

THE GOLD RUSH: AMERICAN ARCHITECTS IN IRAN IN THE 1970S

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Abstract. In the 1970s, Tehran and other major Iranian cities underwent rapid urban expansion, marked by the initiation of numerous large-scale urban development projects and residential and commercial complexes. Many of these projects involved foreign architects, particularly Americans, who were drawn to Shah's ambitious modernization efforts. Described as a "gold mine" by an American architecture magazine in 1970s, Iran became a hub for foreign architectural expertise. This article examines the presence and activities of American architects in Iran during this decade, primarily through a review of American architectural magazines. Most projects led by American architects were mega-projects, such as new towns in Tehran and large residential complexes for affluent groups. The scale and financial magnitude of these contracts highlight significant opportunities available to American architects in the mid-1970s. However, they also faced challenges including planning and negotiation difficulties with clients—primarily the Shah and his aids and Foundations—and the often conflicting demands versus local realities. The American architects' involvement was influenced by economic and political factors, including the 1973 oil boom, the Shah's Westernization policies, and the U.S. economic downturn in 1974–75. Finally, the article explains, using magazine reports, why these projects stopped and why most were never built.

Keywords: 1970's architecture, American architects, architecture of Iran.

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1. Introduction

In the 1970s, Tehran, Iran's capital, and other large cities experienced rapid expansion. During this period, the design and construction of urban development projects and many residential and commercial complexes were started. Many of these projects were designed and built with the participation of foreign architects. American architects were involved in a considerable number of these projects. The subject of this article is the presence and activity of American architects in Iran in the 1970s. This article explores which American architects were present in Iran during that period and what projects they designed in Iran. Then it describes the situation and quality of American architects' presence in Iran, as well as the opportunities and potential challenges facing them. Finally, by examining the political, economic, and cultural context of that period, it attempts to find the reasons for the presence and activity of American architects in Iran.

This article utilizes the Architectural Index, a comprehensive index of articles from major American architectural magazines, to identify relevant projects. Through this resource, articles related to Iran were located in the publications *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Housing and Design and Environment*. In addition, the article incorporates supplementary material from American news-

papers, including the *New York Times*, as well as Iranian publications and newspapers from the same period for comparative context. By drawing on these primary sources, the article aims to provide a foundational overview of the presence and activities of American architects in Iran.

2. Projects and details

A review of American architectural publications from the 1970s reveals that American architects were involved in numerous projects in Iran. Between 1974 and 1979, several American magazines featured these projects or reported related news, with the highest number of published projects appearing in 1976. Some projects were highlighted multiple times across various publications. The most significant and largest of these was the Shahestan Pahlavi project.

Shahestan Pahlavi was a comprehensive plan for a 1200-acre new city center in Tehran. The capital new center was to provide a mixture of uses for 300,000 people including government buildings, housing for 35,000–40,000 people, and retail, cultural, and recreational facilities ("A Comprehensive Plan for a New City Center in Tehran", 1978, p. 98; "Shah of Iran Breaks Ground for 1,400-Acre New Town in Tehran", 1976).¹

¹ Some sources have mentioned the area of Shahestan Pahlavi as 1400 acre. More recent source (1978) wrote the area as 1200 acre.

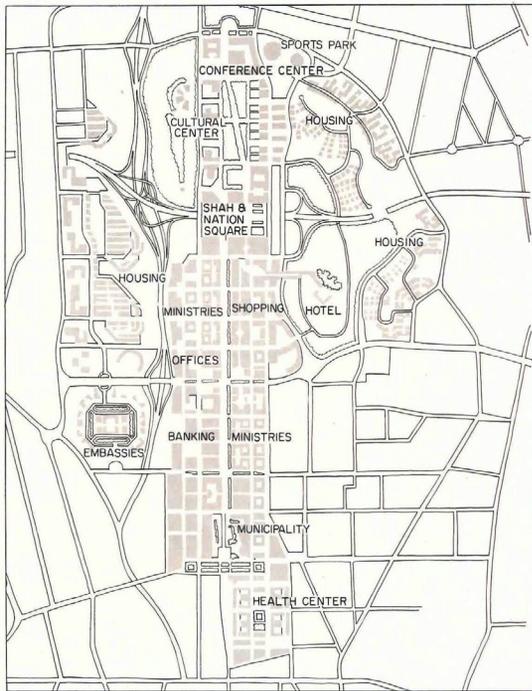


Figure 1. Plan of Shahestan Pahlavi published in January 1976 in *Architectural Record* (source: "Shah of Iran Breaks Ground for 1,400-Acre New Town in Tehran", 1976, p. 37)

Shahestan Pahlavi (literally imperial Pahlavi city) contained a major civic square (650 by 1,300 feet) called Shah and Nation Square (in Persian: *maidan-e shah va mellat*) or White Revolution Square (Figure 1) (Barron, 1979). The project was expected to cost \$3–5 billion dollars in 1975 (Goldberger, 1975, p. 73).² Shahestan Pahlavi was designed by Llewelyn-Davies International and directed by Jacqueline T. Robertson, an American architect, planner, and real estate executive ("A Comprehensive Plan for a New City Center in Tehran", 1978, p. 98).

Another major project, planned with the contribution of American architects and planners, was the Farahzad town, the northwest development of Tehran, —a residential community designed to accommodate 100,000 people. The most important part of Farahzad town was the Zomorod Project. In 1974, Starrett, the American construction firm renowned for building Starrett City and the Empire State Building in New York, signed a contract with Bank Omran, which was controlled by the Shah's Pahlavi Foundation, to construct 6,000 luxury condominiums in the Farahzad suburb of Tehran (Barron, 1979). The project, which Jordan Gruzen and his partners also designed, was expected to cost \$500 million ("A Place in Process", 1976). This complex comprised eight buildings ranging from six to 27 stories in height, all oriented toward the Alborz Mountains. At the time, units were priced between \$80,000 and \$133,000 each, with sizes varying from one-bedroom apartments

² \$5 billion in 1975 is equivalent to about \$29 billion in 2024 based on the inflation rate.



Figure 2. Kapsad project in Tehran by I.M. Pei & Associates (source: "The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 58)

to units occupying half an entire floor. The residences featured nine-foot ceilings and offered luxury amenities, including a choice between self-service and valet parking ("U.S. Builders Sweat It Out in Iran", 1979, p. 34). Starrett was also serving as a contractor on a mass housing project for middle-income called Ekbatan (Kilborn, 1979).

The next major project was Levitt-Shahr (later named Eram-Shahr), announced by William J. Levitt, the American housing pioneer and co-founder of Levitt & Sons, in 1977 ("Iran to Get a Levittown of Condos", 1977, p. 26).³ Levitt formed International Construction Company Ltd. and contracted with the Iranian Ministry of Housing to build 14,100 garden apartments as condominiums at a site in the southern part of Tehran. The cost of this project was more than 500 million dollars at the time ("U.S. Builders Sweat It Out in Iran", 1979, p. 34; Sloane, 1977, p. 91). The Kapsad project, designed by I.M. Pei & Associates in a joint venture with Sazeh Consultants, was a mixed-used center replete with apartments, 2 million sq. ft. of offices space, 400 hotel rooms, and 150,000 sq. ft. of retail space on a 36-acre site in the northwest section of Tehran (Figure 2) ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 58). I.M. Pei also designed an 18-story skyscraper with reflective glass windows for the Industrial Credit Bank in Tehran (Barron, 1979).

Eight multi-use complexes for the Kourosh department store chain in Iran were designed by the office of Edward Durell Stone. One in downtown Tehran, featured a

³ Levitt-Shahr is the Persian equivalent of Levitt-Town.

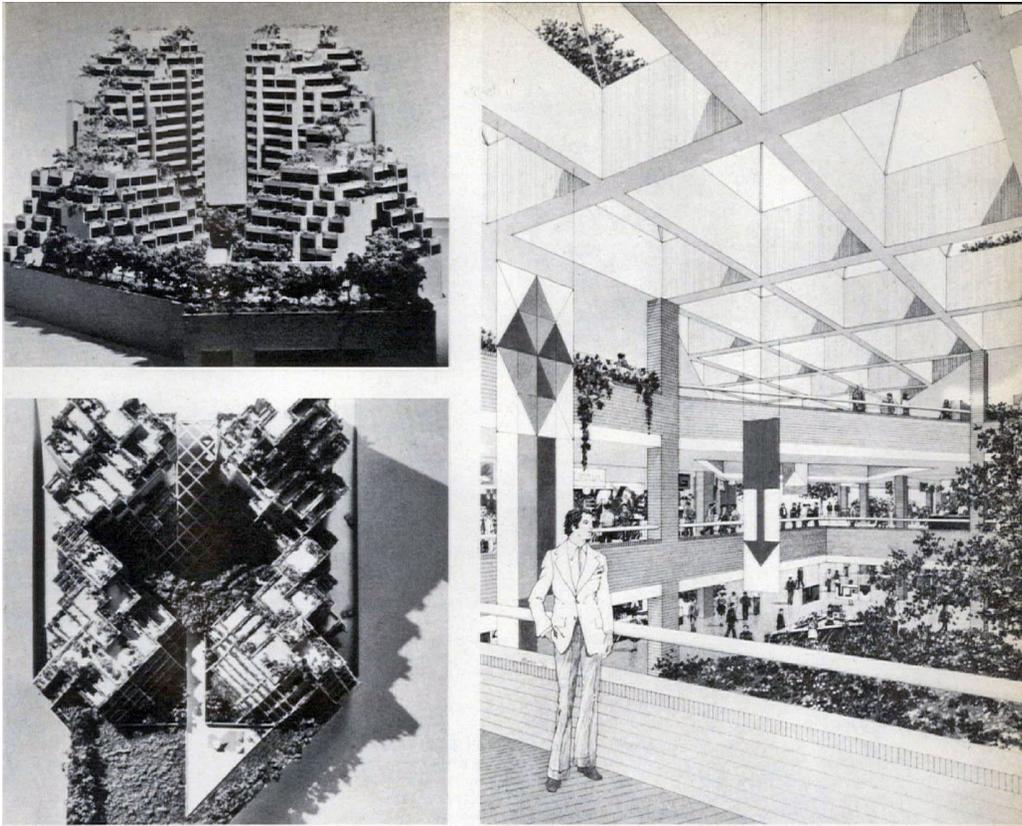


Figure 3. A commercial residential project for Mashhad by the office of Edward Durell Stone (source: "The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 58)

28-story commercial and residential tower with a five-story skylit Galleria and department store. Another commercial-residential project for Mashhad was terrace apartments around a central garden and a three-story-high skylit shopping arcade (Figure 3). These shopping centers were designed based on the Western retailing concept including air-conditioned skylit malls ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 60).

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), known for designing several of the tallest buildings in the world, had also some projects in Iran in the 1970s. One of the projects was the Khaneh Center mixed-use Complex in Tehran and the other was the new town of Jondi Shahpour a joint project with Nardir Ardalan of the Mandala Collaborative in Tehran ("A Place in Process", 1976, p. 54; Barron, 1979). Not much information about SOM's projects has been published in magazines.⁴ Qanat Kosar Housing Community in Lavisan new city in Tehran was another housing project by American architects in Iran. It was a low-rise housing development for 25000 designed by J.G. White Engineering ("Sensitive Urban Planning for Qanat Kosar Housing Development Tehran", 1978, p. 103). Philip Johnson and

John Burgee also designed a \$100 million Housing project in Isfahan the details of which are not mentioned. Martin Holub, a New York City architect, also designed a condominium for Gheytrarieh, one of Tehran's rapidly growing suburbs ("In Tehran: A Private Developer Plans Condominiums for the Suburbs", 1977, p. 43).

American architects also designed some luxury hotels in Iran. Marcel Breuer & Associates designed a 320-room hotel on Mount Tochal, north of Tehran, overlooking the city ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 58). Arya Sheraton, a \$40 million hotel by Welton Becket & Associates, was another hotel project in Tehran. This 41-story hotel had 587 rooms, the largest ballroom in the Middle East, and a revolving rooftop restaurant ("New 'Tallest' for Teheran: A \$40 Million Sheraton", 1976, p. 39). Pearl Palace in Mehrshahr, Karaj, by The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, a 1000-student technical institute in Shiraz by Hugh Stubbins and Associates, and Pardisan Park, Microcosmic Zoo-Park by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd, and Mandala Collaborative were other projects published in American architecture journals in the 1970s (Bantzer, 1977; "Pardisan Park", 1975, p. 20).

⁴ It seems that some corporations and architectural offices declined to disclose details of projects with magazines and newspapers. Progressive Architecture Magazine stated in October 1976 that Skidmore, Owings & Merrill withheld all information on their works.

3. Opportunities and challenges

Reviewing the quantity of projects, their scale, and their value demonstrates that American architects faced a great opportunity in Iran in the 1970s. The author of *Progressive Architecture* magazine describes the conditions in Iran in 1976 as follows: "Here the projects are immense, the construction budgets staggering, and the fees monstrous" ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 56). Housing magazine also describes Iran as a "gold mine" for Americans ("U.S. Builders Sweat It Out in Iran", 1979, p. 34). In the mid-1970s, Iran was the big marketplace for American goods and services. In 1974, Iranian newspapers reported that hotels in Tehran were fully booked for months due to an influx of foreign businessmen, predominantly from the United States. These visitors came to Iran to learn about the Shah's political plans, negotiate economic deals, and pursue financial opportunities ("There Is No Room Available in Tehran hotels", 1974, p. 4). This environment was equally attractive to American architects, many of whom were present in Tehran at the time. According to American magazine reports, it was common for these architects to encounter one another in the lobbies of Tehran hotels, reflecting their significant presence in the city during this period ("The Adventures of Harry Barber", 1976, p. 56). The projects that some architects and architecture companies had in Iran were bigger than their projects in United States. For example, Starrett's Zomorod project in Tehran was the company's biggest investment and bigger than anything the company had built in the United States. It was expected to cost Starrett \$500 million, compared to \$362 million for Starrett City, New York (Barron, 1979).

Despite all the opportunities, American architects faced challenges in Iran. Some of these challenges were related to the clients of the projects. The demands of Iranian clients (which were mostly government or Shah Family Foundations) seem unreasonable to American architects and question their role as thoughtful architects (1979). Iranian clients wanted modern glass box skyscrapers similar to Manhattan or Chicago for Tehran, but these skyscrapers were not suitable for the hot and dry climate and the fabric of Tehran city, and they did not fit in with the surrounding context. This was while the philosophy of modern architects in the 1970s in the U.S. was gradually questioned and criticisms were made of the lack of visual interest, human scale, or content in modern architecture. On the other hand, in the mid-1970s, environmental issues and energy usage became increasingly important in the United States ("Iran to Get a Levittown of Condos", 1977; Barron, 1979). Another problem was that these skyscrapers were often designed for the housing of wealthy Iranian and foreign businessmen, despite the fact that Tehran was experiencing a flood of migration from the countryside to the city at the time, necessitating the urgent provision of accommodation for the middle and lower income levels ("A Comprehensive Plan for a New City Center in Tehran", 1978, p. 98). There were also cultural concerns in

this regard. The development of mixed-use and living in towers and apartments was not yet embedded in Iranian culture, and most Iranians lived in single-family homes. The extended family was still a viable and strong social unit. The role of Westerners in changing the face of Iran and the habits of Iranians bothered some of the architects who worked there (Barron, 1979). Some questioned the cultural, political, and economic implications of the Shahstan Pahlavi project, which was the largest architectural and urban planning project of the 1970s in Tehran. A jury member of the Progressive Architecture Award considered the Shahestan Pahlavi in line with government objectives but did not reflect citizen participation ("A Comprehensive Plan for a New City Center in Tehran", 1978, p. 98). Reviewing articles in American magazines and newspapers shows that American architects were aware of these cultural and social issues and challenges, while the result of their work shows that most of the client's demands were covered by them.

The next challenge was related to the rules and project planning in Iran. American architects considered the negotiation stage more important and time-consuming than the design stage. Rules in Iran were constantly changing, and this made negotiations and planning for projects difficult. The direct role of the Shah in making rules and decisions was significant. The role of Shah's relatives in concluding the contract was evident, and family ties and friendship were preferred over rules ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 56). Another challenge was cooperation with Iranian architecture companies. In Iran, they had to partner with an Iranian architecture firm that usually executed the working drawings and supervised most of the construction. This sometimes caused them to disagree with each other. Iranian architects made changes in the drawings that made Americans unhappy. Some construction materials and technologies (such as heavy steel) were not yet being manufactured in Iran at that time, and this caused changes in the implementation of the designs (1976). Another challenge was the tension between modern architecture and the traditional architecture of Iran. The traditional architectural heritage of Iran—exemplified by the grandeur of Persepolis, the historic urban fabric of Isfahan, mosque architecture, Persian gardens, and houses with central courtyards—captivated American and foreign architects. This clash posed a significant dilemma for both Iranian and American architects, who found themselves uncertain about the most appropriate architectural solutions for Iran (1976).

4. Contexts behind American architects' presence in 1970s Iran

American magazines and newspapers have mentioned some keywords about the contexts and reasons for the presence of American architects in Iran in the 1970s. The first and most important keyword is "oil price." Political circumstances caused a substantial increase in the global

price of oil in 1973. This year, oil prices climbed by 300%, from roughly \$4 to \$12 (Kettell, 2024). Iran, an oil-rich country, expanded its oil output and sales. Iran's annual oil revenue increased from \$2.5 billion in 1971 to \$27.6 billion in 1976. Iran's gross national product in 1975–76 was the fastest-growing in the world ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 64). With the increase in oil revenues, Iran's five-year strategic plan (1973 to 1978) was revised, and its credits increased significantly. Following this program, the government's investment in the housing and building sectors increased significantly, and the building became the top of the government's profitable activities (Razaqi, 1997; Leylaz, 2012). A significant part of the oil income was directed towards large urban projects (for the wealthy and middle class), large multi-purpose buildings, skyscrapers, etc. (Emami, 2014). These projects established a booming market for architects and construction firms.

The next keyword was "Westernization." In the 1960s, the Shah started aggressive programs under the name of the White Revolution of the Shah and the Nation to modernize Iran ("White Revolution", 2024). Shah and his aids considered Western civilization as a symbol of development, growth, and progress and looked to the West for the development of Iran ("A Place in Process", 1976, p. 53). This way of looking led the Shah and his relatives to use the skills, services, and technologies of Western companies. The surge in oil prices accelerated the Shah's modernization and development plans. Magazines and newspapers report the presence of hundreds of American companies in Iran within five years to joining the Shah's ambitious plans (Kilborn, 1979).

It was a modernization from above—an authoritarian modernization by the Shah and his aids.⁵ The Shah and his relatives and family were directly involved in building projects and exercised their opinions. For example, the family-controlled Pahlavi Foundation was directly involved in many projects. According to magazines, American companies were present in Iran by the Shah's direct order; therefore, the Shah's wishes, opinions, and tastes also influenced the decisions and even the design of architectural projects ("U.S. Builders Sweat It Out in Iran", 1979, p. 34). American architects point to Shah's personal interest in high-rise buildings and skyscrapers, which directly influenced architectural decisions ("The Adventures of Harry Barber in OPEC Land", 1976, p. 56). Therefore, the interest of the Shah and his aids and relatives in Western designs justified the presence of many American architects in Iran.

Other reasons for the presence of American architects in Iran should be sought in the economic conditions of the U.S. in the mid-1970s as well as the professional situation of architects there. American architecture publications mention the downturn of 1974–75 in the U.S. as one of the

reasons why architects turned to Iran and oil-rich countries (1976). One of the causes of this recession in America was the 1973 oil crisis. The difficult conditions of the professional activity of architects and construction companies in the U.S. and the government's lack of cooperation with them also pushed architects and construction companies out of the United States ("U.S. Builders Sweat It Out in Iran", 1979, p. 34). In June 1977, the American house-building legend William J. Levitt, creator of all Levittowns, announced that he was leaving the U.S. house-building scene for Iran. He considered American standards to be stringent and complicated while the Iranian government is more cooperative with builders. According to him, in Iran, "The currency is the most stable in the world, and we can take our profits out of the country" ("Iran to Get a Levittown of Condos", 1977, p. 26). Iran had minimal environmental regulations, a readily available and inexpensive labor force, and no labor unions (1977). These factors led Levitt and Starrett to prefer doing business in Iran over the United States during the mid-1970s.

5. American architects' projects in Iranian publications

The projects of American architects in Iran received significant attention in American publications. They published the dimensions and specifications of these projects and also addressed the opportunities and challenges for architects in Iran. On the other side, the situation was different in Iranian publications.

In the 1970s, the magazine *Honar va Memari* (Art and Architecture) was the only specialized official architecture publication in Iran. Its content primarily focused on the works, interviews, and statements of Iranian architects (Pishvaei et al., 2020). Apart from the Pahlavi Shahrestan project—which was extensively covered in issues 33–34 (1976)—the magazine showed little interest in other projects by American architects in Iran and did not publish articles about them ("Shahestan Pahlavi", 1976). The exact reason for this is unclear, but it seems reasonable that the limited pages of Iran's sole architecture magazine at the time were mostly dedicated to showcasing the works and views of Iranian architects rather than foreign ones.

Although *Honar va Memari* was indifferent to American architects' projects in Iran, Iranian newspapers in the 1970s did report on these developments. *Ettela'at* and *Kayhan*, two of Iran's widely circulated newspapers during that decade, featured numerous articles covering these projects. Most of the newspaper coverage focused on the Shahestan Pahlavi project, including news about the contract signing, introductions to various sections of the project, multiple visits by the Shah and Queen to the site, as well as plans and models of the project ("Abbas Abad town is being built by Americans", 1975, p. 4; "The Imperial Highway Was Opened", 1975, p. 3; "Several Ministries Will be Transferred to Pahlavi Shahestan", 1975,

⁵ For authoritarian modernization in the second Pahlavi Era see Saeed Leylaz, *The second wave: authoritarian modernization in Iran*.

p. 2; "Construction Activities for the Pahlavi Shahestan Abbas Abad Begun", 1975, p. 21).

In July 1976, the *Ettela'at* newspaper reported on I.M. Pei's visit to Iran to design the Kapsad project, referring to him as the "greatest architect in the world" ("Large Building Complexes Reduce Tehran's Urban Problems", 1976, p. 40). Later, in December 1976, the same newspaper announced the construction of the second tower of the Arya Sheraton Hotel, describing it as the "most luxurious hotel in the Middle East" ("The Construction of the Second Tower of the Arya Sheraton Hotel, the Most Luxurious Hotel in The Middle East, Has Begun", 1976, p. 30). It appears that, beyond merely informing the public about the design and construction of these projects and their specifications, these newspapers pursued promotional objectives. The use of exaggerated descriptors for the projects and their architects suggests that the newspapers framed the announcement of these designs or contract signings as significant achievements for the government and the nation, aiming to amplify their importance. The role of these two newspapers aligns with and actively promotes the Shah's modernization policies.

6. Unrealized ambitions: the decline and halt of the projects

A reporter from *Progressive Architecture* who visited Iran in October 1976 observed that "there is little evidence to be seen, so far, of any projects now on the drawing boards of American architects," further adding, "there is a lot going on, but there is nothing happening" ("A Place in Process", 1976, p. 49). This assessment remained valid in the subsequent years, as most projects were never realized and remained confined to paper. Notably, the Shahestan Pahlavi project—the largest and most expensive foreign architectural endeavor in Iran—was never constructed. Among the major projects mentioned, only the Farahzad Town development made significant progress, with a portion of its residential towers completed.⁶

The Iranian Revolution of February 1979, which led to the overthrow of the Shah and the collapse of the Pahlavi regime, effectively ended American architectural projects in Iran. However, it appears that even prior to this profound political transformation, various obstacles impeded the advancement and completion of these projects. For instance, the Shahestan Pahlavi project, whose contract with Jaquelin T. Robertson was signed on January 28, 1975, and whose construction commenced on August 19, 1975, with an anticipated ten-year timeline, had made minimal pro-

gress by 1979 ("Abbas Abad Town Is Being Built by Americans", 1975, p. 4; "The Imperial Highway Was Opened", 1975, p. 3).⁷ This suggests that despite extensive publicity and promotion, significant barriers existed that hindered the project's execution before the revolution.

The challenges discussed in the previous section seem to have significantly hindered the advancement of the projects. One of the primary factors contributing to the failure of these initiatives could be the flawed policies of the Shah and the Pahlavi government, who were the main employers and policymakers behind these projects. Under their direction, ambitious projects were launched without proper planning or a clear understanding of their scope, required resources, and construction timelines. As Terrance R. Williams, a Manhattan architect who worked on the Shahestan project in Iran for Llewelyn-Davies, points out, "There was no planning mentality. There was no depth of technological experience or understanding of the time it takes to get a project ready" (Barron, 1979). Additionally, Robertson highlights that the demands of the government were out of touch with reality and the existing conditions: "The problem was with the hosts, who wanted all the goodies whether or not they were good for them—and in most cases they were not" (1979).

In examining the fate of the projects, the economic recession of 1977 and 1978 must not be overlooked. While the rise in oil prices generated a sudden influx of wealth for the Pahlavi government, this wealth drove the regime toward overly ambitious projects. However, the mismanagement of this wealth triggered severe inflation and a range of economic problems. Between 1972 and 1976 (1351 to 1355 in the Iranian calendar), government policies led to severe inflation in the housing sector—exceeding 216 percent—the highest among all sectors. A review of Iranian newspapers from the mid-1970s reveals that housing shortages, soaring prices, and rising rents were among the most pressing issues faced by residents of Tehran and other major cities. This government approach turned the housing market into a focal point of scarcity, inflation, and widespread public dissatisfaction. Consequently, in 1977 (1356), escalating construction costs and rampant inflation caused a sudden drop in housing demand, plunging the sector into recession. This economic downturn and inflation were key factors fueling public unrest against the Pahlavi regime, ultimately culminating in the 1979 revolution (Leylaz, 2012; Abrahamian, 1982).

⁶ Farahzad Town in Tehran is now known as Shahrak-e Gharb, which means the "West Town." This name reflects its design and construction by American engineers and architects, who based it on Western urban planning principles. The towers constructed as part of the Zomorod Project in the Farahzad Town are now known as the Shahgoli Towers.

⁷ The lands of Shahestan Pahlavi have now been transformed into numerous parks and cultural centers, including Taleghani Park, Water and Fire Park, Tabiat Bridge, Book Garden, National Library, Mosalla, and more. Some of the lands originally designated for the Shahestan project are still vacant or under construction. Among the mentioned parks, only Taleghani Park was included in the Shahestan project plan. Construction of this park began in 1978 and it was finally inaugurated in 1982.

7. Conclusions

Reviewing the articles and news published in American architecture magazines in the 1970s provides some information about the projects of American architects in Iran, an overview of their situation in Iran, and reveals some of the contexts and roots of their presence in Iran.

In terms of quantity, the number of projects published increased in the mid-1970s, reaching a peak in 1976. The projects of American architects were mostly included in the category of mega-projects, such as new towns in the suburbs of Tehran or large cities in Iran, massive residential complexes, multi-use commercial and residential buildings, and large luxury hotels. Most of the residential projects were luxury houses for high-income groups. In terms of form, residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects were typically designed as high-rises and skyscrapers.

The number and scale of the project and the financial value of the contracts reflect a significant opportunity that American architects faced in the mid-1970s. American publications, in addition to disseminating detailed information regarding the specifications, dimensions, and financial valuations of architectural projects, also address the challenges encountered by American architects operating in Iran. Journalists of these publications cover their work challenges alongside opportunities by traveling to Iran or interviewing American architects. Following the complete cessation of projects and contractual agreements in 1979, these architects have articulated their challenges with increased candor and specificity. Their challenges have mostly been in the field of communication and negotiation with the client (primarily the Shah and his aids and Foundations), project planning, as well as the contradiction of the client's demands with the existing realities and conditions.

The publications also offer valuable insights into the underlying causes and origins of the presence and activities of American architects in Iran. The 1973 oil boom, coupled with a substantial increase in Iran's oil revenues, represented the most significant economic factor attracting foreign architects to the country. This abrupt and considerable rise in oil income intensified the Shah's investments, as well as those of his affiliated institutions, in the construction sector. Moreover, the Shah and his associates' orientation toward West as well as Western modern architectural styles and practices led them to engage Western architects and construction firms. Simultaneously, the unfavorable economic and professional conditions faced by architects in the United States prompted many to seek opportunities in Iran and other oil-rich countries in the Middle East. Collectively, these factors established the conditions that facilitated the presence and professional activities of American architects in Iran.

Iranian newspapers, concurrently with American publications, reported on these projects while actively promoting and amplifying their significance. Despite such public-

ity and exaggeration, the majority of these projects failed to progress or reach completion. The policies of the Shah and the Pahlavi regime, along with the ensuing economic and political developments, coupled with the numerous challenges faced by architects and construction firms, ultimately led to the suspension and cancellation of many projects and plans.

Although the projects published in architecture magazines provide a general overview of American architects' activity, it is important to note that not all projects are featured in these publications. Some statistics indicate that the number of projects undertaken by American architects and construction companies in Iran exceeded those documented in the magazines (Cody, 2003). In the next step, searching archival documents could reveal more details of American architects' projects in Iran.

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