling of very small numbers of reliable, knowledgeable and friendly informants. Dewey (1962) in Java, for example, used five informants. Fox in Uttar Pradesh, Lele generally and Mines in Madras relied on a 'few trustworthy' informants. (Harriss, cited by Khattab, 1994: 28)

It was important that the fieldwork assistant practice her interviewing skills before starting the interviews. She interviewed the researcher's mother in front of him. During the interview the researcher made his comments to direct the interview to what he thought was important in the study.

Before each interview started the fieldwork assistant introduced herself and explained what the study was about. She also assured the informants that their answers would be used only for research. She asked them to take their time before giving their answers so that they would be as accurate and precise as possible.

The interview consisted of three parts:

3.7.3.1 Demographic Data and Home Activities

It was necessary to start the interview, especially if the informant was not a relative, with easy-to-answer questions until both sides felt more comfortable in their conversation. This part of the interview was the easiest for the fieldwork assistant and the informants. It was conducted to know some essential data such as the family size, education and income (Appendix 2, Part A). Data about guest and family zones, arrangement of furniture in social occasions, the significance of spaces to informants in representing them to others and other general questions were asked in this part. More detailed questions about each space were asked in the following part (Part B).

3.7.3.2 Activities and Furniture of Home Interior Space

Informants were asked if they had the floor plans of their houses. If they did, the researcher would make copies and return them.⁵ For every space the fieldwork assistant filled up the two pages of Part B in Appendix 2 which covers activities and furniture organisation and type. If the informant did not have floor plan drawings, sketches were drawn to record the house layout. The fieldwork assistant measured the spaces with an electronic ultrasound device. This device helped to finish the measurement in a short time and with less inconvenience to the informant. The fieldwork assistant also drew a sketchy floor plan of each space with locations of the furniture. The furniture type,

⁵ Four of the ten case studies did not have ready drawings of floor plans. They are Houses No. 1, 2, 5, 10.

amount, and arrangement were recorded through photographs of every space from different angles.

To avoid overlooking some home activities that the informant might forget to mention, the fieldwork assistant was prepared with a checklist of all possible activities at home. This list helped the fieldwork assistant to remind the subject about the activities that happened in the different interior spaces. How frequent the activities and where they happened were recorded.

The final outcome of this part was a detailed floor plan for each case study. Every object in the photographs was drawn on the plan as accurately as possible. This data and informants' description of the family members' activities gave a complete and detailed image of their home environments.

Even though a pilot interview was conducted with the researcher's mother to develop a comprehensive structured interview, the questions had to be refined after some interviews in which new issues were raised. These happened several times until the interview structure was complete. A fieldwork assistant returned to informants and ask them the new questions and in a few cases clarification was sought by telephone.

3.8 ANALYSIS

Photographs, floor plans, furniture, census data, notes and interviews have to make sense according to the analytical frames of the research. From where to start analyzing these different types of data could be the most difficult stage of analysis. It is like trying to start a jigsaw puzzle of a million pieces each of which may fit with many other pieces (Feldman, 1995).

The first stage of qualitative analysis is description. No analytic or theoretically oriented research can be applied without description. Information about the social and physical context of an act, the meanings that organize action, and its subsequent outcomes is the aim of qualitative research (Dey, 1993: 31). The first step, thus, is to describe the traditional, transitional and contemporary home environment images with the information collected. These descriptive images, then, become the basis on which the concepts of compatibility, criticality and formality provide interpretations of

settings. These two processes, constructing images and interpretations through concepts, are connected and continuously verified (Figure 3.2).

The concepts of compatibility and formality, which were developed from personal observations and examples from literature, fall into two techniques of analysis, dramaturgy and semiotics. According to Feldman (1995), in dramaturgy the primary focus is on the meaning of performances to actors. Most of the description would be of actions and their rules or decorum. This technique was partly used in analysing the Bedouin setting in Chapter 1 and in developing the concept of formality in Chapter 2. This research, however, is investigating not only the function of use (performances or activities) but also the function of objects' forms (signs) in settings. Therefore semiotic analysis technique is also involved. "Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else" (Feldman, 1995: 21). A key assumption in semiotics is that denotative phenomena, or signs, are related to connotative phenomena, or meanings (Feldman, 1995). In other words decoration, symmetry, uniformity and other orders of form are manifestations of meanings that need to be discovered.

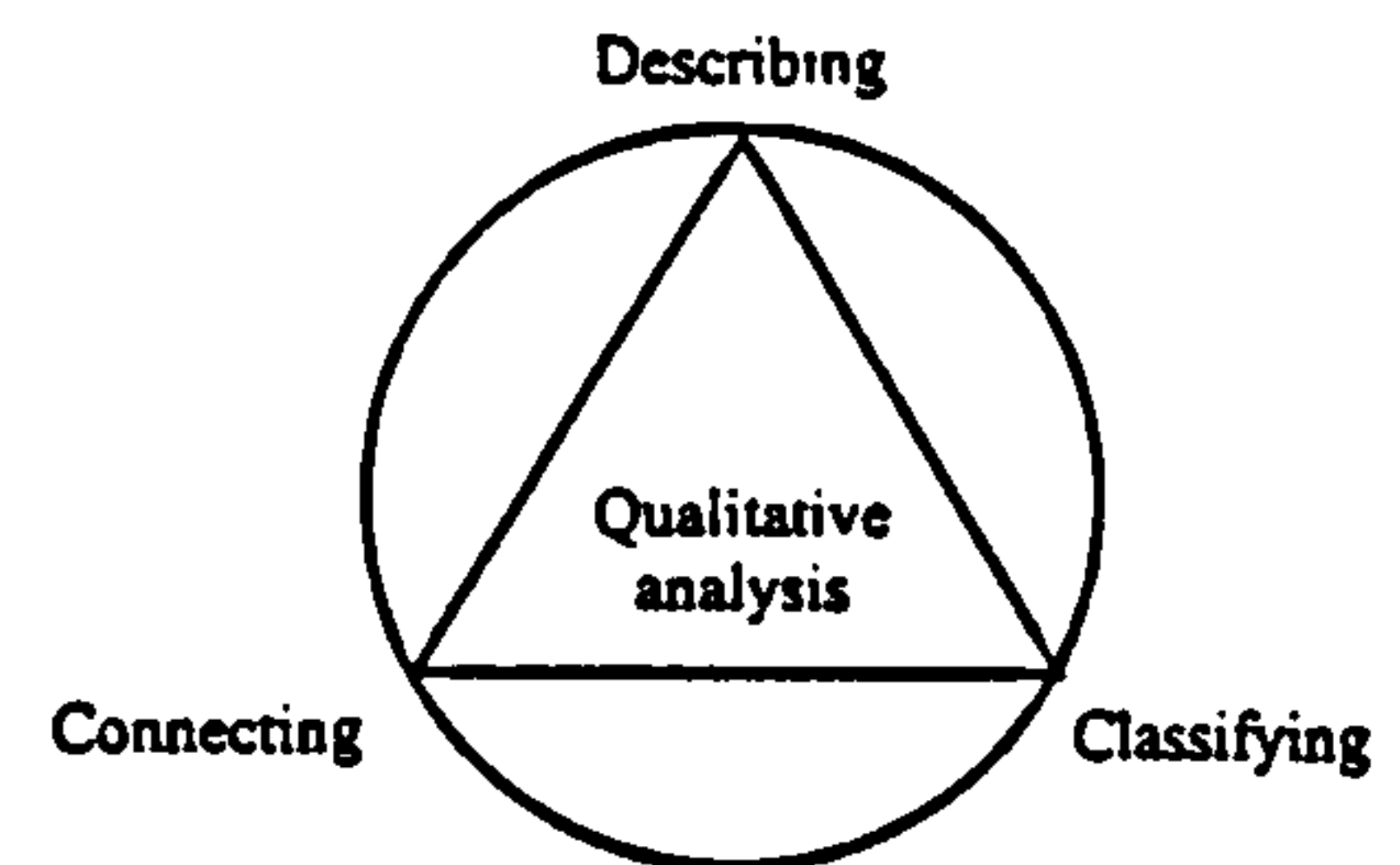
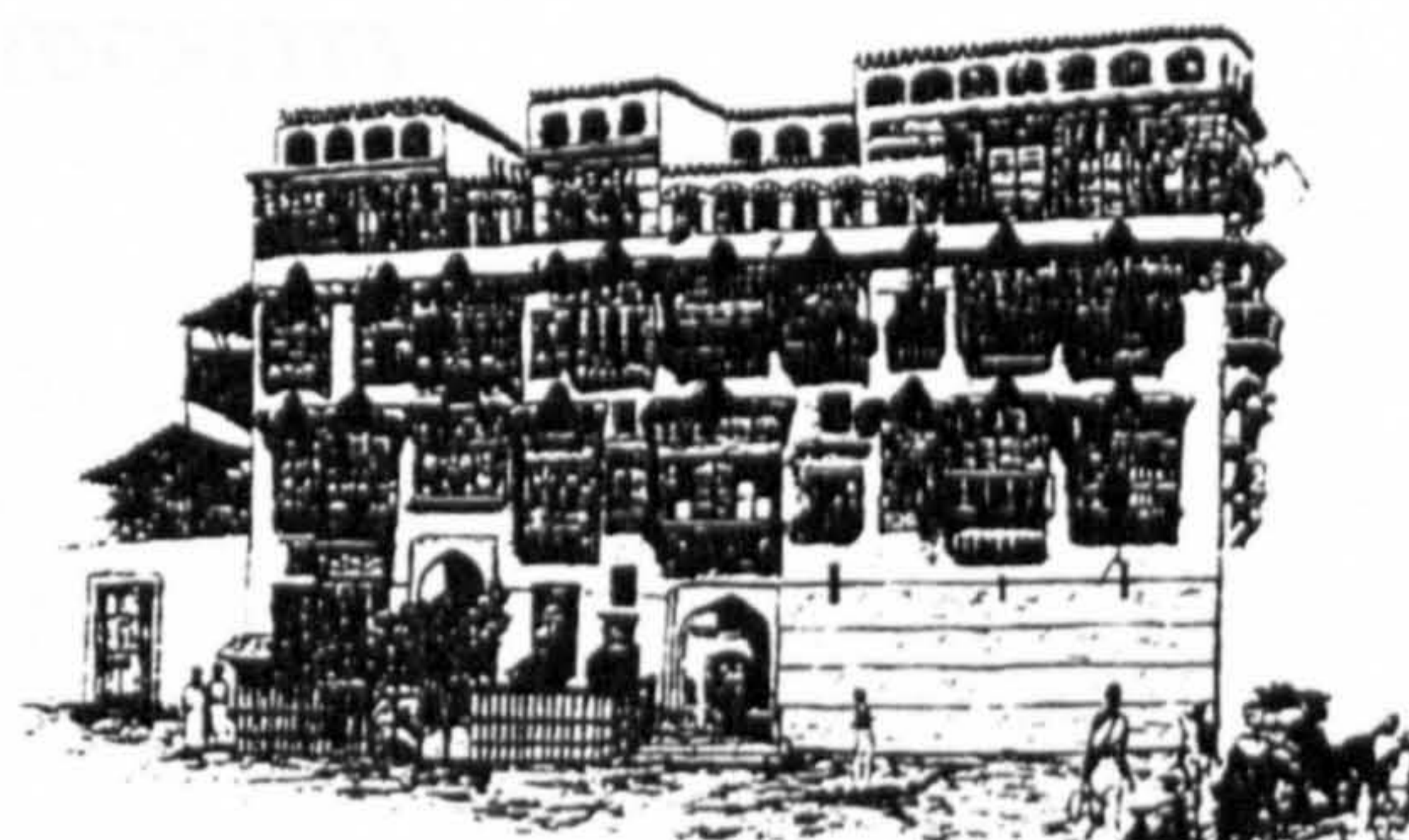


Figure 3.2 – Qualitative analysis as a circular process.

Source: Dey, 1993: 31.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The qualitative methodology is concluded to be the most convenient for this research. Exploring the use and meaning of traditional, transitional and contemporary home environments requires comprehensive and in-depth data collection. Provided that little is recorded about home environments in Saudi Arabia, this methodology has to be partly ethnographic. Data from informants, municipalities, literature and museums were collected. The researcher can then describe the setting of the home environments from the data collected, which includes informants' description of activities and spaces, personal notes, photographs, floor plans and census data. These settings are analysed according to the concepts of compatibility, criticality and formality. This process of analysis can be categorised as dramaturgic and semiotic.



CHAPTER 4

Context and Traditional Home Environments

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 URBAN CONTEXT AND CLIMATE

4.3 URBAN CONTEXT AND SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

4.4 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ROLES

4.5 COMPATIBILITY OF CONTEXT AND HOME

4.5.1 Buildings

4.5.2 Doors

4.5.3 *Dahleez*

4.5.4 *Murakkab*

4.5.5 *Kharijah*

4.5.6 Hierarchy

4.5.7 Stairs

4.5.8 *Rowshan*

4.5.9 Rooms' Width and Colour

4.5.10 Decorated Items

4.6 SOCIAL FACTORS FOR THE TEMPORARY USAGE OF ROOMS

**4.7 COMPATIBILITY OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND
COLLECTIVISTIC EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY**

4.8 CONCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Many architects in Saudi Arabia admire the traditional home environment, and accordingly, they consider it a model to be followed whenever they can in their designs. Picking up images from the past to claim cultural continuity is an oversimplification of the fact that the traditional built environment was a result of a complex and continuous interaction of many variables such as cultural values and norms, climate, and all the physical objects that constitute the environment. In order to understand why the traditional home environment had certain features it is important to start with the context.

The home environment and its context in Jeddah to be discussed in this and the following chapter date back to the early forties.¹ This period was chosen because it is the period during which the traditional lifestyle existed. During this period and before, transportation was by animals, streets were narrow, electricity and water pipe system were not introduced yet, and the newly discovered oil revenues had not yet influenced people's lifestyle.

Before discussing the traditional home environment, this chapter will look at how the different constituents of the surrounding context interacted with each other. The emphasis of the discussion, then, will be directed to discuss how the surrounding context influenced homes. The discussion about the traditional home environment will be completed in the following chapter where the emphasis will be on the furniture and home interior spaces.

4.2 URBAN CONTEXT AND CLIMATE

Many travellers have expressed their fascination about the beauty of old Jeddah in their writings.² The urban form of the traditional residential area of Jeddah, in common with other Islamic traditional urban forms, was organic and compact. A system of narrow

¹ For a brief description of the history of Jeddah see Appendix 3.

² Lebllich, a Spanish physicist, visited Jeddah in 1807 and said "a pretty town" whose tall houses "all have a great number of windows." (Khan, 1981: 10). Russel in 1884 said "I must not omit to mention that I have seen nowhere - not even in Cairo, the Arab city *par excellence* - such beautiful houses as those of Jiddah" (Pesce, 1977: 51). Richards (1947) said "... the tall buildings giving the impression of having been stacked inside the town walls like flower- stalks into a vase..." (Al-Harbi, 1989: 63).

intersecting alleys, often around 3 meters wide, and small irregularly shaped public open spaces run within the building masses (Figure 4.1 and 4.2).



Figure 4.1 - Old Jeddah
Source: Khan, 1981: XIV.

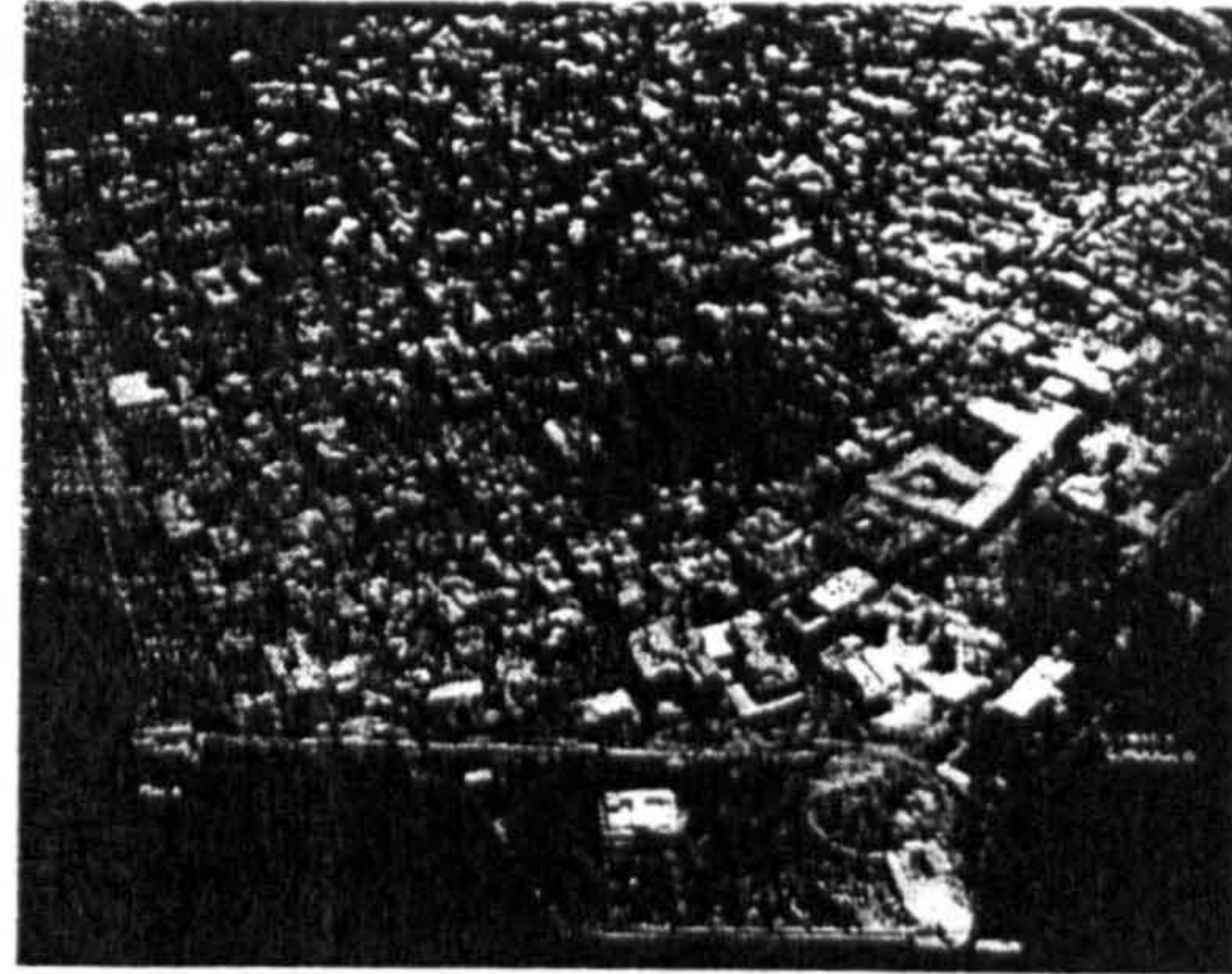


Figure 4.2 - Aerial photograph of Jeddah in 1940.
Source: Pesce, 1977: 112.

The old town of Jeddah was surrounded from all sides by a 3 to 4 meter high wall for security reasons. The land shortage that arose as family size increased caused houses to be expanded vertically rather than horizontally.³ The vertical expansion also had many climatic advantages. It maximised the exposure of building facades to the breeze from the north, north-west, and west (Al-Harbi, 1989), and the passing air through the narrow alleys. The limited angle formed by the narrow alleys to buildings' heights proportions (Figure 4.3) reduces the area of building facades exposed to the sun. On the other hand, the deep alleys reduce the amount of glare on the ground level (Al-Lyaly, 1990).

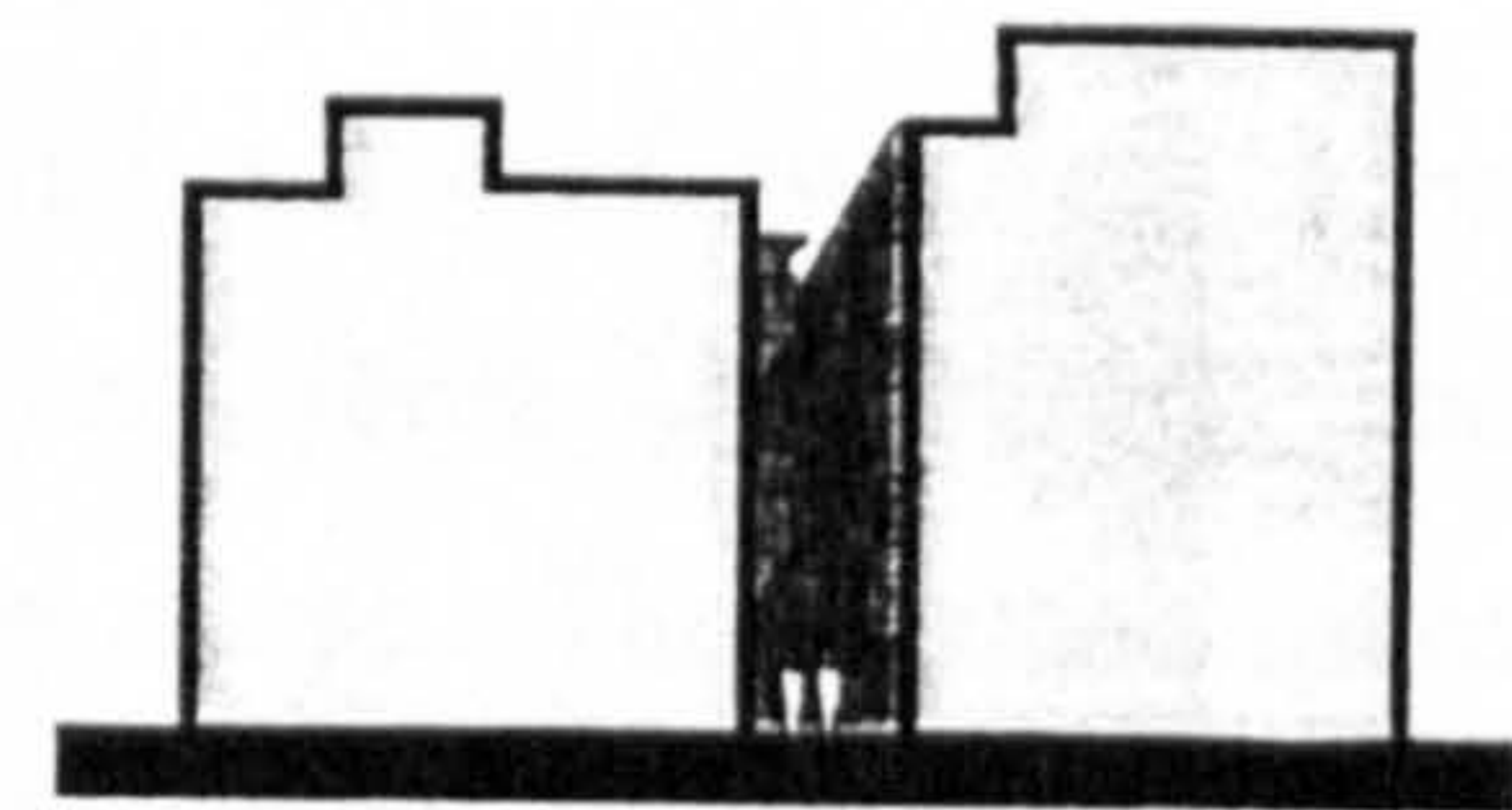
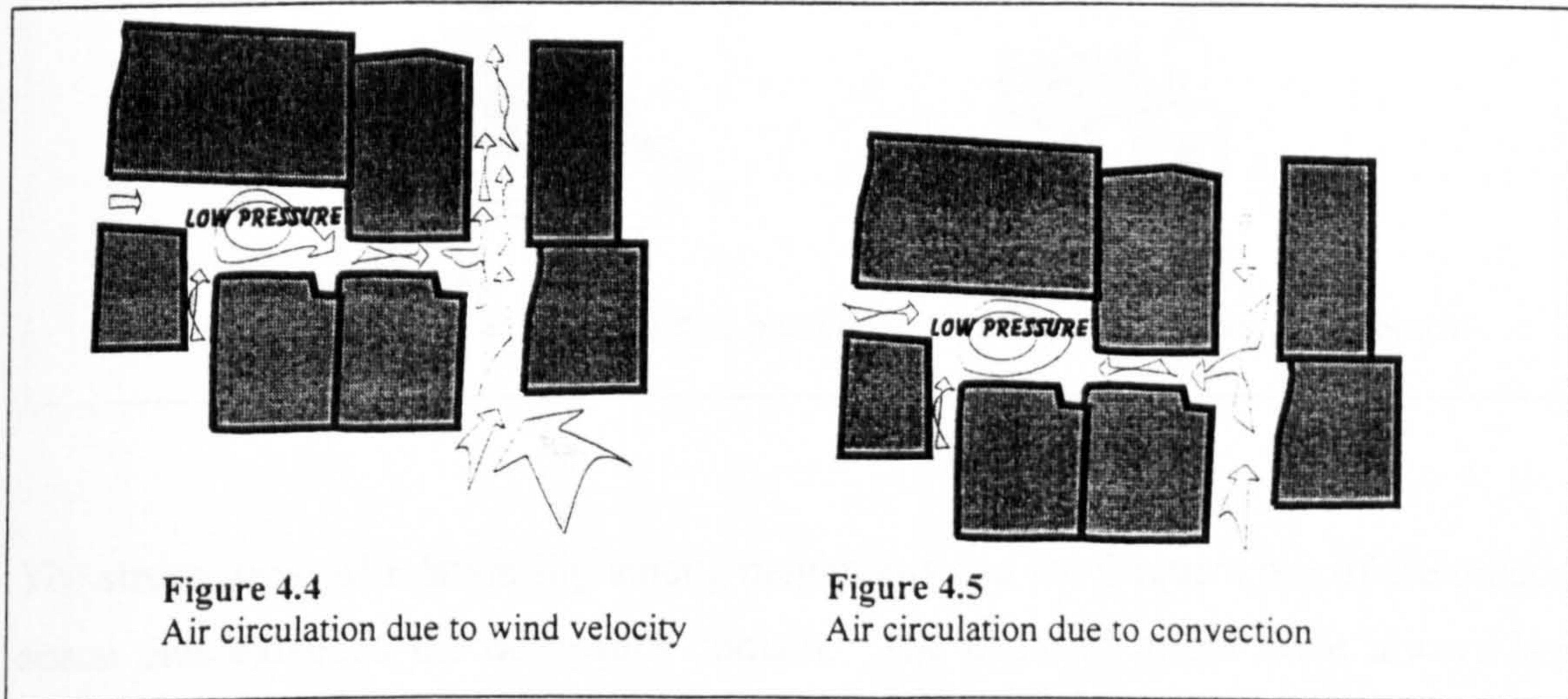


Figure 4.3 - A section through an alley

Al-Lyaly (1990) also noted that there are a few alleys radiating out eastwards from the shore. From these alleys secondary narrower alleys branch off in a north-south direction. When a slow breeze passes through the deep, narrow east-west alleys, its velocity increases. The increased velocity of breeze creates a pressure difference in the secondary alleys and open spaces within which, as a result, air circulates (Figure 4.4).

³ Samizay and Kazimee (1993) also related the vertical expansion of traditional houses of Kabul in Afghanistan, Lahor in Pakistan, and Al-Qala in Qatif region of Saudi Arabia to the surrounding walls.

When no breeze blows, air within the alleys still moves because of a convection air system. The large amount of shade, due to the proportionally significant height of the buildings, and the exposed open areas to the sun cause a temperature difference within the alley system. In contrast to when the breeze blows causing low pressure in the open areas, the open areas are now depressurised by rising hot air caused by the sun's radiation. As a result air from the shaded alleys move to open areas and cause air circulation (Figure 4.5) (Al-Lyaly, 1990).



4.3 URBAN CONTEXT AND SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

Alleys had to be climatically convenient to meet the extensive use of dwellers. Men went to mosques to perform the five obligatory daily prayers, meet with friends, and celebrate social occasions in front of their home and in the alleys. The outdoor space was a very important means by which to maintain social and religious values.

Outdoor social gathering for men took place on a platform, called *mastabah* (Jomah, 1992) (Figure 4.6) or/and on a bench, called *mirkaz*⁴ (Figure 4.7). The bench was the most common item of outdoor furniture. On occasions such as weddings when many guests were invited, some benches were set out in front of the house. It was also common on hot days to put benches out after sprinkling the home frontage with water to cool the air.

⁴ The *mirkaz* is made of thick timbers of wood which are joined as a frame by nails. The timbers of wood were covered by dried leaves of palm trees or robes. *Marakeez* vary in height, but the most common was around 90 cm. The length and width of the *mirkaz* are also good for a person to sleep comfortably. It can take three sitting persons comfortably.

Neighbours had very strong relationships with each other. They depended on each other for many of their daily needs⁵ and in big occasions such as weddings. It was very common that a family borrow from others kitchen utensils, *karaweeet*,⁶ cushions, and pillows. Some kitchen utensils which were needed only in big occasions were not owned by anyone and used by almost everyone.



Figure 4.6
Mastabah, an outdoor sitting platform



Figure 4.7
Mirkaz, an outdoor sitting bench

The strong sense of relationship among neighbours and the frequent use of the outdoor space thus extended the occupant's domain. The unpaved alleys were always kept clean. Residents swept and sprinkled their house fronts as regularly as they did to their home interiors. The behaviour of residents adjusted according to the sense of territoriality and degree of privacy (Khan, 1981). There was no difference between what men wore inside the house and in their alley, unless they moved outside their own area (Jumah, 1992). The absence of the sharp division between the private and public zones influenced the design of doors and entrance halls, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Religious and social values encouraged neighbours to establish these strong relationships. Narrow alleys and compact buildings have maintained a continuous

⁵ One of the informants, Mr. H. Khujah, said that co-operation among neighbours was very strong. He told a story in which a man knew that some of his relatives would come to visit him. He asked his wife if they had any food. The only food they had at that time was a basket of aubergines. The man told his wife to prepare them in the best way she could. The visitors arrived and the man sat with them until his wife knocked the door telling him that the lunch was ready. To the surprise of the man, the *sufrah* (a sheet of cloth or plastic to put the food on) was full of a variety of dishes. After the visitors had left, the man asked his wife where she had got them from. She told him that she had prepared all the aubergines quickly and then put some into several pots and sent them to their neighbours. In reply, their neighbours immediately sent them what they had prepared for their own lunch that day.

Another similar story was mentioned by the informant Ms. F. Ibraheem. She said that her family had a very close relationship with another family. When her family cooked a good meal and the other family knew about it, they would come and take the full pots to their house and empty them; then they filled up the same pots with what they had for lunch that day and sent them back.

interaction among neighbours which helped to maintain these values. The physical environment was a compatible form providing a convenient micro-climate which maintained frequent usage in the hot and humid climate. Thus the outdoors was practical and virtuous, i.e. provided cool climate and maintained the survival of cultural values and people's strong relationship with each others (Stage 3A).

4.4 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ROLES

An extended family of three generations was the common family type in traditional Jeddah. The relationships and the mutual respect among the family members were very strong. Grandparents were the central ties in the family that held the extended family together. The master of the extended family had strong authority. All the family members respected and obeyed his decisions. If he grew old, the eldest son could become the actual head of the family, however, respect and consultation were always due (Jomah, 1992). The family master also enjoyed a special treatment. For example, he always occupied the most comfortable place. While eating together, the best food was put in front of him and he was the first to eat. Stretching someone's legs in front of him was considered misbehaviour.

Young adults and children showed great respect to older family members even if the difference in age was only a few years. When a young child called his eldest brother or sister he would do so using the respectful title *sidi* (for male), or *estaitah* (for female), meaning my master (Maghribi, 1982). This formality among different ages contributed to the establishment of different peer groups based on age, sex, and mutual interests. In order sometimes to act freely, each group could get away from others to practice its own activity.

A house was usually occupied by several nuclear families where adult males and their sisters-in-law were not supposed to see each other in some families.⁷ Therefore some of the family activities were divided according to sex. Men and women as two separate

⁶ The *karawet* is an interior sitting bench. It will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

⁷ It seems that the level of privacy varies from one extended family to another. In describing the process of engagement, Maghribi (1982) said that the bride could be invited to the groom's parents house and the groom could have a chance to look at her from the opening of the door. Gazzaz (1994) denied that such act could happen. Some informants of this research mentioned that the whole extended family, men and women could gather in one occasion. However women were supposed to wear wide clothes and cover their hair.

groups in the house ate their breakfast and lunch together. The only chance for the nuclear family to eat separately from other families was at dinner (Maghribi, 1982).

The house was the women's world. They only went out for family visits. Gazzaz (1994) narrated that it was common in Jeddah and other cities in the same region (Hijaz) if the man of the house was away and his wife needed to buy something from the market, she would hang a basket on the window and the first passing man was responsible for bringing what she needed. He would call from the alley "O, people of the house, what do you need?" After being informed he should then bring what was needed. If he passed without picking up the basket, the woman could complain to the *'omdah*.⁸ The development of such convention to protect the privacy of women is a strong indication of the role of women being confined to the inside of the house. This led to the house becoming the women's world.

The cultural confinement of woman's role inside the house could be due to two reasons. Firstly, the separation of the sexes (where they could legally marry) in the social sphere is founded in Islamic teaching. Since men dominated the public domain, women's domain became the home interiors. Secondly, there was a huge amount of domestic chores that needed to be fulfilled in order to keep up with the requirements of daily life. Traditionally it was women's responsibility to do them. The whole day was consumed in doing family and household chores.⁹

The confinement of women's living environment to the home interior was the reason that the interiors of Jeddah's traditional houses had to have design qualities that enabled women to communicate with each other and with the outdoor without going out, as it will be discussed later in this chapter.

4.5 COMPATIBILITY OF CONTEXT AND HOME

4.5.1 Building¹⁰

The evolutionary growth of traditional houses in Jeddah made them representations of the families living in them. As the family grew, the house morphologically grew as

⁸ The *'omdah* was acting as a social leader of the community. One of his responsibilities was to resolve the conflicts among the community members.

⁹ See the description of domestic chores in Appendix 4.

well. A one-storey house was enough for a nuclear family. When the elder son got married, his wife joined him in his parent's house after an extension had been built. This happened for each son until the house accommodated an extended family of three generations, grandparents, adult sons with their wives and grandchildren. Therefore houses were always full of people.¹

The expansion of houses were vertical because of two reasons, as previously mentioned: firstly the shortage of land caused by limited city expansion due to the surrounding city wall and secondly the need to get as much air movement as possible, especially during hot and humid days. Buildings were also high because of the height of each floor. In order to let more air come in, openings were very wide and the average height of floors was 5 meters. A house which could have started with two or three rooms would end up as tall as a multi-storey apartment building² because of the social structure and climate.

4.5.2 Doors

The extension of occupants' domains to the space directly in front of the house also extended the occupants' privacy. Some home fronts were relatively private. This sense of transition between the private and public domains reduced the utilitarian function of doors as barriers except at night. During the day doors could be left open.

Social and religious occasions strongly influenced the form of doors. They were composed of two large wooden leaves (Figure 4.8). In the right hand leaf, if approaching from outside, was a little door. The little door was for the frequent daily use. The two doors would be left open when the building is used by many pilgrims. During the pilgrimage season, most houses in Jeddah were rented by pilgrims for some days before proceeding to Mecca or to their own countries. In weddings and consolations the two doors were left open.

¹ It is recalled by one of Nasif's family that the original household occupying the building numbered at least 100 people, including servants and slaves (Al-Mashhour). However, it should be noted that Nasif house was one of the biggest houses in Jeddah that accommodated one extended family.

² In a comparison between J. Burckhardt's description of Jeddah in 1814 and T. Lawrence's (Lawrence of Arabia) description in 1916, Al-Lyaly (1990) found that houses of Jeddah which had been two storeys high had become four to five storeys high a century later. Their description differed in street width as well. Burckhardt said that streets were spacious while Lawrence described them as alleys. Traditional houses grew vertically as well as horizontally.

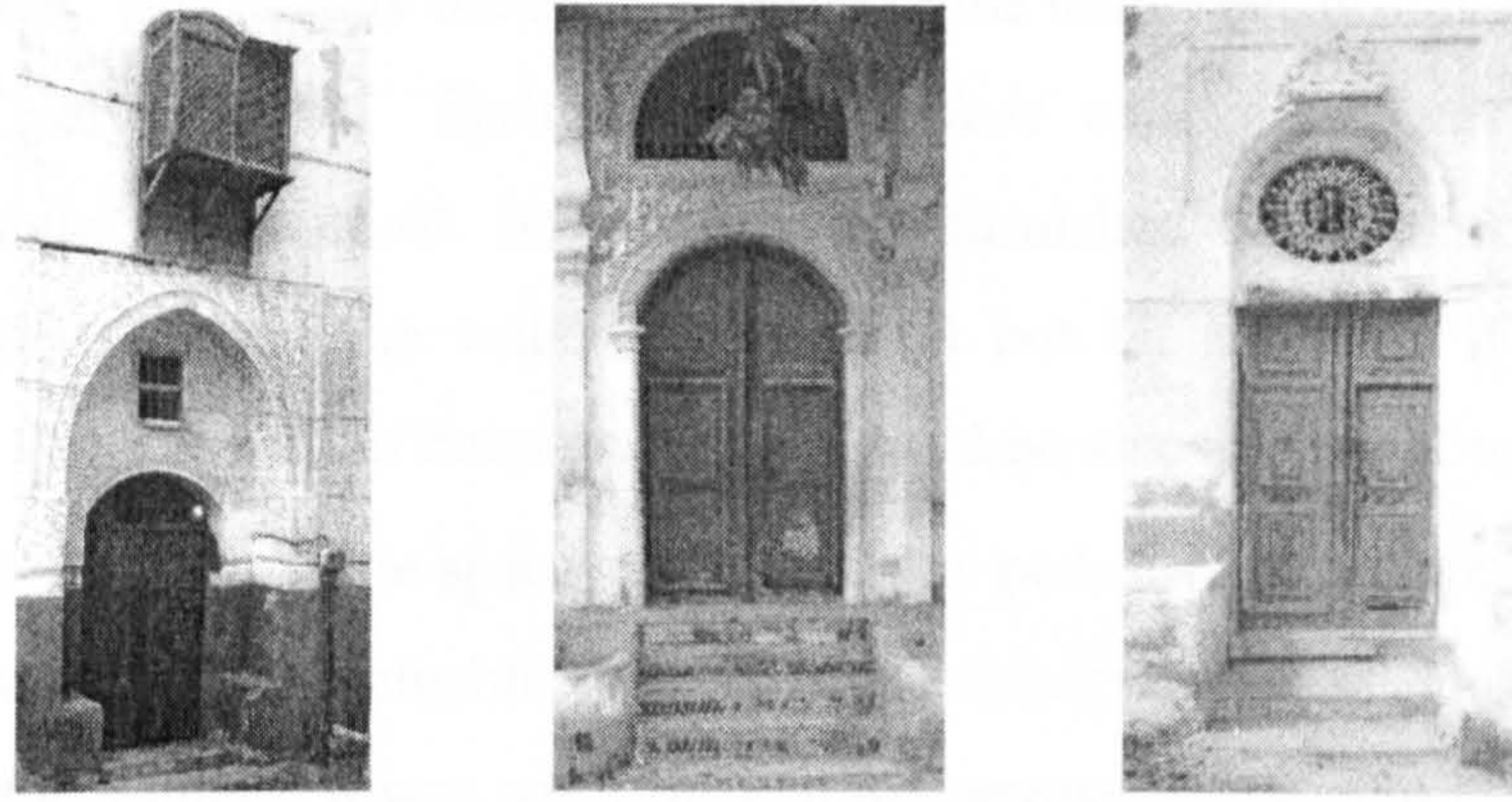


Figure 4.8 – Some doors of Jeddah’s traditional houses.
Source: Stacey International, 1991: 29, 43 and 58.

Since the entrance is the first object through which the status of the occupant is communicated to the passer by or to the guest, it gained a strong meaning expressed by its double height, a flamboyant arch and decoration. Even those who could not afford to have a decorative arch had simple arches. Inside the arch is an opening to let the air flow into the entrance hall. Because doors support activities driven by values (meaning of activities) and occupants identities they are considered to be practical, virtuous and symbolic, in Stage 4 of compatibility.

4.5.3 *Dahleez*

The *dahleez*, or entrance hall, was a spacious transitional space between the outside and the inside of the house (Figure 4.9). The strong relationship of people with the alleys, the use of the home frontage, and the frequently open door made the *dahleez* a semi-private space. Therefore the responsibility for its cleaning was on the children rather than on the housewife. Surprisingly in many cases it was unfurnished, without floor rugs or decorated items, even though it was the first space that a visitor would see when he entered the house. On entering the *dahleez* one gets the feeling that something was missing, as if there had been furniture but it was temporarily removed. One could even hear his voice echo due to the absence of furniture in such a large hard surfaced and five meter high space.

The reason for the emptiness of the *dahleez* was due to its utilitarian function. When the weather was hot and children could not play in front of the house, they played in the

dahleez which was usually the coolest space in the house because it was sprinkled with water (Al-Lyaly, 1990). Sprinkling the *dahleez* with water was also to cool the corridors, stairs, and most importantly the furnished adjacent rooms through the screened openings on the walls. This could not be achieved if the *dahleez* was furnished.³ The absence of decorated items could be also attributed to the sense that the *dahleez* was a semi-private space and passing by pedestrians could see what was inside and, therefore, leaving valuable items in the *dahleez* was risky. Despite the important location of the *dahleez*, it was not furnished to convey the status of the occupant. It had a utilitarian rather than a symbolic function.

However in some houses the *dahleez* was with a few wooden benches, called *karaweeet*,⁴ for occasional use or for sleeping by male servants at night, if the occupant had any. On big social occasions when plenty of seating places were needed to accommodate the large number of guests, more *karaweeet* were arranged in the *dahleez*. The *dahleez*, adjacent rooms, and the building frontage became one large sitting area. Because of this feature of the *dahleez*, supporting big social occasions and enhancing the quality of the home microclimate, it is considered practical and virtuous, i.e. in Stage 3A of compatibility.

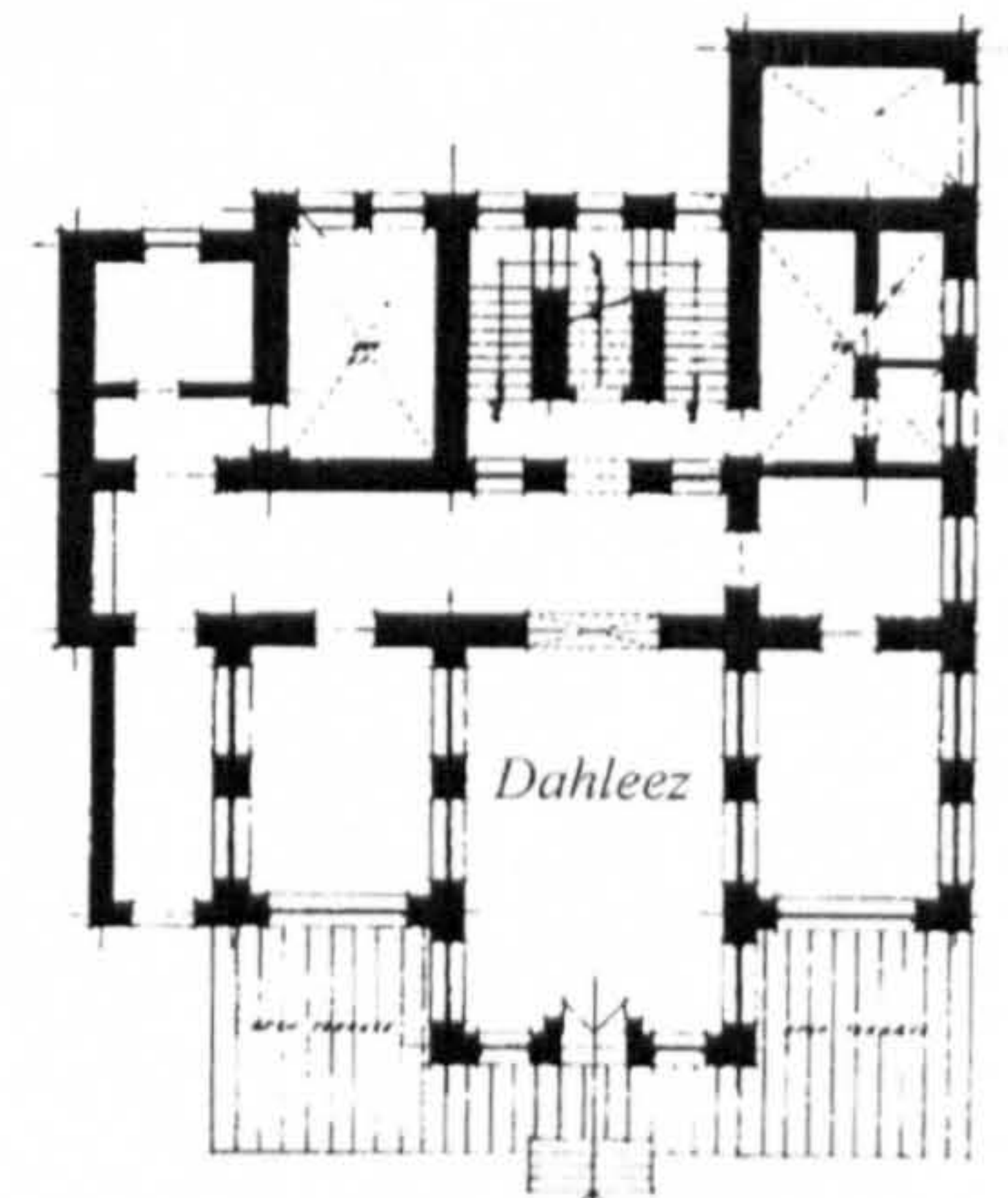


Figure 4.9 – The ground floor plan of *Al-Jukhdar* house. Source: Based on drawings from the old municipality of Jeddah.

4.5.4 *Murakkab*

The main function of the *murakkab* (Figure 4.10) was cooking. There were little *murakkab* in every compartment and a large one on the top floor. If an extended family occupied the whole building, the little *marakeeb* (plural of *murakkab*) in compartments would be used for quick snacks, such as late dinners and early breakfasts. When the

³ Pesce and Khan did not distinguish between the functions of the *dahleez* and the *maq'ad*, thus giving the impression that the *dahleez* was used as a main reception area like the *maq'ad*, which was not the case.

⁴ *Karaweeet* will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

whole extended family ate lunch together,¹⁵ women cooked one large meal which could only be done in the large *murakkab*. The large *murakkab* had to be on the roof terrace for climatic reason. Because wood or coal was the fuel of cooking, much smoke and smell of food would spread into the house if the large *murakkab* were on lower floors. It is considered practical in Stage 2 of compatibility.¹⁶

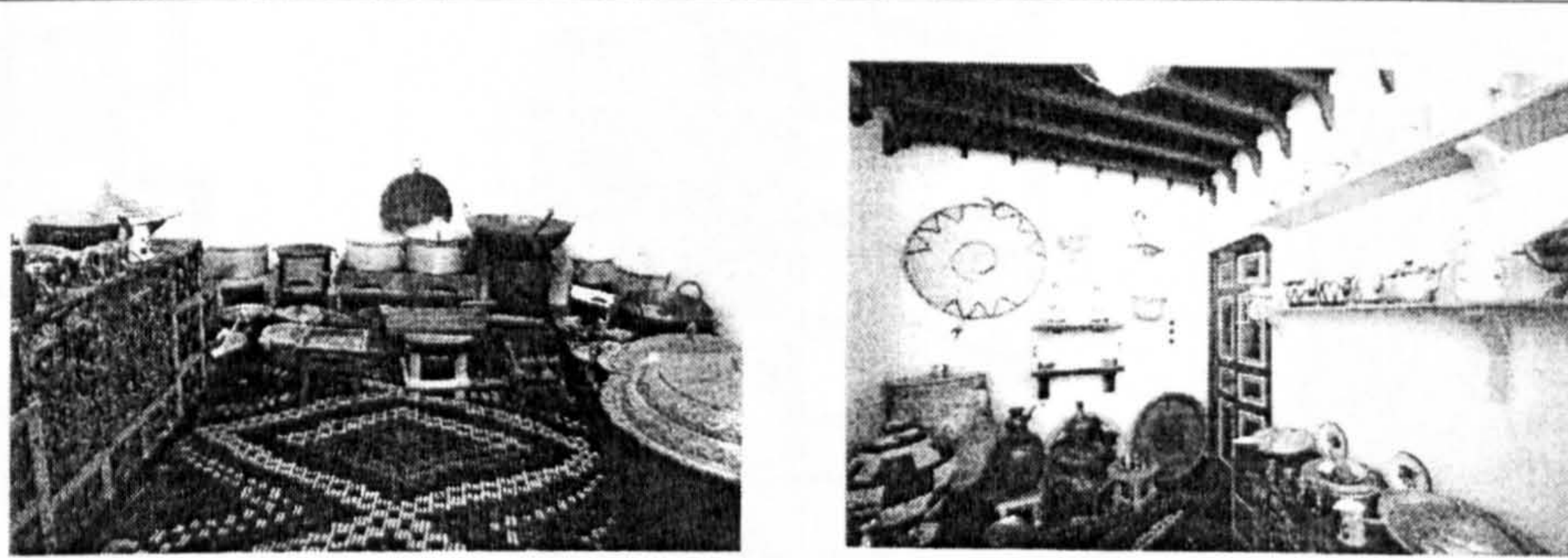


Figure 4.10 - A *murakkab*.

Source: Based on pictures in Al-Muqadimah, 1985: 738.

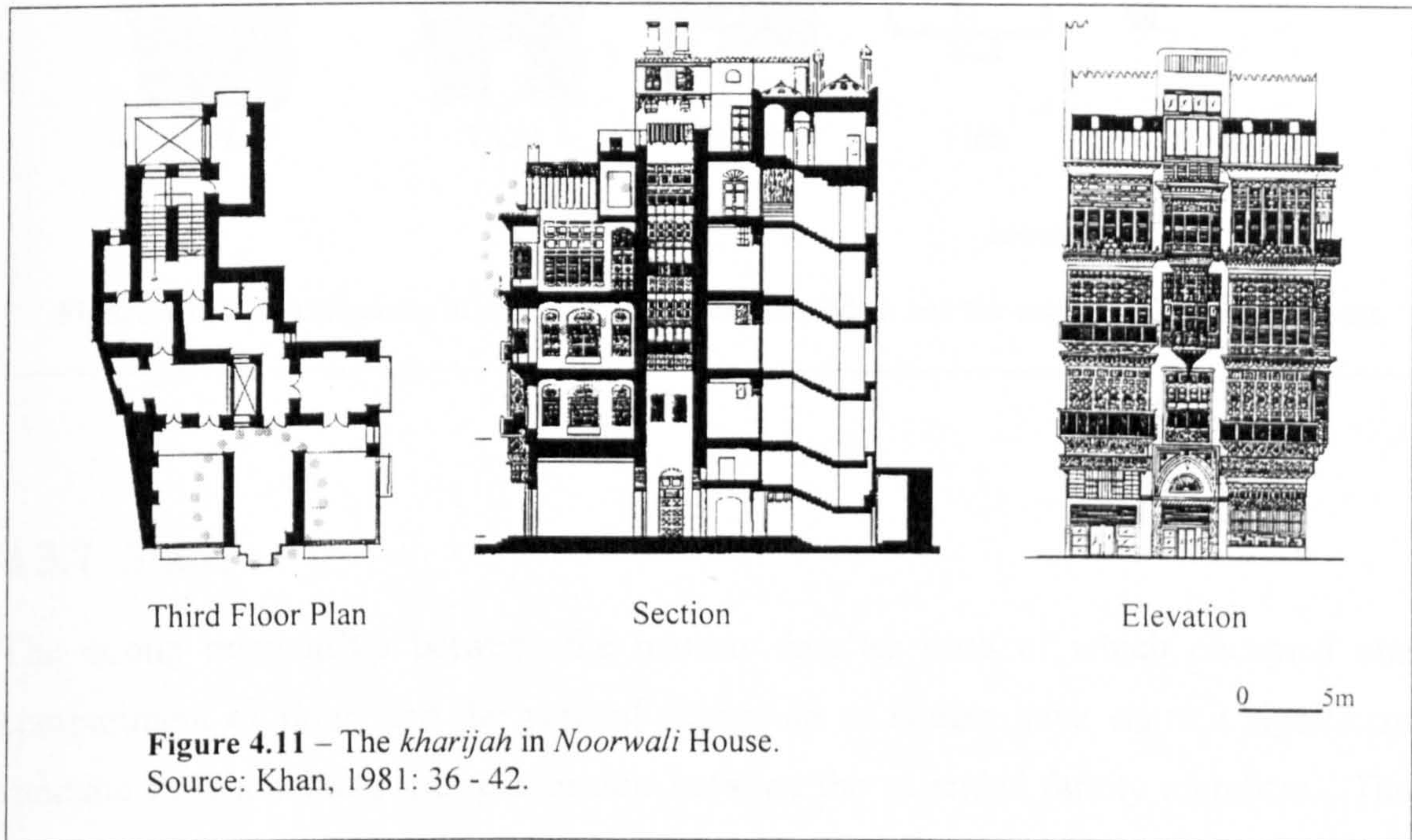
4.5.5 *Kharijah*

The confinement of the women's domain to home interiors and their need for an open and private space produced a unique outdoor private space called *kharijah* (Figure 4.11). It is one of the main features that differentiate the multi-storey traditional houses in Jeddah from the modern apartment buildings. It had the advantage of the balcony and the courtyard. It was a large area surrounded from two or three sides by rooms. The over looking wall to the alley had large holes which were covered with wooden mesh to let air come through. It was located in the upper floors, usually the third and above (Hariri, 1993). Women in the *kharijah* could expose themselves to the sun rays, which is an important prerequisite for good health. The direct visual contact with the sky, the moon and stars, cool climate and privacy gave the *kharijah* a special function in fulfilling a fundamental human need.

These features made socialising in the *kharijah* a special experience. It was extensively used by the family members, especially women, for many activities. Before using, it was sprinkled with water to be cooled, then covered with rugs and *liyanat* (cushions made of sponge). It was used to chat, play games, drink tea and sleep. It was also used

¹⁵ The separation between men and women was not practised in some families as long as women wore long dresses and covered their hair with scarves. In these families, one of the occasions when both sexes could get together was the lunch.

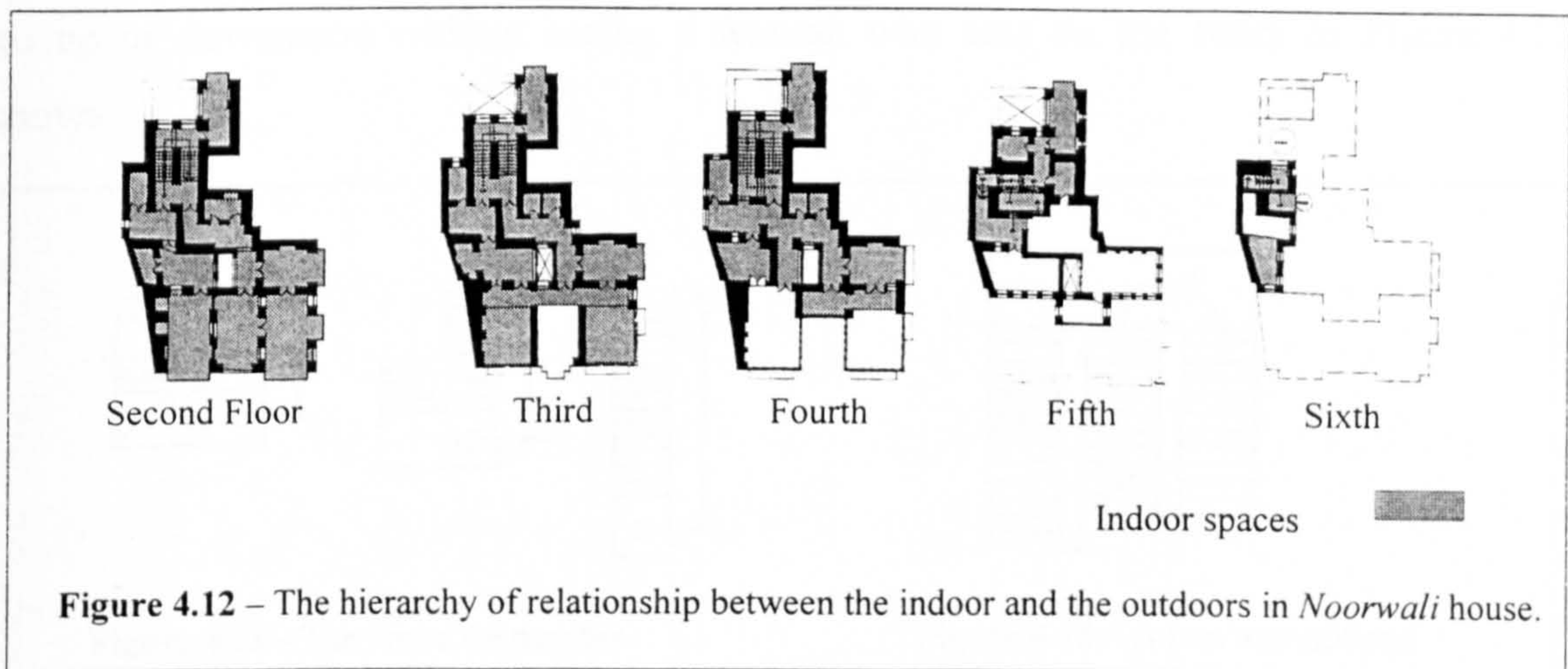
to dry washed clothes by hanging them on a stretched robe from one side to another, to raise birds, and for storage (Hariri, 1993). The *kharijah* was practical and virtuous. It is considered in Stage 3A of the model.



4.5.6 Hierarchy

The hierarchy of relationship between occupants and their context was a common feature in the traditional house of Jeddah. There was a hierarchy of relationship between the private home and public alley zones within the ground floor. The first and second floors were the cores where families' daily activities took place. The third floor was usually the beginning where the indoor meets the outdoors in the *kharijah*. This floor was not completely closed, like the first and second, and not completely open, like the roof terrace floor. Members of the extended family of three generations vary in their sense of thermal comfort due to differences in age, state of health, clothing and nature of activity (Danby, 1984). The hierarchy was to provide a variety of spaces that accommodate family activities according to the convenience of climate. *Noorwali* house (Figure 4.12) shows very clearly this hierarchy of relationship. As the family grew and needed more in-closed spaces, the *kharijah* in the third floor could be covered and more extension added to the fourth, and so on.

¹⁶ For further information about the contents of the *murakkab* see Appendix 6.



4.5.7 Stairs

The strong relationship between the nuclear families each of which occupied one compartment or floor, and the vertical expansion of houses gave stairs a significant function in maintaining the relationship between the extended family members. The function of stairs was more than that of simply connecting the different floors. They were spaces for young children to play and young adults to sit and chat. The convection of air movement, the adjacent duct to the stairs in some houses and the large openings produced cool environment on the stairs.

Because men were outside their homes most of the day, stairs also became part of the women's domain. However it frequently happened that a man needed to use the stairs while a woman whom he was not supposed to see was using the stairs as well. The cultural solution for this dilemma was twofold. Firstly, for example, when the water



Figure 4.13
Saqqah

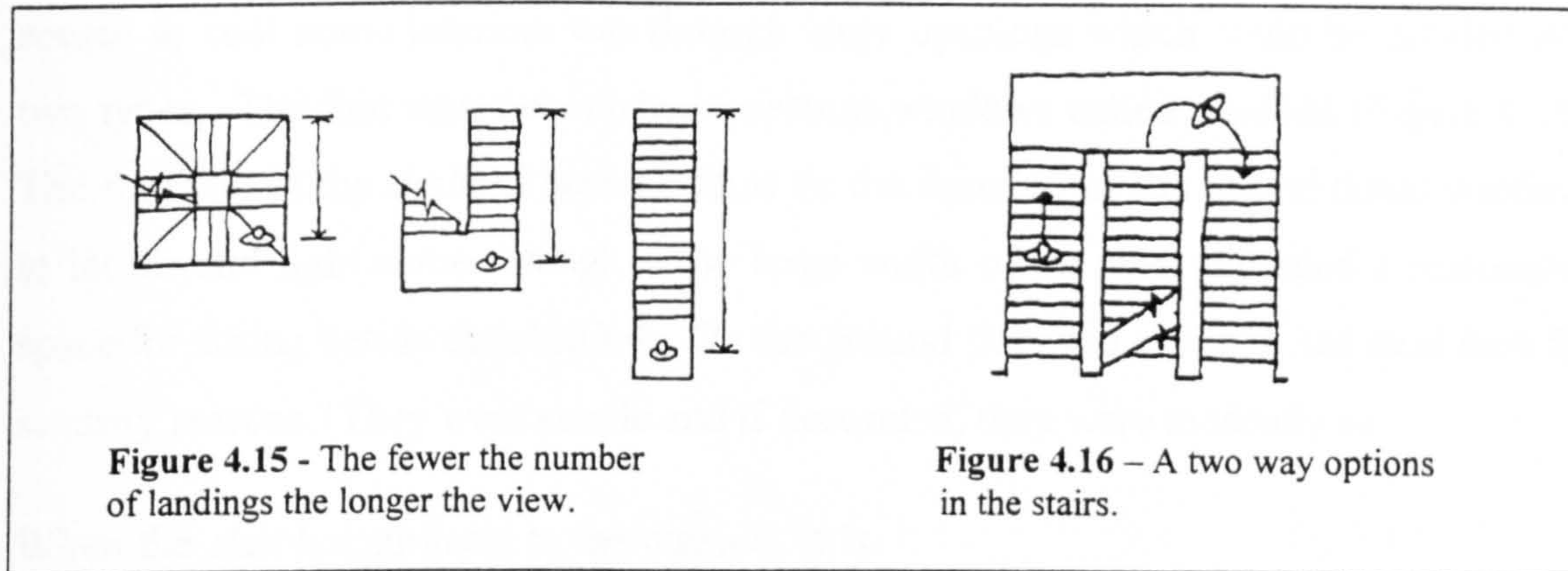


Figure 4.14
Zeer

carrier (*saqqah*) (Figure 4.13) who was called at least once a day to pour water into the water containers (*zeer*) (Figure 4.14), he would say some words loudly to inform any woman using the stairs to get the chance to get inside until he had passed.

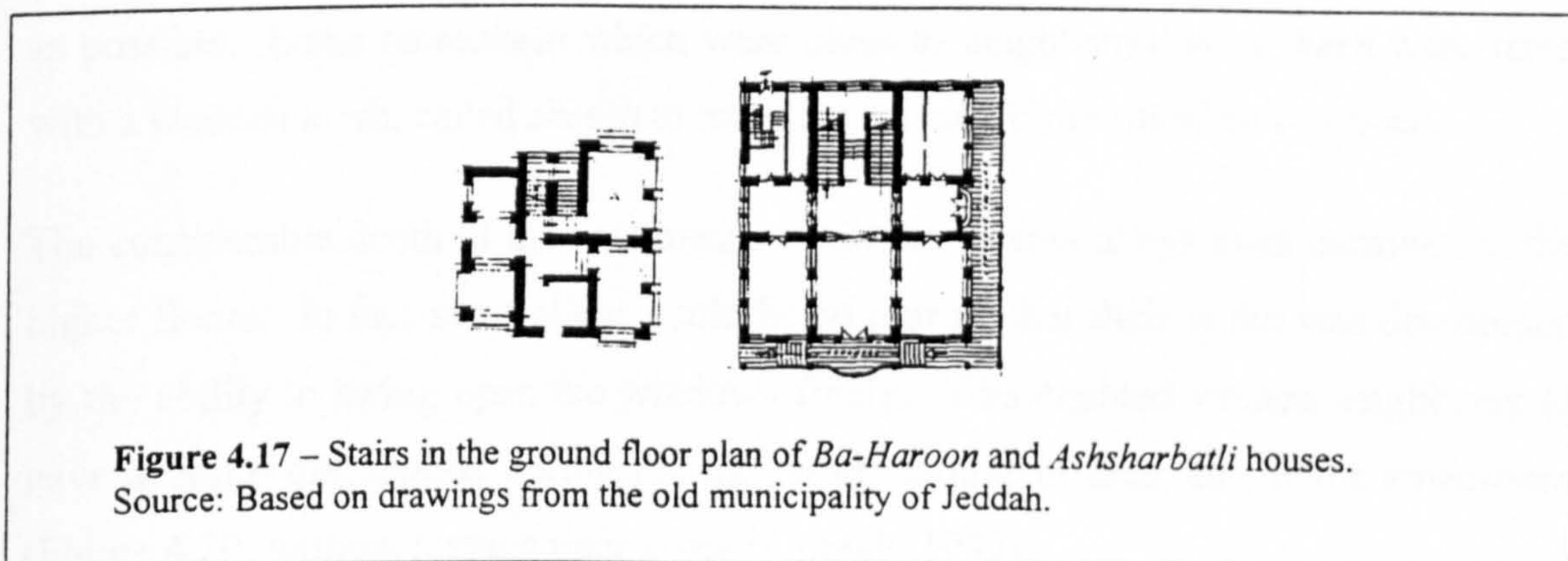
Secondly, the design of the stairs helped to reduce the chance of sudden visual contact between men and women. The number of landings was four rather than two in most houses (Figure 4.15). In fact in many houses stairs were built in a way that a man could

go up or downstairs without seeing a woman who was on the stairs as Figure 4.16 shows.



Because the average difference between two floors was high, the slope of the stairs was deep. Some of the women informants complained about the height of the steps. In some houses, usually houses of those who could afford to allocate large area for stairs, the slope of stairs were shallow. This was because old people needed to go up and down frequently. In a few cases, the grandfather could be carried on a horse to reach the roof terrace on the stairs.

Stairs were compatible with the surrounding physical environment (tall buildings and hot climate) and with the social environment (family structure and extensive use). They therefore were practical and virtuous, Stage 3A of compatibility.



4.5.8 Rowshan

The system of courtyards did not exist in Jeddah's traditional buildings. The main source to cool home interiors was through large openings which could be divided into two types. The first was the wooden casement windows called *shobbak* (Figure 4.18). The function of the *shobbak* was the same as the function of the conventional window, to let air and light come through. The large width of the wall provided a reasonable space for sitting beside the *shobbak*. On the ground floor the *shobbak* had steel bars for security reasons. They were simple and if decorated, they were modestly so.

When the *shobbak* projects to the outside, it is called a *rowshan* (Figure 4.19). The *rawasheen* (plural of *rowshan*) were the most beautiful objects in the traditional houses of Jeddah.¹⁷ The *rawasheen* were made from Indian or Java teakwood imported from the Far East. Local skilful wood-craftsmen then engrave and construct them. When the building construction was completed, the *rawasheen* were brought, raised and fixed on the large openings (Jomah, 1992).



Figure 4.18 - A *shobbak*.

The *rawasheen* were extended out from the home interior to catch as much moving air as possible. Some *rawasheen* which were close to neighbours' *rawasheen* were fixed with a wooden mesh, called *sheesh* to maintain privacy if the *rowshan* was open.

The considerable depth of the *rawasheen* made the narrow alleys even narrower at the higher floors. In fact some alleys could be so narrow that their width was determined by the ability to swing open the windows freely. This enabled women neighbours to have a group discussions during the day while sitting in their airy home *rawasheen* (Figure 4.20) without leaving their homes (Jomah, 1992).

¹⁷ Their beauty was reflected on the traveller's' writings. Russel, cited by Pesce, said "There is nothing more pretty, more aerial than the sculptured wood balconies that adorn the facades of rich mansions." (Pesce, 1977: 51)

Between the wooden mesh and the *rowshan*, the *sharbat* (earthenware drinking pot) were put to be exposed to maximum ventilation¹⁸ (Figure 4.21). Circular holes were cut out of the wood to hold the *sharbat*. These holes were also used by women to look down at the walkways. If there were no holes, the *sharbat* could stand on timbers which covered the gap between the *rowshan* and the mesh.

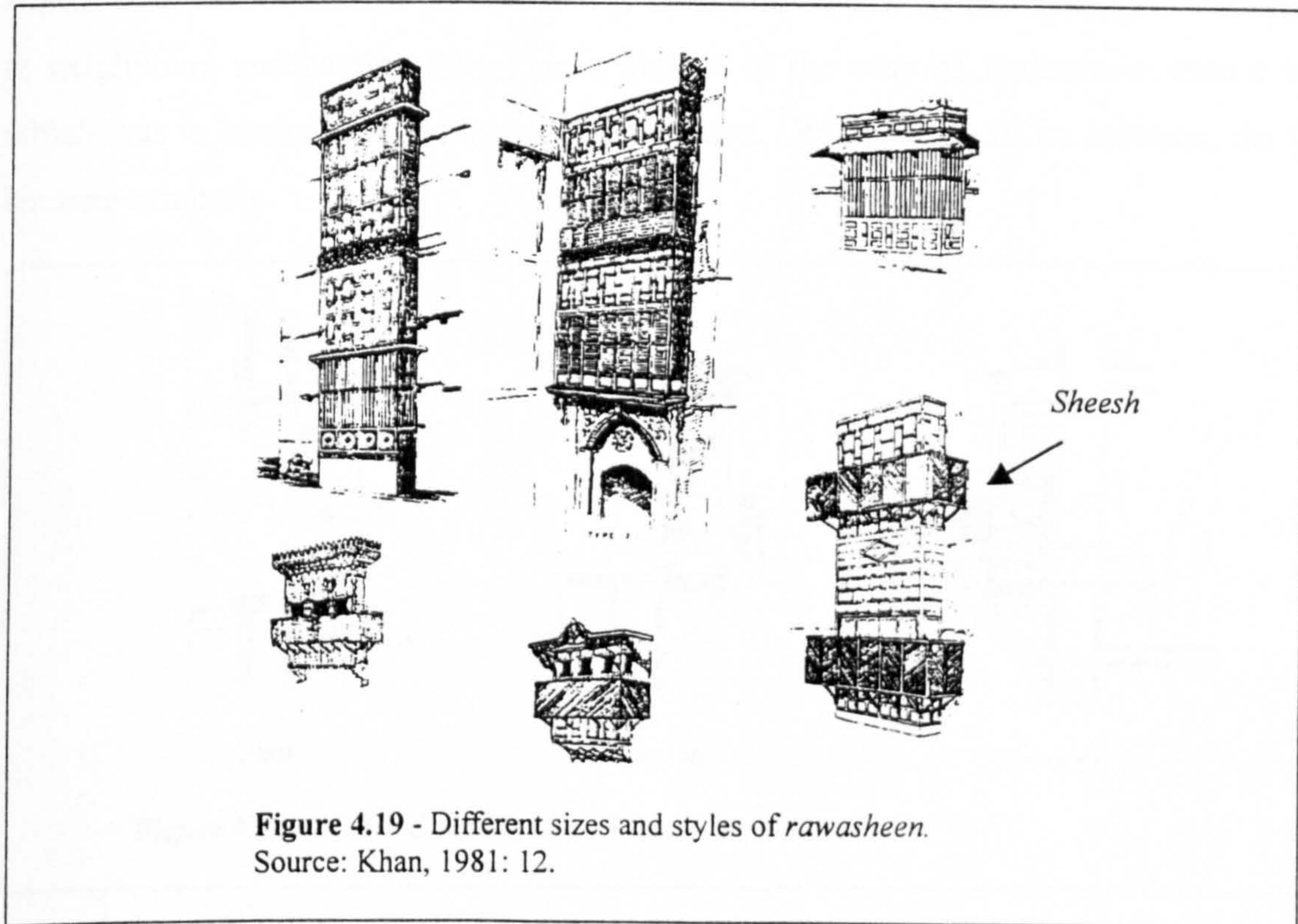


Figure 4.19 - Different sizes and styles of *rawasheen*.
Source: Khan, 1981: 12.

The *rowshan* was also used for parents' sleeping. When the *karaweat*, an interior sitting bench, is put beside the *rowshan* on the same level, which is a common arrangement, the width of the *rowshan*, the thick wall and the *karaweat* combined is larger than a modern king size bed (Figure 4.22). If they have guests, this place is given over to the most honoured person for sleeping and sitting.

The projection of *rawasheen* allowed air to enter the home interiors, women to maintain their

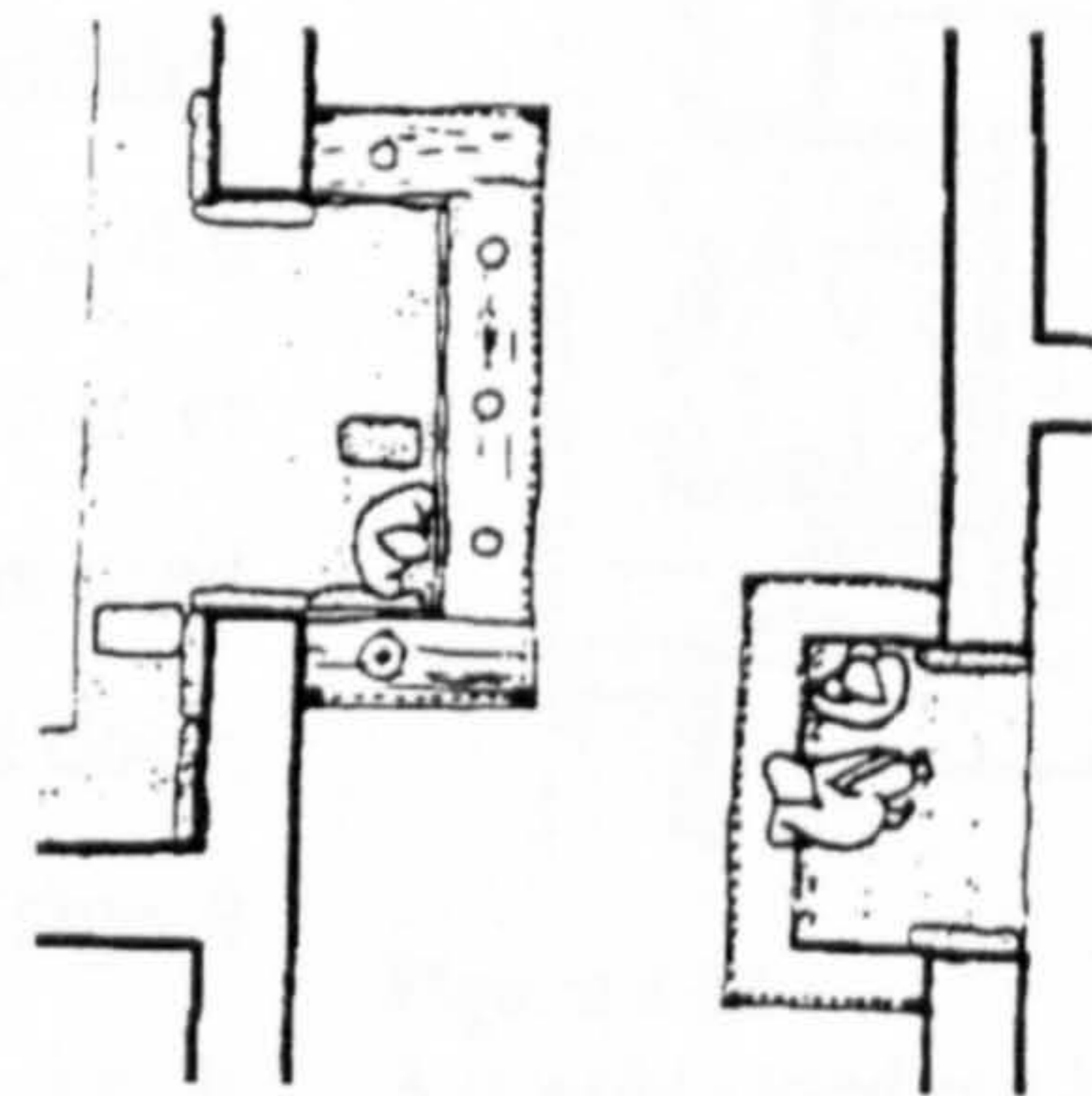
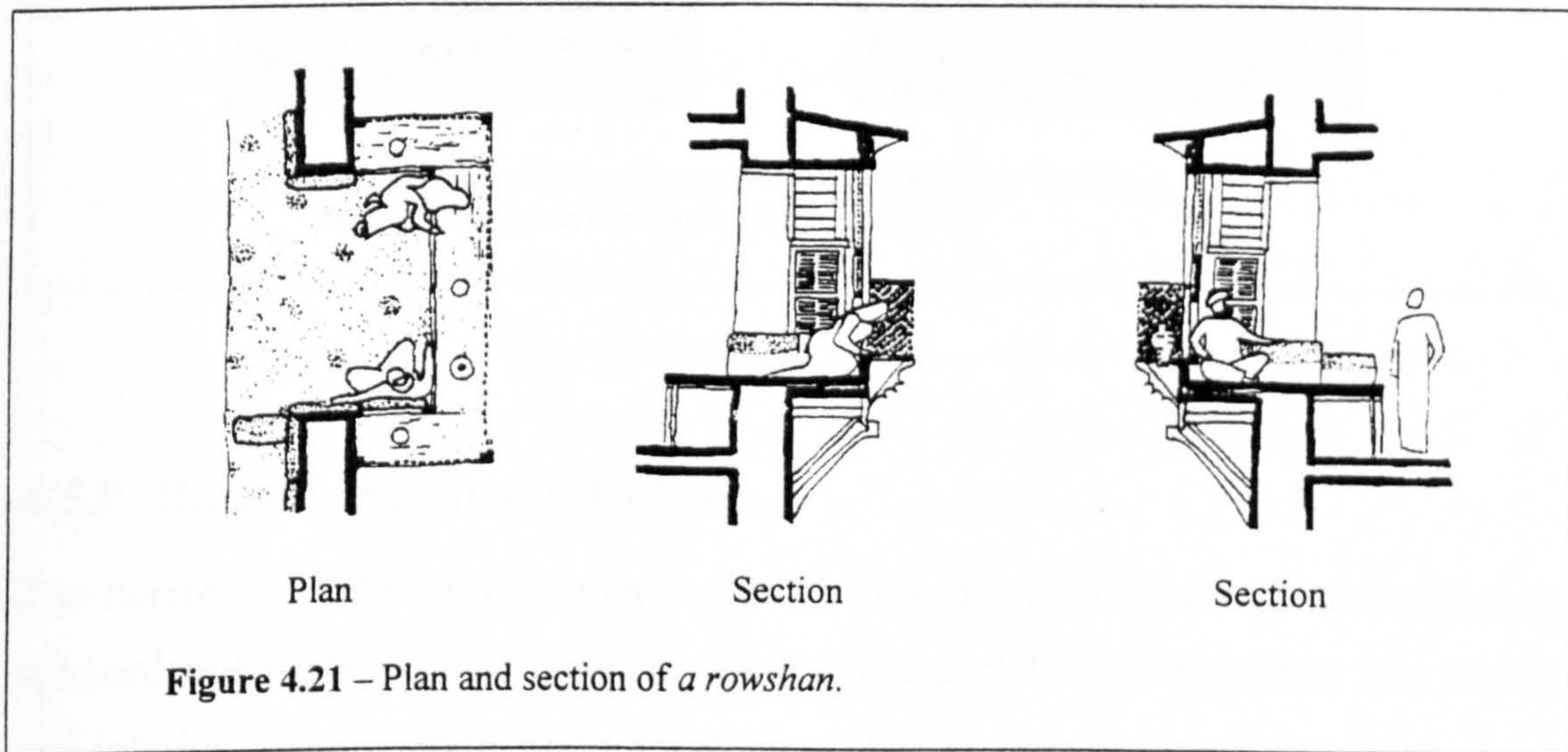


Figure 4.20
Women's discussion while sitting in their home *rawasheen*.

¹⁸ For this reason the term *mashrabiyyah* (which literally means a place of drinking) is used in Egypt instead of the term *rowshan*. (Jomah, 1992)

relationships and family members to watch outside activities and sit and sleep comfortably. The projections were also used for a symbolic function. It was discussed in Chapter 1 that the most frequently seen object could gain meaning because of its good location to communicate to people. Even though staring at one's window from the alley is considered an inappropriate act, because a women may be looking down, *rawasheen* were decorated and became good means to convey the identity of occupants to neighbours and passers by. This is similar to the case of Bedouin women's veil, which was to hinder men from seeing their faces. But because of its location, the veil became symbolic.



With the projection, the *rowshan* became a unique element. It is “a window on the outside world, a screen against Jeddah’s harsh sunlight, an integral part of the ventilating system, and a piece of furniture, sometimes even an extension of a room over the adjoining street” (Khan, 1981: 11). In addition, it was used to cool water and express the occupant’s status. Like the door, the *rowshan* reached the highest level of compatibility, Stage 4 where values, utility and identity are all fulfilled by form, i.e. it was practical, virtuous and symbolic.

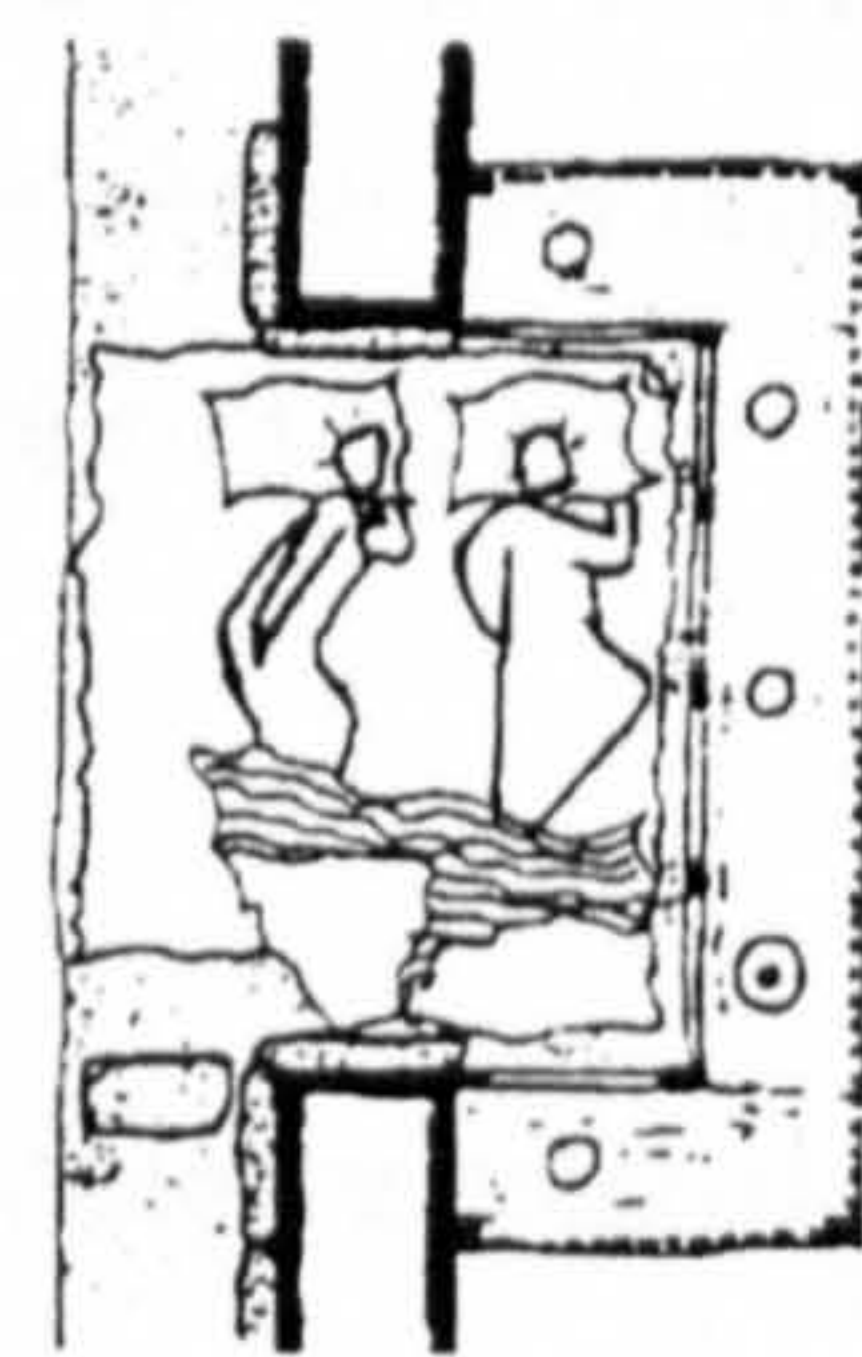


Figure 4.22
A *rowshan* used as a bed.

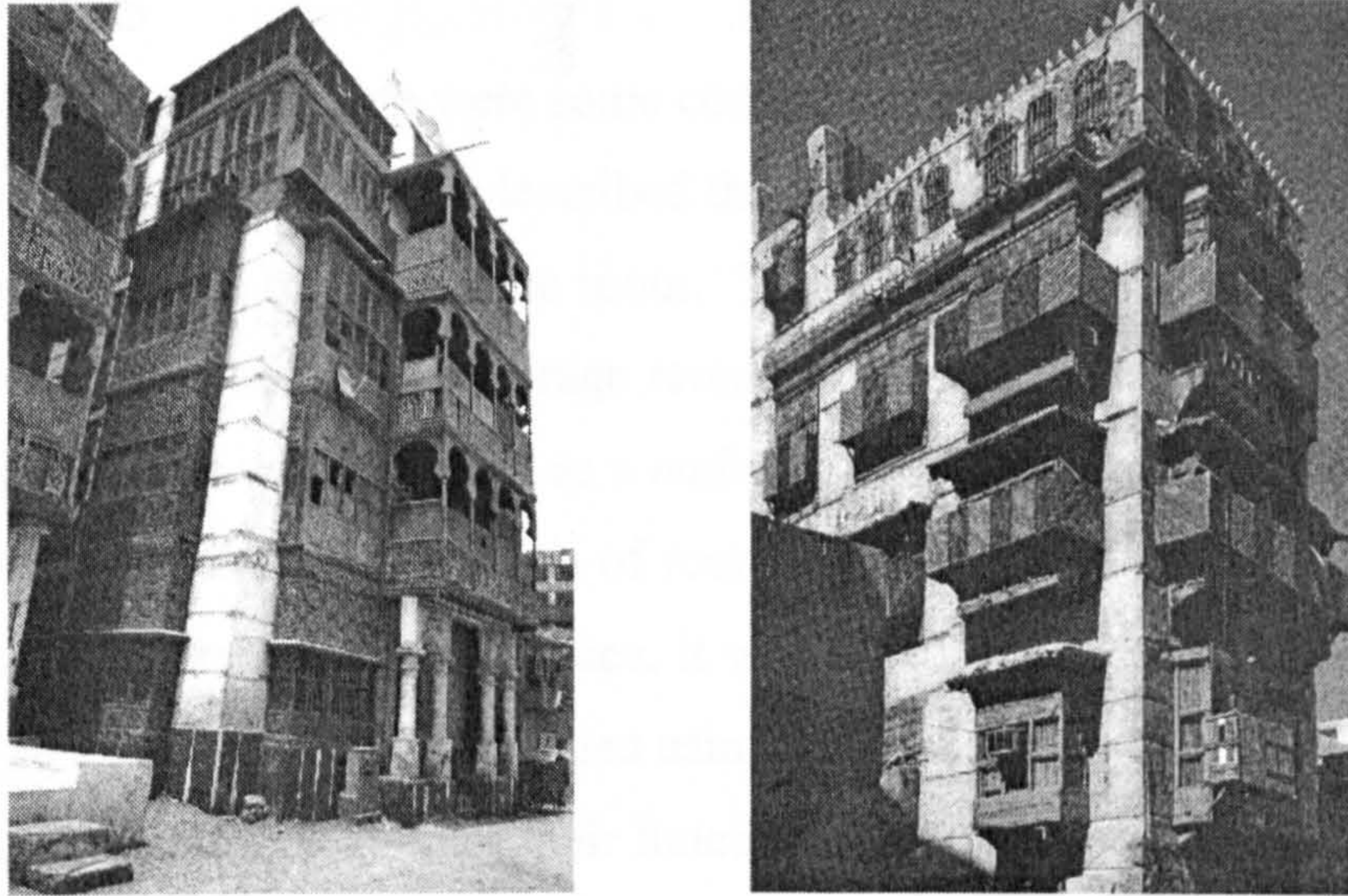


Figure 4.23 - *Rawasheen* covering the building facades.
Source: Stacy International, 1991: 32 and 52.

4.5.9 Rooms' Width and Colour

The maximum width of any room could not exceed 5 meters because the ceiling was spanned with timbers which were only available in such length or shorter. The exteriors and interior colour of the traditional houses of Jeddah was white. Home interiors were plastered with a mixture of lime-powder, sand and sawdust (Jumah, 1992). The availability of these materials could be a strong reason for the prevailing white colour. Considering the beautiful light and shade pattern coming from the *rawasheen* and fallen on the large walls, the brighter the colour of the wall the clearer the pattern will be.

4.5.10 Decorated Items

The home interior was not as highly decorated as the exterior. This could be related to climatic reason. Throughout the year, except in few cold days in winter, *rawasheen* and *shababeek* were open at all times and the amount of dust that entered the house everyday was immense. Cleaning, sweeping and dusting were done on daily basis. They would be difficult tasks if the home interior were full of decorated items.

4.6 SOCIAL FACTORS FOR THE TEMPORARY USAGE OF ROOMS

The researcher found that there were some conflicts in the description by the informants of the use of some spaces. Some described the *mabeet* as a parental sleeping room and others described it as a multi-purpose room. The *makhlawan* was described either as a private place for someone or as a storage room. What was described as a *moakhkhar* in the *A. Khalil* museum was described as a *mabeet* in Nasif house.¹⁹ These discrepancies could be due to the changing function of rooms through time. It seems that if a room began its use as a parental sleeping space, it was called the *mabeet* and would continue to be called so even if the parents stopped using it for sleeping. The name of rooms thus does not give an exact indication of their functions.

There were certain occasions when some rooms were used for certain functions for limited periods of time. Firstly, when the newly married couple occupied a *mabeet*, it was mainly used as their bedroom and living room. Other activities such as cooking, eating and receiving guests could be shared with the groom's parent family in other rooms. When the couple had children they were allocated more rooms. At this stage, if the parents' house was not enough to contain all the sons and their families, some of them would leave and build a new house or rent in another building.

Secondly, when thousands of pilgrims came every year through the seaport of Jeddah, many stayed for several days in Jeddah before proceeding to Mecca which is 80km away. Many occupants evacuated as many rooms as they could to rent them to pilgrims. Furniture was taken to upper floors where the whole family stayed for a week or more.

Thirdly, the elderly needed to retreat from the noise caused by the high number of extended family members. They therefore had a special room, *makhlawan*. When the elderly person died, the room would still be called the *makhlawan* but used for other purposes.

¹⁹ Nasif house was one of the most beautiful houses of old Jeddah. It will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

4.7 COMPATIBILITY OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND COLLECTIVISTIC EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY

Social events such as weddings were very important occasions in the social life of traditional Jeddah. The wedding was not seen as simply an occasion for two people starting a new family life; rather as an occasion when social values and family identities were expressed and maintained. The costs of weddings depended on the status of the family. The wedding cost of a rich family could have reached up to \$300 dollars while the wedding cost of a poor family would cost from 10 to \$20 dollars (Al-Maabadi, 1993).

As Duncan (1981) argued, people in traditional cultures express their social status identity through social occasions (see Chapter 2). There were many ceremonies involved in completing a wedding. Two of these ceremonies, *milkah* and *dabash*, will be discussed below due to their relationship to the discussion.

Parents of the married couples decided the timing of *milkah* in which the legal procedures were performed, however, the bride still remained in her parent's house. On the night of the *milkah*, after wearing their best clothes, the groom and his male relatives went to the bride's house with the public notary. Many kinds of sweets specially prepared for this occasion were carried with the groom's party to be distributed to the guests in the bride's house once the public notary finished the legal procedures. Even though it was much easier to carry the sweets in boxes, they were put on large trays. When men walk to the bride's house passing through alleys with these large trays, everyone in the town would get an impression of the status of the groom's family.

After the *milkah*, the groom's family prepares a room in their house to be the home of the new couples. The only furniture that the groom's family was responsible for providing, if they could afford to, was the structure of the sitting bench (*karaweeet*). The bride's family meanwhile was responsible for providing the *dabash*, which was all the remaining furniture. It could take several months for the room to be prepared. Once the *dabash* was ready, it was sent in a celebratory manner. This time it is the bride's family who expressed their status. Carriers and men from the groom's family carried on their heads rugs, blankets, cushions, paraffin lamps, earthenware vessels, little boxes for the bride's personal belongings and so on. When they walked through the alleys, everyone

cheered and congratulated, children ran around and women watched from their home *rawasheen*.²⁰

These two occasions, the *milkah* and *dabash* were some of the many social occasions through which families expressed the identity of their social status. The physical environment, such as the *rowashan* and alleys in this case, supported the survival of cultural values.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The traditional building was highly compatible with its context. There was an on going process of interaction between use, cultural values, identity, climate, urban fabric and home environment spaces. The traditional building was tall to accommodate the high number of the extended family members and to catch as much air as possible. Its façade was full of beautiful *rawasheen* which allowed much air pass through, showed occupant's wealth and status and maintained relationships between neighbours. From inside, the *kharijah* was the open space in which women enjoyed the outdoors without leaving their home. The form of stairs minimised direct visual contacts between female family members and stranger men. Stairs, in addition to the *dahleez*, were also a cool place for the children of the extended family to sit and play. It was also found that spaces were compatible with activities through which people expressed their status in collectivistic means, as Duncan (1981) described.

In short, the home interior was highly compatible with use, values, climate and the urban fabric in Jeddah, i.e. practical and virtuous in Stage 3A. The direct expression of status and wealth by forms appeared on decorated doors and *rawasheen*. In the following chapter we will look at traditional furniture and the remaining home interior spaces, their compatibility and criticality.

²⁰ Jomah attributed this display of furniture to letting people know what is missing so that they would provide them as gifts.



CHAPTER 5

Traditional Home and Furniture

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 FURNITURE

- 5.2.1 Floor Covers
- 5.2.2 *tawaweel* and *Liyanat*
- 5.2.3 *Madafi'* and *Masanid*
- 5.2.4 Built-in Shelves
- 5.2.5 *Karaweet*
- 5.2.6 *Takhtat ashshai*
- 5.2.7 Tea Tables
- 5.2.8 *Tabliyyah* and *Maddah*
- 5.2.9 *Saisam* Box and *Sahharah*

5.3 INTERIOR SPACES

- 5.3.1 Ground Floors
 - 5.3.1.1 *Maq'ad*
 - 5.3.1.2 *Makhlawan*
- 5.3.2 Intermediate Floors
 - 5.3.2.1 *Suffah*
 - 5.3.2.2 *Majlis*
 - 5.3.2.3 *Muakhkhar*
 - 5.3.2.4 *Bitalma*
 - 5.3.2.5 *Mabeet*
- 5.3.3 Third Floor
- 5.3.4 Roof Terrace Floor

5.4 CRITICALITY

5.5 COMPATIBILITY

5.5 CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion of the traditional built environment in Chapter 4 started with an analysis of the context and its influence on some aspects in the home environment. The emphasis of this chapter is on furniture and interior spaces. Because the identification of places depends on the identification of things (Campbell, 1995), the description and analysis in this chapter starts with furniture, and is then followed by interior spaces. In order to develop a complete image of the traditional home environment, one house (Nasif house) is discussed in detail. Before concluding, issues related to compatibility and criticality are highlighted.

5.2 FURNITURE

Furniture in traditional Jeddah, as will be discussed below, was minimal, simple and multi-functional. It was made of wood, textile, and/or palm fibres and most of it was made locally.¹ Rugs, mirrors, chests, and some utensils were imported from India, China, Europe, and neighbouring countries such as Kuwait, Iraq and Egypt (Al-Maabadi, 1993). There was no electricity. A few rich families had small generators which were used for lighting in special occasions, such as weddings.

5.2.1 Floor Covers

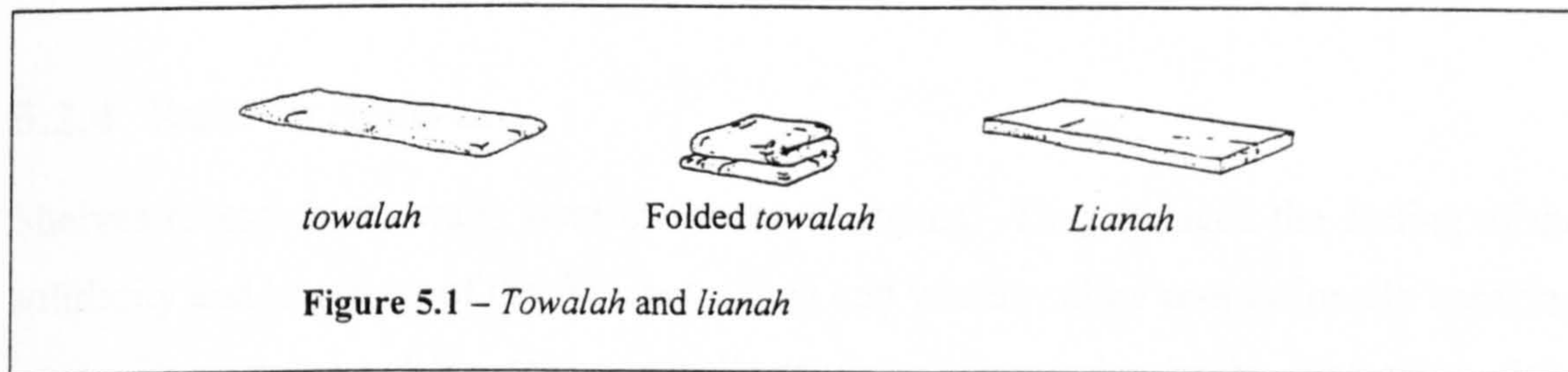
It was common to walk barefoot around the house except in the *dahleez*, *bitalma* and the stairs. Most of the rooms were furnished with mats made locally of palm fibres or imported straw mats, called *haseer*, from India (Jumah, 1992). On top of these mats rugs were placed. Rugs were not available in large sizes, so a room might have several rugs or *haseer*. Occupants who could afford to covered the straw mats with Persian rugs.

5.2.2 *Tawaweel* and *Liyanat*

The *towalah* (single of *tawaweel*) is a cushion positioned around the room and used for sitting and sleeping. Its size (around 180 X 70 cm) is determined by the human dimension. It is large enough to comfort a sleeping person and small enough to be carried and stored whenever necessary. The length of the last *towalah* in the room

¹ For information about craftsmanship and trade in old Jeddah see Appendix 7.

could be adjusted to avoid leaving a gap with the wall. The *liyanah* was the same size as the *towalah* but filled with sponge. It was lower in quality, and thus was used only by family members in their zone. Because they were easy to fold, many *tawaweel* and *liyanat* were stored away, mainly in the corner of a room, to be used whenever necessary (Figure 5.1). Both were made locally by upholsterers. When the frequent use of *tawaweel* hardens their cotton filling, they were taken to the upholsterer for the cotton to be teased.



The *towalah* could have been the most practical piece of furniture in the traditional house due to its portability and multi-use. A room that is used for sitting could be transformed within a few minutes to be used for sleeping by rearranging the *tawaweel*. Therefore the *tawaweel* were used almost in all rooms. It is considered to be in Stage 2 of compatibility where form is influenced by use.

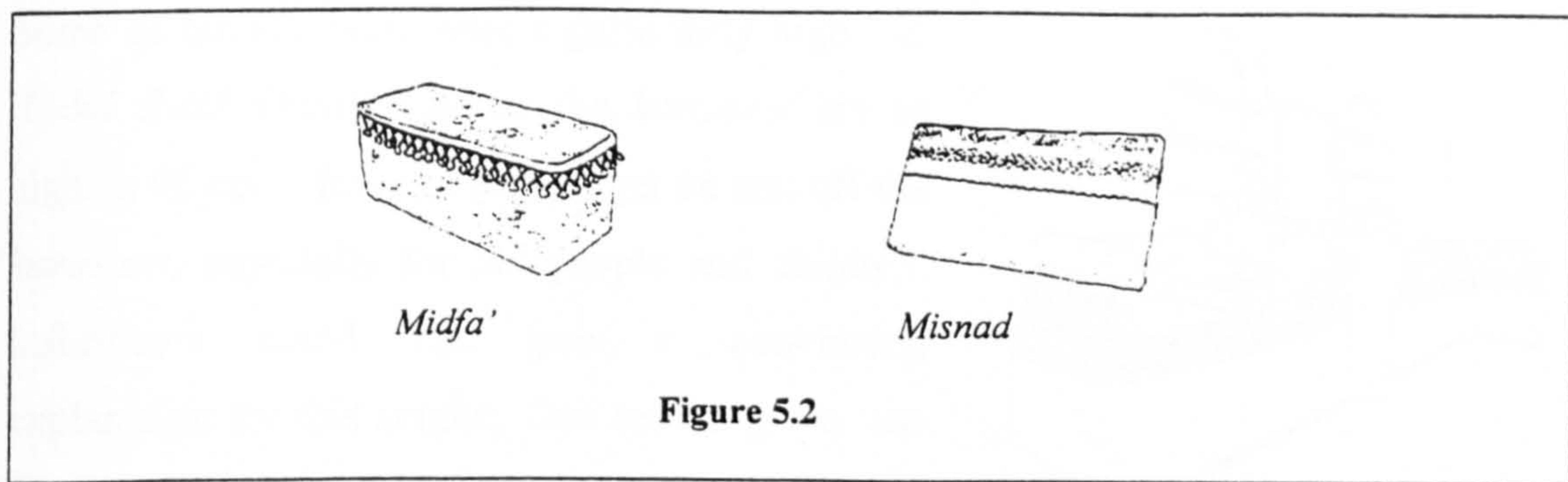
5.2.3 *Madafi'* and *Masanid*

Back support cushions, called *masanid*, and side support cushions, called *madafi'* (Figure 5.2), were put on the *karaweel*, *rawasheen*, and *tawaweel*. They were covered with thick floral red² patterned cloth called *damask*³ (Maghribi, 1982). Because the removal of *masanid* covers for cleaning was a difficult task, long patterned white cloths which could be removed easily covered the upper half of the *masanid*.⁴ They were also made locally by upholsterers.

² People of old Jeddah liked the colour red and used it for their clothes and *karaweel*. The reason for this is not precisely known. However Al-Ansari (1982) cited another writer's opinion who attributed the preference for red to the prevailing red coral stone on Jeddah's sea shores.

³ This name is used as well in English for a rich patterned fabric of cotton, linen, silk, or wool (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). Maghribi (1982) pointed out that it was named as such because this cloth was first made in Damascus. The researcher noted that the same type of cloth was used in Morocco and Turkey for the same purpose.

⁴ In contrast to the *tawaweel*, the *masanid* and *madafi'* were hard. They were filled with compressed cotton. Accordingly they were used only for back or side support and not for sleeping as pillows. Another possible reason



5.2.4 Built-in Shelves

Shelves recessed into walls were in almost all rooms. They reduced the feeling of the solidity and hugeness of the five metre high and white wall by proportionally breaking it up. They were used for storing utensils as well as decorating walls. The sides of the shelves' panels were sometimes trimmed with the same tassels with which the *karaweet* were trimmed.

5.2.5 Karaweet

The *karaweet* (Figure 5.3) were the most common sitting furniture. A *karaweetah* (single of *karaweet*) was around 50 to 90 cm in height, 80 cm in width, and not more than 2 m in length. They were made of wooden frames by local joiners, then covered with a thick cloth called *sijani*. Over the *sijani tawaweel*, which were covered with *damask*, were arranged. Those who could afford filled the *tawaweel* with cotton; otherwise they were filled with granules called *tiraf* taken from desert shrubs (Maghribi, 1982). If finances permitted, the cushions were covered with Persian rugs; if not they were left as they were. When the *karaweet* were put together, they would constitute a long continuous sitting platform, most frequently in a U or L shape, thus leaving the centre of the room for the freedom of use. People furnished their rooms with *karaweet* whenever they could afford to. They were positioned around the *majlis* to make a continuous peripheral seating with the *rawasheen*, and were covered with the same covers of the *rawasheen*, making a large sitting area.

for their hardness could have been to enhance the tidy appearance of the *karaweet* because all the *masanid* and *madafi* would be equal in size and shape. A third reason might have been because it would be easier to pile them up like boxes for storing, which was a frequent practice.

Some of the *karaweet* were significantly high. In *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum the *karaweet* are as high as 90 cm.⁵ It is not easy to get on and off the *karaweet*, especially for old people and children. Informants could not give a convincing explanation for this height. One reason given was because people used the space beneath the *karaweet* for storing family belongings. This explanation does not seem reasonable because

most houses, especially of rich families, had plenty of other storage areas.⁶ Another reason given for the height of the *karaweet* was because they had to be on the same level as the *rowshan*. This reason might be valid on the ground floor where the *rowshan* was high to maintain privacy from pedestrians. However *rawasheen* of upper floors did not have to be high. A third reason mentioned was to keep the sitting people away from insects. This implies that traditional houses were full of crawling insects. The only insects that intruded into the life of the people of Jeddah were mosquitoes, which could fly to any height in the house.⁷

The unexplained height of some *karaweet* could be due to cultural rather than utilitarian reasons. One such reason might have been to have the sitting person on the same height as the standing person (Figure 5.4). It is a tradition that the seated person stands up to greet and shake the hand of someone entering the room as a sign of respect to him, and also not to make him have to stoop over. Sometimes, however, when the person is seated on the floor and cannot stand up for some reason, the norm is to say "*az Allah*

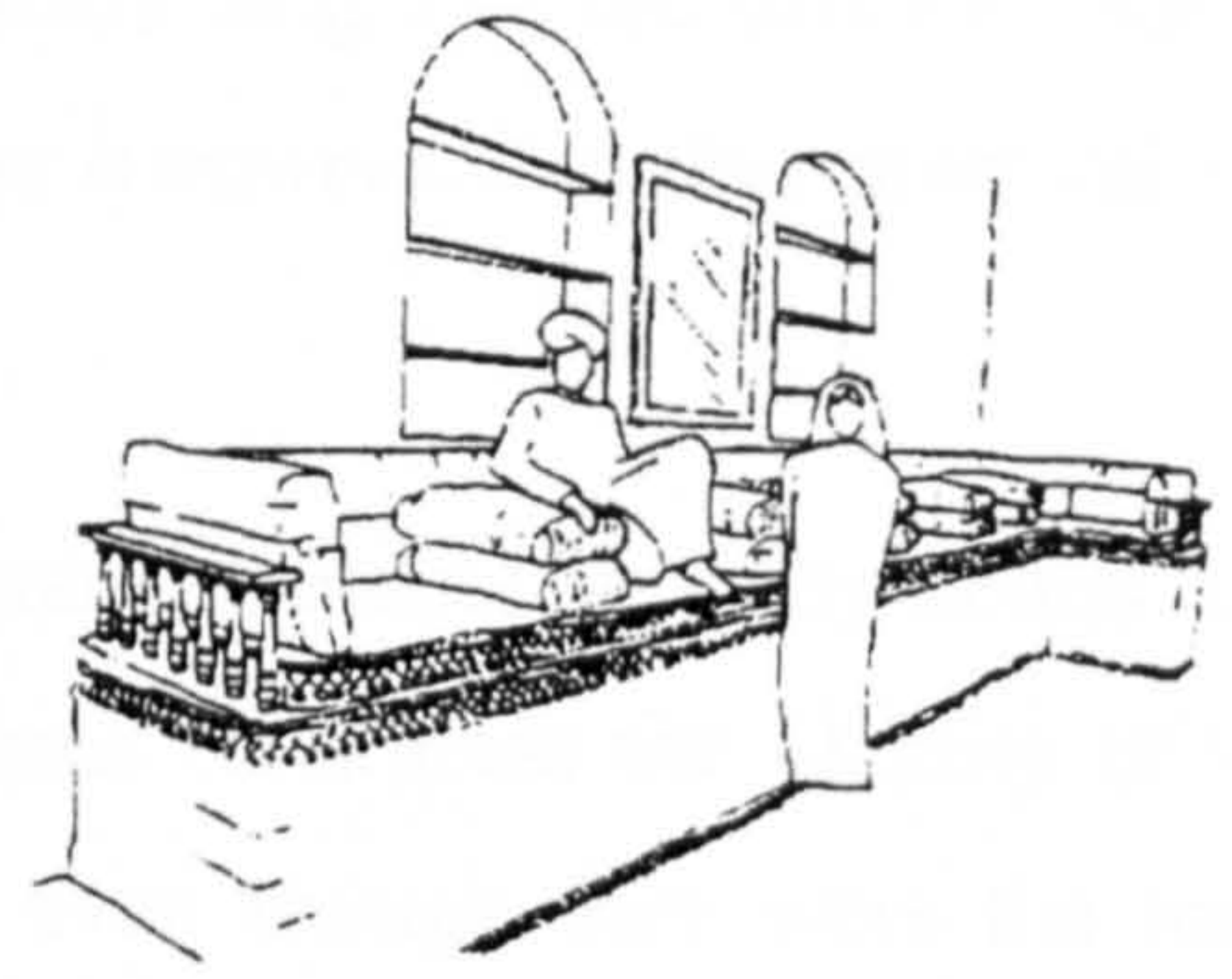


Figure 5.3 - *Karaweet* and built-in shelves



Figure 5.4 - The cultural reason of the high *karaweet*

⁵ There are many cases of lower *karaweet*. One of the informants (Dr. A. Nasif) mentioned that the height of the *karaweet* in *Abdul Rouf Khalil* museum is exaggerated. However other informants did not dispute the height of the *karaweet* when they were asked about the reason for it.

⁶ In fact according to one informant, Ms. Badriyah, the *karaweet* of the *majlis* were not even used for storing anything. Only in other rooms was the space under the *karaweet* used as storage.

⁷ It is expected that the informants would not know the actual reason for the height of the *karaweet*. Charlisley (1992) in his investigation of wedding cakes has found that even though wedding cakes have been powerful symbols in wedding parties for many decades, the ideas of people about this phenomenon were few, little developed and not of any wide concern.

maqamag" (may Allah raise your status). The significant height of the *karaweeet* solves this problem. If this is the reason for the height of the *karaweeet*, it is thus practical and virtuous, i.e. Stage 3A of compatibility.

Chairs and sitting benches throughout history in many cultures were symbolic and highly decorated. The chair has been used as a means to express the identity of the person sitting on it. As for the case of *karaweeet*, even though they were the most common sitting furniture in Jeddah, they did not have as strong a symbolic function as was the case of chairs in many cultures. The continuity of the *karaweeet* around the room and the sameness of decoration did not emphasise any part of them over other parts. The most important part of them was determined by the location not by the decoration. The best location was in the centre of the *rowshan*, this being the most comfortable place in terms of micro-climate.

The arrangement of *karaweeet* as a continuous sitting platform without arms, which may hinder shifting positions, and the portability of the *madafi*' and *tawaweel* increased the freedom of users. They could sit straight, lie on their sides, stretch their legs whichever way they liked, and adjusted their positions to look at each other (Figure 5.5).

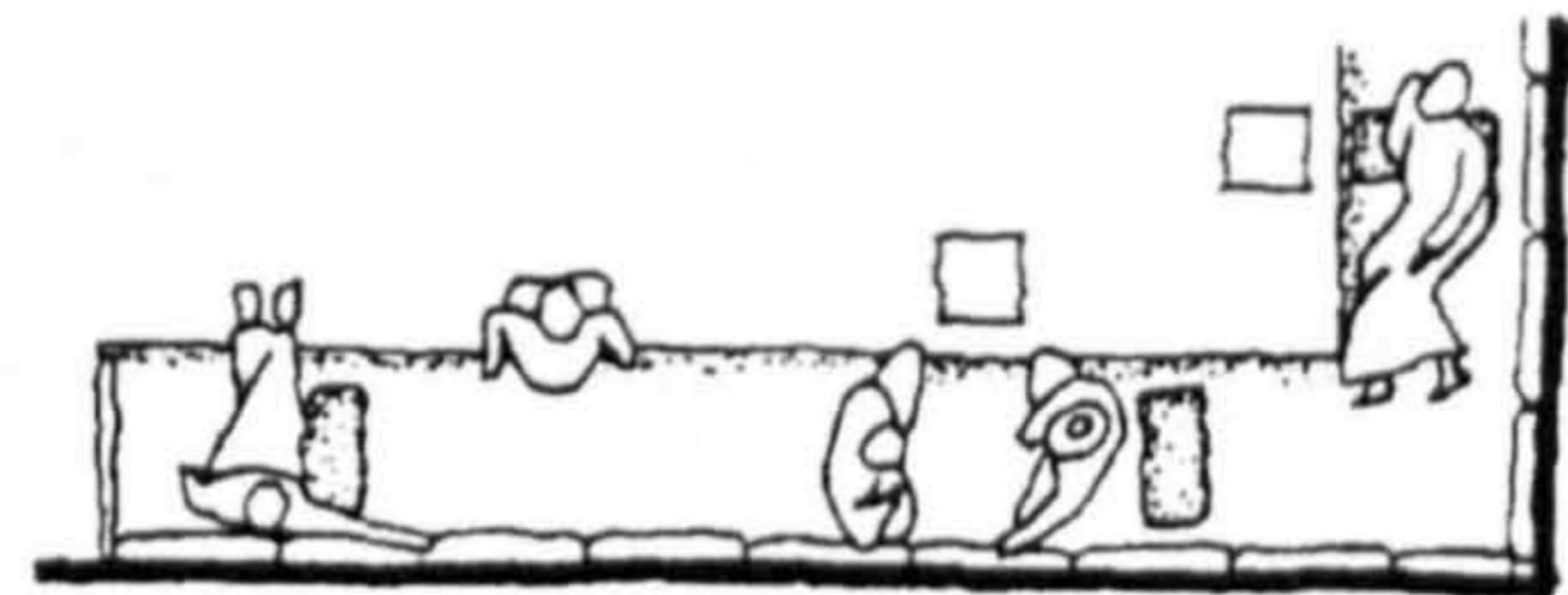


Figure 5.5 - The freedom of sitting positions on the *karaweeet*

5.2.6 *Takhtat Ashshai*

The *takhtat ashshai* (tea lower case) (Figure 5.6) is approximately 30 x 70 x 40 cm. It has little drawers for keeping tea, sugar, little plates, spoons and ashtrays. It is light and can be carried from one room to another. It was placed in the centre adjacent to the wall that faced the seated guests. On top of *takhtat ashshai* little tea glasses with little plates and a *simawar* (a boiling water container) were placed. Under the *takhtat ashshai* a sheet of plastic was put to protect the rug from any spillage.



Figure 5.6 - *Takhtat ashshai*

People in Jeddah prepared tea in front of their guests. One of the informants mentioned that, when people started to prepare tea in their new modern kitchens, one of her friends described that as disgusting. In Chapter 1 different aspects of the process of hosting in Bedouin culture was discussed. However the significance of making coffee in front of guests was not recognised until the fieldwork revealed a similar phenomenon in the traditional culture of Jeddah. Even though Bedouins could prepare the Arabic coffee anywhere around the tent away from guests, it has been the norm to prepare it in front of them. Cardamom is an expensive spice that a Bedouin shows his generosity by putting much of it in the coffee in front of his guests.⁸ The good smell of coffee while roasted could also be another reason. Therefore making coffee in front of guests is an expression of hospitality. The same was true in the traditional culture of Jeddah. The smell of the freshly prepared tea and the sound of stirring sugar in the little *fanajeen* could have been part of expressing hospitality. This made *takhtat ashshai* the focal point wherever guests were. It was covered with a decorated cloth. On top of it the celebratory design of the *simawar* increases its importance. The *takhtat ashshai* and the *simawar* are considered practical, virtuous and symbolic in Stage 4 of compatibility where serving tea (use), displaying the decorated *takhtat ashshai* and *simawar* (identity) and hospitality (value) are maintained.

5.2.7 Tea Tables

When tea was prepared, one of the family members distributed little tea glasses called *fanajeen* (single *finjan*) to guests by handing them or putting them directly on locally made little tables (around 15 x 20 x 15 cm) (5.7). On top of each tea lower case were a little cloth and an ashtray in addition to a *finjan*. If guests were sitting on *karaweet*, the tea tables were high, up to the level of *karaweet*.

In occasions when many guests were invited and each one would drink more than one *finjan*, the host would move forward and backward for second and more rounds of refills. Therefore tables were supposed to be as little as possible to ease the host's free movement. The host showed his/her guests that he/she was



Figure 5.7 – A little tea table
Source: Based on a picture in Al-Muqadimah: 369.

⁸ Many Bedouin poets described the cardamom as a character of hospitality in their poems.

always alert and responsive to what made them comfortable. Once a *finjan* was empty he/she insisted on making another refill. Moving forward and backward, as discussed in chapter 1, and the insistence for more refills until the guest insisted to stop was an expression of hospitality. If the *finjan* was large, this insistence of other rounds of tea would disappear.

Hospitality was also expressed by choosing the person who prepare the tea. If guests were women, the housewife would prepare the tea. If she could not for any reason, the best looking and best dressed female maid would. A second family member was supposed to serve the tea starting with the most honourable guest.

The forms of the *finjan* and the little table were practical and virtuous, i.e. compatible with use (drinking tea) and value (expressing hospitality), in Stage 3A of compatibility.

5.2.8 *Tabliyyah* and *Maddah*

The *tabliyyah*⁹ is a locally made low circular table, around 1m or less in diameter and 30-40 cm in height. It was used for eating and sometimes for meal preparation. Five people could fit easily around the *tabliyyah*. If their number was more, they had to use the *maddah*. The *maddah* is a sheet of plastic or cloth that could be folded according to the needed size. A circular mat made of plaited palm fibre, called *mifattah*, could be put on top of the *tabliyyah*, or on the floor, for eating.

According to Maghribi (1982), the *tabliyyah* was highly decorated and used by guests. The *tabliyyah*, little tables and *takhtat ashshai* were considered one set for hosting guests. This set was socially considered so valuable that every house of newly married couples was furnished with it (Maghribi, 1982). The *tabliyyah* is considered to be practical and symbolic, Stage 3B of compatibility.

5.2.9 *Saisam* Box and *Sahharah*

The most valuable piece of furniture was the *saisam* box. It was impressively decorated (Figure 5.8). It was around 160 cm in length, 70 cm in width, and 90 cm in height. Family clothes were put in different cloth bags which were arranged inside the box. People did not iron their clothes before wearing them. Easy-to-use electric irons were

not available. A heavy charcoal iron was borrowed and used on only very important occasions such as weddings.

The best and most expensive of these boxes were imported from India. Cheaper ones were made in Jeddah and Mecca. Another type of the same size but lower quality was called *sahharah*. It was used by the lower income families for the same purpose or by rich families for keeping sweets and spices in the *murakkab* (Maghribi, 1982).

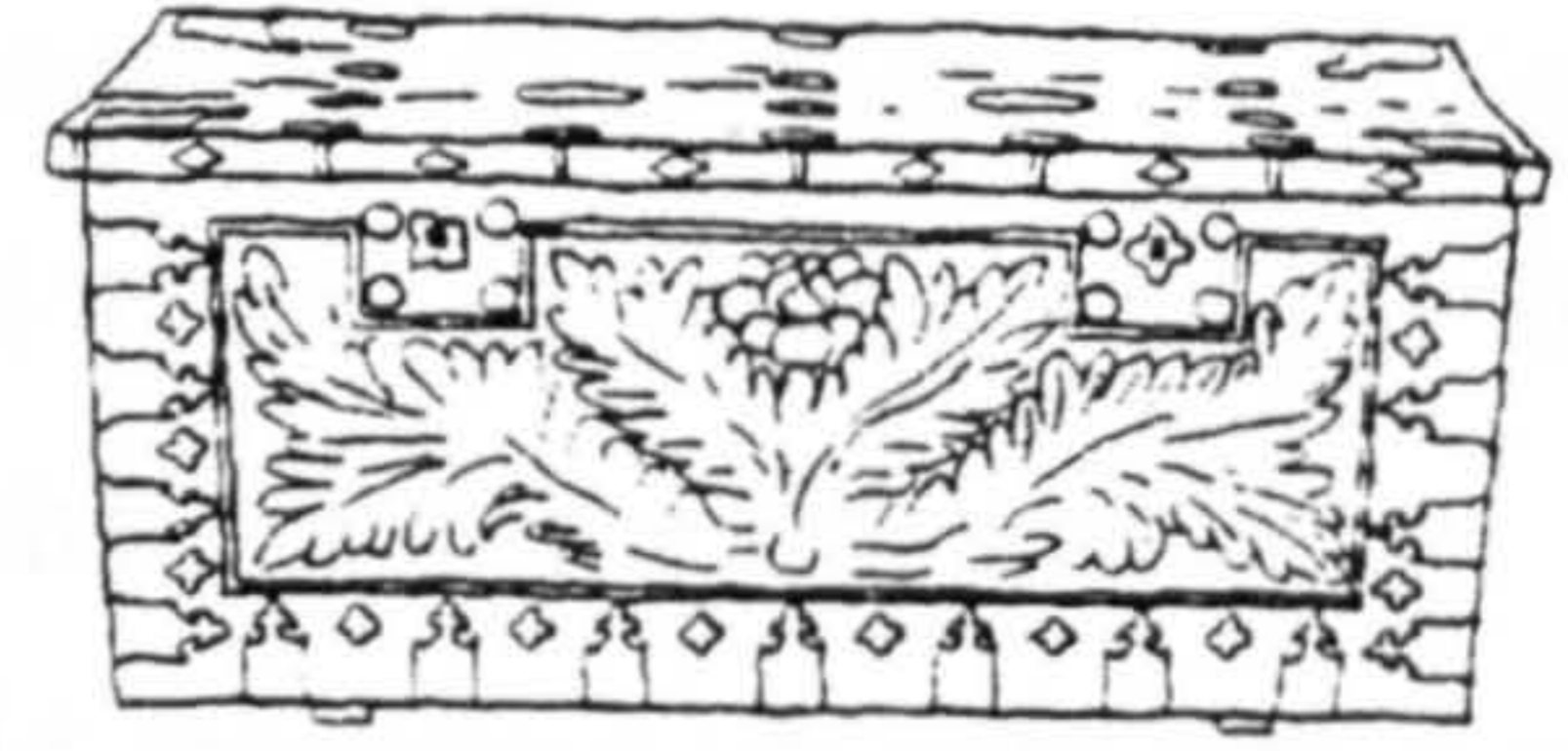


Figure 5.8 – An example of a *saisam* box.

Source: Based on a picture Al-Muqadimah: 365.

Even though the *saisam* box was used for storing family belongings, it was displayed to guests in the *suffah*. It has been argued in Chapter 1 that communication between people and objects started with fulfilling utilitarian needs. If the *saisam* box started as a container of the family's private belongings, and thus its place was in the private zone of the house, why was it displayed in the guest zone?

The reason for possessing the *saisam* box in the first place could have been due to its symbolic significance and not to contain the family's belongings. The *saisam* box has been used throughout history in many cultures.¹⁰ Therefore when it was imported from other countries, it could have been imported firstly as a decorative item, then used as a container in the second place. In other words, if the *saisam* box was for the family private use, it should have remained in the private zone. The variety of *saisam* boxes coming from different parts of the world with different costs and qualities made them capable of expressing the occupant's wealth and status and, as a result, they were displayed to guests in the *suffah*. The *saisam* box is considered to be practical and symbolic in Stage 3B of compatibility.

5.3 INTERIOR SPACES

The traditional house of an extended family in Jeddah consisted of three types of floors. The ground floor was the most public and was used mainly by men during day and by male servants for sleeping at night. The top roof terrace floor was the most airy, and

⁹ The name could be mistakenly attributed to the English word "table." The *tabliyah* has been used by Muslims for centuries. The name could be taken from "*tablah*" which means drum.

¹⁰ Chests were used throughout history starting from ancient Egypt, Greece, and the Roman empire.

thus was used during hot nights for sleeping by family members. The *murakkab* (kitchen) with a storage area was also located on this floor. The intermediate floors consisted of compartments for the regular daily activities of the nuclear families. Each floor was divided into compartments depending on the number of families. A nuclear family compartment did not have certain number and types of rooms such as the modern apartment which have at least one bedroom, kitchen, living room and so on. A nuclear family, especially a newly married couple, could manage with only one room until their income or availability of rooms allowed them to expand and occupy another.

As it was discussed in the previous section, the traditional furniture was a few, simple and practical to reduce the high criticality of the home environment. Most rooms were furnished with *karaweet* and/or *tawaweel*. The means to create stately and formal rooms as receptions for guests was limited to items of decorations, which were also minimal as discussed in Chapter 4. The difference between a symbolic and a practical room was in the decoration and uniformity of cloth patterns of *tawaweel*, *masanid*, etc., the size and decoration of *rowshan* and the number and size of framed pictures and mirrors.

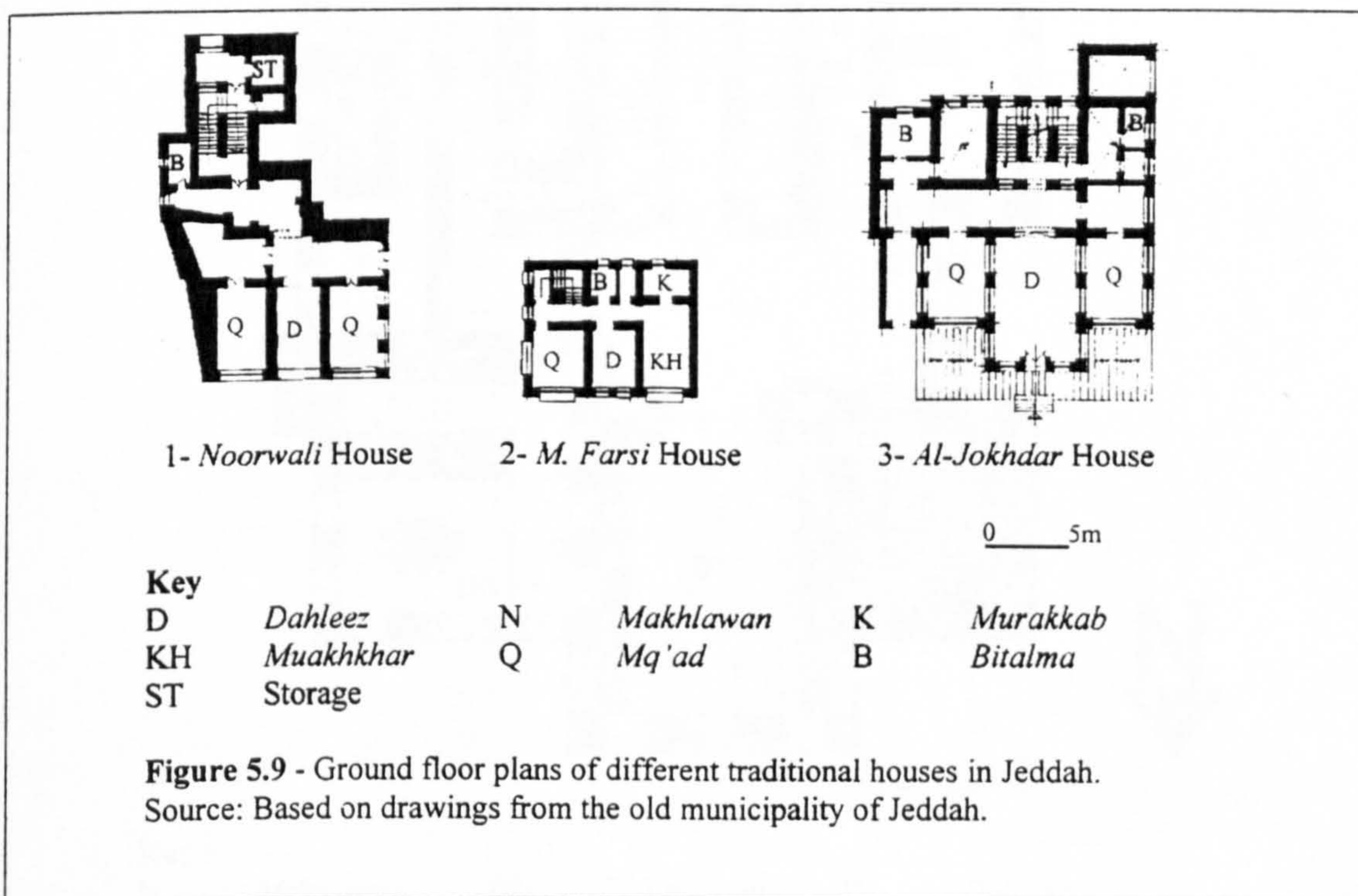
In the following, interior spaces of the traditional houses and their furniture will be discussed. To develop as complete image as possible, a detailed analysis will be conducted on one house, Nasif house.¹¹

5.3.1 Ground Floor

A pattern of space organisation existed in all ground floor plans regardless of their sizes and shapes. Firstly was the centrality of the *dahleez* with the flanked two rooms, called *maq'a'id* (plural of *maq'ad*). Even houses that had irregular plots, such as house 1 (Figure 5.9) had this order to so that a symmetrical front façade was achieved. Secondly behind the *dahleez* a circulation area, from which other parts of the house could be reached, was always located. The *dahleez*, as a transitional area, did not have any direct contact except with this circulation area.

¹¹ Most houses of traditional Jeddah have been demolished. From the few remaining houses only very few are maintained as they were. The traditional houses of all informants were demolished except the house in which Nasif's family lived. It was an excellent chance to meet someone who speaks about his house which is still existing. For background information about the house, its detailed floor plans and owner see Appendix 8.

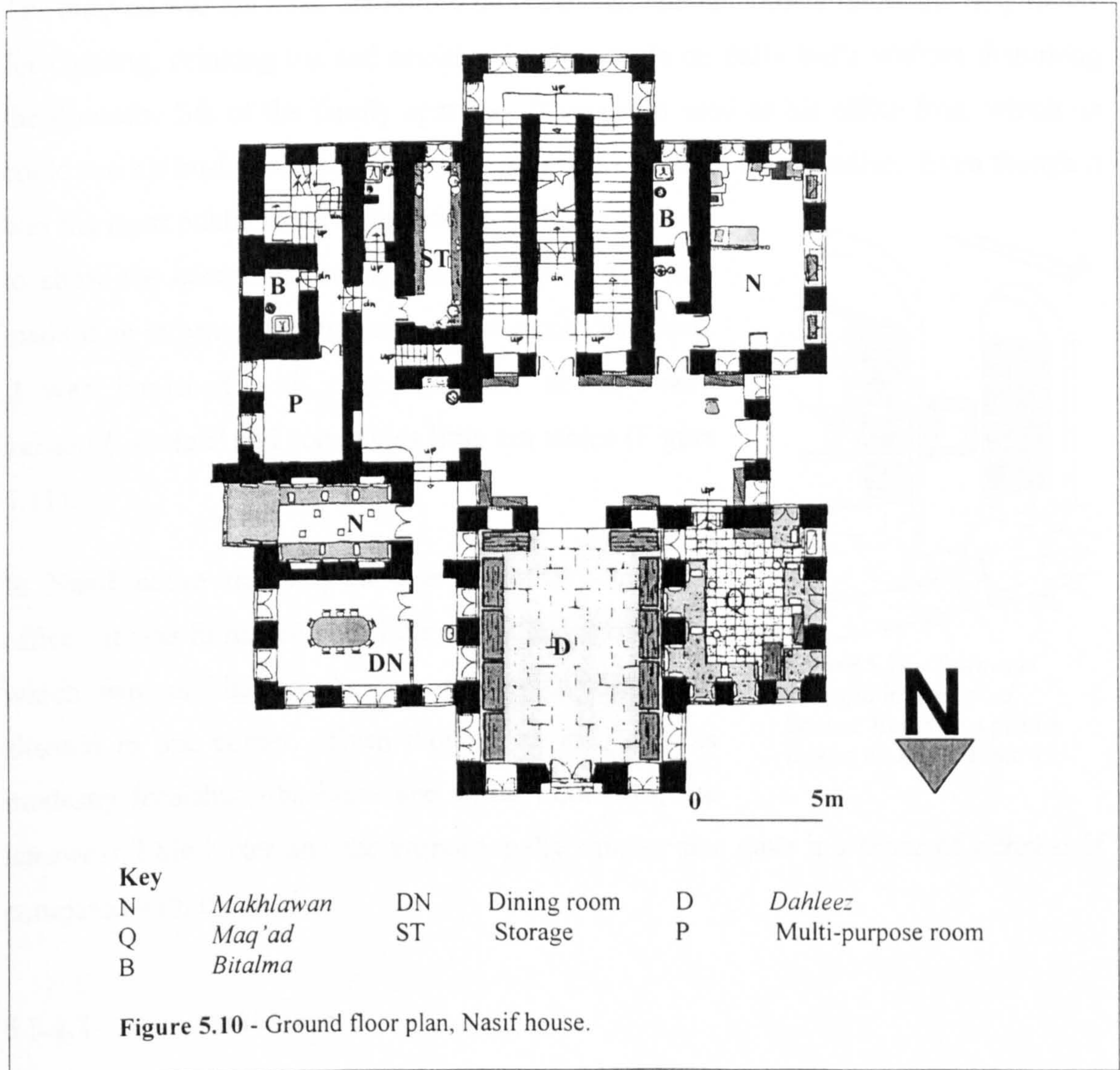
The ground floor of Nasif house (Figure 5.10) was mainly used for receiving guests and running the occupant's business and official affairs. The front door leading to the *dahleez* was open most of the time. The absence of decoration and furniture, the flagstone floor, and the hugeness of the space gave the *dahleez* a strong sense of emptiness and hardness.¹² The wooden sitting benches around the *dahleez* were kept for lending to community members on their social occasions. They were there for storing rather than for use. Beautiful wooden screens, fixed around the *dahleez* to let the air pass through to adjacent areas, were the only decoration.



The *dahleez* was connected to the following transitional area with a wide arched opening. Bookshelves were arranged around this area. From it a *maq'ad*, *makhlawan* with its *bitalma*, service area, and the main stairs could be reached. The importance of this central area was emphasised by having its own door to the outside. This door was always closed except on certain occasions such as the annual pilgrimage, and weddings.

¹² The reasons for this quality of space were mentioned in Chapter 4.

When guests were present, women used the main entrance and went directly to the main stairs.¹³ When the occupant received many guests from around the Islamic world¹⁴ on some occasions such as pilgrimage, the ground floor and some rooms on upper floors would be occupied by many guests. Family members, especially women, used the service stairs which were accessible from outside through a little door in the basement level.



¹³ Khan (1981) stated that mainly women used the side entrance of the central transitional area. A close look at the floor plan reveals that using the side door would expose women to any men who might be sitting in the *maq'ad*. The informant (Dr. Nasif) confirmed that women used the main entrance.

¹⁴ The owner of the house was an important political figure in the region. See Appendix 8.

5.3.1.1 *Maq'ad*

The *maq'ad* was adjacent to the *dahleez* and had at least two *shababeek* (windows) overlooking the street. There were large screened openings on the wall between the *maq'ad* and the *dahleez* to maximise the ventilation. The house could have more than one *maq'ad* depending on its size and the wealth of the occupant.

The *maq'ad* was the most used room by the owner and his close friends and neighbours for chatting, drinking tea and smoking hubble-bubble on daily basis without disturbing the domestic life of the family upstairs. It was also used as his office from which he could run his business, sleep during the afternoon, or store merchandise. Even though it was the most public room in the house, and thus the best to show the occupants' status, the variety of activities made it an informal setting that was not much decorated. It was furnished with rugs, *karaweeet* or *tawaweel*, *masanid*, *madafi'* and sometimes little tea tables (Figure 5.11).



Figure 5.11 - *Tawaweel* arranged in a *maq'ad*.

Source: Based on a picture in Aba Al-Khail, 1988: 77.

In Nasif house the *maq'ad* was like the occupant's office. It was furnished with little tables and a *karaweeet* which was as high as the *rawasheen*. A desk was situated in one corner. Even though the *maq'ad* was modestly furnished, the black and white floor tiles, the *karaweeet*, little boxes and the proportionally smaller size gave it a sense of richness if compared with the *dahleez*.

5.3.1.2 *Makhlawan*

The literal meaning of *makhlawan* is the place of being alone. It could be located in any floor. The range of its usage was wide. A common usage was a retreat from others. It was used by the elderly to get some peace, by guests to rest, for example, after lunch or dinner and as a storage room. Its furniture was similar to that of the *maq'ad*.

The ground floor *makhlawan* in Nasif house was situated opposite the *maq'ad*. It was used mainly by the occupant for taking afternoon naps and storing whatever was

necessary for his business. This room was also equipped with a gas refrigerator.¹⁵ The occupant and his guests used the *bitalma* (equal to the bathroom) of the *makhlawan*.

The transitional area also led to a little lobby from which a second *makhlawan* and a dining room could be reached. Only guests used these two rooms. The dining table was not common in traditional Jeddah; however Nasif's family had to have one because they received guests from other countries. After eating in the dining room, guests could wash their hands in the washbasin¹⁶ and relax, sleep and drink tea in the *makhlawan*. Opposite these two rooms, the little lobby leads to a group of spaces composed of a narrow corridor leading to a storage room, a *bitalma* and a multi-purpose room used as a storage or a sleeping room for male servants.

The main stairs were very shallow that the informant's grandfather could go up and down easily riding a horse. Thus the stairs occupied an area at least four times larger than that of the service stairs.

5.3.2 Intermediate Floors

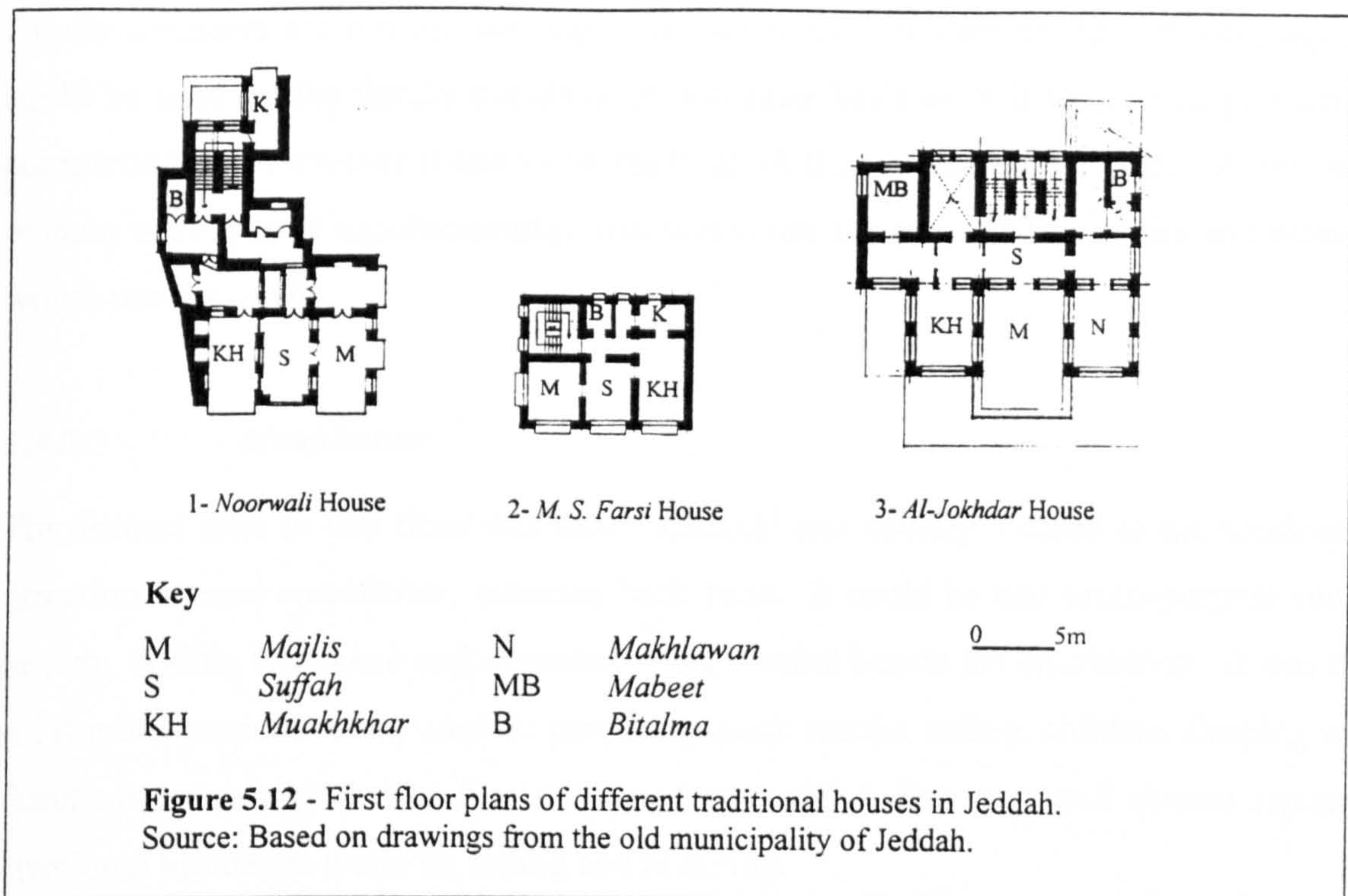
On each floor, except the ground and roof terrace floors, there were two zones. The first was a preferable airy zone usually located in the north-west direction, named *wajhah*, meaning front zone. It consisted of two rooms, a *suffah* and a *majlis*.

5.3.2.1 *Suffah*

The *suffah* was a relatively small room usually located between the *muakhkhar* and the stairs from one side and the *majlis* from the other side (Figure 5.12). It was used as a transitional area and as an informal reception area for close relative female guests. It was furnished with a decorated *saisam* box and *karaweeet* or *tawaweel*. If the number of visitors were high and the *majlis* was not big enough to contain them the *suffah* would be used as an extension. In this case, the door between the two rooms would be left open and the whole area was considered as one large sitting space. Formal guests, i.e. guests who required formal treatment and shown much respect, such as elders usually sat in the *majlis*, which was more decorated, while younger adults sat in the *suffah*.

¹⁵ Refrigerator were not common in those days.

¹⁶ The common way of washing hands before and after eating before the introduction of the piped water system was by a jug and little portable basin. A washbasin connected to a little tank was used in *bitalma*.



5.3.2.2 *Majlis*

The *majlis* was the largest room on the first floor. It was usually located towards the main facade to catch as much air as possible (Jomah, 1992; Maghribi, 1982). It was the main reception room. It was always kept clean and tidy mainly for hosting formal guests.

Even though it was not as public as the *maq'ad* where men met regularly, the *majlis* was the most decorated room in the house. Large framed mirrors were displayed on walls. It had on its recessed built-in shelves the best decorated items that the family could afford such as Chinese plates (Jumah, 1992). The *karaweet*, *masanid* and *madafi'* were always covered with damask that have the same pattern creating a uniformity of appearance. Trimming the built-in-shelves' edges of the same tassels that were trimmed around the *karaweet* enhanced this uniformity.

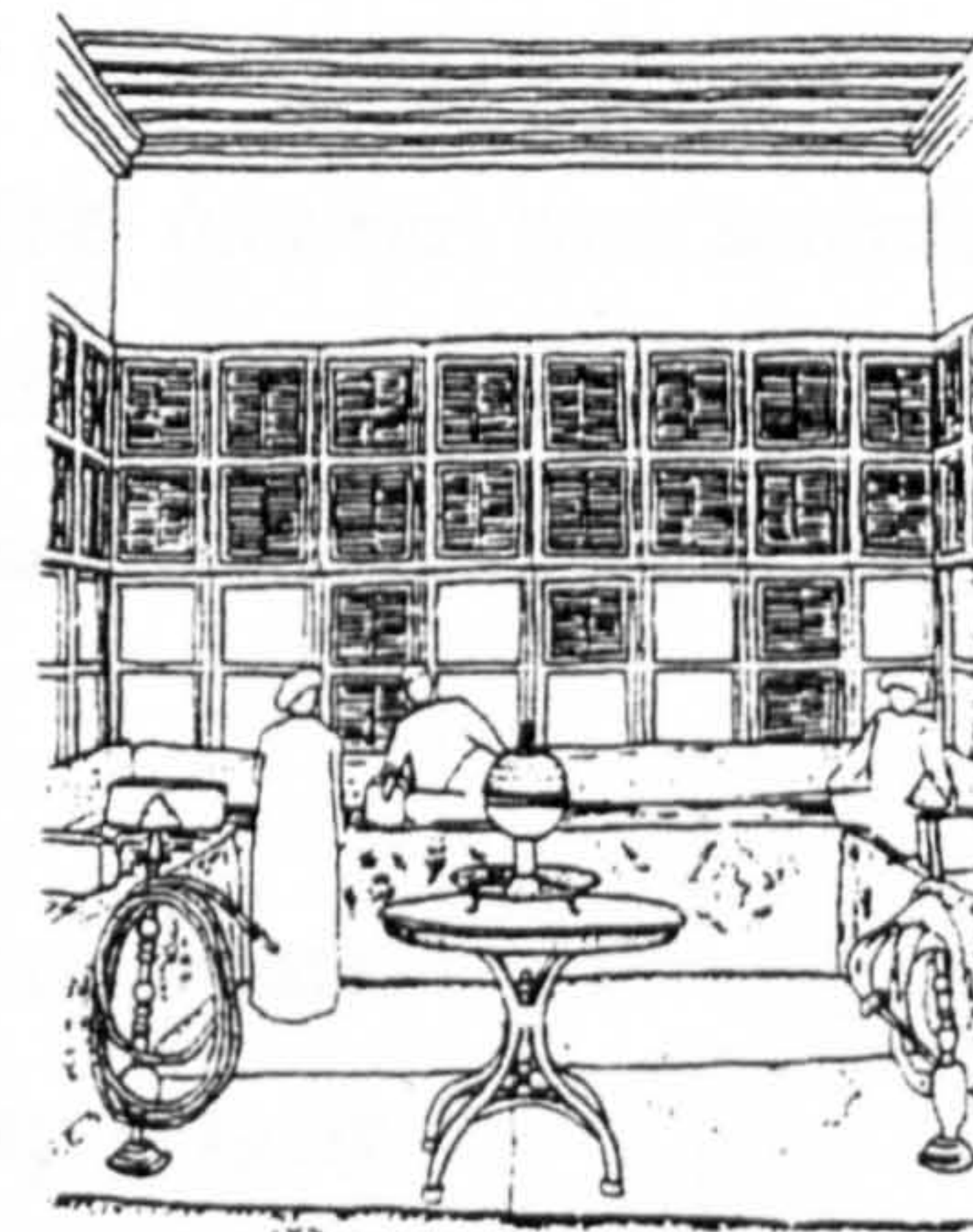


Figure 5.13 - An example of a *majlis* with a high and continuous *karaweet*.

Source: Based on a picture in Aba Al-Khail, 1988: 71.

Family members did not use the *majlis* in their daily activities except for sleeping. It could be used by the family members on a regular basis only if they lived in a small compartment.¹⁷ However it had to be ready at all times to receive guests. If men and women were invited simultaneously, men would use the *maq'ad* downstairs and women would use the *majlis*.

5.3.2.3 *Muakhkhar*

The second zone in this floor was more practical and usually located in the south-east direction, named *muakhkhar*, meaning back zone. It could be one multi-purpose room or two. A little *murakkab* and a *bitalma*, were located beside the *muakhkhar*. It was the most multi-purpose room, used for preparing quick snacks, eating, children sleeping and family entertaining. It was furnished modestly with Indian rugs and *liyanat* (sponge cushions) beside the walls for sitting and reclining.

5.3.2.4 *Bitalma*

The *bitalma* (equal to the bathroom), literally meaning the house of water, was located close to the *suffah* and easily accessible from the stairs for the *saqqah* (water carrier) to enter without invading the privacy of the family. The *bitalma* was sometimes composed of two small rooms. The first was used for keeping the *zeer* (water container), hanging clothes on wall hangers and washing hands, or purifying for prayers using a jug and a little washbasin.

The second adjacent room had a hole in the floor for human waste. Sometimes it was equipped with a stone basin and a tap (Figure 5.14). The floor of *bitalma* was paved with gypsum to prevent water from leaking to lower floors. On entering, wooden slippers were worn. This room was also equipped with a circular metallic washbasin used for washing clothes and bathing children (Maghribi, 1982).



Figure 5.14 – A built in basin in *bitalma*.

¹⁷ One of the informants lived in a little compartment which contained a *majlis* and another room. They even did not have a *murakkab*. The housewife cooked on a movable *kanoon* (see Appendix 6).

5.3.2.5 *Mabeet*

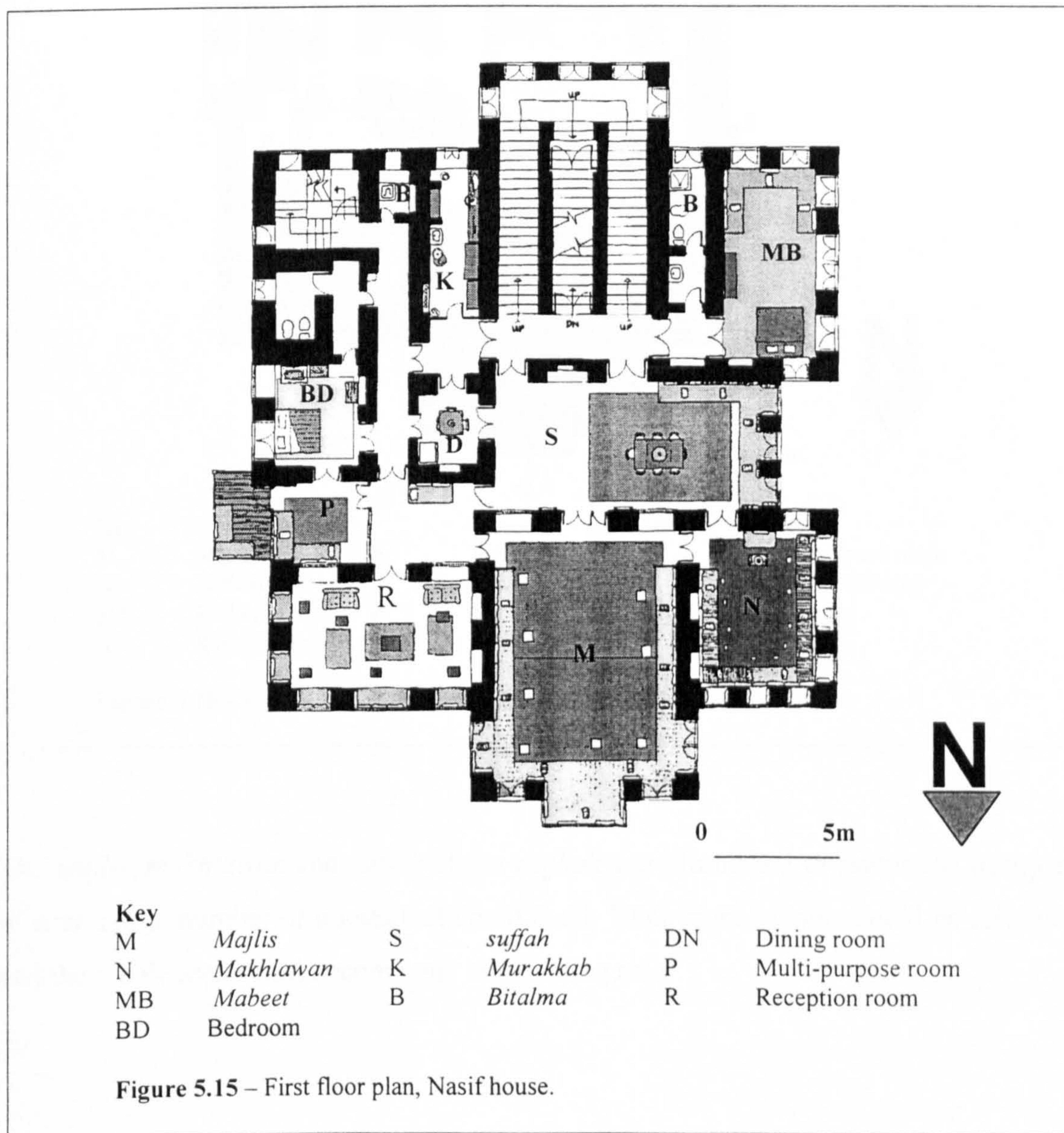
The *mabeet* was usually located at the back of the house and opposite to the *muakhkhar*. It literally means the place for sleeping and was mainly used for parents' sleeping. If the *mabeet* was on the top floor, it was used for supporting the family's activities during hot days and nights when this floor was used more often. Such activities were drinking tea, children playing and storing cushions. Due to its relative isolation from the rest of the house, the *mabeet* was commonly occupied by an occupant's adult relative who did not have a spouse, for example a widowed sister.

Anyone approaching the first floor in Nasif house (Figure 5.15) from the main stairs will arrive at a long corridor leading to three sections. In the eastern section of the building lived one of the occupant's sons (Mr. Hussain Nasif) with his family. Hussain, as can be seen from the floor plan, was interested in the modern lifestyle. Instead of having *karaweeet* in his reception room, he used the *rawasheen* as sofas and added two modern love seats. Little rugs were put separately on the floor which meant that guests were supposed to sit only on the sofas. This room was used mainly by female guests. Men could use the adjacent *majlis*. He also used one room as a master bedroom rather than a multi-purpose room. The master bedroom had its own *bitalma* which was equipped with a modern toilet seat and bidet. In front of the bedroom was a dining room which was easily accessible from the *murakkab*. This room was furnished with a gas refrigerator. The only remaining space for the family's daily activities was between the master bedroom and the reception room. Because it was a family space and had to be private, it could be accessed from the master bedroom directly when guests were using the reception room.

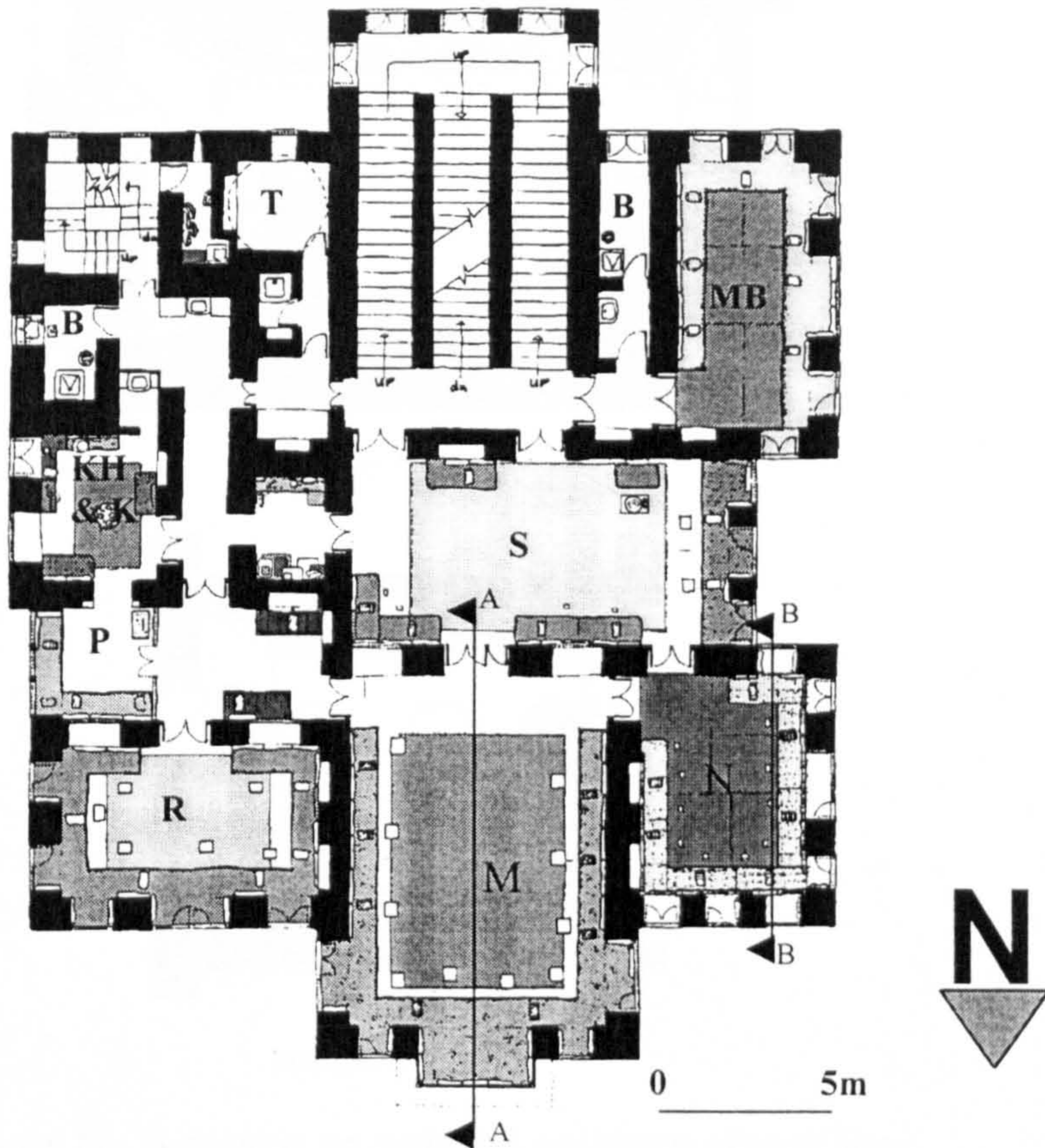
The western section was a suite of a *mabeet* and *bitalma*. The suite could be used by a newly married couple, by parents for sleeping or left unoccupied until it was needed.

The front side, known as the *wajhah*, was composed of the *majlis*, *suffah*, and *makhlawan*. These rooms were always ready to receive guests. The *suffah* was furnished with *karaweeet* and a dining table, which was used by guests from other countries. In the *majlis*, the *karaweeet* were as high as the *rowshan* to create large sitting and sleeping areas. The *makhlawan* was used by guests to relax and drink tea after lunch or dinner. It was furnished by *tawaweel* in a U shape.

The organisation of the second floor (Figure 5.16) was similar to the first. In the eastern section Mr. Abdul-Rahman Nasif, the occupant's second son, lived with his family. The reception room was furnished with *karaweet*. The *murakkab* was used not only for cooking but also for eating and entertaining. Instead of having a special room for dining, the room opposite the *murakkab* was used as a storage. This section also had a Turkish bathroom¹⁸ which was used by important guests and was accessible from the *wajah* or downstairs without invading the privacy of the family.



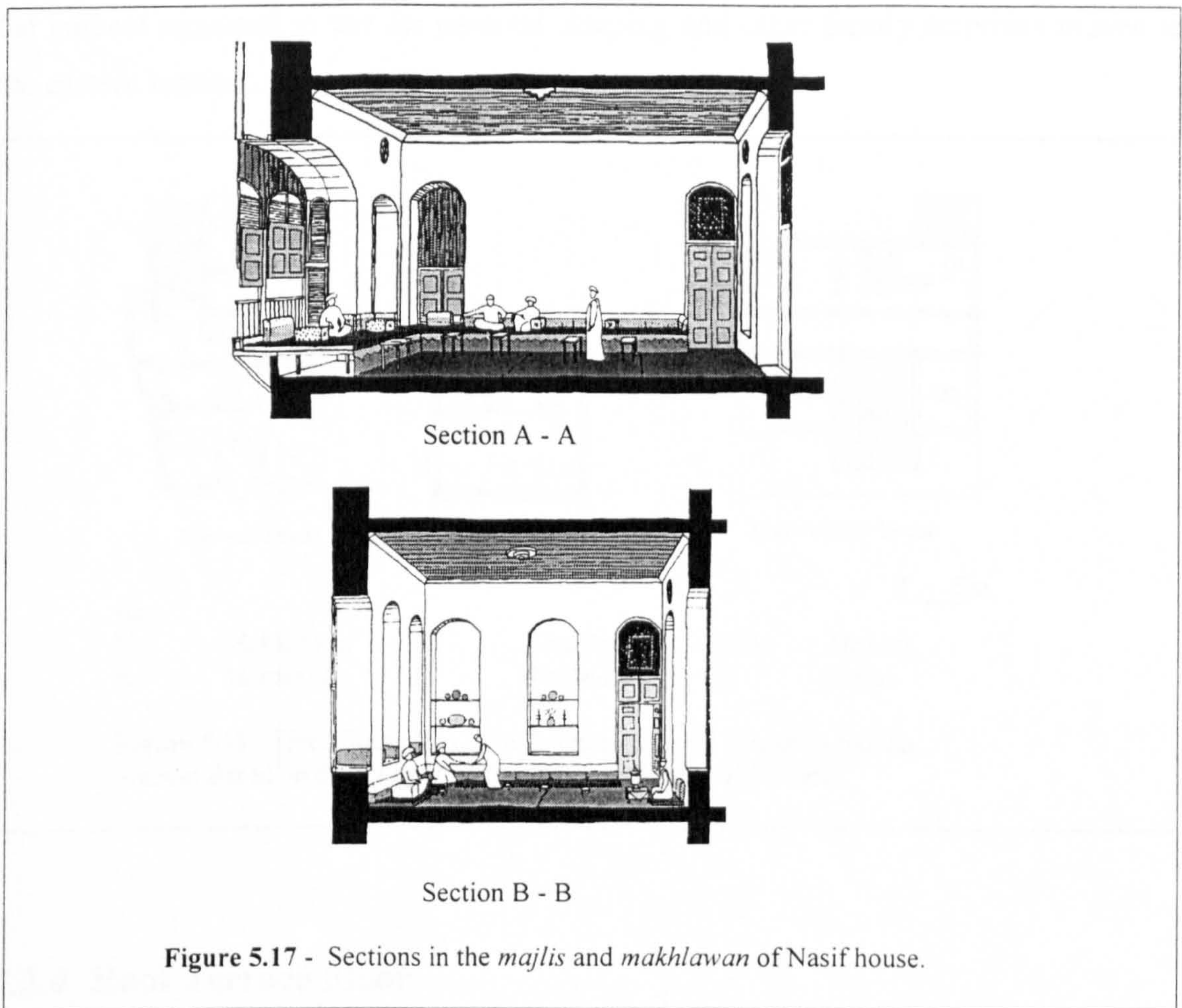
¹⁸ Only a few rich houses had Turkish bathrooms.



Key					
M	<i>Majlis</i>	S	<i>Suffah</i>	P	Multi-purpose room
N	<i>Makhlawan</i>	ST	Storage	T	Turkish bathroom
MB	<i>Mabeet</i>	B	<i>Bitalma</i>	K	<i>Murakkab</i>
R	Reception room				

Figure 5.16 - Second floor plan, Nasif house.

The *majlis*, *makhlawan* and *suffah* of the *wajhah* were furnished to enable the occupant to host a high number of guests that could reach 50 or more. Doors could be left open and the whole area could become one large sitting area.

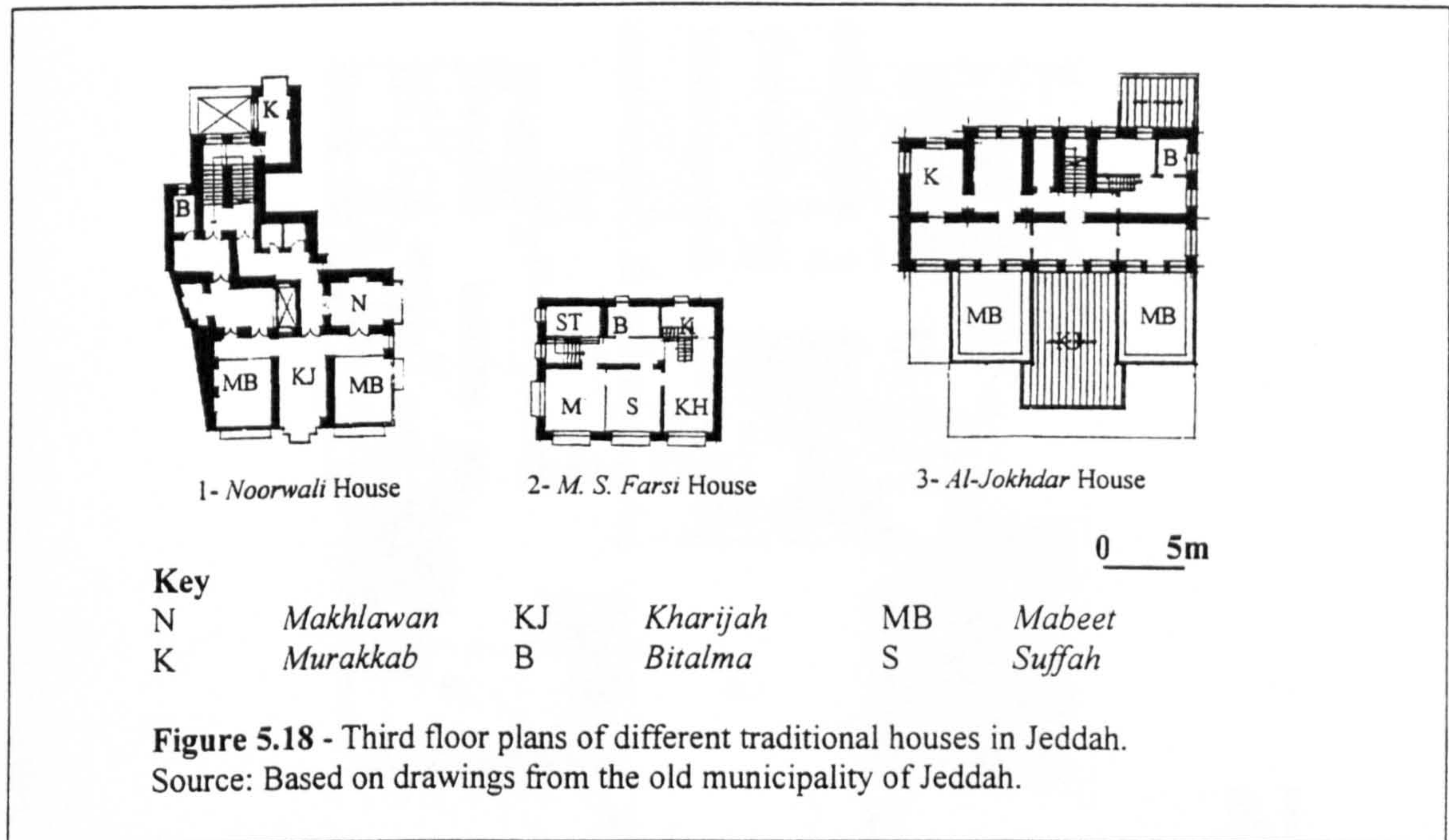


5.3.3 Third Floor

As discussed in Chapter 4 the third floor was usually the beginning where the indoor met with the outdoors. In addition to accommodating the informant's family, this floor was favoured for entertainment activities due to its privacy and openness to the outdoors.

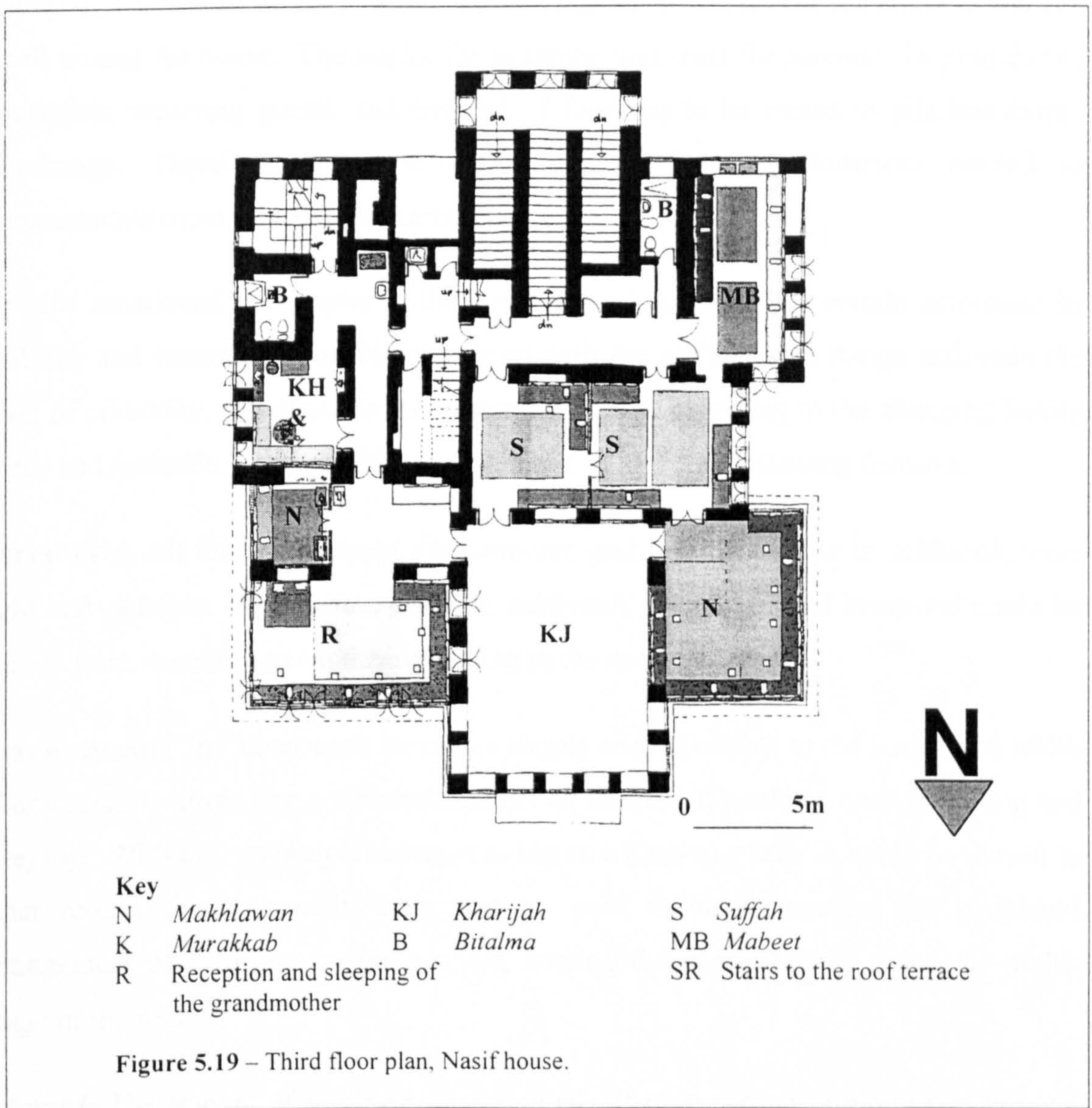
In Nasif house (Figure 5.19) the informant spent his childhood in the third floor. When the his father was out, all women of the extended family could use the *kharijah*. It was lively with women's daily activities. The informant's mother gave regular religious lessons in the *suffah*. After that, the women could entertain in the *kharijah* without being heard or seen by men. The eastern section was used by the informant's grandmother after her husband's death and the *mabeet* was used by the informant's parents with their children. When the grandmother passed away and children grew up,

the *mabeet* remained in use for parental sleeping and other family activities moved to the eastern section.



5.3.4 Roof Terrace Floor

This was the most airy floor. Therefore it was used for sleeping and cooking large meals in the *murakkab*. Before the sunset, water was sprinkled on the roof terrace and *tawaweel* arranged for sleeping. This process cooled the area. This floor was usually divided into sections by approximately one-meter-high walls to identify the domain of each nuclear family and maintain privacy during sleeping when every one was lying down.



5.4 CRITICALITY

According to Rapoport (1969) the criticality of an object or space is high when the more forceful are the physical constraints and the more limited is the technology and command of means, which means less ability of non-material aspects, such as use, to act. The hot and humid climate and the lack of technical means to control the home microclimate made the traditional home environment of Jeddah critical. In other words, a room could not accommodate the same activity throughout the year.

Daily activities were performed in different spaces depending on the convenience of climate. Sleeping took place in the *majlis*, *mabeet*, *kharijah* or on the roof terrace. Also cooking large meals had to be on the top floor, because if it were done in the *marakeeb*

(plural of *murakkab*) of lower floors the moving air would spread the cooking and fire smell around the house. The *majlis*, for example, was used for parents' sleeping during hot nights, receiving guests, and emptied of furniture to be rented to pilgrims during pilgrimage. Therefore spaces in the traditional home environment needed to accommodate moving activities during different times.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the suitability of furniture for certain activities, its mobility and immobility and its integration with the architectural design influence the level of criticality. To allow for multi-usage of space according to the changing family needs and maintain low criticality, furniture had to have the following features:

Portability: All furniture, except the *karaweeet*, and the *saisam* box or *sahharah*, were light and portable. The *takhtat ashshai*, *tabliyyah*, tea tables, and *tawaweel* could be moved from one room to another according to the need.

Arrangement: The *karaweeet's* form was simple and adjustable to the length and width of any room by arranging a different number of frames. It could be used for sitting and sleeping. With the *rowshan* it becomes as big as a king-size bed. It could be moved to other rooms, though usually there was no need to do so because the peripheral arrangement of *karaweeet* around a room, leaving the centre empty, eased the multi-usage of the room.

Amount: The amount of furniture was minimal. If more sitting furniture was needed, for example in big social occasions, *tawaweel* could be brought from other rooms or storage areas and arranged peripherally around the rooms. Before eating, long *maddat* (sheets) were spread on the floor. Once guests finished from eating, the *maddat* were removed. Therefore it was not necessary to have all rooms fully furnished simultaneously.

5.5 COMPATIBILITY

As has been the case in most regions, the architectural features of the traditional houses in Jeddah were not products of an isolated communication between people and their context. The architecture of Hijaz region, where Jeddah is located, shared similarities with other regions, such as Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen (Jomah, 1992 and Khan, 1981). For example the traditional Turkish house has a room called *sofa* (Turgut, 1995) with a similar function to the *suffah* in the traditional house in Jeddah. Likewise furniture had some similarities with the furniture in these regions. The *karaweeet* and its arrangement, but not its height, were similar to the seating in traditional Turkish houses (Figure 5.20), and even the floral pattern of its cover (*damask*) and the large mirrors in the *majlis* were found in traditional Moroccan houses (Figure 5.21). The question here is that: if objects reach higher levels of compatibility through a continuous use in their locality, why do such similarities exist in different regions? Furthermore this similarity implies that people imitated others and possessed furniture just for symbolic purpose.

Such similarities were not mere imitations of others. It was largely due to the similarity of cultural values and family structure, which had a significant influence on furniture and spaces. In dealing with their utilitarian needs, people developed solutions according to their convenience. Even though Turkish rooms had similar seating arrangement to the *karaweeet*, a significant difference was in the location of the most important sitting spot. The most important sitting spot in Jeddah's houses was the

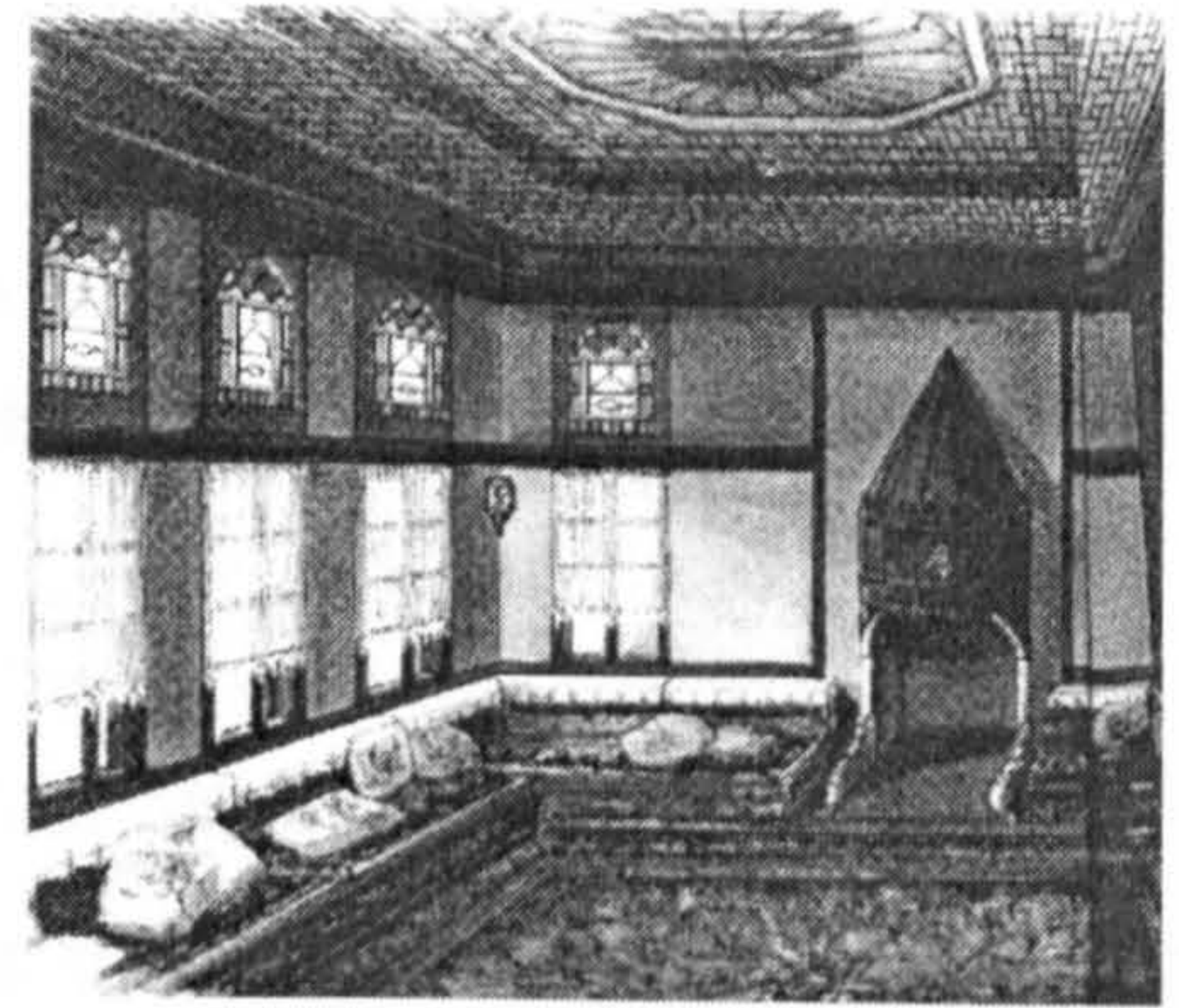


Figure 5.20 – A living area in a Turkish house.
Source: Kucukerman, nd: 64.



Figure 5.21 – A traditional Moroccan sitting area.
Source: Lovatt-Smith, 1995: 217.

largest *rowshan* while in Turkish houses it was near to the fireplace. Before a piece of furniture became part of the home interior in Jeddah it went through a process of communication with people, i.e. was made locally and used in accordance with their climate and cultural values. If it were compatible, it would be adopted; otherwise it would be adjusted or abandoned. Therefore every region had some distinctive features that differ from others.

The furniture of traditional Jeddah, other than those for display such as framed mirrors, was practical and virtuous more than symbolic for three reasons. Firstly the dusty climate required minimum decorated items, which are essential to express status. Secondly furniture was critically low to be compatible with the extended family activities. The variety of activities, caused by the high number of family members of different age, sex and interest (for example an elderly person sleeping, children playing and a housewife cooking), would require a high number of rooms if every room were assigned to one or two members. Thirdly the form of the furniture and its arrangement facilitated the invitation of high number of guests.¹⁹

The compatibility of furniture was with secondary values. It was with activities influenced by the family structure and the high number of extended family members. There has been no evidence that furniture supported or hindered family privacy against strangers and female privacy against non-close male relatives, which are considered culture core in this study.

5.5 CONCLUSION

It was concluded in Chapter 4 that the spaces discussed were influenced mainly by the movement and variety of activities caused by the hot and humid climate and the high number of extended family members. In this chapter, it has been found that activities were also the main criteria in shaping traditional furniture. The furniture was multi-purpose, portable and of a few types to counteract the high criticality of home interior, facilitate the variety of activities that the extended family members performed and accommodate the high number of guests, which was an essential collectivistic expression of identity. The *karaweeet* and *tawaweel*, for example, were placed

¹⁹ It should be noted that furniture here is considered virtuous, not symbolic, in meeting the collectivistic expression of status (identity) because the status is expressed by an activity (hosting) not by the form of furniture itself.

peripherally around the room, forming a continuous seating and leaving the middle of the room for more activities. The *tawaweel* in some rooms could be arranged and removed on a daily basis. The most symbolic furniture was in the *majlis*. However the traditional home furniture was practical and virtuous more than symbolic.

The high compatibility of the traditional furniture does not necessarily mean that living in a traditional house in Jeddah was comfortable and easy. The hot, humid and dusty climate necessitated that occupants perform their activities in different spaces, i.e. criticality was high. Sleeping was on the roof terrace in summer and in the *mabeet* or *muakhkhar* in winter. Cooking had to be done on the main *murakkab*, which was located on the roof terrace. Housewives had to do a lot of cleaning and dusting to remove the dust coming from the widely open *rawasheen*.

6.1 THE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ARCHITECTURE
 6.1.1 The Architectural Process
 6.1.2 The Architectural Profession
 6.1.3 The Architectural Firm
 6.1.4 The Architectural Practice
 6.1.5 The Architectural Firm
 6.1.6 The Architectural Practice
 6.1.7 The Architectural Firm
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 6.1.10 The Architectural Practice
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 6.2.6 The Architectural Practice
 6.2.7 The Architectural Firm
 6.2.8 The Architectural Practice
 6.2.9 The Architectural Firm
 6.2.10 The Architectural Practice
 6.3 COMPATIBILITY
 6.4 CONTRAST
 6.5 COORDINATION



CHAPTER 6

From Traditional to Contemporary

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.2 THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION: LATE FORTIES AND EARLY FIFTIES

6.2.1 RESIDENTIAL TYPES

6.2.1.1 Post-traditional

6.2.1.2 Villas

6.2.1.3 Apartments

6.2.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances

6.2.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment

6.2.3.1 *Saloon*

6.2.3.2 Master Bedroom

6.2.3.3 Multi-Purpose Room

6.2.3.4 Kitchen

6.2.3.5 Bathroom

6.3 THE SECOND TRANSFORMATION: LATE SEVENTIES

6.3.1 Residential Types

6.3.1.1 Villas

6.3.1.2 Apartments

6.3.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances

6.3.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment

6.3.3.1 *Saloon and Majlis*

6.3.3.2 Living Room

6.3.3.3 Bedroom

6.3.3.4 Kitchen

6.3.3.5 Bathroom

6.4 THE THIRD TRANSFORMATION: LATE EIGHTIES

6.4.1 New Supportive Spaces

6.4.2 *Baturmah* or Arabic Seating

6.4.3 Neo-Traditional Furniture Style

6.4.4 Classical Western Furniture Style

6.4.5 Marble Floor

6.5 COMPATIBILITY

6.6 CRITICALITY

6.7 CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The sudden transformation of Saudi Arabia from traditional to modern in many aspects of life was beyond imagination. The reasons were diverse and inter-linked. Charsley noted that although "... there is no single story of cultural change to be told, and the search for a single theory of cultural change must in the end prove fruitless, there are striking links and patterns always to be found" (Charsley, 1992: 101). A careful exploration of socio-cultural changes in the Saudi society is necessary to avoid overlooking any factors that may have contributed to the development of the home environment.

The emphasis in this chapter will be on the role of modern furniture in the transformation of the home environment. This transformation from the traditional before the late forties to the contemporary in the nineties, is divided into three stages. The analysis starts with the first stage which was just after the increase of oil production in the late forties. The governmental projects, foreign expertise, and new facilities brought with them an irresistible image of modernity. Houses, streets, furniture and clothes became categorised as either traditional (old) or modern (new). The second stage which happened just after the world oil price boom in the late seventies is then analysed. People were already familiar with what they categorised as modern, however now they had more chances to emulate it. The final section in this chapter is about the third stage, starting from the late eighties and currently taking place. This stage witnessed increasing interests of architects, interior designers, magazines, and the market of furniture on the home interior.

6.2 THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION: LATE FORTIES AND EARLY FIFTIES

The first concrete building was built in Jeddah in 1929. People were suspicious of concrete's durability. "How could a roof stand without wood timbers!" many wondered. They did not use concrete at the beginning. Another reason for not using it was due to its massive consumption of water, which was still expensive in Jeddah (Al-Ansari, 1963).

In 1947, the government established a new project by which water from different wells would be brought through pipes in large amounts and stored in water towers to provide a continuous supply to the city. This project, known as Al-Aziziah project, was the trigger to use concrete in construction. Imports of steel bars and cement met the slowly increasing demand for concrete.¹

The durability of concrete and its fast construction were great advantages over the traditional material and construction technique especially when the demand for housing increased sharply and time was critical. In addition to these utilitarian advantages, concrete was desirable due to its modern image.

The Jeddah city wall was demolished in the same year to ease the expansion of the city. There were two reasons for the rapid city expansion.² The first was the growing number of immigrants and expatriates.³ Due to the increasing world demand for oil at the end of forties and the beginning of fifties, Saudi Arabia witnessed an increasing economic development. As a result, people immigrated from rural areas, Yemen and Africa to cities in search of job opportunities. These immigrants built their houses wherever it suited them, forming an organic built environment and irregular street patterns.

The economic development also demanded professionals, such as teachers and doctors, from neighbouring Arab countries, such as Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan (Al-Harbi, 1989). The culture of Jeddah, which had managed to assimilate foreign immigrants throughout history into one homogeneous culture, started to lose its homogeneity due to the rapid influx of high numbers of people from different cultures (Bokhari, 1978).

The second reason for the fast city expansion was the change in the street pattern to stop the spread of the unplanned organic streets and facilitate the use of the increasing number of vehicles. The first time the grid system was introduced in Jeddah was in

¹ The production of cement started in Saudi Arabia in 1958.

² See Appendix 3 for the city expansion map.

³ The population of Jeddah in 1946 was around 24,000. It increased to 94,000 in 1955 and to 106,000 in 1959 (Salagoor, 1990). See Appendix 3 for more details.

1952 (Salagoor, 1990). Both the irregular and the grid street patterns continued to grow until 1962 when the municipality started to implement a comprehensive master plan.⁴

There were five home types within the two urban patterns. The organic pattern consisted of three types: shacks and *bioot sha'biyyah* (literally means folk houses)⁵ occupied by immigrants from rural areas, Yemen and Africa, and post-traditional houses occupied mainly by Saudis who had moved from the old town of Jeddah. Villa and apartment buildings were built on plots, which were sub-divided by the municipality, forming the grid pattern. Villas were occupied by middle- to high - income Saudi families and apartments by expatriates.

6.2.1 Residential Types

6.2.1.1 Post-traditional

The expansion of the city which led to demolishing its wall occurred for two reasons: first the population was increasing, and second the government built two major streets⁶ through the old town. Those citizens whose houses were demolished were compensated with plots in the suburbs. Al-Harbi (1989) noted that the majority of houses of the post-traditional type in the areas which were built during this expansion were similar to the traditional houses. The street pattern was organic, the furniture was still traditional and rooms names and organisation were similar to the traditional.

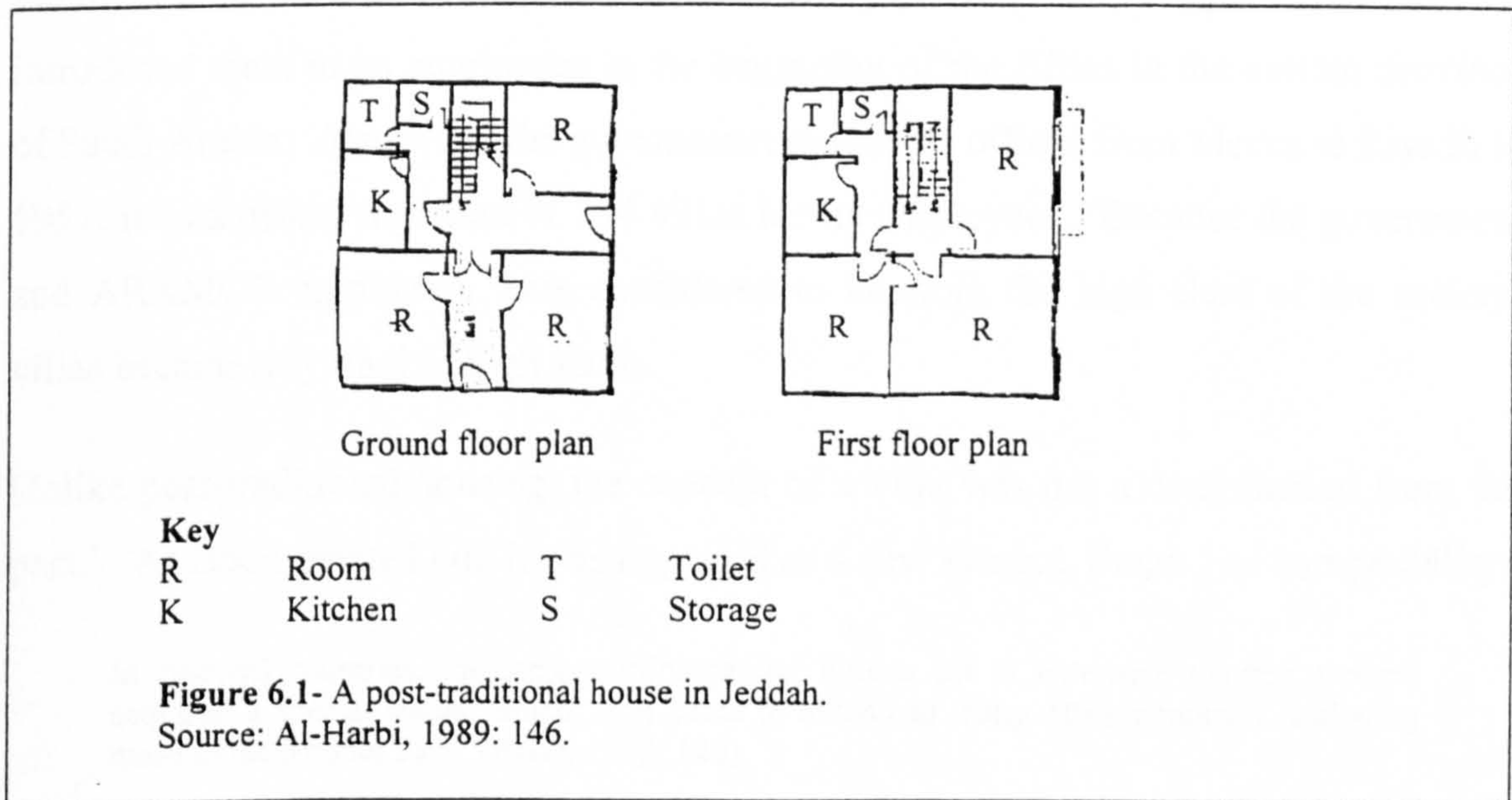
Figure 6.1 shows how similar was this type to the traditional in plan. There were separate entrances for men and women. The main entrance led to a corridor rather than a *dahleez*. The two rooms which were located to the left and right sides of the corridor were similar to the traditional *maq'ad*. Similar to the traditional houses, the corridor led to another corridor which was accessible from the second entrance. This corridor led to a *makhlawan*, stairs and the service area in the left far side corner of the house. The upper floor consisted of three sections. The *majils* was facing the stairs. To the left side was the *moakhkhar* and to the right side was the *mabeet*.

⁴ The new urban system influenced the home environment. See Appendix 9.

⁵ The researcher will not discuss these types because they were neither a continuation of the traditional house nor were they built by Saudis.

⁶ King Abdulaziz and Al-Dahab streets.

The post-traditional type differed from the traditional type in the construction materials, amount of ornamentation and *shababeek's* (window) sizes. The main construction materials were concrete blocks and bricks, but sometimes combinations of old and new building materials were used. The amount of decoration inside and outside the house was minimised and the wooden work on the facade was simplified (Al-Harbi, 1989). The size of openings became much less and extended *rawasheen* on the outside did not exist anymore.



The similarity of the organisation of these houses to the organisation of the traditional houses was because the people who built and lived in them came from the old town of Jeddah. During the late forties and early fifties the old town was still a favourite place for the rich to live in. They remained there until cars became the dominant means of transportation. Young families moving out of the old town were the main inhabitants of post-traditional houses. Their ambition was to live in a villa and, therefore, money was saved for future plans rather than spent on decorating their houses. Therefore it could be concluded that this type represented Stage 3A where the traditional house of Jeddah became more practical and virtuous by losing the highly decorated *rowshan*, which was in Stage 4 of compatibility. Even though this type looked to be a genuine continuation of the traditional house, the identity that people desired was only to be achieved by living in a villa, and as a result the duration of this residential type was short and transitional for Saudis. However it is still occupied, but mainly by low-income expatriates.

6.2.1.2 Villas

Villas appeared in Jeddah in the mid-fifties (Al-Harbi, 1989). When cars became the main means of transportation and the old town began to be a commercial centre, it was no longer convenient for rich families to live there. They gradually moved to the suburbs during the time when villas became a symbol of high status in the society.

Al-Hathloul (1981) argued that the reason villas became a symbol of high status in Saudi Arabia was first because the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) introduced them to its employees in the beginning of the fifties in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Also when the government moved its offices from Mecca to Riyadh in 1957, it established a project of 754 villas for its employees. Because the government and ARAMCO employees were considered to be from the high class of the society, villas became a symbol of high status.

Unlike post-traditional housing, the concept of a villa was not a continuation from the past.⁷ As Boon pointed out, it was imported as a new symbol, Stage 5 of compatibility:

In colonial countries, the large administrators' houses set in extensive planted gardens acquired a special status, which soon came to extend to many other countries, including those in the Middle East. (Boon, 1982: 140)

Furthermore, the introduction of villas coincided with the introduction of modern utilities such as water, electricity and drainage. "Therefore 'traditional' became associated with 'sub-standard', and the detached villa, complete with all modern conveniences, with 'super-standard'" (Boon, 1982: 140).

The villa type had to be modified to suit the Saudi family. Modifications were to maintain privacy, accommodate the extended family and insure good air ventilation during hot and humid nights. The strong sense of family privacy in old Jeddah required that rooms had a unique contact with the outdoors. Family members could see outside without being seen. The strong relationship of men with the outdoors was achieved through a delicate gradual relationship between the street public zone and the home private zone, where women stayed and enjoyed the outdoors in the *kharijah*. The concept of the villa was in complete contrast to this. The front garden was exposed to

⁷ There were around four new architectural offices which designed villas and apartment buildings in Jeddah at the late fifties and early sixties. These four offices belonged to S. Al-Haddad (one of the informants), M. Risq, H. Mihaddawi, and A. Habib.

pedestrians.⁸ There were neither *kharijat* (plural of *kharijah*) nor courtyards and the municipal regulations made it difficult to have such an indoor open space (Boon 1982, Salagoor 1990). Municipal regulations require a front set back at least one fifth of a street width from the boundary and a minimum two metres around the other three sides. The building area must not exceed 60% of the land coverage, which meant that the remaining building area was devoted only to indoor spaces. This incompatibility with values (Stage 7) was dealt with by some modifications.

The villa was added with a roof terrace (Figure 6.2), which was used for sleeping during hot nights, until the introduction of air-conditioning. A two-metre high wall was also built around the plot. This wall was to maintain the privacy of the front and back yards against pedestrians, though not neighbours. The façade had also many windows to maximise ventilation. The front yard was accessible from the main street by two gates, a main large gate and a small gate.

Moreover there was an early consideration to have two zones, public and private, in the villa. The Saudi family cannot allow male guests to see their living zone because it is used by all family members including females. This increases the sense of privacy against male guests more than female guests. However not all villas had a clear separation between the two zones. In Villa 1 Figure 6.3 for example the guest can see the circulation area in the private zone upon entering. This problem was avoided in Villa 2; but still the guest would go through the private zone if he needed to go to the toilet. Villa 3 shows the same problem in addition to the inconvenient location of the kitchen in front of the *saloon*. These problems disappeared in the early seventies when the guest zone became totally independent in all new villas (Figure 6.4).

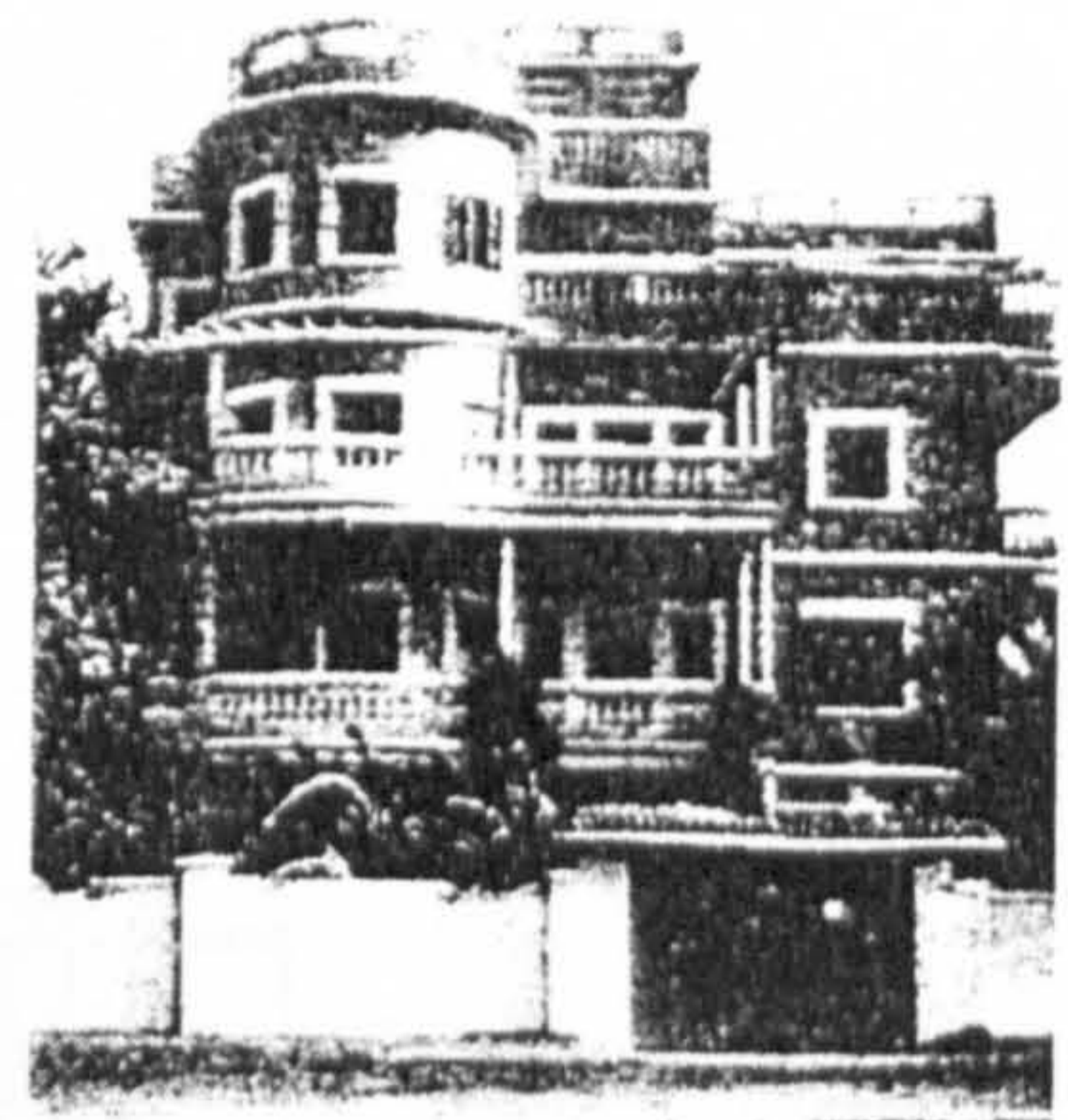
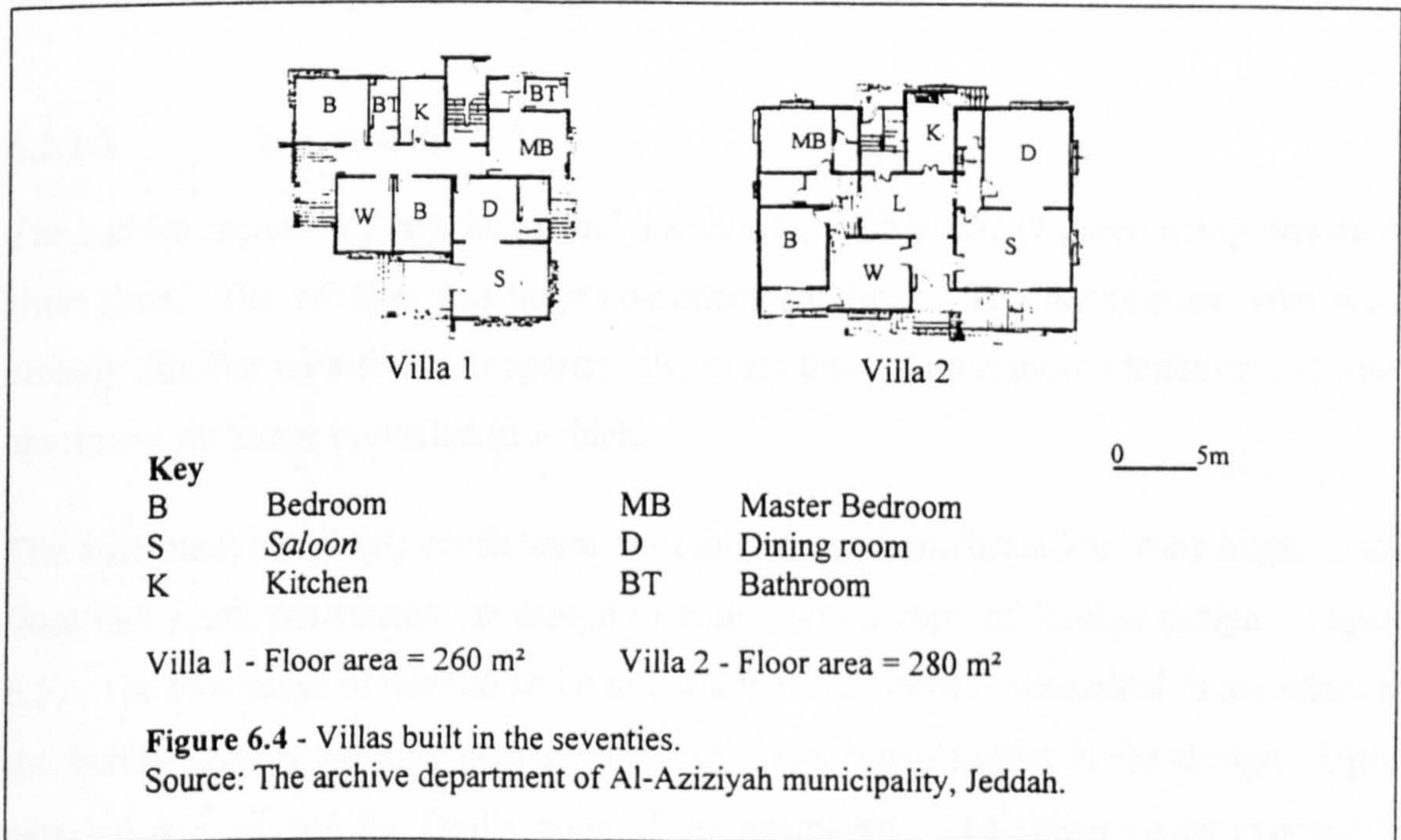
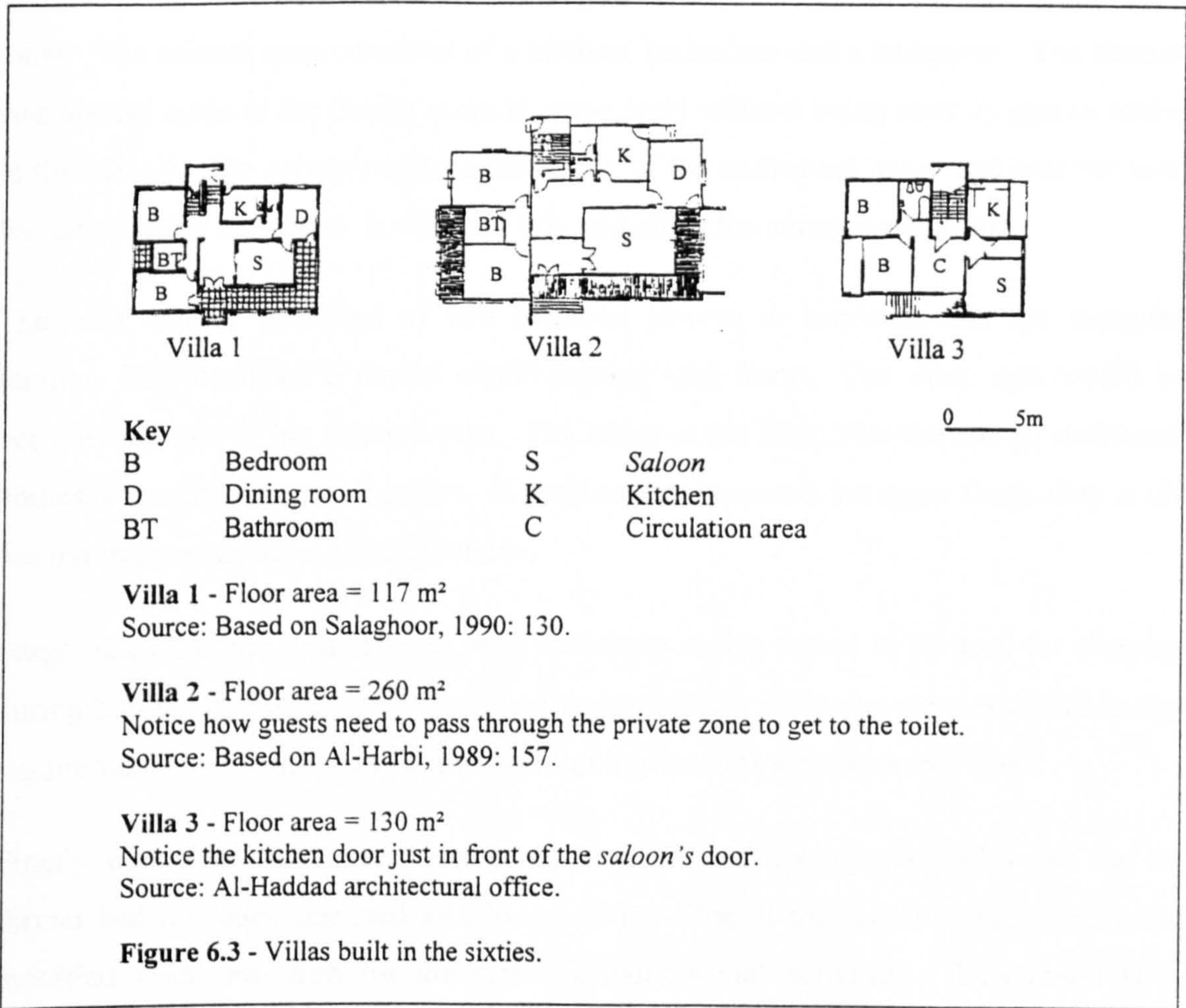


Figure 6.2 – An old villa in Jeddah (c. 1960). Note the high number of windows, roof terrace and the parapet wall around the plot.
Source: Al-Ansari, 1982: Plate M.

⁸ The front garden has been a Western cultural means to convey a occupant's identity (Altman, 1981).



The public zone consisted of a *saloon* (a guest reception room), a dining room and a toilet. The private zone consisted of a kitchen, bedrooms and a bathroom. The kitchen was always close to the dining room to serve food without being seen by guests sitting in the *saloon*. The *saloon* replaced the *majlis* of the traditional house and was not used for daily family activities. It was kept tidy and clean for unexpected guests.

The villa usually consisted of two identical storeys to accommodate the extended family. The occupant's family would occupy one floor. The other one would be occupied by one of his married sons. The stairs at the back, like the one in traditional homes, connected the two families. If another family rented the upper floor, they could use the stairs as an access to the outside.

Large balconies and roof terraces were necessary at this period to be used for sleeping during hot and humid nights. North and north-western balconies were essential design requirements by clients because air-conditioning was not yet commonly used.

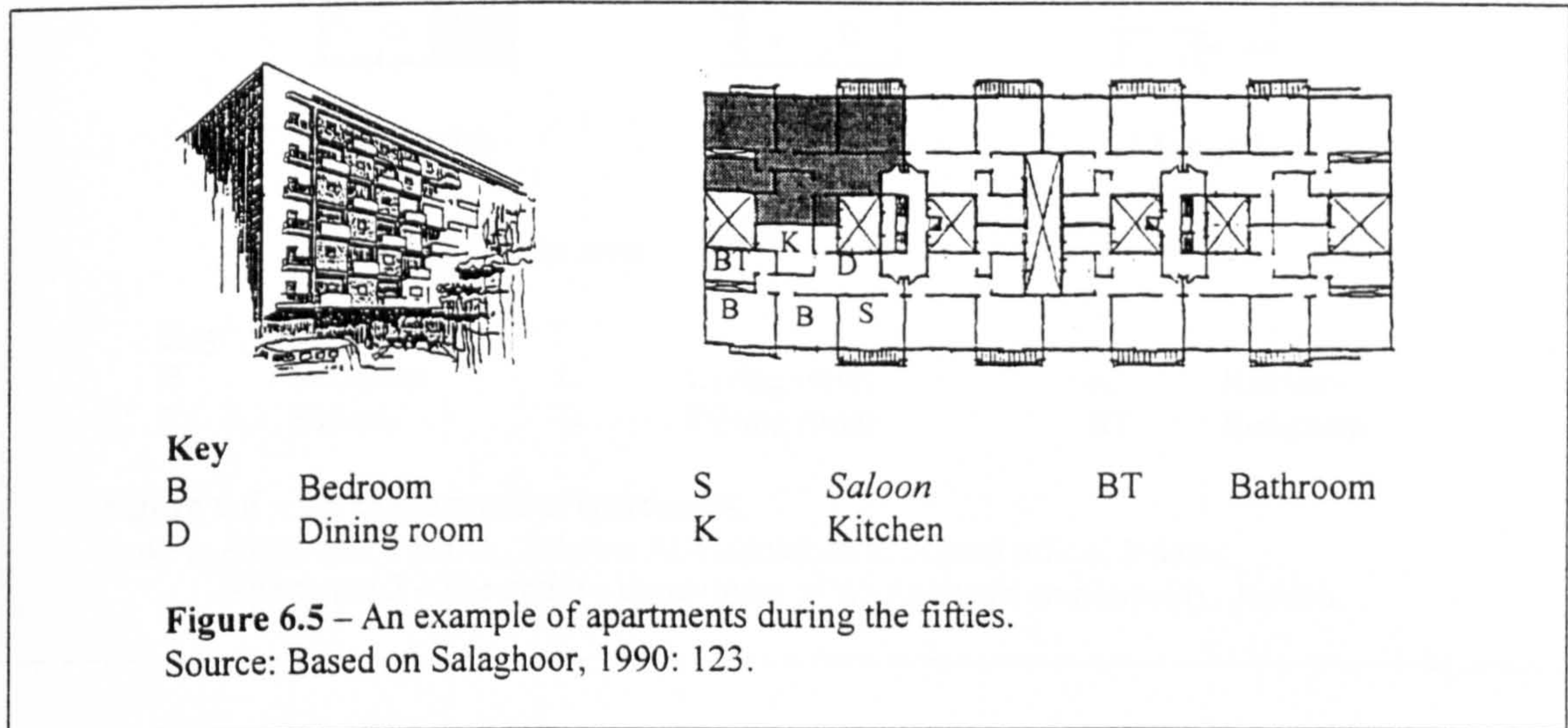
Finally, one of the differences between the modified and the imported villas was that the former had no room designed as a living room. One of the rooms at the back in the modified villa was used for the family's daily social activities. This could be a continuation of the concept of the *muakhkhar*, which was located at the back of the traditional house away from the guest zone.

6.2.1.3 Apartments

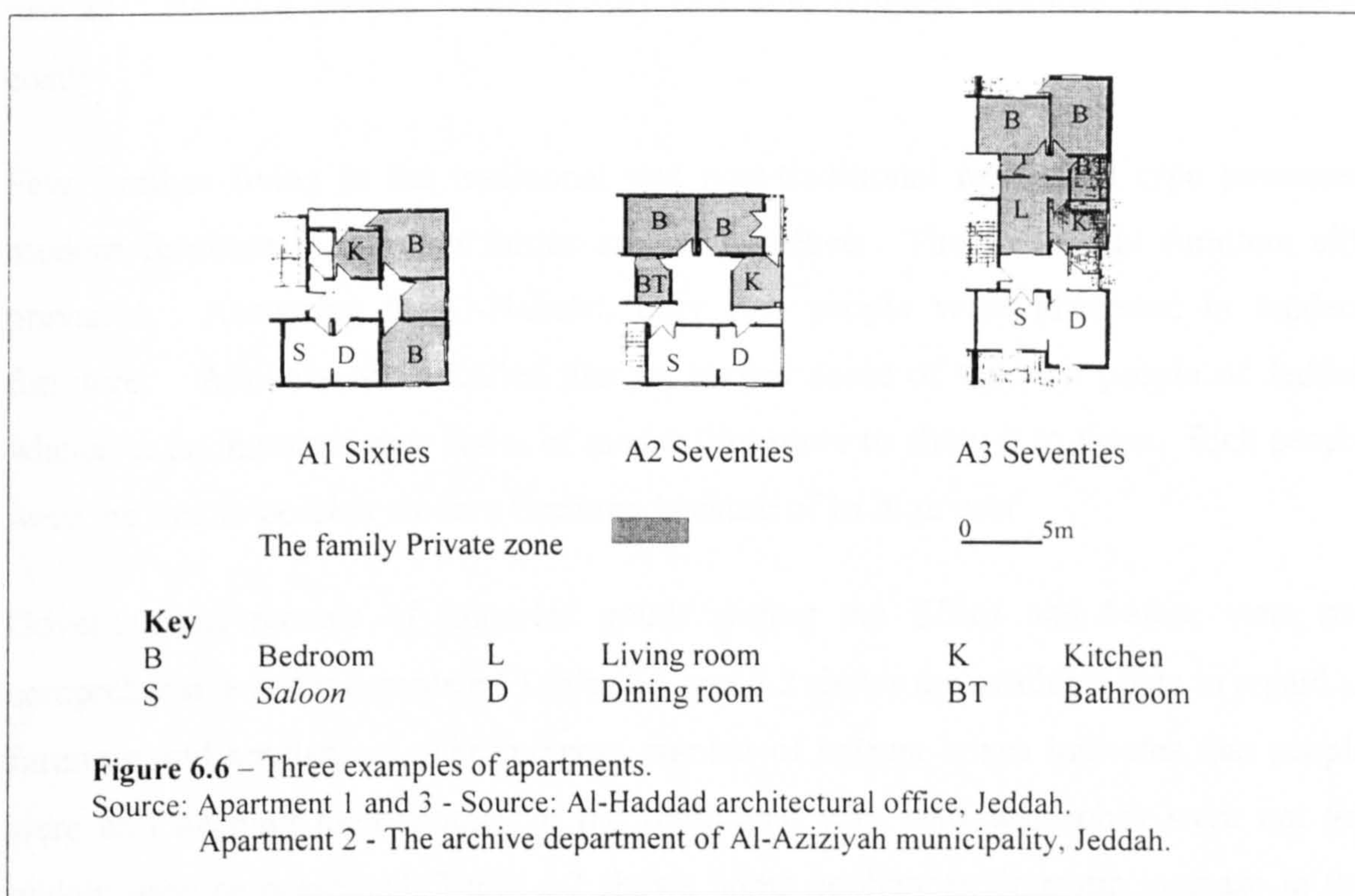
The sudden increase of population and the shortage of housing required many houses in short time. The solution was huge apartment buildings. The newcomers, who were already familiar with living in apartments, made this solution more attractive and soon apartment buildings prevailed in Jeddah.

The apartment buildings, which were built during this transformation, were huge. Each floor had small apartments the design of which was a copy of foreign designs (Figure 6.5). The two zones of *wajah* and *muakhkhar*, which were fundamental in maintaining the family privacy towards guests, were not given consideration in the design. Upon entering one can see the family zone of the apartment. The balcony was exposed to neighbours and pedestrians, which hindered any use other than storage or hanging washed clothes.

The apartment was not modified as much and as quickly as the villa because firstly it was mainly occupied by expatriates, who would live temporarily and return to their home countries; secondly choices of modifications were limited due to space limitation; and thirdly occupiers' control and modification over the design, as tenants not owners, was limited.



It did not take long for Saudis who could not afford to live in villas to accept living in apartment buildings, after some design modifications had taken place. During the sixties apartments increased in size. The apparent modification that happened around the early seventies was, in addition to the further increase in size, dividing the apartment into two zones to maintain the family privacy towards guests (Figure 6.6). The only entrance of the apartment led to a little entrance hall located between the two zones. The guest zone consisted of a dining room and a *saloon*, which were divided by a folding or sliding door. The number of rooms in the private family zone varied from one to three. The kitchen was considered part of the private zone; however because it served the dining room it was located between the two zones. Like the villa there was no room designed as a living room. One of the rooms in the private zone was used for the daily family activities. The two zones were not completely separated. If a guest was in the *saloon* or the dining room, the female family members had to be cautious while passing through the apartment or the host should have made sure that the door of the *saloon* was closed.



6.2.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances

The increase of per-capita income, acceleration of urbanisation, and the prevalence of new lifestyle, new types of furniture began to prevail in Jeddah. With their rejection of the traditional (old) and strive for the modern (new) people considered the new furniture as 'modern'. For this reason this furniture will be described in this research as modern even though some types of it existed centuries ago in other countries, for example sofas and armchairs during the Middle Ages in Western countries. The modern furniture will be described as the discussion progress in this and the following chapters.

According to Al-Nabulsi,⁹ the modern furniture market was slow during the fifties and sixties. Businessmen did not import large amounts of modern furniture until they were sure that they were in demand. There were neither advertisements nor competition between the few shops. There were few models and all were imported from one country, Egypt. The town was small and the shops selling modern furniture were well known. If someone wanted to buy furniture, he would go to the shop and select what he

⁹ Mr. Ahmed Al-Nabulsi, one of the informants, was among the first who started importing and selling modern furniture in Jeddah in the fifties.

wanted. Because people's income was still low, modern furniture was considered costly.

Few families living in the traditional and post-traditional residential type possessed modern furniture in the late forties and early fifties. The traditional furniture still prevailed. According to Al-Nabulsi, only rich people were interested in modern furniture. Abo-Alsoud¹⁰ recalled that he invited some of the rich people of Jeddah whenever he imported new styles of modern furniture to show it to them. Rich people were the first to possess modern furniture because of its high cost.

Governmental records of imported goods during the fifties and before were not comprehensive and incomplete. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 shows the available data in regard to furniture and appliances. The increase number of *saisam* boxes indicates that people were still keeping their clothes in the traditional way, and wardrobes were not yet widely used or possessed. Table 6.2 shows home appliances dramatic increase in the number within two years.

	1951	1953
<i>Saisam</i> boxes	3076	7690

Table 6.1 - The increasing number of imported *saisam* boxes in Saudi Arabia.
Source: The General Department of Customs.

	1951	1953
Electric Refrigerators	646	2191
Gas Refrigerators ¹¹	227	173
Air-condition units	576	5081 ¹²
Electric irons	10	3205
Electric Fans	3679	10782

Table 6.2 - The increase in number of imported electrical home appliances in Saudi Arabia.
Source: The General Department of Customs.

¹⁰ Mr. Abu-Alsoud, one of the informants, started the business of importing modern furniture after Mr. Al-Nabulsi.

¹¹ Many families did not use gas refrigerators because they could not afford to. However when the average family income suddenly increased at the beginning of the fifties, electric refrigerators were the better option. Thus gas refrigerators had become already obsolete before being widely used.

¹² The number of air-conditioners imported this year was not available. The researcher found out the cost of an air-conditioner (1035 SR) in 1951 by dividing the total cost by the number imported; then he divided the total cost of air-conditioners imported in the year 1953 by the cost per one air-conditioner to conclude that the number of imported air-conditioners in 1953 was around 5081.

It was discussed in Chapter 2 that advertisement is a strong means by which the market motivates people to buy furniture for symbolic purposes. Advertisement did not exist during the fifties and sixties in Jeddah, yet people replaced the traditional furniture with the modern. The prevailing image of modern lifestyle, which introduced the villa and apartment, was also the primary reason for the introduction of the modern furniture to the home environment.

6.2.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment

The *rowshan* was abandoned. The reasons were utilitarian and symbolic. It was symbolic because villa and apartment's facades which did not have much decoration played a major role in presenting the people's status (Jomah, 1992). The traditional way of showing status through *rawasheen* was abandoned due to its correlation with the negative image of being old.

The reason was utilitarian because air-conditioners had now begun to be used and large openings were not needed anymore. A new type of windows (Figure 6.7) replaced the *rowshan*. From the inside there were frosted panes of glass with wooden frames and from the outside there were wooden shutters with slats. The frosted glass was to maintain privacy while letting the daylight in. It would be kept closed during hot and humid climate only if the air-conditioning was on. If the weather was suitable, they would be left open while the external shutters were closed to maintain privacy. Thus this type of window was suitable with the occasional use of air-conditioning. It did not have any exterior or interior decoration. It was practical and virtuous. The traditional *rowshan*, which is considered in Stage 4 of compatibility, was replaced by a new type, which is considered in Stage 3A.

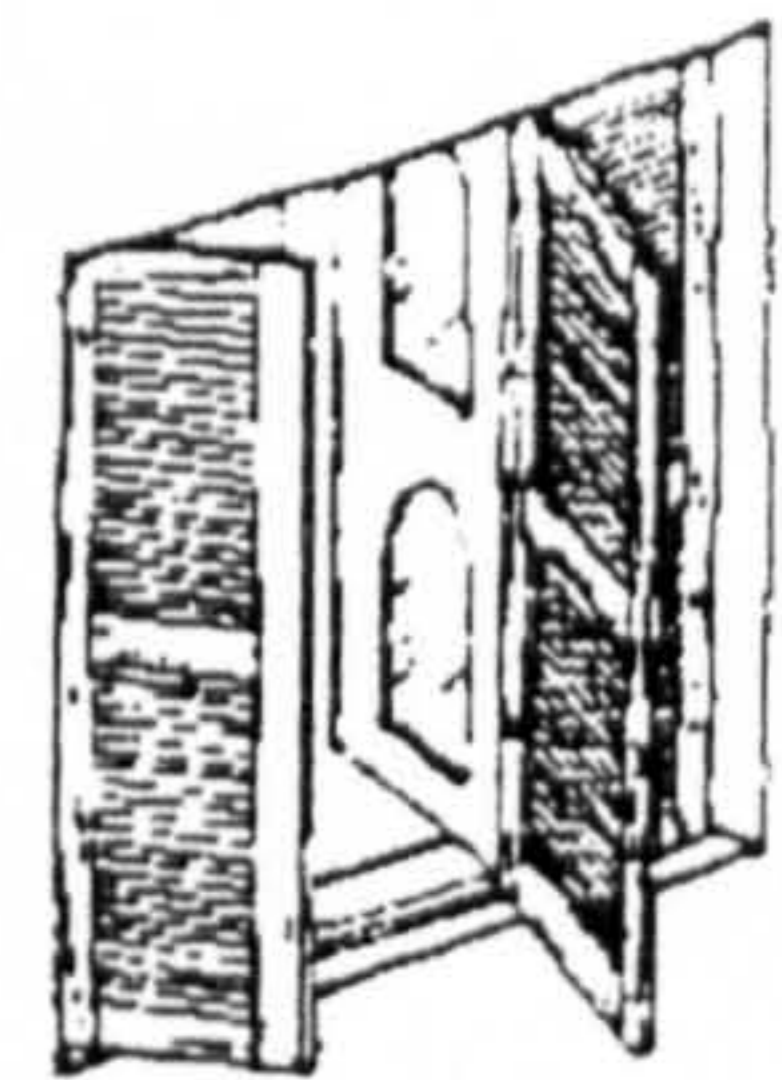


Figure 6.7 - An external view of a shutter window.

6.2.3.1 Saloon

People replaced all the traditional names of spaces with new ones that came with villas and apartments.¹³ The *majlis* was called *saloon*, the *murakkab* was called *matbakh*

¹³ One of the informants said that she and her family moved to Libya in 1953 and returned to Jeddah after seven years. When they returned they found that a lot of changes in room sizes, names and organisation had occurred.

(kitchen), the *bitalma* was called *hammam* (bathroom), the *dahleez* was replaced by an entrance hall, the dining room was introduced, and the names *wajhah*, *muakhkhar*, *suffah*, *dahleez*, and *makhlawan* disappeared.

The first modern furniture that every family was keen to possess was a complete suite for guests in the new reception room, the *saloon*. This suite usually consisted of a sofa and four to six armchairs. Because of the small number of guests this suite could serve if compared with the number of guests that the *karaweeet* served, two suites were sometimes acquired. Mr. Al-Nabulsi mentioned that furniture shops ordered suites with a larger number of chairs to meet this demand.

The suite did not replace the *karaweeet* immediately. The two types were often kept together in the house for a few years. One informant had her family's *majlis* furnished with *karaweeet* and a suite simultaneously. Another informant had her family's *karaweeet* and a suite in separate rooms.

The contemporary style was dominant during this period. Figure 6.8 shows a sketch based on a picture taken in the reception room on the second floor of Nasif house. The *karaweeet* in the reception room was replaced with two suites¹⁴ of sofas and armchairs. People were not aware of the different styles of suites. All styles were named as *taqum afranji* (meaning western suite).

The least used room in the house was the *saloon*. It was devoted to guests like the *majlis* in the traditional house. The question arises: why were people interested in furnishing the *saloon* with the modern suite before furnishing any other room in the house, despite the high cost? If use were the reason of purchasing modern furniture, the more frequently used, such as the master bedroom suite, would be purchased before the guest reception suite which was the least used furniture. This is an indication that the introduction of

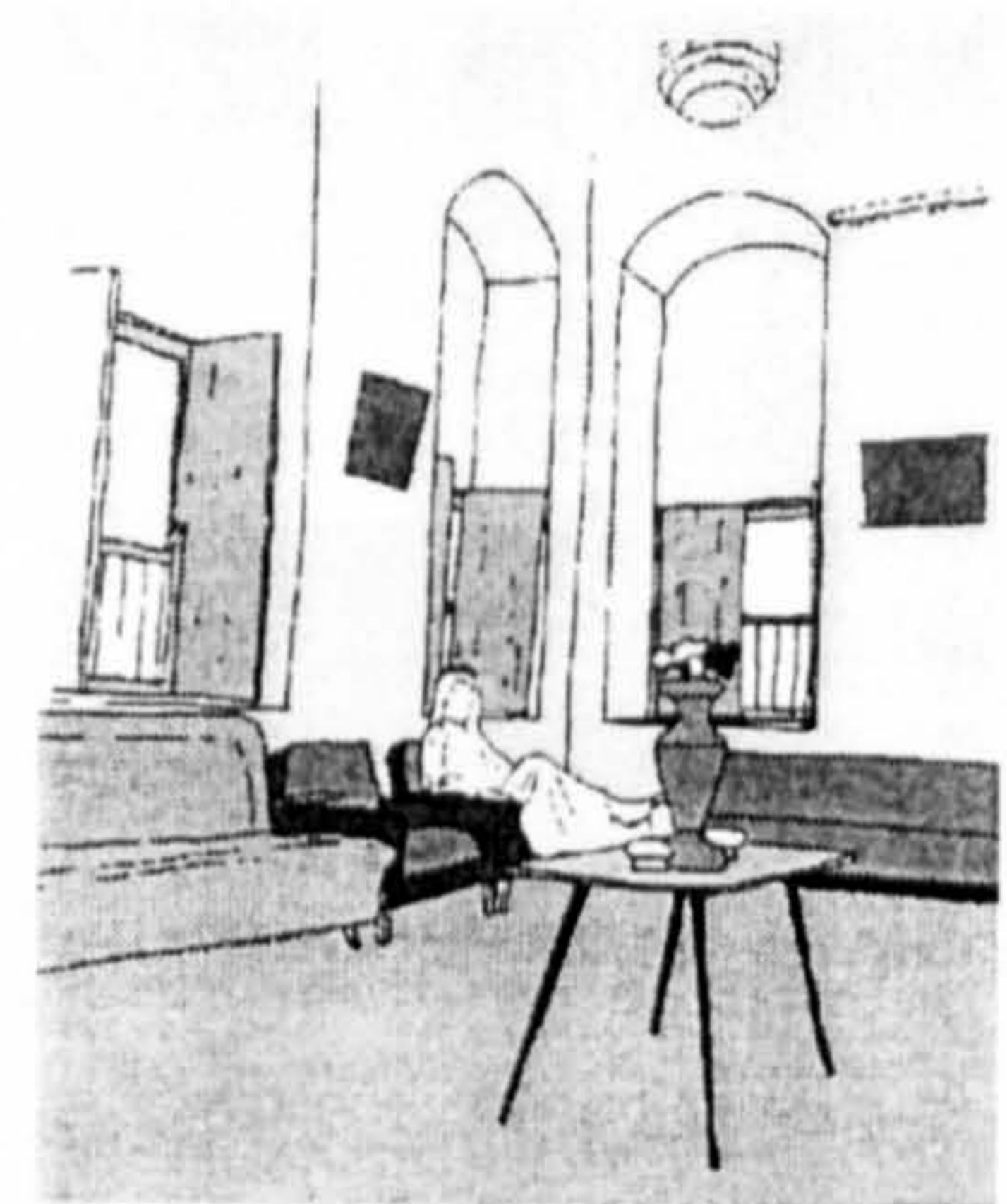


Figure 6.8 - The reception room on the second floor of Nasif house. Source: Based on Pesce, 1977.

¹⁴ The style of the suite is contemporary which was dominant during this period. The contemporary could be referred to as "... designs that, on the one hand, do not reproduce antiques and, on the other, do not belong to the category known as *modern*. In the furniture trade, it usually means a current design with no strong stylistic character, furniture that can blend in with almost anything else" (Pile, 1995: 387). This style prevailed during the fifties in England. Chairs and tables of this style stand on outspread tapered legs (Bond, 1984).

modern furniture sprang from the desire to express social status and not from a utilitarian need, the same as the villa. The sitting/reception suite was compatible with identity more than with use, Stage 5 or 6. It did not go through the traditional process where objects start from use and then possibly gain meaning and consequently used to express identity.

6.2.3.2 Master Bedroom

The collectivistic expression of identity through weddings accelerated the introduction of modern furniture. In Chapter 4, it was mentioned that it was a tradition to show others the furniture of a newly married couple. People always enquired about the furniture of married couples. It slowly became a social norm in the late fifties for a

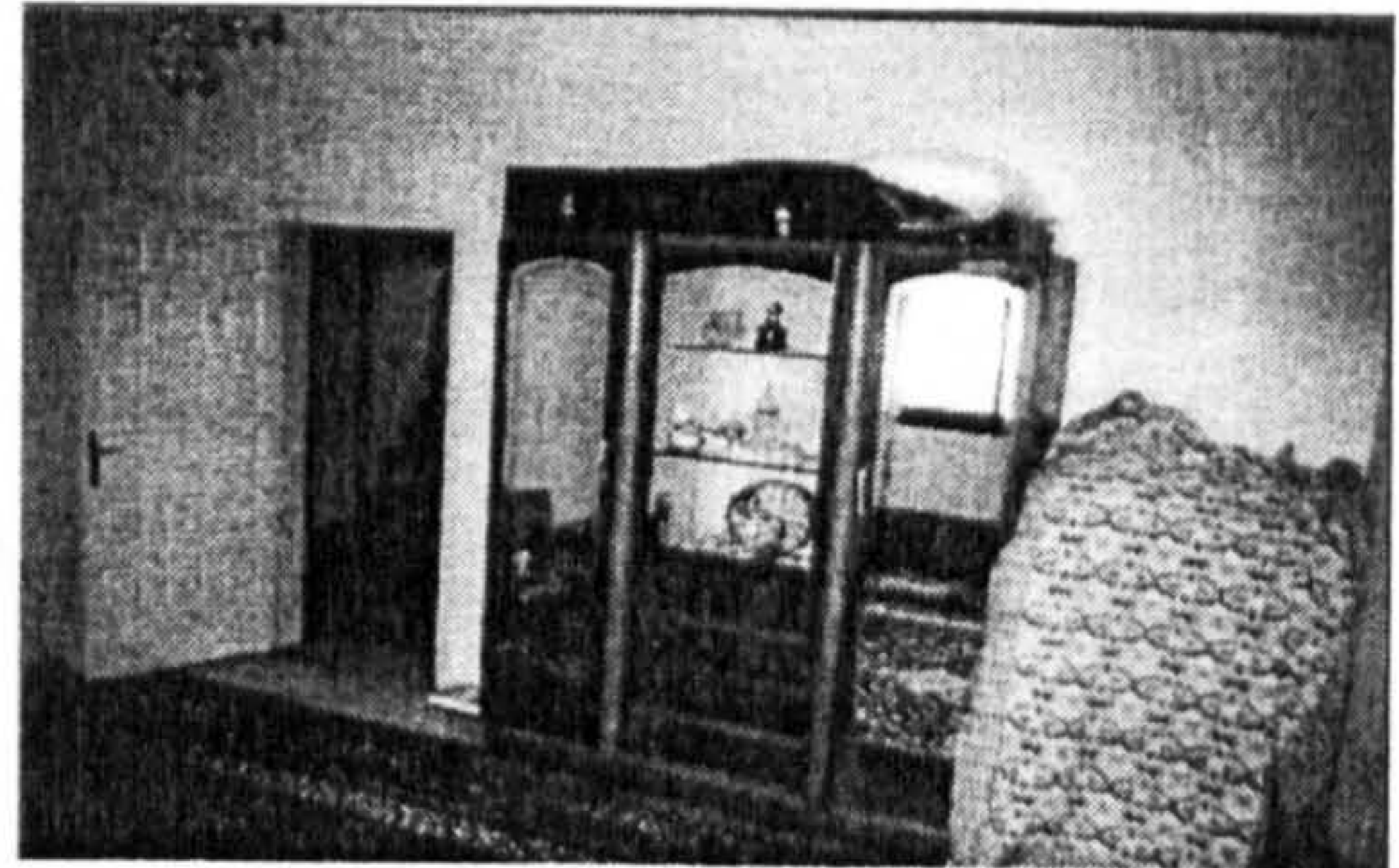


Figure 6.9 – An example of a wardrobe (1950s).

newly married couple to furnish their house with *masanid* and a master bedroom suite whenever they could afford to do so even though some people still slept on the floor. If they could not afford this, it was enough to furnish the new house with a wardrobe (Figure 6.9) and *masanid*. The wardrobe shown consists of two doors and a dressing table.

6.2.3.3 Multi-Purpose Room

One of the rooms in the private zone was used for the family's daily activities and children's sleeping. Therefore it was furnished with *tawaweel*. Women guests were hosted in this room if men were occupying the *saloon*. It was not called a living room yet. Its name followed the main activity it frequently accommodated, for example the television room.

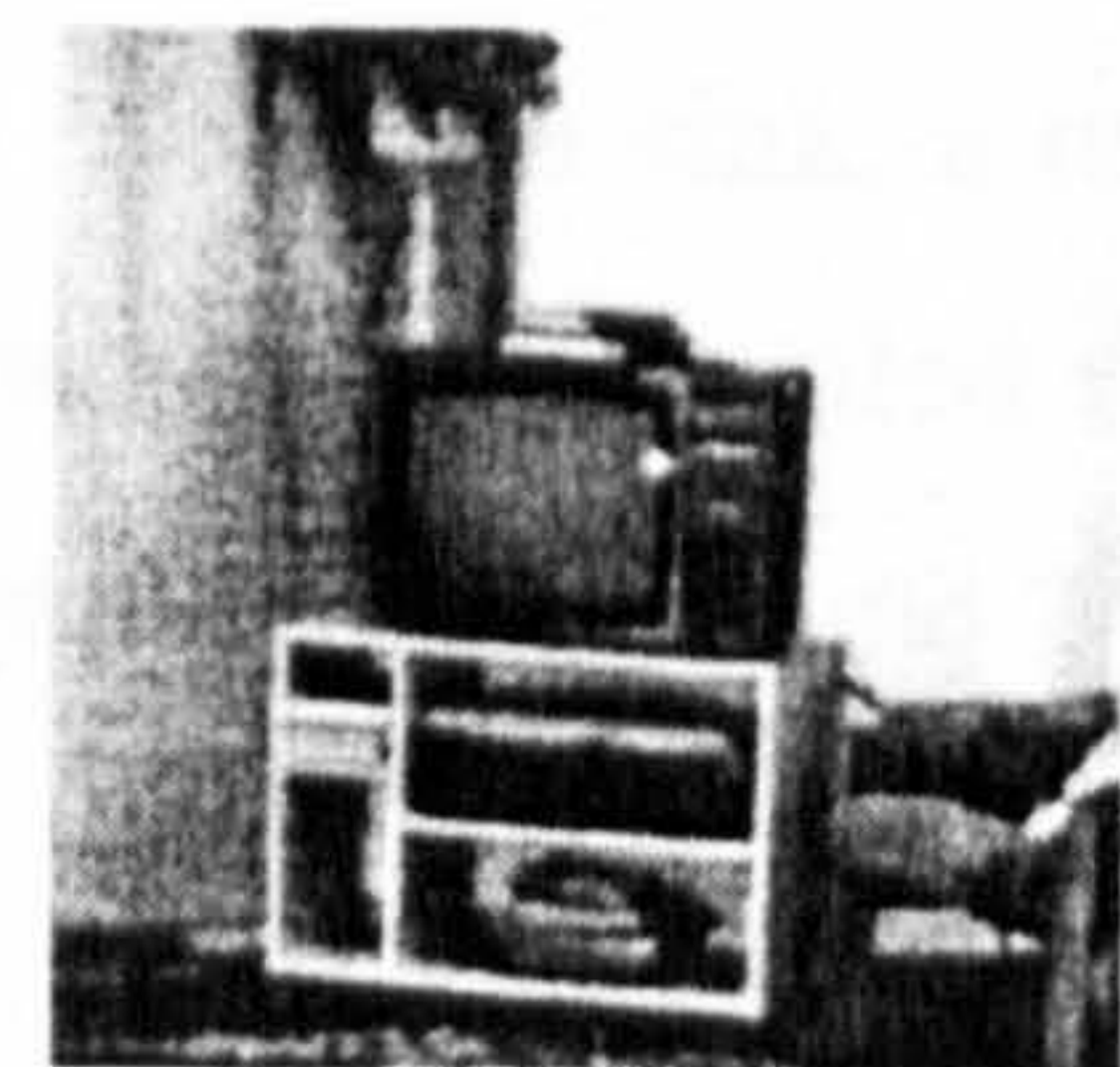


Figure 6.10 – An example of a television when it was introduced in the late sixties.

When the television set was introduced into the Saudi house, it was put on a side or corner table (Figure 6.10). It sometimes had a decorated item such as a flower vase on top of it.

6.2.3.4 Kitchen

It was considered inappropriate to prepare tea in the *murakkab* (see Chapter 5). However after the introduction of the water pipe, sewage system and modern appliances the hygienic standard and the image of kitchens were improved and preparing tea in the kitchen became acceptable. Cookers saved people from burning wood, refrigerators made it possible to keep food for long periods without their smell spreading throughout the house and electric fans ventilated the kitchen during cooking. The kitchen became cleaner with fresher air, and therefore did not need to be situated away from the rest of the house.

The kitchen was modestly furnished. With the introduction of the piped water and sewage system, the kitchen was fitted with a sink. Utensils were put inside a cupboard called *namlıyyah*¹⁵ and/or on wall shelves. The *namlıyyah* became almost standard in kitchens until the introduction of the modern kitchen suite, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The size of the kitchen was 3 x 4 metre or even less. A refrigerator, a gas cooker and a *namlıyyah* or two did not take much space. If the kitchen was very small, the refrigerator was put in the corridor beside the kitchen.

6.2.3.5 Bathroom

Bathrooms' hygiene standards were also improved due to the availability of the new water and sewage systems. Human waste could be flushed away immediately and the whole bathroom could be washed more frequently. The introduction of electric fans also controlled the bathroom ventilation and abolished the need to locate it at the back end of the house. A complete suite of porcelain consisted of a bathtub, a sink, a toilet and a bidet was introduced with the villa and apartment. The wall was also tiled with porcelain tiles. The four pieces were introduced as a pre-arranged suite in around 2 x 3 metre area and soon became standard (Figure 6.11).

¹⁵ The *namlıyyah* was a cupboard with framed doors of thin mesh to allow air through and it dried the utensils while preventing insects from entering.

There is a strong indication that having a modern bathroom suite in the guest zone was for symbolic function in the first place. Even though the modern bathroom suite was not suitable to people's customs in dealing with evacuations and taking showers, they insisted on possessing them.¹⁶ Using the modern toilet seat required a totally new sitting position. The traditional way was to squat in such a way that only slippers touched the floor (Figure 6.12). Touching a toilet



Figure 6.11 – The Prevailing standard size of the modern bathroom.

seat that could be wet with dirty water or urine is not desirable for Muslims. The new way of sitting involves part of the thighs touching the toilet seat. Squatting is also healthier.¹⁷ Furthermore showering was the only traditional way of washing the body. This is not necessarily due to the shortage of water in Jeddah, but possibly to the religious teaching that Muslims use water economically. Another reason is that the water which has been used to wash the body must not be re-used as is the case with bathtubs (Konash, 1977).

Therefore it can be concluded that the introduction of bathroom suites was not for utilitarian functions, but for symbolic functions.

The modern bathroom suite was introduced to the Saudi culture without passing through the initial communication process between form

and use suggested in the model in Chapter 1. The question here is: has the new form developed a new use and has the old use been abandoned?

Many people who used to squat have not abandoned doing so immediately. In fact some still squat on the modern toilet even though it is dangerous to do so and others had to struggle and adjust their way of evacuation according to the new way.¹⁸ The new generation that has not practised squatting use the modern toilet without any difficulty.



Figure 6.12 - Squatting on the traditional toilet seat and sitting on the modern toilet seat.

¹⁶ Mr. Al-Haddad, an architect and one of the informants, mentioned that he tried many times to persuade his clients not to install bathtubs because they were not suitable to local needs but they insisted on doing so.

¹⁷ Kira, cited by Konash, said "The ideal posture for defecation is the squatting position, with the thighs flexed upon the abdomen. In this way, the capacity of the abdominal cavity is greatly diminished and inter-abdominal pressure increased, thus encouraging the expulsion of fecal mass. The high toilet seat may prevent complete evacuation." (Konash, 1980: 101)

¹⁸ A researcher's friend told him once that his grandfather visited them from another city in the early seventies. Their house did not have an Arabic bathroom. As a result, his grandfather cut his visit short because he used to squat only.

It required almost a new generation to adopt to the new way of sitting. With regard to taking showers or bathing, bathtubs have only been used for showers. They are filled with water only during the bathing of young children.

The inconvenience of the modern suite has resulted in many houses having two types of toilet, *hammam afranji* meaning the Western bathroom and *hammam 'arabi* meaning the Arabian bathroom. The Arabian bathroom was located beside the family living area because it was used more frequently. Because the modern toilet was correlated with the occupant's expression of status, it was located beside the guest area.

6.3 THE SECOND TRANSFORMATION: LATE SEVENTIES

During the sixties and early seventies, changes in the home environment were slow until the early eighties, when the impact of the sharp increase in national income took effect due to the sharp increase in world oil prices in the mid-seventies. Many social changes occurred in the Saudi society due to governmental projects and the significant increase of per capita income. The living standard of most Saudis improved significantly. Better education, medical care, transportation, electricity, water pipes, sewage systems and telephone lines became available to the populations in cities.

The family pattern was changed from extended to nuclear (Hamdan, 1990; Rugb, 1985). This contributed to the increase of residential constructions (see Appendix 1). The interest-free long-term loans by the Real Estate Development Fund, which was established in 1974, made it easy for nuclear families to have their own separate houses. However relationships between the extended family members continued to be strong. According to Rajab (1990) one of the criteria families applied to their choice of home was closeness to relatives in order to overcome the influence of the vast expansion of Jeddah that led to fewer visits between relatives. They also maintained their relationships through short visits, telephone calls and social occasions.

Television had a great impact on people's lifestyle. Black and white television broadcasts started in 1965 and were replaced by colour broadcasts in 1976. Foreign programmes influenced the home environment in at least two ways. First was a direct influence on people's image of the home environment. People emulated the furniture style and arrangement which they saw in foreign movies. Second was the variety of

television programmes and videotape movies that consumed much of the family members' time.

It was discussed in Chapter 2, according to Duncan (1981), that the home environment in Hyderabad was influenced by the adoption of the new generation to the individualistic expression of lifestyle. Likewise in Saudi Arabia, the sense of individuality among family members was increased. Foreign television programmes, mainly American, had a great impact on people's values (Merdad, 1993). Many sources such as articles of family issues in newspapers and magazines and radio programmes advised to provide special rooms for children. A recent example of this is an article in *Okaz* newspaper (Figure 6.13) mentioned that studies proved that allocating a special room for a child would increase his/her confidence and sense of self worth. Moreover the article advised that the child should be consulted in selecting the furniture of his/her room. Figure 6.14 also shows a door hanger that was distributed with McDonald's children's meals. The hanger is only useful in non-shared rooms.

Furthermore Al-Rifaiy (1988) found that the possession by some family members of their own televisions and videos in their rooms reduced daily communication between family members in Jeddah.

The increasing sense of individuality has led to the assignment of more space per a family member. The size of the Saudi nuclear family has decreased (Hamdan, 1990) while the size of villas and apartments has increased. Table 6.3 shows that the number



Figure 6.13 – An article that advise allocating a special room for a child to increase his/her confidence and sense of self worth. Source: Okaz Newspaper, October (1995), No. 10669.

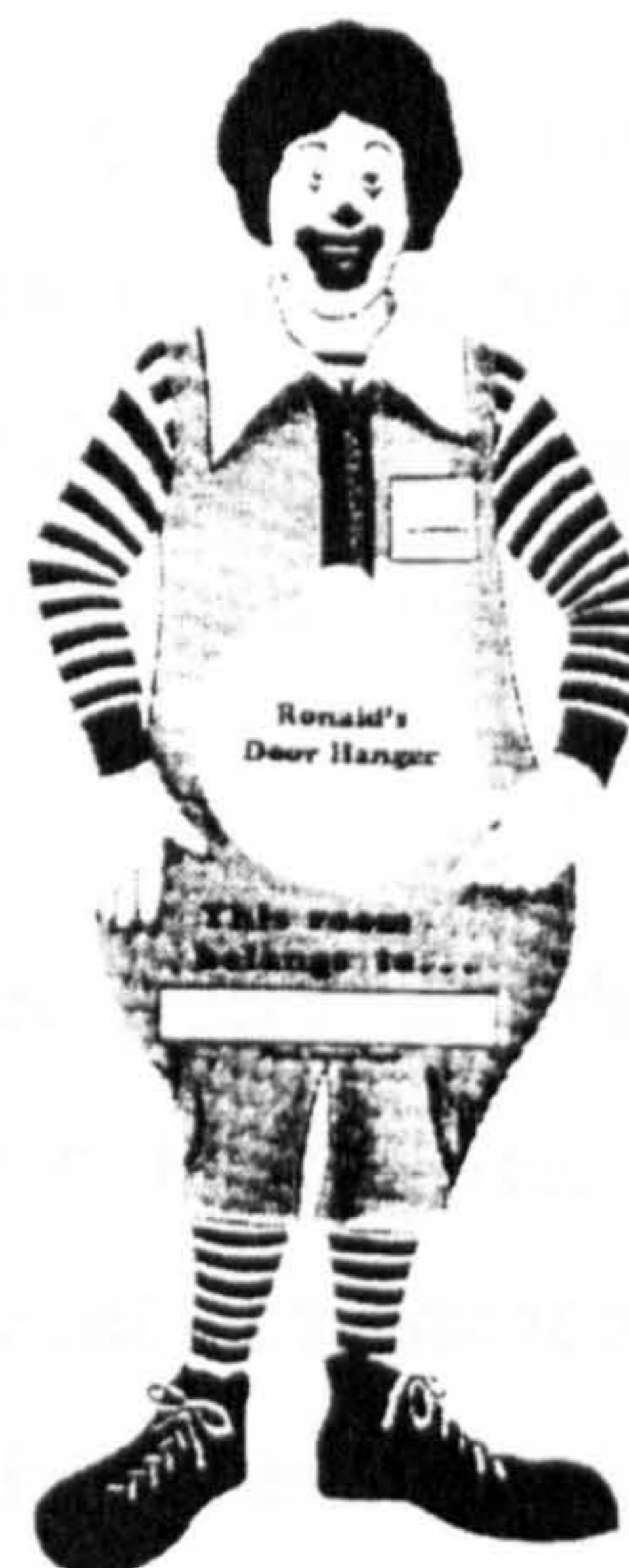


Figure 6.14 – A door hanger that was distributed with McDonald's children's meals.

of rooms per household increased in Jeddah. This phenomenon has been found to be correlated to families' income. Al-Ghamdi (1985) in a comparative study between Jeddah and Al-Baha, which is a rural village in Hijaz, found that the number of rooms per household increases in relation to income in Jeddah while there was no indication of this in Al-Baha.

Number of Rooms	% in 1971	% in 1978
1-2	55.4	4.6
3	23.8	6.7
4	11.7	15
5	4.4	17.8
6	2.3	19.2
7	0.9	19.8
8	0.6	10.3
9 and Over	0.9	6.6
Total	100	100

Table 6.3 – Number of Rooms per Household in Jeddah, 1971 and 1978.
Source: Sert Jackson International/Saudconsult, 1979: 117.

More people could afford to travel to European countries and the United States for vacation and saw different home environments, by which they were impressed, and consequently emulated when they returned (Al-Lyaly, 1990). Mr. Al-Nabulsi recalled that the demand for modern furniture increased after people began to travel abroad.

It has become socially unacceptable for newly married couples to furnish their house with a modern bedroom suite and *masanid* only. The house should be furnished with a master bedroom suite, a sitting suite in the *saloon* and the living room, a refrigerator, a washing machine, a television and maybe a dining suite. In fact marriage expenses have become a great burden for young people.¹⁹

The increasing size of the house, the number of furniture pieces, and the increasing hygiene standards demanded more time and effort from housewives. For many housewives at least one full time female maid in the house became essential. Maids do the vast amount of work to maintain the standards of cleanliness and tidiness. The cheap cost of maids also contributed to the dependency on them since they come from far-east countries where the cost of labour is cheap.²⁰ The availability of domestic help

¹⁹ Parents in some families help in furnishing their son's or daughter's new house. However many young people do not have such help and wait for years until they collect the marriage and furniture expenses. Some charity organisations assigned special funds for helping in this cause.

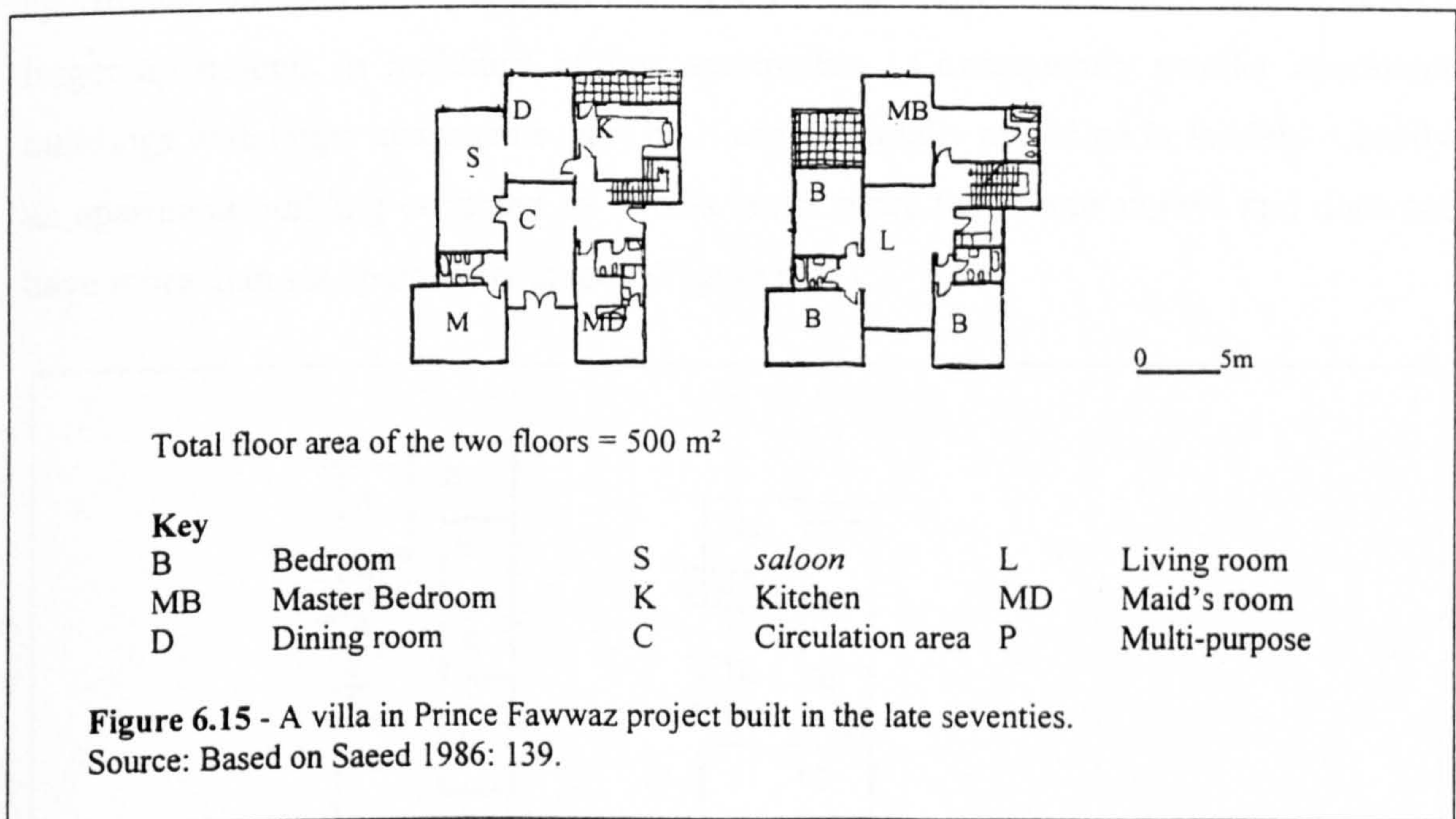
²⁰ The wage of a maid per month is around 600 Saudi Riyals (around £100 sterling pounds).

by cheap maids, in fact, increased the standard of cleanliness and tidiness that one maid has become insufficient in many households.

6.3.1 Residential Types

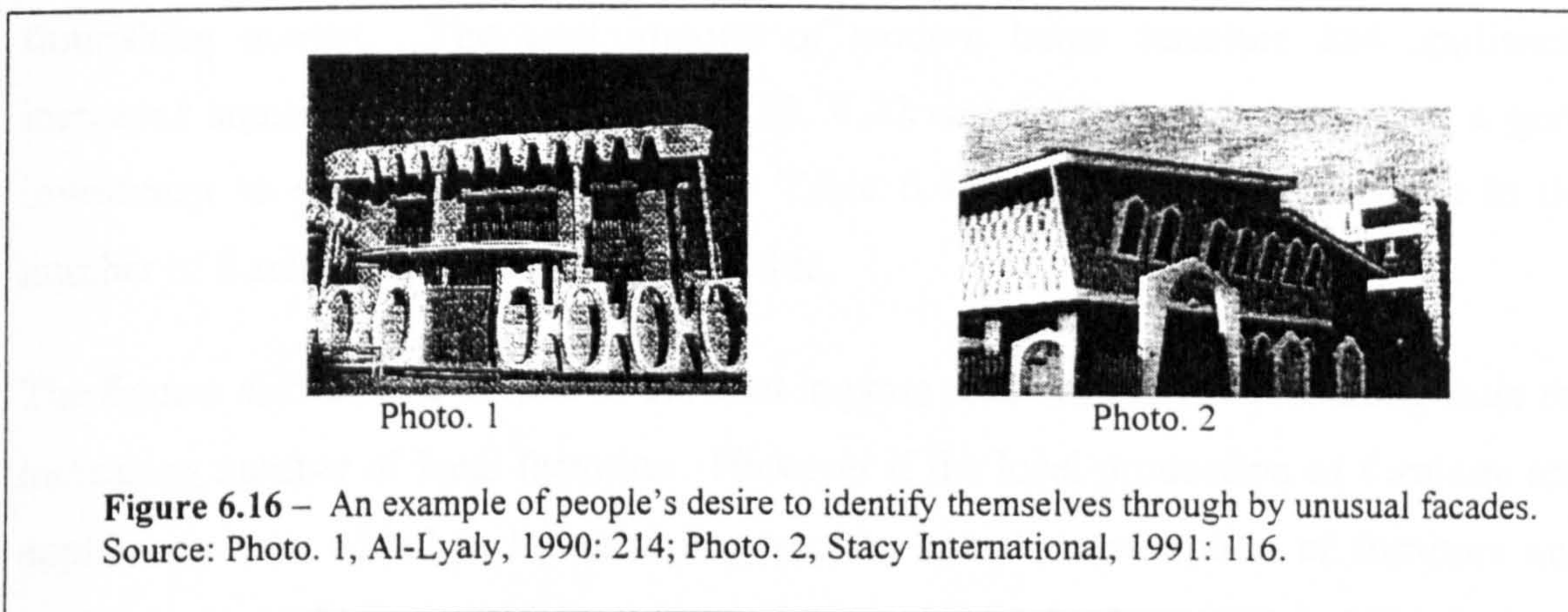
6.3.1.1 Villas

The villa type of two identical floors for the extended family was gradually replaced by a villa type for one nuclear family. Those who wanted to invest one of the two floors to rent out built two identical floors. The ground floor of the villa (Figure 6.15) consisted of a *saloon*, a dining room, a living room from which stairs lead to the first floor, a large kitchen, and two bathrooms. Its first floor consisted of bedrooms and bathrooms. The living room could be on the first floor instead of the ground floor. Sometimes a *majlis* and a guest sleeping room with its bathroom were added on the ground floor. Because one nuclear family used both floors, the stairs at the back of the house were not enough. Most villas now have stairs within, or easily accessible from, the living room.



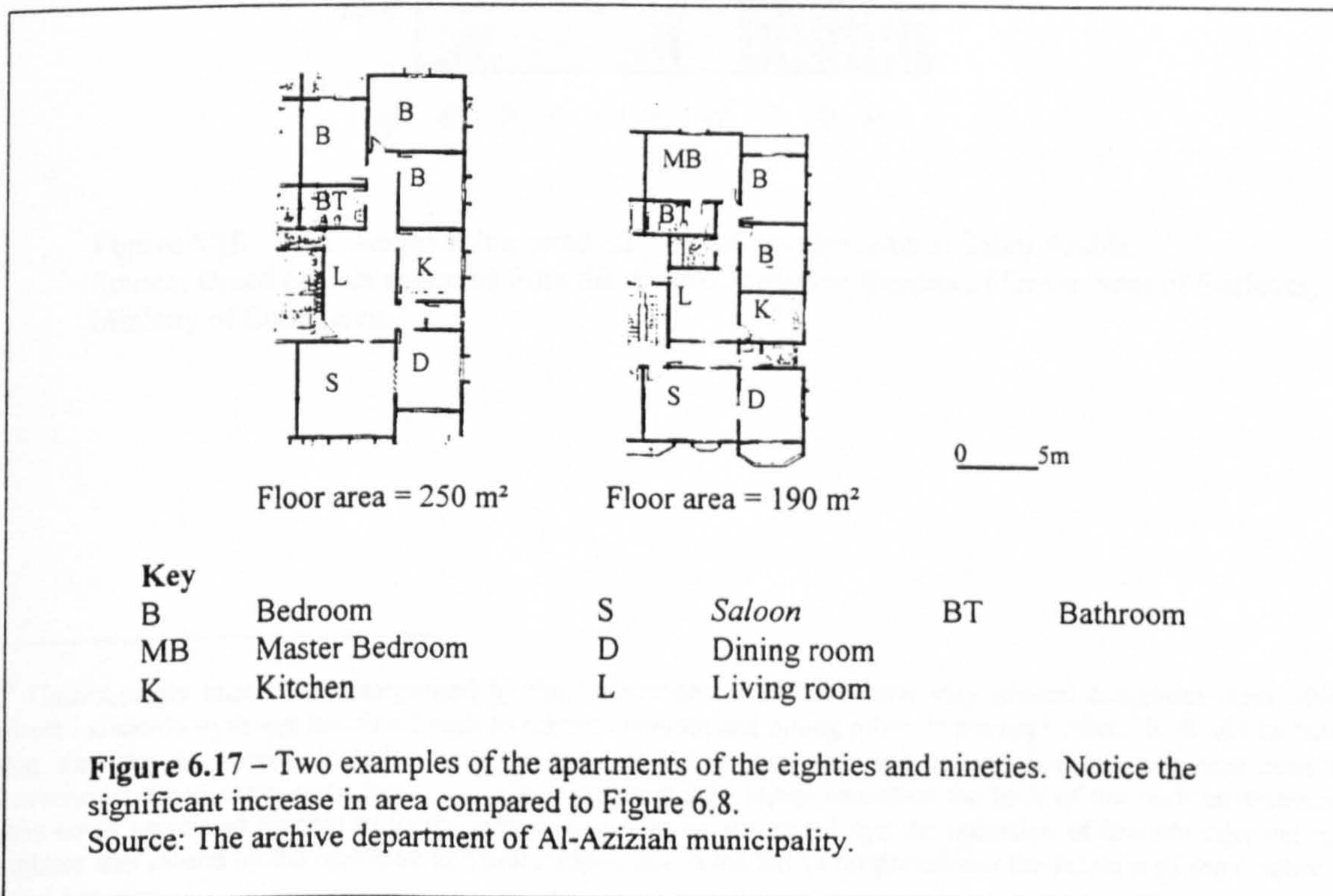
During the fifties and sixties living in a villa was a primary social criterion in identifying occupants status. This criterion became insufficient with the increasing prosperity during the seventies and eighties. People now have more freedom to build what they wanted to distinguish themselves from others or claim high social status by building villas with unusual forms and facades. Differences of disposable income

which was spent on decorating facades and people's different tastes aggravated the situation (Jomah, 1992). There are many examples where clients ask architects to design facades that never existed before, thus creating funny shapes (Figure 6.16).



6.3.1.2 Apartments

At the beginning apartment buildings were huge multi-story buildings with at least four apartments on each floor, and the size of each apartment was small. Saudis needed larger apartments in buildings of few apartments. Consequently smaller apartment buildings with larger apartments were built and eventually prevailed in Jeddah. Usually an apartment building occupied by Saudis is not more than three storeys and does not have more than six apartments in total (Figure 6.17).



6.3.2 The Market of Modern Furniture and Appliances

The strong demand for modern home furniture and appliances during this period led to a flourishing market. The total imports of modern home furniture and appliances increased significantly (Figures 6.18, 6.19, 6.20 and 6.21).²¹ It became also a good investment to establish local factories. Table 6.4 shows the steady increase in the number of furniture factories in Saudi Arabia.

The figures also show a decline in the total imports after around 1984 resulting from the increasing number of local factories. However if the local production of furniture and appliances were added to the total imports, the actual consumption of furniture and appliances would be much higher. According to Al-Abdalqadir (1995) in 1995 the local industry covered more than 70% of the total consumption. This is an indication that the figures of the total imports, especially in recent years, only show around 30% of the total furniture consumption.

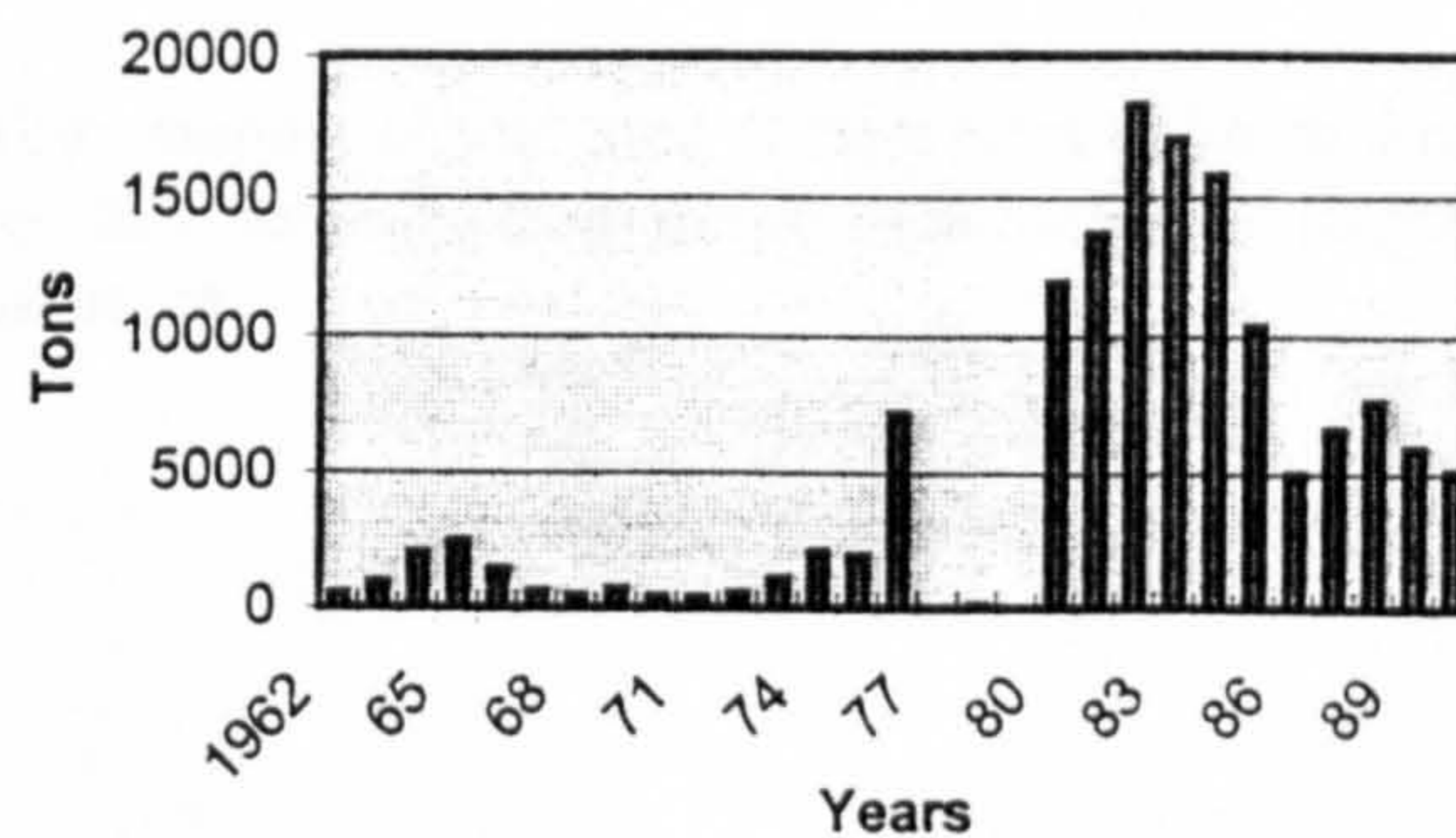


Figure 6.18 - Total weight of imported all types of wooden seats to Saudi Arabia.

Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

²¹ Unfortunately imports are categorised by the Department of Statistics into very general categories from which direct indication to rooms functions, such as master bedroom and dining room, is not applicable. It should be noted that the data of imports includes furniture and appliances that are used in non-domestic purposes such as governmental and commercial buildings. Since residential buildings constitute the bulk of the built environment, they could be related roughly to these figures. It should be also noted that the reduction of imports after the mid eighties was caused by the recession in Saudi Arabia, due to the fall of oil prices, and the increase of the number of local factories.

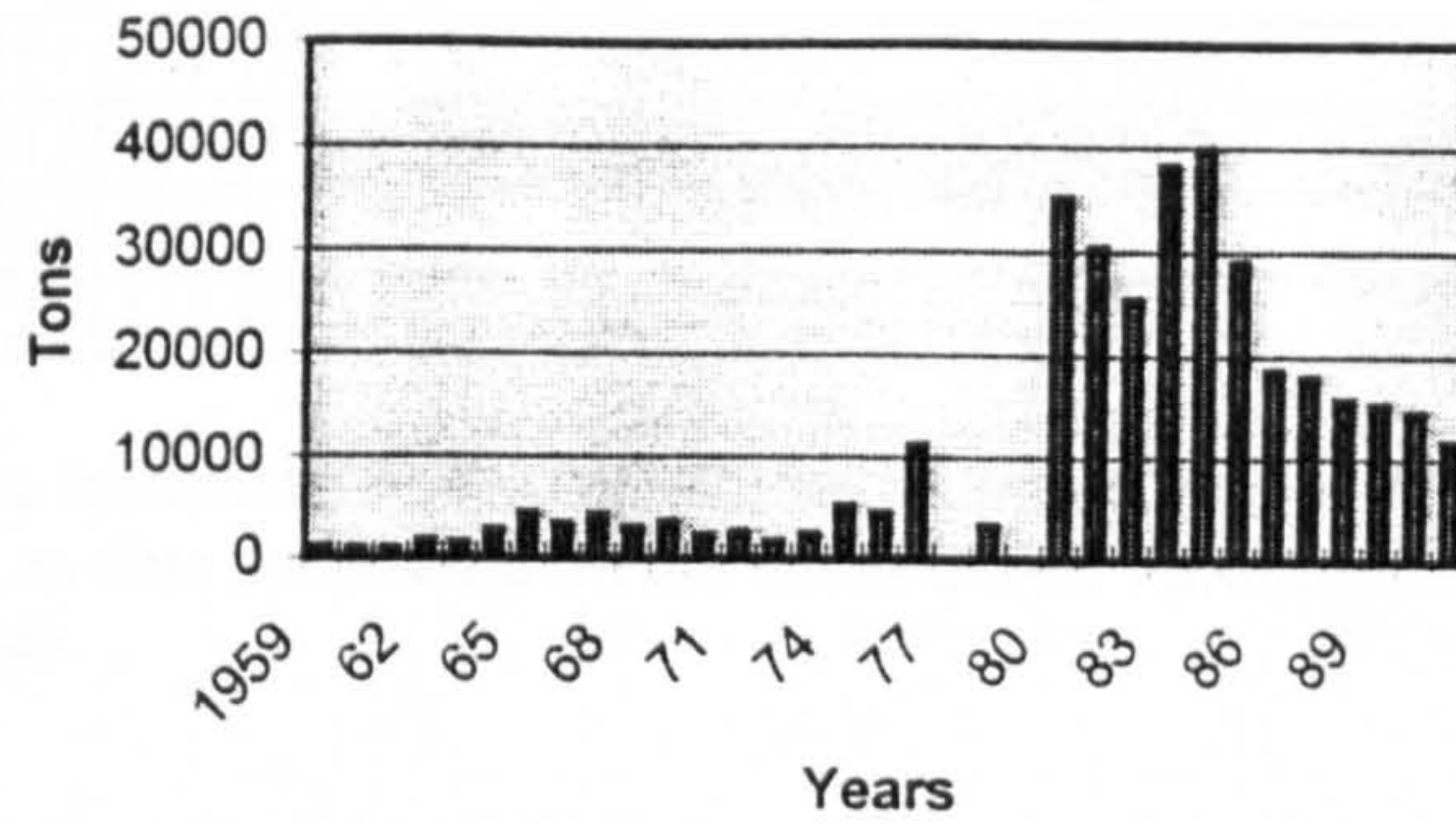


Figure 6.19 - Total weight of imported sanitary equipment to Saudi Arabia.
 Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

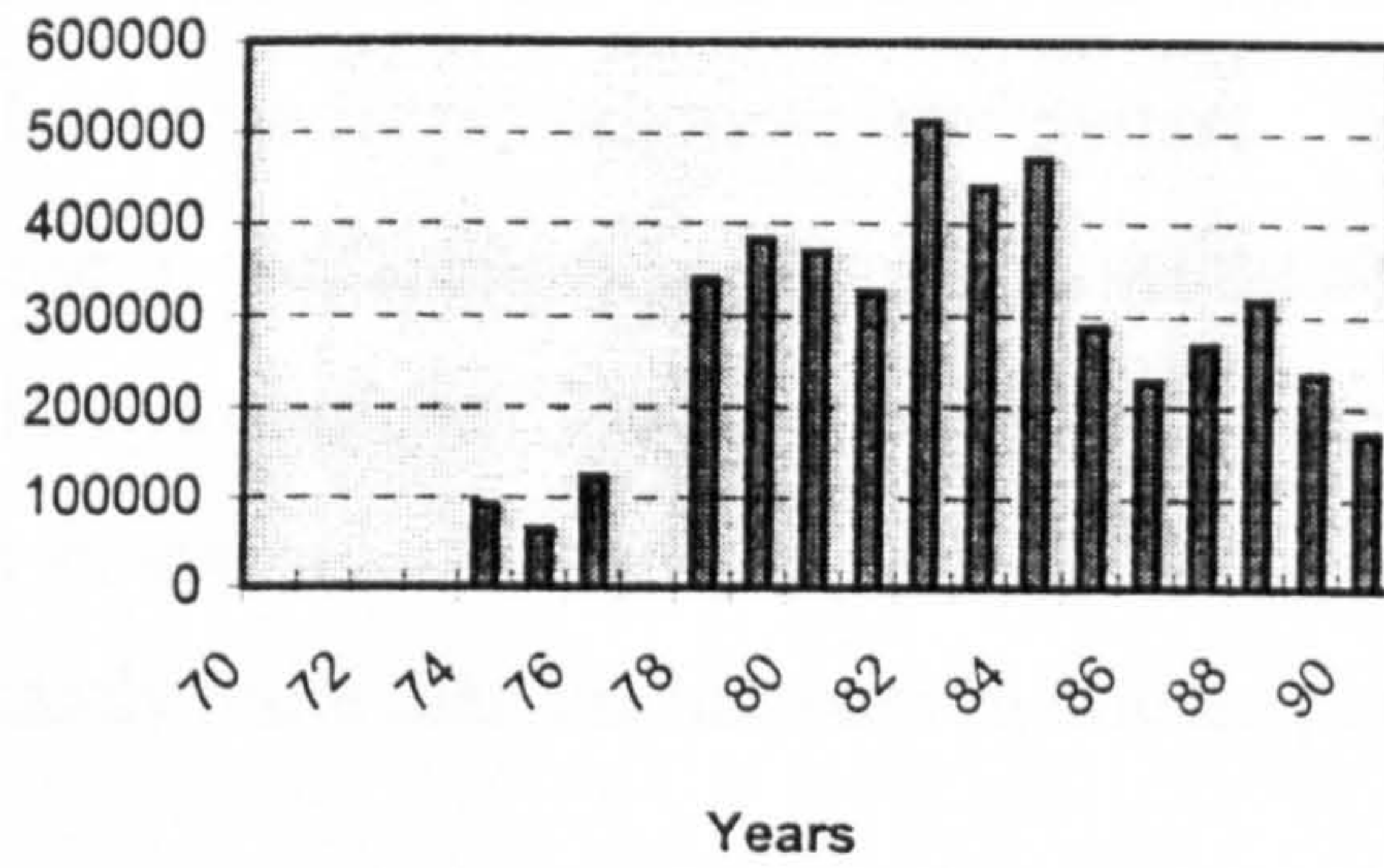


Figure 6.20 - Total number of imported refrigerators to Saudi Arabia.
 Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

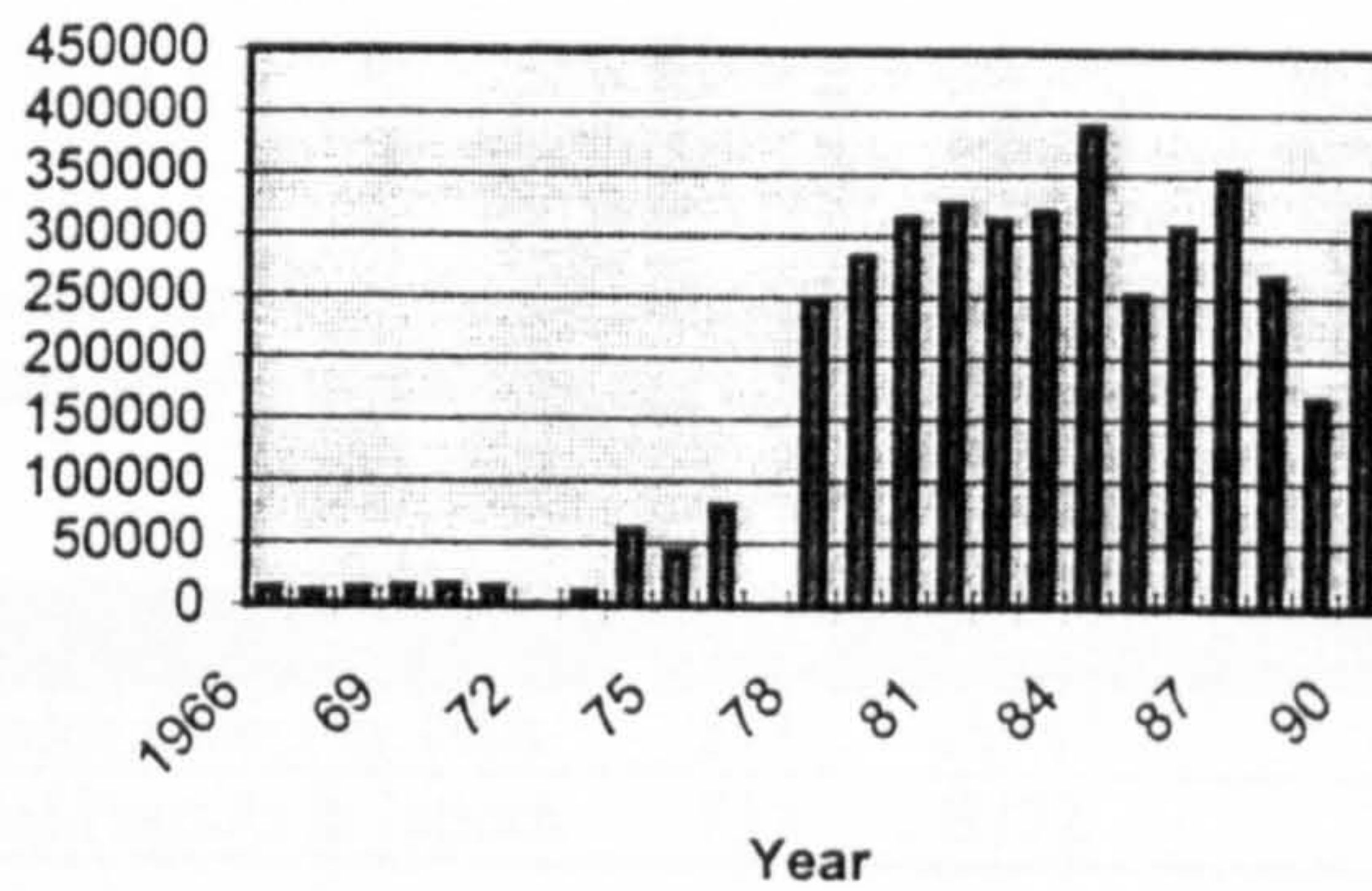


Figure 6.21 - Total number of imported washing machines to Saudi Arabia.
 Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

Year	Total Number of Wooden Furniture Factories
1970 (1390 H)	6
1975 (1395 H)	15
1980 (1400 H)	28
1985 (1405 H)	43
1992 (1412 H)	65

Table 6.4 - The increasing number of wooden furniture factories in Saudi Arabia.
Source: Based on data collected from the Saudi Office Furniture, Equipment and Supplies Directory (1994).

It should be noted that the sharp increase in imports and local factories is not an exact indication of the increase of consumption. Figure 6.22 shows the total number of construction permits for houses issued by the municipalities in Jeddah. More houses mean more consumption of furniture. In other words, it could be that the amount of furniture per room remained the same and the increased sales of furniture and appliances were due to the increased number of houses. To find out what was the main cause of the increase in the furniture consumption, a comparison between the imports of home furniture, disregarding the 70% production of the local factories, with the increase of the permits for house construction (Table 6.5), shows that the increase in furniture imports is significantly more than the increase in houses permits.

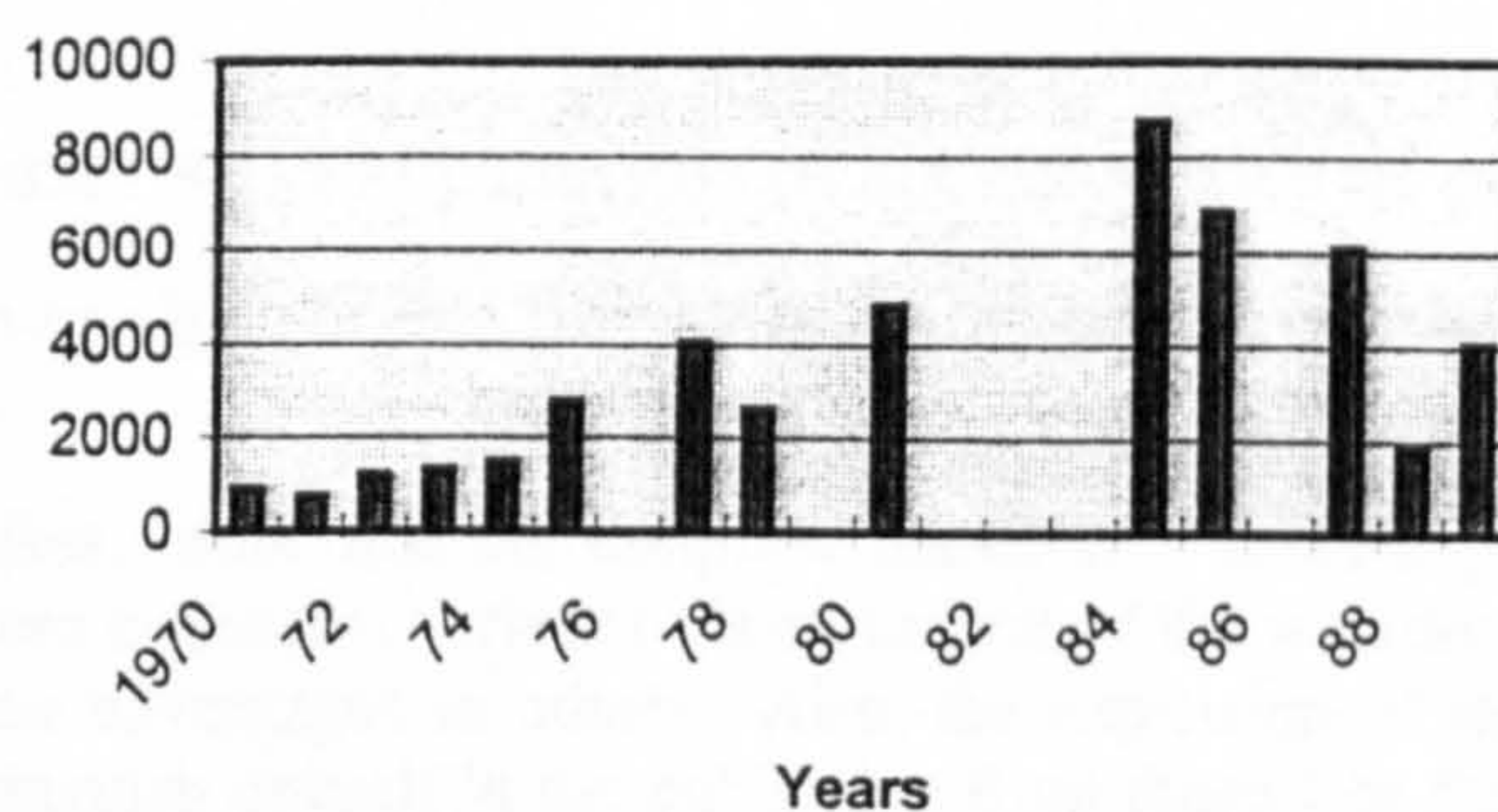


Figure 6.22 - The total number of residential construction permits by the municipality of Jeddah.
Source: The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

	1971	1984	Times of Increase
Imports of Wooden Chairs in Tons	373	15747	42
No. of Residential Permits in Jeddah	737	8772	12

Table 6.5 - A comparison between the increase of wooden chairs imports in Saudi Arabia and the increase of residential permits in Jeddah.
Source: Figures were taken from the Annual statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

Consumption increased even though advertisements did not play a significant role in marketing. At the beginning of television broadcasting there were no advertisements. Television advertisements started in the late eighties. According to Sajini (1995: 57) in 1995 the annual average expenditure for advertisements per individual in Saudi Arabia was \$14 US dollars. This figure is very low if compared to the corresponding figure in any European country, for example Switzerland \$612 US dollars.

Since advertisements in Saudi Arabia have been very weak, what was the reason for the increasing consumption of modern furniture? The answer of this could be found in the emulation theory. "According to the theory of emulation, the envious lower classes keep copying the upper-class styles, and the upper keep trying to distinguish themselves, so the style for luxuries seeps down." (Douglas, 1996: 56)

Since furniture has been a good means to express household's identity, for rich families to be distinguished from the less-income families, they always look for new styles of furniture. Al-Nabulsi and Abo-Alsoud comment that rich people started the purchase of modern furniture supports this explanation. Mohaimeed (1994) also supported the explanation of the emulation theory. He found that the low and middle-income families in Saudi Arabia imitated the consumption behaviour of the high-income families.

Moreover in Albazai's (1991) analysis of six categories of private consumption in Saudi Arabia²², one of which is house furnishings, he explained that:

As income rises, individual consumption habits and tastes expand to include additional goods and more expensive varieties via emulation of the wealthy who can afford them first and show their advantages to others. Also, the expansion of tastes is accelerated by the desire to distinguish oneself in the public eye from those less fortunate who cannot afford these improvements. The combination of these two phenomena leads to increased consumption first as income rises, then falls to its long-run path level. (Albazai, 1991: 98)

This means that the market process, discussed in Chapter 2, which influences people to buy goods for meaning purposes, i.e. to express certain messages did not exist during the seventies and eighties in Saudi Arabia. People's desire to express their identity was the main drive for buying modern furniture.

²² The six categories are: 1) food, drink, and tobacco, 2) clothing and footwear, 3) rent, fuel and water, 4) house furnishings, 5) entertainment, and 6) miscellaneous services.

6.3.3 Modern Furniture and Appliances in the Home Environment

When air-conditioners provided the means to ignore the climate, the home environment was greatly changed. Before the second transformation, a house usually had no more than two air-conditioners. Now, every room has at least one air-conditioner. Figure 6.23 shows a significant increase in the import of air-conditioners.

Balconies and roof terraces, of villas which were built during the first transformation, were necessary for night sleeping. After the introduction of air-conditioners there was no longer any need for outdoor night sleeping. The roof terraces and balconies were only used as storage areas. Only if many guests were invited, some families use the roof terrace for hosting a large number of them at night. Many villas which were built after the mid eighties were without roof terraces. The introduction of air-conditioning reduced the family's relationship with the outdoors and the family's home environment became confined to the home interior.

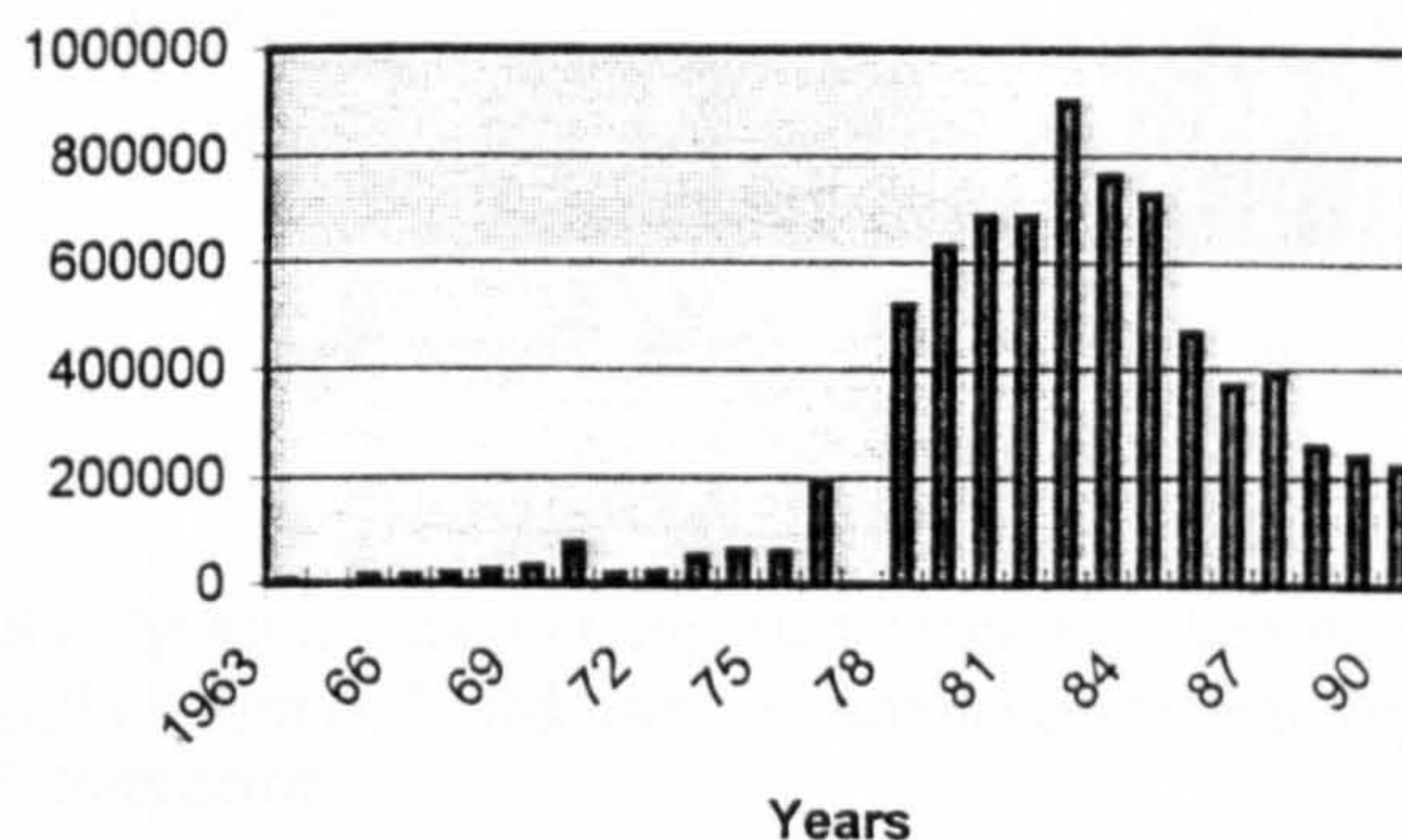


Figure 6.23 - The total number of imported air-conditioners to Saudi Arabia.

Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

Window air-conditioning units²³ were the prevailing type. Split and central air-conditioning²⁴ were introduced recently only to rich households due to their high cost. In a house furnished with the window air-conditioning units, it was common on hot

²³ A window air-conditioner is a whole system put into a hole in the wall. A fan and a blower motor, thermostat, control panel and a condenser are all in one cubical.

²⁴ A split air-conditioner is composed of two separate systems. The first, which is inside the room, consists of a fan motor, thermostat and a control panel. The second is put on the roof or on the backyard and consists of a blower motor, condenser fan and a coil. The liquid is pushed from the noisy external system to the internal system to cool the air inside the room. The central air-conditioning system is only external. All the components are located outside. The hot air is pulled from the room to be cooled in the central external system and pushed back to the room.

days for the air-conditioning to be turned on and the doors to rooms to be closed in order to control their temperature. This facilitated the isolation of family members from each other. With every family member or two withdrawing to his/her/their own room, eventually communication between them may have been reduced. This is in contrast to the traditional house where all doors were kept open to maximise the air circulation.

A climatic advantage of air-conditioners is the reduction of dust getting into the house. The hot and humid climate of Jeddah throughout the year, and consequently the heavy dependency on air-conditioning, discouraged people from opening their windows. Prosperity, absence of dust and the low cost of maids, who could help in dusting and cleaning, made it easy to furnish home interiors with many decorated items, which have caused an increase in imported decorated items (Figure 6.24).

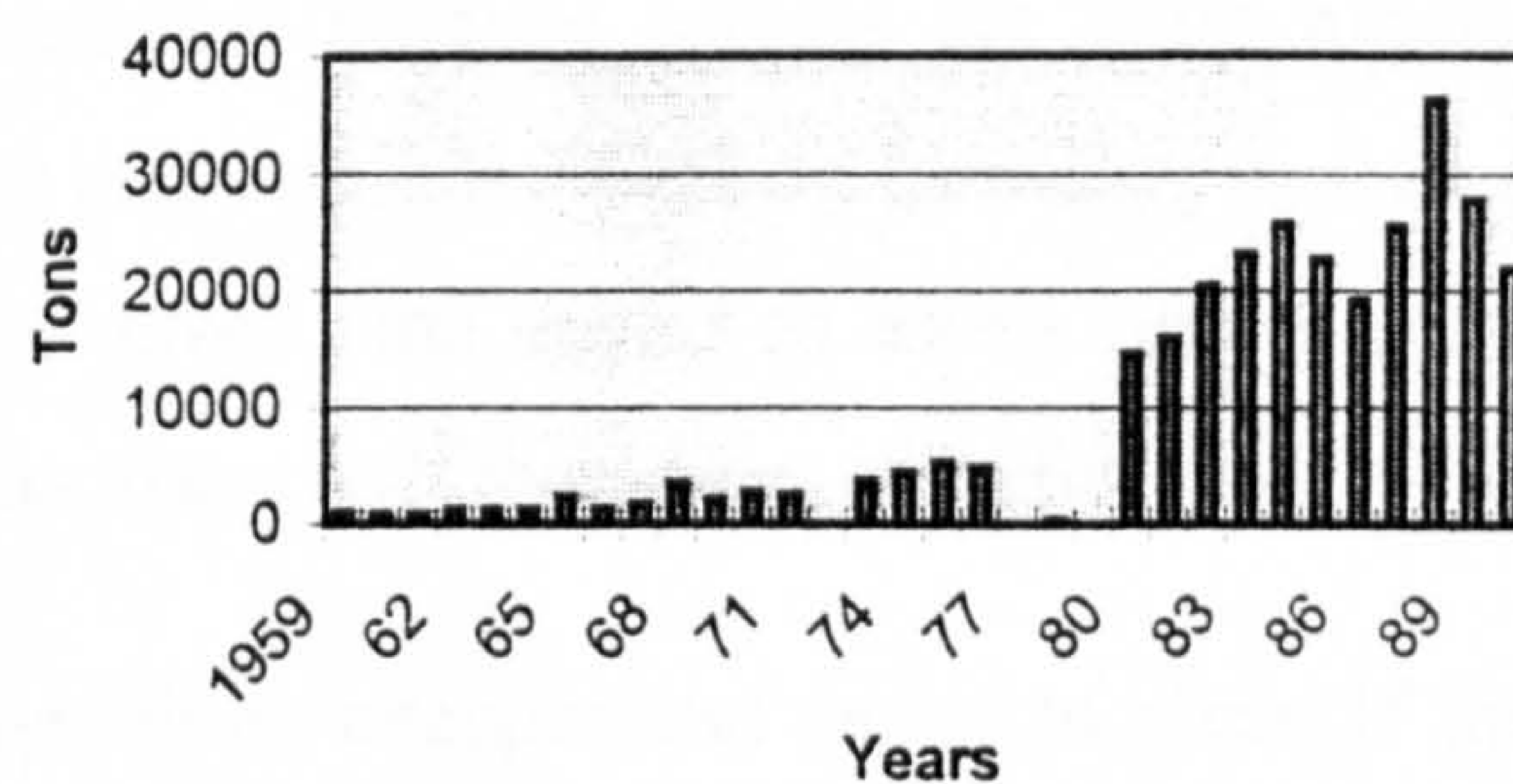


Figure 6.24 - The total weight of imported decorated glass items to Saudi Arabia.
Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

Furthermore the availability of electric vacuum cleaners (Figure 6.25) and the dust reduction facilitated the introduction of carpets into houses. Whereas the floor of corridors, stairs, kitchens and bathrooms were not covered with rugs before the second transformation, now the floor of the whole house, including kitchens and sometimes bathrooms, was carpeted. It became easier for housewives to sweep and dust the entire house.

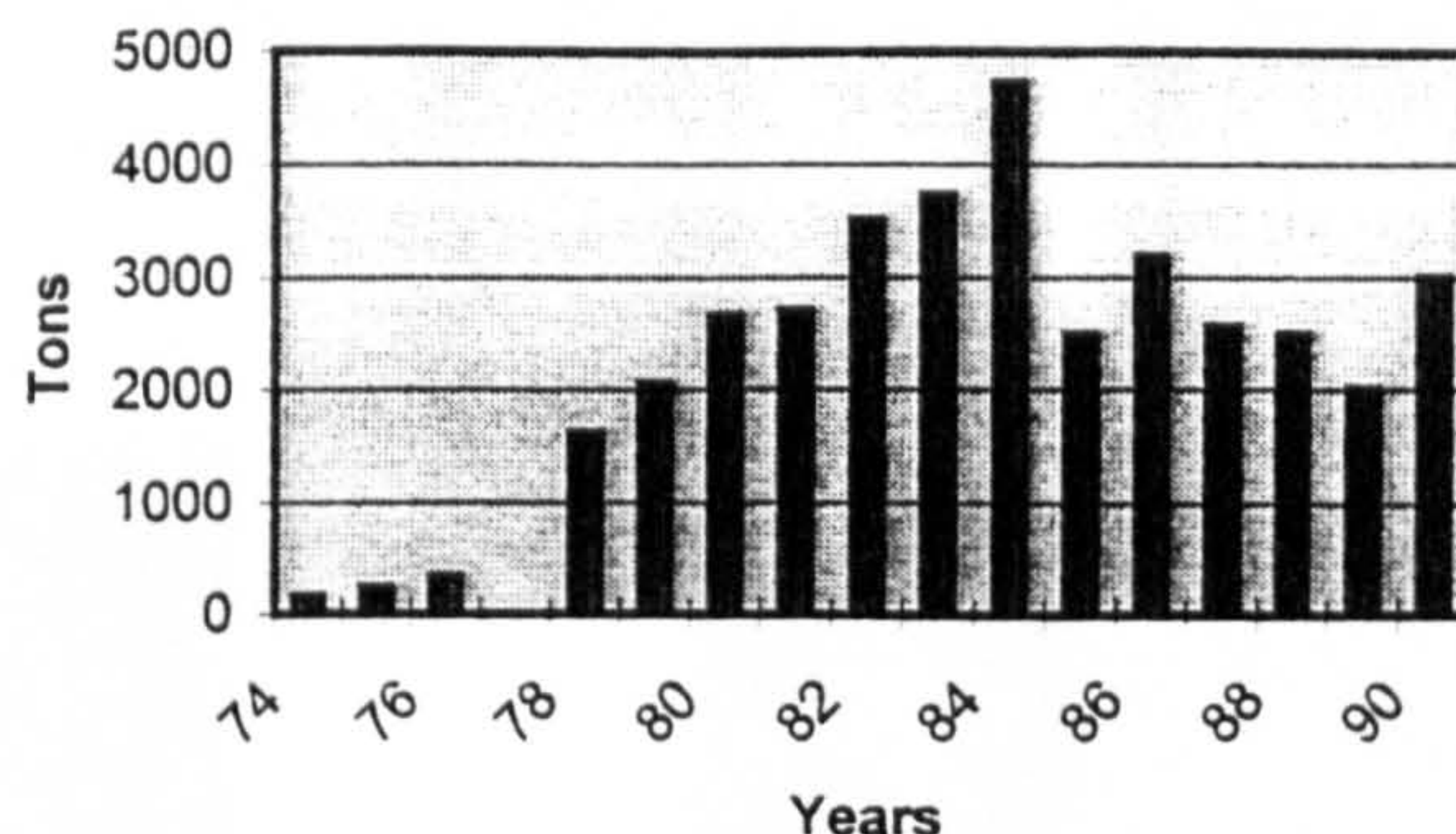


Figure 6.25 - The total weight of imported vacuum cleaners and parts to Saudi Arabia.

Source: Based on data collected from the Annual Statistical Reports of Department of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce.

Pile (1995) argued that rooms without carpet are healthier, cheaper and easier to clean. They would be healthier because carpets are great hidiers of dirt and dust, cheaper because the money that would be spent on carpeting unseen spaces under large pieces of furniture would be saved, and easier to clean because these spaces would not need regular sweeping as many as if they were carpeted.

Since rooms are healthier, cheaper and easier to clean if they were not carpeted, what was the reason of the introduction of carpets? The reason for carpeting the whole house could be due to reduce the criticality of spaces, i.e. increase their multi-use. Wherever convenient children could play on floor, parents sit down and drink tea or have their breakfast, or guests play cards.

The control of the home microclimate also abolished the need to open windows. The practical window of wooden shutters was replaced by a cheaper sliding aluminium window type (Figure 6.26). The new type was made of two aluminium frames holding clear sheets of glasses. Even though it is easy to slide one side to open the window, the lack of use and maintenance lead to the rails of the window filling with dust. It is common to find many houses in which windows are difficult to open.

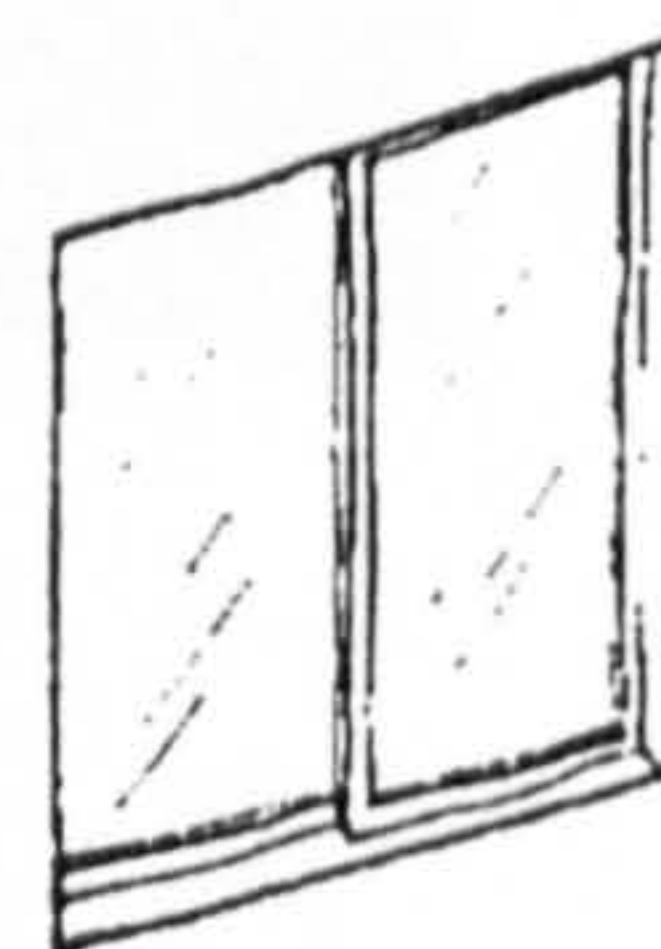


Figure 6.26 – An external view of an aluminium window.

The new window type did not have any sort of light control like the *rowshan* or wooden shutters. This has increased the utilitarian function of curtains. Curtains existed before

aluminium windows, but not with many forms and layers to control the amount of daylight. The development and diversity of curtain designs could be also to cover the ugly appearance of the aluminium window type.

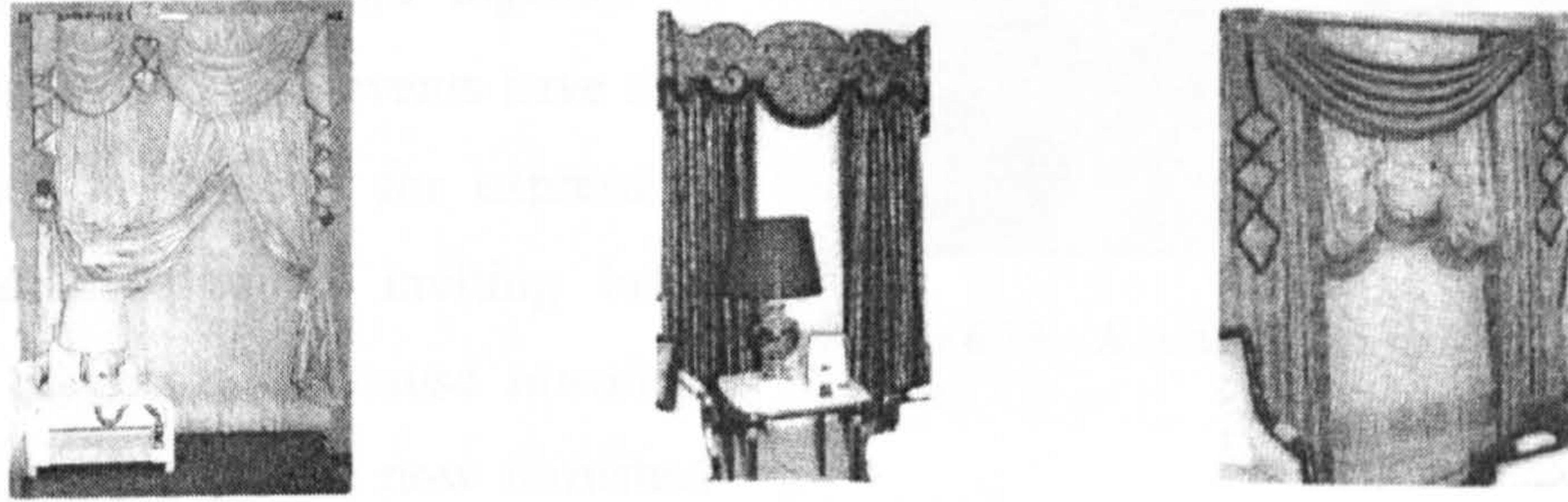


Figure 6.27 – Examples of different forms of curtains.
Source: Albenaa, 1991, 62: 30.

6.3.3.1 Saloon and Majlis

During this period, a new style known locally as *klaseeky* (classic) was introduced (Figure 6.28). The *klaseeky* was of different styles imported from Europe and the United States. A common feature of the *klaseeky* was the floral patterns and carving wooden arms and feet. Because its decoration conveyed more formality than the plain suite which was moved in many houses to the living room.



Photo. 1

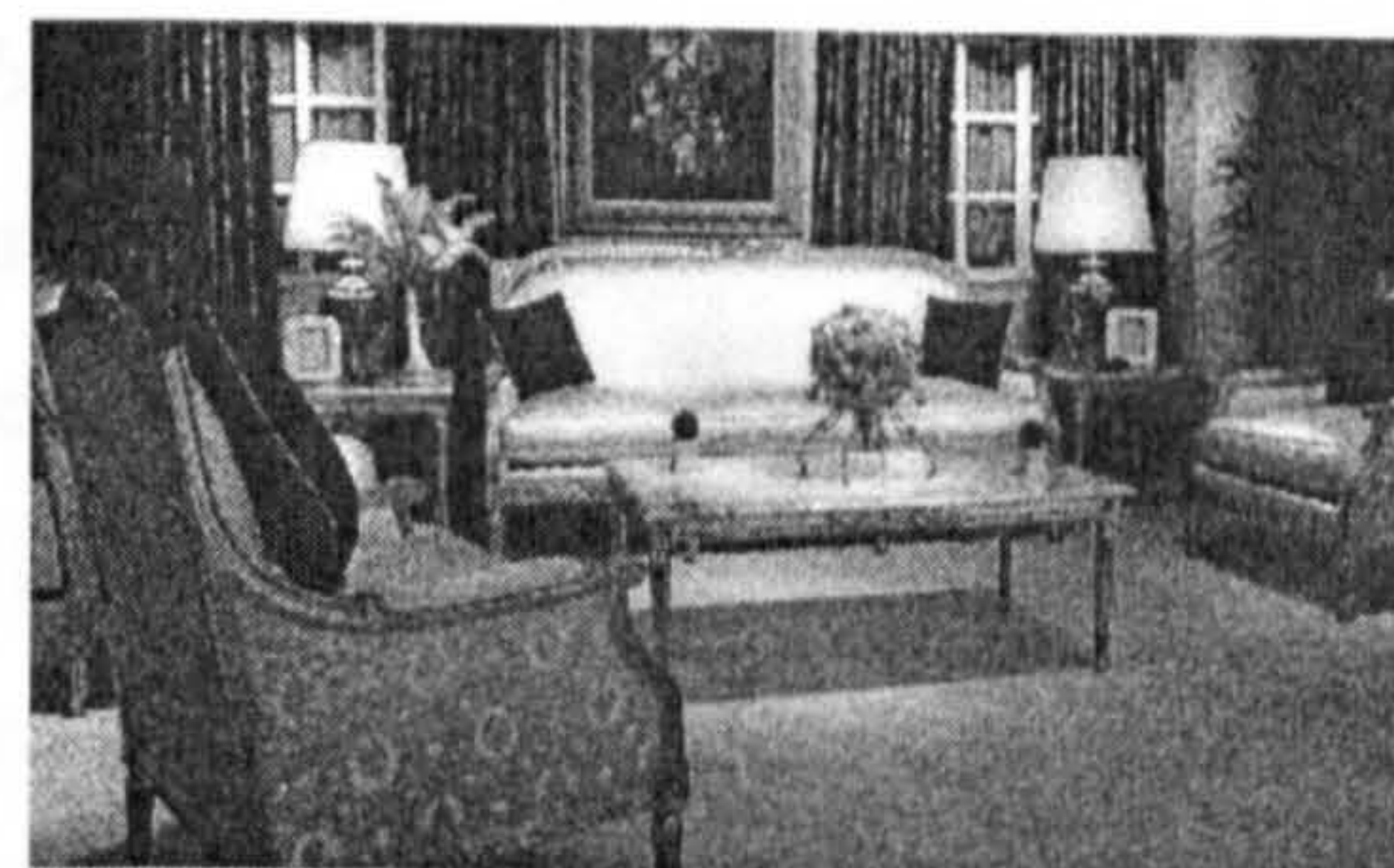


Photo. 2

Figure 6.28 – Suites known locally as *klaseeky* introduced during the eighties.
Source: Photo. 1, Almanzel, issue 2 – 3, 1995
Photo. 2, Albenaa, Vol. 14, No. 82, 1995.

Despite the many social factors that weakened the social relationships, big social and religious occasions such as births, deaths and weddings bring relatives and neighbours together in large numbers. These events have also been used as vehicles for expressing social status through inviting large number of guests. Because *sawaleen* (plural of *saloon*) were now furnished



Figure 6.29 – A suite of high number of chairs in a *saloon*.

with modern sofas and chairs, the capacity of which was less than the capacity of traditional furniture, the average sized *saloon* was not big enough on such occasions. In some rich houses the size of a *saloon* could reach more than 100m². More than two suites were arranged, or special suites with a larger number of chairs (Figure 6.29) were ordered from furniture factories to furnish such *sawaleen*.

The *saloon* was convenient for formal occasions when activities are limited to sitting on chairs, drinking tea and chatting. There are other occasions when men guests practice informal activities, i.e. activities that do not have strict decorum such as playing cards on the floor, watching television and smoking huble-bubble. Engawi (1991) investigated a strong cultural phenomenon which prevailed in Jeddah and Mecca especially among men, a card game called *baloot*.²⁵ Men usually get into groups and organise among themselves nightly visits during which they entertain, play *baloot* and have dinner. The visits are on a daily or weekly basis. Depending on the number of participants in the group, a participant could host his group once every month or more. Therefore a separate room, called *majlis*, furnished with *tawaweel* was added to some villas. Usually the *majlis* was located separately from the villa because it was frequently used by male guests who stayed until late night chatting, watching television and videos and playing cards; thus the noise was kept away from the rest of the house. It was also accessible from outside the main gate of the villa (for example Houses 6 and 8 in Chapter 7). These informal activities required practical furniture in the *majlis*. It

²⁵ During the last century and the first half of this century men played *baloot* only occasionally. After the sudden prosperity, it became much more popular. Engawi claimed that 85% of the male population in large cities of Saudi Arabia know how to play the game.

was furnished with rugs, *tawaweel* and/or a new locally developed seating called *baturmah* (Figure 6.30). The *baturmah* was a revival of the *karaweet*.

Large social occasions, especially weddings, could not be conducted in houses. It became a profitable business to own a special hall to be hired in such occasions. The services that are provided by the hall owner include the provision of food, tea and Arabic coffee and waiter service. These halls are of different sizes and can accommodate hundreds of men and women separately.

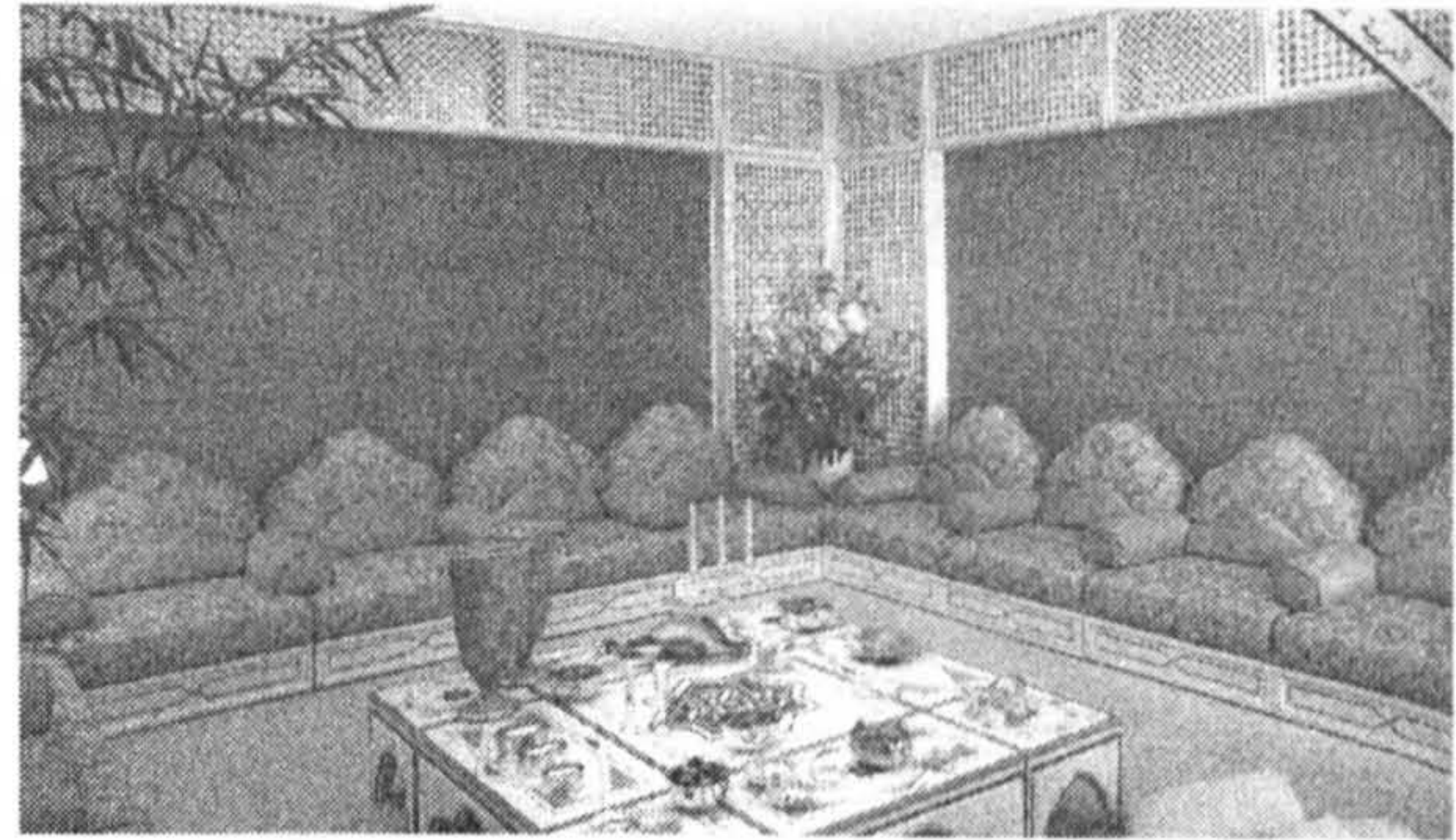


Figure 6.30 – An advertisement for *baturmah*.
Source: *Albenaa*, issue 37, 1987: 79.

An interesting phenomenon on these occasions is that guests complained that the host of the occasion and his sons do not serve the tea and coffee themselves anymore. It became part of the service provided by the hall owner. This confirms one of the findings in Chapter 5 that serving tea and Arabic coffee is done by an important person from the host family to show respect and hospitality to guests.

6.3.3.2 Living Room

The villa did not have a room designed as a living room before the seventies. One of the back rooms could be used for sleeping at night by children and for the family's daily activities. After the second transformation, architectural offices began to design central spaces in the ground floor as living rooms. Sometimes the living room was located on the first floor. It could be furnished with modern sitting furniture or *tawaweel*.

When the television was introduced into the home environment it was put on a little table. Now the living room has a cupboard especially designed for the television (Figure 6.31). The cupboard is around 2m in length and height and designed in many forms. Decorated items such as flower vases, crystals and family photographs are arranged on the cupboard. This is similar to the case of the mantelpiece in Western countries. The mantelpiece started to meet utilitarian needs. Through time it gained a symbolic role and lost its utilitarian role. Rybczynski noted "fireplaces were no longer

a functional necessity, but still symbolized the family hearth. Historical decoration had been simplified - most people could not afford it - but vestiges remained” (Rybczynski, 1986: 179). Likewise the arrangement of the television was utilitarian, Stage 2. Through frequent family gathering and looking at the television, the arrangement has been gaining meaning, which is expressed by decorated items, Stage 3B.

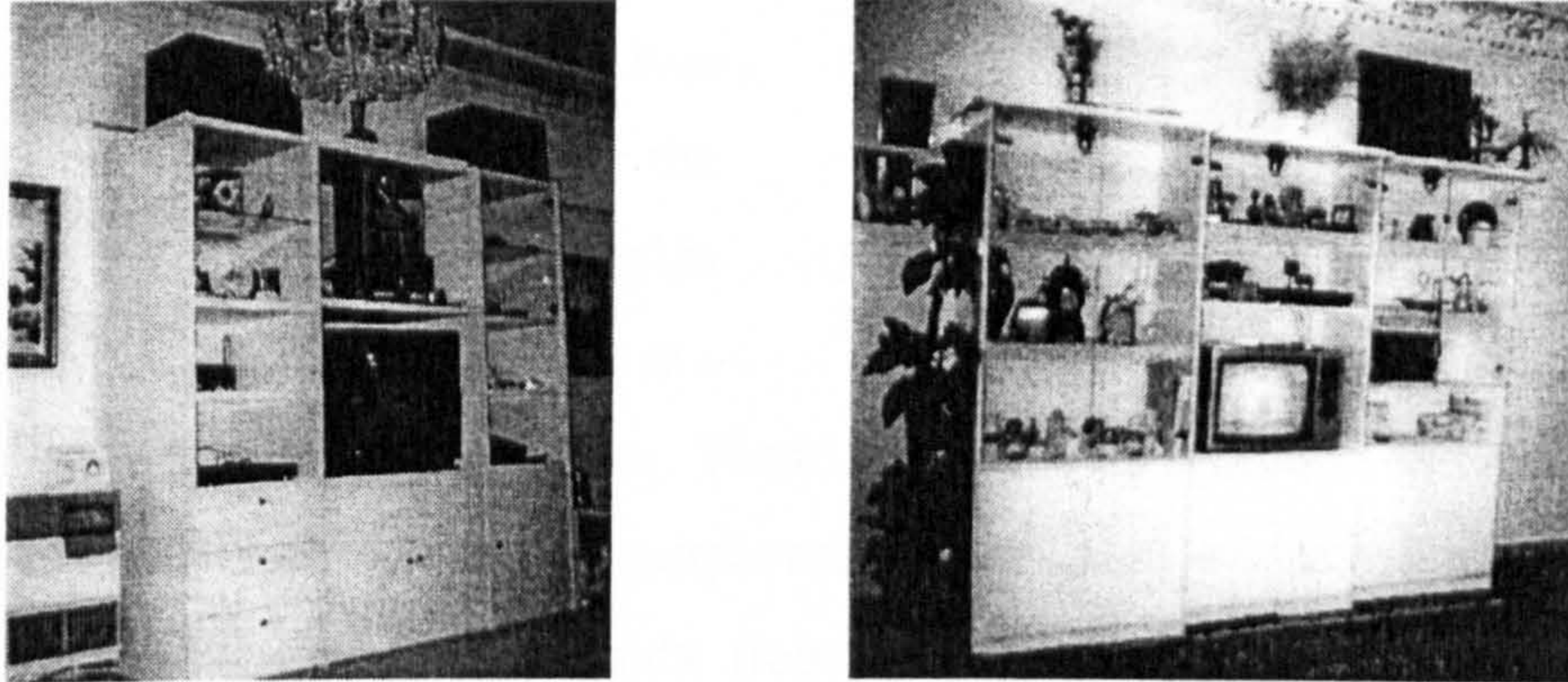


Figure 6.31 – Television cupboards in the living room.

6.3.3.3 Bedroom

The master bedroom suite has become a necessity in every house. It consists of a large bed, a wardrobe, a dressing table with a mirror and two side cabinets. There are some standard children’s bedrooms suites on the market; however households vary in this aspect. Some do not consider furnishing children’s bedrooms to such standards important. It is common to select beds, wardrobes, desks and cabinets from different styles and stores. Old pieces of furniture are often used to complete the children’s bedroom furniture if there is any shortage. Some other households are keen to furnish their children’s bedroom with a complete suite. They go as far as to furnish them with master bedroom suites.

The average size of wardrobes has almost doubled. The number of doors in the wardrobe shown in Figure 6.11 was two. Now, the number of doors can reach to six. This is due to the increasing amount of clothes that people possess nowadays. In addition to the suite’s wardrobe, the increasing amounts of clothes led people to request architects for built-in wardrobes when they designed their houses.

6.3.3.4 Kitchen

Before the second transformation it was common for households to borrow utensils from relatives and neighbours for occasions when a large number of guests were invited. The amount of utensils every household had was enough for small occasions. After the second transformation, households possessed more utensils and did not

need to borrow from others anymore. These utensils were stored in the kitchen, which accordingly needed to have more cupboards. Different styles of modern kitchen cabinets, which were imported mainly from Italy, United States and Germany, were already in the market (Figure 6.32). Thus the size of kitchens increased significantly after the second transformation.

The kitchen also witnessed another development. It began to be used not only for cooking but also for the family members to socialise in. Its large size, at least 25 m², allowed space for a little dining suite. This was used for preparing food, chatting and having breakfast or quick snacks.

6.3.3.5 Bathroom

The number of the standard bathroom suite, 2 x 3 metre, per a household has increased. Before the second transformation, one bathroom was enough in the private zone. Now, every two bedrooms have one bathroom in addition to the private bathroom in the master bedroom. For high income families, the bathroom seems to be designed not only for the basic human functions (taking

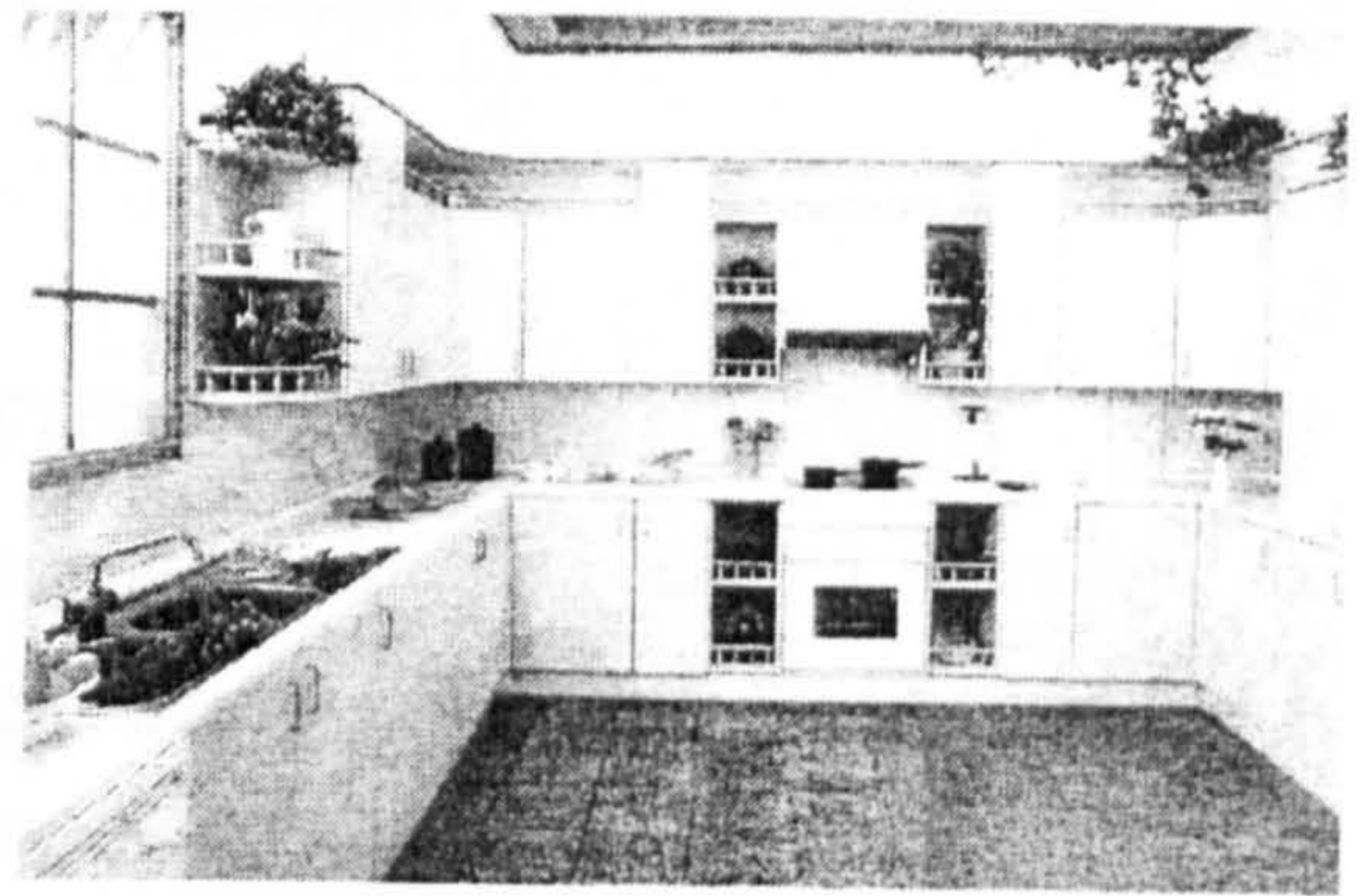


Figure 6.32 – A modern kitchen.
Source: *Albenaa Cataloge*, 1993: 51.

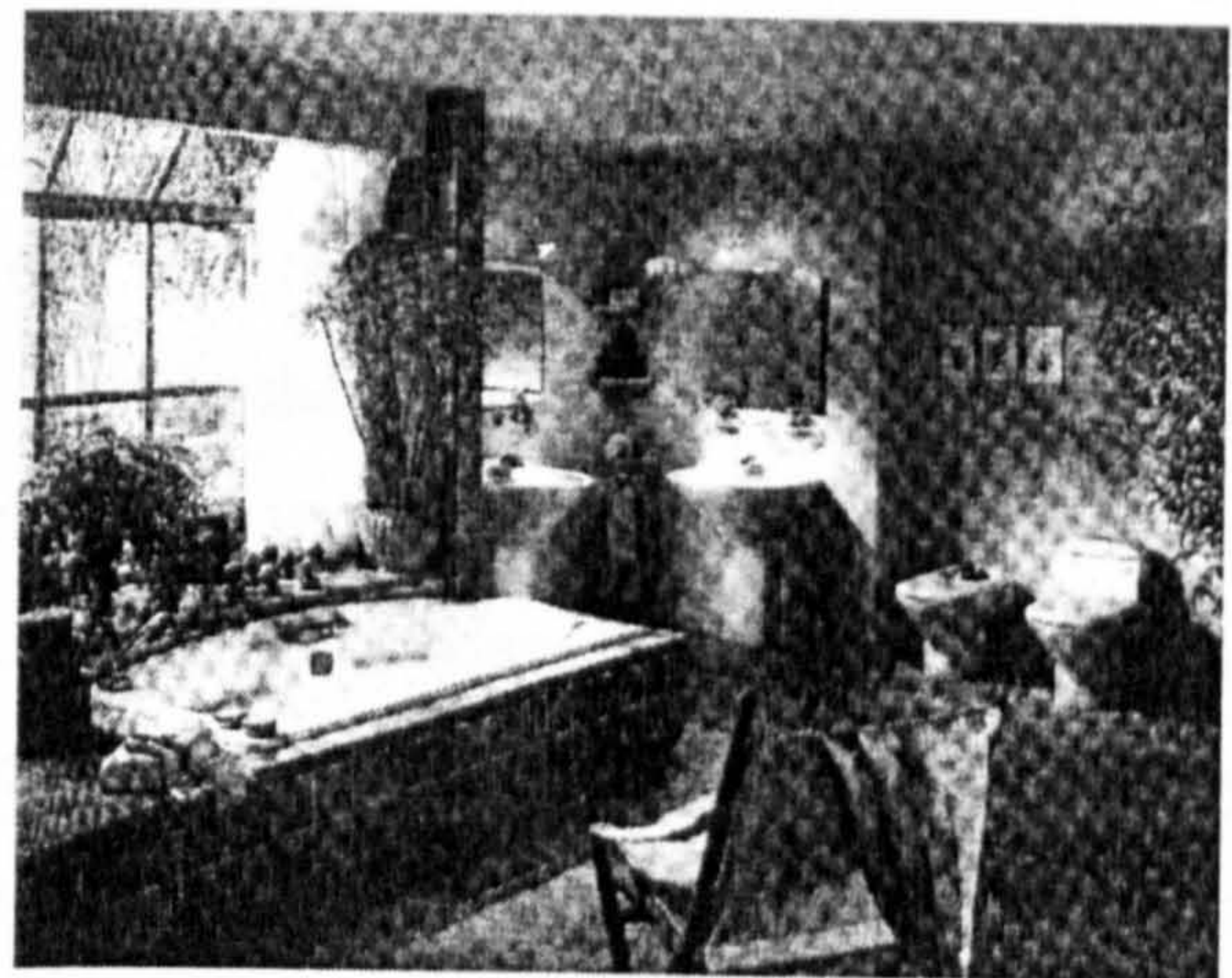


Figure 6.33 – An advertisement of a local company for a bathroom.

Source: *Albenaa*, issue 80, 1994: 218.

showers, washing and evacuation); it can also be furnished with a telephone, magazine shelves, plants and a large bathtub, sometimes equipped with a Jacuzzi and bath platforms (Figure 6.33).

6.4 THE THIRD TRANSFORMATION: LATE EIGHTIES

Al-Nabulsi said that after the second increase in prosperity, demand increased for fashionable furniture. Accordingly businessmen imported whatever was fashionable. It became common for people to change their furniture, especially in the *saloon*, just to keep up with fashion. However after the recession of the mid eighties, new home interior trends appeared. Durability became an important criterion in buying furniture, people began to take their furniture to the upholsterers for refurbishing instead of replacing it, and started to think of ways, other than buying whatever new in the market, to utilise and decorate their homes.

The third transformation started in the late eighties. As was the case with the first and second transformations, the third started with rich households. Rich householders have become more interested in home interior design ideas after the increasing size of houses and the influx of modern furniture during the second transformation.

There are several factors which contributed to the increasing interest of home interior designs. Before the late eighties no Arabic interior design magazine was available. Nowadays, there are at least six Arabic magazines only for interior design ideas.²⁶ Design ideas in these magazines are borrowed mainly from Western interior design magazines.

The increasing interest of interior design was also reflected in architectural practice. The standard drawings of a house design include the architectural layout, electrical, structural and plumbing specifications. Rich clients wanted, in addition to that, interior design specifications. It has become increasingly important for large architectural offices to employ interior designers. Depending on the willingness of the client to pay for the design and the furnishing, the architect or interior designer will, in addition to the house design, design the home interior.

²⁶ Some of these magazines are: *Iwan* published in Lebanon, *Snob Alhasna* published in Lebanon, *Al-Bait Al-Mithaly* published in Kuwait, and *Al-Manzil* published in Saudi Arabia. The publication of these four magazines started in 1995.

One last factor was the increasing number of furniture factories and stores which led to competition in the furniture market. Consequently advertisements of modern suites increased in local newspapers and magazines. Furthermore annual furniture exhibitions, which have many design ideas, were organised to accelerate the market.

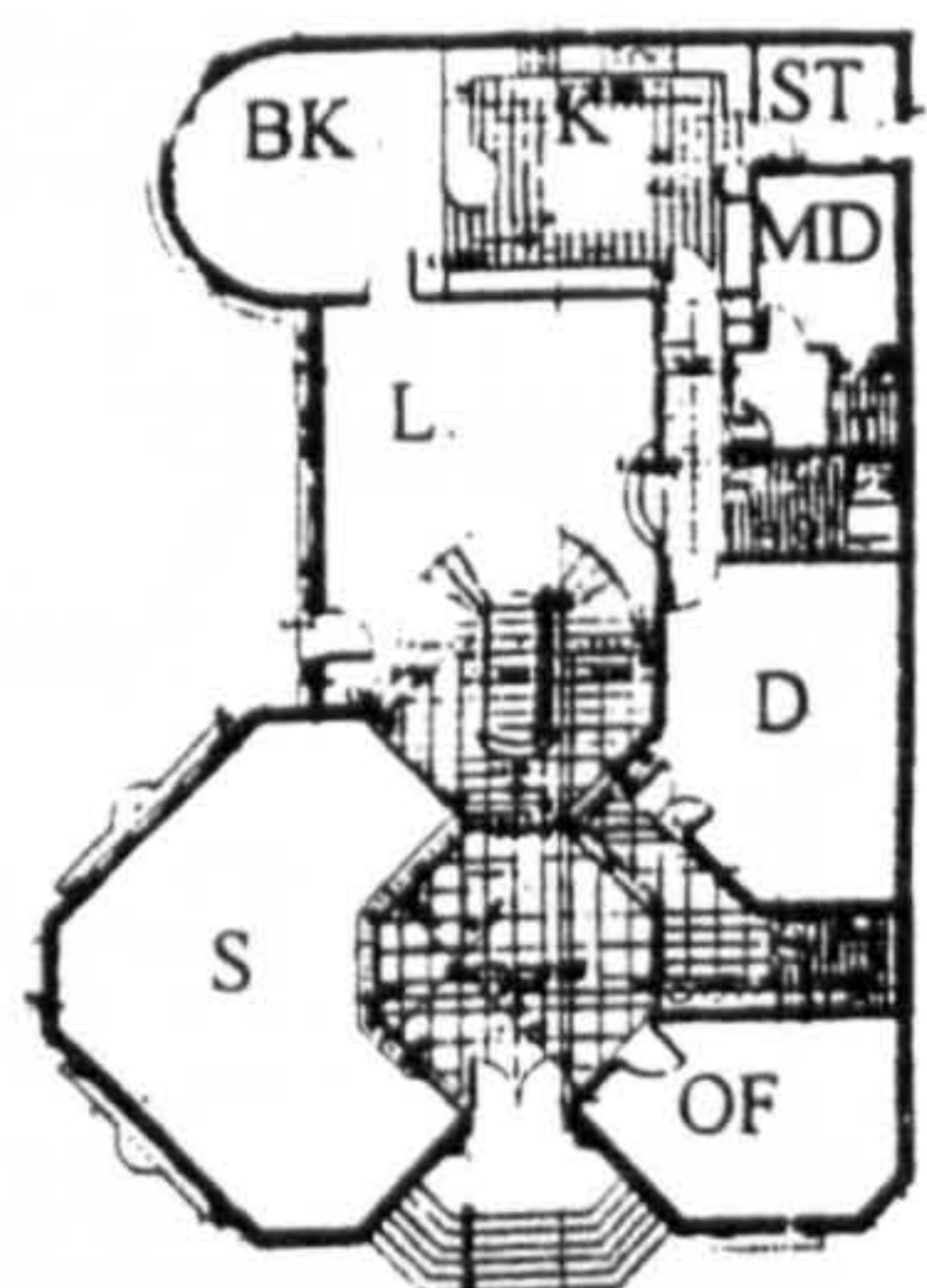
The following are some trends appeared in the home environment during this period.

6.4.1 New Supportive Spaces

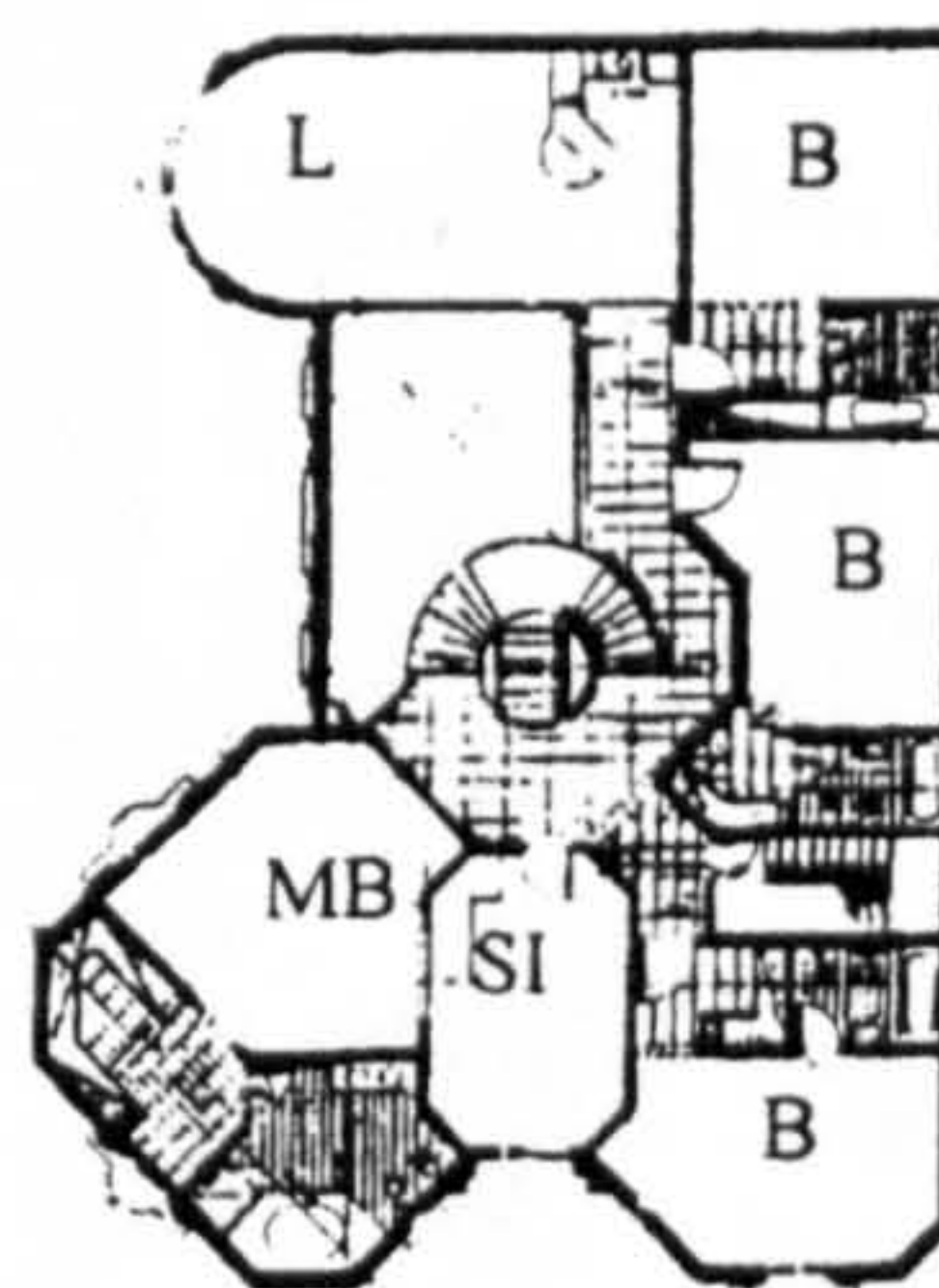
The new architectural consideration given to the home interior and some household needs produced new spaces in rich households. These spaces were supportive to other main spaces in the house. For example, the important role of the housewife among the family members could have been a strong reason for the increasing socialisation in and around the kitchen, which led to having, beside the kitchen and overlooking the garden or the living room, a breakfast or snack nook in some villas (for example Villa 1 in Figure 6.34).

Even though kitchens became equipped with many drawers and cabinets, there was a need for an extra storage space. The increasing variety of cooking recipes required more food and consequently more storage area. Families depend on monthly shopping more than on weekly or daily shopping. Meat for example is bought as a whole lamb rather than pieces. One refrigerator is not enough to store meat, vegetables, etc. Furthermore after the recession many households began to buy their groceries from wholesale stores instead of supermarkets to save money. Food bags, an ice box and shelves in the kitchen would distort the appearance of the complete modern cabinet suite. As a result storage spaces in kitchens became a design requirement (Figure 6.34).

The increasing responsibilities of household chores necessitated the dependency on maids for many housewives. It has been always more convenient that the maid has her own room to maintain her privacy as well as the privacy of the family. Usually, a maid's room was located beside the kitchen.

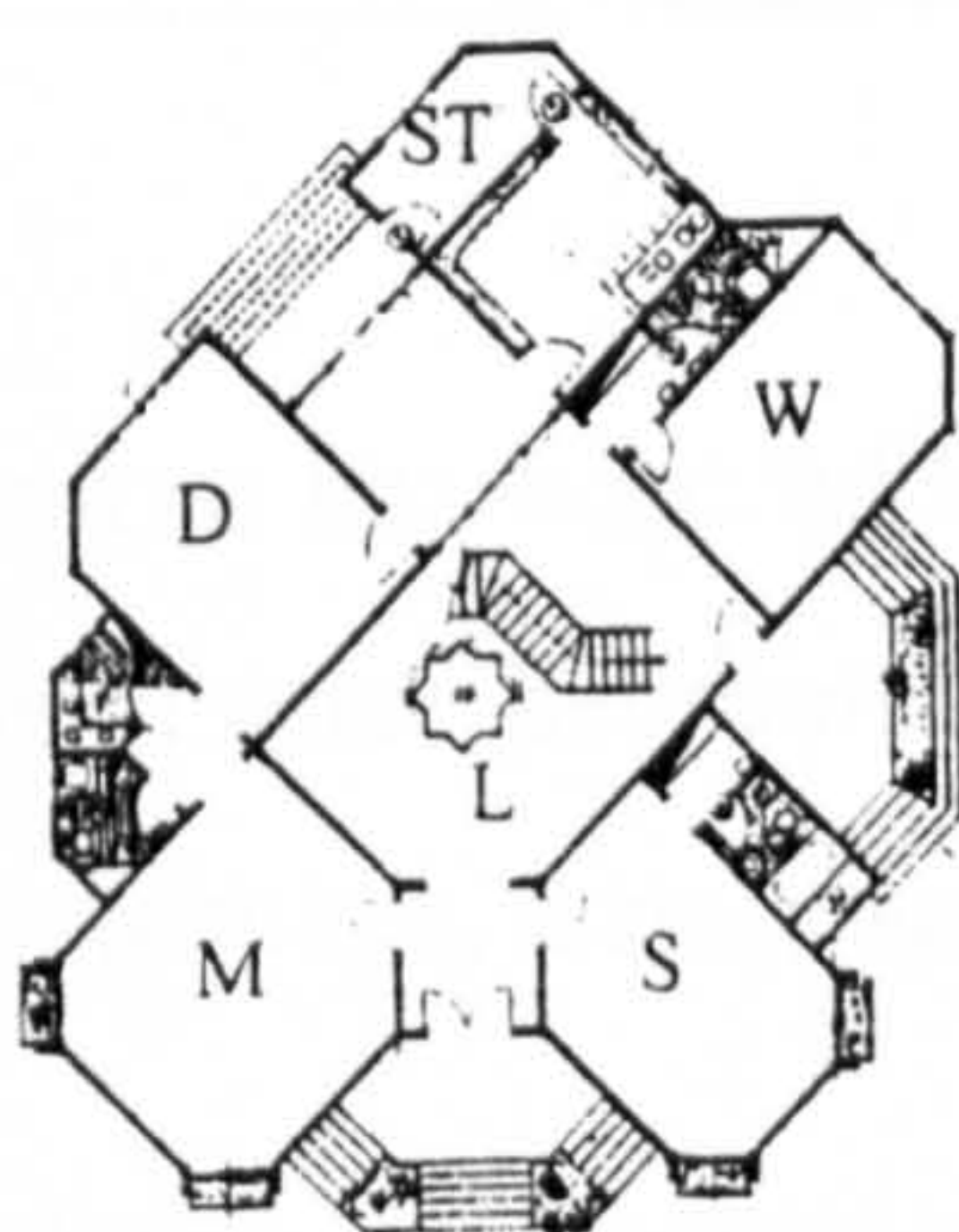


Ground floor plan

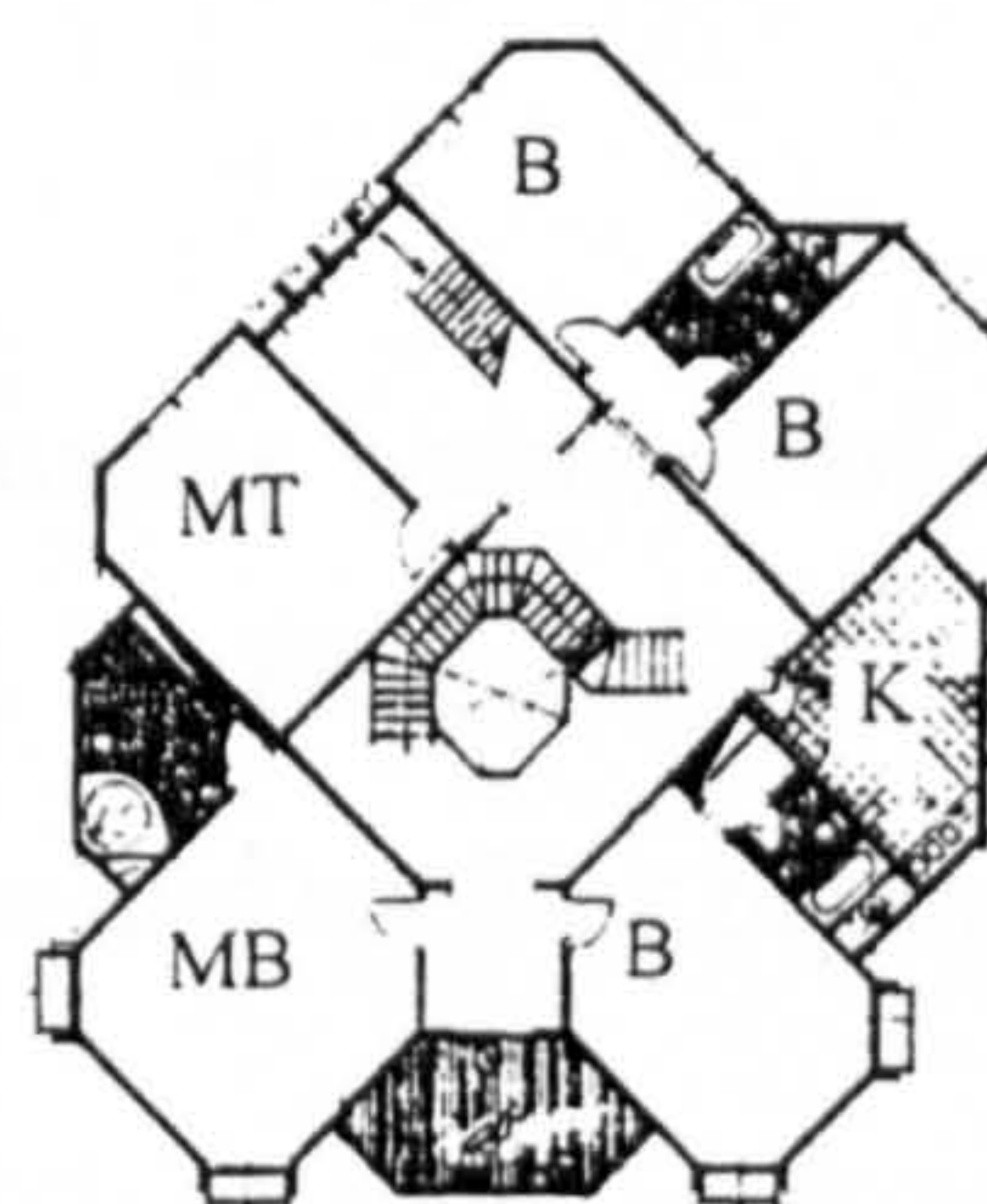


First floor plan

Villa 1 - Total area of the two floors = 690 m²



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

0 5m

Villa 2 - Total area of the two floors = 700 m²

Key

S	Saloon	D	Dining room	W	Women reception
L	Living room	MD	Maid's room	M	Majlis
K	Kitchen	OF	Office	MB	Master Bedroom
B	Bedroom	SI	Sitting room	MT	Multi-purpose room

Figure 6.34 – Floor plans of villas built in the nineties.
Source: The archive department of Al-Aziziah municipality.

Recent villas' designs show a growing interest in the design of living rooms. The living room could be double height with a distinctive geometrical and spiral stairs (Figure 6.34). The furniture could be organised in different groups and the floor level could be manipulated to create spaces with different qualities in the living room, such as Figure 6.35.

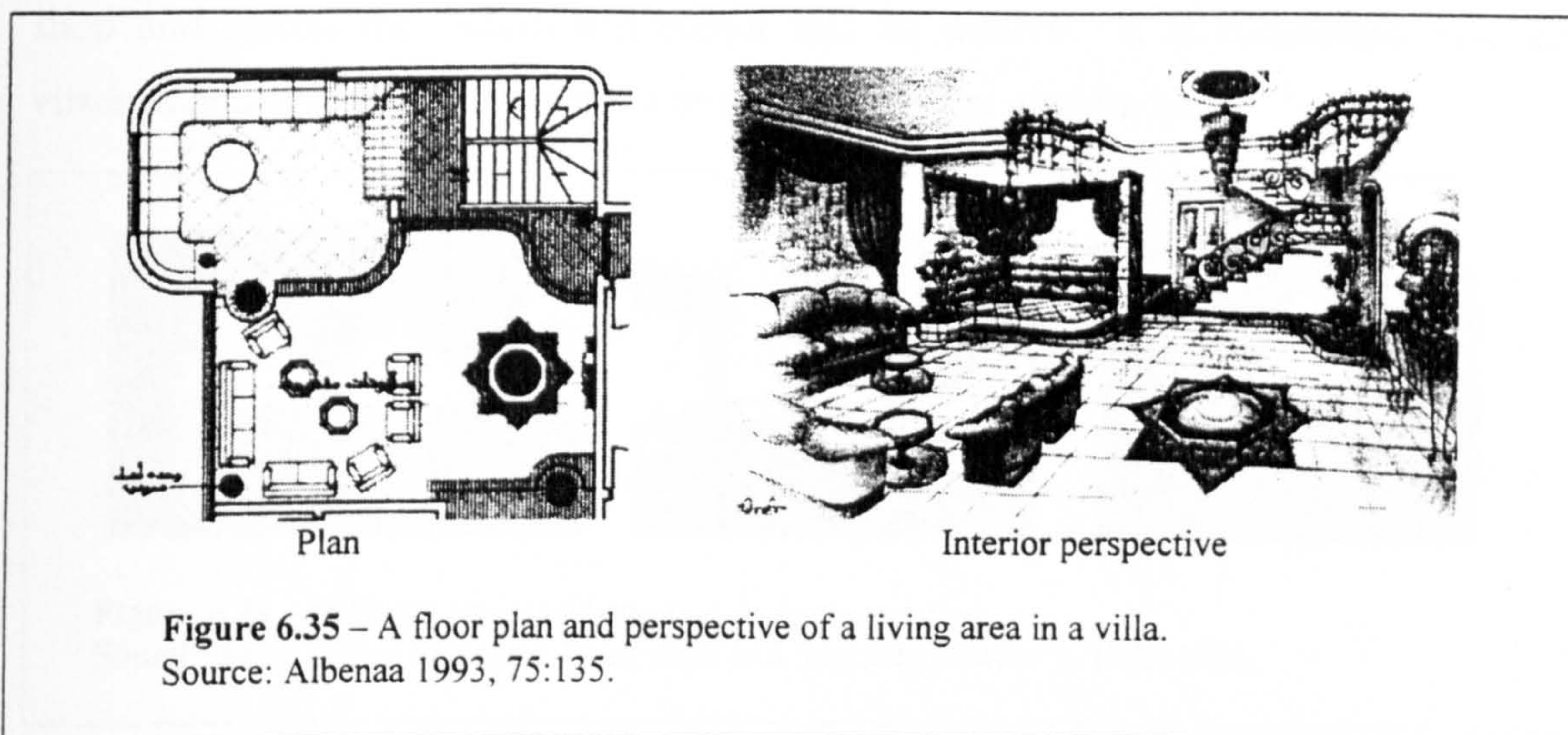


Figure 6.35 – A floor plan and perspective of a living area in a villa.

Source: Albenaa 1993, 75:135.

A small sitting room has been added to the master bedroom of some rich households (for example the master bedroom of Villa 1 in Figure 6.34). This sitting room is furnished with wardrobes, a suite and television and used by parents only.

As Figure 6.35 shows, the architectural layout was designed having into consideration the organisation and type of furniture. These spaces were the result of the additional service required by clients in regard to their interior design desires. When architects and interior designers began to design the interiors of rich households the integration between the architectural layout and furniture started to take place. The size of these additional spaces and their spatial organisation near other main spaces increased their criticality. For example, the size of sitting room in Villa 1 (Figure 6.34) allows for a small suite. Its adjacent location near the master bedroom and isolation from the rest of the house confine its use to the parents.

6.4.2 *Baturmah* or Arabic Seating

People's persistence to use the living room and the *majlis* informally increased the demand for the *baturmah*, sometimes called Arabic seating (Figure 6.36). Because it was easy to make, the market became full of *baturmah* shops. The *baturmah*, unlike the modern furniture, is considered a local cultural product. It was invented after people's experience of the impracticality of modern suites. The *baturmah* is not ready made like the modern suite, which could be selected from the display room. If someone wants to furnish his living room or *majlis* with *baturmah*, he gives the room's dimension to the

shop and selects the pattern and colour that he desires. It is considered practical, virtuous and symbolic; however not as symbolic as the modern suite.

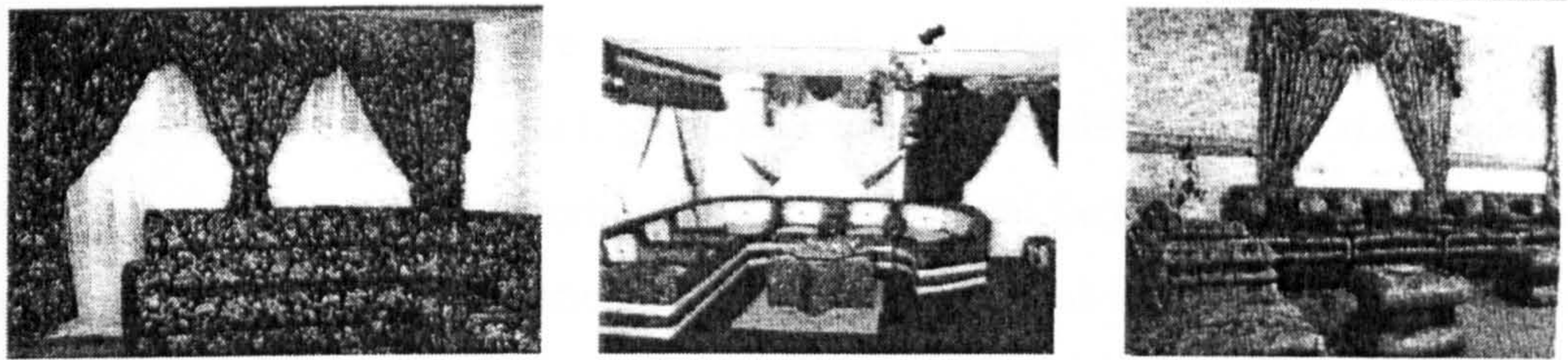


Figure 6.36 – Different styles of *baturmah* or Arabic seating.

Source: Saudi Office Furniture, Equipment and Supplies Directory, 1993-1994.

6.4.3 Neo-Traditional Furniture Style

By the third transformation the outcry about losing the identity of the built environment produced a new direction in architecture. There are many projects in which architects borrowed images from the past and stuck them in their modern designs. In one of the leading residential projects (Figure 6.37) in Jeddah, fake *rawasheen* have been attached to windows to reflect a traditional image. As in the case of home interiors, there have been few attempts in the same direction to design new traditional furniture (Figure 6.38). Such designs have not prevailed yet, maybe due to their high cost.

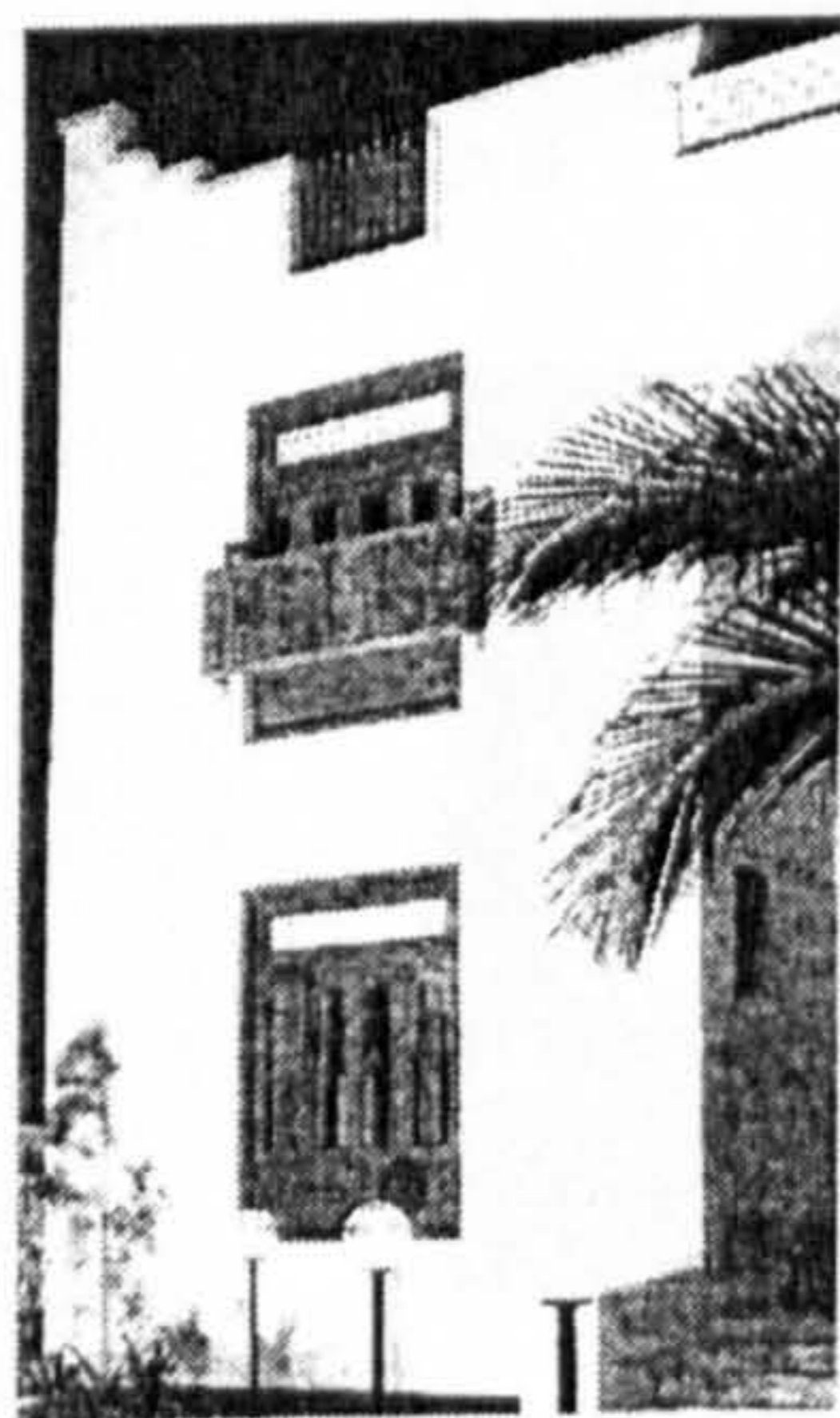


Figure 6.37 – Windows fixed with faked *rawasheen* in one of the residential projects in Jeddah.

Source: Albenaa Catalogue 1993: 84.

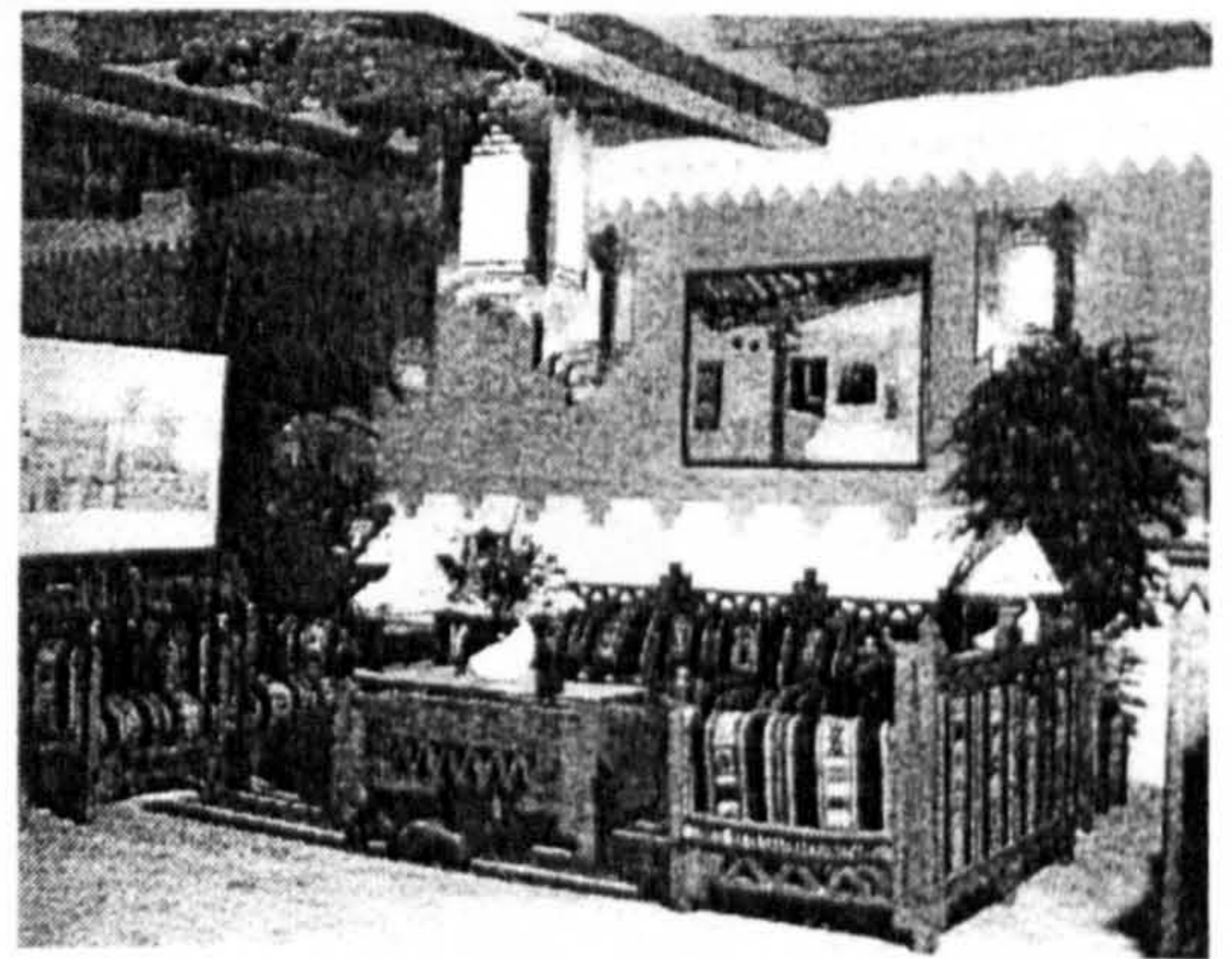


Figure 6.38 – One of the attempts in which the interior designer tried to establish traditional identity by imitating images of the traditional architecture of Najd region, Saudi Arabia.

Source: Albenaa 1995, 84:42.

6.4.4 Classical Western Furniture Style

The *klasecky* suite continued to represent the high-class image of many households. The demand for this style is still high and a variety of models have been available in the market. In addition to the imports of such styles, local factories produce and advertise them. Figure 6.39 shows a master bedroom suite designed by a local factory. The style of the suite could be at best linked to the Neo-classical style (Oates, 1993: 137) which is characterised by rectangular engravings. The designer also suggests a chaise longue with Cabriole legs and Dutch grooved feet and a chair which is an exact copy of Louis XV style (Pile, 1995: 383). This mixture of different styles in one suite reflects the tendency of rich clients. Knowing the origin of these styles is not necessary for them. As long as the suites look majestic, fancy and Western classical it is enough to attract them.

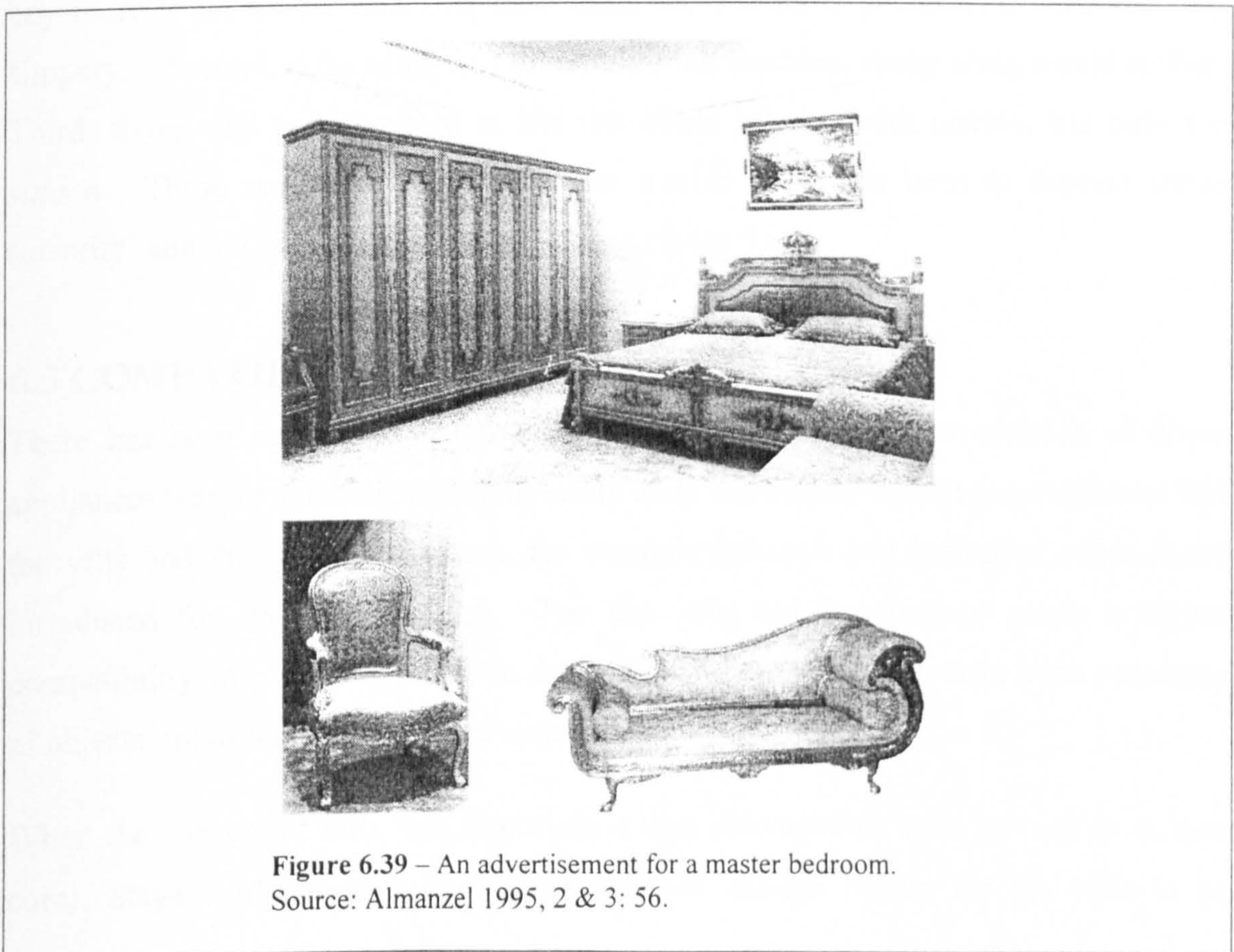


Figure 6.39 – An advertisement for a master bedroom.
Source: Almanzel 1995, 2 & 3: 56.

6.4.5 Marble Floor

A fashion among some rich households during this period has been to tile their interiors with marble without covering them with carpets. Small rugs can be laid under tables. It is difficult to find out exactly what has started this. However it can be speculated that advertisements and ideas from the interior design magazines (Figure 6.40) and shops were strong causes.



Figure 6.40 – An entrance tiled with marble.
Source: Al-Bait Al-Mithali, Dec. 1995: 56.

Marble is an expensive material. It is clear that its introduction has been for symbolic purpose because, first, it is against the multi-use of space. It is not convenient any more to sit on the floor. In fact, when the marble is polished, it becomes very slippery.²⁷ Second, if the tiling was for a utilitarian function, cheap tiling would suffice. Third, those who cannot afford to tile the whole interior with marble, tile only the *saloon*. These are strong indications that marble tiling has been to express status (identity) and not to meet utilitarian functions (Stage 5).

6.5 COMPATIBILITY

There has been no indication throughout the chapter that the introduction of home appliances was for symbolic functions while there were many convincing evidences that the villa and the modern furniture, for example *saloon's* and bathroom suites, were introduced for symbolic purpose. For the villa and furniture to reach a higher compatibility with use and values in the home environment, there have been processes of objects' modifications and users' adjustments.

When the concept of villa was imported, it was incompatible with privacy (a culture core), Stage 7 of compatibility. That was not enough reason for the villa to be

²⁷ A fieldwork assistant's nephew broke his arm after slipping on polished marble. His parents decided not to polish the floor again.

abandoned. The villa was modified and went to a higher compatibility (Stage 4) where the desired new identity was achieved and the privacy was maintained.

The introduction of the modern bathroom suite was also caused by the desire to reflect the prevailing identity of the high status in the society. The image of *bitalma* in the traditional house was related to its hygienic standard. Water was not available in large amounts and consequently *bitalma* had to be at the back corner of the house to keep the smell away. Its location and tools were to meet its utilitarian function (Stage 2). The new and modern bathroom design was used to express people's status, especially in the guest zone, even though it was incompatible with the way people took showers and squatted (Stage 6). As a result, two different bathrooms were necessary in every house, the Western bathroom in Stage 6 and the Arabic bathroom in Stage 2. As time passed and people adjusted their use and sat on the toilet chair, the importance of Arabic bathroom diminished. Now most houses are built without the Arabic bathroom because the Western bathroom meets people's use and symbolic needs. In short, bathrooms moved from Stage 6 until it reached to Stage 3B of compatibility.

The source of furniture designs in the contemporary home environment, excluding the *baturmah* and *tawaweel*, is from Western countries. Even the locally made suites are imitations of Western models. Buying a modern suite requires a visit to the display room and a selection without having much control on the form of these suites. The *baturmah* is more influenced by users' input. It is only after giving the room's dimensions and describing the form desired, the *baturmah* is made for the client.

The introduction of home appliances was mainly utilitarian to facilitate easier life. The transformation from *rowshan*, the shutter, to the aluminium window type in accordance to people's control of the home microclimate suggests that use, not meaning, was the main reason for abandoning the *rowshan* and the continuous diminishing function of windows. For more compatibility with climatic needs (utilitarian) the *rowshan* had to be abandoned. The role of windows diminished greatly because the social relationship between people and the outdoors diminished and air-conditioners provided the desired microclimate.

Likewise people bought refrigerators and cookers, for utilitarian functions, to improve the hygienic standard of their kitchens. When they were introduced during the first

transformation, kitchens were still small and practical. After the second transformation, when the American and European modern kitchens were introduced, kitchens became large and housewives have become concerned about their appearance more than ever.

6.6 CRITICALITY

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the simplicity and portability of the traditional furniture was to facilitate the mobility of activities in the home environment. As a result spaces had a high potentiality of accommodating different activities, as long as the climate allowed. With the introduction of air-conditioning the influence of the hot and humid climate on the criticality of the home environment has disappeared. The technical control of the home environment has saved people from moving their activities from one space to another seeking cool air. Consequently people now are not in need of simple and portable furniture anymore. This leads us to conclude that spaces of the modern home environment are single used partly because of their low criticality caused by the climate control.²⁸ People are not forced by climate anymore to have all of their rooms²⁹ furnished with simple and portable furniture to reduce their criticality.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Advertisement, which was argued to be a main reason for motivating people to buy modern furniture for symbolic functions in Chapter 2, has been very weak in Jeddah and it could not have influenced people's desire to possess modern furniture. The image of modernity and people's prosperity have been the reasons of acquiring modern furniture.

The traditional house, which was highly compatible with its context, has been replaced by the villa and apartment types in the early fifties. The main factor that caused this was the strong image of modernity seen in villas and apartments. The image of villas became an identity of a high status when the government built villa housing projects to accommodate its employees.

The design of the villa was incompatible with the strong sense of privacy of the Saudi family (Stage 7). Instead of abandoning it (Stage 9), the villa was modified and is

²⁸ It should be noted here that the criticality of the home environment is also influenced by its spatial layout. Callado (1991) found that the less the hierarchy of spaces is the more the variety of activities per space are.

categorised to be in Stage 4 where identity and culture core value (privacy) are met. The same was the case of the modern bathroom suite; except that to achieve higher compatibility people adjusted themselves instead of modifying the bathroom. Therefore it could be concluded here that objects can be introduced into societies as images and attached to social stratum (identity) (Stage 5, 6 or 7) and through processes of modifications of objects and adjustments of people (communication) they could reach to a high level of compatibility. People were willing to adjust their cultural custom of squatting in the toilet to reach to a higher level of compatibility; however culture core like privacy was strongly maintained by modifying the spatial layout of the villa and apartment.

²⁹ It will be discussed in Chapter 7 that people still need multi-use rooms, however because of social, not climatic, reasons.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.2 FLOOR COVERINGS

7.3 ENTRYWAYS

7.4 CURTAINS

7.5 WALLS

7.6 LIGHTING

7.7 FURNITURE

7.8 DECORATION

7.9 PATTERNS

7.10 HOMEWORK

7.11 CONCLUSION



CHAPTER 7

Contemporary Home Environments

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.2 FLOOR LAYOUT

7.3 ENTRANCE HALL

7.4 GUEST ZONE

7.4.1 *Saloon*

7.4.2 *Majlis*

7.4.3 Dining Room

7.4.4 Bathroom

7.5 FAMILY ZONE

7.5.1 Living Room

7.5.2 Multi-Purpose Room

7.5.3 Kitchen

7.5.4 Master Bedroom

7.5.5 Bathroom

7.6 HOUSE 10

7.7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional home environment was compatible with climate and social structure, and its spaces had to be multi-purpose, which required simple, multi-purpose furniture. Now the social structure is changing and the climate is no longer so problematic. After the introduction of air-conditioning, assigning rooms for a few activities became possible and the quantity and diversity of furniture increased. To explore the contemporary role of furniture ten case studies are discussed in this chapter. They are six apartments, three villas and a house composed of two apartments open to each other (House 9).¹ The use pattern and meaning of each type of space (living, dining, etc.) and its furniture will be analysed in detail. The variety of floor plans, family sizes and income have created different circumstances in which occupants have to take different decisions in accordance with their various needs of using space and expressing identity. A further analysis will be conducted on one house to investigate the relationship between the family size, their personal values and relationships with relatives, and the function of furniture in meeting them.

7.2 FLOOR LAYOUT

The interior spaces fall into two separate zones, a guest and a family zone. The former consists of a *saloon*, a dining or multi-purpose room, a bathroom and in some houses a *majlis*. The latter consists of a kitchen, living room, and bedrooms. The separation between the two zones, the centrality of the living room in the family zone and the relationship between the kitchen and the dining room is a pattern that exists in all case studies, except House 3.²

¹ Floor plans of all houses are illustrated in Appendix 10.

² The two zones in House 3 are not clearly separated because the kitchen is open to the entrance hall, but still the informant maintained her privacy as will be discussed later in this chapter.

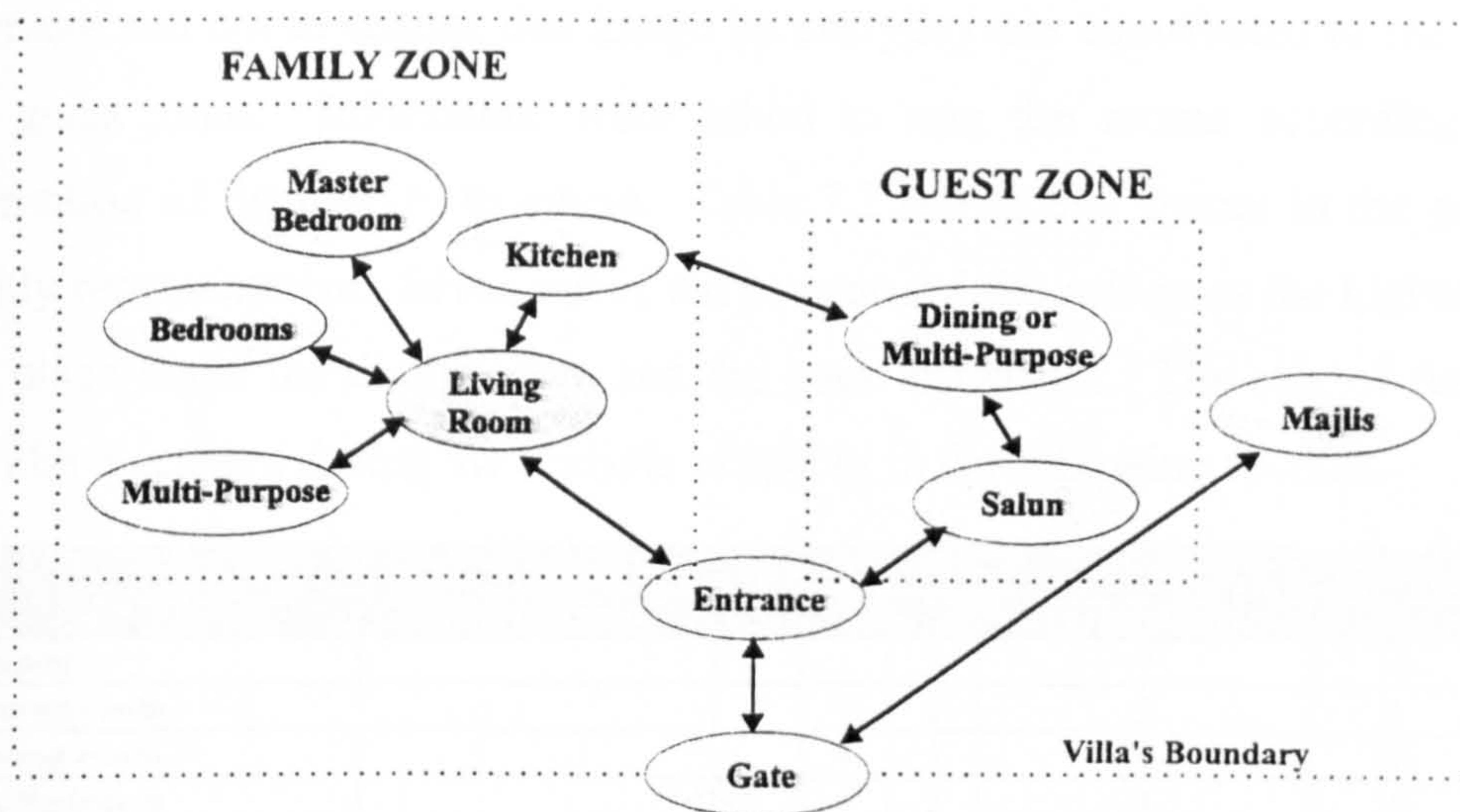


Figure 7.1- Spatial relationships in the contemporary villa.

Having two zones with a strict control in between is to maintain occupants' privacy. This does not necessarily mean that guests are always hosted in the guest zone. The family members' sense of privacy towards strangers varies according to gender and type of relationship. It has been found that the family members' privacy is less towards female than male guests, and relatives than friends. Each informant of the ten case studies was asked to allocate the accessibility of friends and relatives according to their gender. Table 7.1 shows that nine informants said that non-close guests of both genders have access only to the *saloon*. To the opposite of the table (the upper-right side), eight informants said that their very close female relatives have access to the whole house.

Guests	Saloon		Saloon & Living Room		Whole House Except M. Bedroom		Whole House	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Very close relatives (married sons and daughters with their spouses, parents, sisters)				4	2	3	8	3
Other relatives	1	1	1	7	5	2	3	
Very close friends		7	5	3	2		3	
Other friends	9	9	1	1				
Non-close	9	9	1	1				

Table 7.1 – The accessibility of guests according to their types (relatives or friends and males or females) to the home interior spaces.

Most houses employed a hierarchy of grandness, from the guest zone, through the living room, down to the multi-purpose rooms. The furniture and amount of decoration reflected this order. The occupants' desire to keep the guest zone in accordance with a

fixed image and not to change that image by everyday use contributed to the seclusion of the guest zone. Informants³ were asked to rate the rooms according to their representation of themselves to others. Table 7.2 shows that spaces in the guest zone are highly representative. Seven out of ten categorised the *saloon* as the highest. In the second place come the dining room and the guest bathroom. The role of furniture in this will be discussed during the analysis of spaces in the following section.

	0 Not representative	1	2	3	4 Very representative	Total
<i>Saloon</i>		1		2	7	10
Dining room		1	1	2	5	9
Living room			4	5	1	10
M. Bedroom			4	3	3	10
Other Bedrooms		3	4	2		9
Kitchen		3	4	3		10
Guest Bathroom			1	4	5	10
Other Bathrooms		6	3	1		10

Table 7.2 - The rating of informants as to the degree the rooms represent them to others.

7.3 ENTRANCE HALL

The entrance hall works as a transition between the outside and the inside. It also acts as a buffer area between the guest and family zones. The guest enters the house and is led to the *saloon*, or the family zone if he/she is a close relative. Female guests hang their *'abayah* (a black cloth that covers the body) on a hanger. On the way out, they put it on again. Therefore the entrance hall is always furnished with hangers and a mirror. Most entrance halls, however, are furnished with additional items, such as armchairs, tables, plants and baskets made of palm fibres as in House 6 (Figure 7.2). The wall is also decorated with engraved metallic plates, shields and framed paintings.

³ It should be noted here that all the informants in the ten case studies are the housewives. Interviews with their husbands were not arranged due to reasons explained in the methodology in Chapter 3.

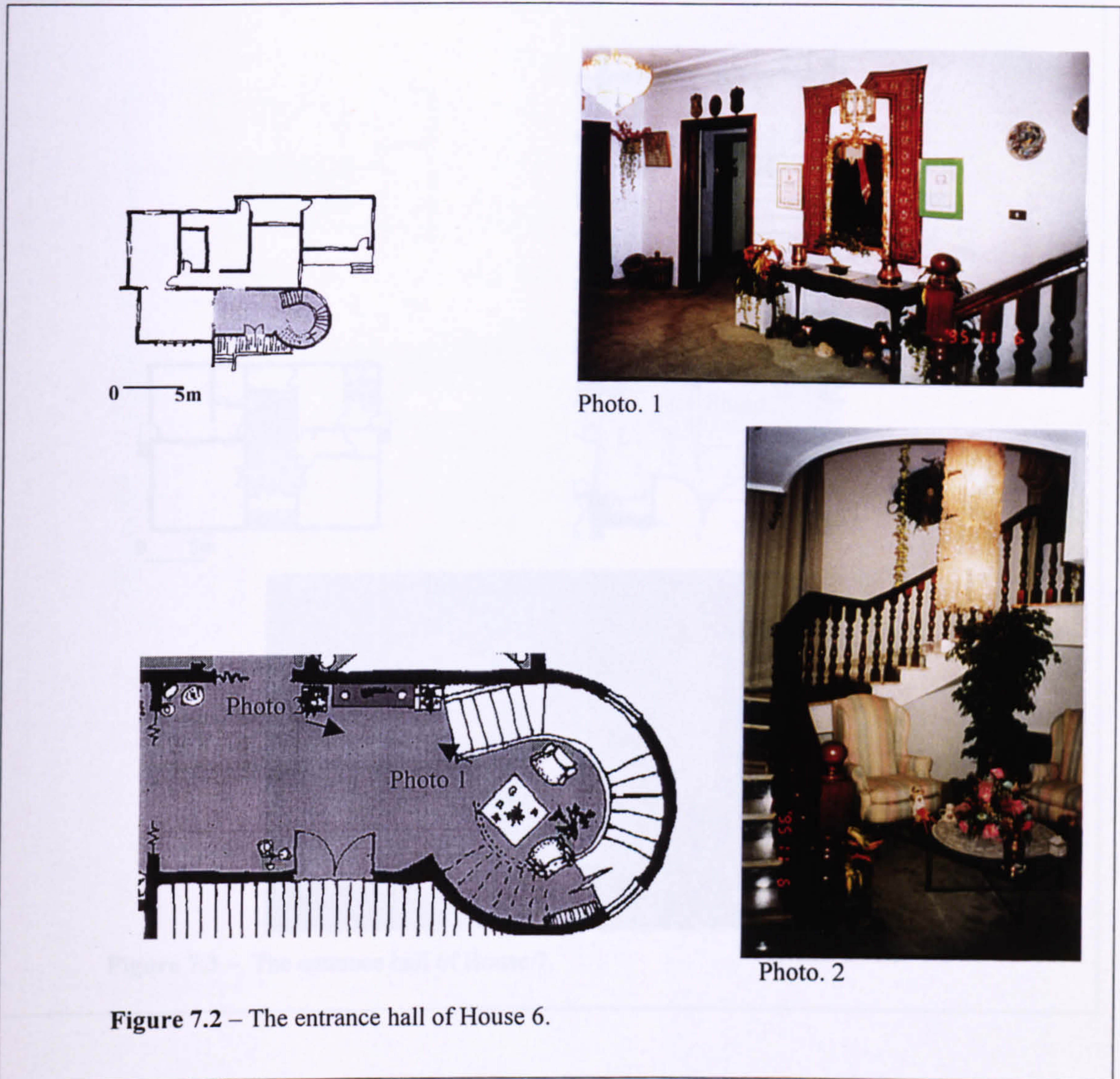


Figure 7.2 – The entrance hall of House 6.

From the ten case studies, there are four (Houses 2, 6, 7 and 9) of which the entrance halls are furnished with chairs and table/s. Three of the four informants mentioned that the chairs in the entrance halls were not used. The informant for House 7 (Figure 7.3) said that the chairs were used for casual chatting with close friends and relatives. This means that the chairs in the entrance halls are more for identity than utilitarian function, i.e. in Stage 5 of compatibility.

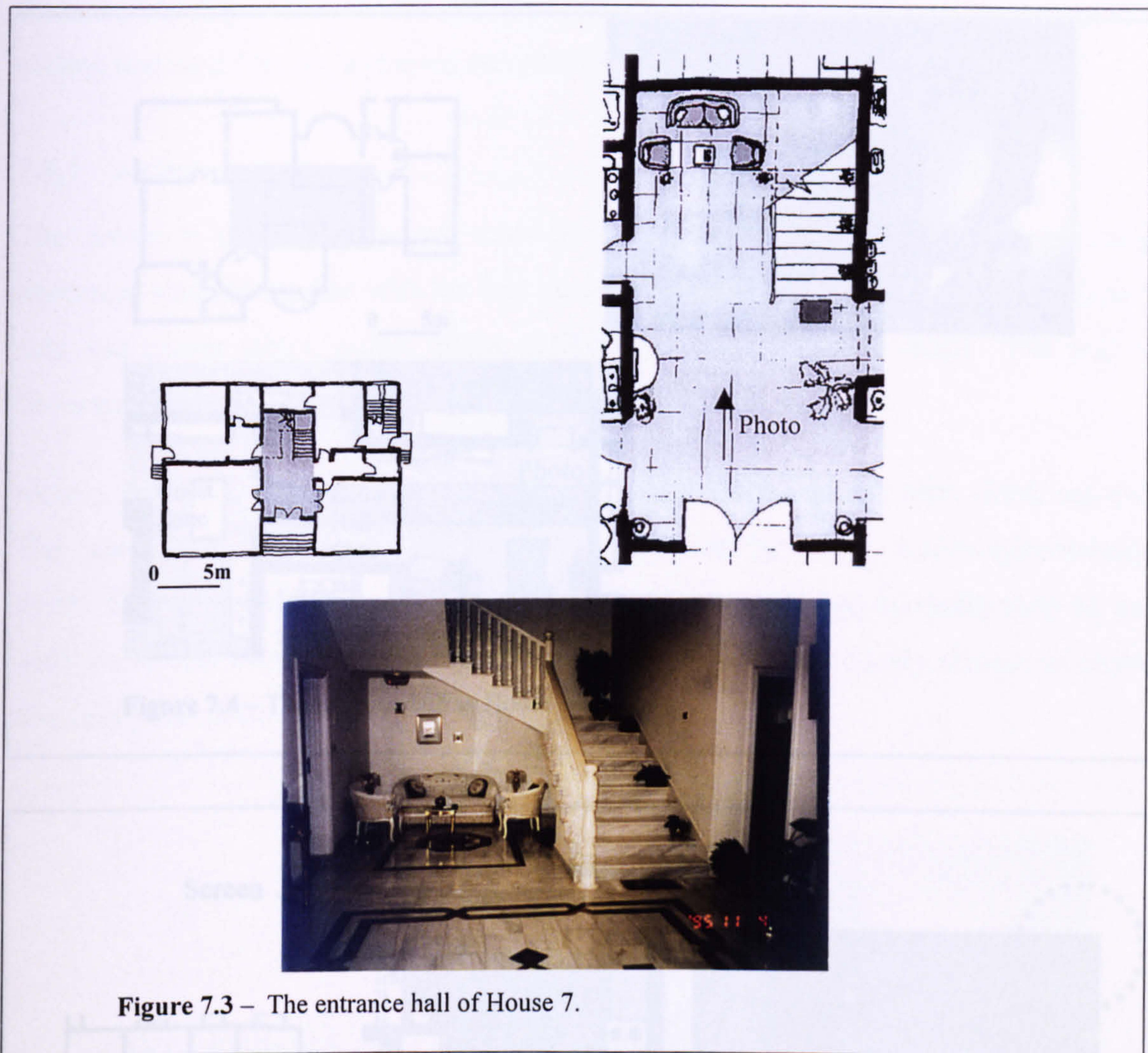
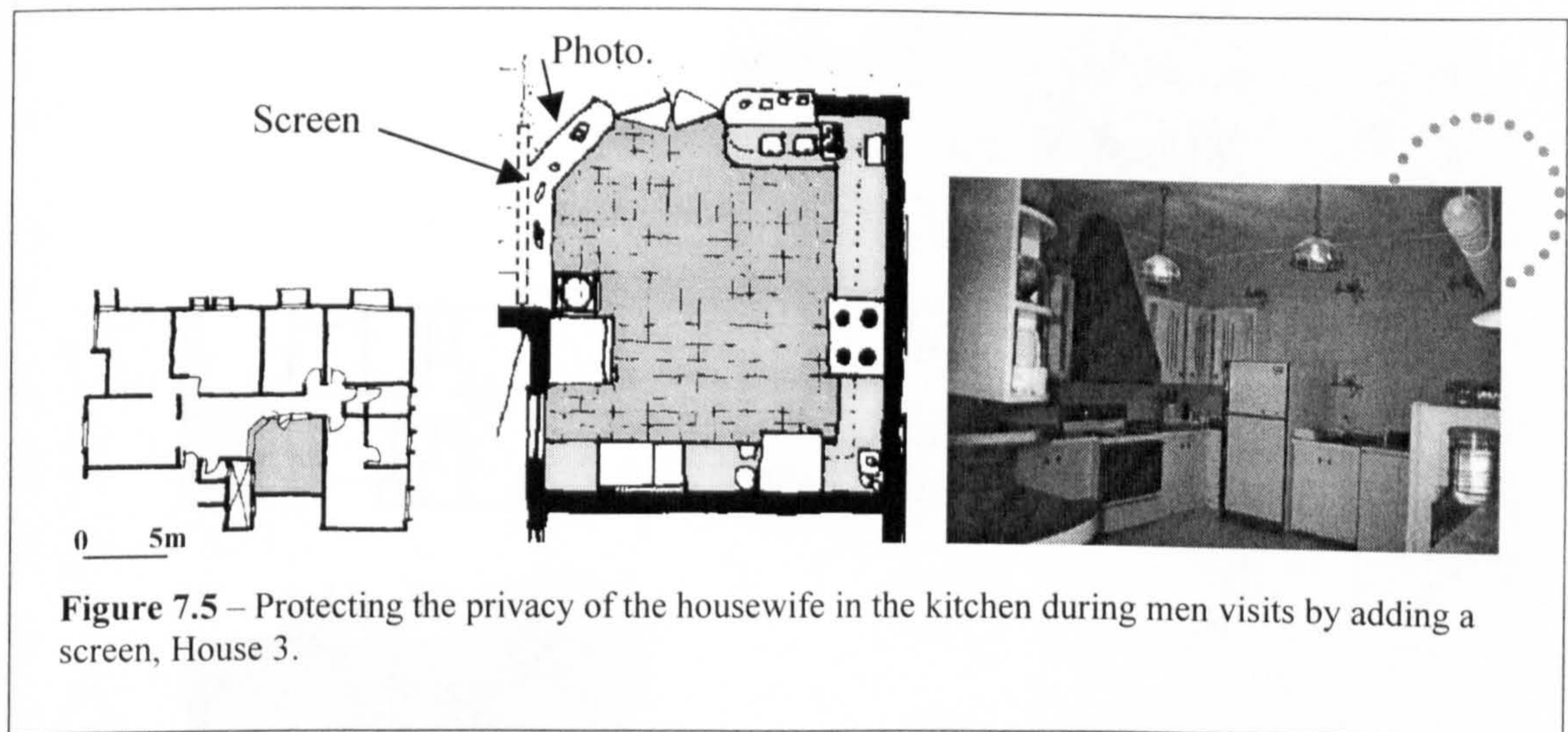
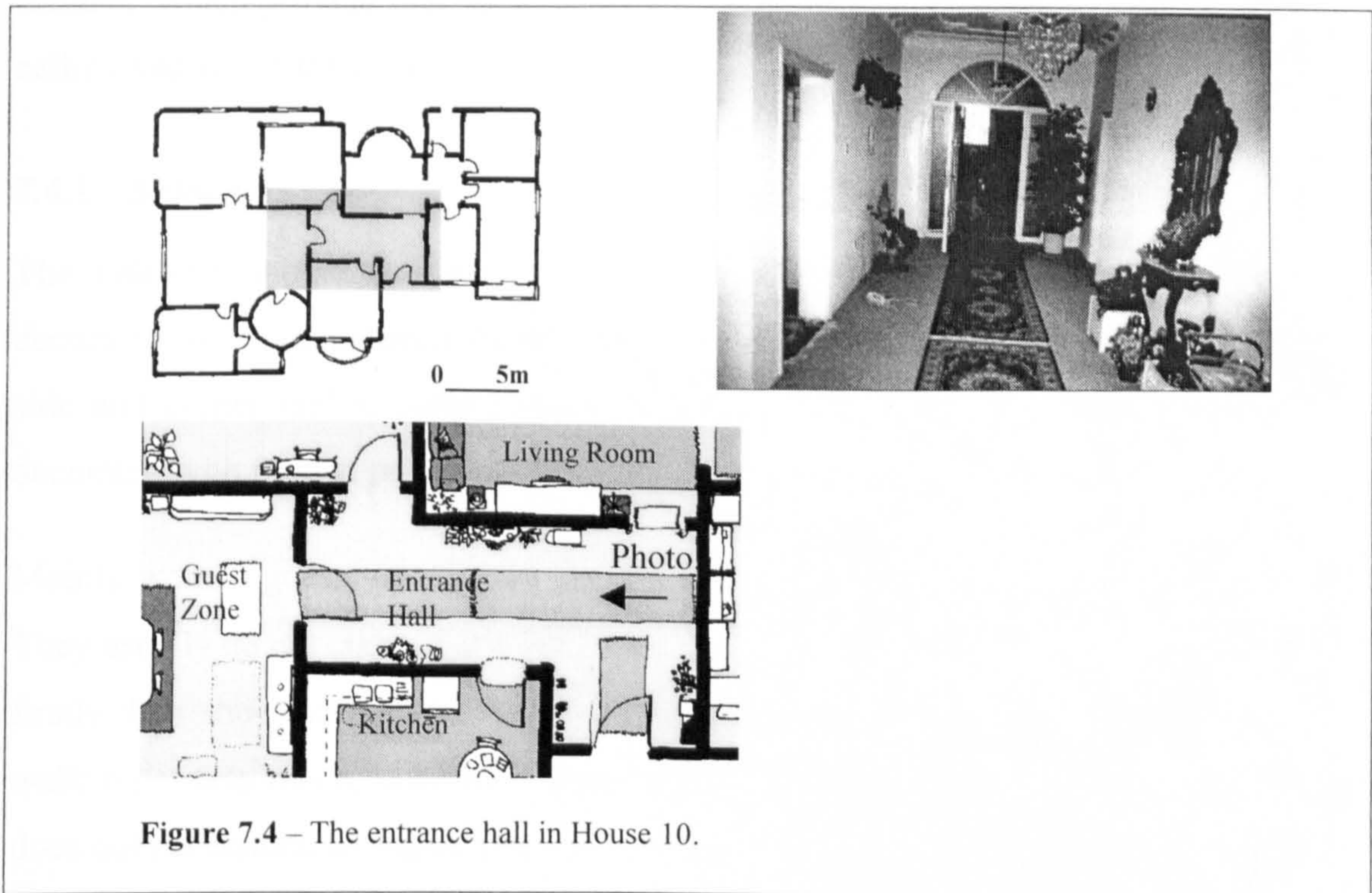


Figure 7.3 – The entrance hall of House 7.

The family zones of Houses 3, 5 and 10 are open to their entrance halls. Therefore when men guests go through the entrance hall to the *saloon* a strict control over the doors is usually maintained.⁴ The door that separates the guest zone from the entrance hall in House 10 (Figure 7.4) is fixed with an automatic shutter and between the entrance hall and the living room a curtain is hung. The occupant of House 3 has purposely modified the architectural layout to have an open kitchen to the entrance hall. To maintain the privacy of the informant during men's visits an adjustable screen is fixed above the kitchen counter, facing the *saloon* (Figure 7.5).

⁴ It should be noted here that not all people in Jeddah maintain such control. The sense of women's privacy against non-close adult male relatives is not necessary the same in all families. Once the researcher visited a friend whose wife had her friends sitting in the living room, which was open to the entrance hall. Even though the *saloon* had a separate entrance the researcher was led to it through the entrance hall and the visiting women did not withdraw to another room or wear their veils.



7.4 GUEST ZONE

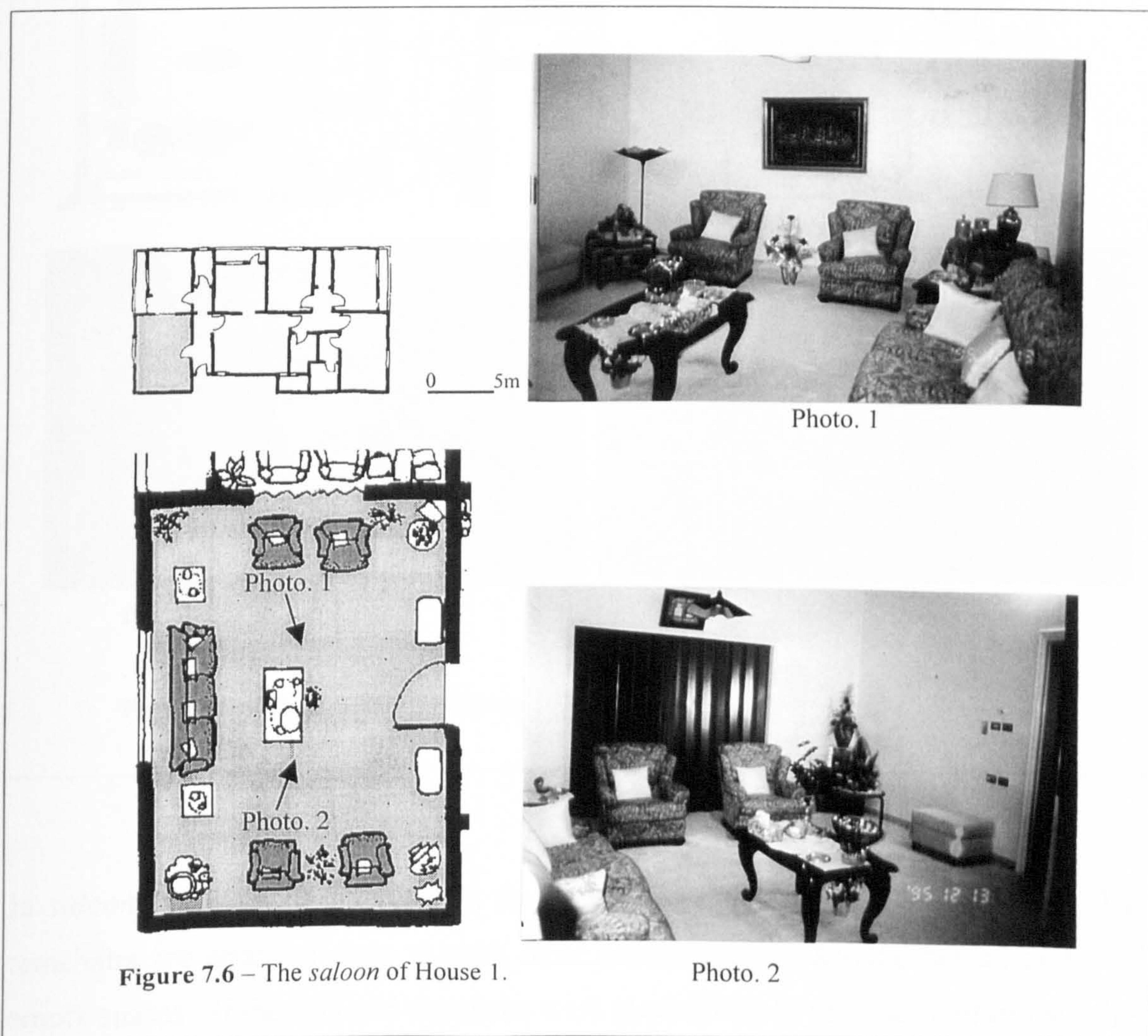
Table 7.2 shows that the spaces in the guest zone, which are the *saloon*, the dining room and even the bathroom, are the most representative of the housewife to guests. This zone is the most symbolic and the least used by the family members. It is always furnished with the best modern furniture in the house, kept clean and tidy and no space is left vacant without being arranged with pieces of furniture. Different incandescent

fixtures, which provide warmth and show the true colours of items such as chandeliers, ceiling and wall fittings, and table and standard lamps are commonly used.

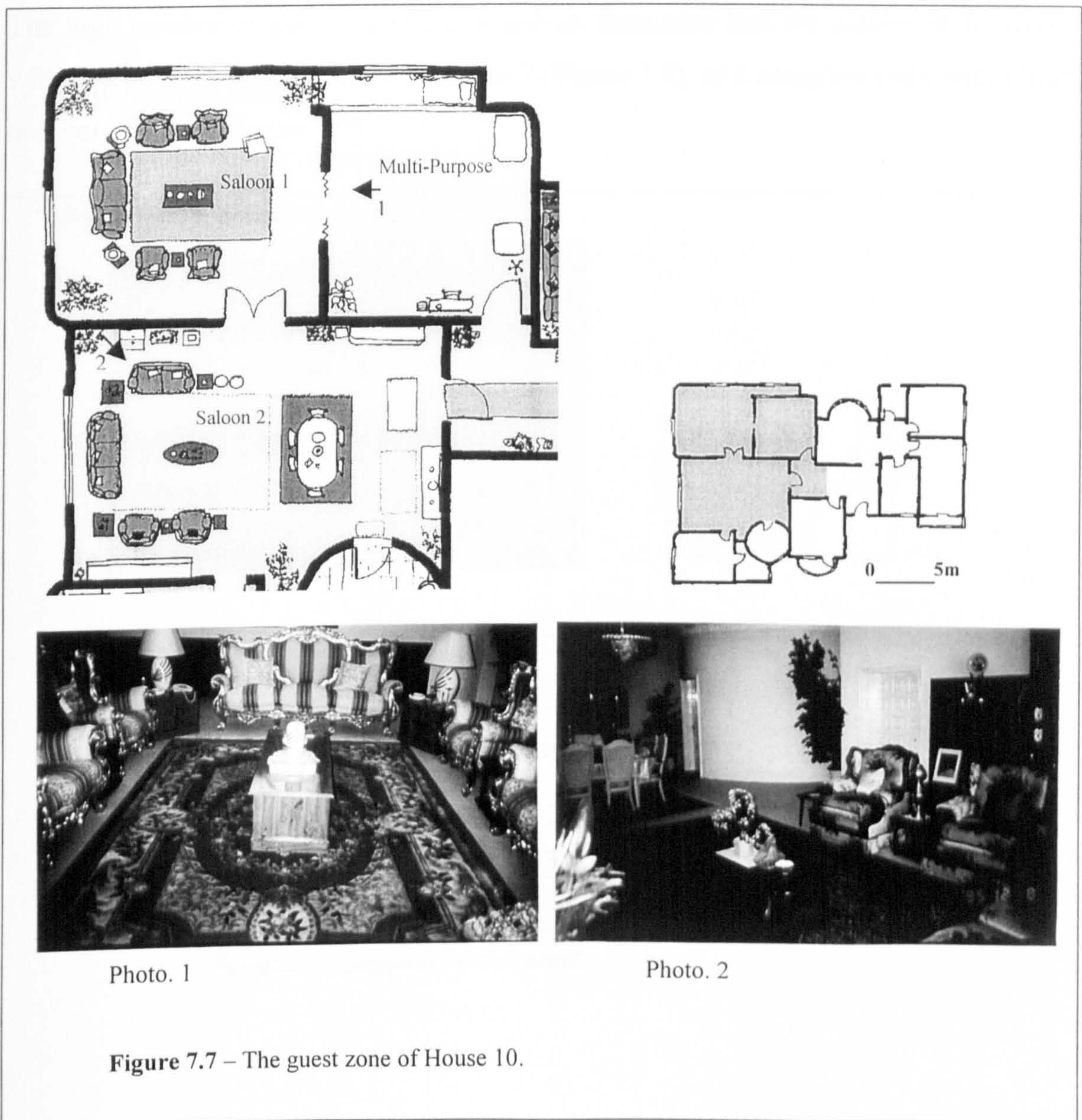
7.4.1 Saloon

The *saloon* is the second largest room in the house after the *majlis*. It is the most decorated room, furnished with the best modern suite, little rugs on the floor, mahogany side and corner tables, coffee tables, artificial plants and flower vases. The wall is decorated with framed paintings and Koranic texts.

Mainly women guests use the *saloon*. During their visits they sit, chat, drink and eat. They usually do not take off their shoes when they enter the house. This maybe because firstly their shoes are part of the fashion dress they are wearing, secondly they do not walk on streets much, thus their shoes are always clean, and thirdly sitting on chairs does not necessitate taking off the shoes like sitting on floor.



The arrangement of the furniture in the *saloon* is influenced greatly by the aesthetic impression that the occupant wants to maintain. No space or corner is left empty. Wherever a guest looks, he/she would see a piece of furniture. The *saloon* of House 1 (Figure 7.6), for example, is large and furnished with only one suite of a sofa and four armchairs. The left-over spaces are occupied with plants, side and corner tables, standing lamps and flower vases.



In *saloon* 1, House 10 (Figure 7.7), the informant arranged the suite differently. The armchairs are arranged close to each other around the rug leaving behind plenty of empty spaces. If the sofa and armchairs were placed back to the wall, half of the room would be empty and consequently would need to be filled with decorated items as in the

case of House 1. For the informant of House 10 to avoid the visual inconvenience of empty spaces, she developed another option and grouped the furniture leaving the empty spaces away from visual contact behind the armchairs. *saloon 2* is also very large and had to be filled with furniture. The informant brought the dining suite from what was supposed to be a dining room,⁵ opposite to *saloon 1*, and arranged it in *saloon 2* to avoid the visual inconvenience of empty spaces.

The high number of guests on some occasions demanded that the *saloon* be furnished with two or more suites, such as in House 7 (Figure 7.8), or a complete suite with a high number of chairs (Figure 7.9).

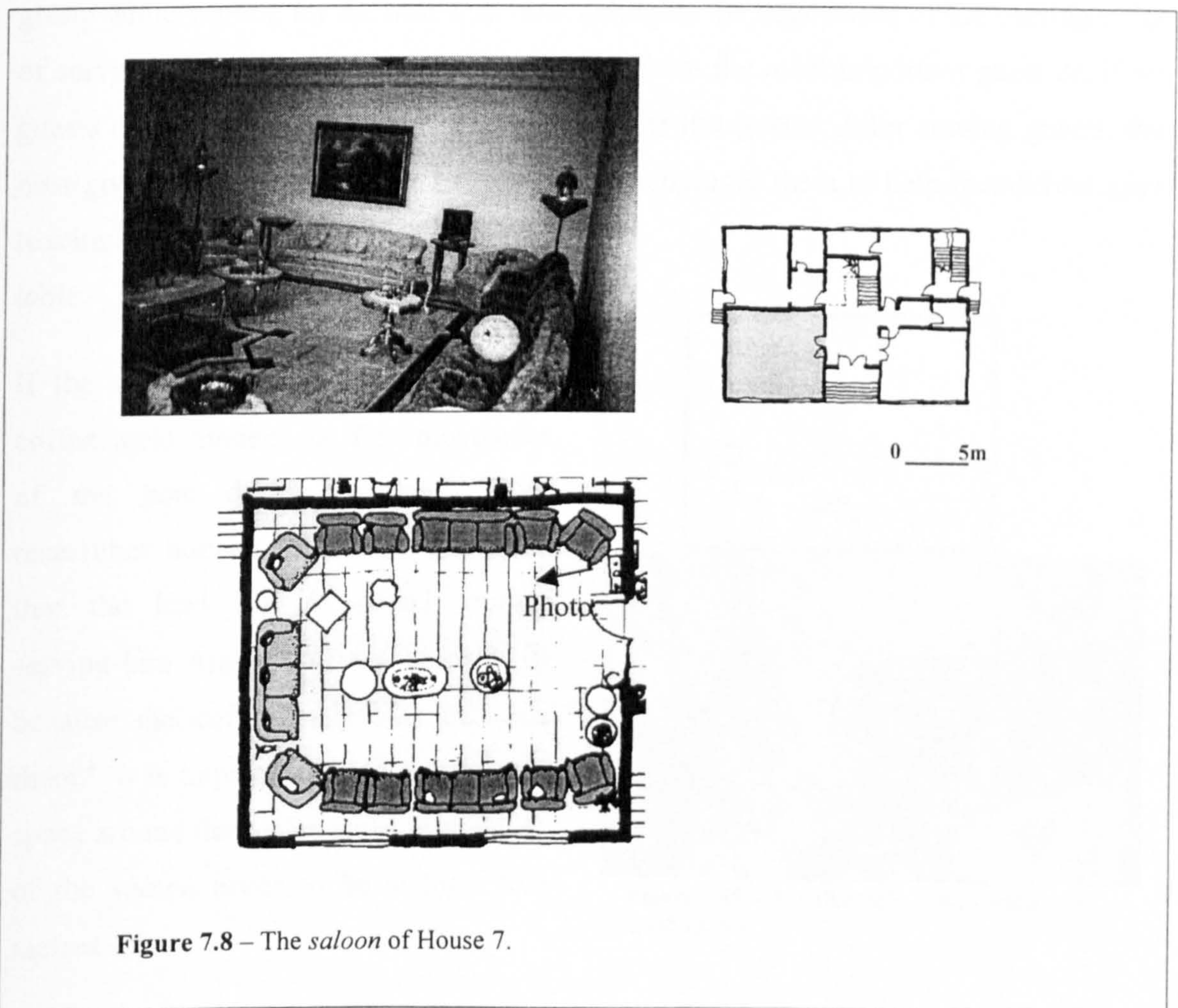


Figure 7.8 – The *saloon* of House 7.

⁵ This room is used now as a multi-purpose room.

The traditional way of serving tea and *takhtat ashshai* disappeared. Tea now is brought ready from the kitchen. During serving guests, the host puts the tea, sweets, nuts etc. on the coffee table/s located in the centre of the *saloon*. He/she pours the tea from the teapot into the *fanajeel* and starts serving. As the arrangements of suites



Figure 7.9 – A complete sitting suite.

in most houses suggest, guests sit as one group whatever their number. Forming one group while waiting for the host's service highlights the importance of the starting point of serving. It is important that the host starts from the most important guest or, if all guests are equal, from his/her right side until the last guest. After serving guests, the host gives them second rounds or frequently encourages them to help themselves after leaving the trays on the middle coffee table.

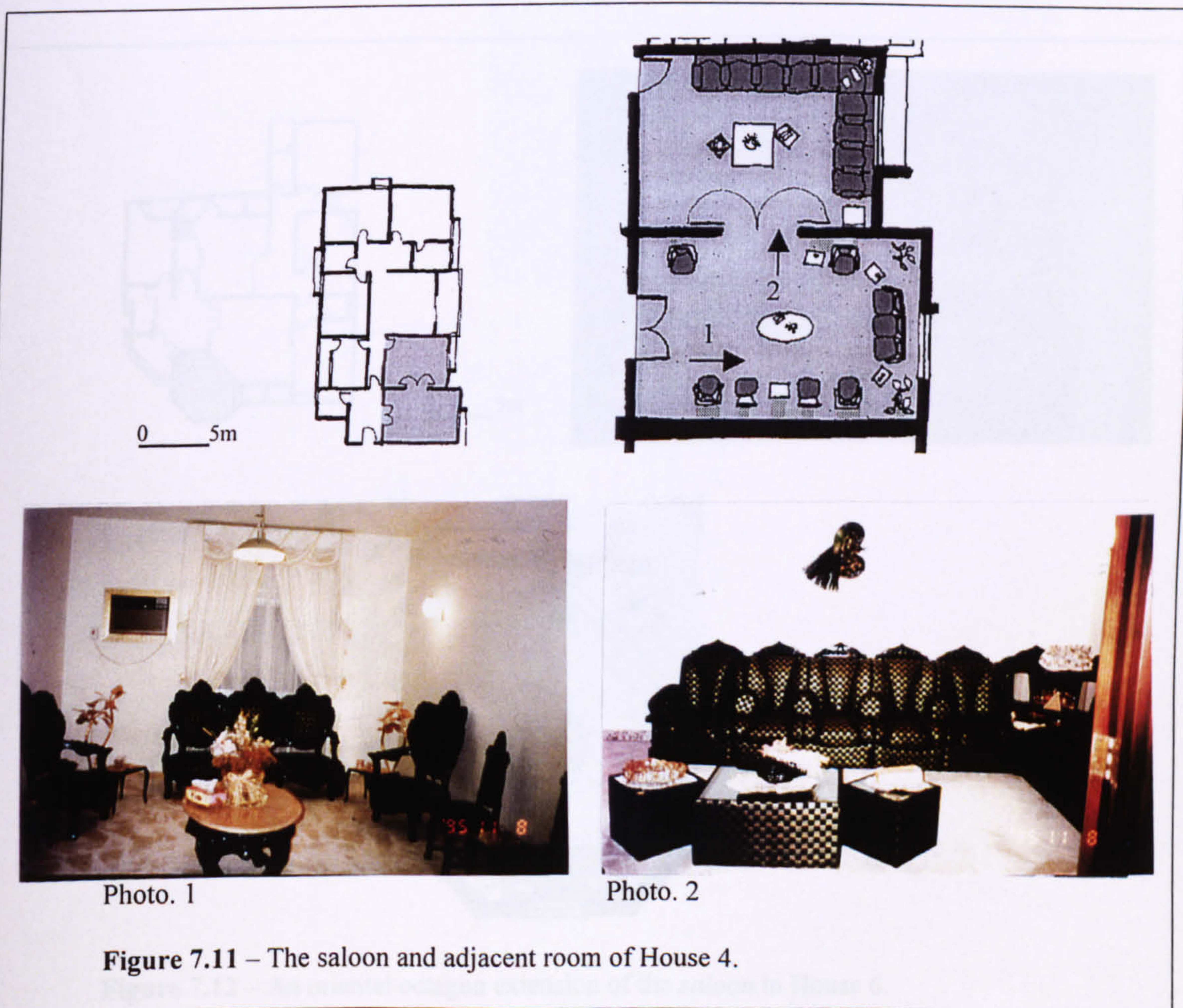
If the size of the *saloon* is small, the coffee table hinders the free movement of the host during serving. The researcher noticed on one of his visits that the host had to stretch during serving him Arabic coffee (Figure 7.10) because the coffee table was between them.⁶ It is important to have some free space around the coffee table. The width of the *saloon* needs to be at least five metres.



Figure 7.10 – A coffee table in the middle of a small *saloon*.

⁶ Refilling the guest's *finjal* with the Arabic coffee continuously in Jeddah's culture is not as significant as in Bedouin culture. The reason for this could be that serving Arabic coffee was not common in Jeddah before the establishment of Saudi Arabia. It has only become so after the domination of the central region culture, from where the ruling family comes. People in Jeddah adopted serving Arabic coffee, but the etiquette was not transferred as it was in the central region and the Bedouin culture. This is the case with men's headgear too. Men's customary head covering in Jeddah was the turban but after the domination of the central region culture, the headgear of that region has become the custom all over Saudi Arabia.

The *saloon* is the most critical room in the house. The only activity in the *saloon* is hosting guests in a formal manner, sitting, chatting and drinking tea and coffee. The uniformity the high number of chairs and tables, the excessive suite decoration and marble tiles in the *saloon* (Figure 7.9) contribute to the formality of the setting that the occupant wants to maintain. This criticality is caused by the image that the host wants to convey to his/her guests. The furniture in the *saloon* is supposed to be in a certain arrangement and kept that way. If guests are many and all want to be together, chairs from the dining room or other less formal rooms (such as in Houses 1, 4 and 10) are pulled into the *saloon*. The opposite never happens, i.e. chairs from the *saloon* are never moved to other rooms. It may be thought that this is so because chairs in the *saloon* are heavier than those in the dining room. The experience of the informant for House 4 indicates that this explanation is not valid. She mentioned that when the number of guests increases she pulls chairs, which are heavier than those of the *saloon*, from the adjacent room (Figure 7.11).



The *saloon* has an appearance that the household has seen in a magazine, television programme, or other houses. The *saloon* of House 6, for example, has an extension which is surprisingly different from the rest of the house (Figure 7.12). It is octagonal in plan, semi-isolated and furnished in oriental style. It has an appearance similar to a guest room illustrated in an interior design magazine (Figure 7.13). The high cushions in the middle of the room can never be used for sitting or putting things on. The reason for the peripheral seating arrangement in traditional houses was utilitarian, to leave the centre for more activities, but here the seating is peripherally arranged and permanently fixed to imitate the traditional appearance only. The centre cannot be used like the traditional one because it is not covered with rugs or a carpet. If the centre of the room were covered, the beautiful expensive marble pattern would not be seen. According to the informant, this room is rarely used. The role of this room is only to represent an image that the informant wants to convey, like a painting, i.e. Stage 5 of compatibility.

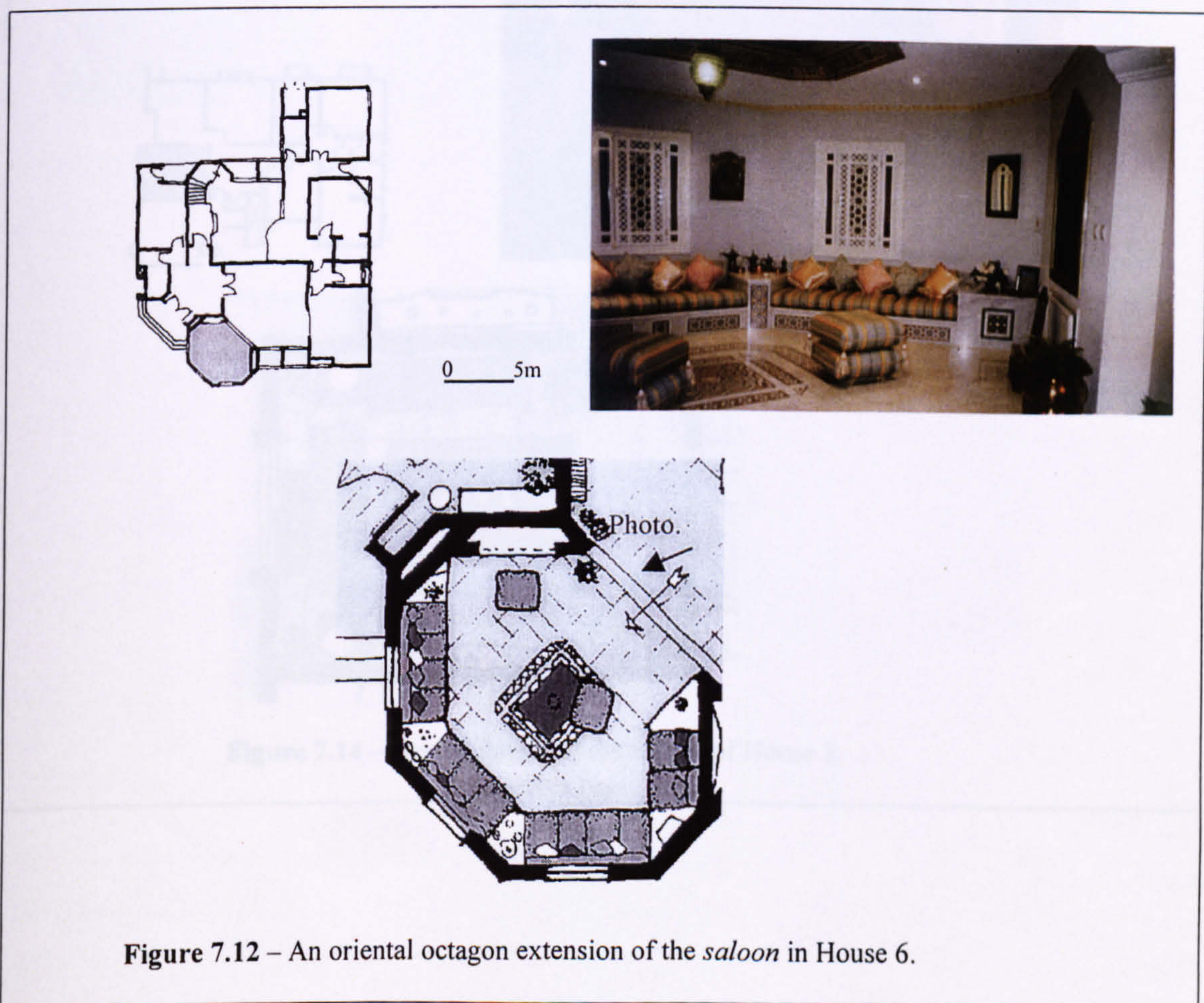


Figure 7.12 – An oriental octagon extension of the *saloon* in House 6.

In House 3 the householder installed a fake mantelpiece in his *saloon* (Figure 7.14). Mantelpieces have never been used in Jeddah. This example shows how the desire to express identity can lead people to possess objects even if they will never be used. The mantelpiece is considered in Stage 5 of compatibility and will remain so since the weather of Jeddah is hot and humid.

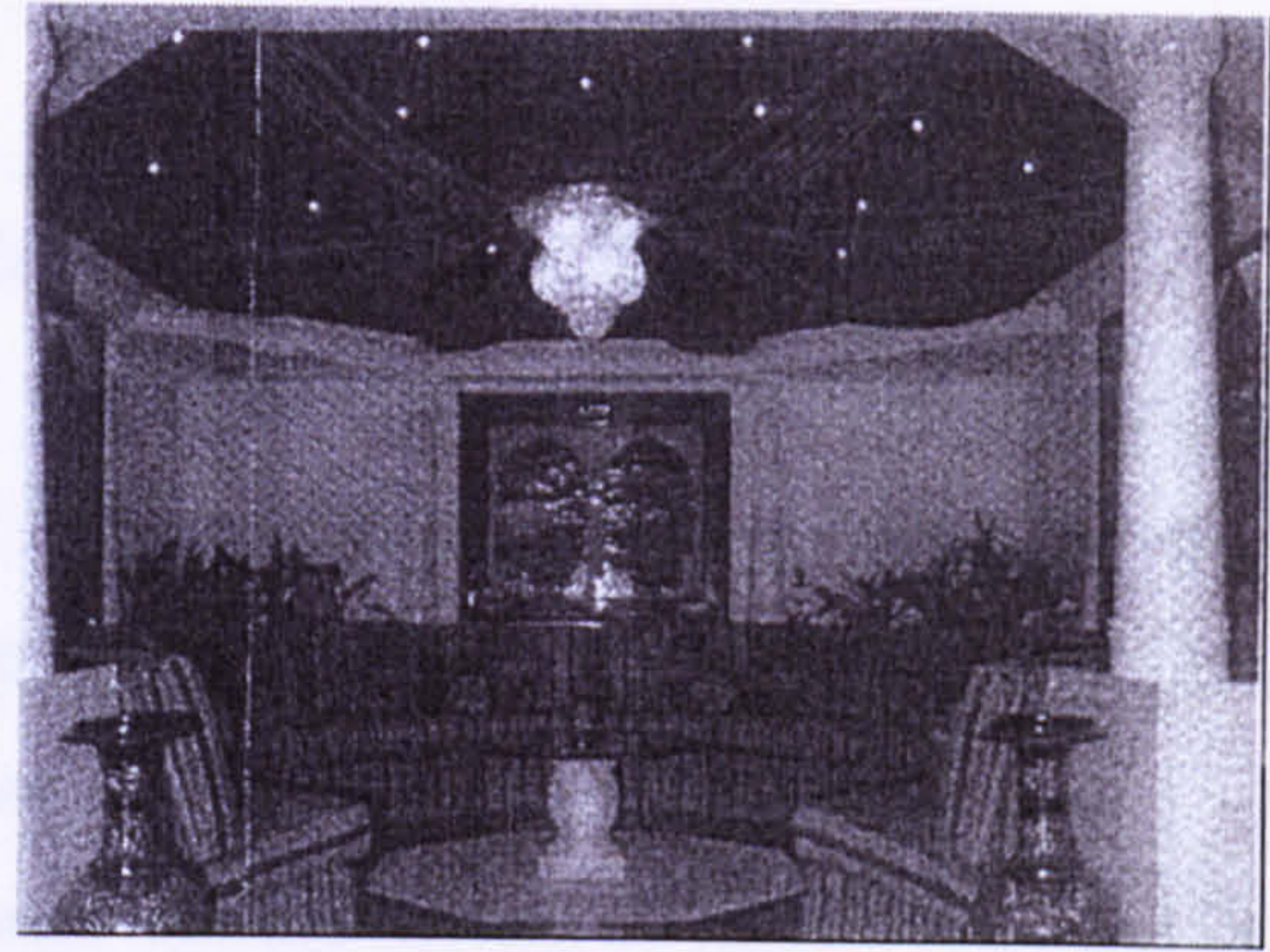


Figure 7.13 – An oriental octagon guestroom advertised in a local interior design magazine. Source: Almanzel, 1995: 16.

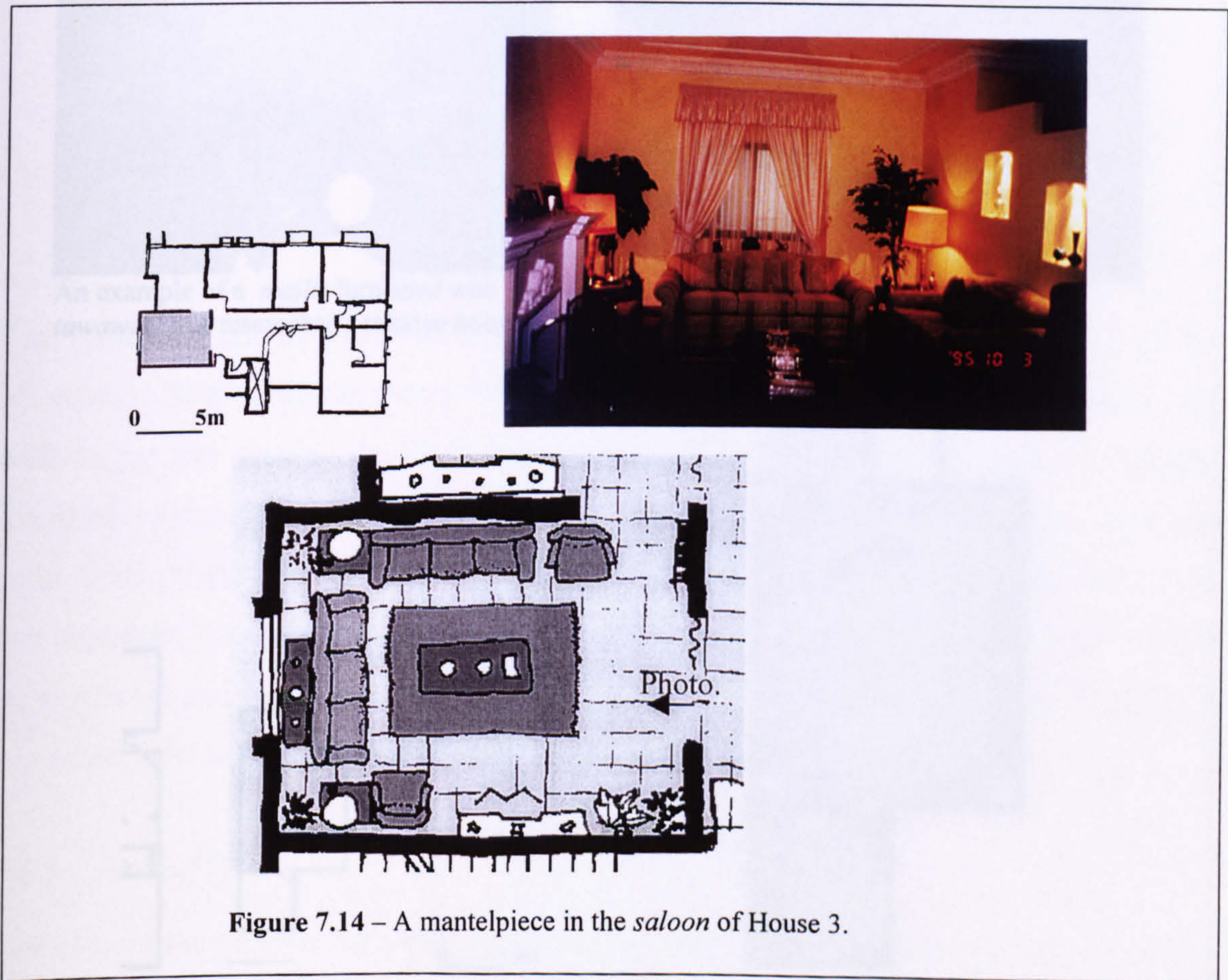


Figure 7.14 – A mantelpiece in the *saloon* of House 3.

7.4.2 *Majlis*

Only male guests use the *majlis*. The *majlis* is usually located as far as possible from the family zone and has its own entrance. As mentioned in Chapter 6, men organise weekly or monthly visits in which they play *baloot*, chat, watch television, drink tea and smoke hubble-bubble. These activities happen in an informal social environment and can continue until late night hours. Men sit on the floor, stretch and lie down. The informality of the *majlis* requires *baturmah* or *tawaweel*, (Figure 7.15) arranged peripherally around the *majlis*, leaving the centre empty.



An example of a *majlis* furnished with *tawaweel* in a researcher's relative house.

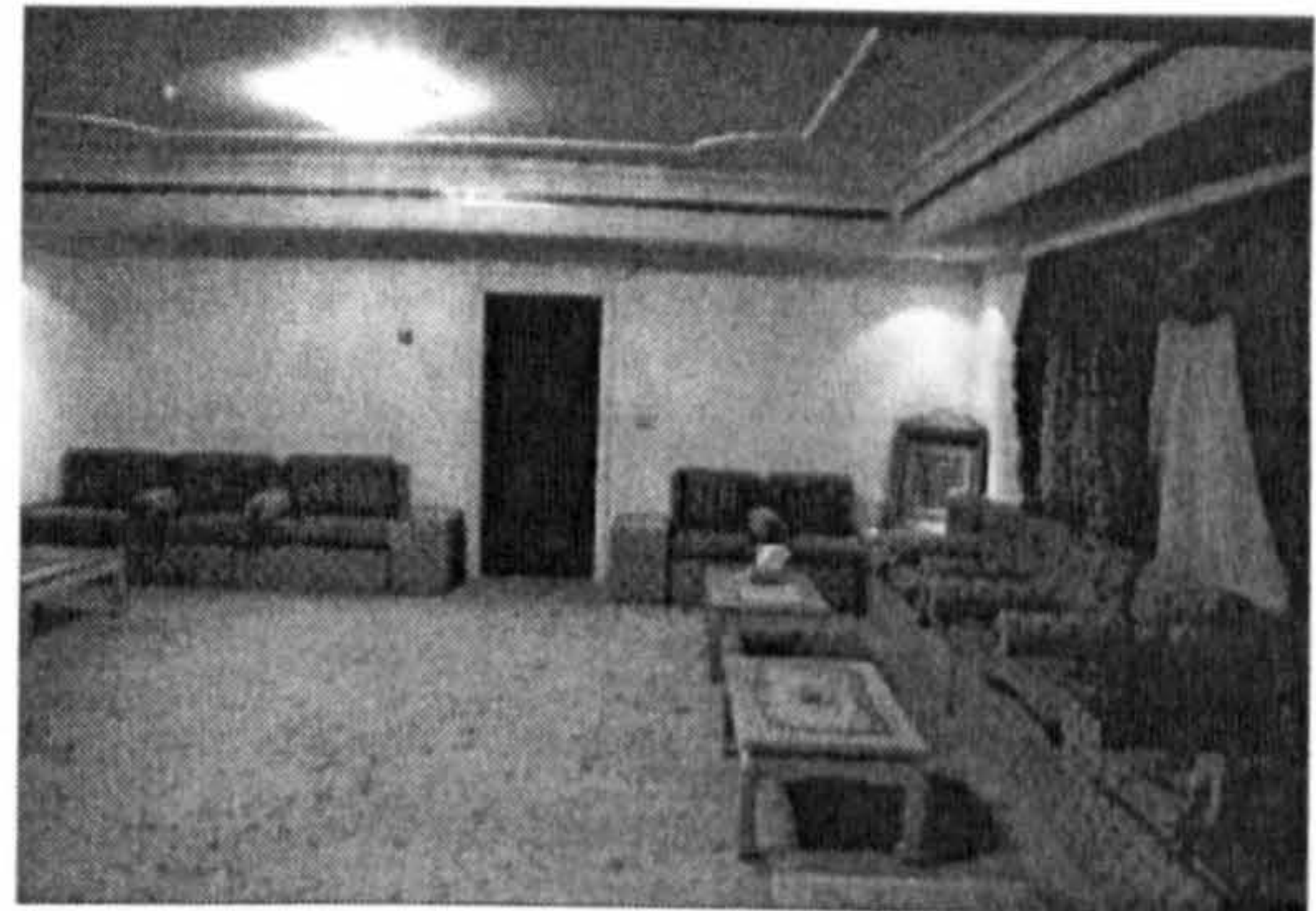


Photo. 1

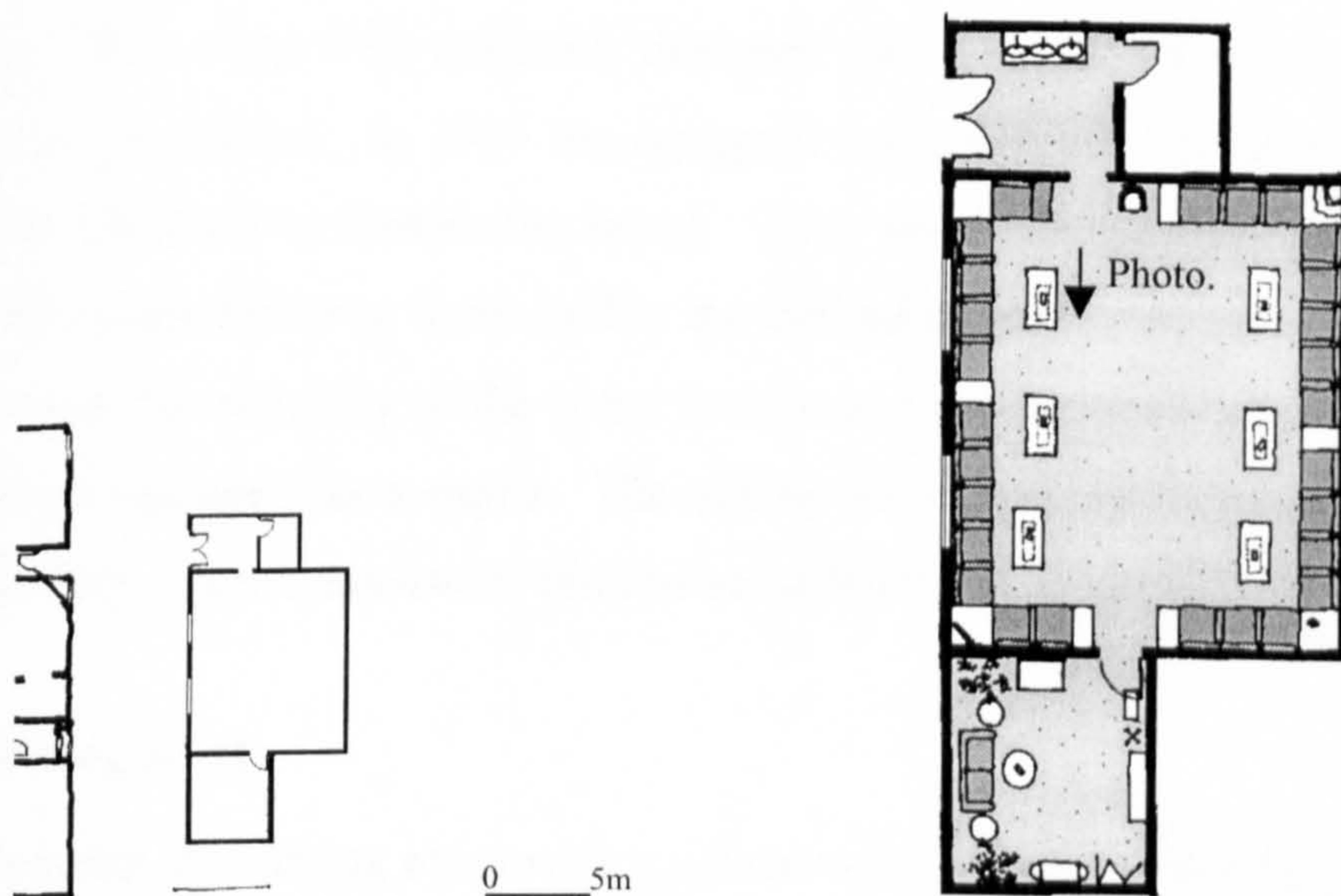


Figure 7.15 - A *majlis* furnished with *baturmah* in House 8.

It is difficult to have a *majlis* in an apartment, where the number of rooms is limited. In coming to terms with space limitations, the occupants are obliged to make a number of decisions according to their priorities. The husband in House 4 (apartment) is so committed to the regular visits that he hosts his friends in the living room while his wife (the informant) spends the night in the master bedroom. Men guests are allowed to get into the family zone because the *saloon* cannot accommodate their activities. The informant maintains her privacy by staying in her bedroom all night. This option of dealing with the shortage of space to maintain a culture core was caused by the high criticality of the *saloon*.

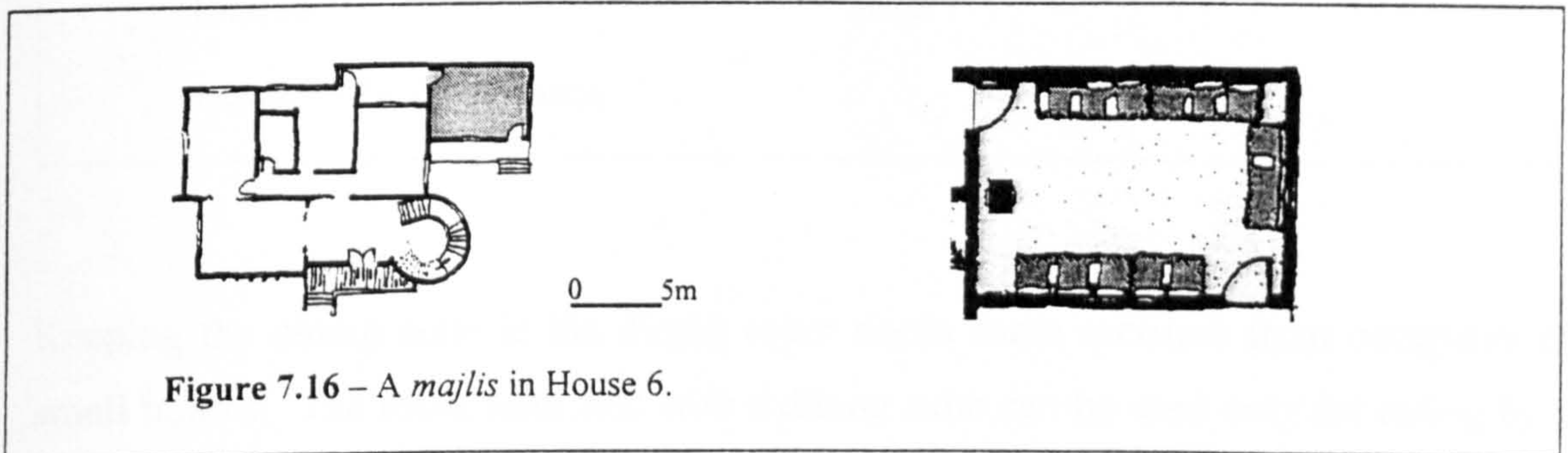


Figure 7.16 – A *majlis* in House 6.

Two (Houses 6 and 8) out of the three villas studied in this research have *majalis* (plural of *majlis*). Both villas were originally designed and built without *majlis*. House 6 was built in the late sixties. In 1985 the occupant consulted one of the leading furniture companies (Habitat) to furnish the house. Ever since the furniture arrangement and style in all rooms has been fixed so that the desired image would be maintained. This has increased the criticality of the home interior and the occupant was obliged to build an extension and use it as a *majlis*. The *majlis*, which was not designed by Habitat, is furnished with a carpet, *tawaweel*, pillows and a television (Figure 7.16).

7.4.3 Dining Room

The association of a dining room with a *saloon* was introduced with the concept of the villa in the fifties. The dining room has been used in one of two ways, either as a modern dining room and thus furnished with a dining suite, for example Houses 2 and 7 (Figure 7.17), or as a multi-purpose room furnished with *tawaweel* or modular seating, and the dining suite has been moved to another space. When the dining suite is located in the dining room it becomes the least used furniture in the house. It would be used

only when guests are invited for lunch or dinner. If the number of guests exceeds the number of chairs, the dining table and the sideboard may be used as buffet tables. Guests fill their plates and sit in the *saloon*.



House 2



House 7

Figure 7.17 - Dining rooms

Keeping the dining suite in the dining room needs some sacrifice from occupants of small houses. The room furnished with a dining suite can be used only for eating by a limited number of people, i.e. it is highly critical. The informant of House 2 and her husband had three sons and one daughter living with them. The daughter required a room. There was no space to use as a living room except the circulation area, which was not wide enough. Once the daughter was married and moved out, her former room was used as a living room. Had they done away with the dining room, they would not suffer from space limitation. They were willing to experience the inconvenience of space limitation for the sake of displaying the dining suite to express identity.

The occupants of House 5 had more flexibility when the family had to deal with space limitations due to an increase in size. They used the dining room as a bedroom and moved the dining suite to the circulation area, which is large enough. The sliding door between the *saloon* and what was supposed to be a dining room was replaced by a large mirror from the *saloon* side and a wardrobe from the other side (Figure 7.18). Strict control now has to be exercised in the circulation area over the doors to the kitchen, the bedrooms and the living room, in order to maintain the family's privacy during visits by male guests. By this arrangement, the utilitarian need (accommodating the increasing number of family members) and the symbolic need (displaying the dining suite) are achieved with some inconvenience during guests use of the dining table. The case of

this house and Houses 1 and 9 indicates that, even though it is preferable to have a special room for the dining suite, the space limitation leads occupants to invent new ways of using the space according to their priorities.

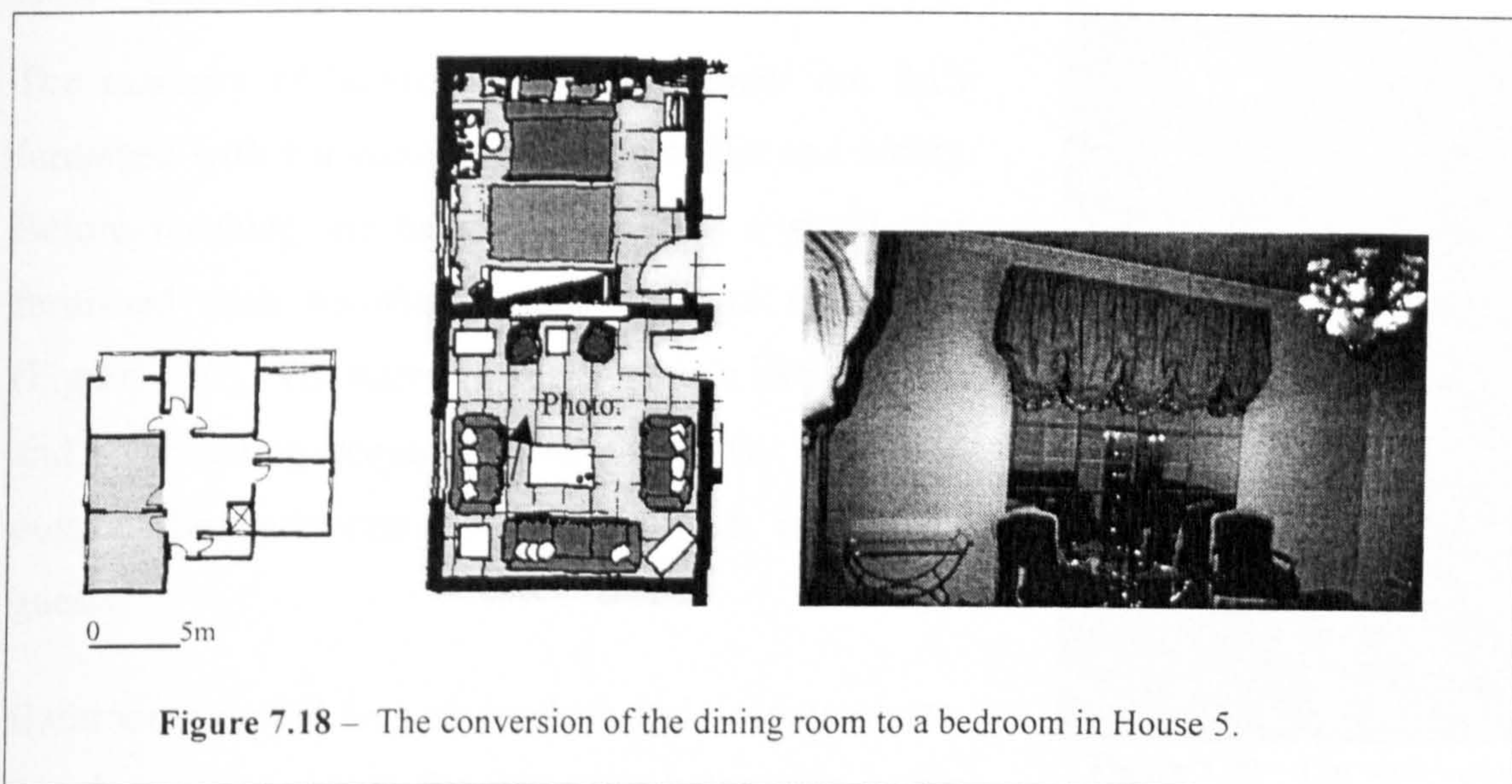


Figure 7.18 – The conversion of the dining room to a bedroom in House 5.

Because the *saloon* is highly critical and needs a utilitarian room beside it to accommodate the variety of uses, some occupants use the dining room as a multi-purpose room and furnish it with *baturmah* or *tawaweel*. The modular seating is continuous in a U or L shape around the room like the *karaweel*. This room is also convenient for accommodating any visiting relatives¹ who stay for several days. Usually they keep their belongings in one corner, and for sleeping at night *tawaweel* are arranged in the centre of the room (Figure 7.19).



Figure 7.19 – A multi-purpose room used for sleeping.

Dining suites are not used regularly and occupy large spaces, yet some householders are keen to have them. The folding door between the *saloon* and the dining room is left

¹ They are adult male relatives who are not conventionally supposed to see some of the adult females in the house. People vary in these conventions. Some, for example, would not allow visual contact between a brother and his sisters-in-law while some others do not mind.

open for guests to see. The dining suite is intended to convey meaning more than to be used, Stage 5 of compatibility, and the room it occupies becomes highly critical.

7.4.4 Bathrooms

The majority of bathrooms in guest zones are fully furnished with bathtubs, sinks, toilet chairs and bidets. Before reaching the bathroom, there is a small area furnished with washbasins, shelves, and floor rugs (Figure 7.20). The norm of washing one's hands before and after eating required more than one washbasin outside the bathroom to serve the high number of guests.



Figure 7.20 – The washbasin area next to the guest bathroom.

Bathrooms should be easy to clean and decontaminate, which requires simple fixtures. For bathrooms in the guest zone to fulfil an additional symbolic function, they are furnished with some non-utilitarian items such as flower vases (Figure 7.21 and 7.22). Moslems' frequent use of water means that a carpet is not practical because it remains wet. This problem is dealt with by adding on top of the carpet little rugs on areas that are most likely to get wet. Once the little rugs are wet, they can be dried.



House 7



House 6

Figure 7.21 – Bathrooms in the guest zone.

7.5 FAMILY ZONE

The family daily activities occur in this zone. Its furniture is more practical than that of the guest zone. Fluorescent lighting is the most common.

7.5.1 Living Room

The room with the widest range of activities in the house is the living room. It is the communal room of the whole nuclear family. They have their breakfast, lunch, dinner (on a plastic sheet spread on the floor and removed after eating), and tea, watch television, read magazines, chat, make phone calls, take naps, children play, host women guests and close relatives in the living room. It is furnished with either modern suite, for example House 2 (Figure 7.22) or, for more flexibility, modular seating, for example House 6 (Figure 7.23).

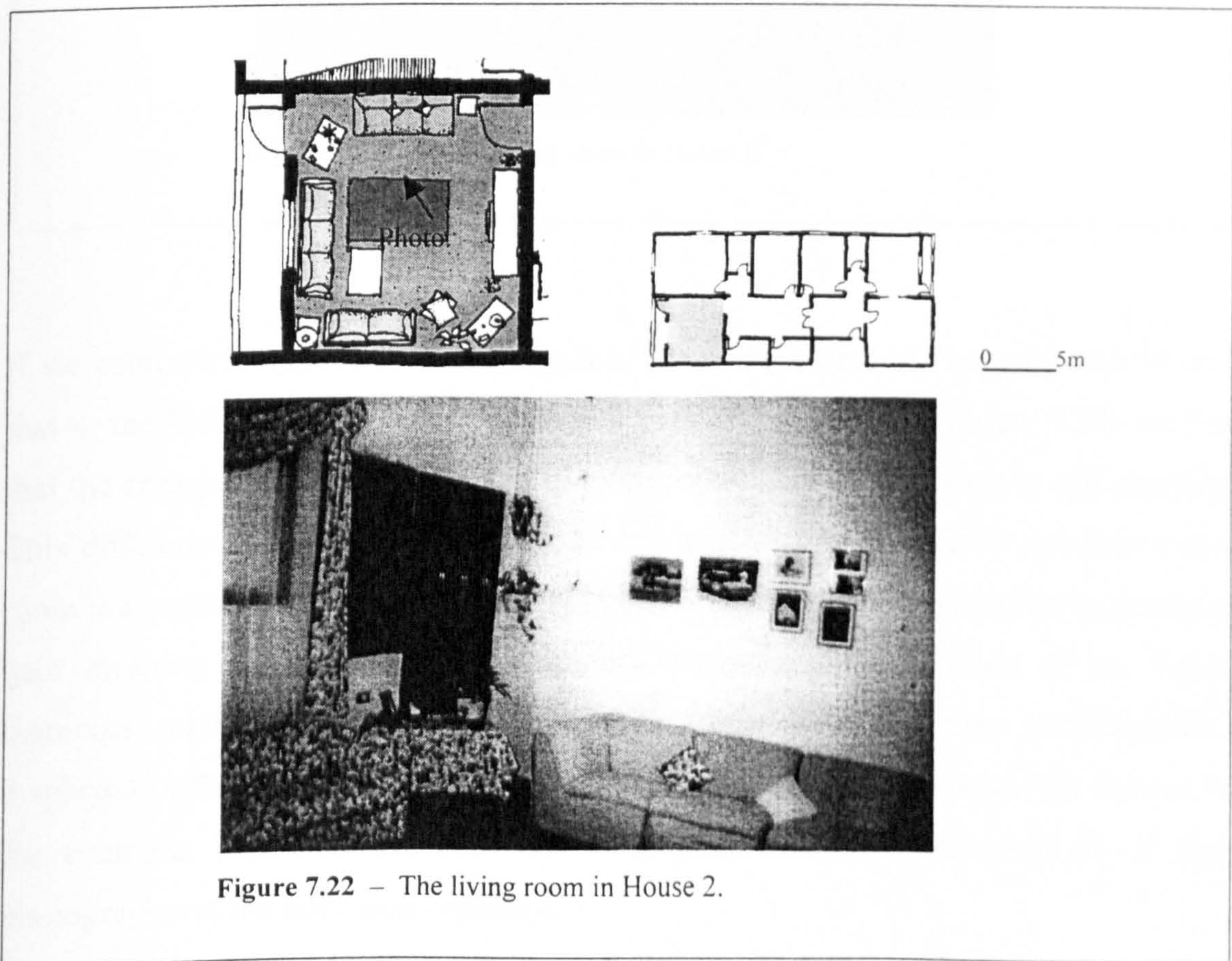


Figure 7.22 – The living room in House 2.

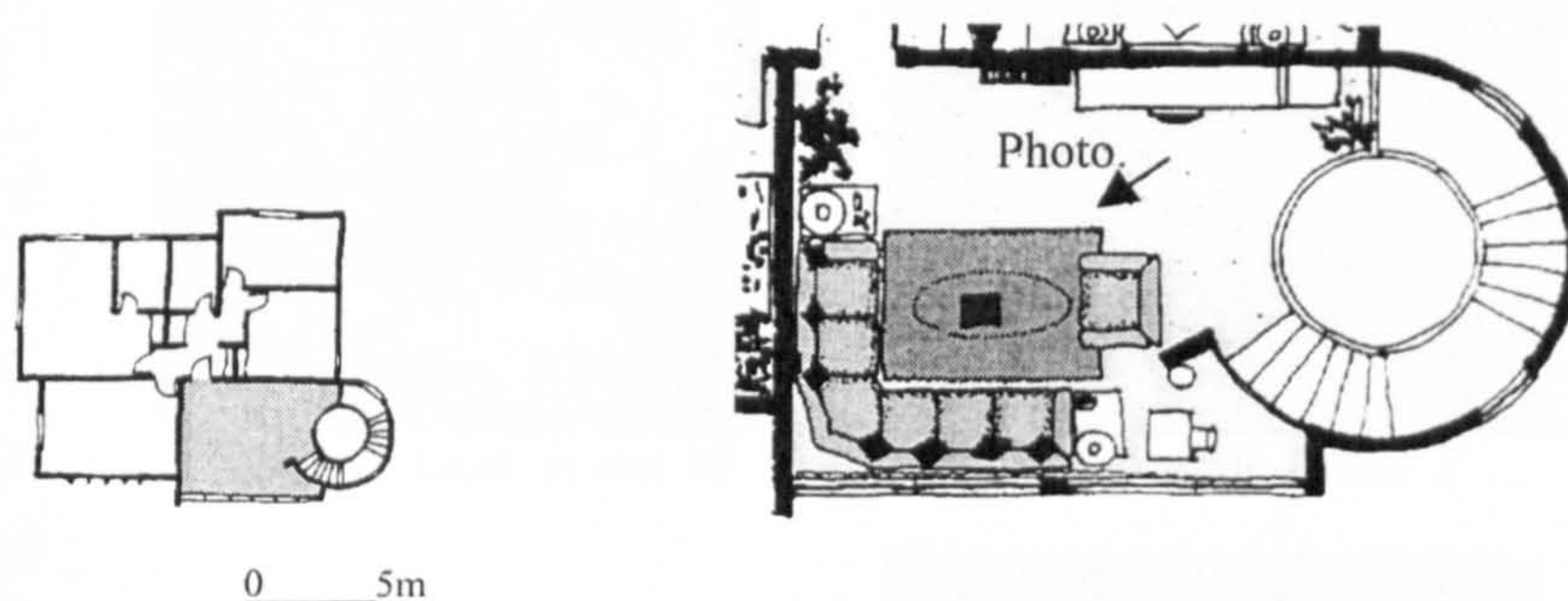
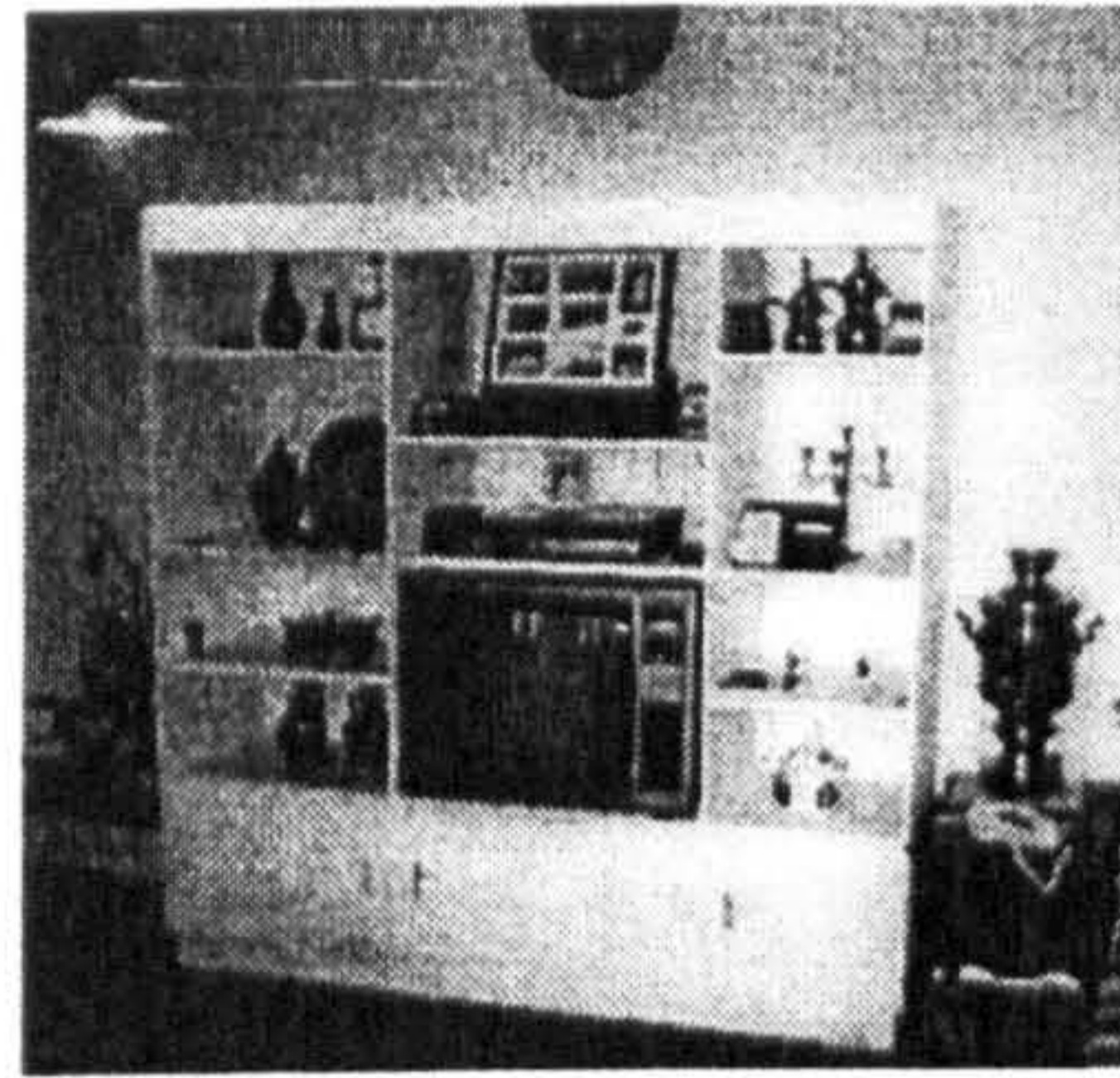


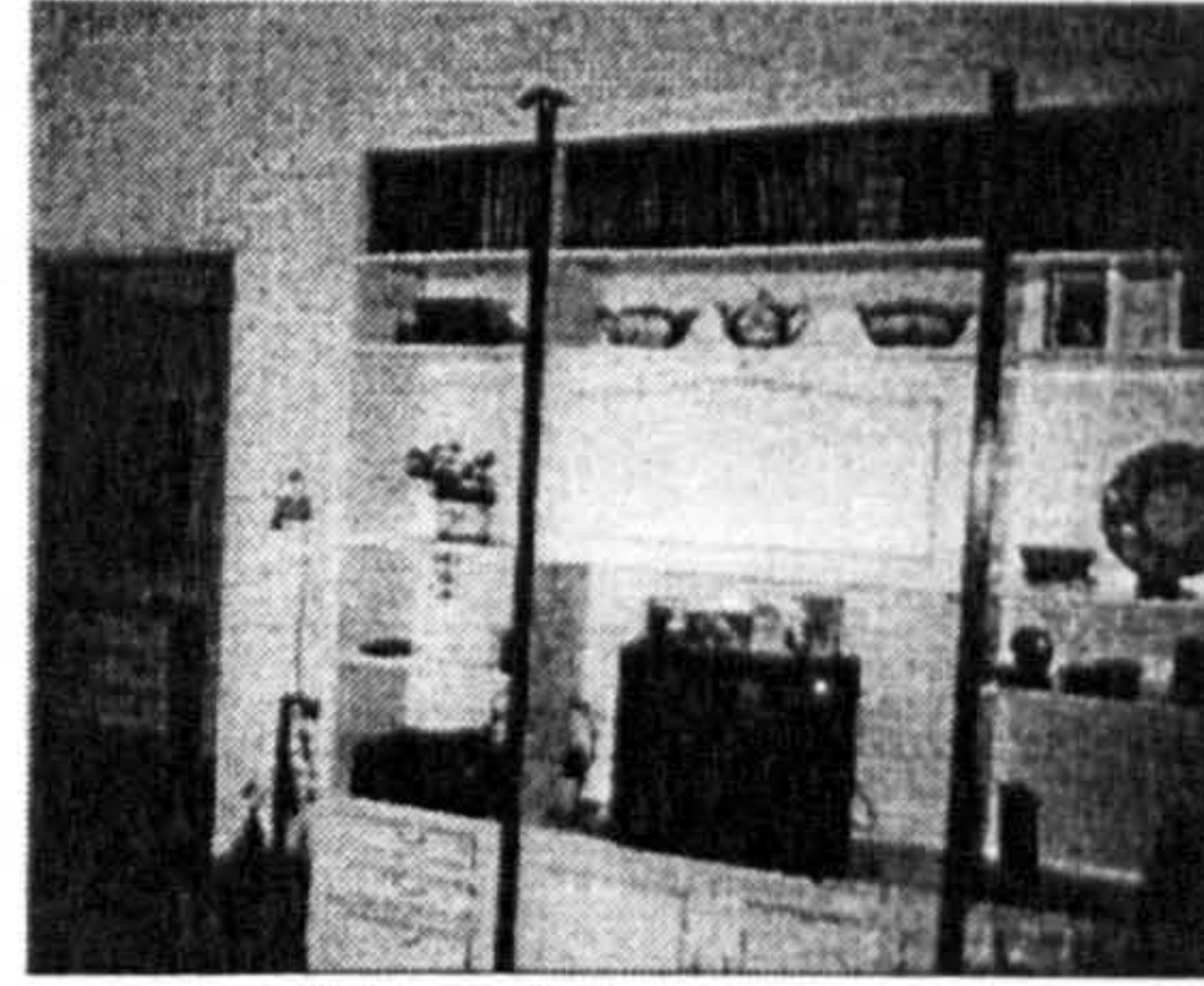
Figure 7.23 – The living room in House 6.

If we compare the television arrangement in the living rooms of Houses 2 and 10 with that in the bedroom of the former and in the office¹ of the latter (Figure 7.24) we find that the arrangement of the television in rooms other than living rooms is still practical. This difference is first because family having a television in a family member's own room is a relatively new phenomenon. Time is needed for the television arrangement to gain meaning in these rooms. A second reason is the expression of the family members' relationship in the living room. Photographs of the three generations are displayed in the living room more than any other room. The informant for House 10, for example, expressed her love to her grandchildren by displaying all of their photographs on the television cupboard.

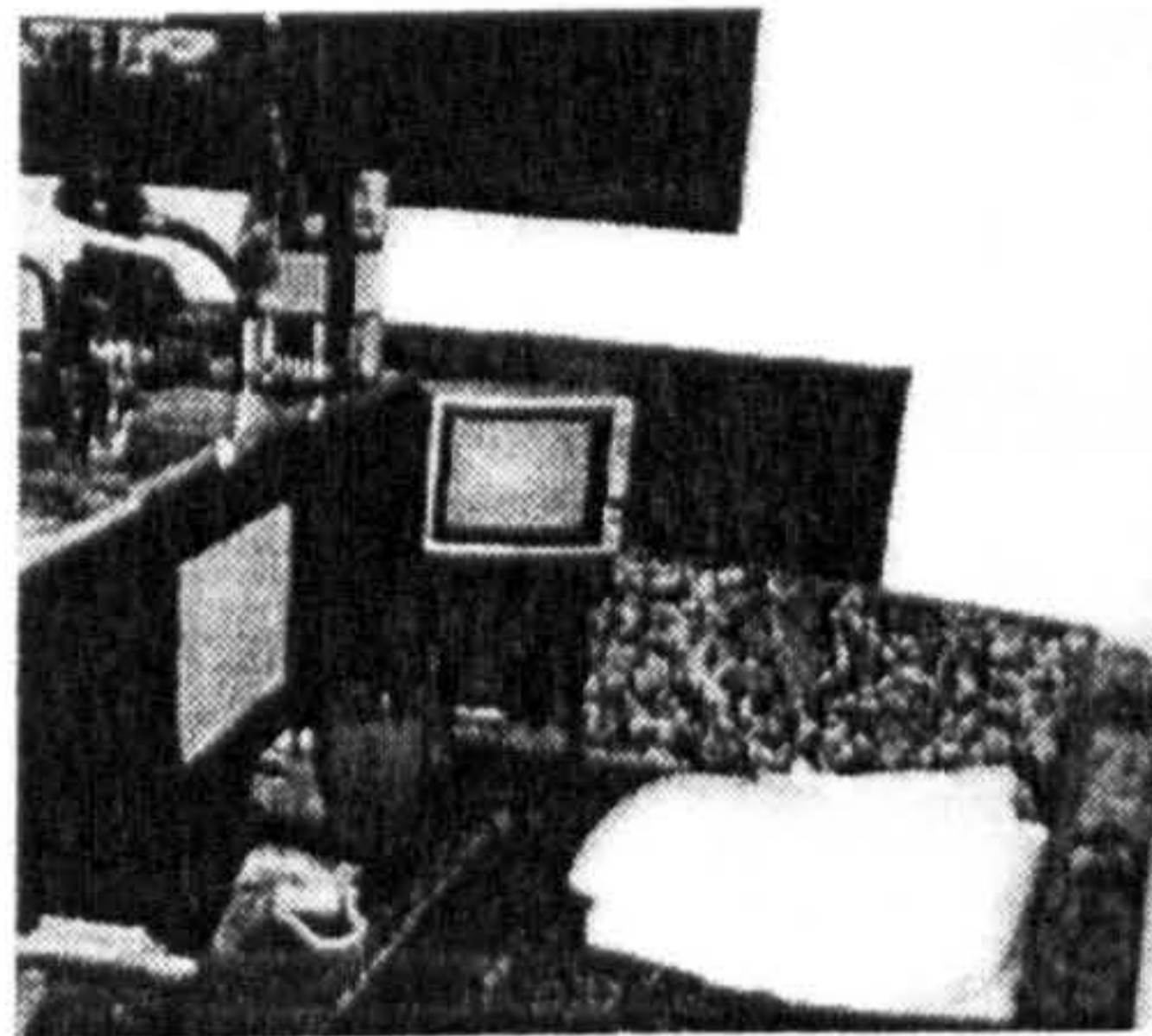
¹ The term office is used here even though this room is private and not used for running business because it is named usually by occupants as *maktab*, meaning office.



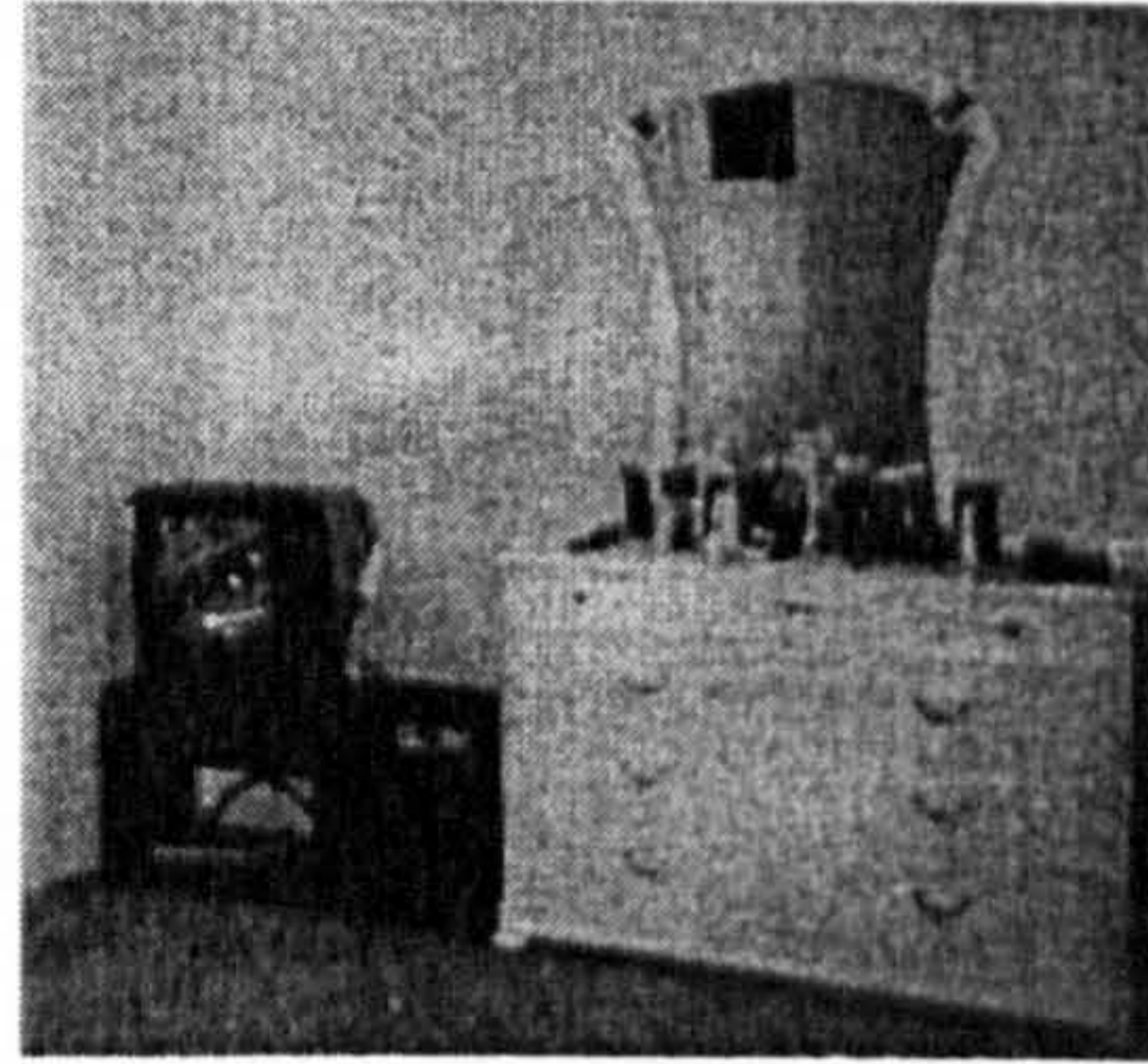
in the living room, House 10



in the living room, House 2

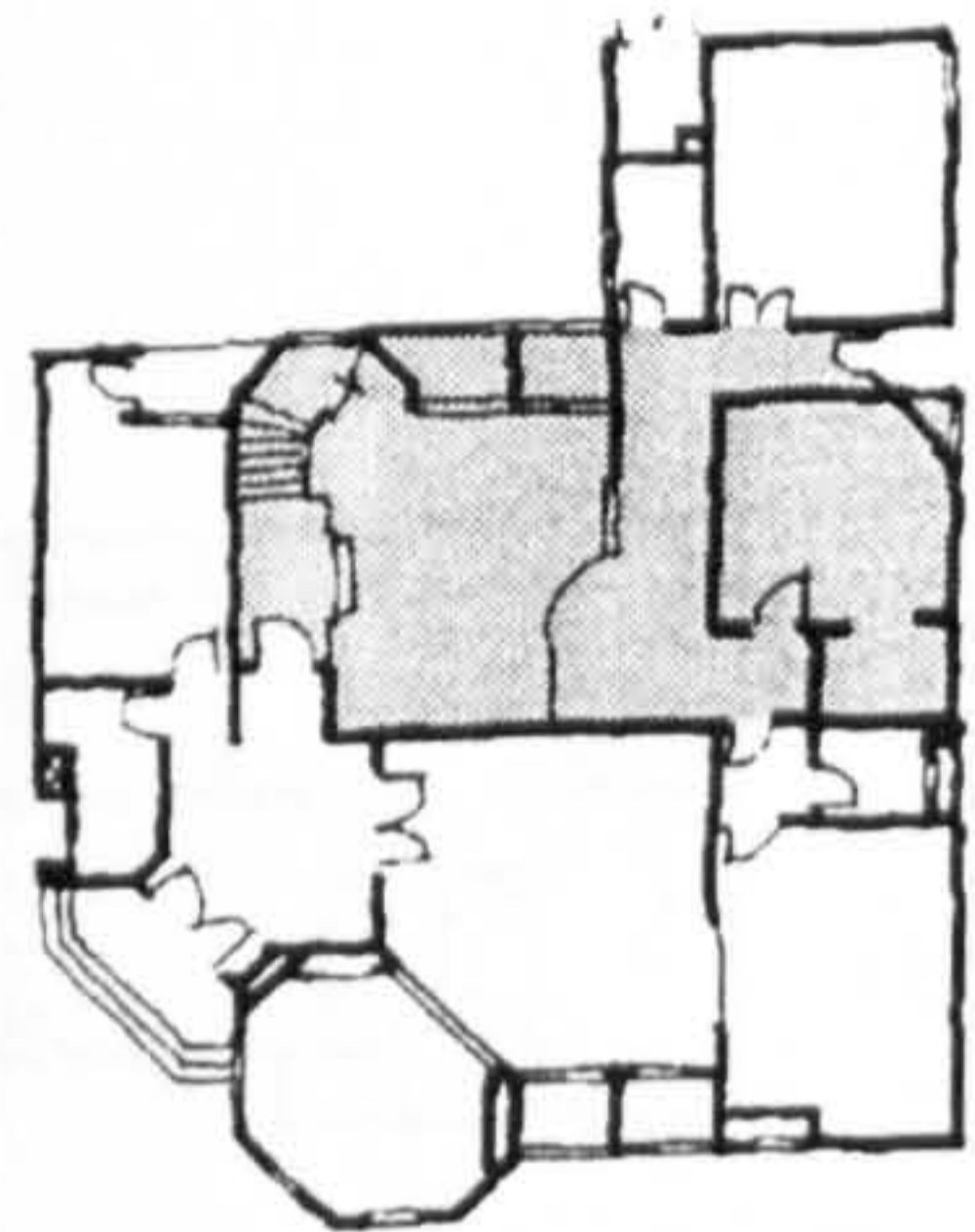


in the office, House 10



in the bedroom, House 2

Figure 7.24 – Different television arrangement according to the rooms they are located in.



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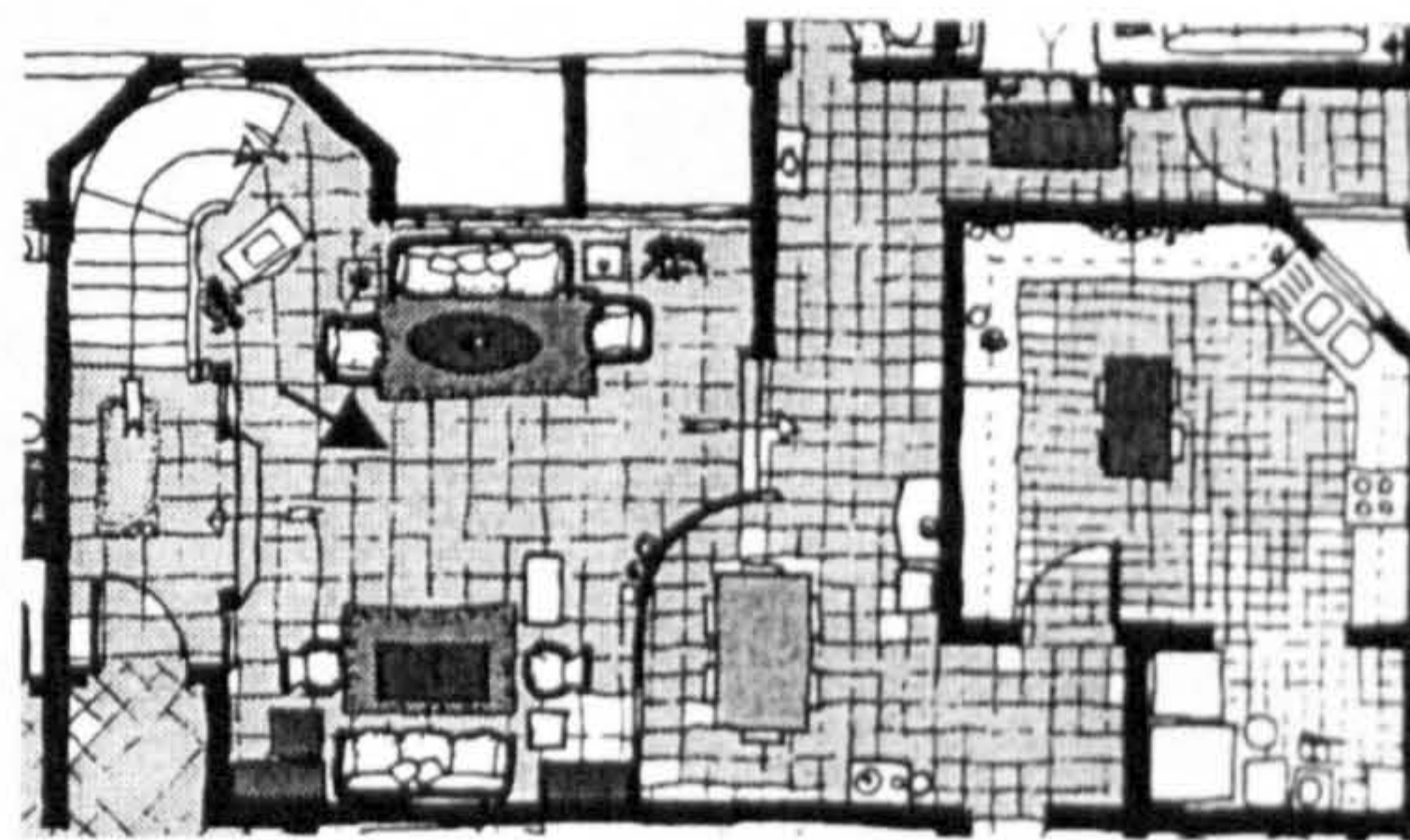


Figure 7.25 – The integration of the dining suite with the architectural layout in House 8.

In Chapter 6 it was discussed that in the nineties the design of interior spaces of rich households by architects and interior designers lead to some integration of the architectural layout with modern furniture. The size and location of the family dining area in House 8 (Figure 7.25), near the kitchen and overlooking the living room, is integrated with the dining suite. The most appropriate furniture in this area is the dining suite. Thus this integration increases criticality of this area.

7.5.2 Multi-Purpose Room

In addition to the multi-purpose room in the guest zone, a similar one is always useful in the family zone. A close relative, such as a married son or daughter with his/her family, would stay in this room during their visit. If more relatives come, they would occupy the multi-purpose room in the guest zone. When women guests occupy the living room, this multi-purpose room is used to accommodate more women guests, playing or sleeping children. Thus the furniture of this room is the most similar to that of traditional houses. It is furnished with *tawaweel* and *masanid* and its walls are rarely decorated with framed pictures.

The multi-purpose room is not indispensable in every family, as the *saloon* or master bedroom are for example. It seems that occupants who receive a large number of guests from other cities to stay for several days during social occasions need multi-purpose rooms. The occupant of House 1 (Figure 7.26) is the only extended family member who lives in Jeddah. His brothers and parents visit him regularly from other cities. Most sons of the parents in House 10 are married, have many children and live in other cities. They also visit their parents and occupy the multi-purpose room.

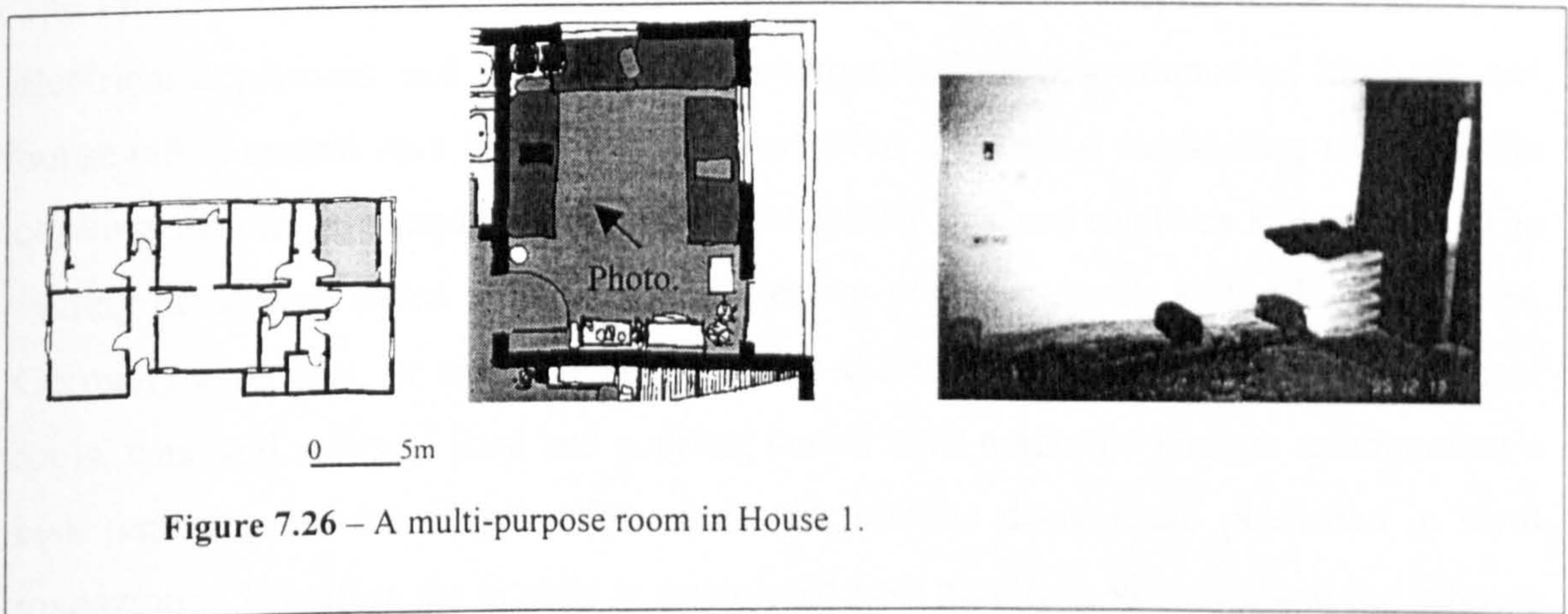
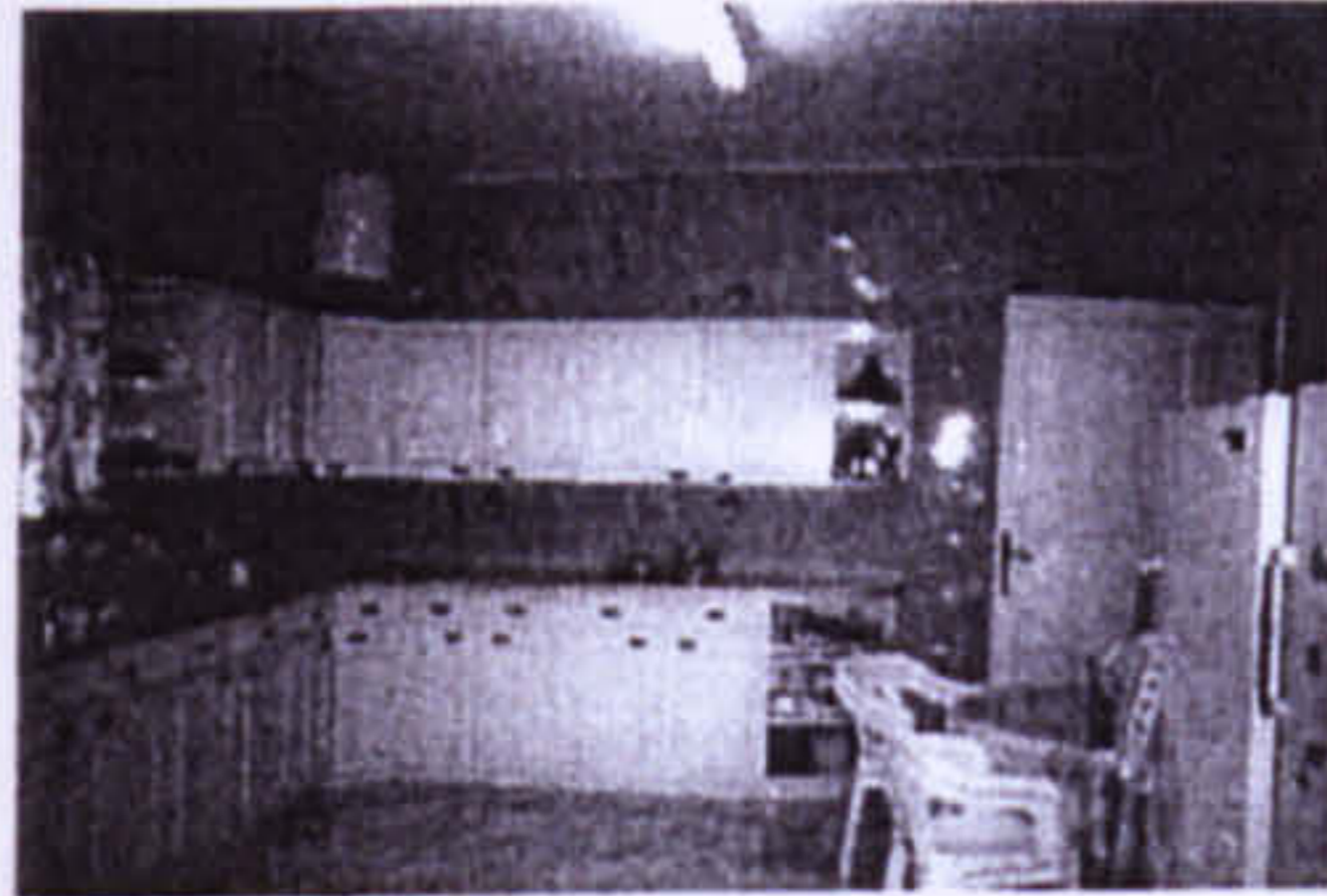


Figure 7.26 – A multi-purpose room in House 1.

7.5.3 Kitchen

The kitchen design is simple. A base and overhead cabinets, a sink, gas cookers and a refrigerator or two are arranged along the wall leaving the centre either empty or for a little dining table with four chairs or fewer, used for quick snacks and preparing food. The wall is tiled with porcelain which can be wiped easily. The floor in most houses is without carpeting. Counter tops are clear, to be used for preparing food. The shine on

the surfaces of the floor, wall tiles and counter tops, which is caused by the florescent lighting, and the practical dining suite give the kitchen a feeling of practicality.



House 9



House 8



House 7

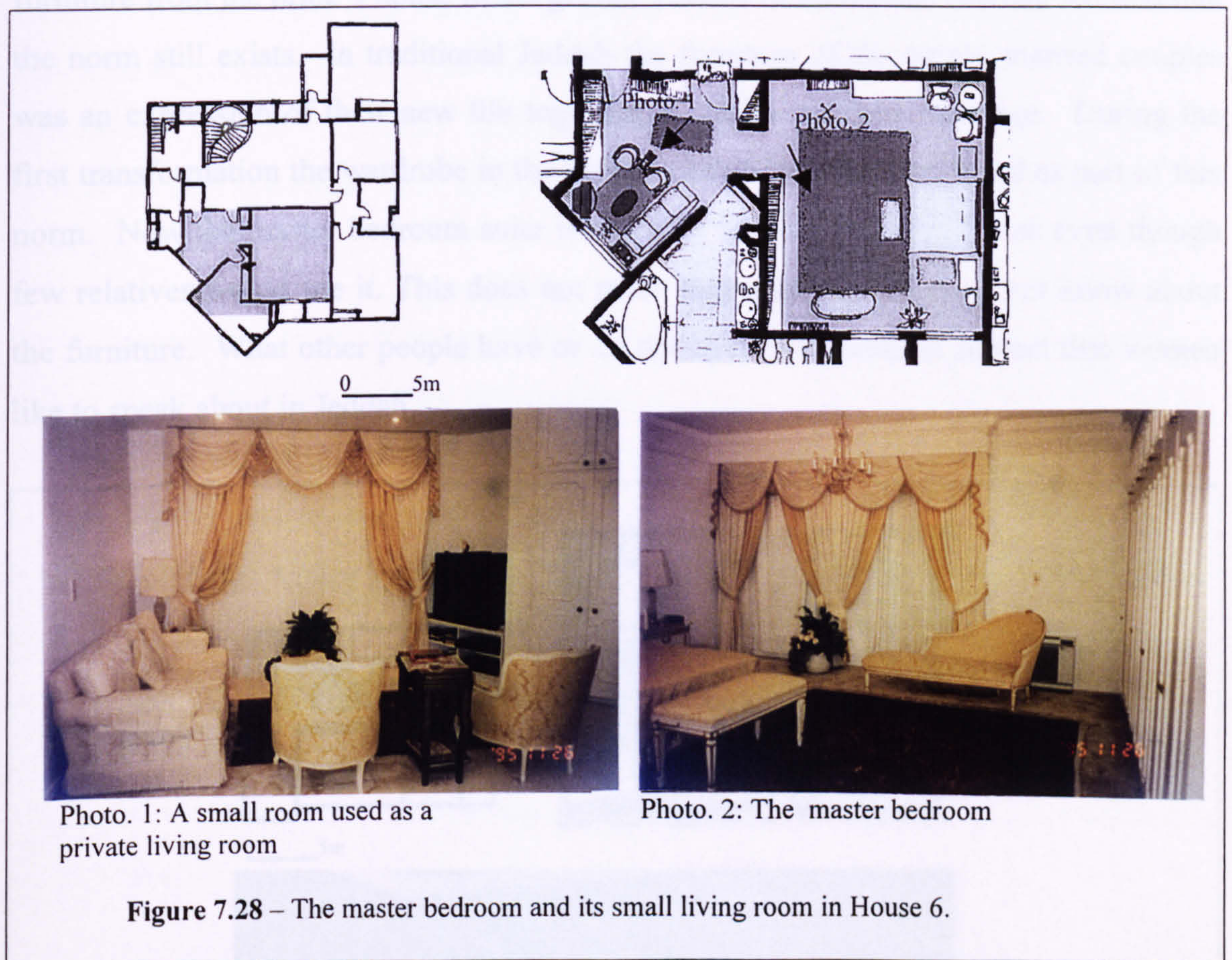
Figure 7.27 – Kitchens.

The kitchen consumes the housewife's time more than ever, despite the availability of electrical appliances and tools. The improvement of the appearance of kitchens and housewife's central role in the family have given kitchens a socialising role. While cooking she can be joined by members of the family or close relatives and friends. The variety of cabinet styles imported from Western countries, such as the United States, Germany and Italy, or made locally, and the different utensils, appliances, electrical tools, cans and sacks of food and cooking books have made the kitchen arrangement a task requiring special talent. Many ideas for kitchen designs are published in local magazines. Therefore the kitchen is considered here practical, virtuous, and the tidiness and organisation of which reflects the housewife's talent (Stage 4).

7.5.4 Master Bedroom

The master bedroom is for sleeping, taking afternoon naps, eating breakfasts, drinking tea, making phone calls, praying, watching television and exercising. It is the parents' private living room. A television and chairs or sofa have become part of the master

bedroom in many houses. Therefore it has become a design requirement for rich households to have a small room beside the master bedroom (Figure 7.28).



Parents' clothes are stored in the master bedroom. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the amount of clothes per family member has been increasing, which requires more storage spaces. Floor-to-ceiling built-in cupboards have become more desirable. The bedroom of House 7 (Figure 7.29) is fitted with high cupboards that frame the bed and provide additional storage for out-of-season and rarely-used clothes. This design shows a strong integration between the bed and the flanked cupboard. This integration will make it difficult for the occupants to rearrange the furniture or change the room function to another. The criticality of this room, thus, is high.

Eashannas yugoolo meaning “what would people say?” is a phrase casually used by women when an inappropriate social situation happens. Such a situation could be living in a house without a master bedroom suite. It is a necessary social image for married couples to have a complete set of at least a bed, two bedside cabinets, a wardrobe and a dresser with a mirror in the master bedroom. But why is it so since the master bedroom

is a private room and only close relatives have access to it, as Table 7.1 shows? If we recall the significance of the *dabash* (discussed in Chapter 4) of transferring the furniture from the bride's house to the groom's house in traditional Jeddah, we find that the norm still exists. In traditional Jeddah the furniture of the newly married couples was an expression of their new life together, a symbol of their marriage. During the first transformation the wardrobe in the parents' bedroom was introduced as part of this norm. Now the master bedroom suite is essential in every married house even though few relatives would see it. This does not mean that other women will not know about the furniture. What other people have or do not have is a common subject that women like to speak about in Jeddah.

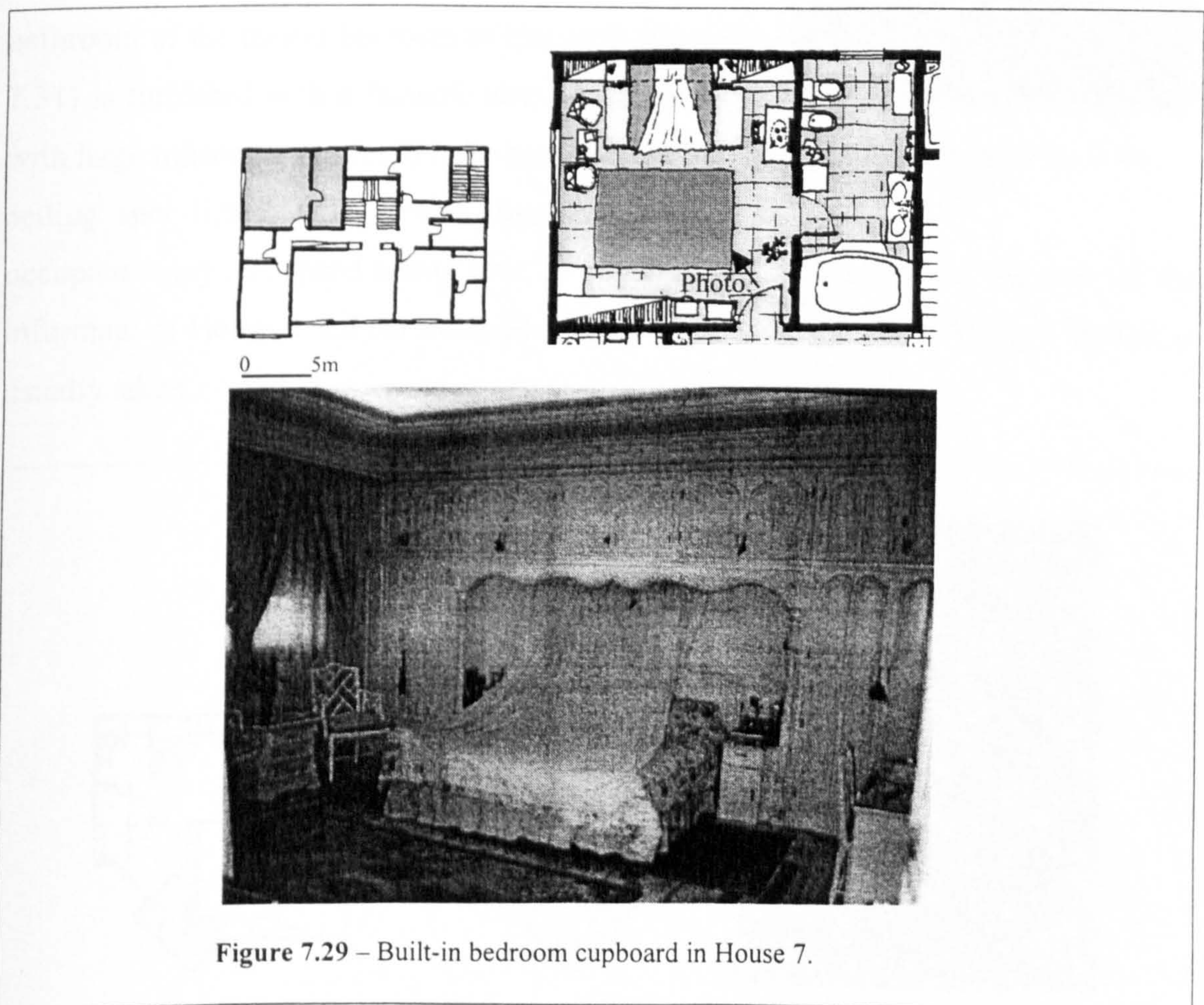


Figure 7.29 – Built-in bedroom cupboard in House 7.

7.5.5 Bathroom

If we exclude the few of the rich, bathrooms are standard and consisted of a bathtub, a sink, a toilet and a bidet (Figure 7.30). The wall is tiled with porcelain. A plastic curtain is hung along the bathtub to stop the water from splashing out during showers.

Rich households have large bathrooms in their master bedroom suites. They are furnished more fully than an ordinary bathroom. For example, the bathroom of the master bedroom of House 6 (Figure 7.31) is furnished with a Jacuzzi, three wash basins with large mirrors, a shower, a toilet seat, a bidet and ceiling spot lights. The design suggests that the occupant enjoy and spend a long time in this bathroom. This was not the case for the informant of House 6 and her husband. The Jacuzzi is rarely used. A quick shower is usually taken.

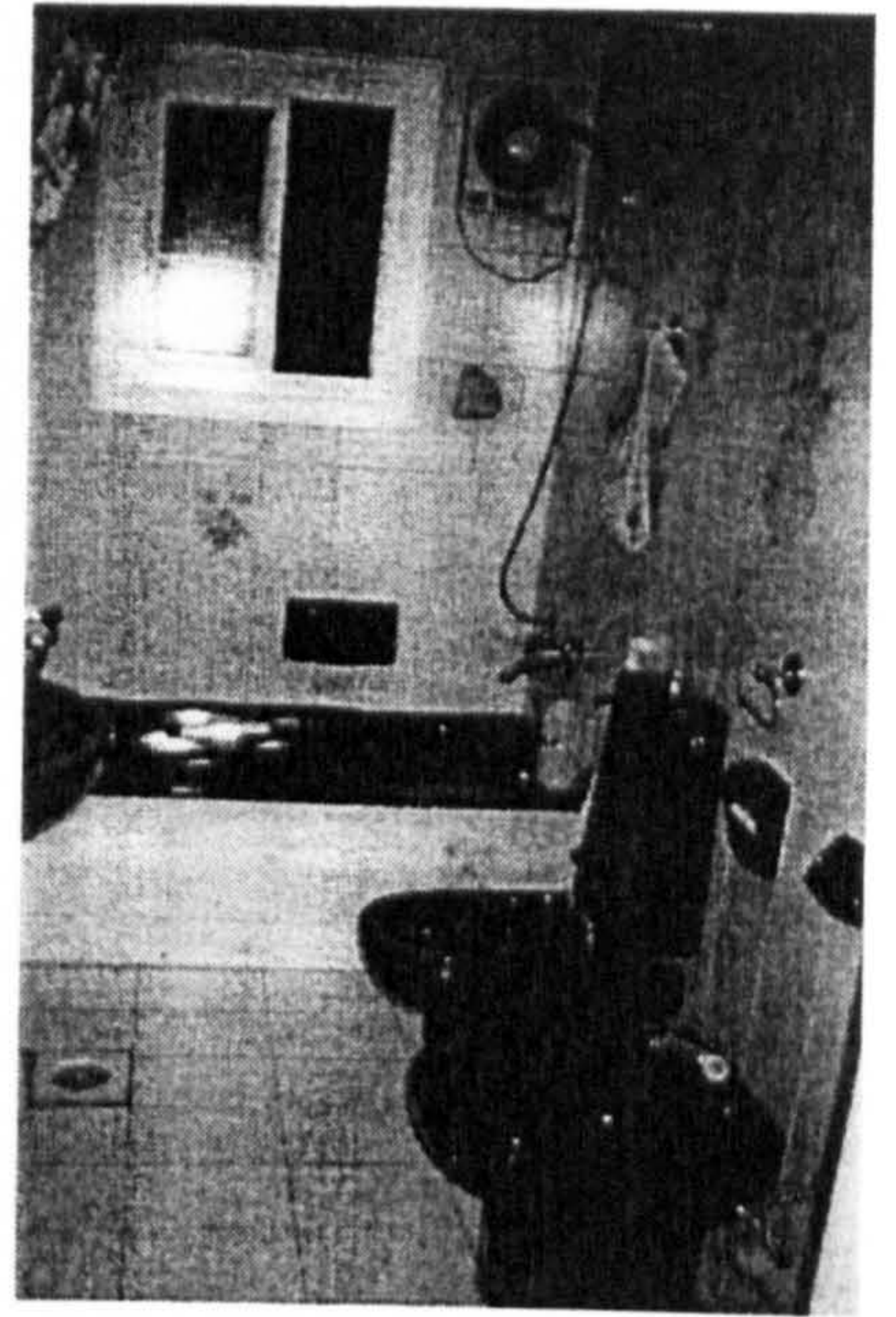


Figure 7.30 – A bathroom in the family zone, House 5.

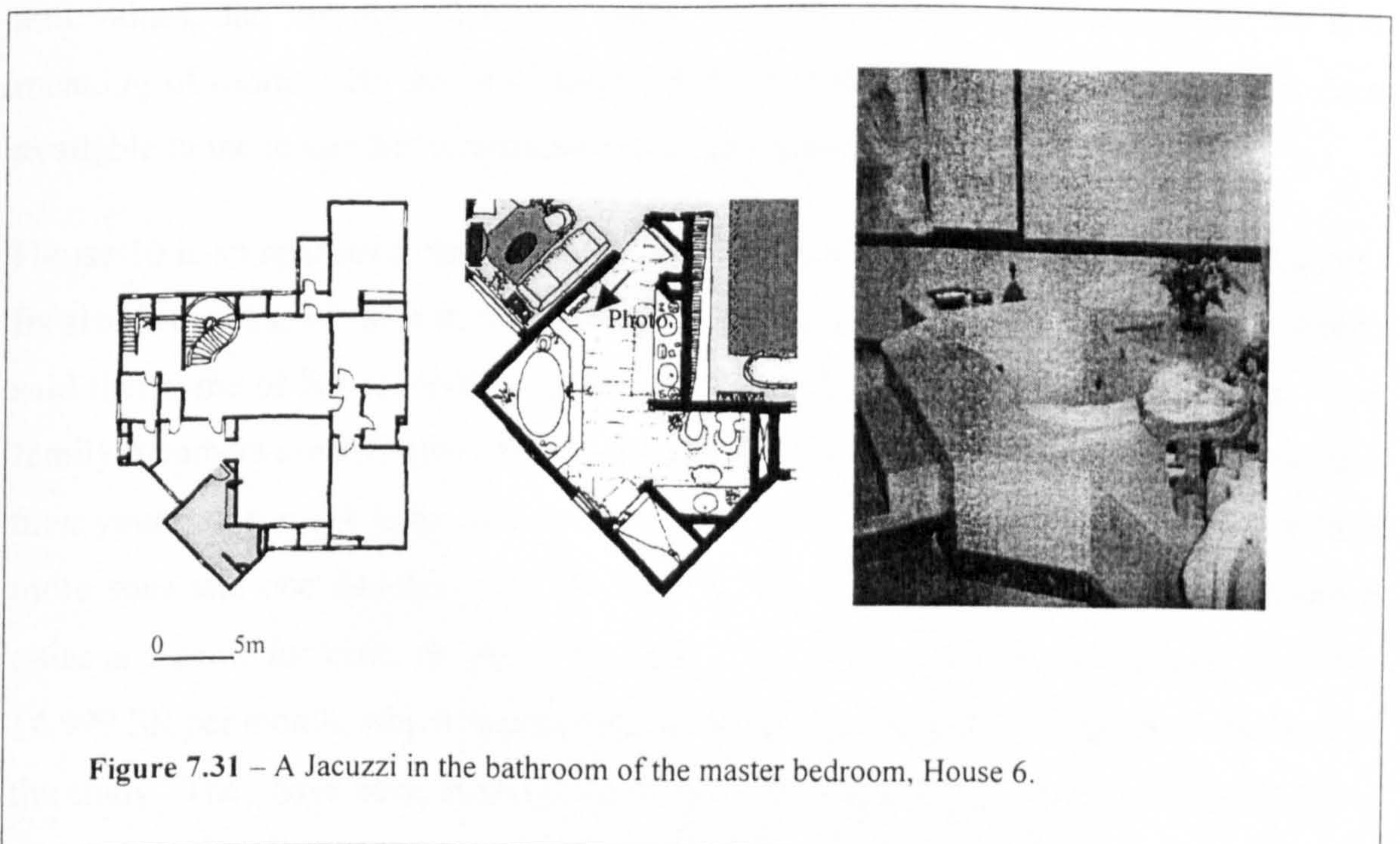


Figure 7.31 – A Jacuzzi in the bathroom of the master bedroom, House 6.

Five of the ten case studies have laundry rooms. Others who do not have such rooms may put their washing machine under the stairs, such as House 7, or in the bathroom. If the bathroom is small, finding a place for the washing machine is a problem, as the case in House 4 shows (Figure 7.32). This means that, even though the bathtub is unnecessarily occupying a large space, it is part of the bathroom set and will not be removed even if the spaces it occupies is needed for more practicality.

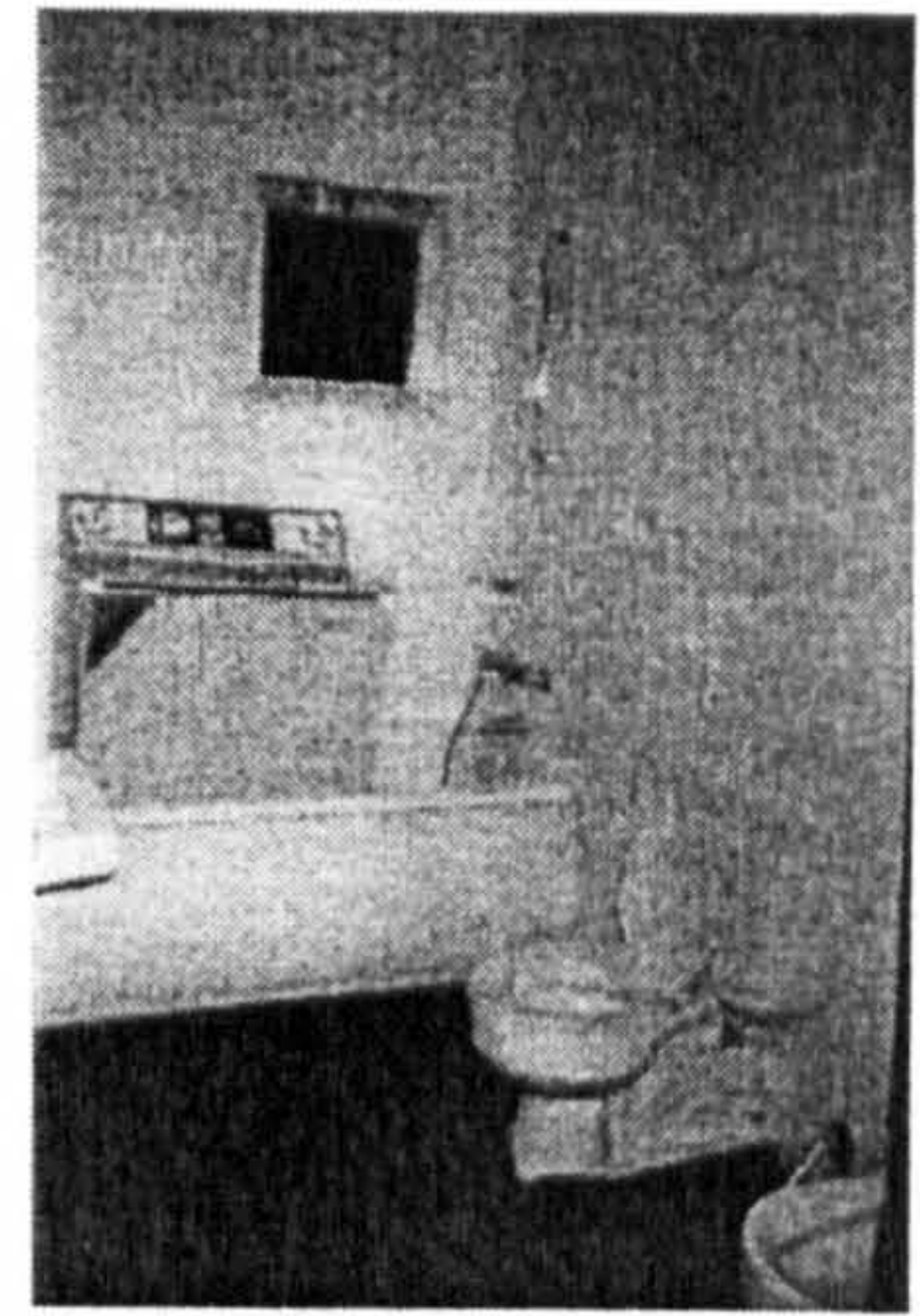


Figure 7.32 – A washing machine in a bathtub in House 4.

7.6 HOUSE 10

So far the discussion in this chapter has been focusing on the role of furniture in each space, independently from the rest of the house. The reader may have noticed already that this role differs from one case study to another depending on several factors, such as space limitation and the wealth of the occupants. It would be useful now to discuss the home environment of one case study, its family structure, income, members' roles and values, and the important role which furniture plays in influencing the use and meaning of rooms. House 10 (Figure 7.33) is chosen because the amount of its data available to the researcher is more than with any other house.

House 10 is an apartment that occupies a whole floor in a building of three apartments. Its size is considered large if compared with most apartments in Jeddah. The informant said that some of her relatives would like to live in this house if she moves out. The family members are the informant (55 years old), her husband (retired 65 years old) and their youngest son (14 years old). A maid lives with them in the house. There are four more sons and one daughter who are married and have children. They live in other cities and come for visits on social occasions. The family income is between 10,000 – 14,999 SR per month, which is considered middle if compared with the other families in the study. They have been in this house since 1989 and pay the amount of 35,000 SR a year for rent. Before that they moved twice from one apartment to another seeking for a larger one with reasonable rent.

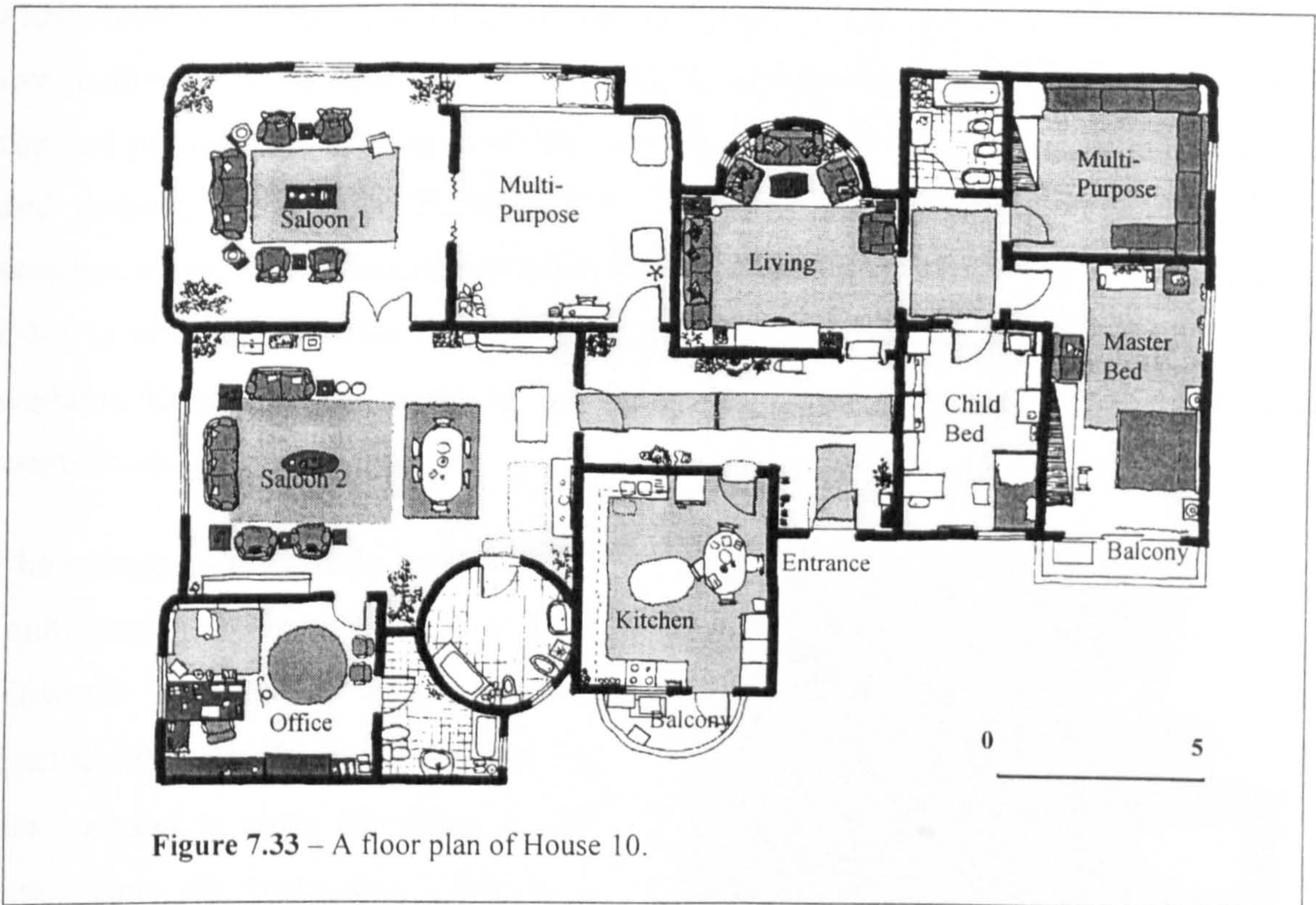


Figure 7.33 – A floor plan of House 10.

The husband spends most of the day in his private room, called *maktab* (meaning office), in the guest zone. He is not engaged in regular visits with friends and relatives. He meets people only on social occasions. He prays in his office, watches television, reads books and practices his hobby which is collecting tree branches, and once they are dried he drills holes in them through which he inserts small branches of leaves made artificially from plastic. He makes many beautiful and different sizes of artificial plants and arranges them in empty corners, for example Figure 7.34. His isolation has increased after installing a satellite dish that

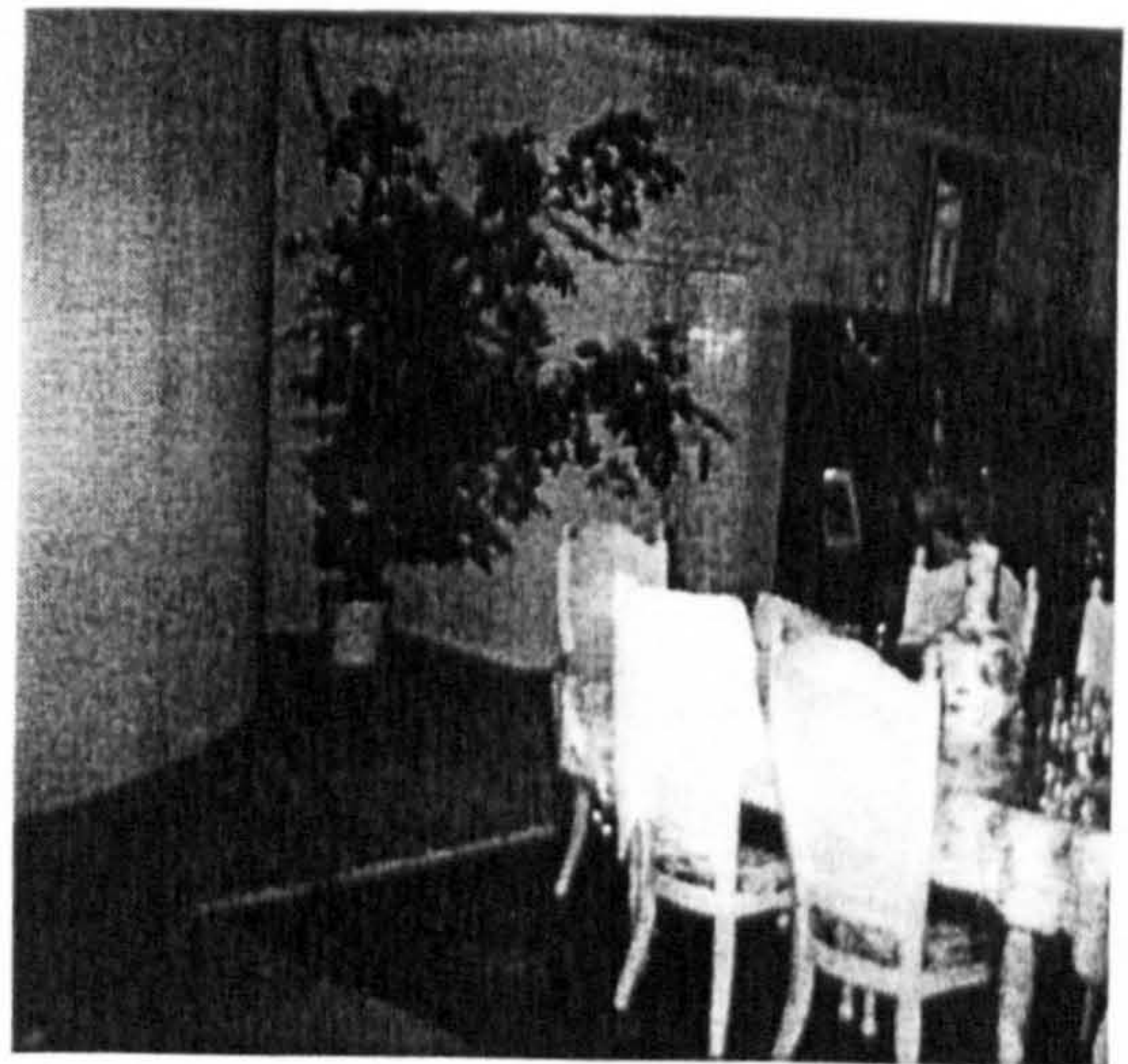


Figure 7.34 - A large plant made by the tenant of House 10.

shows many television channels.¹ Lately he has wanted to have his own little refrigerator in his office, an idea that was not welcomed by his wife. The office has its own bathroom and is equipped with furniture that supports his independence. The floor rug and pillows are for lying down and watching television and the desk is for reading and making phone calls (Figure 7.35). All of his valuables, such as documents, watches, rings, and perfumes, are stored in the desk drawers. An old mirror that means a lot to him hangs on the wall (Figure 7.36). It was a present for his wife at their wedding 40 years ago. The two chairs beside the door are for any family member who wants to chat with the husband.

The office was previously located in the multi-purpose room in the family zone. However during their visits, grandchildren made enough noise for the husband to move his office to the guest zone six years ago. This is a strong indication that his isolation was due to personal desire and thus he chose the furthest room and filled it with the

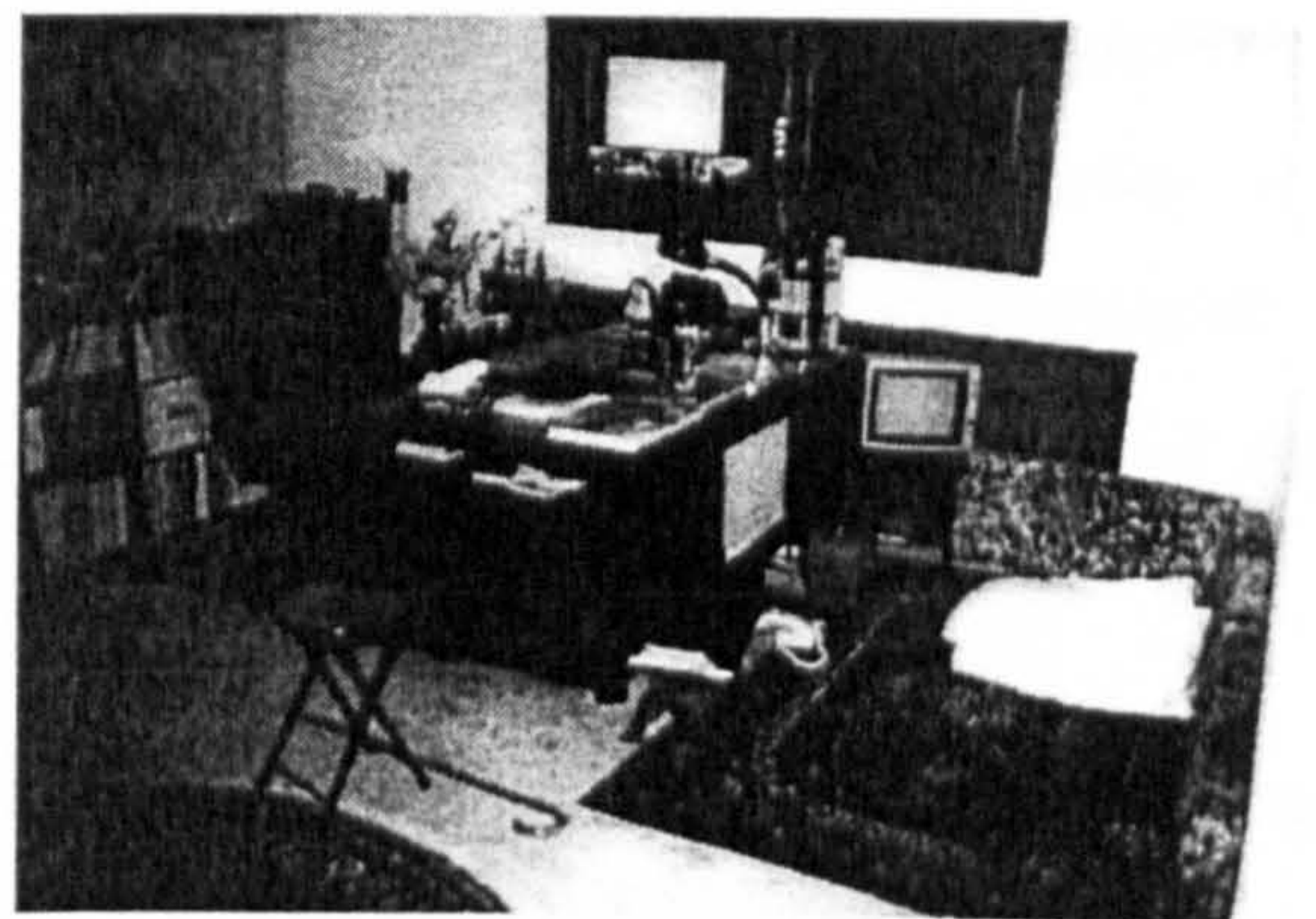


Figure 7.35 – The office in House 10.

furniture that supported his independence. The long distance between the living room or the master bedroom and the office caused the informant a problem whenever the husband received a call. She had to walk across the whole apartment (from bed to his office is more than 25m). To overcome this problem they installed a telephone system that enabled her to inform him with the push of a button. This telephone system facilitated more isolation. To conclude that filling his office with furniture, having his own bathroom and installing the telephone system have led to his isolation, as determinists may claim, is an overstatement. Admittedly if he had had a refrigerator, his isolation would have increased, as the informant feared. But his desire for isolation was the primary reason for going to the furthest room, and in order to facilitate his isolation he equipped the office with what was described above. It is concluded from this discussion that furniture and appliances might support values but not create them.

¹ It has been found most husbands in the ten case studies tend to isolate themselves from the rest of the family, in different degrees.

The youngest son, like his father, is socially isolated. After returning from school, he spends most of the day in his room, while the door is shut, either studying, reading stories, watching television, lifting weights or playing electronic games. The furniture is arranged peripherally around the room leaving the centre empty.

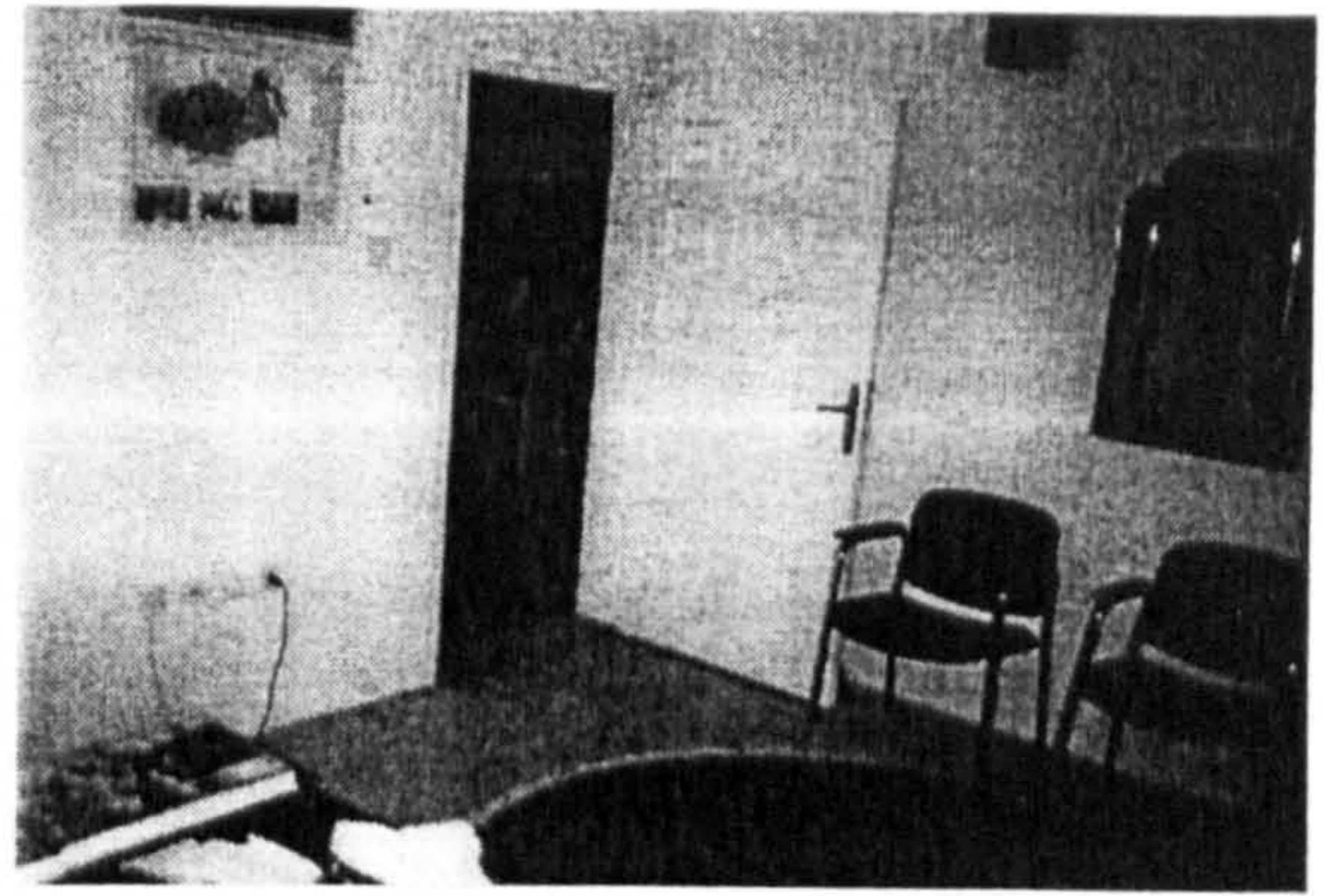


Figure 7.36 – The office in House 10.

In contrast with her husband and son, the informant is socially active and engaged in regular visits with relatives and friends. Her belongings are kept in the bedroom wardrobe, cabinet and chest. She prays in the master bedroom or the adjacent multi-purpose room, watches television, reads magazines and chats by the phone in the living room, and spends two to three hours a day cooking in the kitchen.

The maid sleeps in the multi-purpose room of the guest zone. She removes her sleeping cushion whenever guests use the room. The informant always wished to provide a special room for the maid.² The maid is responsible for cleaning, dusting and sweeping the house, washing plates and ironing clothes.

The daily activities of family member occupy less than half of the house area. They needed such a large apartment because of their relationship with the extended family members. Married sons with their families visit their parents at least twice a year in vacations and social occasions. When married son 1 comes with his family, they occupy the multi-purpose room in the family zone. When married son 2 comes with his wife, who is not supposed to be seen by married son 1,³ and children they occupy the other multi-purpose room. Other sons stay in their parents-in-law houses⁴ and come during the day. The married sons and daughter have full accessibility to all rooms.

² This was achieved when the family moved, after the researcher finished his fieldwork, to a villa where there are more rooms than in House 10.

³ People in Jeddah vary in this manner. Brothers and sisters in-law in some families see each other with fewer restrictions.

⁴ All the four married sons have their parents in law in Jeddah or Mecca, which is 80km from Jeddah.

The accessibility to the home interior reduces as the relationship with the informant and her husband weakens. For example, the informant's brother cannot go beyond the living room in the family zone. The married daughter's husband, who is treated relatively in a more formal way, cannot go to the living room directly as the informant's brother does. He waits in the reception area until he is led to the living room. If a married son's wife were in the house, he would be led to *saloon 2*. Adult male cousins and nephews do not enter the living room and are always led to *saloon 2*. The married sons also meet and chat in *saloon 2* when their wives occupy the living room. *Saloon 1* is used when non-close relatives and important guests such as one of the married sons' father-in-law visits the family or when *saloon 2* cannot contain all the guests. The care with which *saloon 1* is treated symbolises the respect for the important guest.

There are three levels of room space that adult male guests have access to, the living room, *saloon 2* and *saloon 1*. The furniture of *saloon 1* is more symbolic than that of *saloon 2*, and the furniture of *saloon 2* is more symbolic than that of the living room. Tenants' manipulation of furniture can help us to conclude which style is



Figure 7.37 - *Saloon 1* in House 10.

more meaningful to them than others. The suite in *saloon 1* was in *saloon 2* while the one in *saloon 2* was in *saloon 1*. They replaced each other after the one which was in *saloon 2* was upholstered by changing its cloth and painting the wooden frame with a golden colour (Figure 7.37). Consequently it looked more stylish than the other one, especially because golden wooden frames became the new fashion in Jeddah.

During the fieldwork, the occupant of House 9 also moved the *saloon* suite to the living room after buying a new one with a golden wooden frame (Figure 7.38). Thus the different levels of space meaning that are used differently according to the family relationships are maintained by different styles of furniture.



The old sitting suite



The new sitting suite

Figure 7.38 – The replacement of the suite with a new one in House 9.

7.7 CONCLUSION

It has been found in this chapter that the significance of modern furniture, especially the suite of the *saloon* and the dining suite, has been more symbolic than virtuous or practical. The best modern furniture the family can afford is located in the guest zone, which is the least used. Occupants' desire to convey social identity by possessing and displaying modern furniture and the criticality of this furniture has produced critical spaces. More spaces are needed to accommodate the variety of activities in the home environment. The high criticality of the *saloon* has necessitated having a *majlis* in some villas to accommodate male guests.

However occupants in villas have not suffered from space limitation as much as occupants in apartments, which have fewer of rooms. Occupants' approach to this problem in apartments varied according to their priorities. Some are willing to move the dining suite to another space and use the room it was occupying as a multi-purpose room. The dining suite for some others had to be in front of the *saloon*, and consequently they used the circulation area in the family zone as a living room. In fact space limitation has led an occupant to use the living room as a *majlis* for male guests.

Given that air-conditioning has abolished the need to move activities from one space to another for coolness, critically low spaces are still needed to meet occupants social obligations. Members of the extended family visit each other for several days, which requires extra rooms other than those for family daily activities. These rooms are furnished with traditional style, *tawaweel* or *baturmah* similar to the *karaweet*.

Privacy between adult males and females who are not closely related is still strong despite the introduction of modern furniture. As the analysis revealed, some occupants have parts of their family zones open to the guest zone. They have developed ways to maintain their privacy. Even if modern furniture is considered representative of the family or the informant to others, as the case of the master bedroom suite indicates, it has not made occupants relaxed concerning privacy. Strict control over the accessibility of relatives who have different relationships with occupants is maintained.

The sitting suite in the *saloon* and the dining suite are the most symbolic furniture in the contemporary home environment. They are seldom used and occupy rooms that are needed by the family for utilitarian functions. However they are still possessed because occupants' priority to express themselves is higher than their utilitarian need.

This chapter dealt with the contemporary home environment without discussing its features in relation to the traditional home environment. In the following concluding chapter both home environments will be discussed and the differences, their causes and the role of modern furniture will be highlighted.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.2 RECAPTULATIONS

8.2.1 Traditional Furniture

8.2.2 Modern Furniture

8.2.3 Social and Physical Consequences

8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

8.4 CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this concluding chapter is to recapitulate through a theoretical discussion the main findings of this research and to propose some research implications and recommendations.

8.2 RECAPTULATIONS

8.2.1 Traditional Furniture

Objects, such as male headgear, *dallah*, minarets, military uniforms, wedding cakes, Bedouin women's veils discussed in Chapter 1, are adopted or invented for utilitarian purposes and consequently their forms are determined by their practicality in the first place. Because objects were made by local craftsmen, who used them, perceived their meaning, experienced their inconvenience, listened to the comments of others and modified them accordingly, the form is gradually modified to meet local cultural values and meaning. It was a gradual, slow and continuous cultural process of communication between users and objects, through which what was convenient remained and what was inconvenient was either abandoned or modified. This gradual process produced objects that were highly compatible with peoples' use, values and identity.

The home furniture in old Jeddah, like traditional objects, was also directly influenced by users. Through time traditional furniture reached a high level of compatibility with climate, people's activities and expression of identity. The climatic and social context of the traditional home environment required furniture which has been practical and virtuous, i.e. compatible with local cultural values (Stage 3A). In response to the hot and humid climate the traditional home environment was highly critical. Activities were moved around the house depending on the location and timing of the cool air. This movement of activities required a few types of portable furniture, such as *tawaweel*, *masanid*, *madafi'*, *tabliyyah* and *takhtat ashshay*. The *karaweet*, which was heavy to move, was always arranged peripherally around the room, leaving the centre for freedom of use. The only furniture integrated with the interior architectural layout

was the *rowshan*. However its integration did not influence space criticality because it was always located at the edge of the room.

The furniture was also shaped to maximise the number of activities in the room for socio-cultural reasons. The high number of extended family members of three generations living together, and their consequently different needs and senses of comfort, meant that the home interior had to accommodate many different activities simultaneously. Furthermore the collectivistic expression of identity, which was achieved by inviting a high number of guests on social occasions, required easy-to-arrange and easy-to-move furniture, such as *tawaweel* for sitting and *maddat* for eating.

The traditional furniture in the *wajhah* (guest zone) was also symbolic. Items such as framed mirrors, Chinaware and vases were displayed in the *majlis*. The *tabliyyah*, *takhtat ashshai*, and the *saisam* which were more frequently seen by guests were engraved and decorated by patterned clothes. The *rowshan* and *karaweet* in the *majlis* were covered with *damask* and sometimes small Persian rugs.

The compatibility of traditional furniture was with peripheral values. The extended family members living together and the collectivistic expression of identity are considered peripheral values and not culture core because they are not a direct implementation of Islamic teachings, as the concept of culture core in this research is defined in Chapter 2. In regard to culture core, there has been no evidence of compatibility or incompatibility between furniture and the family's privacy towards strangers or women's privacy towards non-close male relatives. Privacy was primarily maintained by the architectural layout and space organisation.

8.2.2 Modern Furniture

The first modern furniture introduced to the home environment during the fifties was the guest suite. Weddings, as an important collectivistic social occasion, were the reason for people to observe the furnishing of the married couple house with a master bedroom suite or at least a wardrobe. The master bedroom and the guest suites became essential in every house. During the seventies and eighties the influx of modern furniture increased, and suites for living rooms, children's bedrooms and kitchen cabinets became essential as well.

The introduction of the villa as a high status symbol with its interior spaces, the image of which was achieved by modern furnishing, was a strong motivation for people to accept modern furniture. The guestroom and the master bedroom suites were introduced before other modern furniture because of their meaning function (Stage 5).

Modern furniture could have been introduced when rich merchants in Jeddah had many contacts with Western goods, including furniture, during their visits before the fifties to India, which was an important commercial source for the Middle East. The merchants of Jeddah did not import modern furniture from India even though they could have done so at that time. Furnishing one's house with modern furniture was rarely practised. It could be similar to a Saudi going to a formal occasion without wearing a headgear. It was conventionally unacceptable. How was the convention towards modern furniture changed between the late forties and early sixties?

The discussion in Chapter 2 indicated that a strong factor by which the market introduces industrial design objects into the home environment in industrial societies is by attaching meanings to their products through advertisements. Because there was no advertisement in Jeddah in the fifties and sixties, the introduction of modern furniture during this period was caused by other factors.

According to Foster (1962) cities, unlike villages and rural areas, are focal points of cultural change because they are the place "where the intellectual, political, and government and economic policy are evolved. These cities ... are the most important centers of cultural change, particularly in the fields of education, new forms of business organization, new administrative practices, and new techniques" (Foster, 1962: 29). Singer (1972) also found that traditional ceremonies, which were slowly evolving through the centuries in India, were transformed from religious rituals to art expressions as a result of urbanisation. The transformation of the different cultural performances in relation to urbanisation in India suggests that a general process of change was introduced with urbanisation. "The more complex, specialized, and differentiated a society, the more likely it is to change, and to change rapidly. Furthermore, a complex society has a greater potential for change than does a simple one" (Vago, 1980: 11).

The urbanisation that took place in Jeddah during the fifties transformed its cultural process from traditional to urban and made people more willing to change. Without urbanisation villas would not be accepted just because they represented a symbol of high status. The traditional cultural process that filters new objects overlapped with, if not temporarily overtaken by, a more dynamic process, and consequently many objects, including modern furniture, were introduced.

Change within a society does not happen in a chaotic and haphazard manner (Vago, 1980). People do not become passive if massive transformation takes place. This is because they always need to make sense of their surroundings, understand situations, define roles, perceive settings and objects, and test the compatibility of these objects with their values and use of space so that the complex image of everyday life is simplified and put into order. The cultural process of filtering objects continues, however, according to Vago (1980), with some strain.

Strain here refers to a condition in the relation between two or more structured units (i.e., subsystems of the system) that constitute a tendency or pressure toward changing that relation to one incompatible with the equilibrium of the relevant parts of the system. (Vago, 1980: 48)

The home environment in Jeddah has suffered from strain because when most of the traditional furniture was abandoned they were still practical and virtuous. Furniture in old Jeddah was suddenly abandoned. At the same time, the role of modern furniture was not equal to that of traditional furniture.

The sudden replacement of furniture created what Ogburn calls a cultural lag (Griswold, 1994). As discussed in Chapter 2, he argued that nonmaterial culture changes in response to the change in material culture. Because material culture changes more frequently due to people's technological innovations, nonmaterial culture is always lagging behind and has to catch up (Griswold, 1994). Thus, according to the cultural lag theory, the extended family relationships and large social occasions will be weakened if not abandoned due to the incompatibility of the modern furniture with these cultural values. This is a deterministic view.

Before discussing this issue, it has to be mentioned here that the need for multi-usage of space was relatively reduced due to the control of the home microclimate by air-conditioning units. However the easy-to-arrange and easy-to-move furniture was still

needed to meet the activities of the extended family and the large number of guests. Has the lagging of the two cultural factors led to their adjustment, as the cultural lag theory suggests? According to the findings of this research, the answer to this question is No.

8.2.3 Social and Physical Consequences

The incompatibility of modern furniture with the multi-usage of space has led to the continuation of *tawaweel* and the reinvention of *karaweeet* with a different name, *baturmah* or *jalsah arabiyyah* (Arabic seating) during the eighties. People's identification of their status with modern furniture assigned the *saloon* and dining room to limited functions. The *saloon* and dining room with their suites have been representations of images for display that have been seen elsewhere and imitated (Stage 5). They are tidy, fixed in a certain arrangement and used on formal occasions by formal guests. Their high criticality created a demand for other multi-purpose rooms. The *majlis* was introduced to accommodate the informal activities of men guests and the dining room in some apartments was used as a multi-purpose room. Both rooms were furnished either with *tawaweel* or *baturmah*. On very large social occasions, usually weddings, when the number of guests cannot be accommodated in houses, private halls (called wedding halls) can be hired. The persistence of expressing hospitality through inviting large number of guests and the maintenance of relationships with extended family members accelerated the market of wedding halls.

The continuation of *tawaweel*, the invention of *baturmah*, the addition of the *majlis* and the modification of the villa and apartment to separate the guest zone from the family zone are strong evidence that values, unlike the expression of identity, resist the incompatibility of the modern furniture.

The *saloon* and dining suites have been symbolic (mainly in Stage 5 of compatibility) since their introduction. The Western bathroom suite was also introduced for symbolic purpose (Stage 5), however it moved to Stage 3B. Squatting on the Arabic toilet chair was the custom before the introduction of the modern bathroom suite. People continued to squat, and simultaneously possessed modern bathrooms, so that they had to have two types, the Arabic and the Western toilet, until the eighties when the new generation and most of the old one adjusted their manner and sat on the Western toilet seat. People are

willing to adjust some of their use of furniture after some time, as long as that does not conflict with their values.

The possession of modern furniture for symbolic purpose has led to some space ramifications. The temporary ramification of the *bitalma* to Arabic bathroom (practical, Stage 2) and Western bathroom (symbolic, Stage 5) was a result of persistence followed by adjustment of manners. In regard to the traditional *majlis* within which activities are driven by values, its ramification still exists. The function of the traditional *majlis* (Stage 4) is fulfilled now by the *saloon* (Stage 3B) and a contemporary *majlis* (Stage 3A).

The number of rooms that have become essential in every household, other than the kitchen and bathrooms, increased due to this factor and to the assignment of rooms to family members, which resulted from an increasing sense of individuality due to the acculturation of the Saudi society. Even though the number of rooms in villas and apartments has increased and the size of the family has decreased, space limitation has been experienced. Occupants who lived in apartments had to compromise with this limitation without losing their values. For example, in one apartment a wide corridor was used as a living room and once the daughter got married and left the house her room became the living room. In another apartment informal and non-close relative male guests were hosted in the living room and the housewife remained all night in the master bedroom to maintain her privacy. Occupants living in villas do not experience such inconvenience and have more freedom to assign rooms for limited activities.

Furthermore rich households' interior design requirements from architectural offices in the early nineties has led to some integration of the architectural space layout with furniture. Additional sitting areas beside living rooms or *saloons*, sitting areas beside master bedrooms and dining family areas are spaces integrated in different degrees with furniture. This integration increases the criticality of space which does not limit the family activities as long as they have adequate number of rooms.

This means that the assignment of limited activities to some rooms in contemporary houses is not a result of high criticality. Even though air-conditioning units have facilitated the multi-use of space, occupants like to assign rooms for limited activities

whenever they can afford to. In fact, it is not always the case that spaces of traditional houses are multi-use more than the spaces in contemporary houses. The number of activities that the contemporary kitchen accommodates is more than that of the *murakkab*. The example of the kitchen here shows that the control of the home microclimate facilitated multi-use even where the primary task is very utilitarian, cooking. The high number of rooms in relation to the high income of occupants in Jeddah is a strong indication of their desire to assign rooms for limited functions whenever they can afford to.

Modern furniture has not had a direct impact on people's behaviour. It helps them define the situation, which in turn influences their behaviour according to their perception. The *saloon* has been furnished with modern majestic suites in some houses as part of constructing a social situation that the occupant wants to provide for his special guests. As the occupant does not host his guests while wearing a pyjamas for example, he does not host them in a room that does not reflect their status. Guests are hosted in rooms of different degrees of formality according to their status and closeness to the occupant and his family. Formal guests, such as old men or non-close relatives, whom the occupant wants to show respect and appreciation, are hosted in the *saloon*. Close relatives might be hosted in the living room, and close friends in the *majlis*. Modern furniture is one of many cues, including behaviour and dress, in a situation. If the situation is understood, behaviour will be determined as a result. It is the situation that determines behaviour and the physical setting defines the situation (Rapoport, 1990).

8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

It is hoped that this research has contributed firstly by filling the vacuum of studies about home environments, especially in Saudi Arabia. The description of the traditional and contemporary home environment in Jeddah could be a reference for future studies. Secondly, the exploration and analysis of a strong phenomenon, modern furniture replacing traditional, in a place where culture is strongly observed, the home, should be a significant contribution to the ongoing debates of 'tradition and modernity' and 'environment and behaviour'.

This research has dealt with home furniture and its relation to the use and meaning in the home environment of villas and apartments. It should provide valuable insights if research about one or two spaces in the home environment are carried out. This should give the researcher the opportunity to implement a diachronic or longitudinal approach through which the space use, meaning and morphology is explored in greater detail in relation to the changing context.

It has been stated in the research that there is a relationship between the number of rooms and the level of income in Jeddah, while this relationship was insignificant in rural areas. The reason was due to the increasing number of essential spaces caused by modern furniture. The introduction of modern furniture and its continually changing models, with insufficient time for a new model or style to infiltrate all social strata (for example marble tiles today) could highlight different expressions of identity based on different income levels. It can only be speculated that the introduction of modern furniture led to highlighting the differences between the social strata. In dealing with this speculation a comparative research study is suggested.

The influence of climate on furniture form has been significant in traditional houses. A comparative study might be useful between two traditional regions, say Hijaz and Turkey, where the climate is different in order to investigate the influence of hot and cold climates on the amount of furniture and its decoration.

The main source of the home environment data in this research was the housewives because the home, at least in Jeddah, is a woman's place more than a man's place and housewives, as informants, showed more interest in co-operating than their husbands. There have been some indications that the use of space differs between male and female guests. The *saloon* is used by women more than men and the *majlis* is used only by men, and both rooms are furnished differently to support the different activities. No emphasis has been given in this research to the different uses and meanings of furniture and spaces in relation to gender. This important issue may need an independent study.

People's different perception of objects depending on their different background is discussed in the literature of environment and behaviour. People in Jeddah could have perceived the imported modern furniture different from people of other countries,

especially Western countries where the modern furniture was originally developed. Comparative studies were conducted to examine this issue between different European countries, for example Bonnes et al. (1987). It should be insightful and interesting to conduct a similar study, however of an exporting society with an importing one.

8.4 CONCLUSION

If people no longer consider traditional objects culturally significant because their identity is fulfilled by new objects, does inventing objects that look traditional lead to the establishment of cultural identity? According to the discussion in this research the answer is No. There has been evidence to indicate that objects in traditional cultures gain symbolic functions during a slow process of use and direct control to meet people's values and utilitarian needs. An object may continue to survive to meet a symbolic cultural function even if the initial utilitarian reason for its possession is fulfilled by another object or no longer applies (Stage 5). Abandoning or keeping the object depends on the image of the object if it is still culturally significant to them or not. If they no longer reflect these images or people cannot afford to possess them they would not reflect cultural identity any more. For example, the *rowshan* was a window to let light and air into the room, a place through which people communicate with nature and the street and maintained their relationship with neighbours, and a display item through which the occupant conveyed his status (Stage 4). Its climatic function has been fulfilled by air-conditioning units, its social function of maintaining relationships between women neighbours can partly be fulfilled by telephone calls, its social function of communicating with the alley is no longer significant because activities in the streets are no longer socially significant, and its symbolic function was fulfilled by modern building forms and facades. Thus abandoning the *rowshan* was inevitable. People will not interact with the street if the contemporary window is replaced by *rowshan*, nor develop stronger relationships with neighbours, nor have better microclimate, nor express themselves as they want others to perceive them. In other words, opposite to what many architects believe, abandoning the *rowshan* was necessary to allow for cultural continuity. By picking up forms from the past architects and interior designers are counteracting the traditional process from which cultural identity evolves. By doing so, architects and interior designers consider forms as culture cores by which people will

maintain their values and generate identity, which is a deterministic view. In other words, to have a cultural identity the process should be maintained, not the form. People should have direct contact with objects without mediators such as architects and interior designers.

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC WORD AND MEANINGS

SINGLE	PLURAL	MEANING
<i>'abayah</i>		A black cloth with which women cover their body when they get out of their houses
<i>'igal</i>		a head circlet
<i>'umdah</i>		A community social leader
<i>bitalma</i>		bathroom in the traditional house
<i>dabash</i>		moving the bride's furniture to the groom's house
<i>dahleez</i>		entrance hall in the traditional house
<i>damask</i>		thick red floral patterned cloth which covers the <i>masanid</i>
<i>finjal</i>	<i>fanajeel</i>	the Bedouin pronunciation of a little cup for coffee or tea
<i>finjan</i>	<i>fanajeen</i>	the urban pronunciation of the little cup
<i>ghutrah</i>		a headcloth
<i>haseerah</i>	<i>hasayr</i>	a straw mat
<i>istaitah</i>		my master (for females)
<i>itreek</i>		a lantern lamp
<i>kanoon</i>		a small barrel with side openings for cooking by wood or coal
<i>karaweetah</i>	<i>karaweeet</i>	the most common seating in traditional Jeddah
<i>kharijah</i>	<i>kharijat</i>	a large private balcony
<i>kufiyyah</i>		a another name for the skullcap
<i>liyanah</i>	<i>liyanat</i>	functions like the <i>towalah</i> but filled with sponge
<i>mabit</i>		sleeping
<i>maddah</i>	<i>maddat</i>	A sheet of plastic or piece of cloth spread on the floor for arranging food on
<i>majlis</i>	<i>majalis</i>	main reception room
<i>makhlawan</i>		little room mainly for the eldest person
<i>maq'ad</i>	<i>maqa'id</i>	men reception
<i>midfa'</i>	<i>madafi'</i>	a hard pillow used for laying a side
<i>mifattah</i>		a circular mat made from palm fibres
<i>milkah</i>		the notary party of the wedding
<i>mirkaz</i>	<i>marakeez</i>	a sitting outdoor bench
<i>misnad</i>	<i>masanid</i>	a hard pillow used for laying to the back
<i>mu'akhkhar</i>		the back side of the house
<i>murakkab</i>		kitchen
<i>namliyyah</i>		a kitchen cupboard that was used for during the first transitional period
<i>rwoshan</i>	<i>rawasheen</i>	a wooden window used for many purposes
<i>sahharah</i>		a large box for keeping mainly food
<i>saisam box</i>		a large decorated box for keeping valuables
<i>saqqah</i>		a water carrier
<i>sharbah</i>	<i>sharbat</i>	an little earthen water container for drinking
<i>sheesh</i>		a wooden mesh fixed on the <i>rowshan</i> for more privacy

<i>shubbak</i>	<i>shababeek</i>	a window
<i>sidi</i>		my master (for males)
<i>sijani</i>		cloth which covers the wooden frames of the <i>karaweeet</i>
<i>simawar</i>		a container for boiling water
<i>suffah</i>		multi-purpose transitional area
<i>tabliyyah</i>		a low circular table for eating
<i>tagiyyah</i>		a skullcap
<i>takhtat ashshai</i>		a chest with little drawers to prepare tea
<i>tiraf</i>		granules taken from trees to fill up the <i>tawaweel</i>
<i>towalah</i>	<i>tawaweel</i>	long cushions for sitting and sleeping filled with <i>tiraf</i> or cotton
<i>wajhah</i>		the front side of the house
<i>zanbeel</i>		a basket made of palm fibres
<i>zeer</i>		an earthen large water container

APPENDIX 1

SAUDI ARABIA: A BACKGROUND

Topography and Climate

Desert land occupies more than 80% of the total area of Saudi Arabia. The area is basically flat, with the mountains of *Assarawat* parallel to the Red Sea. No lakes or rivers exist in Saudi Arabia. Short valleys drop from the sharp edge of *Assarawat* to the narrow coastal plain *Tihama*, where Jeddah is located, along the Red Sea. On the opposite Eastern side of the mountains, long valleys start from *Assarawat* heights to disappear through the vast desert. All of these valleys are dry throughout the year except in short periods when the rainfall level gets high.

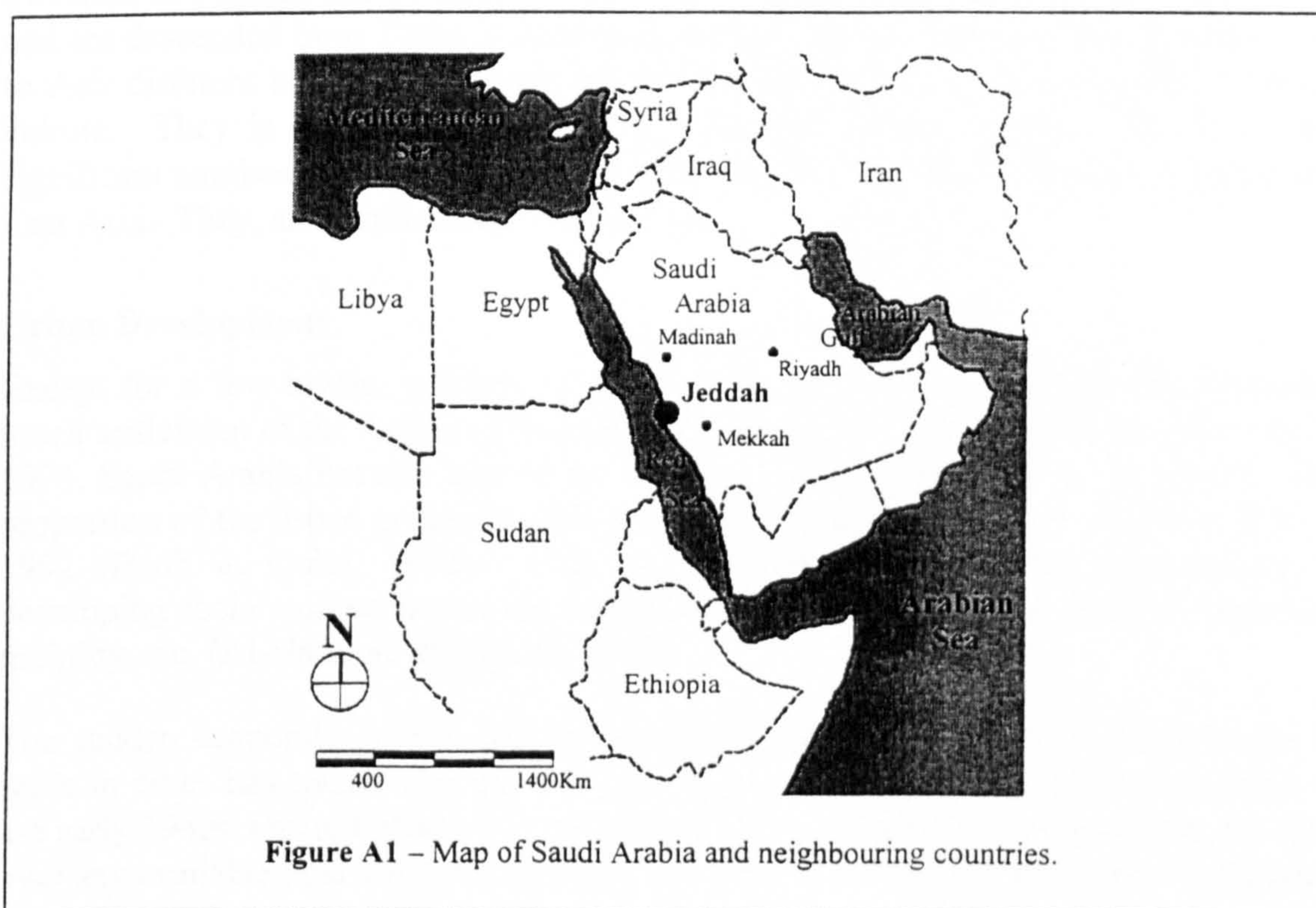


Figure A1 – Map of Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries.

Saudi Arabia is dominated by a very hot climate especially from March to November. The temperature on hot days in Jeddah can reach above 45° C. Jeddah suffers as well from high relative humidity especially during the summer. The mean daily maximum of relative humidity in July and August is 93% to 98% while the mean daily minimum ranges from 45% to 50% (Al-Layaly, 1990). The average rainfall is very low, 40mm. It rarely rains but when it does the city gets flooded due to the heaviness and suddenness of the rain (Salagoor, 1990). A summer wind from the North-west with a breeze from the sea is always preferable in summer. Winter in most areas in Saudi Arabia is short, two months. At the coldest periods, the temperature does not usually go under 0°C.

The wind is usually light or still during the year except in winter when it becomes slightly stronger.

People

It was estimated that in 1992 the population of Saudi Arabia was about 16.9 million, including 4.6 million resident foreigners (Central Department of Statistics, 1993). Until the 1960s, most of the population was nomadic. Due to the rapid economic and urban growth, more than 95% of the population is now settled.

The majority of Saudi people are descendants of indigenous tribes who have inhabited the peninsula for centuries. Many members of these tribes still enjoy strong relationships and strongly hold their traditional values which tend to be a mixture of tribal values and Islamic values. During the middle part of this century, other Arabs and non-Arabs immigrated from their homelands to Saudi Arabia and resided in Hijaz region to be close to the two holy mosques in Mecca and Madinah. Some others travelled as pilgrims and remained in the Hijaz region. They are of mixed ethnic origin and are descended from Turks, Indonesians, Indians, South Yemenis, and Africans. Due to their different backgrounds, these inhabitants have had a remarkable effect on Saudi culture. They in turn were influenced by the local Hijazi culture. There are also significant numbers of expatriate workers from North America, South Asia, Europe, and East Asia. They, also, influenced Saudi culture.

Urban Development

Except for a few towns, villages, and oases, the harsh climate historically prevented much settlement of the Arabian Peninsula. Due to a sharp rise in petroleum revenues in 1974, Saudi Arabia became one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The proportion of the urban population has increased from 10% to 15% in 1950 to 77% in 1992 (Barth & Quiel, 1986). This was because of government commitment to developing social and economic infrastructures, increased per capita income, improved mobility, etc. (Al-Hathloul & Edadan, 1995).

The sudden economic growth and the governmental policy to encourage Bedouins to settle in cities has caused a mass immigration to cities. The initial growth of cities in the early 1940s was not planned in an orderly way. As immigration grew, people took over any available land within and around city centres and built their houses. Following the traditional patterns already existing, the streets were narrow and irregular (Al-Hathloul, 1981).

The influence of modern urban planning and housing designs was first seen in a major way in 1947 through the activities of ARAMCO, the Arabian-American Oil Company. Responding to the request of the Saudi government, the company introduced the grid street system into two towns, Dammam and Khobar, in which most Saudi employees of ARAMCO lived. Soon the two towns have grown and became the model for other cities to follow (Al-Hathloul, 1981).

As the government feared to have uncontrolled growth in the built environment due to rapid immigration, non-Saudi consultants were employed to implement ready-made

universal standard plans. In addition private architectural offices used Western models of house plans in their designs (Al-Hathlool, 1981).

The dramatic escalation in housing rents and prices due to the increasing demand in cities required active public sector participation. Consequently the government established the General Housing Department in 1971 under the ministry of Finance and National Economy to provide housing for low- and middle-income families, the Real Estate Development Fund (REDF) in 1974 to provide interest-free housing loans to families, and the Ministry for Housing and Public Works in 1976.

Figure A2 shows the total number of constructions in the private sector, which includes commercial, industrial and residential buildings. Because the majority of the private sector buildings are residential, this chart is a strong indication of the sharp increase of house construction.

Total Number of Constructions in the Private Sector in Saudi Arabia

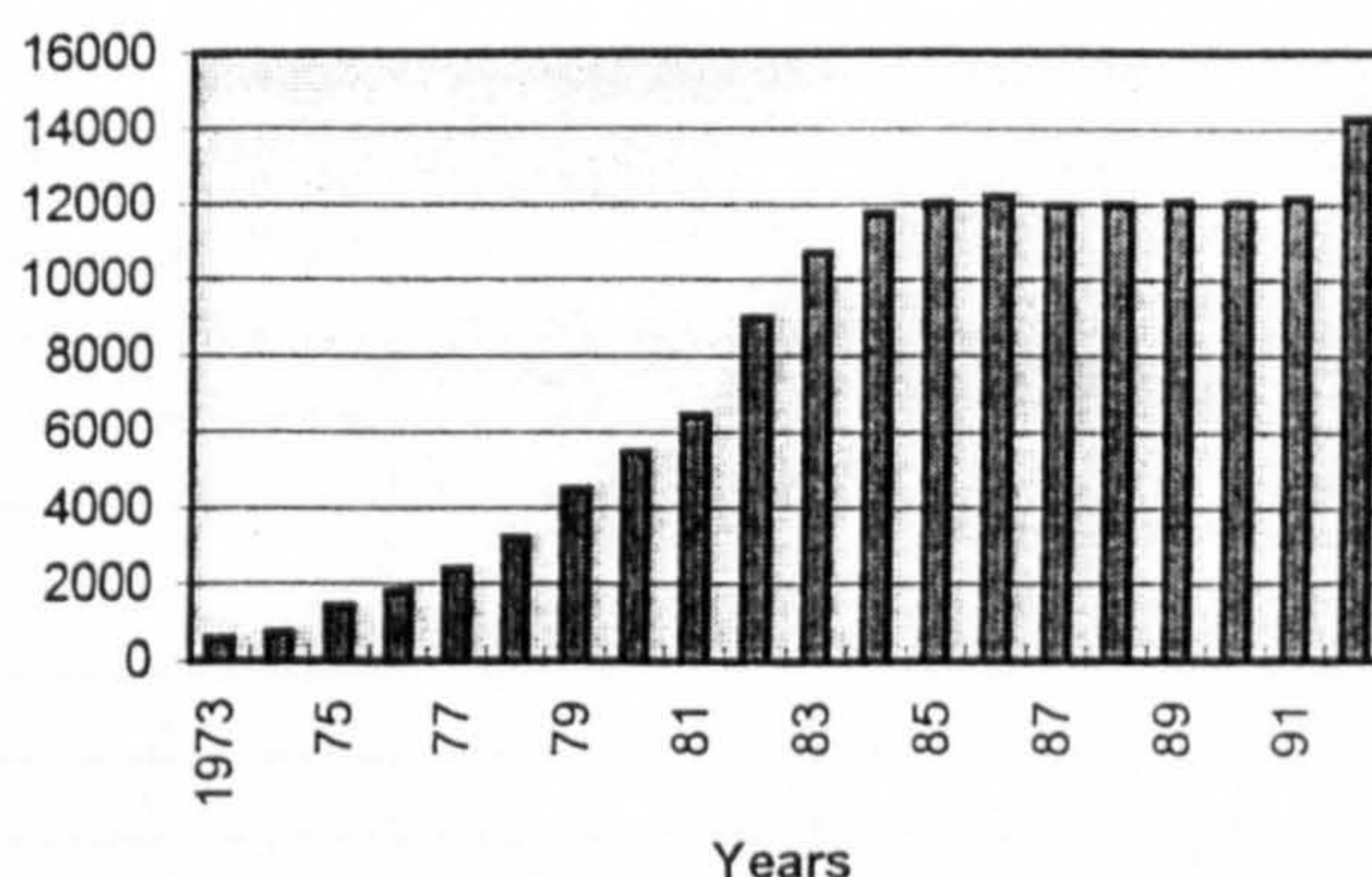


Figure A2 - The total number of constructions in the private sector in Saudi Arabia. Source: Based on data collected from the Annual statistical Report of General Organisation for Social Insurance.

APPENDIX 2

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

My name is Saucer Akbar and I am a lecturer in King Faisal University in Dammam. Currently I am doing my Ph.D. study in the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne in England. As part of my study I am conducting a research about family's behaviour in relation to their house organisation and furniture. I would be very grateful if you could help by giving the time to answer some questions.

**YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE.
IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION JUST SAY SO.**

In this interview you need to concentrate on remembering before you answer. Please take your time and make sure that your answers are complete and accurate.

Thank you for your help.

SECTION ONE

Phone #

- Give a description of each member living in this house regarding the following:

Family Member	Age	Education
1- Your self	34	طبه تجريب
2- Spouse	31	مدر انتظامات
3- <u> </u>	18	اول جامعة
4- <u> </u>	15	قانوني
5- <u> </u>	14	مدرسة
6- <u> </u>	13	مدرسة
7- <u> </u>	8	مدرسة
8-		
9-		

- what does your spouse do? مدرسة

- what do you do?

- What is the average income of the whole family per month?

0 - 4,999 SR 5,000 - 9,999 10,000 - 14,999 15,000 - 19,999 20,000 - Over

- Do you Own or rent the house?

- If you own the house, have you participated in its design? Yes No

- If you rent the house, how much you pay per year?

- For how long have you lived in this house? 9 سنوات

- For how long do you think that you will stay in this house (approximately)?

I don't know

Don't have the intention to

- If you have the intention to move, why?

- What magazines do you and your spouse read usually? صحف

- Do you read magazines that give ideas of improving your home interiors? What are they? صحف

كيف تقرأه بتخصصه (الاصحة في الزوج) -

- If you read books for personal interests, in what subjects do you and your spouse read?

- If you eat ready cooked meals from restaurants, how frequent, what meals, and what restaurants do you buy from?
 مرة اسبوعياً
 وجبات سريعة

- Do you entertain your self by making window shopping, or you only go to the market when you need to buy the thing you need?

* - Where do you go for entertainment and how frequent?
 في الجازيرون ناد في الرياض

- Do you travel for vacation abroad?
 (Yes) No

- If yes, for how long and where?
 صعدت باريس ، سوريا (١٥ - ٢٠)

- for how long do you watch television everyday:

You Your spouse your children
 ساعات ساعات ساعات

- What programs do you watch:

You Your spouse your children
 اخبار ، برنامج المسابقات ، كارتون ، كارتون

- Do you have a video?
 نعم - If you do, what type of tapes do you watch?
 افلام اجنبية

- Do you have a dish?
 نعم

- How many visits for relatives do you make every week?
 مرة اسبوعياً

- At what time do you sleep every night during the weekdays and the weekend?
 الساعة الواحدة
 (١٠ - ١١)

- (May be personal) Do you and your spouse have more than two watches each?

- Do you wear some of them only on certain occasions?
 نعم

- Do you have a driver?
 نعم

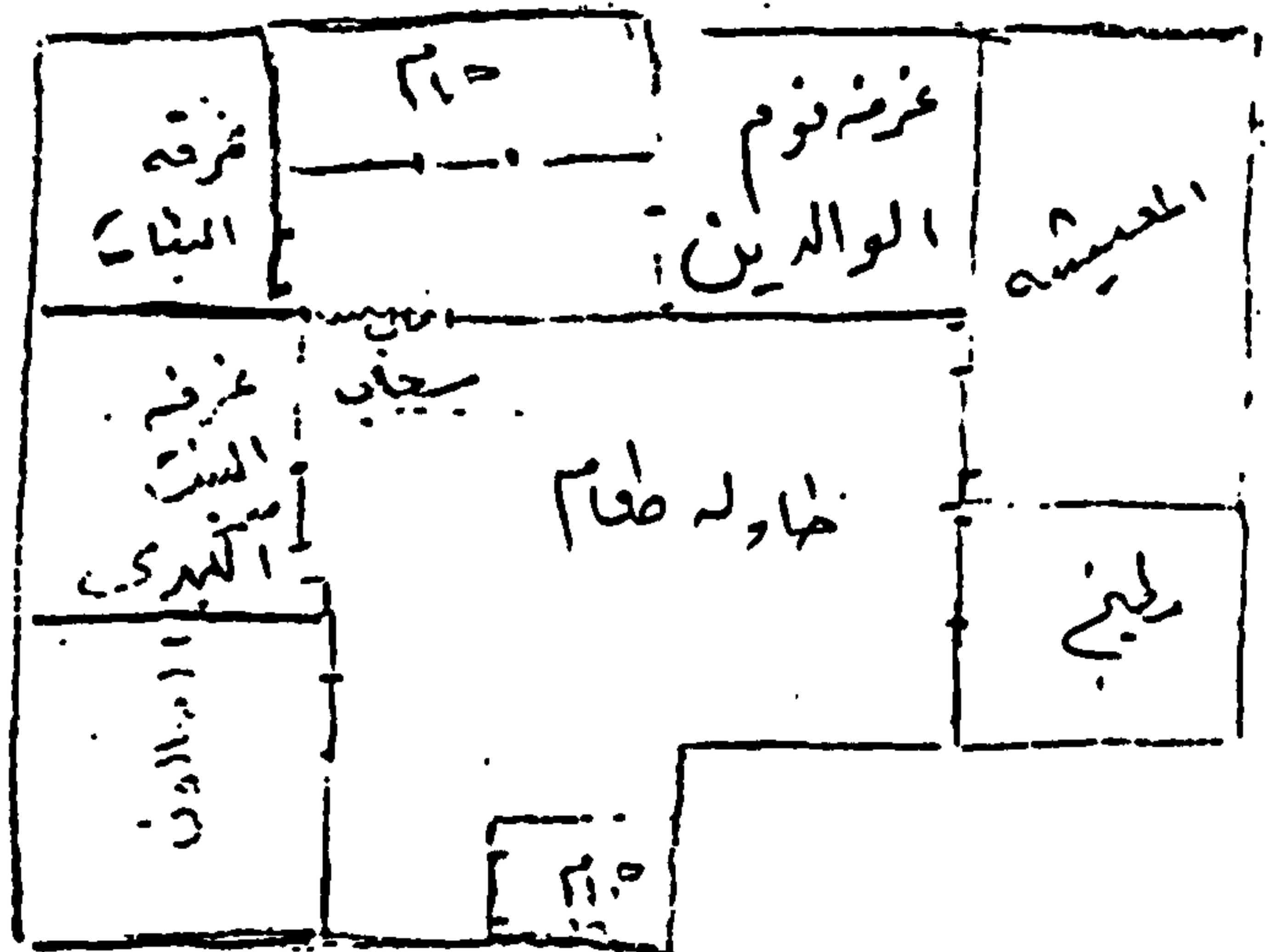
- How many cars do you have?
 سيارة واحدة
 What type and model are they?
 فورد كروزر

- If you have a maid, what type of home tasks she does?

كفح ، تنظيف

- For how long have you been living in Jeddah?

١٢ سنة



- When visitors visit you, what are the zones that they are expected to be in?

Female visitors	Zones
Very close relatives (Son, Daughter, Parents, Brothers)	كل البيت
Other relatives	كل البيت
Very close friends	كل البيت
Not very close friends	مرفق الطيوس
Strangers	مصالة

Male visitors	Zones
Very close relatives (Son, Daughter, Parents, Brothers)	عزقة الطيوس
Other relatives	مرفق الطيوس
Very close friends	الصالون
Not very close friends	مصالة
Strangers	

- What is the process of hosting visitors such as providing Arabic coffee, tea, cake, and so on?

صباحاً بعد الإفطار أو مساءً بعد العشاء + شاي + قهوة عربية

- How do you serve the Arabic coffee?

نصب، وعلب، وضغط حتى يترد

- If you have a maid, what type of home tasks she does?

Sweeping the carpet, cleaning the floor, cleaning bathrooms, cleaning the furniture of other rooms, cleaning pictures, plants, and decorations, washing clothes, ironing clothes, cooking, preparing for cooking, taking care of children, other

- How many times do you or your maid do the following tasks every week?

	Hours	Per week
Sweeping the carpet and cleaning the floor		
Cleaning the furniture of the Saloon	١ ساعة	مرتين أسبوعاً
Cleaning the furniture of the dining room	١ ساعة	يومياً
Cleaning the furniture of other rooms	٢ ساعات	يومياً
Cleaning decorations	١ - ٢ ساعة	مرة في الاسبوع
Cleaning bathrooms	١ ساعة	يومياً

يومياً
تصيف في البيت

- Before receiving guests, what do you do to prepare the house?

- Before occasions such as Eid, what do you do to prepare the house?

- Does any family member play cards at home? If yes, where, with whom, and how frequent?

لا نعبير اذا قام به احد من عذوم بعذوف نوصف انترام
 في التابينة
 يوم الاربعاء
 عند الصلاه
 لا
 في التابينة
 يوم الاربعاء
 عند الصلاه

- When you moved from one house to another, have you noticed any changes in relationships among the family members due to the new arrangement? If yes, what are the changes?

التحولات في العلاقات بين أفراد الأسرة
 الصداقات التي أصبحت أوثق
 الصداقات التي أصبحت أضعف

- Do you borrow furniture, kitchen utensils, or any kind of food from your neighbours? If yes, what and how frequent?

لا (أصل)

- Have you noticed any changes in the use of the following by the family members. Start from the first time you remember them:

Place or Furniture	Changes
Saloon	كما هي
Dining	للصديق للسينمائي العادي
Parents Bedroom	كلين، لزوجة من مديان تزوجت، أما عند صحتها حرفة، نغز، نغز - فقط -
Other Bedrooms	منذ بدء المدارس كبروا، أصبحوا مزهين كانت عند أهلكم تلبسوا في غزواتهم
Living room	كما هي
Bathrooms	وضع غسالة ملابس حمام زاندي، بعد استخدامها ورددت صا عند أهلها في غزواتهم
Bathtub	استخدمت بنفسها عند أهلها

- As a housewife, do you consider the furnishing of your home interior (not the cleanliness) as a representative of yourself to others? If yes, give values for each of the following:

	0 Not representative	1	2	3	4 Very representative
Saloon					✓
Dining room					✓
Living room				✓	
M. Bedroom				✓	
Other Bedrooms			✓		
Kitchen				✓	
Guest Bathroom					✓
Other Bathrooms			✓		

هل يوفق المستحق لتنظيف الامتار اقول في في
 الوقت اقول: - بعد الاسرة في الامتار من في الامتار بسبب
 الديكورات تاقد وقت

تتوزع اصناف الطعام
 الان اكثر - من السنوات انواع اصناف الطعام

List of functions:

Parents sleeping
Taking nap
Eating breakfast
Reading magazines
Children studying
preparing for cooking
Sewing
Visiting women sitting

Children sleeping
Guest sleeping
Eating lunch
Watching television
Adults studying
Drinking tea, coffee
Ironing
Visiting men sitting

Infant sleeping
Exercise
Eating dinner
Children playing
Cooking
Repairing things
Speaking by phone
Praying

- Since you have lived in this house, has the main function of this room (living, dining, ...) moved around the house or not? If yes where?

جس وقت سے کھانا کھانے کا وقت اور کھانا کھانے کا وقت
میرے گھر میں کھانا کھانے کا وقت اور کھانا کھانے کا وقت

- Speak about the history of furniture of this room during living in this house.

میں نے اپنے گھر میں کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے
کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے

Have you ever rearranged the organisation of the furniture in this room?
If yes, what, when, and why?

میں نے اپنے گھر میں کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے
کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے

- When visitors come, do you rearrange the furniture?

میں نے اپنے گھر میں کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے
کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے

- What influenced your decision more when you bought this piece or a set of furniture, it was new in the market, its style, or its comfort?

میں نے اپنے گھر میں کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے
کئی کئی سالوں سے کئی کئی سالوں سے

APPENDIX 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JEDDAH

Jeddah's location on the Red Sea and proximity to Mecca, which was the birthplace of Islam, prompted early importance and prosperity for the city. Its history can be divided into three different stages. First the pre-Islamic during which it is believed that a small tribe worked in fishing some 2500 years ago. During that time, Jeddah was a little village and its people lived in huts and shacks. In the second stage it became more significant since a seaport was established in it in the sixth century AD by the third Islamic Caliph, 'Uthman Bin 'affan. Due to its closeness to Mecca, it has been the main seaport of debarkation and embarkation of pilgrims from all over the Muslim world. It has been the access point of goods as well from all over the world to Hijaz region. This has produced a flourishing economy and a multi-racial population in Jeddah. The third stage has been after Jeddah came under the control of King Abdulaziz, in 1924, who was the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In this stage, Jeddah and other major cities in the kingdom have gone through a sudden and fast growth due to the discovery of oil. Now it is the second largest city, after Riyadh the capital.

From the beginning of this century until 1940 the population in Jeddah was increasing slowly. In 1960, Jeddah, like some other major cities, experienced from a sharp increase of population (Figure A3).

Population Growth of Jeddah

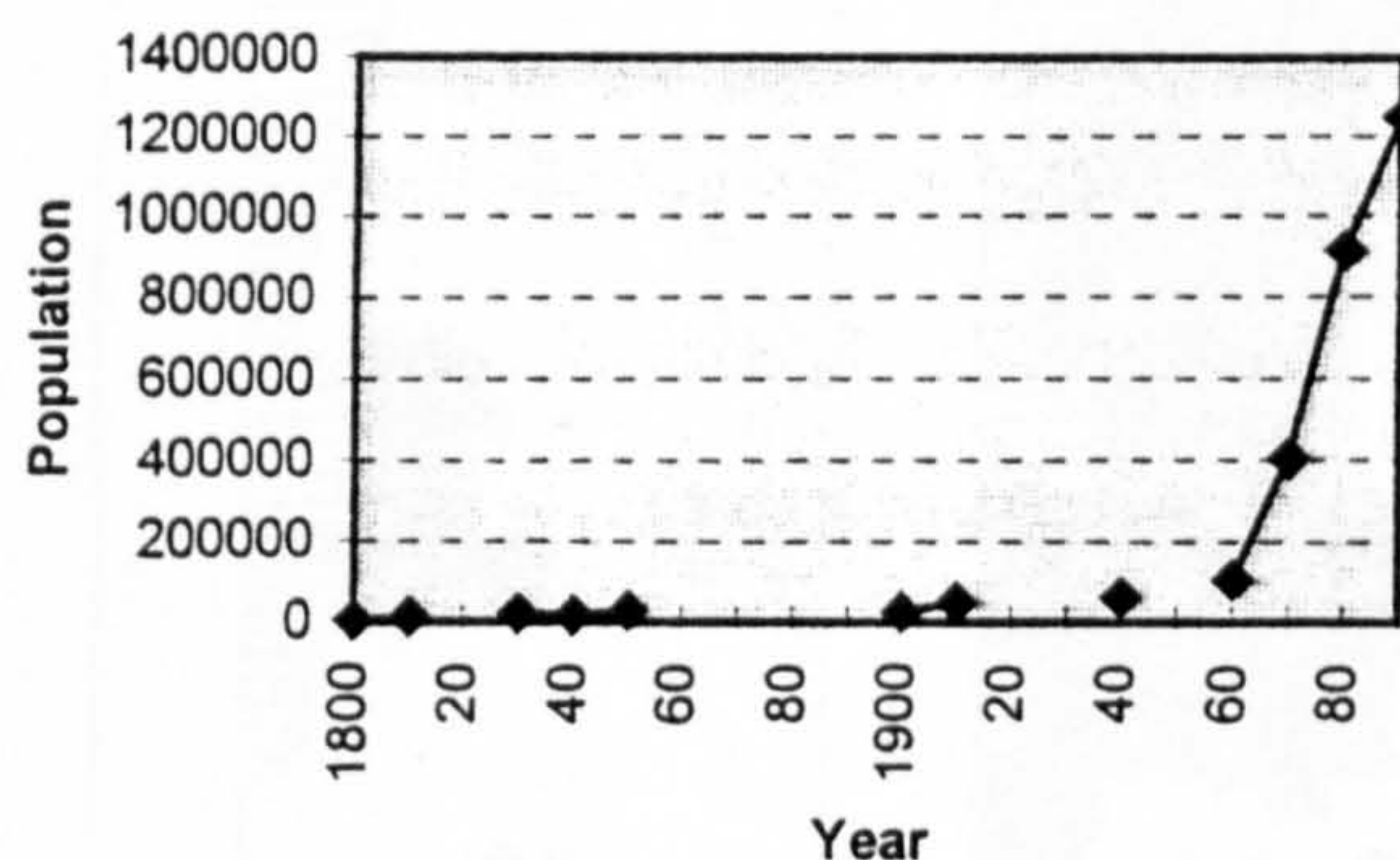


Figure A3 - Population growth in Jeddah.
Source: Based on Salagoor, 1990: 11

Jeddah is a multi-racial city. Bedouin, pilgrims from different origins and people from rural areas immigrated and resided with local people of Jeddah. Nevertheless the community of Jeddah was a coherent one. Family occasions such as birth, wedding, death, etc. were collectively shared by many others and all in the town would know about it. This social cohesiveness and tranquillity was a strong reason for people from different backgrounds to dissolve in one community with shared values.

THE URBAN GROWTH OF JEDDAH

Before demolishing its surrounding wall in 1947, the total area of Jeddah was less than 1 km². In 1990, the area of Jeddah was 240 km square (Salagoor, 1990).

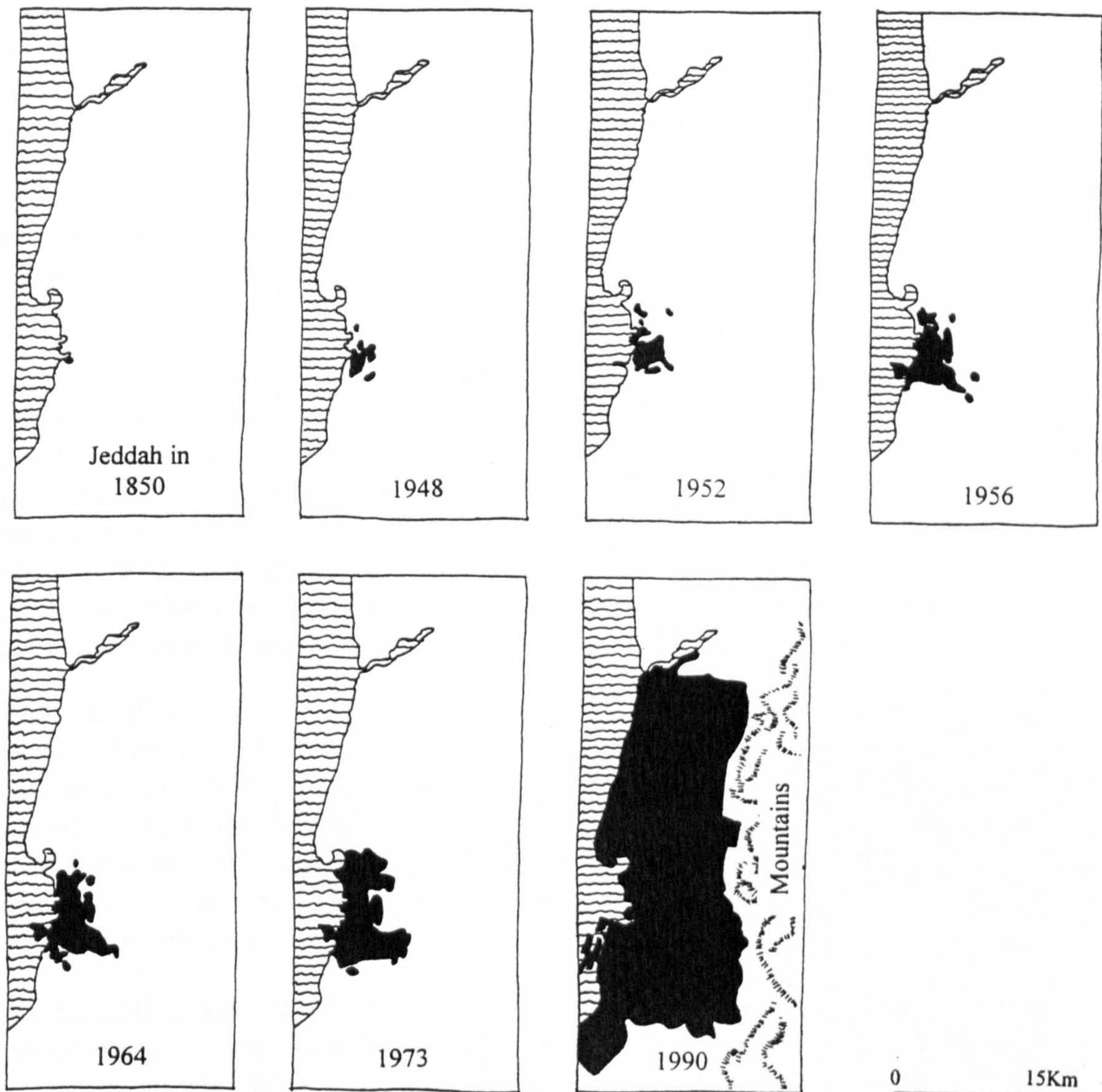


Figure A4 – The urban growth of Jeddah

APPENDIX 4

DOMESTIC CHORES IN TRADITIONAL HOUSES

Housewives spent most of their time working at home. They woke up early in the morning and rarely slept during the day. Their daily tasks began with preparing the breakfast for their husbands who left home early to their work. If a housewife needed vegetables, meat, or any groceries for the following day or two, she asked her husband to bring them from the market. Because they did not have refrigerators, buying fresh meat and vegetables was necessary every two days (Gazzaz, 1994). Once her husband left, a housewife began cleaning the house. After everyone woke up, she piled up the *tawaweel* and pillows into one corner.

The wide open *rawasheen* brought in a lot of dust. The floor rug picked up a lot of sand from the floor due to being frequently stepped on (Gazzaz, 1994). Dust needed to be removed from other objects in the house as well. Sweeping rooms with a broom and dusting the furniture thus consumed a lot of time and effort.

If lunch was to be cooked with other extended family members, the housewife went up stairs to the main *murakkab* to participate in preparing the food. Cooking for the whole extended family could be divided into turns. Every day two or more of the extended family members were responsible for cooking. Because the population of Jeddah has been a mixture of different races - Indians, Turks, Egyptians, Javanese, and Moroccans - there has been a variety of traditional meals. Therefore, unlike other areas in Saudi Arabia,¹ there has not been only one single traditional meal. A variety of meals need to be cooked, which consumes a lot of time.

Bread was all home made; the prepared dough was sent to the bakery with children or servants. After cooking and arranging the food on the *maddah*, the family members ate their lunch. Used plates were then taken back to the *murakkab* where they were washed by hand. Usually the amount of food cooked was more than the amount required and the extra was covered and put up on shelf or hung from the ceiling to prevent cats² from reaching it. One way to keep it fresh for the next day was to reheat it thoroughly again the following morning.

Washing clothes was a weekly task. The family members used to wear their clothes for a whole week. If they could afford it, a woman was hired one day a week for the washing. Otherwise the housewife would not cook one day and would spend the time washing. The family might then eat from the leftovers of the previous day or the householder might buy prepared food from the market (Gazzaz, 1994).

Dinner did not need a lot of preparation. The extra leftovers from lunch or any quickly prepared snack type food would do. Every nuclear family ate their dinner separately from the extended family members.

¹ The traditional meal in many other parts, which were not influenced by pilgrims, was rice and meat.

² Cats were not necessarily kept as pets. It was common that cats wandered around in alleys and sneaked into houses since gates were left open most of the time.

Rich families had several male and female servants who lived in the same house. Middle-income families, who did not have any servants, hired one or more when much work was expected during important occasions such as family visits and weddings, or for weekly tasks such as washing clothes.

In addition to the daily home chores, childcare would also take up a lot of the housewife's time. Some housewives tailored clothes for their family and relatives. For relatives and members of the community, tailoring could support the family income. Housewives of lower-income families could work for a day or a few hours in other houses.

Living together in an extended family with a lot of home chores necessitated a person in charge to teach skills and assign responsibilities. The housewife was in charge of assigning the responsibilities between herself, her daughters, her daughters-in-law, and servants if there were any. Chores which needed experience were given to adults while other chores such as sweeping floors and removing and storing *tawaweel* were given to servants and young females.

APPENDIX 5

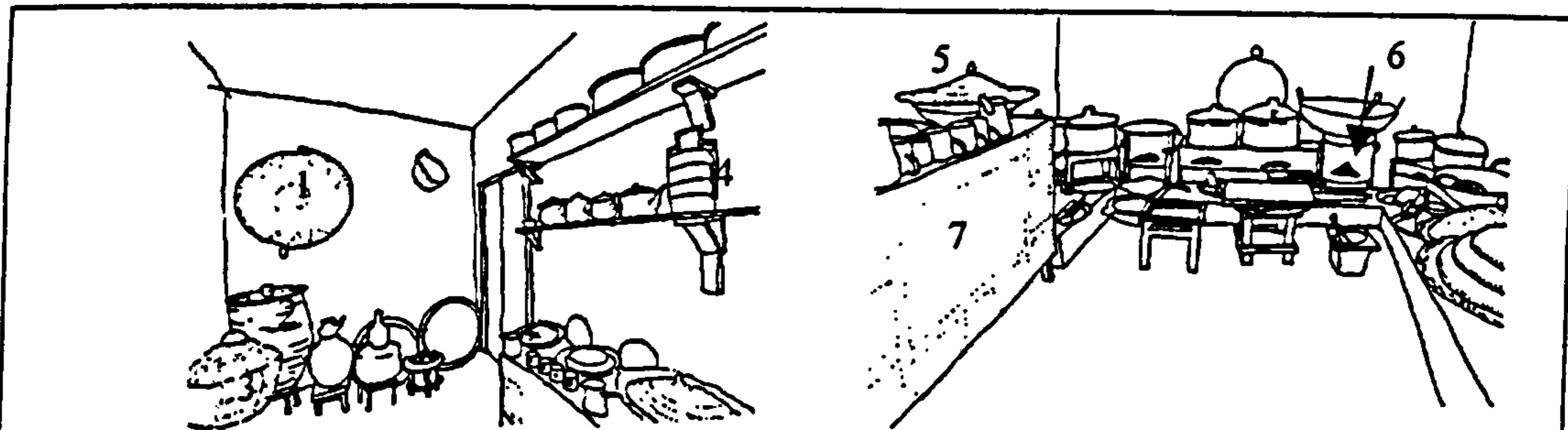
BUILDING MATERIALS

The majority of the traditional houses of Jeddah were built from coral limestone which was taken out from raised reefs along the seashore (Pesce, 1977). The black mountain stone which was the main building material in other towns of Hijaz was never used in Jeddah except in one building (Al-Ansari, 1982). The availability of coral limestone and its softness, enabling it to be cut according to the needed size were the reason for its popularity in old Jeddah. However, because of its softness the structure of buildings had to be reinforced with tiered teak beams, horizontally embedded in between the limestone blocks (Pesce, 1977). The limestone blocks were mortared with a dark clay, dug from the shallow bottom of a nearby lagoon.

To protect the soft coral limestone from the harsh climate it was necessary to plaster it with "a base coat of lime-powder and sand which was left to harden for two days and then covering with a coat of lime-powder, crushed stones and sometimes ultramarine." (Jomah, 1992: 147)

APPENDIX 6

COMPONENTS OF THE MURAKKAB



Key

- 1 *Mifattah*: for preparing food and informal eating
- 2 *Zeer*: water container
- 3 *Joonah*: for keeping bread
- 4 *Mutabaqqiyyah*: for keeping different meals separately
- 5 *Tibsy*: a highly decorated large plate made of copper for hosting guests
- 6 *Kanoon*: for cooking
- 7 *Sahharah*: for storing row food such as rice and flour

Figure A5 - A *murakkab*.

Source: Based on pictures in the illustration volume of *A. Khaleel* museum: 738.

APPENDIX 7

CRAFTS IN TRADITIONAL JEDDAH

TRADE

Most of the cities in the Arabian peninsula experienced slow growth and little prosperity due to the lack of resources before the discovery of oil. The richest city probably was Jeddah. The location of Jeddah was the main reason for the prosperity of its people. It was the seaport through which imports from India, Basra in Iraq, African countries, and the Far East came and distributed to many parts of the Arabian peninsula. In fact, before the opening of Suez canal, large ships from the Far East evacuate their goods in Jeddah from where small ships later conveyed the goods to African countries. Thus, Jeddah was a rich market. Pilgrims, as well, from all over the Muslim world came by sea to Jeddah before going on to Mecca. Goods from the Arabian peninsula were also exported from Jeddah. Thus, working in trade in Jeddah was a successful business (Ansari, 1982).

INDUSTRY

Shipbuilding. Local and imported wood was used in the building of different sizes of ships by local carpenters. There was a special fleet owned by the local traders.

Woodcarving. Woodcarving involved carving *rawasheen*, doors, screens, and *tabliat*. The wood for carving was imported from the Far East.

Plaster. This was used to decorate the interior and exterior of buildings. The availability of plaster craftsmen influenced the quality of buildings facades and home interiors. The availability of local building materials and fine craftsmanship boosted the construction market and enhanced the local builders' skills. As mentioned before, Jeddah had many beautiful buildings.

Basketry. Many pieces were made from palm fibres. Palm fibres were brought from a nearby valley and made into robs, brooms, baskets, hand fans, and floor covers.

Upholstery. This involved mostly the making of *towalat*, *madafii*, and *masanid*.

Pottery. Different sizes of water containers and some kitchen bowls were made locally.

Fishing. Fishing was the oldest craft in Jeddah. The Red sea is rich of many types of fish. There were fishermen who fish on shore by using their nets and others went with boats to deep areas.

There were many other crafts such as oil-pressing and the working of metal, gold, and silver (For more information see Jomah, 1992).

APPENDIX 8

BACKGROUND OF NASIF HOUSE

Nasif house is one of the best known traditional houses in Jeddah. Sheikh Omar Nasif, who built the house, was an important figure in the Ottoman caliphate. He was the representative of the Prince of Mecca to the Ottoman Caliph (Al-Mashhour, nd). Accordingly Sheikh Nasif received many government officials, and therefore the house was one of the largest and most beautiful houses in traditional Jeddah. Its construction was completed in 1881 AD (1298 H). The house was built all at once, as the elevations indicate, and did not grow incrementally as the family grew. However, regardless of the size of the *dahleez*, *majlis* and *maq'ad*³ and the amount of exterior ornamentation, the arrangement of furniture and the organisation of space were similar to other houses.

³ It was mentioned in Chapter 4 that the width of rooms did not exceed 5m due to the limited length of wood timbers. However, it was reported that Omar Nasif bought a sunken ship in the sea from its owner and lifted up the shipload which contained long timbers, which enabled him to build large rooms.

FLOOR PLANS OF NASIF HOUSE

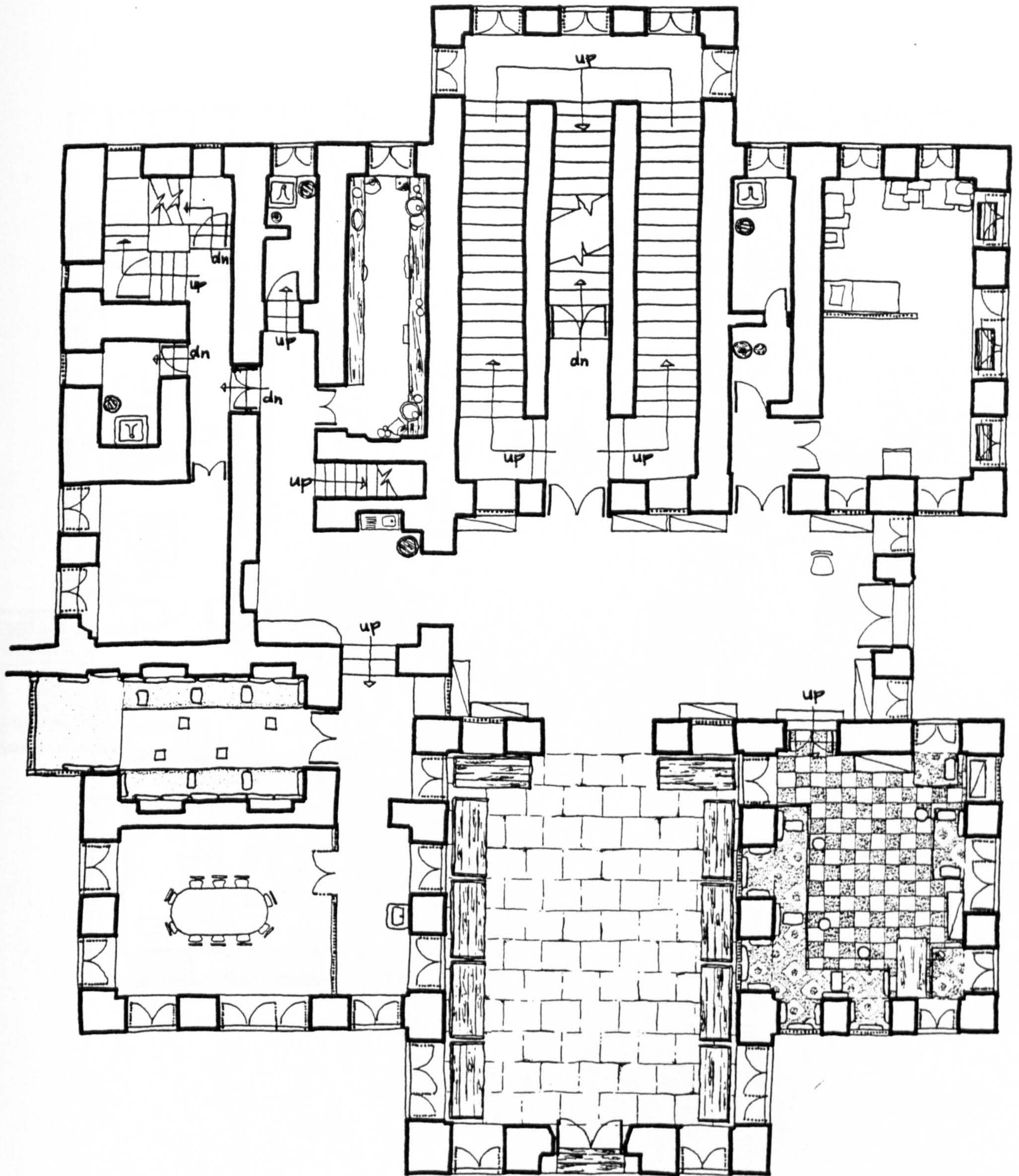


Figure A6 - Ground Floor Plan of Nasif House.
 (Dimensions of floor plans are based on Al-Mashhour, nd.)



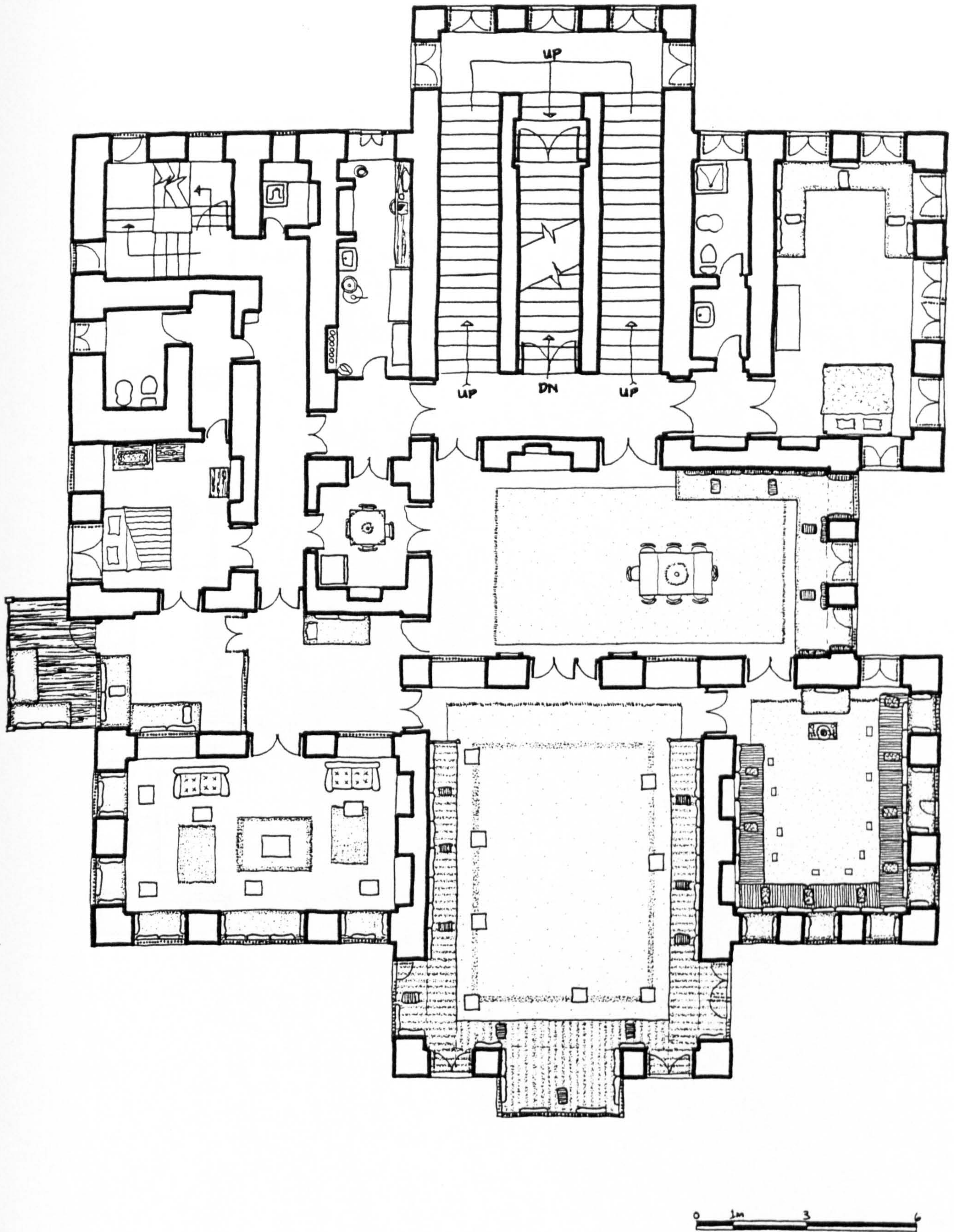


Figure A7 - First Floor Plan of Nasif House.

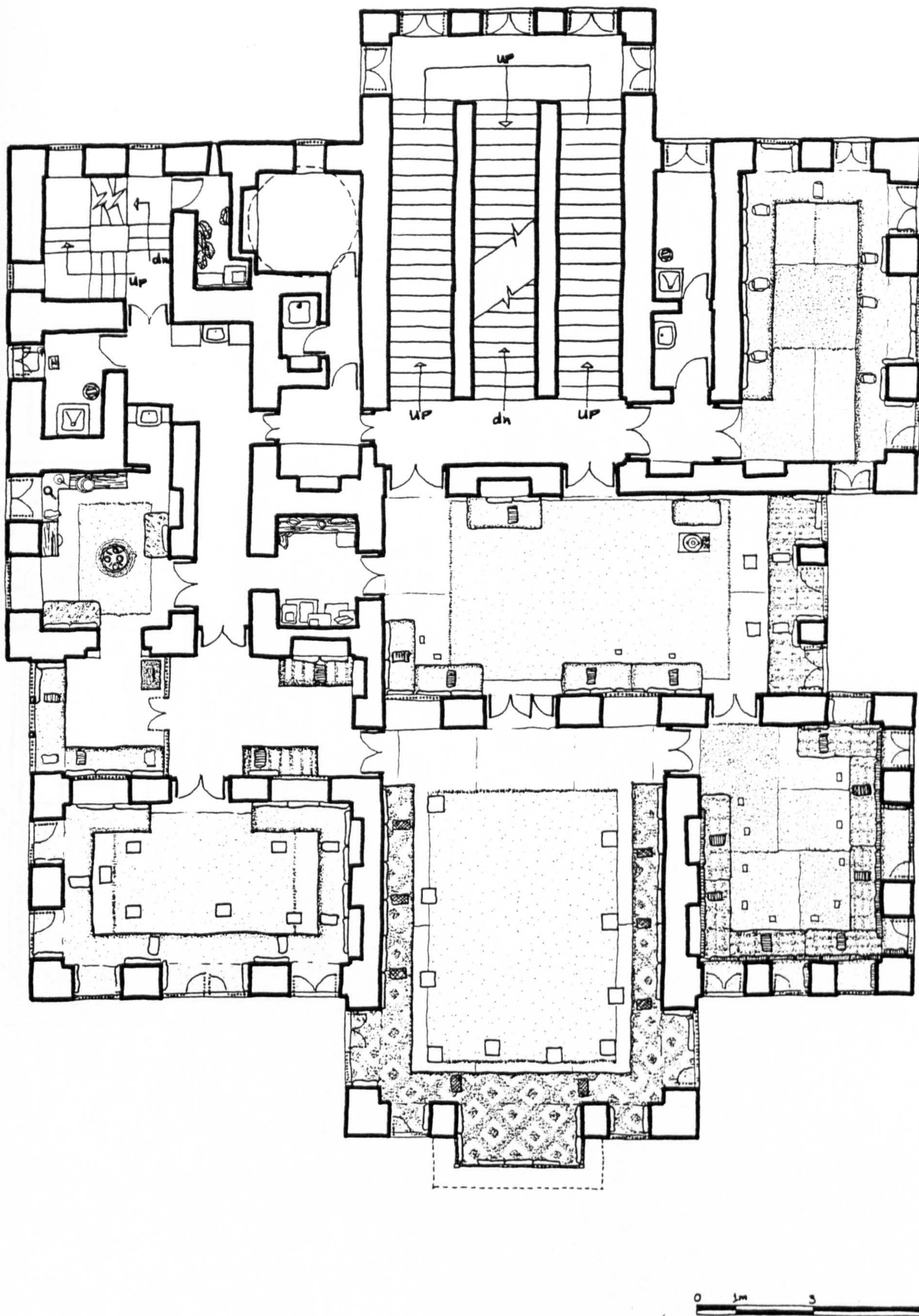


Figure A8 - Second Floor Plan of Nasif House.

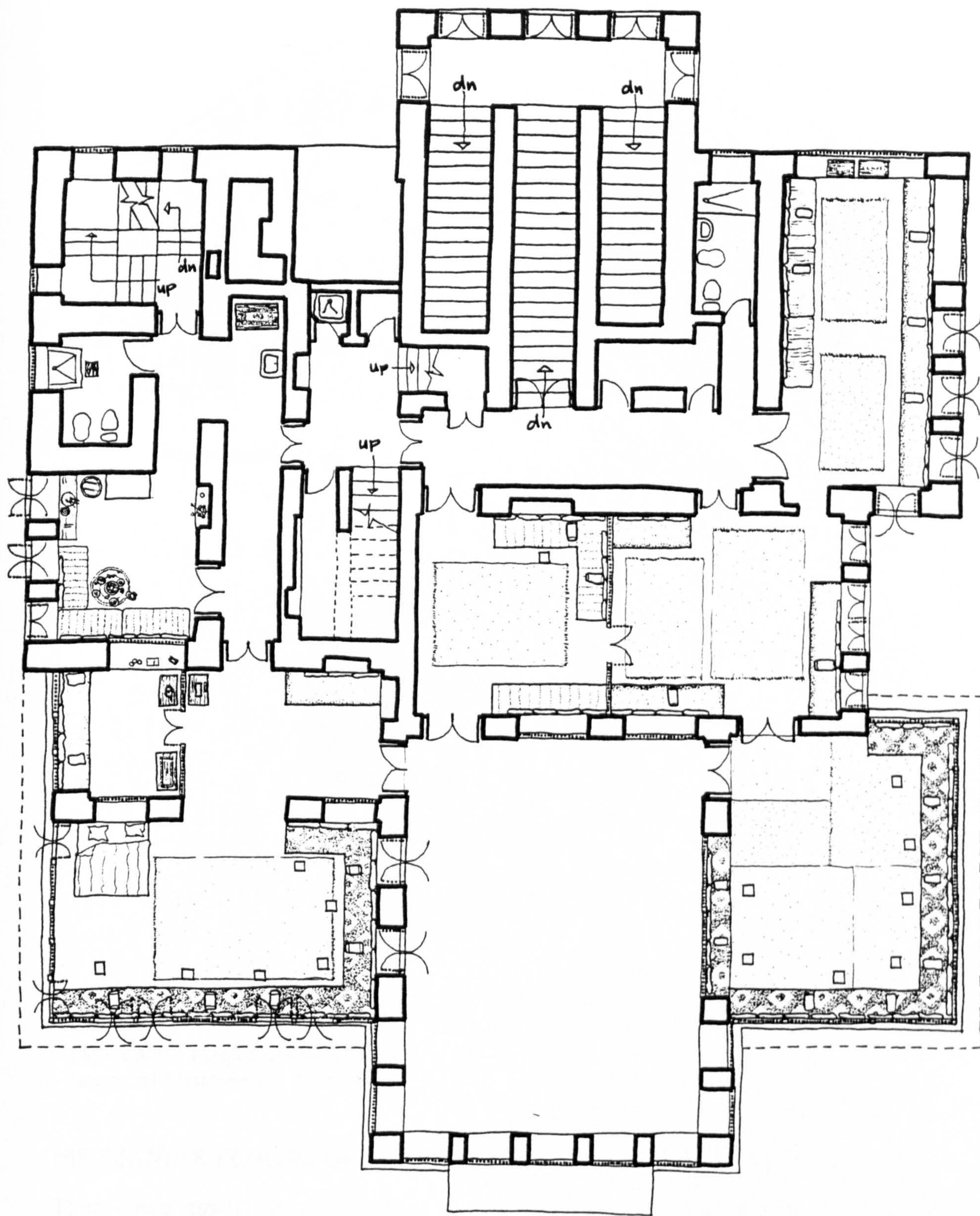


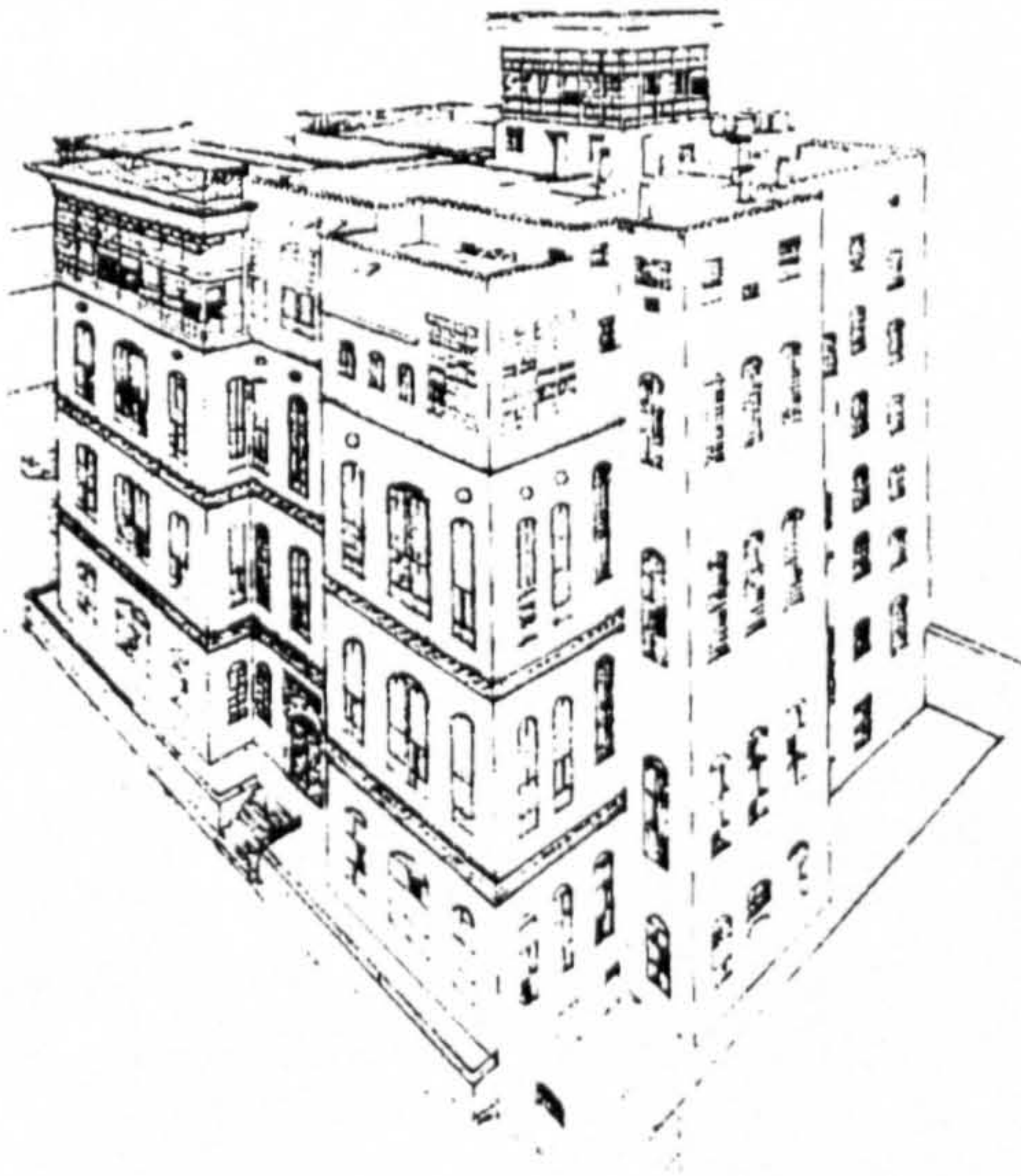
Figure A9 - Third Floor Plan of Nasif House.



North-western perspective



North-eastern perspective



South-western perspective

Figure A10 – Perspectives of Nasif house.
Source: Al-Mashhour, nd: 17, 19 and 21.

MEZZANINE FLOORS OF NASIF HOUSE

There were small mezzanine floors in the north-eastern corner. Each mezzanine contained one *bitalma*, a corridor and a multi-purpose room. They were connected with other floors by the service stairs. This made the height of the floor of the multi-purpose room and *bitalma* on the ground floor around 2.5 metres. The height of rooms above these two spaces on the upper floor was the same. The mezzanine floors were used when the need for more private spaces increased during pilgrimage or other occasions when many guests inhabited the building. The informant used one of the multi-purpose rooms in the mezzanine floor for rearing pigeons.

APPENDIX 9

THE INFLUENCE OF THE URBAN SYSTEM ON THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

The introduction of the gridiron system and new municipal regulations have greatly disrupted the slow evolutionary system involving traditional urban fabric, climate and cultural values. After being from two to five metres wide in old Jeddah, streets in residential areas are now at least 12 metres wide. Building set-backs and new street widths have increased the open areas among buildings. Streets are paved with asphalt and exposed most of the day to sun radiation. Cars and air-conditioning units warm the air. Streets have become unbearable not only to sit in but also to walk through. The outdoors has lost its semi-private and semi-public features. The confinement of the home environment and its family activities and the disappearance of outdoor social activities were inevitable. Cars have become essential household possessions. Many households have more than one car, which, if not garaged at home, are at least parked in front of the house. Thus the hierarchy of transitional spaces between the public and semi-public outdoors and the private home environment has disappeared. A sharp edge between public and private has reduced the amount of communication between neighbours.

The introduction of the grid system was perhaps a strong reason for the disappearance of the *dahleez*. The role of the *dahleez* in the traditional house was influenced by the transitional relationship between the private zone of the house and the public zone of the alley. With the introduction of the grid system and wide streets to facilitate the use of vehicles, the hierarchy between the home private zone and the street public zone disappeared and home fronts became part of the street. The wide hot streets discouraged neighbours from meeting each other, and thus their territorial sense of home fronts decreased. As a result, main doors had to be closed at all times to maintain occupants' privacy against passers-by who were not neighbours or members of the community. This new context abolished the need for the *dahleez*.

The main remaining factor enabling male neighbours to maintain their relationships is the five daily prayers that men have to perform in their community mosque, which can usually be reached within five minutes' walk. This provides the chance for men to chat for few minutes in front of their houses, and they may invite each other for tea, especially after the evening prayers, at which time the climate is pleasant. Even though the urban context and street heat do not encourage neighbours to meet and maintain their relationship, those who perform their prayers in the mosque have some chance to do so. This supports the possibilist view that as long as culture cores are maintained the physical context will not necessarily change them.

APPENDIX 10

THE TEN CASE STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY HOMES

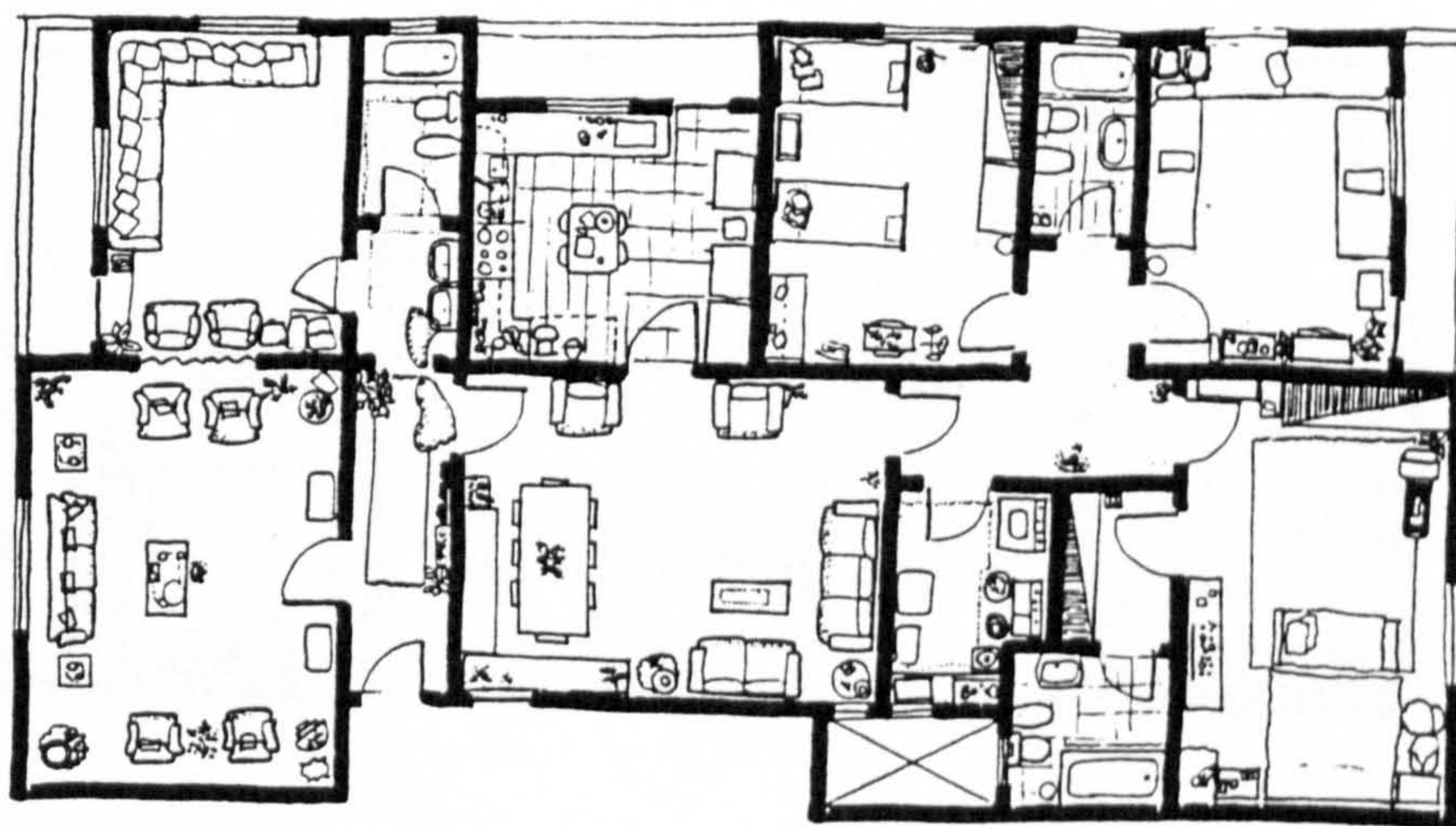
House 1 - Apartment

Location: Al-Faisaliyyah neighbourhood

Date of Construction: Mid eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	25	Housewife	Secondary School
2- Spouse	35	Supervisor in SAUDIA	Diploma of Flight Eng.
3- Son	8		
4- Daughter	7		
5- Daughter	2		
6- Son	2months		

Monthly income 5,000 – 9,999 SR Rent the house for 28,000 SR a year.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A11 - Floor plan of House 1.

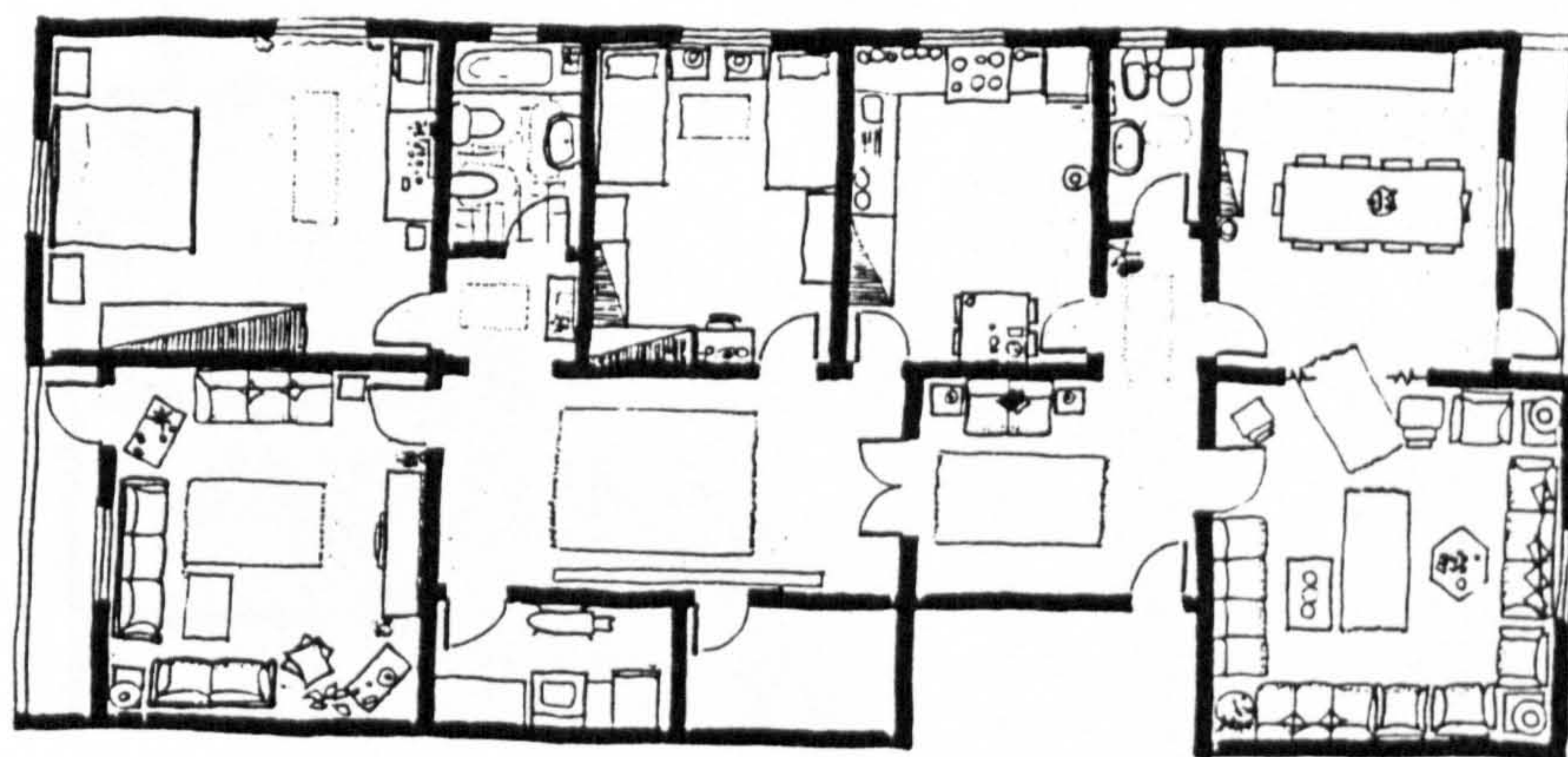
House 2 - Apartment

Location: Al-Rawdhah neighbourhood

Date of construction: Early eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	42	Housewife	Secondary School
2- Spouse	53	Retired	High School
3- Son	21	Student	University
4- Son	15	Student	High School
5- Son	8	Student	Elementary School

Monthly income 5,000 – 9,999 SR Rent the house for 25,000 SR a year.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A12 - Floor plan of House 2.

House 3 - Apartment

Location: Al-Rawdhah neighbourhood

Date of construction: Early eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Degree
1- Informant	31	Housewife	University
2- Spouse	36	Architect	Bachelor of Arch.
3- Daughter	9	Student	Elementary School
4- Daughter	6	Student	Elementary School
5- Son	6 months		

Monthly income 10,000 – 14,999 SR

Rent the house for 10,000 SR a year (Cheap because rented from father).



0 _____ 5m

Figure A13 - Floor plan of House 3.

House 4 – Apartment

Location: The low income housing project.

Date of construction: Early eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	31	Teacher	Bachelor of
2- Spouse	35	Teacher	Diploma of Physical Fitness
3- Son	7	Student	Elementary School
4- Son	3		

Monthly income 5,000 – 9,999 SR Rent the house for 20,000 SR a year.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A14 - Floor plan of House 4.

House 5 – Apartment

Location: Al-Faisaliyyah.

Date of construction: Mid eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	41	Housewife	Diploma
2- Spouse	43	Army	Diploma of Flight Eng.
3- Daughter	18	Student	University
4- Daughter	15	Student	High School
5- Daughter	14	Student	Secondary School
6- Daughter	8	Student	Elementary School

Monthly income 10,000 – 14,999 SR Own the house.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A15 - Floor plan of House 5.

House 6 – Villa

Location: Al-Azeeziyah.

Date of construction: Early seventies

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	50	Housewife	High School
2- Spouse	56	Retired	
3- Son	19	Student	University
4- Daughter	16	Student	High School

Monthly income

15,000 – 19,999 SR

Own the house.

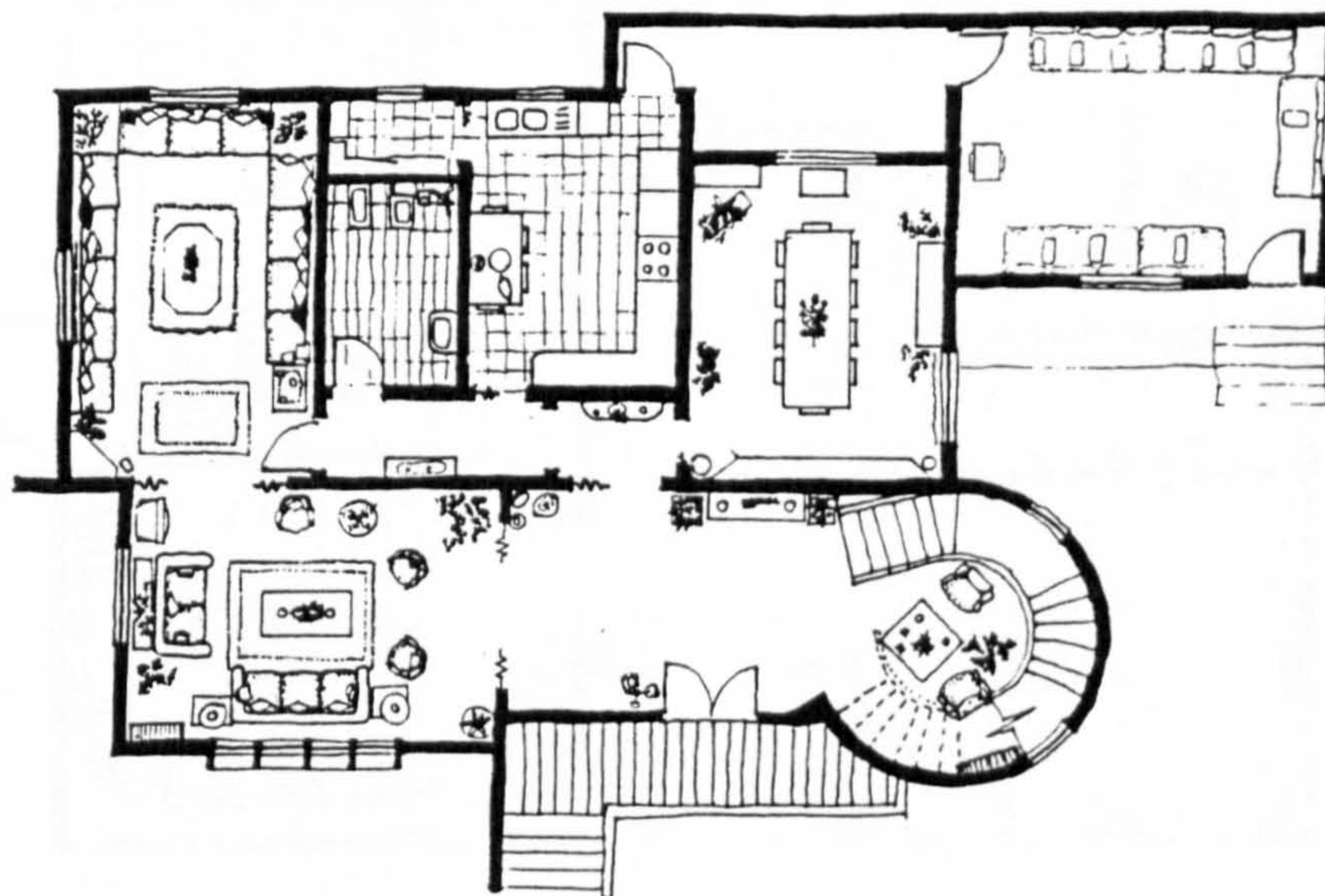
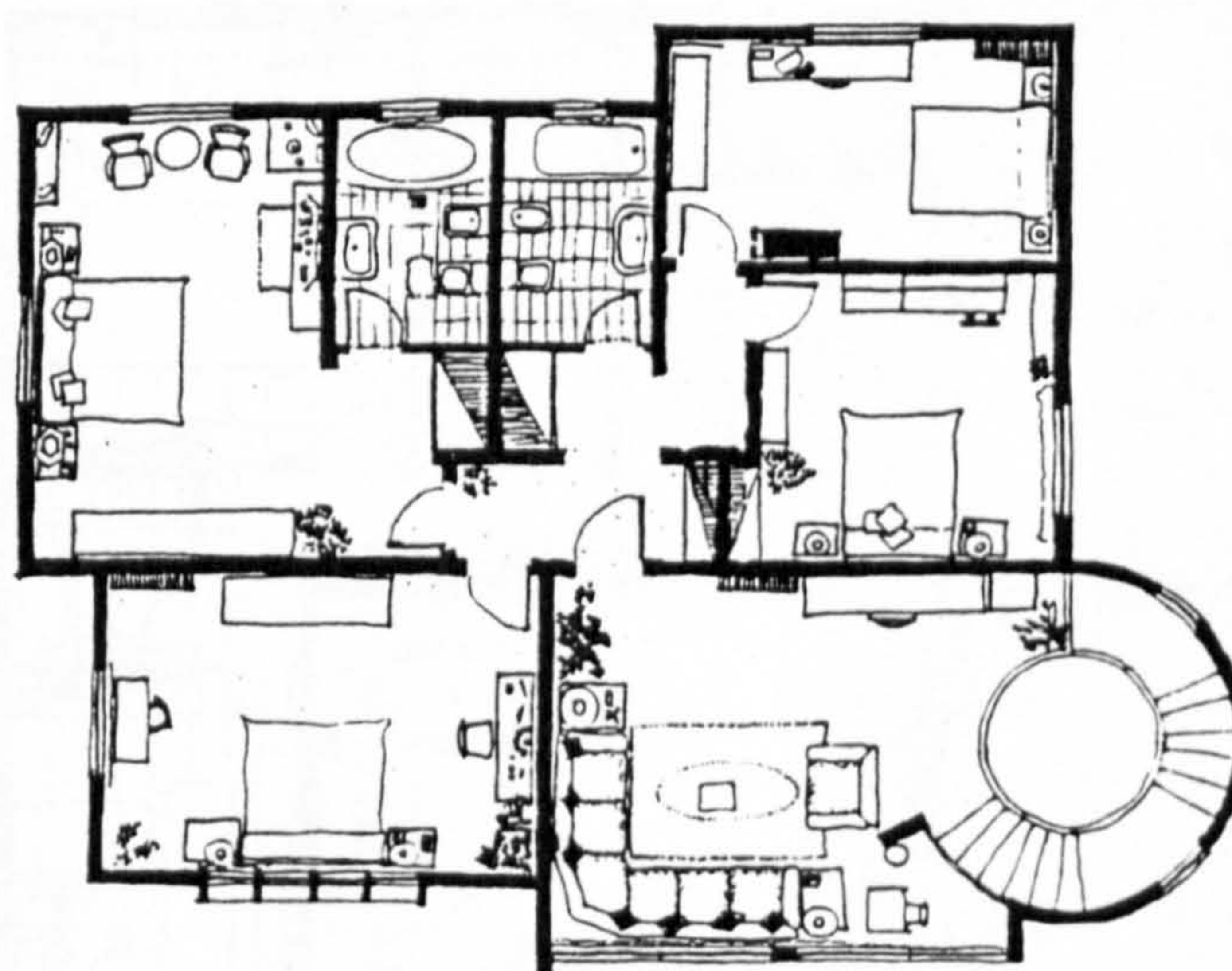


Figure A16 - Ground Floor Plan of House 6.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A17 - First Floor Plan of House 6.

HOUSE 7 – VILLA

Location: Al-Rawdhah neighbourhood

Date of construction: Early nineties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Degree
1- Informant	48	Housewife	Diploma in Psychology
2- Spouse	43	Retired	Ph.D.
3- Son	16	Student	High School

Monthly income 10,000 – 14,999 SR Own the house.

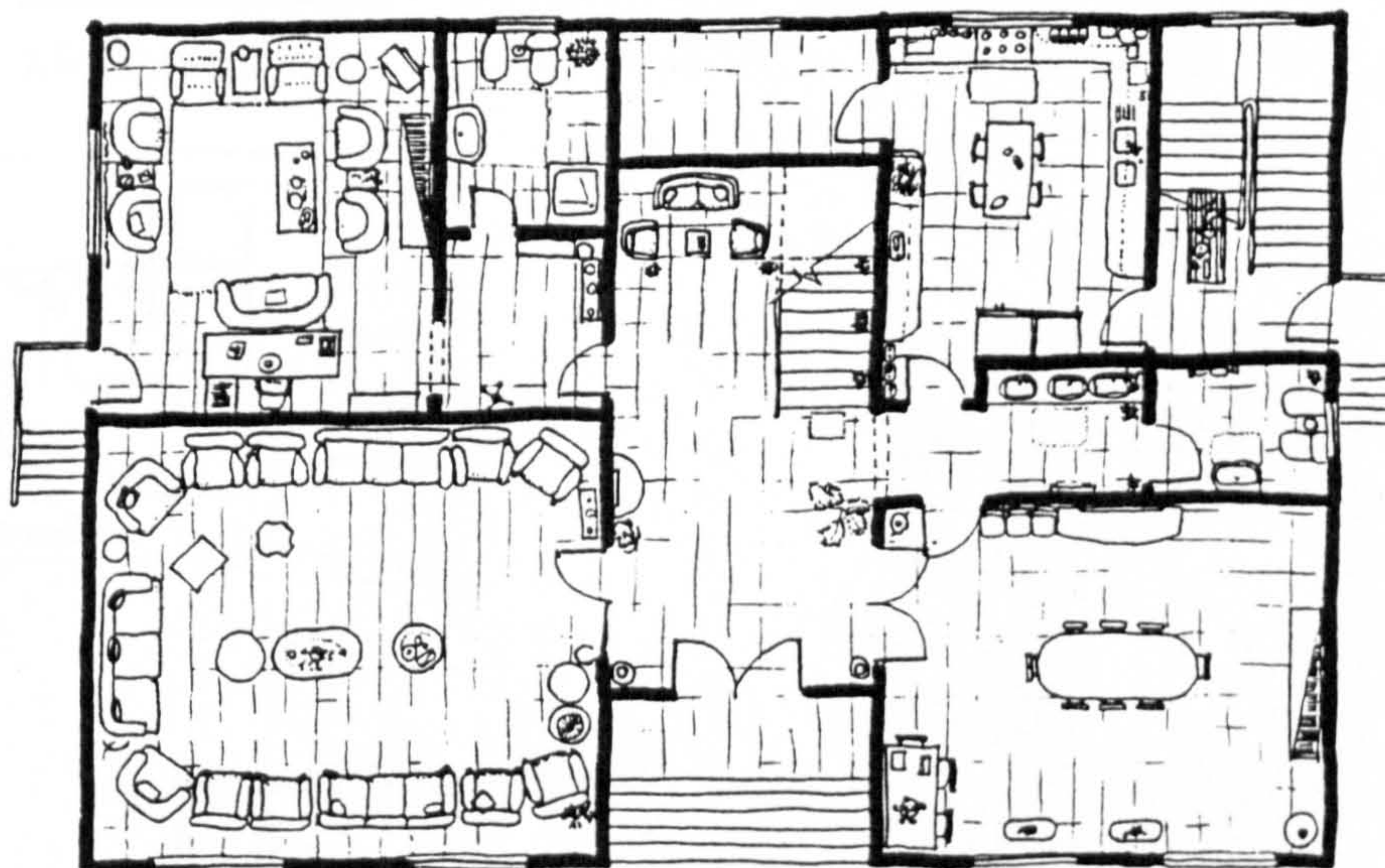
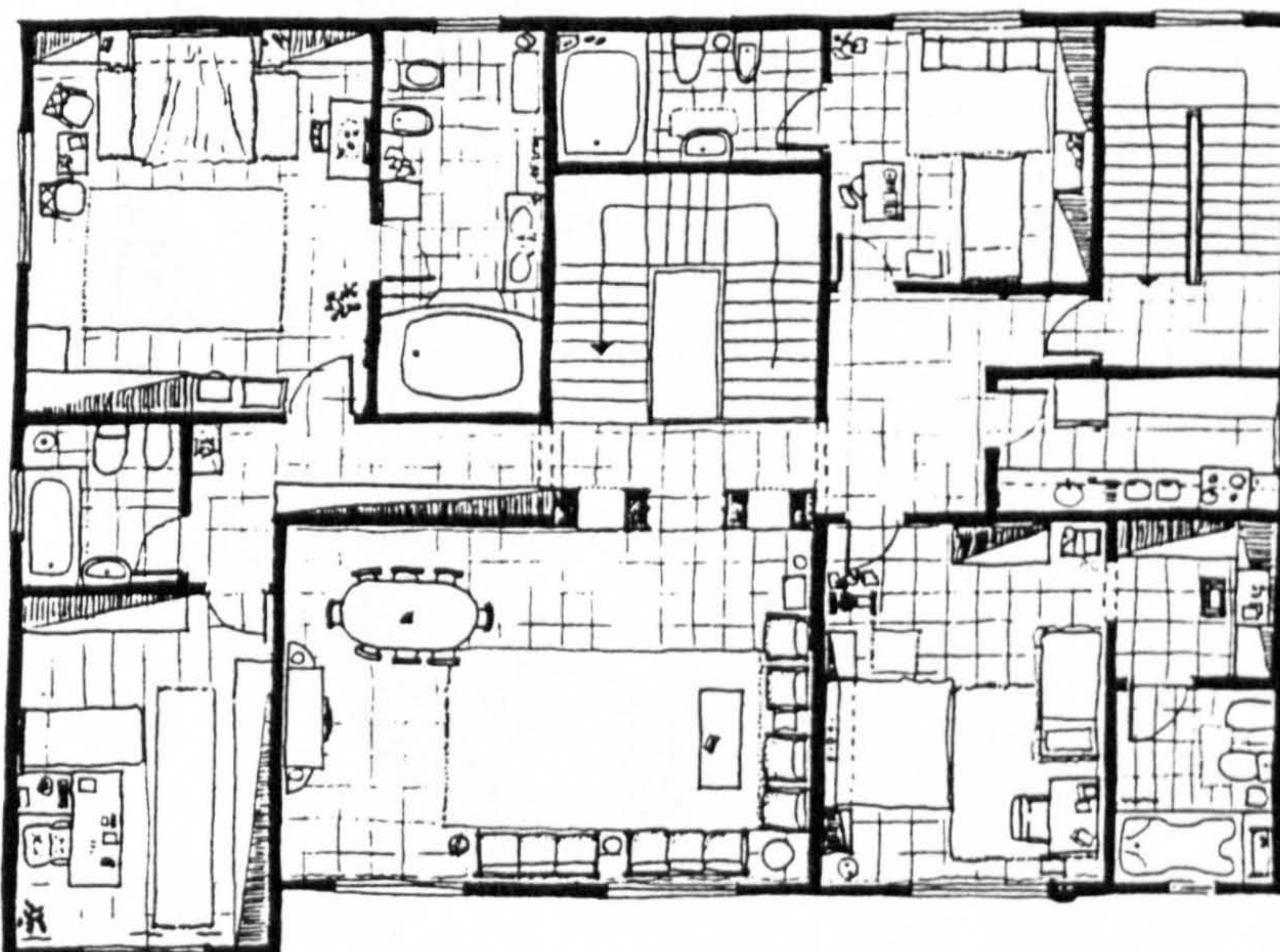


Figure A18 - Ground Floor Plan of House 7.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A19 - First Floor Plan of House 7.

House 8 – Villa

Location: Al-Andalus neighbourhood

Date of construction: Early nineties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	38	University Lecturer	Master
2- Spouse	40	Business Man	Bachelor in Public Administration
3- Son	11	Student	Elementary School
4- Daughter	8	Student	Elementary School
5- Daughter	6	Student	Elementary School
6- Son	3		

Monthly income

Over 20,000 SR

Own the house.

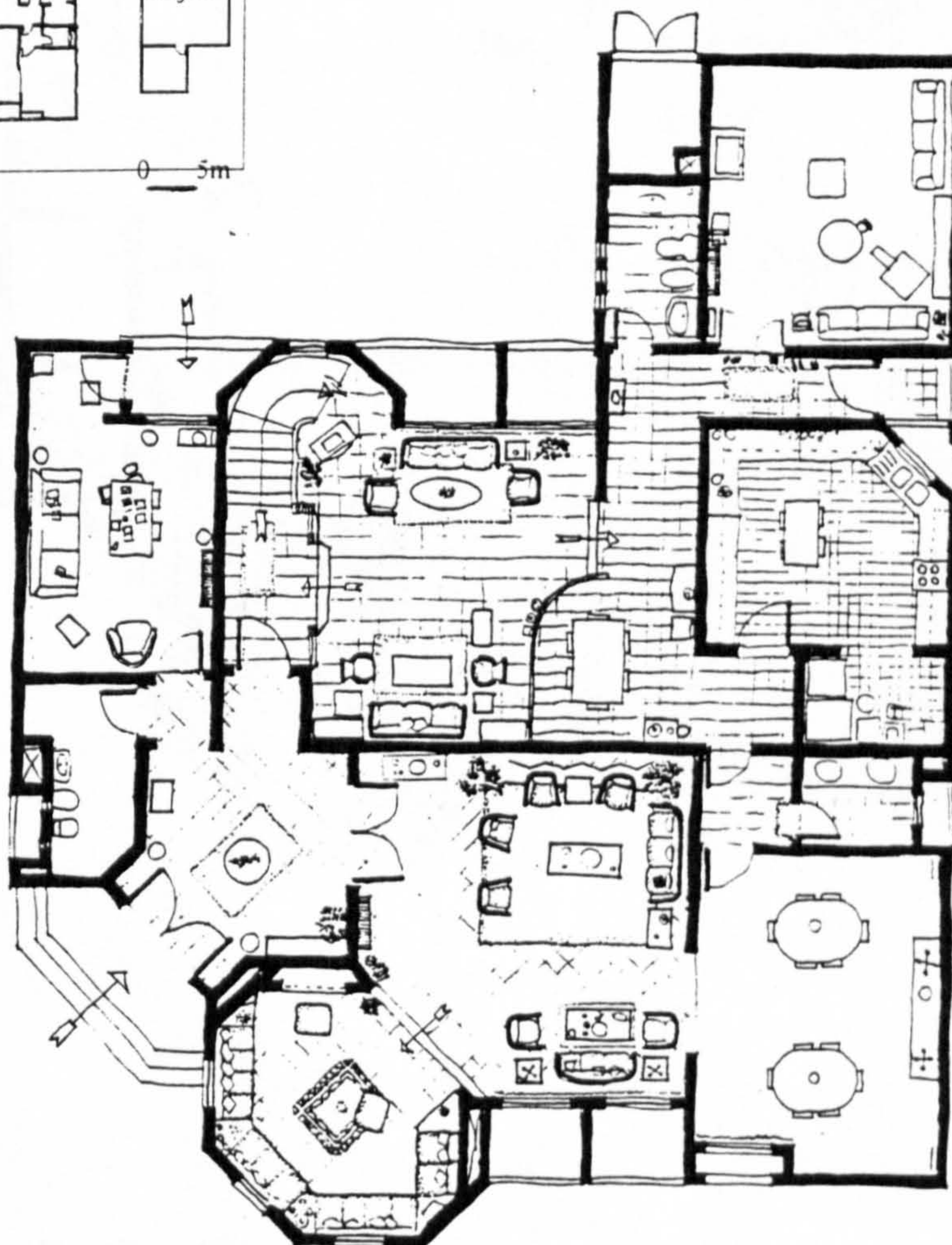
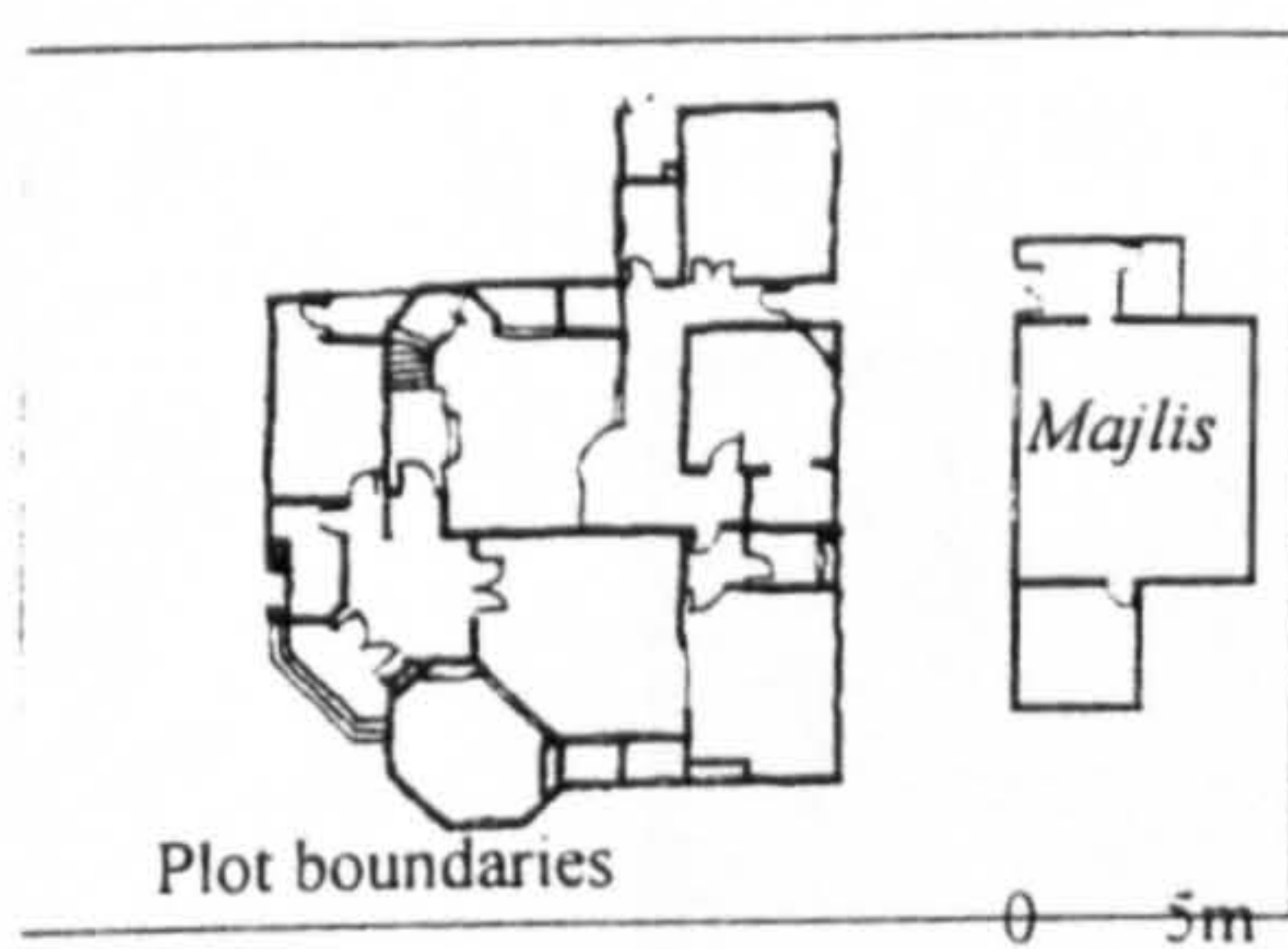
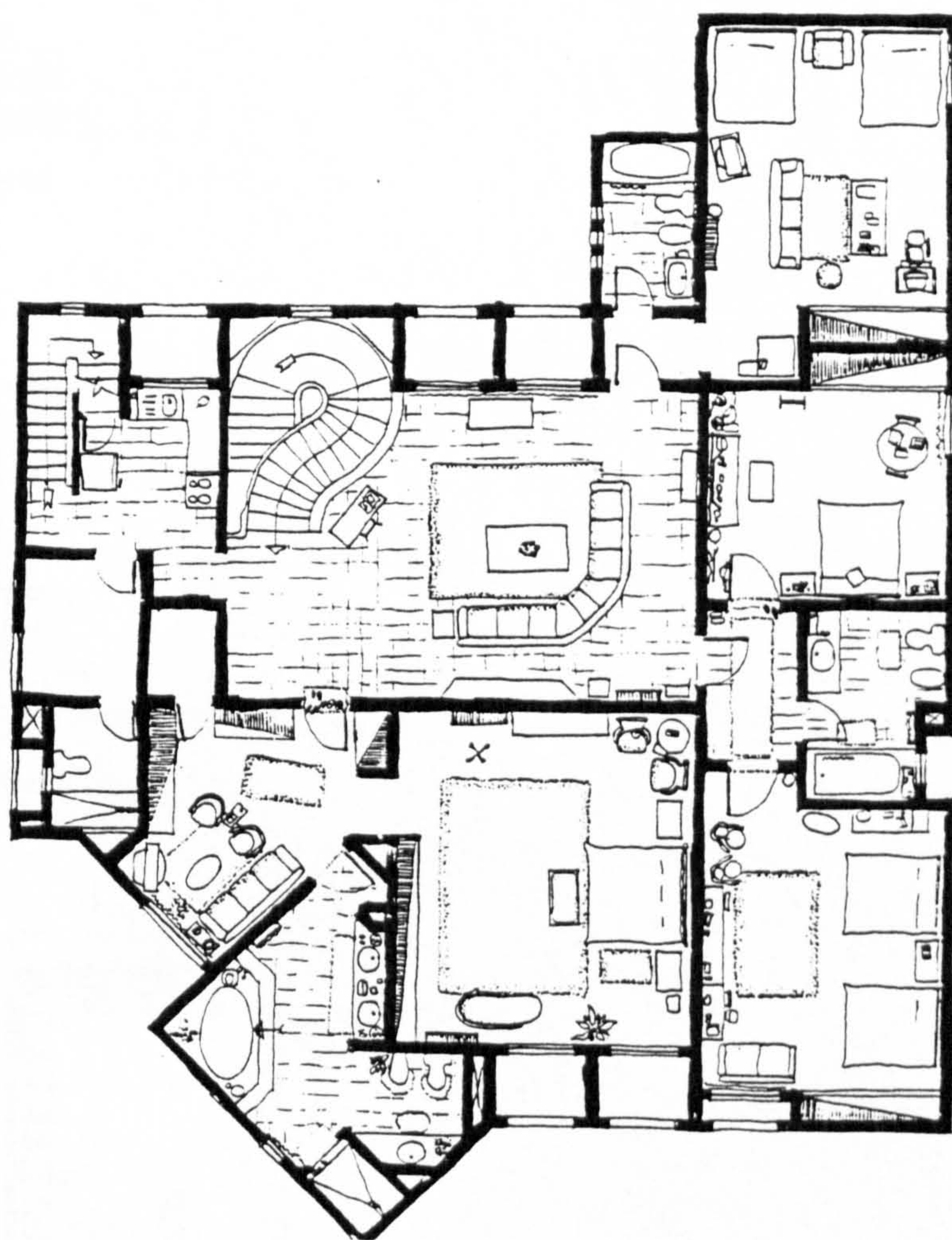


Figure A20 – Ground Floor Plan of House 8.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A21 – First Floor Plan of House 8.

HOUSE 9 – APARTMENT

Location: Al-Sulaimaniyyah neighbourhood

Date of construction: Early eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	37	Teaching Assistant	Bachelor
2- Spouse	45	Government Employee	Bachelor in Economics
3- Son	17	Student	High School
4- Son	14	Student	Secondary School
5- Son	11	Student	Elementary School
6- Daughter	8	Student	Elementary School
7- Daughter	1 month		

Monthly income Over 20,000 SR Own the house.

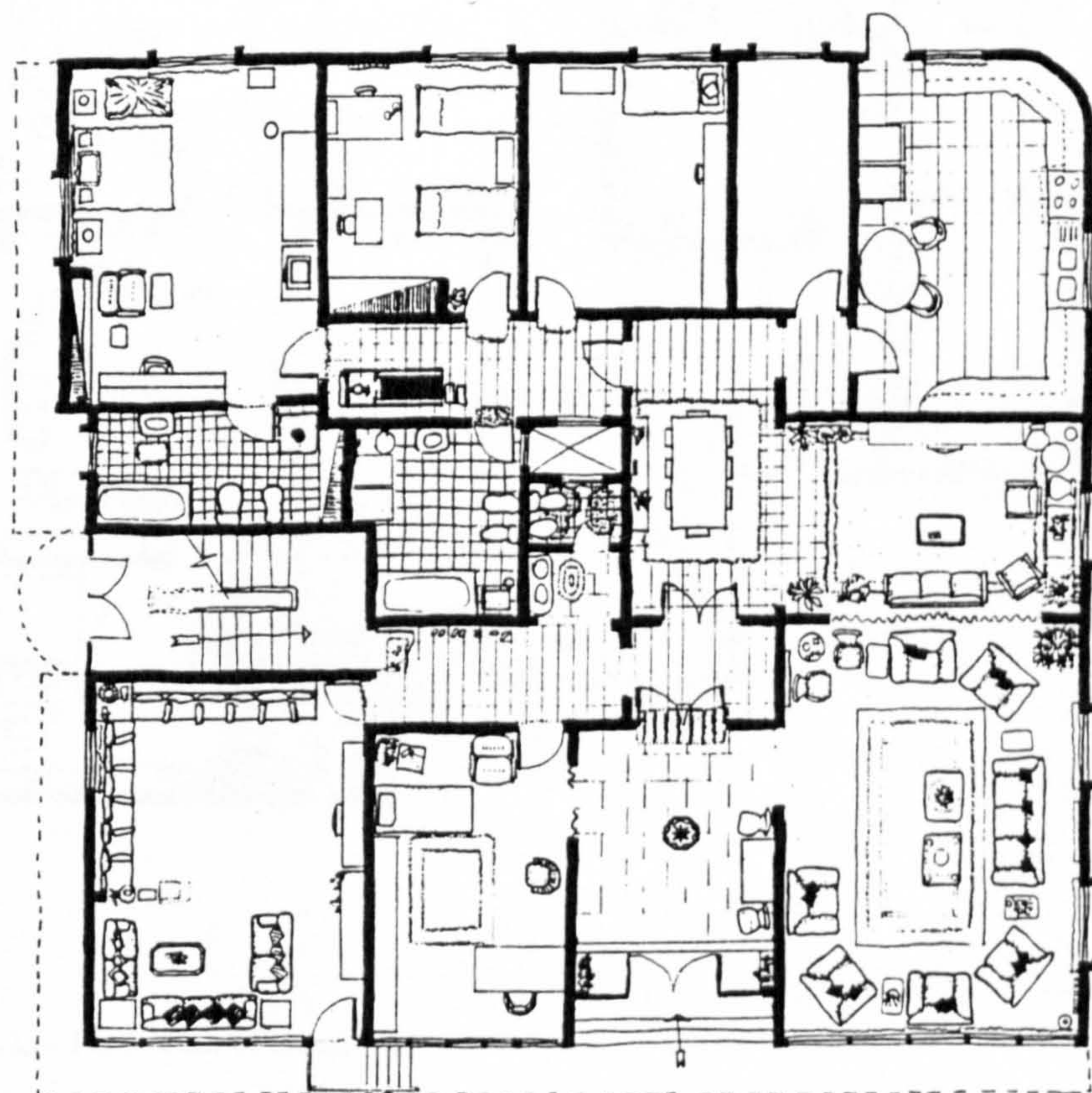


Figure A22 - Floor plan of House 9.

0 _____ 5m

House 10 – Apartment

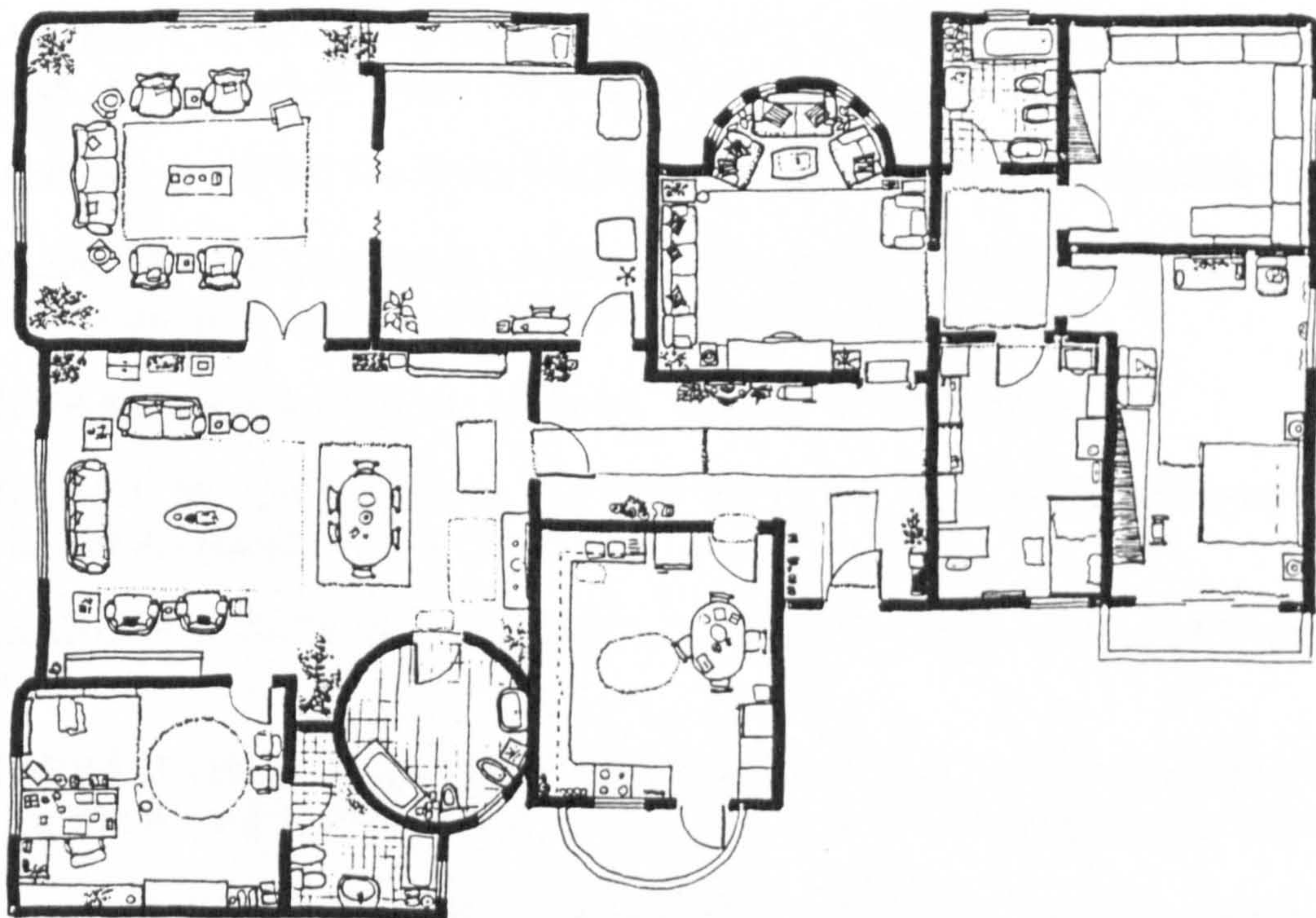
Location: Al-Salamah neighbourhood

Date of construction: Mid eighties

Family Member	Age	Occupation	Education
1- Informant	55	Housewife	
2- Spouse	65	Retired	Elementary
3- Son	16	Student	High School

Monthly income 10,000 – 14,999 SR

Rent the house for 35,000 a year.



0 _____ 5m

Figure A23 - Floor Plan of House 10.

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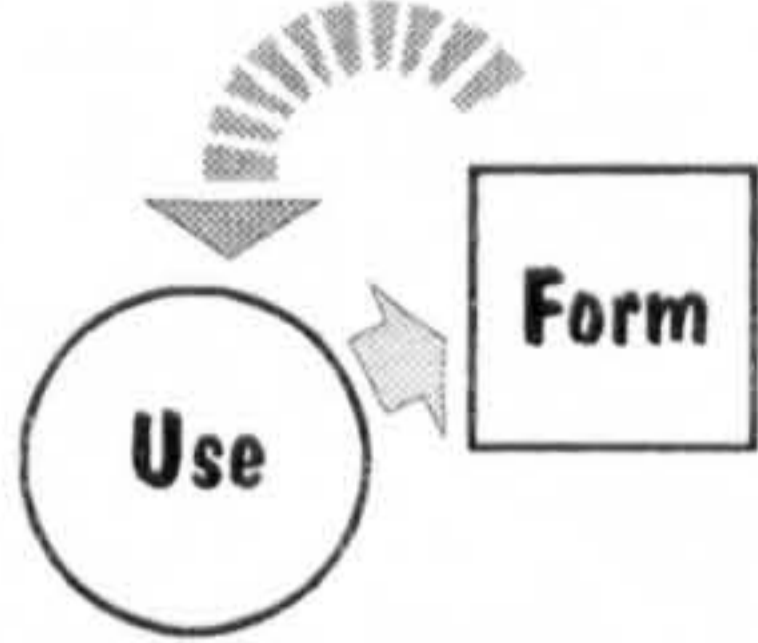
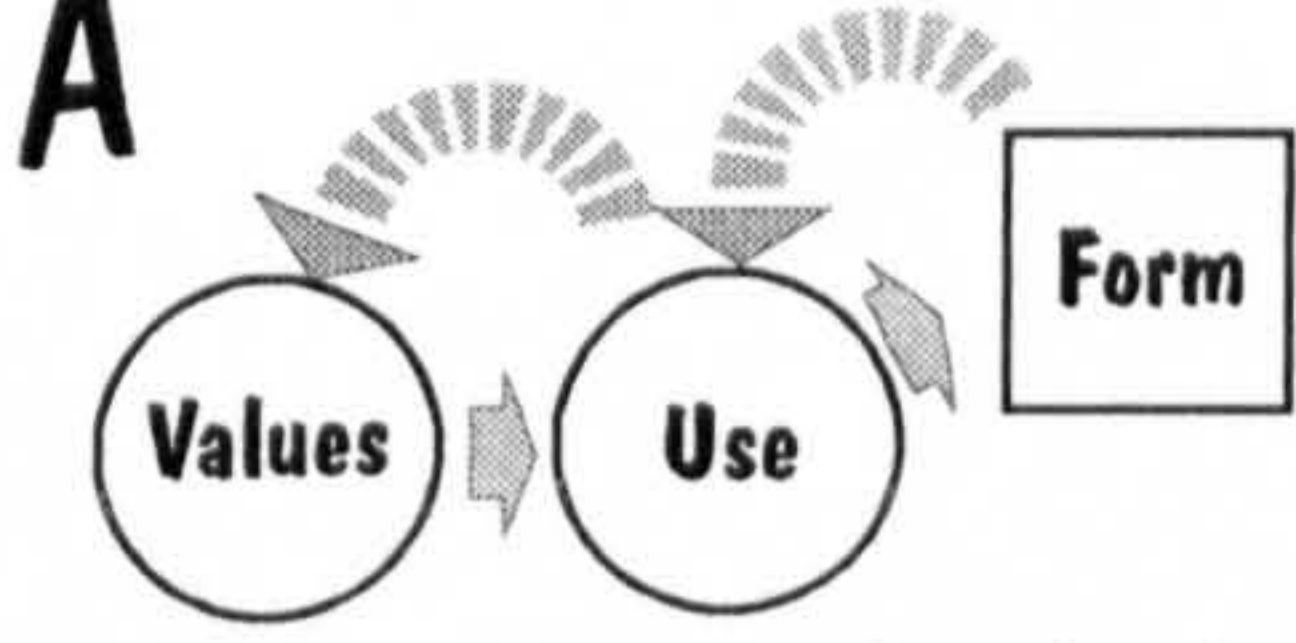
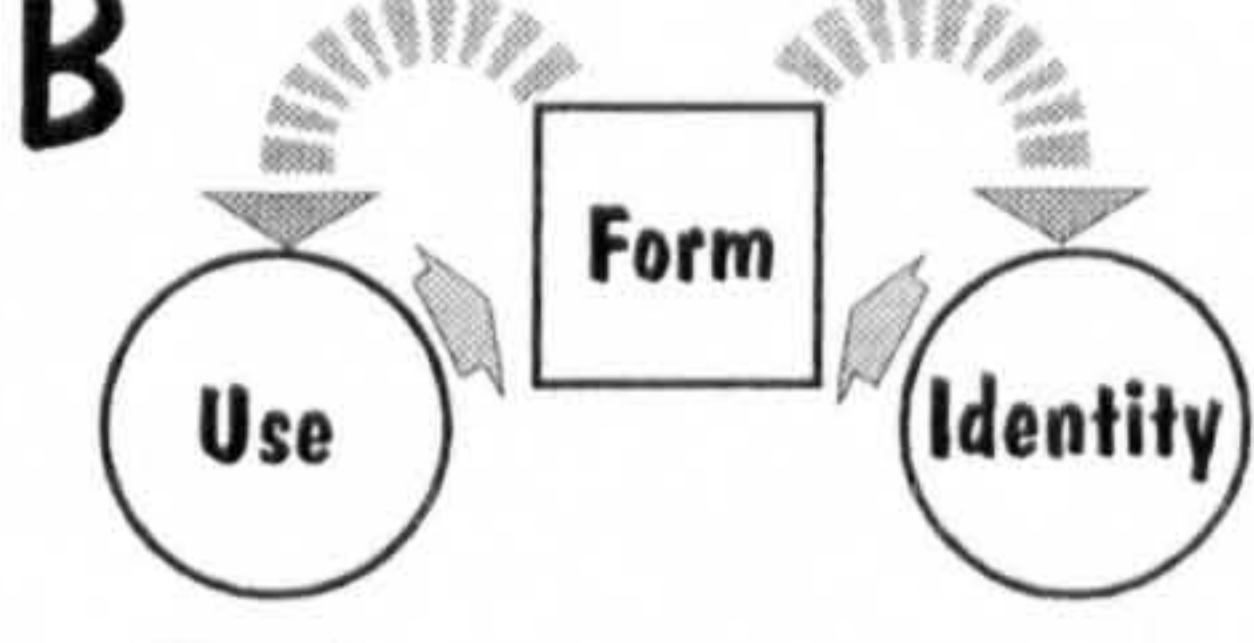
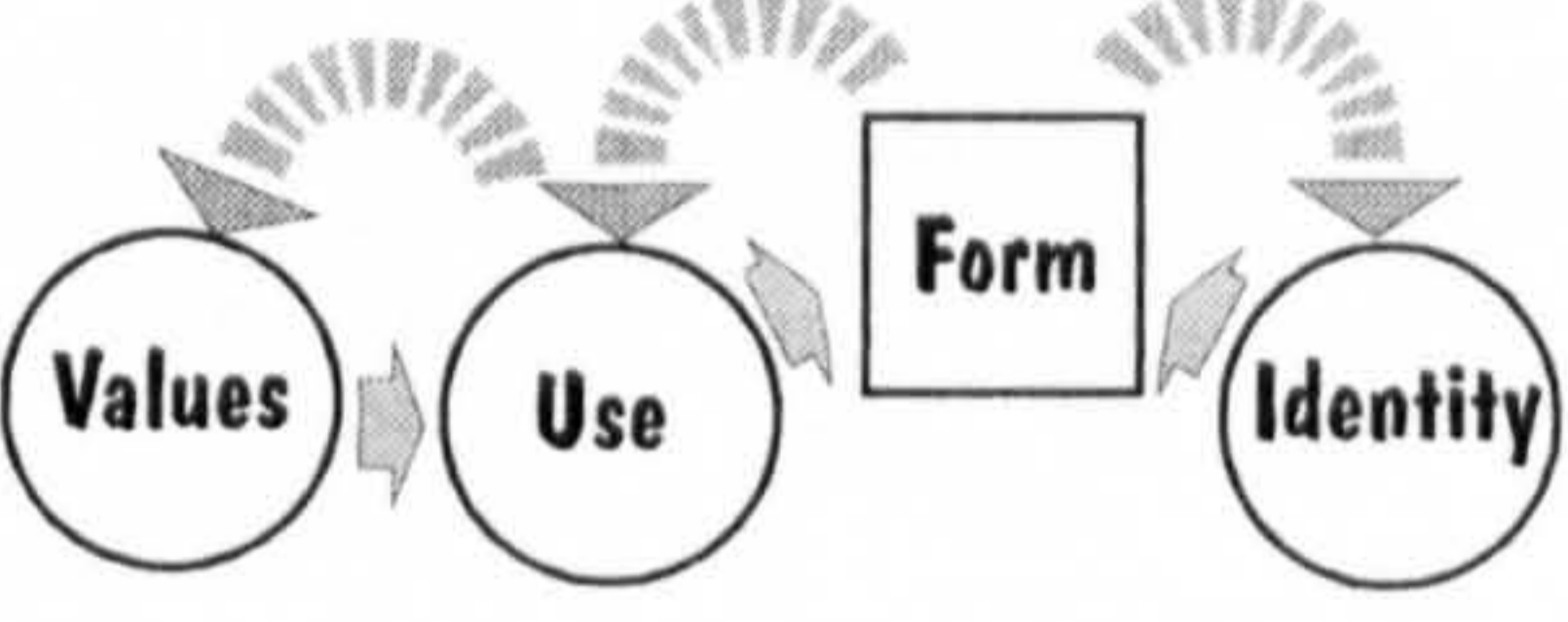
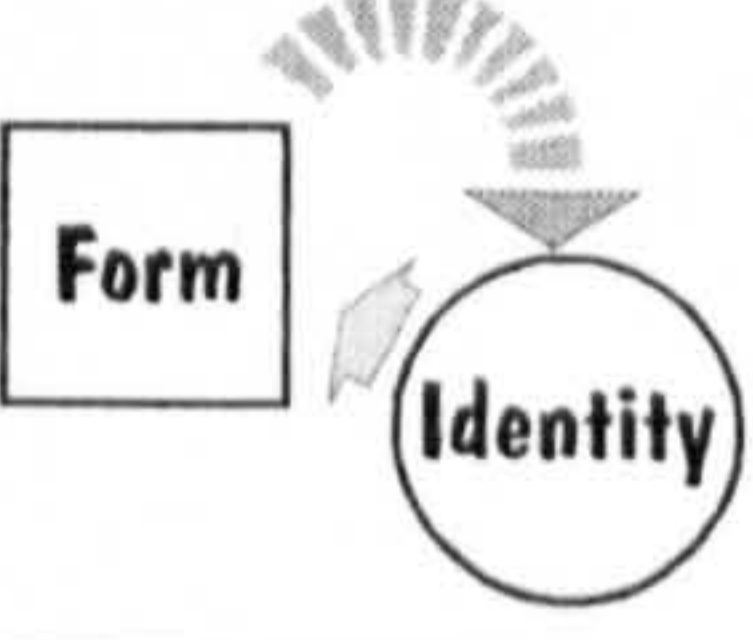
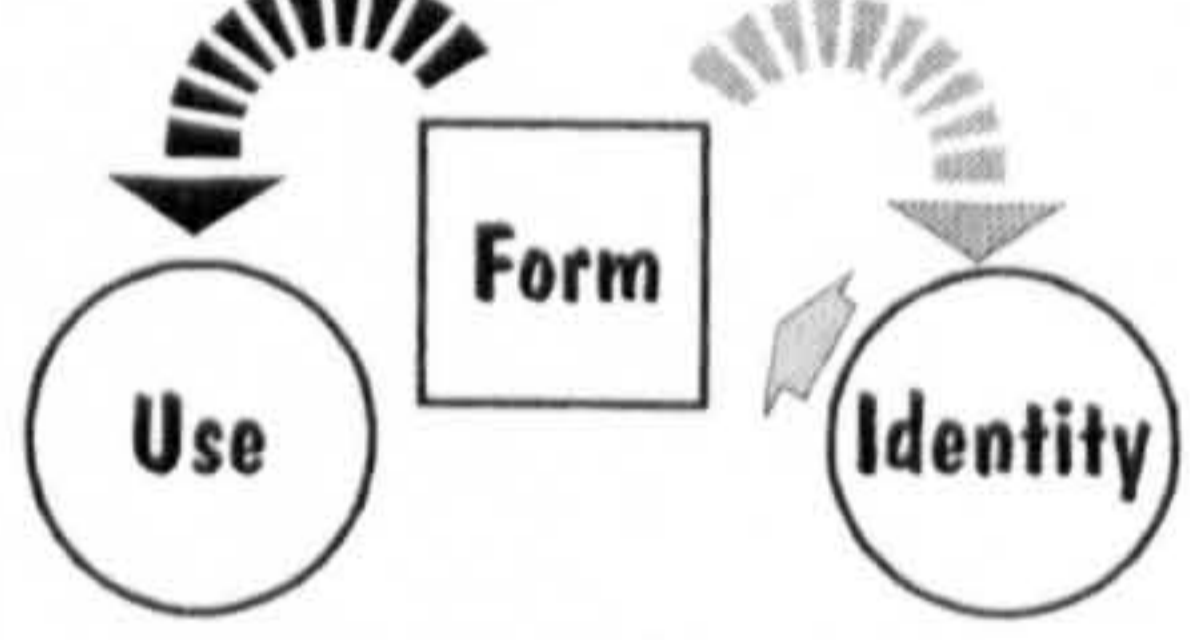
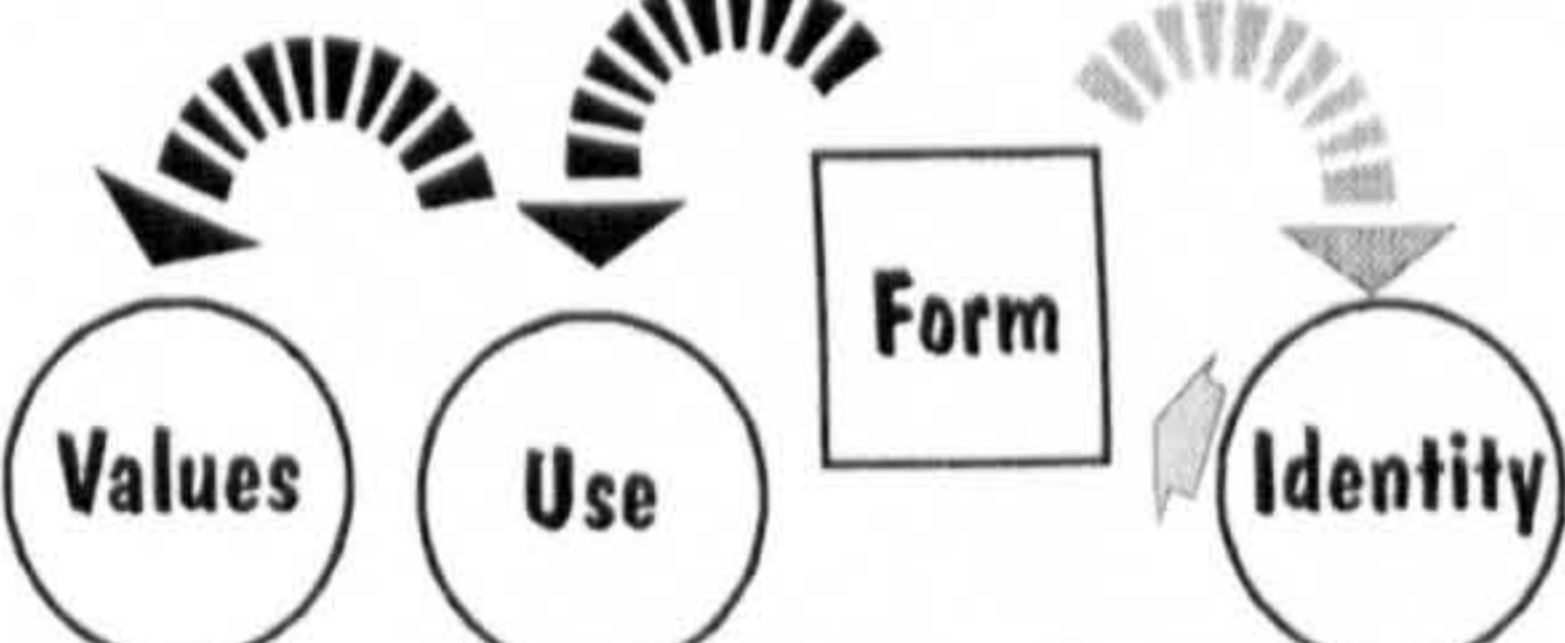
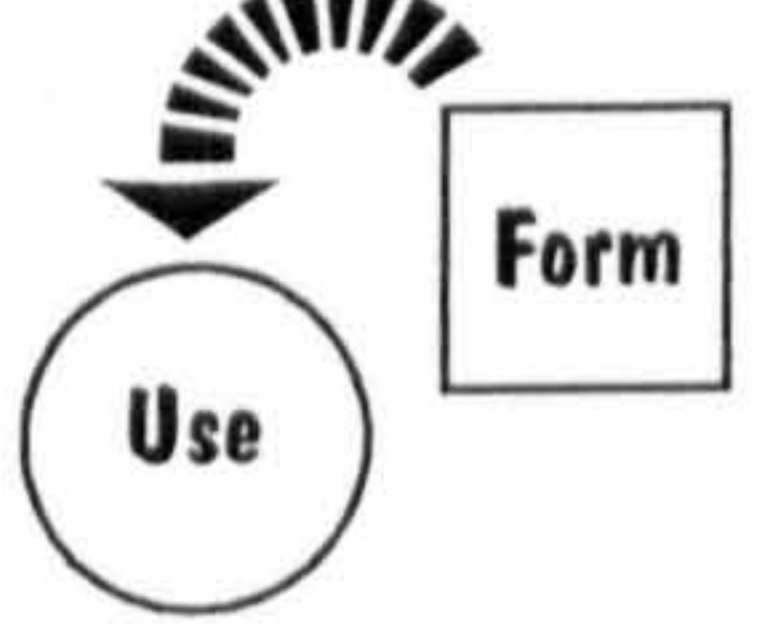

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Stage	Levels of Compatibility	Relationships
1	No Compatibility	A useless object 
2	Low Compatibility	An object invented or adopted to support a utilitarian use 
3	High Compatibility	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>A</p>  <p>The form supports cultural values</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>B</p>  <p>The form supports utilitarian use and identity</p> </div> </div>
4	Very High Compatibility	The form supports cultural values and users' identity 
5	Low Compatibility	The form supports users' identity only 
6	Incompatibility	The form supports identity but against use 
7	Incompatibility	The form supports identity but against users' values. 
8	High Incompatibility	The form does not support identity and against use 
9	Abandoned	The object has to be abandoned 

Direct Influence
 Maintains the Survival
 Hinders the Survival

The model of compatibility