

Recognizing Juxtaposition Patterns of the Dwelling Units in Housing Cluster: The Case Study of Aghayan Complex: An Example of Rural Residential Development in Qajar Era in Iran

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Abstract : Mayamei is a small town in Iran that is located between Shahrud and Sabzevar cities, on the Silk Road. It enjoys a history of approximately 1000 years. An alley entitled 'Aghayan' exists in this town that comprises residential buildings of a famous family. Bathhouse, mosque, telegraph center, cistern are all related to this alley. This architectural complex belongs to Sadat Mousavi, who is one of the Mayamei's major grandees and religious household. The alley after construction has been inherited from generation to generation within the family masters. The purpose of this study, which was conducted on Aghayan alley and its associated complex, was to elucidate Iranian vernacular domestic architecture of Qajar era in small towns and villages. We searched for large, medium, and small architectural patterns in the contemplated complex, and tried to elaborate their evolution from past to the present. The other objective of this project was finding a correlation between changes in the lifestyle of the alley's inhabitants with the form of the building's architecture. Our investigation methods included: literature review especially in regard to historical travelogues, peer site visiting, mapping, interviewing of the elderly people of the Mousavi family (the owners), and examining the available documents especially the 4 meters' scroll-type testament of 150 years ago. For the analysis of the aforementioned data, an effort was made to discover (1) the patterns of placing of different buildings in respect of the others, (2) finding the relation between function of the buildings with their relative location in the complex, as was considered in the original design, and (3) possible changes of functions of the buildings during the time. In such an investigation, special attention was paid to the chronological changes of lifestyles of the residents. In addition, we tried to take all different activities of the residents into account including their daily life activities, religious ceremonies, etc. By combining such methods, we were able to obtain a picture of the buildings in their original (construction) state, along with a knowledge of the temporal evolution of the architecture. An interesting finding is that the Aghayan complex seems to be a big structure of the horizontal type apartments, which are placed next to each other. The houses made in this way are connected to the adjacent neighbors both by the bifacial rooms and from the roofs.

Keywords : Iran, Qajar period, vernacular domestic architecture, life style, residential complex

Conference Title : ICAH 2018 : International Conference on Architecture and History

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : December 13-14, 2018