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Architectural Design of the Vacant Space Adjacent to the Martha Peters House (Art University of Isfahan) in Isfahan, Iran

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Abstract

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Martha Peters House is one of the gorgeous houses in the Jolfa neighbourhood of Isfahan. It was built during the kingdom of Shah Abbas Safavid Empire and is now used as the Art University of Isfahan. There is a vacant space between two parts of this historic house, which can be reused as an academic space at the University. This article aims to introduce and summarise the considered rules in contemporary architectural design in the neighbourhood of historic buildings. After brief research about Isfahan and the Martha Peters House, the design process of the vacant space near it is mentioned. This historic research is based on a qualitative method and the personal observations of the author. The results of this article can be useful for preservationists and conservationists in the field of cultural heritage, as well as architects and interior designers, in designing in the historic context of ancient cities worldwide.

Keywords: Martha Peters House; Historic House; Art University of Isfahan; Isfahan; Iran.

1. Introduction

For thousands of years, Isfahan has been chosen as the capital of the country several times due to political considerations, geographical location, natural conditions, and the vastness of its land. On several other occasions, preparations were made for this, but problems prevented it. The most important periods when Isfahan was officially the capital of Iran were the Parthian era, the Sasanian era, the Djalmeher era, the Seljuk period, and the Safavid period. Isfahan was the capital of Iran in various periods and the favourite of the sultans who ruled there. However, Isfahan was not as important and famous in any of these periods as in the Safavid period and the reigns of Shah Abbas I and Shah Abbas II. During this period, Isfahan had reached perfection and fame in every way and had attracted the nations of the world to itself, and thousands of archaeologists, orientalist, historians, artists, and scientists from all over the world lovingly entered Isfahan. Most of them, after a long stay, have written down their astonishing observations in valuable books and published them in the world, each of which is an undeniable document of the antiquity and greatness of the culture of Iran (Abouei, 2023, pp. 128-151).

The first part of this article introduces Isfahan City in general, and the second part is about The Art University of Isfahan. The third part is about the current situation and architectural characteristics of Martha Peters House, the fourth part is about the architectural design of the vacant space adjacent to the Martha Peters House, and the fifth and last part is about conclusions.

1.1.1. The Beginning of the Islamic Period (Until about 150 AH/ 767 AD)

It is believed that Isfahan was formed from two urban habitats in this period. “Jeï” near the river and “Judah” northwest of it at about 2 miles, each of them surrounded by villages under their territory. It seems that the arrival of Muslims (21-23 Hijri) to the region did not have much effect on urban development until the second century Hijri (641-643 AD). Internal movements happened until around 324 AH (324 AH / 935 AD).

1.1.2. Abbasid Period

From the 2nd to the 4th century of Hijri, the great social and political movements that took place in the whole country of Iran crystallised in the development of the city of Isfahan. These factors attracted surrounding villages to the centre and urban development.

1.1.3. Al-e Buyeh and Seljuq Period (324 to 592 AH/ 935 to 1196 AD)

In the 4th century (10th AD), Iran regained its political independence, and its reflection was the revival of the country's economic, social, and cultural status. In the first half of the 4th century, the densely populated part of Isfahan was surrounded by a wall. The urban cores outside the wall, including Lenban in the west, Jay in the east, and agricultural lands between them in the shape of a crescent, were established north of the river.

1.1.4. Safavid Period (1006 to 1130 AH/ 1597 to 1722 AD)

The greatest development of the city of Isfahan took place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Hijri (sixteenth and seventeenth AD) when it was the capital of the Safavid dynasty. A premeditated plan to regulate the development of the city connected the checkered grid of the southern part of the city to the existing riverside properties outside the city without major changes in its structure. This development was guided by two main axes. River (West-East) and Chaharbagh Street (North-South). Esfahanians accepted only Safavids in the royal position. The Qajars made Tehran, a village in the north of Ray, their capital. With the growth of Tehran, it fell from prosperity and became impoverished, and the number of its inhabitants decreased from several thousand to several tens of thousands. But Sardar-e Pahlavi settled Iran's largest textile factories in Isfahan, and this city became the largest working town in Iran. During the time of his successor, the Kouhrang tunnel poured a part of the Karun River into the Zayandeh-Roud River, and the Zayandeh-Roud Dam was closed on this river. Native industries such as iron smelting, steel complex, and acrylic bridges were established in Zayandeh-Roud Valley.

Delicate crafts such as silver and copper engraving, enamel, penmanship, intaglio making, and carpet weaving are a sign of Isfahani's artistic taste, accuracy, and mentality, which is in great demand in the world. The disaster that happened to the historical neighbourhoods of Isfahan was that they were emptied of their original inhabitants, and the historical fabric around the market was severely damaged. The construction of unnecessary and unmeasured streets and the destruction of some historical buildings have increased the speed of this destruction. The buildings and connections that appeared in their place did not have at least half of their artistic value. The new architecture that took their place is so devoid of identity and content that most of it should be recorded in the list of visual pollution. An eye-sucking debate has destroyed the pleasant atmosphere of the city (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, General Directorate of Housing and Urban Development of Isfahan Province, 1993).

1.2. The Building of the City of Jei

Govind Iskandar Rumi (336-323 BC) said this city was founded by the son of Zardeh Esfahani and named after him. The width of the fertility base of the city was 60 raw clay, and based on Farhiz, they stuck it with a flower. They also say that Shahr-e (city of) Jei was built before the Jam Kingdom. But Afrasiab destroyed it along with other Iranian cities. Khomani Cheharzad (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 92: Chama Azad) Dokht e Bahman, son of Esfandiar, rebuilt the foundation of the city before Iskandar's invasion. Half of the rampart was built when Khamani died. When Iskandar came, he left the rampart in the same condition, until in the days of Firoz, the son of Yazdgerd, and under his command, Azarshapour, the son of Azarmanan, who was from Dieh-e-Harastan, from Rastaq Mabrin (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 92: Rastaq Mabrin; Abu Al-Sheikh, 1/39: Iskandar Rumi Sakht and Kasri Anushirvan, with the help of Azarshapur, we saw him, Anjam Rasand), completed the construction of the rampart of Shahr-e-Jei. This work was done one hundred and seventy years before Islam. In this rampart, Azarshapur built viewpoints for the watchers, prepared the position of the warriors on top of it, and built four gates on the four sides of the fort, each with a day. He built that gate, which was in front of the market square on the day of Khor and called it Khor (Khorshid=Sun) Gate. The next day, he built the moon gate on the moon day, which is called the Asphis gate (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160: Asvij; Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 92: Asfish). The next day, he built the gate of Tirbar (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160: Tira), which is the gate of Mercury and is known as the gate of darkness. So, on the fourth day, he built the fourth gate, called Gosh Bar (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 92: Bab Josh), which is the Gate of Judea.

The geometrical style of the construction of these gates is such that when the sun is at the first degree of the Jedi, it rises from the entrance of the gate and sets at the Yehudiyeh gate, and when it is at the first degree of the Sultan, it rises at the Asfis gate and sets at the Tirah gate. In the city, there was a man from Zubairian named Muhammad bin Mahmud (one of the followers of Abdullah bin Zubayr bin Awam was killed in 73-73 BC). He broke the mouth of the gate and opened another gate in the wall of the city, which was called New Gate, and in place of the mouth of the gate, he placed a wooden door. One of the elders said that he read an inscription on a door of the gates with the following content: Ashtazoweh (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 93: Stadtwer), the supervisor of engineers and architects, says that the cost of bread stew for the workers of the barrow of the city reached 600 thousand dirhams. Quoting another, they say that a complaint was made against the superintendent of the building. They asked him back, and he was sentenced to pay 50,000 dinars, and this amount was used as the basic cost for Farheez. The city of Jei had no inhabitants and was only a fortress for the villagers of Rastaq Jei, who lived in the city of Qe. With the arrival of Islam, the Arabs destroyed the city of Gaha, and the remaining people of the city moved to Jei. They were the first people who settled in Jei. The first house they built in the city of Jei was Matiyar's house, which was

built by the order of Khosroparviz (Sasanian, 590-627 AD) when he opened the city of Constantinople to Khosrow. After that, when the residents of Jei moved to Jei, they built other houses in the city.

1.3. The Area of the City of Jei

The surrounding area of the city is one thousand Kasbah, A kasbah (romanised: qasaba, lit. 'fortress', also spelt qasbah, qasba, qasaba, or casbah, is a fortress, most commonly the citadel or fortified quarter of a city (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160) and its area is equal to two thousand Jarib because its diameter is three hundred and twenty Kasbah, which if half the diameter is multiplied by a semicircle, the result will be eighty thousand Kasbah, which is the same as two thousand Jarib. Inside the rampart, one hundred and four booths (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160: 100 Burj) are built in the form of wide and curved towers, which are stable despite the circularity of the rampart. It is a thousand and one hundred cubits from the gate of the gate to the gate of Little Judah. Eighteen towers have been built between these two gates. From there to the Tirah Gate is one thousand and one hundred cubits, which has thirty-three towers, and from there to the Sfis Gate is one thousand three hundred cubits, with twenty-four towers between them (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160: 23 Burj), and from there to the Khor Gate is one thousand four hundred cubits (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, pp. 160-161). This is the equivalent of 2,625,000 cubits, and it is equal to the amount of 2,625,000 cubits. The surroundings of Shahr Haft Hazar and Sad Arm Berabar Ba Do Hazar and Sad and Hashtad and Seh and Yik Sum Qasba Ast. There are thirty-five towers in between. Therefore, the circumference of the city of Jei is seven thousand one hundred cubits, which is fifty cubits, and its length and width are five thousand hundred one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two cubits. They say that this estimate was made under the supervision of Mohammad Bin Lore Hasab (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 160: Muhammad bin Ibrahim, known as Muhammad bin Larah Isfahani, engineer).

1.4. The City of Judea

The construction of this city was done in the year 152 AH during the caliphate of Abu Jafar Mansour (136-158 AH) by Ayub bin Ziyad. He entered the city as a tribute agent along with Saeed bin Mansour Hamiri, Mahdi's uncle. Saeed, who was a general in the war, took over the responsibilities of war and tributary besides Ayoub. He settled in Diyeh Khoshinan and built a palace by the river Farsan built a mosque with an altar in front of it and placed a pulpit in it, and that altar is still standing today. He found a market in several rows for sellers and merchants in Yehudiyeh, in a place known as the straw sellers' pit. During his rule, the houses of Dieh Khashinan were joined to the houses of Yehudiyeh. The boundaries of the lands and properties belonging to the Ayyub family were from the door of the Khoshinan Mosque to the garden of Isa bin Ayyub and from the side of the Kora neighbourhood to Melenjeh. In the days of the Iranian kingdom, Judea was called Kojjudaan, that is, Koi Yehud, and it was in the Qoyeh Yuan desert. One end of it reached the village of Yuan, the other end reached the villages of Khurjan and Sanbalan, the third end reached the two districts of Kamaan and Ashkhahan, and the fourth border reached the two districts of Jarvaan and Khashinan. It was 700 acres in the area where Jews lived and engaged in their lowly professions such as cupping, leather making, gas making, and butchering.

As soon as Mahdi Abbasi (158-169 AH) got angry with Ayyub bin Ziyad, they took him to the Caliph's gate and threw him into prison. After this event, the Arabs of Dieh Tehran from the Tim tribe agreed to build the Farakhi Jami Mosque and move Ayub bin Ziyad's pulpit to it. The covered place above the mosque to the back of Abshakhor was a narrow place belonging to Sakhar bin Sinan and land belonging to him in Diyeh Tehran. Text: Marulka land. In another version, belonging to one of the writers and researchers of the Arabic language, "Muriqa" is mentioned (p. 36), who gave it to the mosque. So, the pulpit was taken there in 156 during the reign of Hani Ibn Hani, and this work was done by Ayyub son of Ziyad five years after Judea became a city. They say that the first mosque that was founded in Judea was a mosque in the Bazaneh neighbourhood, attributed to Walid bin Thamameh, the ruler of Isfahan. He is right that the first big mosque that was built in Isfahan was the Khoshinan Mosque, which was built by Abu Khanas Mouli Omar bin Khattab during the Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib, may God be pleased with both of them. After the building of Jame Mosque, Judea expanded from the desert side, and the lands of these fifteen villages were added to it: Batarqan, Farsan, Yuan, Kharjan, Felfalan, Sanbalan, Faraanen, Kamaan, Jozdan, Lanban, Eshkhan Bruscano, Fabjan (Ibn Rusta Isfahani, 10th century, p. 200: Fabzan).

As Judea expanded, the people agreed to expand the mosque and increase its size, and Khasib bin Salam (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, pp. 84-85: Khasib bin Muslim) added lands known as Khasib Abad to it. The mosque was rebuilt again in 226 during the Caliphate of Mo'tasim and the rule of Yahya bin Abdullah bin Malik Khazai. Then, Abu Ali bin Rostam (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 1: Abu Ali Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Rustam Madini) added the part called Ziyad Abad. These were the lands of caravanserais and watering places that Abu Ali bin Rostam cleaned and added to the Grand Mosque, This work was done in 307 AH during the time of the powerful caliphate (295-320 AH) and the rule of Ahmad bin Masrour. The expansion of the first mosque and the increase of tombs and houses was in the same year, 226 AD. Abdullah ibn Hassan ibn Hafs Zakwani left many works in this mosque. He took over all the expenses of the mosque and talked to some people about this, and many things were provided to him. At the same time, he didn't consider a ring or its value or a bunch of spindles or its value to be insignificant, and what was collected was spent on building the mosque and buying its houses and land.

1.5. The Five Parts of the City

Today, the northern part of the river has been divided into four parts:

Part One: Elyadran, Lanban, Chahar Sui Kochesh, Khosh Street, Chahar Sui Shiraziha, Pai Narun, Joi Shah, Mushtuhlah, Shams Abad, Chaharbagh Kahneh, and Posht Mokhukh. The southern limit of the city reaches the

riverside street. From west to east, all of them have built wonderful houses and gardens, and although Eliadaran, Jozdan, Bagh Nou, and Najunan are on the other side of the street outside the city, it cannot be said that it is outside the city.

Part Two: Darb Kushk, New neighbourhood, Shahish, Bidabad, Qiblah Doa, Pachenar, Mornan, and part of New Gate, Hakim Mosque, Homayun Garden, and part of Dardasht and Lower Sine.

Part Three: Old Square, Yamvard, Jamale Kaleh, Shahshahan, and a part of Dardasht and Bazar up to the gate of Ashraf Jobare, Golbar, the Old Jame Mosque, Mir Square, Pashakh, Voltur, and Seyed Ahmadian, and below the gate and Nakhesh, the lands of part two and part three. It is drawn by the aqueduct and the Anjiri spring, whose water goes to Haftan village.

Part Four: East of Shah Square and Bagla Feroshan Alley and under the dome and part of Golbahar and Zale Gate and Khajo Gate and Hassan Abad Gate and Pa Qala and Karan and Tervaskan and Manshi Palace and part of Dar Al Batikh and Yazdabad and the south side of Ahmedabad and Hesar Posht The Shah Mosque and a part of the back of the kitchen and the spinning wheel, and Nakhesh spread four with some of the third parts, Khorasgan spring and Jashmedaran, and up to the river, buildings And gardens have been planned.

Part Five: As for the four gardens of Bala, Jolfa, Sichan, Hossein Abad, Marnan, Qinan, Farah Abad, Saadat Abad, and Hazar Jarib, which is on the south side of the river, it is the fifth section and it is the best neighbourhood in terms of climate, and there is a street named Nazar.

Isfahan was developed during the Abbasid period, especially Al-e Buyeh. This city, along with Ray and Hamedan, was one of the three centres of the Al-Buyeh kingdom. Isfahan, which was "the eye and light of the eastern cities in the 14th century AD" (Brugsch, 1992, p. 366), was burned by the lightning of Timur's attack. Isfahan lost its beauty and artistic effects that it had inherited from the past. If Timur destroyed Isfahan, Shah Abbas I of Safavi also made his name associated with the name of Isfahan by settling it.

Sharden, who visited Isfahan during the time of Shah Abbas II, writes in the description of its buildings and population: "According to some, the population of Isfahan is over one million and one hundred thousand. Some other residents consider it to be six hundred thousand. The documents that have reached me regarding the population of Isfahan have many differences, but the contents of all of them are almost the same in terms of buildings. The number of buildings in the city of Isfahan is 38,200 or 38,300. This means that there are twenty-nine thousand four hundred and sixty-nine houses in the city and eight thousand seven hundred and eighty houses in its suburbs. Palaces, mosques, hot springs, markets, caravanserais, and shops are also included in this account.

The new Isfahan that Shah Abbas founded, in terms of design and plan, was beyond the expectations of the minds of that time. Engelbert Kaempfer's description of Isfahan in the era of Shah Suleiman Safavi also shows that the city had the characteristics of a complete city, a city that could not be found in Iran.

Eugene Flandin, a tourist who visited Isfahan in the era of Muhammad Shah, while confirming the decrease in the city's population after the Safavid period, considered the splendour of Isfahan's artistic effects to be insignificant. In his opinion, the ornamentation of Iranian houses should be sought within them and not outside them.

In Iran, houses or abandoned areas are not worth attention, but they do not show sad scenes like in our countries. The houses do not face the streets and are free of any external decoration. All their glory is inside, which is hidden from passers-by by walls (Flandin & Coste, 1851, p. 159).

In the description of Isfahan, Madame Divalafova wrote: "The city of Isfahan, or the seat of the governor of Iraq, is located at the base of this mountain and is drowned in azure vapour. A lot of crops and trees surround it like a green cloak. The turquoise-coloured tiles of the mosques shine and have a special effect in the light of the Maghrib sun. Tall and beautiful minarets stand out against the blue background of the sky. Farang towers, which are decorated with congresses and mosaic bricks, are scattered from all sides in the fields, and many pigeons are going towards them with speed; there are so many that they have covered the sky and created clouds. Now we have come close to the beautiful city of Isfahan, that is, Isfahan, which is half of the world and the most beautiful beauty on earth and is a heavenly flower tree praised by Iranian poets. Around the road, an emerald carpet has been spread on the ground with abundant crops, and it has decorated this area like an eternal spring as if it is the envy of heaven. The air is completely perfumed by the smell of many flowers and it is a source of joy and happiness. Streams of clear water flow like life-giving springs. The wind in the branches of trees and smiling bushes imitates the life-giving songs of doves and nightingales. They say that Hamadan is a clean city and everyone dreams of living there, but Isfahan is a picture of paradise. O beautiful Isfahan and O pure region of the world, I request the creator to always rain on you more than all the cities of the world and the dew of the soul of the sky to keep you fresh and fresh."

Finally, we approached the city walls and passed through the gate and the moat. I suddenly stopped like a surprised person and looked at the ruins around it and realised my negligence, and the joy and happiness that was created in me turned into despair and sadness because I saw that the ruins were looted. I have entered. The alleys are all narrow and full of garbage. On the right and left sides are ruined bazaars that are all empty, and the walls are about to collapse, and they want to bury the passers-by under them. In these alleys, no ghost is seen, except sometimes a scorpion or a snake crosses in front of a person. There are no buildings, doors, or windows. The roofs have been torn down to remove the arrows. The precious tile coverings are broken and falling everywhere, and only the walls washed away by the rain are standing.

Olivier talks about the beauty and goodness of the bazaar and caravanserais, mosques, and public buildings in contrast to the city's "bad construction" According to Jackson (1906), these buildings and at the top of them were "Shah's Magnificent Square" which are memories "in the mind of a traveller who visited Isfahan" They would leave it.

Polak, a tourist who came to Iran during the Nasser period, believes that “the appearance of other big cities of Iran” is not much different from Tehran, the capital of the Qajar dynasty. Buildings, alleys, markets, caravanserais, and ruins are all the same in these cities, but Isfahan is an exception and a unique position in Iran. “The name of the capital is beautiful, and every government whose work is based on reason will place its shelter and work centre in it in the future.”

God-given nature and man-made domes and minarets have given Isfahan a magnificent appearance that every observer can see with similarity and balance between the two. The greenery of the trees and the turquoise and blue colour of the buildings of the city have created a novel combination.

Zayandeh-Roud River has given it a beautiful image. Nature and human artistic hands have joined hands here. Isfahan was built along this river, and there are three beautiful bridges, one in the middle of the city and two at the other two ends. What is obtained from Chardin's statement is the confirmation of the fact that the beauty of Isfahan is mixed with natural beauty and human art.

According to Engelbert Kaempfer, “The streets of Isfahan are sometimes very wide, straight, and considerably wide. Most of these streets have become the most pleasant with trees and flowing water in the middle. The most beautiful streets are located on the new outskirts of the city, Abbas Abad. After that, Jolfa and the last stage of the old city, which has few tree-planted streets, can be mentioned. Unlike the streets, the alleys are narrow and crooked and often have roofs, and this is a huge advantage for pedestrians.” (Kaempfer, 1684-1685, p. 190).

Chardin describes the city's climate as the healthiest in the world.

At the time of Sharden's visit, the city had eight gates, four of which were located on the east and south sides, and they were: 1- Hassan Abad, 2- Jubareh, whose other name is Abbasi Gate, and 3- Karan. 4- Seyed Ahmadian. Four other gates were in the west and north, named: "1 - Government Gate, 2 - Lenban Gate, 3 - Toghchi Gate, 4 - Dardasht Gate". According to this French tourist, in addition to these, six other small gates were not given a special name (Chardin, 1983, p. 38). These eight magnificent city gates were in between, whose "circumference length" was "about eight miles" from the suburbs. According to Tavernier, the two neighbourhoods of Haidari and Nemati were two famous neighbourhoods of Isfahan, which, according to the registers of the two villages that make up Isfahan, were also named after this. The suburbs of the city were made up of six towns or towns, which were called Rabat. The largest of these towns was called Jolfa. For more information about the Dardasht neighbourhood of Isfahan, the published book chapter entitled “Tomb of Sultan Bokht Agha and Two Minarets of Dardasht Neighbourhood in Isfahan, Iran” written by the author can be studied (Babazadeh-Asbagh, 2022b).

1.6. Denomination of Isfahan

Different spellings of the name “Isfahan” in old and new sources:

Espadan (The writing of Isfahan by Ptolemy, quoting Eratosthenes, in the second to third centuries BC).

Espadaneh (The writing of Isfahan by Ptolemy, quoting Eratosthenes, in the second to third centuries BC; Turkish Media Dictionary, Isfahan section).

Sepahan (Pahlavi writing of the word).

Sabahan (Minorsky & Bosworth, 1982, 7a-76-10a-27a-28a-29a).

Asbahan (Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 269/1 and by Kesr Hamzah, written by Samaani and Abu Ubayd Al-Kabri Al-Andalusi, Ibn Kalbi Ibn Darid and Abdullah Al-Mustajir, quoted by Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 270/1, Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 102, and writing the word in some Arabic books; Written by Hamza Esfahani, quoted by Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 270/1).

Esfahan (Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, p. 6).

Aspadna (The writing of classic geographical writers quoted by Barthold & Bosworth, 1984, p. 225).

Espatna (The ancient writing of Isfahan quoted by Rezazadeh Shafaq, 1977, p. 32).

Esbahan (Tabrizi in Borhan-e Qate Dictionary, 1651, Isfahan Section).

Espahan (Sheikh Jaberi Ansari, 1999, p. 13).

Espahan (Jenab Esfahani, 1992, p. 2).

Basfahan (Another writing by Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, quoted from the Dekhoda Dictionary, 1950).

Safahan (Another writing by Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, quoted from the Dekhoda Dictionary, 1950).

Esfahan (Another writing by Mafarrukhi Isfahani, 2006, quoted from the Dekhoda Dictionary, 1950).

Safahun (Other forms of the name of Isfahan in different books according to the Dekhoda Dictionary, 1950).

Esfahan (Local pronunciation of Isfahan people).

From past centuries until now, Isfahan has been referred to as a vast area whose boundaries and territory have changed, and what emerges from history, the size of Isfahan's land has decreased in the later stages. It is worth mentioning that due to Isfahan being the capital of the Safavid dynasty and the creation of great architectural masterpieces in it, since then, the name of Isfahan has been associated with this city more than the district and province of Isfahan. The boundaries of Isfahan, before Islam, were 120 farsangs, which extended from the north and east to Tari and Qoms (Semnan) and from the south to the vicinity of Kerman, Fars, and Khuzestan, and from the west to the vicinity of Hamedan and Nahavand, and had three provinces and thirty villages and 120 Tasuj (Persian Arabic “Tsavi” meaning bank, area) and 5 thousand villages and 7 cities with the names: “Kahtha - Jar - Jei - Geh - Mehrin”- It has been drama and drama (Rafiei Mehrabadi, 1973, pp. 1, 2, 9).

As can be deduced from the historical books, the mentioned cities were destroyed due to natural and unnatural events and lost their prosperity, among them, the city of “Jei” (Gi - Gabian - Gabieh, etc.) near the current Jolfa, It was established for a long time and with the migration of the Jews of Babylon by “Bokht al-Nasr” to the position opposite “Jei”, that area was called “Jehuda” or “Dar-e-Yahoudi”. Some historians have no doubts about applying

the name of Isfahan (with its different forms of spelling) to this area before Islam, but from what date was Isfahan applied to the current city, and the names “Jei” and “Yahoudiyeh”. Kam has been forgotten or mentioned as one of the neighbourhoods of Isfahan, it does not give a definite theoretical history in this case. Interestingly, Damascus is mentioned in “Nakhbah Al-Dahr” from Isfahan, under the title “Rashorji” (Rafiei Mehrabadi, 1973, p. 473).

Regarding the name of Isfahan, various opinions have been expressed, from fact to legend. Among the names, what many writers with different opinions agree on is what “Isfahan” means. It is “Sepahan”, and it has been known by this name since it was the gathering place of the army and corps in pre-Islamic times. One of the first sources that consider the word “Isfahan” to be derived from “Lashgar” is the book *Mahasen of Isfahan*, written by Mufadl bin Saad Mafaroukhi in the fifth century of Hijri: “... and they have also said that the original name of Isfahan was “Isfahan”, because during the days of Fars, Gudrazb Keshwad was the ruler and owner of it, and whenever the foot of authority was displayed in the stirrup of power, eighty of his noble sons rode with him, all of them The wise warriors and all the culturally brave men, who were too much on their sons and daughters and worshipers, when they were riding, people said: Isfahan means the army, the circulation of the words of the people, Isfahan was called that.” “...and they have also said that when Nimrod cursed, out of misguidance and satanic delusion, Ibrahim Khalil (AS) was thrown into the fire from the catapult of seduction and disbelief, and he sent a herald around the kingdoms, to the gathering of Hime and Naqal to At one point, all the kingdoms submitted to him and obeyed, but the people of Isfahan again called him: Isfahan, that is, the army of God” (Rafiei Mehrabadi, 1973, pp. 79-80).

In the first story, although Mafrookhi deduced the meaning of army from the word Isfahan, he considered Isfahan in the story of Nimrod and Ibrahim, which is folk and has no historical authenticity. On page 87 of the book, Mafarokhi again mentioned the soldiers and soldiers of Isfahan, which also indicated the centrality of Isfahan in this matter. Ibn Athir (6th and 7th century AH) also considered Isfahan to be the place of gathering of Sassanid kings in the book “Al-Lab” (Mashhadizadeh Dehaqani, 1994, p. 298). Ibn Hamza also considered Isfahan as a derivative of Lashgar for the following reasons: “When the word Isfahan is translated into Farsi, it becomes Isbah, and Isbah is the plural of Isbah, and Isbah is the name of the army, and the name of the dog and the dog are also the name of the army, as well as an animal with the same name, and these two words have two meanings. The duty of both (the dog and the army) is patrolling, and that is why the two cities where the army was located were called by these two names: Isbah was called Ispahan, and Sejstan was called Skan and Sakstan” (Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 270/1). They called Abdullah Al-Mustajir (Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 270/1) and Ibn Athir (Mashhadizadeh Dehaqani, 1994, p. 298) considered “Han” in the word “Isfahan” to be a plural sign, which not only does not indicate such meaning but its “e” is related to the last letter of the first part, which is “Isfa” (Espeh = Horse). And “an” is also a place suffix.

On the other hand, Ibn Duraid (Mashhadizadeh Dehaqani, 1994, p. 298) took Isbah as a compound of “Esb” which means Horse, and “Han” which means a city and in general, “City of Riders” and these two meanings are not found in any of the dictionaries. The scholars of Anandraj and Mentehi Al-Arab (Isfahan section) cultures have also considered Isfahan or Isbah as the root of Sepahan or Espahan. Jackson writes in his travelogue: Ptolemy, the Greek geographer in the 2nd century AD, named Isfahan as Aspadana, which can be equivalent to an ancient Persian word meaning ‘with horses of mercy’. In the Pahlavi texts, where there is an interpretation of an Avestan phrase, the city is called Sepahan (Jackson, 1906, pp. 307, 308). Saeed Nafisi says, “In fact, the name of the city was Aspadan in the old days, which means: the place where horses are bred” (Jackson, 1906, p. 173; Nafisi, 2012).

Ebrahimpour Dawood considered Isfahan to be derived from Isfahan and “Espheh” to be derived from “Esb” The summary of his expressions is as follows: “The name that this animal (horse) has today in Persian is the same one that it had among the Aryans several thousand years ago: in Avesta and Achaemenid Persia, “Asp” and its female “Aspi” or “Asbi” And in Sanskrit, it is called Asva and in Latin, Equus. Some scientists have taken the word horse from the Aryan infinitive “Ag” AK (as), which means to rush... Among the words in which the horse is seen are “Spah” and “Spahbod”. He is the one who is appointed as the commander of the Cavalry. There is no doubt that the name of the city is “Spahbad” or “Sepahbod”, which is assigned to the command of cavalry soldiers. There is no doubt that the name of the city of Isfahan or Sepahan (Isfahan Arabic) comes from the same word that is Spada in the Avesta and Achaemenian Persians. The famous Greek geographer, Ptolemy Ptolemaos, mentioned the name of this city by quoting Eratosthenes (195-275 BC) Aspadana.” (Jackson, 1906, pp. 222, 225).

Lord Curzon suggests that the name of Isfahan is derived from the name of the Feridan family, called Aspian (Atrian) (Curzon, 1971, p. 30; Jackson, 1906, p. 42/2). Because these two researchers did not mention the lexical derivation of this city, the name they have mentioned deserves a historical investigation from the aspect of term derivation. Therefore, since Isfahan was in the heart of the Iranian Plateau during the Ashkan and Sassanid eras and even before that, it was given importance and due to its strategic aspect, it became the centre of gathering and gathering of the army, and it presented itself as a strong fortress. Therefore, he took the name Sepahan due to his role as a soldier, and this word gradually became Arab and became Isfahan. From non-scientific aspects, the name of Isfahan is attributed to Isbah bin Falluj ibn Lanti ibn Yunan ibn Yafath according to the Companions of the Travelers and according to the Torah, and according to Ibn Kalbi attributed to Isfahan ibn Falluj ibn Sam ibn Noah (peace be upon him) is (Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 270/1).

The author of Rozat al-Janat offers such a legendary opinion regarding the name of Isfahan: “They say that there used to be a sea here. Suleiman ordered the Jinn to dig a hole for him in a place known as Javakhwani, and the ground there dried up. On the slope of its southern mountain, the great Zandroud river flowed until Suleiman (a.s.) entered there with a procession or with a blanket and enjoyed the weather there. He pointed there with his vizier Asif, and because he spoke many words, he said in Farsi: Asif Han, which in Farsi means a nearby place. The meaning is that we are looking for the land. For this reason, Asif Han was told.” (Yāqūt al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 3/1).

For obtaining more information about the city of Isfahan and its historic houses an article written by the author titled “Comparative Analysis of Qajar Historic Houses in Tabriz, Isfahan, Yazd, and Kashan, Regarding their Architectural Forms and Elements” can be read (Babazadeh-Asbagh, 2022a).

2. Art University of Isfahan

Founded in 1977 as Isfahan Pardis College, the Art University of Isfahan (AUI) is situated in the culturally rich city of Isfahan, a historic centre of art and architecture in central Iran. In its formative years, Pardis operated as a branch of Farabi University and emerged as the first national institution dedicated to the conservation and restoration of historical artefacts, monuments, and architectural heritage. Following a temporary suspension of activities after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the institution resumed operations and achieved independence from the Art University of Tehran (Farabi University) in 1999. In 2000, AUI attained full university accreditation and currently offers a comprehensive array of academic programs, including five undergraduate majors in fine arts and architecture, as well as three graduate specialisations in architecture and conservation. The university is uniquely situated amid significant historical buildings and monuments, providing an inspiring academic environment conducive to artistic and architectural study. The central location of the AUI campus enhances accessibility to a variety of social and cultural activities in Isfahan, facilitated by efficient public transportation options. According to the most recent scientific ranking report released by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology of Iran, The Art University of Isfahan has been distinguished as the leading art university in the country for the past three years.

With an enrollment exceeding 3,000 students across various academic levels and a dedicated faculty of approximately 130 full-time members, AUI is poised for continued growth and excellence in the field of art education. As we look to the future, the university remains committed to nurturing artistic talent and fostering innovation within the arts (URL1 & URL2). AUI is recognised as a comprehensive institution that offers a wide range of academic programs at undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels across five faculties (URL3). The Art University of Isfahan is a young, modern institute of higher education located centrally in the area bordering the five Iranian federal states. The heritage of Isfahan as a home for art, culture, education, and research dates back many years. The mission of the five comprehensive faculties, which were simultaneously founded at that time, was to bring together theoretical and practical training, to implement enhanced permeability and equality of opportunity in the educational system while driving a more regional approach to study programmers and research (URL9).

2.1. Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning

This faculty consists of 3 departments of Architecture, Urban Design, and Industrial Design and is in the central part of the Safavid royal governmental area. The campus is in the historical monument of Tohid Khaneh, and the University’s main (conference) hall is located on this campus. It used to be the Safavid’s Zekr Khaneh, in which the great Sufis of the time held weekly gatherings and spiritual ceremonies. The school is also located across from the Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art.

2.1.1. Architecture Department

Architecture is a discipline that integrates art and technology. Architects are responsible for shaping the built environment around us. The emergence of architecture as a distinguished discipline dates to antiquity when many monuments and public buildings were constructed. Since ancient times, architectural culture has guided arts and society and created significant movements that shaped different ages. Similarly, today's architectural designs will shape our daily environment and act as representatives of our times. The criteria for architectural education are determined with the understanding of this important role and the social impact of the profession. The Architecture Department of AUI focuses on architecture and architectural theory and studies at Undergraduate and Graduate levels up to PhD.

2.1.2. Urban Design Department

Urban design involves the arrangement and design of buildings, public spaces, transport systems, services, and amenities. Urban design is the process of giving form, shape, and character to groups of buildings, whole neighbourhoods, and the city. It is a framework that orders the elements into a network of streets, squares, and blocks. Urban design blends architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning to make urban areas functional and attractive. Urban Design is about connecting people and places, movement and urban form, nature and the built fabric. Urban design draws together the many strands of place-making, environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability into the creation of places with distinct beauty and identity. Urban design is derived from planning and transportation policy, architectural design, development economics, engineering, and landscape. It draws these and other strands together, creating a vision for an area and then deploying the resources and skills needed to bring the vision to life.

2.1.3. Industrial Design Department

Industrial design is the professional service of creating and developing concepts and specifications that optimise the function, value, and appearance of products and systems for the mutual benefit of both the user and the manufacturer. Industrial designers develop these concepts and specifications through the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data guided by the special requirements of the client or manufacturer. They are trained to prepare clear and concise recommendations through drawings, models, and verbal descriptions. In addition to supplying concepts for products and systems, industrial designers are often retained for consultation on a variety of problems that have to do with a client's image. Such assignments include product and organisation identity systems, development of

communication systems, interior space planning and exhibit design, advertising devices and packaging, and other related services. Their expertise is sought in a wide variety of administrative arenas to assist in developing industrial standards, regulatory guidelines, and quality control procedures to improve manufacturing operations and products. Industrial designers, as professionals, are guided by their awareness of obligations to fulfil contractual responsibilities to clients, to protect public safety and well-being, to respect the environment, and to observe ethical business practices (URL4).

2.2. Faculty of Conservation and Restoration

Art conservation is an exciting and challenging multidisciplinary field that involves examining, interpreting, analysing, and treating cultural, historic, and artistic objects. Professional conservators rely on their knowledge of both the humanities and the sciences to understand the creation and production of material culture in the past and present and to ensure its preservation for future generations. The Conservation Group of Art University of Isfahan has been the first educational institution in this field since 1977. The main objective of this school was to educate and train professionals for the conservation and reconstruction of cultural and historical artefacts and monuments to preserve the treasures of Iranian culture scientifically and fundamentally. The school is in two historic Armenian houses, David and Soukias, in the old neighbourhood of Jolfa in Isfahan. The school has a specialised library, Photo Lab, X-Ray Lab, Metallographic Lab, Chemical Lab, and conservation workshops for painting, metal, paper, textile, glass, ceramics, wood, Ivory, and bone.

2.2.1. Department of Archaeology

Since its establishment in research and academic activities, the Institute of Archaeology has been active in various excavations at numerous sites. It has also played an important role in training a great number of students and researchers and has facilitated the promotion of this field at the postgraduate level as well as PhD in three main focuses, Prehistoric, Historical, and Islamic orientation.

2.2.2. Department of Archaeometry

The main purpose of the program is to qualify the postgraduates to bring solutions to archaeological problems by the application of scientific methods of natural and applied sciences. This department focuses on two main areas of research, such as organic and inorganic materials. The study and understanding of history have acquired a new dimension through the collaboration between pure scientists and archaeologists. Thus, the analysis, identification, characterisation, and dating of archaeological remains and materials have become complete. Archaeometrical studies help to provide a universal chronology, the origin of production and production technology of artefacts, concentrated on the questions of where artefacts were made, how they were made, and what they were used for. Archaeometrical studies also provide information on past landscapes, climates, flora and fauna as well as on man himself, information about the locations both of archaeological sites themselves and buried features within these sites, information for full site evaluation before any planning application, information for decay processes as well as precautionary conservation (URL5).

2.3. Faculty of Research Excellence in Art and Entrepreneurship

Through Arts Entrepreneurship, students will be able to develop the entrepreneurial and managerial skills necessary to succeed as creative individuals in the increasingly complex economic environment of contemporary artmaking. Students will attain the business acumen and expertise necessary to operate arts and cultural institutions in the specific role of an arts administrator. They will exhibit the critical and creative skills needed by policymakers and the knowledge of varied cultural, social, and economic realities impacting contemporary art disciplines, creative sector collaborations, and the role of art in society. Based on the Iranian Comprehensive Scientific Map, the Iranian 5th five-year plan for higher education development, and the 1404 (2025) National Horizon Documents, shifting universities towards entrepreneurship has become the key factor in national development. Due to this fact, The Art University of Isfahan started the studies of establishing the School of Art Entrepreneurship in 2010, and finally, the first group of graduate students were accepted in 2012 in 4 majors: Cultural Entrepreneurship, Art Economics, Tourism, Museums Studies, and Urban Economics.

The two departments of Art Theory and Research and Islamic Art are among the leading academic centers in Iran applying contemporary and scholarly theories and methodologies. To name a few, clusters of students are working on historical and contemporary topics in Iranian, Islamic, and Global art with a focus on Mythology, Anthropology of Art, Iconography, and Iconology, Phenomenology, Post-structural theories such as Discourse Analysis, intertextuality, and other trends in contemporary theory and analysis. On the other hand, Traditionalism and Islamic interpretation of traditional art are applied in the Islamic Art department, especially at the graduate level. Islamic philosophy, theosophy, mysticism, and Sufism are areas of interest to students who are searching for the sacred in art and traditional culture. Thus, the aesthetics, art analysis, and criticism in the Art of Religions and Civilisations school are of multi-disciplines. The research areas of graduate students cover various fields from Cinema to Visual Arts. The school research framework is both Based Research and Practice-Led Research, which is mainly applied in the Islamic Art Department. Also, seminars, workshops, and national conferences are a part of the school's objectives and programs to produce interdisciplinary knowledge in the fields of creative and traditional art (URL6).

2.4. Faculty of Handicrafts

The power of knowing how experiences with handmade objects and craft enrich, change, and sustain is what forms the unique majors of Craft Studies at AUI. Separated in 2012 from the schools of Visual and Fine Arts, the School of Crafts consists of three departments: Handicrafts, Carpet, and Calligraphy and Persian Miniature Painting. The school is spread over three campuses of the Hakim Campus, located in three reconstructed traditional houses. The school offers all the majors at the undergraduate level and two minors in Handicrafts at the graduate level MA and PhD: Research-Based and Practice-Based Crafts studies (URL7).

2.5. Faculty of Visual Arts

The interdisciplinary program of the school integrates theory and practice. The aim is to enhance the students in various fields of fine arts. The students are expected to go through the phases of research, recognition, experience, and production of original works of art. They are continuously encouraged to develop their own artistic and critical formation. In School programs and courses, students experiment with various fields of the arts such as painting, printmaking, photography, carpet design, and handicrafts and are encouraged to conceive and produce creative original works and modes of thought. The School of Visual Arts of the Art University of Isfahan started with the independence of the college in 1990. It first started with two majors: Painting and Handicrafts. In 1997, the major of Carpet was added, and in 2006, Graphics design and Photography were established at the University. Currently, this faculty is in the French School in Jolfa (URL8).

3. Current Situation of the Historic Houses Reused as The Art University of Isfahan

3.1. Martha Peters House

Martha Peters House in Isfahan has an area of 2500 square meters, and some parts of it, like the northern yard, the palace, and the southern yard, are built with the architectural characteristics of the Safavid era. The roof of some parts of this house has Mokarnas decorations, and its walls are elaborated with decorations, mouldings, mirror work, golden decorations, and paintings of angels, which make it special and decorated. Martha Peters House is one of the tourist attractions and ancient buildings of Isfahan, which is in the historical neighbourhood of Jolfa dating back to the Safavid era, and it was built during the kingdom of Shah Abbass-e Safavid. This house, also known as “John Peters House”, was the father of “Martha Peters”, the last owner of this historic house, apparently, one of the European immigrants to the old Isfahan. Martha Peters House was registered as a historic building of Iran in 1974 and was reused as The Art University of Farabi in 1978 and faced restoration and reconstruction since the same year.

Nowadays, The Art University of Isfahan has its main campus in this historic building. The design of this historic house is varied, and the quality of the construction and decorations are of great value. Having precious artistic values with the rich architectural characteristics of Martha Peters House makes this historic building a very valuable masterpiece. Martha Peters House consists of several separate buildings. The main building of this house is in the southern summer part. A huge part of the northern winter part of it was destroyed during the widening of the church alley, and just a small part remains. Nowadays, Martha Peters House consists of three buildings: the northern, the eastern, and the old part. The northern building has a huge room in the middle, two halls in the east, and one corridor in the west without decorations. The eastern building has a kitchen, bathroom, and other service facilities without ornaments. The old part of the house, which is the main part of the building, consists of a vast saloon with paintings, mouldings, and wooden windows with beautiful details (URL10).

Martha Peters House is one of the valuable residential houses from the Safavid era, located in the historical neighbourhood of Jolfa in Isfahan and on Hakim Nezami Street. Martha Peters House, known as Jani Gani (father of Mrs. Martha Peters), was built during the reign of Shah Abbas Safavi. This house is of high value due to its diversity in design, quality of construction, and decoration style. The architecture of this house, in addition to its historical antiquity, also has special artistic values. This house, with an area of about 2,500 square meters, was built with the architectural features of this historical period (including the northern courtyard - the pavilion - the southern courtyard). Martha Peters House has a different pattern from the artistic houses of its era, and it seems that the general plan of this house was initially in the form of a pavilion located in the middle of the garden and has undergone changes over time. The main part of this house is a cube-shaped building dating back to the Safavid period, with a four-sided hall in the middle. This space was two stories high and had balconies on the eastern and western sides (See **Figure 1**).



Figure 1. Martha Peters House, The Art University of Isfahan (Developed by the Author).

The roof of these four sides has Muqarnas decorations and its walls are covered with stucco decorations, mirror work, gold work, and paintings of angels that have given it a special look; the entrance of the house in its current state also leads directly into the northern courtyard. There were probably other spaces in this part that were destroyed by the exposure of the street adjacent to this side of the building. Various changes over time caused the garden surrounding the building to be transformed into several courtyards and open spaces so that today there is a courtyard to the north of the main pavilion and other spaces on the northern and eastern sides of this courtyard. The name of this house is taken from its last owner, Martha Peters. The Martha Peters House, which was registered in the country's historical monuments list by the Antiquities Conservation Organisation in 1974 under number 990, was handed over to the University of Arts (Farabi) in 1978 and since then, serious restoration and reconstruction work has been carried out on it. The university's main building is currently located here (URL13) (See **Figure 2**).



Figure 2. Panorama of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) (Developed by the Author).

3.2. Khachikian House

The Khachkar monument was originally known as the House of Karam Khan and dates to the first Safavid period; the main part of this building was the winter residence and was located to the north of the courtyard, which was destroyed and rebuilt during the reign of Reza Khan. The remaining part of the southern facade is the summer residence. This facade has a main hall in the middle and two three-door rooms on either side. The southwest three-door is two stories high and has a dormer room above it. Currently, the Faculty of Entrepreneurship, Arts and Tourism is in this building (URL14).

3.3. Tohid khaneh

The Tohid Khaneh building, which was located within the gardens and buildings (palaces, harems, etc.) of the Safavid kings and with its function and located to the west of Naghsh-e Jahan Square, is today, a building with distinctive features, such as the dome of the house being located in the middle of the courtyard, etc., in the historical and cultural area of Isfahan (approved in 1349). This building is also located within the area determined by the

revised plan of the Isfahan Comprehensive Plan and the subsequent Isfahan Special Plan. In addition to Tohid Khaneh, many valuable buildings of Isfahan, such as Ashraf Hall, are also located in the historical areas. In such a historically valuable context, the Tohid Khaneh building has been restored and renovated to change its function to an art college. This article briefly shows the stages of this work.

3.3.1. Past Functioning of the Building

For the first time, we encounter the word Tohid Khaneh on page 145 of the book *Alim-e-Arabi Abbasi* by Iskandar Bey Turkman. Other historical information about this building can be found in the works: "The System of the States in the Safavid Period" by Klaus Michael Rehrborn, "History of Tahmasbiyyah", "Volume 7 of Chardin's Travelogue", "In the Court of the Shah of Iran" by Engelbert Kaempfer and "The Travelogue of Pietro Delavale". From the writings of these travellers and historians, Tohid Khaneh was a gathering place for Sufis in the past. They gathered here on Friday nights and prayed for the life of the Shah. Sometimes the Shah attended these gatherings to learn about the news and opinions of the people about himself, and other people expressed by the Sufis. Some historians have considered Tohid Khaneh to be closed. It seems that since Aali Qapu was a bast, over time the bast was moved from this place to Tohid Khaneh and after Shah Abbas I this place was used as a bast. During the Safavid kings, the dome of Tohid Khaneh and its enclosures were part of a large royal complex that was used as a prison in later periods and for many years (until 1356). In this year, the building was taken over by the then Ministry of Culture, and some restoration work was carried out on it until 1363. This year, the building became active as a part of the Isfahan Campus Faculty affiliated with Tehran University of Art.

3.3.2. Architecture, Restoration, and Renovation

After the Isfahan City Police Prison was transferred from Tohid Khaneh, the annexed sections that were built between the dome and the city police station were demolished, thus revealing the general shape of the city police station. The architecture of Tohid Khaneh until 1984, apart from what was done during the Safavid period, which included the dome building, parts of the southern courtyard, the porch, and the remaining openings of the northern wall of the Ali Qapu communication corridor, can be classified and introduced as follows: Brick and mud buildings with brick facades and pedimented arches on the northern, western and southeastern fronts, which continue around the former city police station area and are divided into two periods:

A. Parts that have pedimented arches and include rooms located around the courtyard area and have round columns on the western front.

B. The exterior facade, which is located on the three north, east, and south sides of the compound in front of the latter buildings, has a narrow corridor approximately 1.80 meters wide with arches of approximately 1 meter in diameter. The exterior facade has semicircular arches that were built in the second period of the Qajar kings (from the time of Nasser al-Din Shah onwards).

The buildings that have changed shape due to the change in the previous function of the building have flat coverings and have converted their corridor into a porch. Currently, these parts have been destroyed.

The architecture of recent periods is mostly made of brick and cement, which are used to build rooms in the garden space or to divide larger spaces into smaller ones.

The repairs carried out in the Tohid Khaneh building from 1978 to 1984 included the restoration and reconstruction of the western facade, part of the northern facade and the main entrance on the southern side, and the construction of the main communication axis of Ali Qapu, the removal of extensions and the strengthening of the bodies. Since 1984, architectural changes have been made based on the conversion of the Tohid Khaneh space into the Pardis Faculty, which has been specified in the building plan. Cement, plaster, brick, stone, metal, and thatch materials have been used in the restoration, reconstruction, and renovation (division of spaces).

The changes made are as follows:

A. The southern facade of the building was completely reconstructed based on the remaining evidence of the pediment and portico. This reconstruction also includes the external facade of the communication axis to Ali Qapu.

B. Simultaneously with the southern facade, the main entrance of the northern facade (the current reading room) was reconstructed on the original foundation based on the remaining evidence.

C. The current halls in the southwestern and northwestern corners are additions from this period.

D. The Pahlavi era additions on the northeastern facade, whose corridors had been converted into iwans, were destroyed and are now being reconstructed based on the form.

E. The eastern front (behind the bazaar) was designed and renovated based on the northern and southern fronts and the evidence available on the eastern front. To avoid its connection to the historical building of Ali Qapu in the southern part (except the eastern entrance, which was completely renovated by the overall plan of the complex), a private courtyard space was also planned and implemented.

F. In the main building of the Tohid Khaneh (Gonbad Khaneh), repairs were made to the extent of replacing the roof tiles and designing the interior of the hall to change its function to a meeting hall and amphitheatre.

G. The flooring of the Tohid Khaneh area was carried out in two stages:

- The western side of the area around the dome, was paved after the construction of the utility canals in 1364 and 1365.

- The paving of the eastern side began after the construction of the utility canal (on a scale for human movement inside it) in 1372 and is still being done.

3.3.3. Organising Spaces

The way new needs were established in the old structure and the annexed sections were as follows: after the preliminary preparation of the building in 1935, with the activation of the painting and handicrafts courses at the undergraduate level, the new functional life of the building began. In the academic year 1980-1991, the architecture course at the postgraduate level and the restoration of historical buildings and textures were added to the two courses. The existing spaces of the Tohid Khaneh are divided based on the educational activities of the three disciplines of painting, handicrafts, and architecture, and into workshops, laboratories, and theoretical and educational classes.

The way this division is realised is as follows:

1. The dome of the Tohid Khaneh for the assembly hall and amphitheatre

2. The western side:

A. The current entrance, is in the northern part of the western side. This entrance is temporary. The main entrance, which is located on the southern side, will be used after the renovations are completed.

B. West side hall, for architectural studios.

C. Southwest hall, for temporary exhibitions of works in all academic disciplines available at the faculty. Other uses of this hall include the judging of theses, a conference hall, and sometimes classrooms.

D. The porches opposite the west facade have been prepared, but the porches have not been renovated.

3. Southside:

A- West of the main entrance, including a set of rooms belonging to the office of the educational groups of architecture, painting, and handicrafts.

B- East of the main entrance, including workshops of ceramics, pottery, materials and materials, carpentry, wood carving and mosaic, and prayer room.

4. Northside:

A- Northwest hall and three adjacent rooms including the library and reading room.

B- Reproduction unit, three classrooms, cultural relations office, educational management office, water supply, and health services.

C- Other parts of the north side are currently under construction.

5. Eastside:

A- Entrance to the Tohidkhaneh from Imam Square (Naqsh-e Jahan).

B- Two halls on either side of the entrance to expand the architectural workshops.

3.3.4. The Building's Connection to Urban Arteries

As mentioned earlier, the main entrance to the Tohid Khaneh building was located on the southern side, which is currently being restored and reconstructed. In 1984, while the building was in use, the entrance was made through Ostandari Street (the eastern street parallel to Naqsh-e Jahan Square). After the Isfahan Municipality converted the spaces around the Tohid Khaneh into a public park, the entrance to the building was moved to the eastern side until 1992. Then, with the change in the paving of the square, the entrance through the square was practically eliminated, and currently, the entrance is on the northwest side of the building (the western entrance) on foot from Ostandari Street.

3.3.5. Form and Decorations of the Building

The main dome of the building is in the shape of a dodecahedron, with one door on each side, and one entrance (six entrances in total). Inside the dome, the walls are divided into two parts by a partition. To convert the dodecahedron plan into a circle, arches were used, with a "narrow foot" between each arch. An inscription in the third line surrounds the interior of the dome. The ceiling of the southern porch of the dome has painted decorations. It is speculated that the southern porch was the main entrance to the dome room.

3.3.6. Interior Furniture

By assigning new academic functions to existing spaces, these departments were put into operation by installing educational equipment in them (appropriate to the needs of each space).

3.3.7. Facilities

The accuracy of the original designers of the building in terms of the correct use of materials and equipment, the precise dimensions of the mass of materials and the form of the building on the one hand, and its suitability with the climatic conditions on the other, have made it possible to provide heating and cooling of the building with minimal equipment today. The new installation of the building consists of two parts: mechanical and electrical. The mechanical installation was designed and implemented by an expert in two stages. The first stage was carried out in 1984, which covered only a part of the building complex. The second stage, in 1993, simultaneously with the implementation of the electrical installation plan by the relevant expert, included the entire building.

3.3.8. Sources of Funding

Until 1984, the costs of repairing the Tohidkhaneh were entirely covered by the National Cultural Heritage Organisation. From that year onwards, the costs were paid jointly by the organisation and the University of Arts. From 1993 onwards, all costs were borne by the University of Arts.

3.3.9. Design, Implementation and Monitoring

This activity was also carried out jointly by the Cultural Heritage Organisation of the country and the University of Arts. The task of preparing the plan and supervising the organisation was the responsibility of Mr. Shirazi, Mr. Jabal Ameli, and Shahzamani, while Mr. Moghaddas and Ms. Baba Shahi collaborated in the archaeological excavations. At the University of Arts, the task of preparing the plan was also assigned to Mr. Montazer, Ms. Shokouhi, and the writer (Vafi). The supervision in the University of Arts department was carried out by Mr. Montazer and Mr. Nooh Mousavi (currently responsible for the construction of Isfahan University of Arts). In terms of implementation, the Cultural Heritage Organisation operated independently until 1984, but from this year onwards until 1993, the implementation operations were carried out jointly by the organisation and the university, and from 1993 onwards, the University of Arts has been independently responsible for the implementation operations.

3.3.10. Conclusion

At the end of this report, it is necessary to mention that the revival of the Tohid Khaneh building has just begun. Giving a new function to a valuable building with a rich historical background correctly and scientifically may be easy in words, but in practice, it poses very complex complications for designers. Preserving the originality of the building along with giving it specific functional aspects requires a redesign and architecture with numerous limitations. In the case of the Tohid Khaneh building, this work has been done. Therefore, considering the observance of the two principles above to the desired extent, this building can now be used as a suitable model for the continuation of future work in the country (Newsletter: National Organisation for the Protection of Antiquities, No. 34, October 1978; Moghaddis, Mohammad: Article "Tohid khaneh Isfahan" page 7; URL11).

3.4. Ayubi House

The Ayubid House is a building from the second Safavid period and is a remnant of a larger building on the northern side of the building. This building is a rare example of two floors with a summer section on the top and a winter section on the bottom, and its courtyard is shaped like a garden pit. The design of this building is unique and includes two symmetrical porches in the corners and two or three doors on the eastern and southern sides. The Faculty of Arts, Religions, and Civilisations is currently located in this building (URL12).

3.5. Haratians House

The Haratian House, which was originally the summer part of the house of Khwaja Petros, a famous priest during the time of Shah Abbas Safavi, is a very valuable building from the Safavid period that, in addition to its remarkable architecture, also benefits from very valuable compositions. The main part of this building was on the northern front as the winter section, and its entrance and vestibule were also located on that front. The remaining summer space of this building is on two floors, including a central hall and two rooms with three doors and two side rooms on the upper floor; the ceiling of the central hall is in the form of a slat and in front of it a very valuable war painting remains. Currently, administrative areas are operating in this building (URL15).

3.6. Soukias House

This house is in the Tabrizi neighbourhood of Jolfa, between the houses of Soukias 2 and David. The history of Soukias 1 dates to the Safavid era. This building is built on two floors and has an infrastructure of 920 square meters, in two parts, north and south, and an area of about 3100 square meters. The Soukias 1 house has special artistic and historical values, and the decorations of the outer frescoes of the pavilion and the space-making of its central hall are considered unique. According to Abraham Korgyan, a famous Armenian painter, this house was built in 1655 by the translator of the British ambassador to Iran (during the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid) and the paintings of the porch belong to Queen Elizabeth. With the restoration and reconstruction of this house, its northern side has been used for specialised laboratories of the restoration group (chemistry and metallurgy). Its southern side is for specialised workshops in painting restoration, pottery restoration, fabric restoration, ivory and bone restoration, paper restoration, and glass restoration. Soukias House 1 was registered in the country's historical monuments list in 1974 with the number 994. Soukias House 2 is located next to Soukias House 1 and in the Tabrizi neighbourhood of Isfahan. This complex has an area of over 1980 square meters and dates back to the Safavid period. This house was purchased and restored by Isfahan University of Art in 1997, and after the restoration of its southern part was completed in 1998, it was used as the educational space of the restoration group in 1999. The building houses a technical drawing studio and materials laboratory, as well as paper, leather, fabric, painting, and metal restoration workshops (URL16).

3.7. David House

David's House is in the Tabrizi neighbourhood of Jolfa in Isfahan. This house is one of the historical and valuable houses of Isfahan during the Safavid era, with an area of about 1900 square meters. David's House is of great value in terms of architectural features and architectural decorations. Brickwork, plasterwork, wall painting, formalisation of the main niche, etc. are among the decorations of this building. The northern side of David's House dates to the Safavid era, and its western and southern sides date back to the Zand and Qajar eras. The most important set of spaces in this house is located on its northern front, which includes a cruciform hall with a height of two floors in the middle and four rooms with three doors on the first two floors. On one side, it looks out onto the courtyard through a veranda, and on the other side, it is connected to the middle hall of this front, on the second floor, they

overlook the hall space in an angular manner. The ceiling of this hall has a dome-shaped covering and is decorated with muqarnas.

Among the most important architectural features of this building are the entrance and the type of access to the different parts of this house. The entrance to the House of David is in the northeast corner of the building and has a square-shaped octagonal space. In the main courtyard of this house, there is a large pond in front of the northern front and a large garden that covers a large part of this courtyard. The southern front of the House of David has a semi-open space in the middle and two rooms with three doors on either side and a portico is in front of this entire front. The spaces on the western front were originally perfectly ordered and symmetrical, but their appearance was distorted by the additions to the southern front during the Fajar era. Apparently, David was one of the famous Christian priests of Isfahan during the Safavid period. The House of David was the first building entrusted by the Cultural Heritage Organisation to the Faculty of Pardis. Currently, the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Isfahan Art University operates in this building (URL17).

3.8. French House

The French (Catholic) School in the Stonecutters' Quarter was founded in 1281 (the last two decades of the Qajar government) as the primary branch of the Setareh Sobh School, which was established by French Catholic Christians under the leadership of Perdomotte on Chaharbagh Street. This building, with its half-European-half-Iranian structure, is one of the famous buildings in the Jolfa area. This building, which is currently owned by Isfahan University of Art, is used as the Faculty of Visual Arts (URL18).

3.9. Haghghi Building

This historical building dates to the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar. It was purchased from the Akhavan Haghghi family before the revolution and was transferred to Pardis University by the Technical Office of Antiquities in 1976. Its decorations are unique. This house has sash or valuable doors and a part of this valuable building is located in the south of the central courtyard and must be purchased. The university's research office is currently located in this building (URL19).

3.10. House of Nations (Melal House)

This building consists of a main hall in the middle and two rooms with a mogharnas ceiling on either side of the central hall. On the northern front of the building, there are four rooms with a door and an entrance vestibule dating back to the Qajar era. Currently, this building is used as one of the faculties of Isfahan University of Arts, called the Faculty of Arts and Civilisations (URL20).

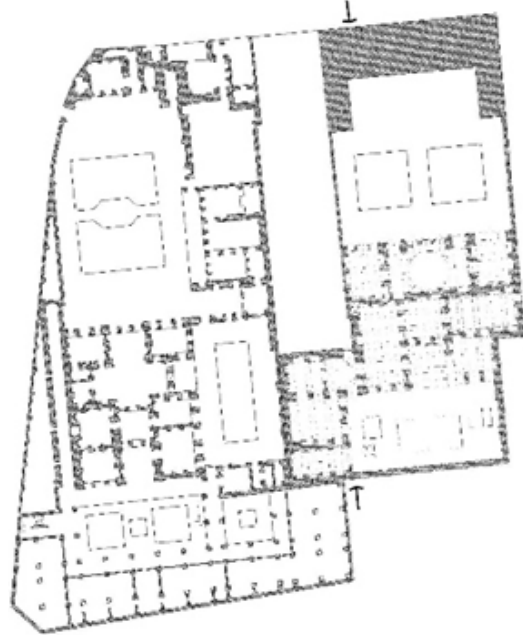
4. Architectural Design of the Vacant Space between Martha Peters House and Khachikian House

Table 1. Architectural Maps, Plans, Elevations, Sections, and 3D Views of the Designed Vacant Space between Martha Peters House and Khachikian House in Isfahan (Developed by the Author).

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| <p>Site Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) in Jolfa Neighbourhood of Isfahan</p> | <p>Roof Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) and the Designed Space Between Them</p> |



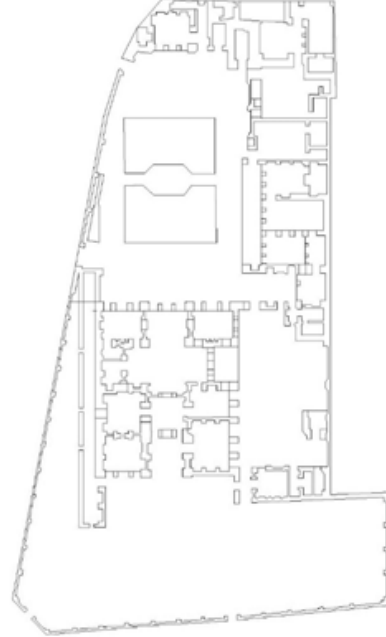
Roof Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) and the Vacant Space Between Them



Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) and the Vacant Space Between Them



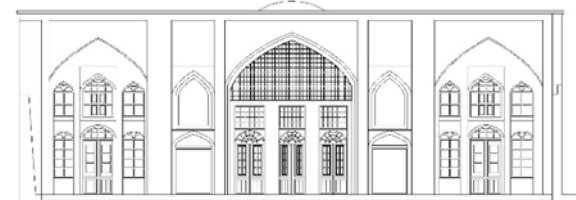
Roof Plan of Martha Peters House



Plan of Martha Peters House



East Elevation of Martha Peters House



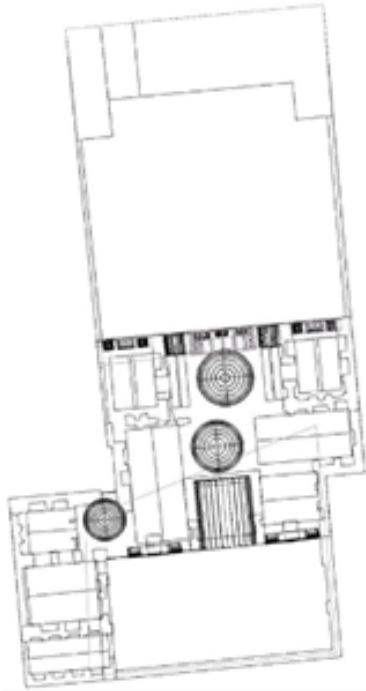
North Elevation of Martha Peters House



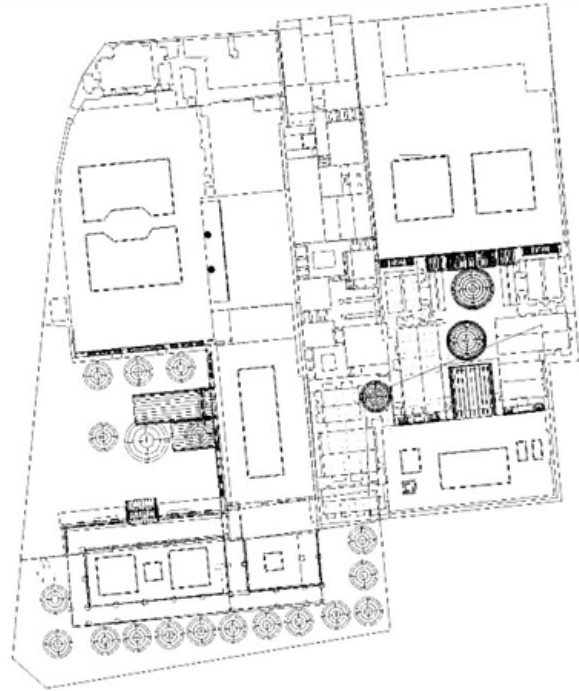
South Elevation of Martha Peters House



North Elevation of Khachikian House



Roof Plan of Khachikian House



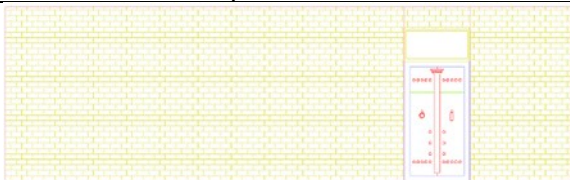
Roof Plan of the Complex



Roof Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) and the Designed Plan of Vacant Space Between Them



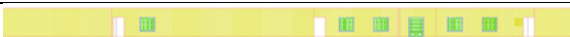
Plan of Martha Peters House (Left) and Khachikian House (Right) and the Furniture Plan of the Designed Space Between Them



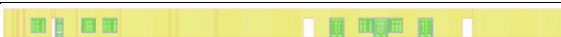
South Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House



North Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House









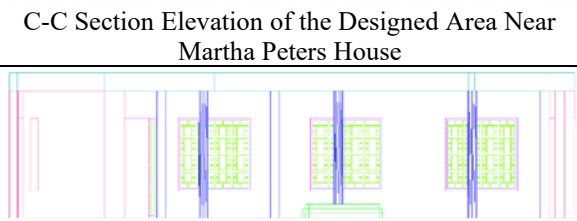
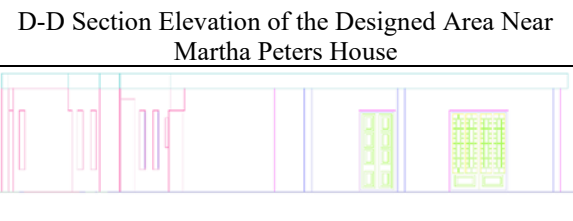

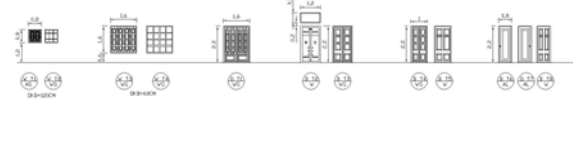
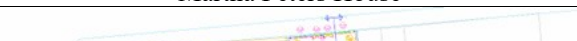





West Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House



East Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House



| | |
|---|--|
| <p>North Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> | <p>South Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>East Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> | <p>West Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>A-A Section Elevation of the Vacant Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>A-A Section Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>B-B Section Elevation of the Vacant Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>B-B Section Elevation of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>C-C Section Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>D-D Section Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>E-E Section Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>G-G Section Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>H-H Section Elevation of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>Different Types of the Designed Doors and Windows</p> |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| <p>Furniture Plan of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> | <p>Furniture Plan of the Designed Area Near Martha Peters House</p> |



Site Plan of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



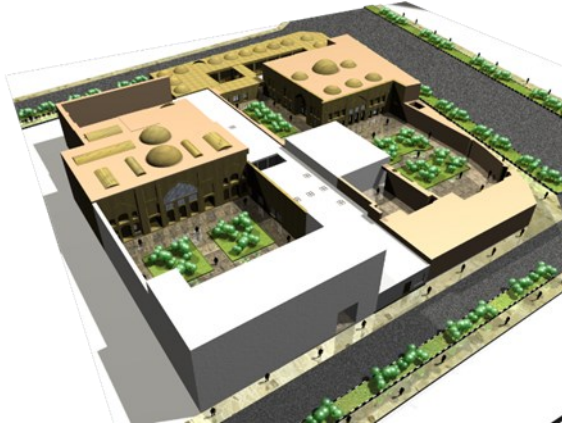
Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House



Three-Dimensional Model of the Designed Area and Martha Peters House

5. Conclusions

The design in the vacant space between Martha Peters House and Khachikian House is intended to be as simple as possible to respect the historical buildings. The windows and doors used in the vacant designed area are selected as simple forms of wooden frames with squares of glass. The colour of the bricks used for the external façade of the designed area is selected as yellow to be both neutral and different from the original texture of the main façades of Martha Peters House and Khachikian House. All the niches and frames of doors, windows and entrance passages are selected as square or rectangular forms to be different from the arches and arcades of the adjacent historic buildings and to be distinguished as newly designed parts. Daylight to the interior of the designed spaces is supposed to enter from the vertical windows designed on the external elevations and the horizontal windows of the roof. The classes and the computer sites are designed at the parts of the site with the best access to daylight, and the toilets are designed at the end of the building. A closed central yard is designed at the centre of the site to give access to the interior of the classes and the possibility of being a passage between Martha Peters House and Khachikian House. As the Art University of Isfahan needs some more space for classes and computer sites, the vacant space between Martha Peters House and Khachikian House can be proposed to improve the quality of academic life at the university.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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