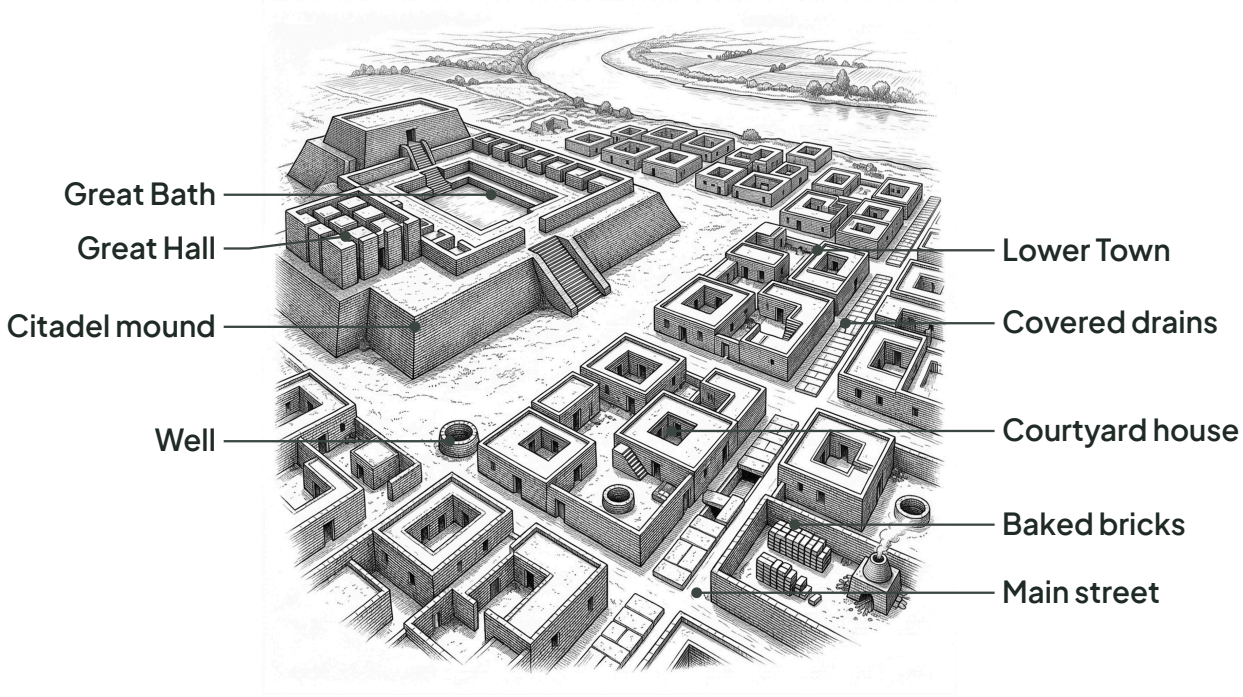
MOHENJO-DARO: A PLANNED CITY

Mohenjo-daro, on the Indus River, was one of the largest cities in the world about 2500 BC, home to perhaps 40,000 people. It was carefully planned: a high mound for big public buildings, a lower town of houses on a grid of streets, and drains, wells and bathrooms, all built of baked brick.



◆ THE PARTS ◆

Citadel mound A high mound on the west side of the city, about 12 meters (40 feet) high, built up on huge platforms of brick and earth. It raised its big public buildings above the river's floods.

Great Bath A pool 12 meters long, 7 meters wide and 2.4 meters deep, with a staircase at each end. Its tightly fitted bricks were sealed with a layer of natural tar to keep the water in. Many historians think people washed in it during ceremonies.

Great Hall A large building on a brick base next to the Great Bath. Early archaeologists called it the Great Granary, but no grain was ever found, so many archaeologists now call it the Great Hall.

Lower Town The larger part of the city, east of the citadel, where most people lived and worked in houses and workshops.

Main street Wide, straight main streets ran north to south and east to west, crossing at right angles in a grid. Narrow side lanes led between the houses.

Covered drains Brick drains ran along the streets, covered with bricks or stone slabs. Drains from the houses' bathing floors flowed into them. Workers could lift the covers to clean them out.

Well Round wells lined with wedge-shaped bricks gave fresh water. Mohenjo-daro had more than 700 wells, about one for every three houses.

Courtyard house Houses were built around an open courtyard, with a bathroom with a brick floor and stairs to a flat roof. Blank walls faced the main streets, and doors opened onto side lanes.

Baked bricks Bricks were baked hard in kilns and made in standard shapes. Most had the same shape: thickness, width and length in the ratio 1 : 2 : 4, in city after city.