

In addition to empty lots, which were generally used for the construction of new houses and as vegetable gardens, the hawakir included the village cemeteries which were also part of the barrier defining the boundaries of the built-up area. The back of the many inwardly-looking buildings located at the peripheries of the village also defined a critical boundary which signified a psychological and sociologically meaningful interior into which the fallah could withdraw after long hours of work in the open, ever extending fields. The three elements namely; density differentiation, empty lots(hawakir) and backs of buildings, all acted simultaneously so as to define the village's outermost boundaries (fig. 4.2).

Although the village is densely built with a defined boundary, it still had a transparency which allowed for the penetration of the village from all directions. However, the village "formal" entrance is located to the west of the village. This was also the formal entrance to the village's main plaza.

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The visitor to Deir Ghassaneh is at once struck by the imposing character of its buildings and the sharply defined quality of spaces (fig. 4.3). However, the spatial structure and the laws governing it cannot be felt or recognized at once. On the contrary, at first it seems to be a random assembly of structures with different styles and scales. However as one becomes more acquainted with the village, one starts to experience a meaningful interaction of the natural and cultural forces which have determined the spatial structure.



Fig. 4.3: Imposing character and quality of spaces and buildings