

Investigating Elements of Identity of Traditional Neighborhoods in Isfahan and Using These Elements in the Design of Modern Neighborhoods

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Abstract : The process of planning, designing and building neighborhoods is a complex and multidimensional part of urban planning. Understanding the elements that give a neighborhood a sense of identity can lead to successful city planning and result in a cohesive and functional community where people feel a sense of belonging. These factors are important in ensuring that the needs of the urban population are met to live in a safe, pleasant and healthy society. This research paper aims to identify the elements of the identity of traditional neighborhoods in Isfahan and analyzes ways of using these elements in the design of modern neighborhoods to increase social interaction between communities and cultural reunification of people. The neighborhood of Jolfa in Isfahan has a unique socio-cultural identity as it dates back to the Safavid Dynasty of the 16th century, and most of its inhabitants are Christian Armenians of a religious minority. The elements of the identity of Jolfa were analyzed through the following research methods: field observations, distribution of questionnaires and qualitative analysis. The basic methodology that was used to further understand the Jolfa neighborhood and deconstruct the identity image that residents associate with their respective neighborhoods was a qualitative research method. This was done through utilizing questionnaires that respondents had to fill out in response to a series of research questions. From collecting these qualitative data, the major finding was that traditional neighborhoods that have elements of identity embedded in them are seen to have closer-knit communities whose residents have strong societal ties. This area of study in urban planning is vital to ensuring that new neighborhoods are built with concepts of social cohesion, community and inclusion in mind as they are what lead to strong, connected, and prosperous societies.

Keywords : development, housing, identity, neighborhood, policy, urbanization

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