

gathered around a central courtyard (hosh), which is open to the sky. The compound has one formal entrance from the plaza and another small women's entrance located on its northern elevation.

As illustrated by figure 4.20 the compound could be divided into four domains:

1. Men's semi-public domain
2. Women's semi-private domain.
3. Domestic unit: private domain
4. The parents' private domain for sleeping.

The men's domain, which was a semi-public area, was used by the men of the compound and their male visitors. This area included (1) the area right outside the compound entrance where men casually met; (2) the entrance vestibule, furnished with a stone seat along its walls and acting as a transitional area between the outer communal space and the inner private world; (3) The Diwan located opposite the entrance where coffee was prepared, and; (4) the visitors' quarter located on the second floor. This floor could be reached by a stair case situated in the east wall of the vestibule. This quarter consisted of a big reception hall where the family's male visitors were received and lodged at night. This was the only room in the whole compound which had decorations on its walls. As figure 4.19 shows, a colonnade was painted on its four walls giving a feeling of being out in nature. In addition to this reception hall, the visitors section had a semi-open space (liwan) which was used as a dining room. This area also had a separate kitchen, and a separate toilet.

This semi-public area was separated from the second semi-private women's domain first, by its location just on the boundary of the compound hence preventing any other interaction with other private domains and second, by using a bent vestibule (L-shape), which changed the direction of the movement and third, by locating the visitors quarter on a separate level and using wood screens on the few windows opening on the inner-court. Finally, the area was separated by having a big gate which set the two worlds apart.