

Contrastive study of culture and architectural design pattern for Iranian houses in Safavid and Qajar dynasties: formation of private space in entrance

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Abstract

Contrastive study on the elements of traditional houses in different times, is an effective method in understanding the culture and design factor, the architectural evolution, space organization, ornaments and the structure of the historical buildings and it describes that different features and distinguishing factors in traditional houses were usually closely related to the political, economy, and social issues of that region. Synchronized with historical dynasties, traditional houses are thus, easily distinguishable regarding their architectures and the manner of architectural pattern can be followed regarding the historical evolution. As Isfahan was the capital of Iran in Safavid time, building magnificent palace-like houses were the trend; in Qajar dynasty as well architecture had its own unique elements. The present study enjoyed the mixed methods of descriptive and analytical methods as well as case study. The problem was examined based on observation, field studies, and documentation; the results then were compared and contrasted. The architectural design of these houses are introverted (mainly) as well as extroverted (in jolfa). The main front of the houses are in southern part and having porch, straight sky line, rectangular garden, rectangular rooms, sometimes octagonal houses, abundant ornamentations in central halls, using natural colors, easier use of bricks as the main material are some features of these houses. The present study aims to analyze and evaluate how the privacy of entrances in both Safavid and Qajar houses as one of the most significant elements of architectural times formed.

Keywords: Design Patterns, House, Safavid, Qajar, Entrance Privacy

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Introduction

Understanding and recognizing the architecture of Iran can make us familiar with the cultural principles as well as beloved and respected architectural patterns of Iranian. Concerns about human, security and safety, privacy, relaxing, relation with nature, moderation, respecting to others' right, the unity of society, respecting to family and being synchronized with time are some of the features for the architectural pattern of tradition houses in Iran. However, by reviewing the historical sites, it is revealed that the monuments are analyzed mostly and houses were not in the spotlight (Memarian, 1993: 47). The present study aims to examine the houses in the Safavid and Qajar dynasties.

different architectural styles before the advent of Islam such as Elami, the Madi, hakhamaneshi, Parthian, and Sasanian are reviewed as well (Zarei, 2013: 54). Some believe that the first architectural style was born by the Achaemenes and it is called the Parsi Style and the style before it is called pre-Parsi style. Other architectural style after the advent of Islam include Khorasani, Razi, Azari and Isfahani Styles (Pirnia, 2000:130); and in the present study Isfahani style in houses is examined. Houses are important element of a society as shelters. Human beings have been constantly trying to cope with the climate changes and seasons and have been constructing houses (Rapoport, 1999: 39).

Isfahan has been constantly considered an important cities for the people and the officials of the time. Climate as well as other natural conditions such as Zayanderud contributed to the significance of this place as a civilized and human congregation settlement. Since a long time ago and during different dynasties, Isfahan had numerous small and big villages, neighborhoods, places, and gardens. In the Ancient time Gabay and Pertikan were very famous. In Sasanian Dynasty jey and judieh were two important cities and they were called sepahan. In Buyid and Seljuq dynasties Isfahan was the capital. In Safavid dynasty Isfahan was again chosen as an ideal place to

be the capital of the government. After establishing the government in Isfahan, different buildings were constructed. Ali apu, Chehel Sotoun, Hasht-behesht, Farah Abad, Were built in Shah Abas dynasty. Following the invasion of Afghan and due to disorderly and lack organization in Afsharid and Zand dynasties, the buildings were highly ignored and they went ineffective or partially destroyed. After Qajar came to power, and transferring the capital to Teheran, although Isfahan was not the capital anymore, it still remained one important city. Qajar Kings assigned important people such as Seyf-al-Dole and Manoucher Khan Gorji to rule Isfahan. Some governors such as Haj Mohammad Hossein Khan Sadr started buildings such as Sadr School, Sadr Palace, and so on. However, there were some governors such as Zelle- Soltan who were totally inattentive and unkind to the cities and its buildings and most of the buildings were destroyed or ruined at his time. Another important point was the attacks and invasion by outsiders that had nothings but destruction for them (Corush Salehi, Asgari, 2011, 2).

Literature review

There are many books and texts that reviewed the culture and architecture of the historical houses, among them is a book "House, Culture and Nature" by Mohammad Reza Haeri Mazandarani which is the fruit of search in the architecture of Iranian houses and their relation with nature and culture. This book aimed to identify the features of Iranian houses and the manner they respond to the material and spiritual needs of human as well as recognizing the identity of Iranian architecture. Regarding the publications on entrance, "Entrance Spaces in Old Tehran" by Hossain Soltanzadeh is a well-known book. This books has 9 main elements about privacy in entrances. These axes are: 1) the entrance position regarding the length of passage. 2) The position of entrance regarding the passage edge. 3) The architectural features of entrance space. 4) the elements and combination of entrance space. 5) Proportions of the entrance space. 6) The manner of combining the

entrance space with adjacent levels and elements. 7) Different kinds of entrance ornaments. 8) The portal and the orifice at the top of the door. 9) Color in the entrance space. There are a few works on examining the architecture of traditional houses in Isfahan including “The Armenian in New Jolfa, Isfahan” by Karapetyan. Moreover, Jabal Ameli cited an article “Isfahan Houses in the Contemporary time” and reviewed the contemporary houses in a typological manner from the Persian Constitutional Revelation to the development of the modern architecture. This book reviewed the typology of the form and history of historic houses in Isfahan. Some scholars such as SerzheSanteli and Dyba made a documentation on this typology.

Methodology

The present study employed the case study method as well as the mixing methods such as descriptive and analytical methods. So that the subject of the study was examined and reviewed by field studies and library documentation as well as observations and the results were compare and contrasted afterward. The cases were three Armenians houses from Safavid dy-

nasty and five other houses from the Qajar dynasty and then they were compared and contrasted. These cases were chosen because they had entrance space and elements. The spaces were compared regarding their privacy. The present study aims to find answer to the following questions: are the entrance spaces different from those of Qajar Houses. What are important and effective factors on the privacy in these houses in both dynasty? Were the governments influential in determining the privacy in the houses?

The main argument

The role of privacy in the culture and patterns of architecture describes the principle of the traditional and Islamic principles. Creating privacy in organizing entrance spaces while passing a hierarchy of entrance is highly important. Privacy has been always observed in building of the traditional architectures and it is expected that it be valued in the present architecture as well. By comparing two influential historic times on the architecture of traditional houses in Isfahan, some features have been found that effect on the degree of privacy. In our traditional architecture that have been some solutions for privacy (fig 1).

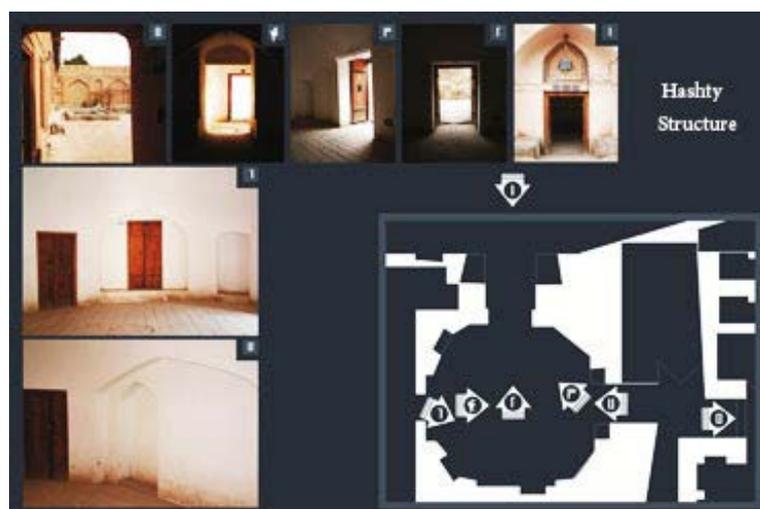


Fig 1. Entrance space at Sheikh al-Islam's house (Source: Writer)

In the Safavid houses the spatial organization of the physic of the houses is mostly introverted but most houses in Jolfa from the Safavid time are mainly extroverted. This is due to the role of protection and se-

curity of Armenian in Jolfa (figure 2). In Qajar time, however, the formation of houses are extroverted. In both dynasties houses had elements for the entrance and multiple gardens representing the privacy. Gar-

dens related to Andaruni and Biruni parts and the Khalvat provided privacy for the family members,

guests, and strangers. This shows that privacy was very important. Even with differences in the govern-

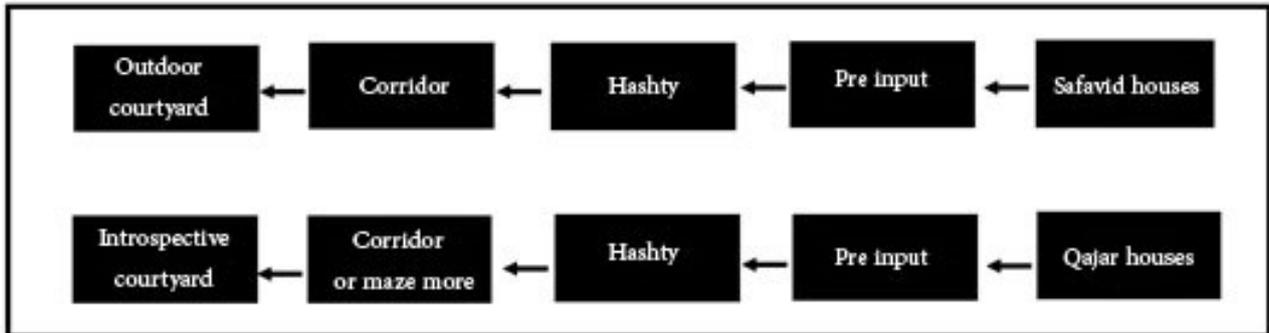


Figure 2. Diagram of the division of inputs into Qajar and Safavid houses (Source: Writer)

ments and dynasties, privacy was of highest importance showing that government has lesser effect on the concept of privacy in houses. But the houses remained from the Safavid dynasty we can see extrovert and introvert houses and this difference can be seen in the garden spaces.

The architecture patterns feature

Yard: in the architecture patterns in the Safavid and Qajar time, the gardens were mostly introvert (Sheikh-al-Islam’s house and Alam’s house) and rarely a case of extrovert was seen (Figure 3). Observing the pattern of privacy distinguished the pub-

lic and private parts (Alam’s house). Based on the dimensions and position of house, this privacy is observable by allocating one room to guests or having different gardens as well as Andaruni and Biruni parts. Each house usually has one garden with rooms around. On the other hand, the Armenian houses in Safavid dynasty privacy is not that important. Constructing the porch on the first floor and lack of gardens showing Andaruni and Biruni shows that privacy in jolfa is not observed that much. Multi-garden houses have Andaruni, Biruni, Baharvand, Narenjestan, and Khalvat.



Fig 3. Dr. Alam’s house plan and a picture of the introversion created in this house (Ganjnameh)

Entrance: The first sign of the effect of privacy in the entrance of the traditional houses is shown in the form of doors and door knockers as well as spaces such as Hashti and twisty passages provide more spaces for the elements and hierarchy of privacy.

Façade

By employing the Persian and Islamic knowledge and combining the new ideas, the structure of traditional houses and architecture are witnessing different façades in the Safavid and Qajar time, sometime in accordance to the design, the façade that masterfully observed the elements such as climate, environment, and surroundings.

Plan

there is a complete symmetry in façade and plan and usually the main front of the building is in the

southern part and it used the triple divisions in plan, facades and details. The central hall is usually more conspicuous than and usually as high as two floors. Porch is one of the most significant elements in the Safavid time and is in the middle axe. The gardens as well as rooms are usually a complete rectangle. The heights in Safavid architecture is not as high as those of Qajar’s and doors are usually wider (Ghasemi Sichani, 2015, 35).

Conclusion

By observing the elements of the entrance in the Safavid and Qajar houses we conclude that the primary part of the entrance in both styles have jolokhan. Jolokhan may have two platforms for sitting or o show a recess in the plan representing a different space in the ally. Some times in blind or private alleys jolokhan was only defined by placing two platforms in each side. However, there may be some houses in

Seeing out To the middle ground	Yard	Corridor	Hashty	Pre entrance	Safavid houses
does not have					Daivid
does not have					Sokeias
does not have					Zuliian

Table 1- Safavid houses in Isfahan (Writer, 2017)

such allies. After jolokhan there are masterfully ornamented door with door Kobe allocated separately for men and women. There are also beautiful inscriptions on the top of the doors. Then we get to Hashty which explains the master work of Iranian architecture using different ornamentation elements present

the feeling of invitation to the house (Table 1).

These is some places for sittings with different purposes such as loading, sitting to relive tiredness, of paying a short visit. After hashti there are different

passages to get to the warehouse, stable, or roof and in some houses there was an attic for safeguarding. Between hashti and garden, there is a passage, mostly a twisty one, to prevent the direct eye contacts of

the strangers; this is present in most of the houses in Safavid and Qajar dynasties (Table 2).

After the passage we get to the miansara. Miansaras usually have one small-garden and in some others

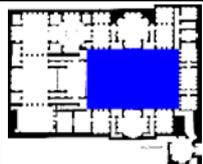
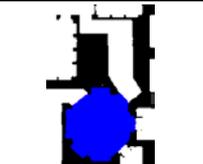
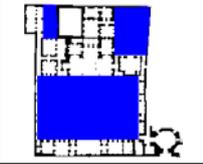
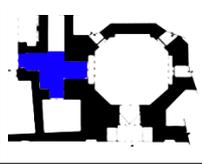
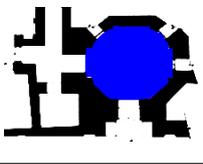
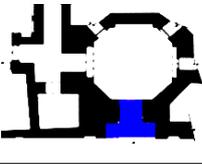
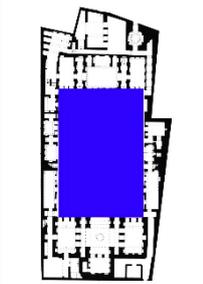
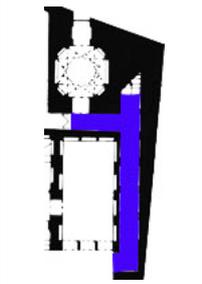
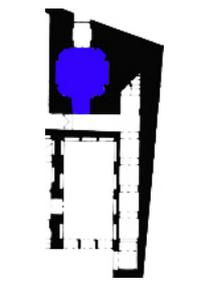
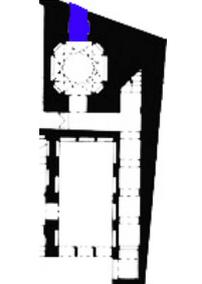
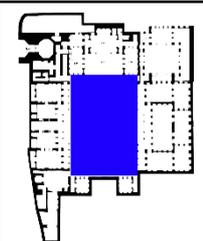
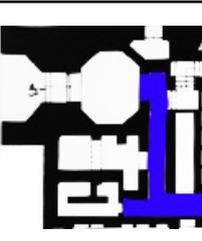
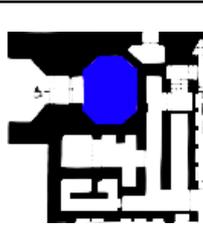
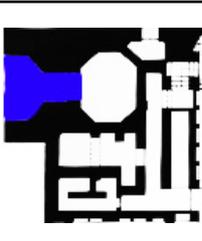
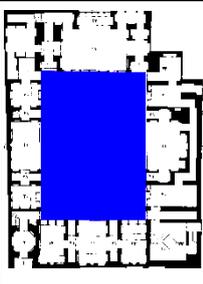
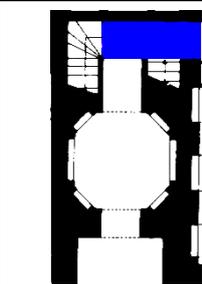
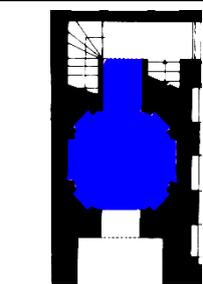
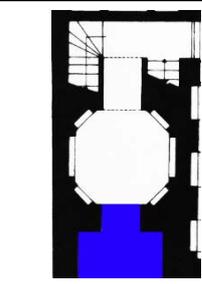
Seeing out To the middle ground	Yard	Corridor	Hashty	Pre entrance	Safavid houses
does not have					Wasigh ansary
does not have					Sheikh al-Islam
does not have					khodsie
does not have					charmi
does not have					Haj Rasools

Table 2-Qajar houses in Isfahan (Writer, 2017)

they are two or two small-gardens. The first garden has a direct relation to the outside and the outside garden or next garden is called Andaroni which is especial for the family members and the outside garden

is called Khalvat and has more private space mostly for the servants. Direct entrance to the porch was not in fashion in the past and the entrance were from the sides. To enclose the porch in a central manner, it

was protected by fences (Karapetyan, 2001, 202). The remained houses from the Safavid time are mostly in the Jolfa and belong to the Armenian com-

munity. These houses are mainly extrovert, however, the entrance in them have a lot in common with Qajar house regarding the physic and structure. Consid-

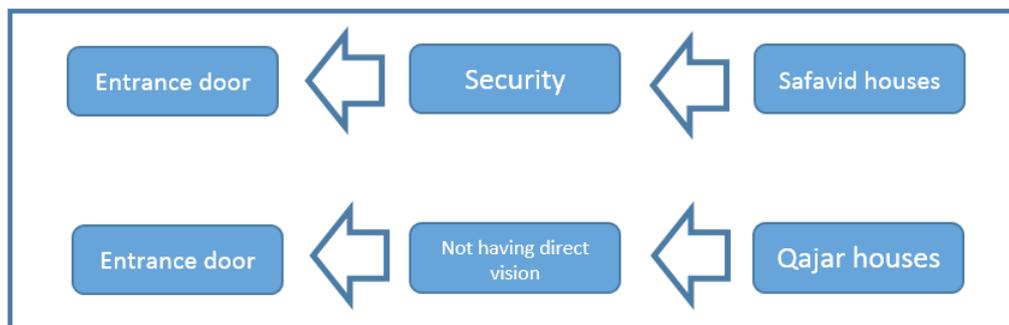


Fig 4. Different causes of privacy in Safavid and Qajar homes (Writer, 2017)

ering the garden, they are more extrovert in and like Qajar houses they do not encompass the garden and only in one or two sides of the garden the building is situated. It is inferred that government and dynasty changes (Safavid and Qajar) did not affect the degree of privacy in the entrances and both styles have similar fashion. Even in houses in Jolfa, the neighborhood for the Armenian settlement, the same privacy is observed (Fig 4).

In miansara, however, the influence of religion in the Armenian houses changed the element of pool to well. There have been many extrovert houses in Safavid time that has been destroyed and most of the remained houses are in Jolfa. Features such as lack of direct view from outside to inside, creating a communicative place in a space between outside and inside to prevent the entrance of the strangers as well as having spaces for sitting in the entrance to provide a more extensive relation with the people in the ally brought about the sense of tranquility, and security as well as a visual and relational privacy in both Safavid and Qajar time. That is why the entrance were twister in the Qajar time. As it was mentioned earlier, the gardens in the Safavid and Qajar are extrovert and introvert, respectively. For the later, this introvert display the degree of privacy in the Andaroni, Bironi, and Khalvat. Further studies on direct sight from the opening of the outside and their comparisons with the inside opening in Safavid and Qajar

time can help to have more understanding on the concept of privacy in houses in Isfahan.

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