

Original Research Article

The Role of Architectural Elements in Iranian Gardens*

Narges Aghabozorg**

Lecturer, Architecture and Urban Planning Department, Technical and Vocational University (TVU), Tehran, Iran.

Received: 01/09/2023

Accepted: 26/11/2023

Available online: 22/12/2023

Abstract | The Iranian garden is a product of Iranian culture and has artificial and natural elements. At the same time that it has fixed and clear principles, it has a lot of variety. Following this diversity, different designs for Iranian garden elements are observed. This research has been focused on the architectural elements of Iranian gardens. Then what are the reasons for the architectural elements' diversity? This is the question that this research is looking for. Finding the answer to this question can help designers with the idea of an Iranian garden. For example, what is the basis for designing a Kushk (kiosk or pavilion), and what is the basis for the variations in their designs? There can be various reasons for these architectural elements' designs, and these reasons originate from their philosophy and theoretical foundations. So far, many studies have been done on different architectural elements of the Iranian garden, and they have been looked at from different angles. But what are the roles of these elements in the overall plan of the Iranian gardens? Are these elements based on functional, climatic, or shape reasons or other reasons? And which reason is stronger? For this purpose, ten gardens in different climates and of different ages were selected to examine their architectural elements. Qualitative evaluation and analytical-descriptive methods have been used in examining the various reasons for the formation of each of the architectural elements in the selected gardens. The abundance of roles in the examination of each element determines the dominant role each of them plays in the garden. In the end, the conclusions show that "wall" has a mainly functional-climatic role, "entrance" has a mainly symbolic role, and "kiosk" has a mainly spatial role. In this way, the architectural elements are not very prominent, and they draw most of the audience's attention to the garden and nature.

Keywords | *Iranian garden, Iranian garden architectural elements, Wall, Entrance, Kiosk (pavilion).*

Introduction | A Persian or Iranian garden is a manifestation of Iranian culture and encompasses various interpretations. So far, Iranian gardens have been examined from different material and symbolic perspectives. Numerous studies have also been conducted on the elements of Iranian gardens. Like other gardens, Iranian gardens consist of artificial elements (such as walls, entrances, kiosks (pavilions), etc.) and natural elements (water and plants), all of which have been extensively studied in Iranian gardens. However, less has been said about the theoretical foundations and different layers of meaning of the elements of Iranian gardens and their dependence on their physical characteristics. The present study focuses

on the role of artificial elements in Iranian gardens because the design of the architectural elements of an Iranian garden is based on their role and interpretation. The question of "What impact does the role of architectural elements have on their physical characteristics in Iranian gardens?" is the main question that this study seeks to answer. The research hypothesis is that while the elements of Iranian gardens are designed to fulfill human functional and material needs, they also have roles that direct attention to the garden and nature. In other words, these elements, in addition to their functional and material roles, are spatial, meaningful, and ritualistic. If the research hypothesis is proven, it can serve as a criterion for designing the architectural elements of Iranian gardens.

**Corresponding author: n-aghabozorg@tvu.ac.ir, +989124216495

Research Background

So far, there hasn't been a direct study on this specific topic. However, there are sources available regarding each architectural element. For example, in the articles "Garden Wall, the Safe Realm of Fantasy" (Razavi, 2014) and "Phenomenology of the Surrounding Wall in Persian Garden" (Mansouri, 2016), different roles of walls in Iranian gardens have been discussed. Furthermore, in articles such as "A Restudy of the Form of Isfahan's Palace of Hasht Behesht (The Eight Paradises)" (Taghvaei, 2011), "Hasht-Behesht Pavilion Isfahan Its Study as a Viewpoint" (Bina & Etezadi, 2015), "Pavilion in Persian Gardens; A Review on Nine-Part Pavilions" (Motedayen & Motedayen, 2016), and "The Structure of the Kiosks in Khorasan Gardens; a Model for Permanent Residence" (Mehrbani Golzar & Fatemi, 2016), aspects of kiosks (pavilions) in Iranian gardens are addressed. Leila Medghalchi et al., in their article "Spirit of Place in Persian Garden" (Medghalchi, Ansari & Bemanian, 2014), have mentioned characteristics of Iranian garden elements to enhance the sense of place. Furthermore, in her article "Recognizing the Concept of "Threshold" in Persian Gardens" (Medghalchi, 2017), she examines the symbolic aspect of the entrance in Iranian gardens. In addition, in an ongoing research project at the Nazar Research Center entitled "Designing the Details of Iranian Garden Elements," the objectives of "explaining the various roles of Iranian garden elements," "explaining the relationship between roles and details of elements," and "achieving design guidelines for the details of elements" (Mansouri, Atashinbar, & Aghabozorg, 2022) have been identified. For the achievement of the project's objectives, selected samples of Iranian gardens, which are diverse in terms of historical and geographical aspects, need to be determined, and the elements of Iranian gardens and their components should be analyzed in these selected samples. The criterion for analysis is the interpretation of elements and the extraction of keywords from their interpretation to reach the roles of these elements (Mansouri, 2022). The present study also provides a specific structure

regarding such analysis. Although the mentioned studies have presented specific roles for individual architectural elements of Iranian gardens, none of them refer to the relationship between the roles of elements and their physical characteristics—a relationship that can contribute to a better understanding of these elements and the reasons for their physical diversity.

Theoretical Foundation

The term "role" in its literal sense refers to function and performance. The functions and performances of Iranian garden elements have a hierarchical structure from subjective to objective or from material to spiritual, and in its modern sense, it is not limited to physical or material aspects. The roles of Iranian garden elements, or their functional hierarchies, are the underlying theoretical foundations embedded in Iranian garden elements. Instead of the roles of Iranian garden elements, one can also substitute the design objectives of those elements. To substantiate the research hypothesis, roles can be classified into five general categories: functional-climatic, visual, spatial, socio-cultural, and symbolic. This classification is somehow similar to aspects of architecture that have received significant attention from many theorists throughout history (Memarian, 2005). For these five categories, roles or functions can be considered in a hierarchical sequence from subjective to objective or from material to spiritual (Fig. 1). Furthermore, the architectural elements of Iranian gardens can be classified into three general categories. These elements include "walls," "entrances," and "kiosks (pavilions)". The extracted items from the research background section are presented in Table 1 as elements categorized according to the classification of roles. As observed, instead of the mentioned titles for roles, other titles such as "comforting and securing," "beautifying and unifying," "space-making and landscape-creating," "inviting and interactive," and "calming and thought provoking" can be used. However, for ease of use, their modification is overlooked.

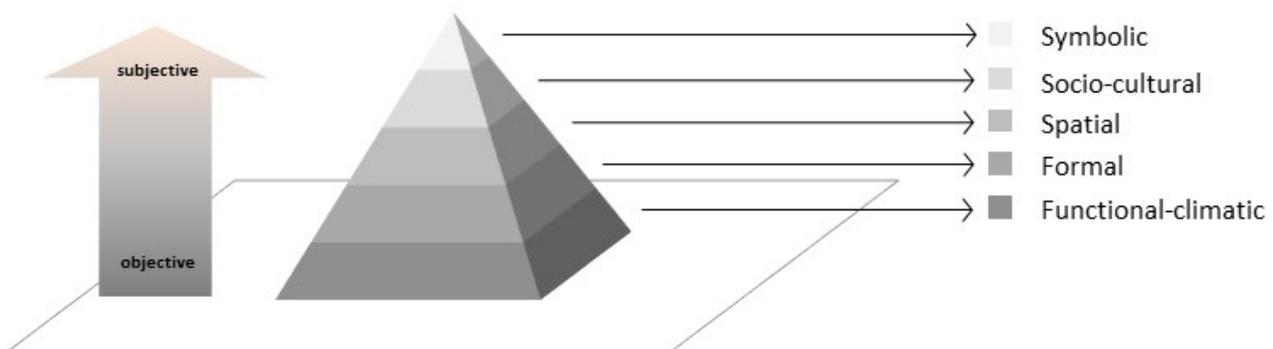


Fig. 1. Hierarchy pyramid of roles of architectural elements. Source: Author.

Table 1. Classification of roles of elements in Iranian gardens (the most highlighted role regarding each architectural element in conducted research has been marked in gray color).Source: Author.

Roles	Descriptions	Wall	Entrance	Kiosk
Functional-climatic	-Dependent on performance, climate, and environment.	-Comforting (Medghalchi et al., 2014) -Providing security (Razavi, 2014) -A defensive element (Mansouri, 2016).	-Separator, connector, place identifier, location changer, viewpoint, symbolic element, security-enhancing, and controlling (Modghalchi, 2017).	-Viewpoint (a place for observation) (Bina & Etezadi, 2015) -Climatic, residential, ceremonial (Motedayen & Motedayen, 2016) -Permanent or temporary housing (Mehrbani Golzar & Fatemi, 2016).
Formal	-Dependent on the physical structure/form.	-	-Articulated, harmonious with both inward and outward, people-oriented, symmetrical and balanced, proportionate, hierarchical, continuous, a place of pause and passage (Medghalchi, 2017).	-Viewpoint (with a semi-open space) (Bina & Etezadi, 2015).
Spatial	-Dependent on the definition of space and perspectives -Dependent on stimulating the five senses and...	-	-Separator, connector, both inward and outward (Medghalchi, 2017).	-Viewpoint (spatial connection to the garden) (Bina & Etezadi, 2015).
Socio-cultural	-Dependent on social interactions, customs, and traditions...	-Security-enhancing (Razavi, 2014) -Defensive element (Mansouri, 2016).	-Security-enhancing and controlling (Medghalchi, 2017).	-Viewpoint (a place of interaction) (Bina & Etezadi, 2015).
Symbolic	-Dependent on transcendental and mental, symbolic, virtual and unreal concepts.	-Silent wall, secure mental space, secluded and tranquil, focal point of attention or collective memory (Razavi, 2014) -Calming (Medghalchi et al., 2014) -Destination or medium, symbol of ownership, symbol of limitation (Mansouri, 2016).	-Separator, connector, linking and disconnecting, transformative space, preparatory space for the audience, waiting area, gatherer of contrasting concepts such as light and shadow, stillness and movement (Medghalchi, 2017).	-Center of the world, focal point and destination of the garden (Taghvaei, 2011) -Viewpoint (a place of contemplation) (Bina & Etezadi, 2015).

Research Methodology

To examine the theoretical foundations of Iranian garden elements, first, a number of Iranian gardens from different historical periods and geographical locations (the eight climatic regions of Iran) are selected (Fig. 2). Then, the characteristics of each architectural element of Iranian gardens in these gardens are investigated. The type of examination is qualitative valuation based on specified roles and is descriptive-analytical. The valuations are conducted in a way that establishes a connection between the roles and the physical characteristics of the architectural elements. In the tables, the color of the physical characteristics of the elements and the related role are jointly selected to determine the prominent role of that element in the specific garden. The method of data collection for the gardens is both fieldwork and library research. The selected gardens are described as follows:

1. Pasargadae Garden (Achaemenid period): semi-arid climate
2. Jahan Nama Garden in Shiraz (Zand period and possibly

earlier than the Timurid period): bordering between semi-arid and hot-dry climates

3. Fin Garden in Kashan (Safavid period and possibly Albooyeh dynasty): Bordering among three climates: semi-arid, hot-dry, and cold

4. Chehel Sotoun Garden in Isfahan (Safavid Period): Bordering between semi-arid and cold climates

5. Chehel Sotoun Garden in Behshahr (Safavid Period): Temperate and rainy climate

6. Golshan Garden in Tabas (Afsharid Period): hot-dry climate

7. Dolat Abad Garden in Yazd (between the Afsharid and Zand periods): semi-arid climate

8. Akbarieh Garden in Birjand (Qajar Period): Bordering between semi-arid and cold climates

9. Pahlavanpour Garden in Mehriz (Qajar Period): Cold climate

10. Shahzadeh Garden in Mahan (late Qajar period): cold climate

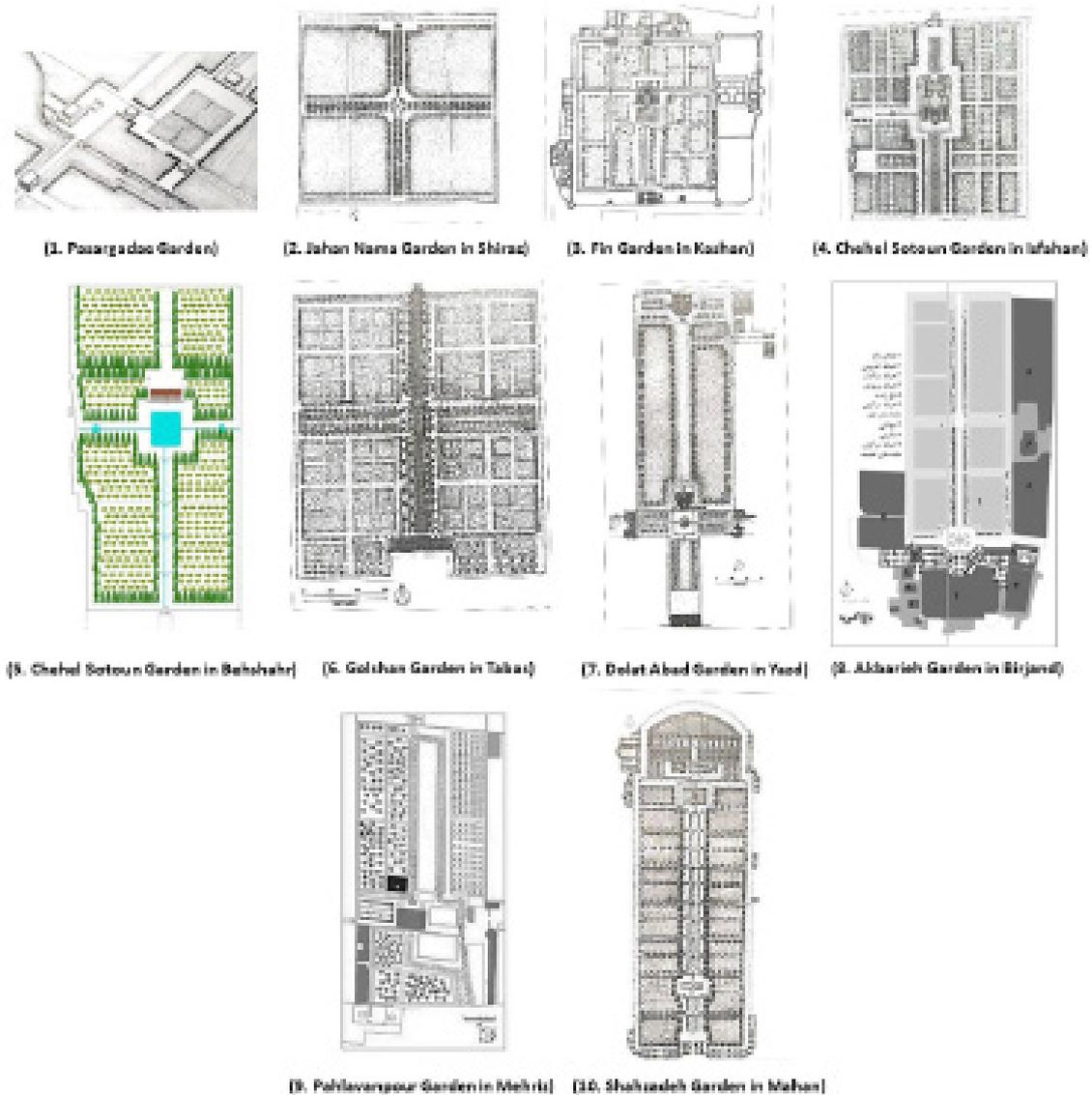


Fig. 2. Plan of selected gardens. Sources: (1): Stronach 1991, (2), (3), (4), (6), (7), & (10): Naeima, 2006, (5): Mansouri Roudkoli, Daneshduost & Abouie, 2016, (8): Etezadi & Bina, 2017, (9): Khalilnezhad & Tobias, 2016.

Investigating the Elements of Iranian Garden Architecture

Now, a separate examination of each of the architectural elements of Iranian gardens, namely the wall, entrance, and pavilion, will be conducted in the selected gardens. Referring to the research background section, the physical characteristics of each element in the gardens and their dominant roles have been mentioned. The dominant roles of architectural elements can be determined through the key physical features of each role. In the tables, the color of the physical characteristics of the elements and the related role are jointly selected to determine the prominent role of that element in the specific garden.

• Wall

The wall is an element that initially had a functional role but gradually acquired symbolic meaning over time. According to the research background, the wall in an Iranian garden, as a cultural product, appears to have rather

more symbolic aspects. In the following, this element is examined in the selected gardens. In Fig. 3, you can see images of parts of the walls in these gardens.

- It can be imagined that the walls or fences of Pasargadae Garden were non-structural, and their remains are not visible today since aerial images of Pasargadae Garden do not show any traces of walls or fences. The reconstructed images only depict the garden area with a row of trees. Although the reconstructed images cannot be considered scientifically reliable, assuming the correctness of hypotheses and relying on archaeological findings, the row of cypress trees has been considered a reference for examination. Due to the ceremonial nature of the cypress tree, it has a lesser spatial role and is more symbolic. Symbolism also confers a socio-cultural role in it. Cypress trees grow in most climates and, due to their evergreen nature, act as windbreak walls. Therefore, it has a functional-climatic role to some extent.

- The fence of Jahan Nama Garden in Shiraz has a base, body, and edge. The base rises one to two steps higher, then recedes backward, forming the lower edge of the wall frames. The edge of the wall is designed to prevent rainwater infiltration. The simple framing on the wall adds to its symbolism. Then, due to its role in wall resistance, it also serves a functional purpose. It also has some visual or physical significance due to this framing. It doesn't have a significant socio-cultural role. The lower edge of the frames may occasionally serve as a place to sit and rest.
- The fence in Fin Garden in Kashan has a base. The wall narrows from bottom to top. It has a simple body and narrow edge, and the base is made of natural stones. Its simplicity and use of local materials emphasize its functional-climatic role. Its shape is not particularly prominent, but the actual towers and occasionally symbolic elements emphasize its functional role and, to some extent, its socio-cultural role. It is worth mentioning that this wall has a framed entrance, which is similar to the fence of Jahan Nama Garden.
- The wall of Chehel Sotoun Garden in Isfahan is a framed and colonnaded wall with lattice frames. Due to its latticework, it has a certain spatial quality. It has acquired a socio-cultural role due to the presence of the colonnade. It also has symbolic significance because of the framing. Its visual shape is somewhat highlighted due to its lattice frames and the front colonnade showcasing itself.
- The authentic fence of Chehel Sotoun Garden¹ in Behshahr is a combination of brick and stone materials. It is unclear why bricks were used at the bottom of the wall and stones at the top. However, it serves a functional purpose

- to a large extent (defining the territory and boundary of the garden) and has no climatic significance. The front edge of the wall and the texture of the stone materials hold some symbolism.
- The wall of Golshan Garden in Tabas appears very simple and somewhat short. However, near the structure, the wall becomes more elaborate and features a creative design. This wall has minimal functional-climatic significance due to its short height or lack of significant impact on climate, but it is more spatial due to its windows and openings in the structure. Its shape is somewhat prominent, and it has some socio-cultural significance due to the possibility of views.
- The Dolat Abad Garden in Yazd has a simple mud wall that narrows from bottom to top. This wall is similar to the Fin Garden wall and has functional-climatic characteristics. It has a framed and symbolic entrance.
- The Akbarieh Garden in Birjand also has a simple wall with simple brick framing. The base is defined correctly in some parts and made of brick in other parts, which occasionally leads to water infiltration. The wall has functional-climatic characteristics and is symbolic due to its framing.
- The Pahlavanpour Garden in Mehriz has a clay and mud wall, which is relatively short and narrows from bottom to top, except in certain parts where service spaces are located. Its role is mainly functional and climatic.
- The Shazdeh Garden in Mahan, like the Pahlavanpour Garden, has a very simple wall without a base or edge, except in parts where it encloses a space in which it is



Fig. 3. Parts of the walls of selected gardens. Source: (1): www.pasargadae.info, (2): www.yjc.ir, (3): Naeima, 2006, (4): www.mehrnews.com, (5): Mansouri Roudkoli et al., 2016, (6): www.isna.ir, (6): www.anthropology.tabasenc.ir, (7), (9), (10): www.isna.ir, (8): www.beytoote.com.

framed. In the front area, this wall has lattice frames and is designed. However, the main role of the wall is functional-climatic.

Summary: In general, there are two types of walls for gardens: one is simple, and the other is strong and sturdy. Wherever a strong wall is prominent, something significant is happening. For example, it may enclose a covered space or be close to the entrance. Therefore, these walls are usually functional-climatic and then symbolic. The only exceptions are the Chehel Sotoun Garden in Isfahan and Golshan Garden, where the walls are lattice or have windows and are neither simple nor strong, like the walls of other gardens. It seems that the reason for this difference is the non-residential and ceremonial

use of these gardens, which allows the walls to provide views of the surrounding spaces and take on a spatial and socio-cultural role. Thus, walls in Iranian gardens are generally functional-climatic, unless they are near the entrance or a structure, in which case they become symbolic. In the analysis, framed, patterned, and brick walls are considered significant elements in the physical aspect, while simplicity and mud construction are seen as functional-climatic elements and lattice or windowed walls are seen as spatial elements. Also, the presence of vaulted openings is considered a socio-cultural element. In the Table 2, the dominant element of each role is indicated by the corresponding color, and the secondary elements are listed in the same place.

Table 2. Wall Roles in Selected Gardens and Their Abundance, The dominant role and its associated architectural feature in each row are indicated by a specific color. Each star assigned in the table is equivalent to 5% of the role². Source: Author.

Cases	Height of wall	Base of wall	Body of wall	Edge of wall	Role				
					Functional-climatic	Formal	Spatial	Socio-cultural	Symbolic
Pasargadae	--	--	A row of cypress trees	--	***	**	****	*****	*****
Jahan Nama	About 4-5 meters	Stone Edge	Framed brick wall	Forward edge	*****	*** Frame	**	*** Frame	*****
Fin	About 4-5 meters	Mountain stone	Simple mud wall	Non emphasized edge	***** ****	*** Tower	**	*** Tower	**
	About 4-5 meters	Brick	Framed brick wall	Non emphasized edge	*****	*** Façade Frame	**	**	*****
Chehel Sotoun of Isfahan	About 4-5 meters	Curved stone or brick	Framed brick wall	Forward edge	**	*** Frame	*****	*****	*****
			Lattice Colonnade from the inside						
Chehel Sotoun of Behshahr	?	Brick	Simple mountain stone wall	Forward edge	***** *****	*** Fabric	**	**	*** Fabric and edge
Golshan	Variable	Brick	Has viewpoints	Brick edge	**	*** Patterned	***** ****	*** Visibility	**
	About 3 meters	Mud	Simple mud wall	No edge	***** *****	**	**	**	**
Dolat Abad	?	?	Framed brick wall	Forward edge	*****	*** Frame	**	*** Frame	*****
	About 4-5 meters	Mud	Simple mud wall	No edge	***** ***	**	**	**	**
Akabariyeh	?	Mountain stone or brick	Framed brick and	Forward edge	***** *	*** Curl	**	**	*****
			Mud wall						
Pahlavanpour	About 3 meters	Mud	Simple mud wall	No edge	***** *****	**	**	**	**
Shazdeh	About 3 meters	Mud	Simple mud wall	No edge	***** *****	**	**	**	**
The abundance of predominant roles of walls in selected gardens					7	0	2	1	6

• Entrance

It seems that entrances in Iranian gardens are often symbolic, according to previous research. Sometimes they appear in the form of a structure, and other times they are simpler and take the form of a gateway. The entrances in selected gardens are examined in the following. In Fig. 4, you can see pictures of the entrances of these gardens.

- The remains of the Pasargadae Garden indicate that it had a structure as an entrance gate. The size of the gate structure signifies its importance and gives it a symbolic and formal role. Due to its function as an entrance, it also has some socio-cultural significance.
- The entrance of the Jahan Nama Garden in Shiraz is only a gateway and does not have a distinctive shape. The only distinguishing feature is the tilework above the entrance. It does not have a covered space, and recently, a fountain has been added to the front of the entrance. The pavement details of the entrance courtyard are very similar to the main courtyard of the garden and the surrounding pavilions. This gateway is aligned with one of the axes leading to the pavilions, which gives it a spatial role³, and due to its prominent tile decorations, it is symbolic. Additionally, because it serves as an entrance, it has some socio-cultural significance.
- The entrance structure of the Fin Garden in Kashan is

- clearly taller than the garden walls and has symmetry and balance. Therefore, it has a formal role. Before entering, there is a *Pir-Neshin* space (waiting area with sitting platforms). After entering, you will be faced with a brick lattice frame that provides a view of the garden. However, the entrance to the garden can also be accessed through a rotation, similar to what is seen in many Safavid-era structures. It also has two *Iwans* on the upper floor. The entrance structure of the Fin Garden has a spatial role due to its lattice and its placement on the main axis of the garden. It is also symbolic due to its height and decorations. Additionally, it has some socio-cultural significance because of the *Pir-Neshin*.
- The entrance of the Chehel Sotoun Garden was covered in the past and had a structural form. Due to its lattice walls and its placement on the main axis of the garden, it has both a spatial and socio-cultural role. Its height is prominent, and its shape is notable. Furthermore, it is symbolic due to its high and painted plaster decorations.
- The Chehel Sotoun Garden in Behshahr had several gateways, with the most important one having a square in front of it. One of the Qajar-era images clearly shows this gateway. The image indicates that this gateway was very simple (Mansouri Roudkoli et al., 2016). The entrance structure of the Chehel Sotoun Garden in



Fig. 4. Entrances of selected gardens. Source: (1): Stronach 1991, (2), (9) & (10): www.isna.ir, (3): Rezaeipour.& Irani Behbahani, 2006, (4): www.mehrnews.com, (5): Mansouri Roudkoli et al., 2016, (6): www.anthropology.tabasenc.ir, (7): Khansari, Moghtader & Yavari, 2004, (8): www.beytoote.com.

Behshahr is primarily symbolic due to its height and indirect entrance, with little spatial significance. It has three sections and its shape is notable. It also has some socio-cultural significance due to the presence of a *Jolokhan* space (frontage and a space like a square as a reception area) and a *Pir-Neshin*.

- The main structure of the Golshan Garden in Tabas is located at the entrance of the garden and serves as the gateway to the garden. Its shape is notable due to its distinctive divisions, and it has a formal role. It is symbolic due to its large and tall size. It also has some socio-cultural significance due to the presence of a *Jolokhan* and a *Pir-Neshin*.

- The Dolat Abad Garden in Yazd has two main gateways: the outer gateway and the inner gateway. The outer gateway has minimal decorations but is taller than the surrounding walls and has multiple *Iwans*. Its prominence, tall height, and large size make it symbolic. Its three-part division gives it a formal role. The presence of an *Iwan* on the ground floor and its placement on the main axis make it spatially significant and have some socio-cultural significance.

- The Akbariyeh Garden in Birjand has a simple gateway along the main axis of the garden. Therefore, it has a spatial significance. The height of the gateway is significantly taller than the surrounding walls, making it symbolic. Additionally, due to the presence of a *Jolokhan* and setbacks, it has a socio-cultural role.

- The entrance of the Pahlavanpour Garden in Mehriz is defined by a watchtower and guard post from the inside. This entrance has a tower-like structure and is highly formal and symbolic. It has some socio-cultural significance due to the presence of a *Pir-Neshin*.

- The entrance of the Shazdeh Garden in Mahan is well-defined and features a *Jolokhan*, a fountain, and a beautiful gateway structure. The architecture of the gateway and its perspective is even more beautiful than the main structure of the garden. The garden's *Jolokhan* is defined by lattice walls on both sides. This structure has distinctive divisions and a formal role. It is spatially significant due to its placement on the main axis of the garden and the presence of an *Iwan* on the ground floor. It is symbolic due to its tall and large size, as well as the decorative brickwork and tilework. It also has some socio-cultural significance.

Summary: The entrance gateways and structures in the studied gardens vary in their architectural styles. Some are simple, like the Jahan Nama and Akbariyeh gardens, while others have been transformed into magnificent mansions, such as the Pasargad, Fin, and Shazdeh Gardens. Sometimes, the main pavilion of the garden becomes integrated with the entrance gateway, like in the Golshan garden. The presence of a *Jolokhan* is often

felt in the examined gardens. However, the significance of these areas varies. In Iranian gardens, the entrances are often symbolic and then formal due to their elevated position and decorations. In the analysis, the presence of a tower or structure, and the presence of distinctive divisions are considered indicators of a formal role. The tallness and presence of decorations serve as indicators of a symbolic role, while being placed on the main axis of the garden and having an *Iwan* or lattice on the ground floor serve as indicators of a spatial role. In Table 3, the dominant role is indicated by the same color, and the secondary role in all entrances, due to its specific function, is socio-cultural.

• Kiosk (pavilion)

Kiosks (small pavilions) are often destinations and viewpoints, sometimes open and sometimes closed. If they are open, they have a minimal climatic role, but they serve other purposes. If they are closed, they also have a climatic role. Most kiosk facades have odd divisions, and their skyline has a broken appearance due to the elevated middle section. According to previous research, kiosks primarily serve a functional role. A detailed examination of kiosks in selected gardens will be discussed in the following. In Fig. 5, kiosks from the selected gardens can be observed.

- The main kiosk in Pasargadae Garden (Cyrus' private palace) has an elongated shape and an elevated middle section. The kiosk has a stretched *Iwan* facing the main garden on the ground floor. The role of this kiosk is primarily formal due to the presence of the *Iwan*, its spatial nature, and the elevated middle section. Due to the presence of an *Iwan*, it also has a certain socio-cultural role, and due to the elevated middle section, it also has a certain symbolic role.

- The kiosk in Jahan Nama Garden in Shiraz has a square shape with 45-degree corners, it is centralized, and it is located in the center of the four gardens, making it symbolic. It also has small *Iwans* on the 45-degree corners on the upper floor. Due to the small *Iwans* and limited decorations, it serves a functional and climatic role. It also has a certain formal role due to its height.

- The central kiosk in Fin Garden, Kashan, has a meaningful role due to its centralized location, placement at the intersection of main axes, the presence of a pool, and notable decorations. Due to the multiple *Iwans*, it serves a spatial and sociocultural role. According to an old painting of the kiosk, it had an elevated middle section, and therefore, it has a formal role due to its height and the presence of a tall *Iwan*.

- The kiosk of Chehel Sotoun Garden in Isfahan is spatial, sociocultural, and functional due to its multiple *Iwans*. Its formal role is attributed to its tall and drawn *Iwan*, while its symbolic role is due to its centralized

Table 3. Entrance Roles in Selected Gardens and Their Abundance, The dominant role and its associated architectural feature in each row are indicated by a specific color. Each star assigned in the table is equivalent to 5% of the role. Source: Author.

Cases	Form	Number of floors	Facade	Semi-open space on the ground floor	Façade decorations	Place	Role				
							Functional-climatic	Formal	Spatial	Socio-cultural	Symbolic
Pasargadae	Structure	One tall floor	3 or 5 sections	--	Exists	Outside of the main garden	***	*****	***	****	*****
Jahan Nama	Head	--	One frame	--	Tiling	Main axis	**	**	*****	****	*****
Fin	Structure	Two floors	Three sections	Latticed space	Colored plaster, woodwork, lattice	Main axis	***	****	****	****	****
Chehel Sotoun of Isfahan	Structure	One tall floor	Three sections	Hall	Colored plaster Ornamental bricks	Main axis	***	****	****	****	****
Chehel Sotoun of Behshahr	Structure	Two floors	Three sections	--	--	Main axis	***	*****	***	****	*****
Golshan	Structure	Two floors	Three or nine sections	--	Tiling	Main axis	***	*****	***	****	*****
Dolat Abad	Structure	Two floors	Three or nine sections	<i>Iwan</i>	--	Main axis	**	*****	*****	***	*****
Akabariyeh	Head Tall	--	Like a simple <i>Iwan</i>	--	--	Main axis	***	***	*****	****	*****
Pahlavanpour	Tower	Two floors	Has a <i>Iwan</i> entrance	--	Tiling	Outside of the main axis	***	*****	***	****	*****
Shazdeh	Structure	Two floors	Three or five sections	<i>Iwans</i>	Tiling and brickwork	Main axis	**	*****	*****	***	*****
The abundance of predominant roles of entrances in selected gardens							0	8	6	2	10

location, the presence of a pool, and abundant decorations.

- Evidence suggests that during the Safavid era, the Chehel Sotoun Garden in Behshahr had a different kiosk than the present one (belonging to the Pahlavi period), which was ordered to be reconstructed by Nader Shah in the past. An old painting depicts this kiosk (Fig. 5), which had a three-part facade, with the middle section being half-open and likely later transformed into a pool-house during the Nader Shah era. Its role is similar to the kiosk of Chehel Sotoun Garden in Isfahan.

- At the entrance of the Golshan Garden in Tabas, there is a kiosk with two *Iwans* on the middle and upper floors, one facing the garden and the other facing the *Jolokhan*. The kiosk also has a *Mahtabi* (a kind of terrace in Iranian historical architecture), but it is simple and lacks notable decorations. Due to its limited decorations, it serves a functional and climatic role, while its two *Iwans* and *Mahtabi* give it a spatial and sociocultural role. The middle section is slightly taller than the other parts and has a certain formal role.

- The plan of the kiosk in the Dolat Abad Garden,

Yazd, is centralized and semi-hexagonal with beautiful ornamental decorations and a pool, giving it a symbolic role. Additionally, the tall windcatcher in the middle of the kiosk serves a formal role. With its multiple *Iwans*, it has a spatial and sociocultural role, and with its smaller *Iwans* (as well as ornamental windows and windcatchers), it serves a functional and climatic role.

- The kiosk in the Akbaryeh Garden, Birjand, has a wide central *Iwan* and other *Iwans* on the upper floor, located on both sides of the central section. The predominant roles of this kiosk are functional-climatic, formal, spatial, and sociocultural. The formal, spatial, and sociocultural roles are attributed to the wide central *Iwan*, while the functional-climatic role is due to the simplicity and balanced combination of enclosed and open spaces.

- The Pahlavanpour Garden in Mehriz has a semi-open kiosk with a pool. Its role is formal, spatial, and sociocultural due to the tall and large central *Iwan*. It also has a symbolic role because of the presence of the pool. With its smaller *Iwans* and limited decorations (as well as windcatchers and underground spaces), it serves a functional-climatic role.

- The kiosk in the Shazdeh Garden of Mahan has

several *Iwans* on both sides of the central section and a *Mahtabi* in the middle. It is white in color and has minimal decorations. Therefore, it has a spatial and sociocultural role due to the presence of the *Mahtabi*. It serves a functional-climatic role due to its minimal and practical decorations, smaller *Iwans*, and practical design. Additionally, its elevated middle section has a formal role.

Summary: Various roles can be observed in the plans of Iranian garden kiosks (pavilions), but they primarily have a spatial role. Spatiality is attributed to their perspective and the presence of a *Iwan* (or *Mahtabi*). The social-cultural role is also prominent in the location of the *Iwan*. The presence of an elevated central section and an extended or tall *Iwan* signifies the formal role, while smaller *Iwans* and limited decorations indicate the functional-climatic role. Being centrally located on the main axis, having a pool and abundant decorations signify the symbolic role. The functional-climatic role of the kiosks has received less attention, due to the kiosks being situated in the microclimate of the Iranian garden, and the fact they are primarily used seasonally rather than for permanent residence (Table 4).

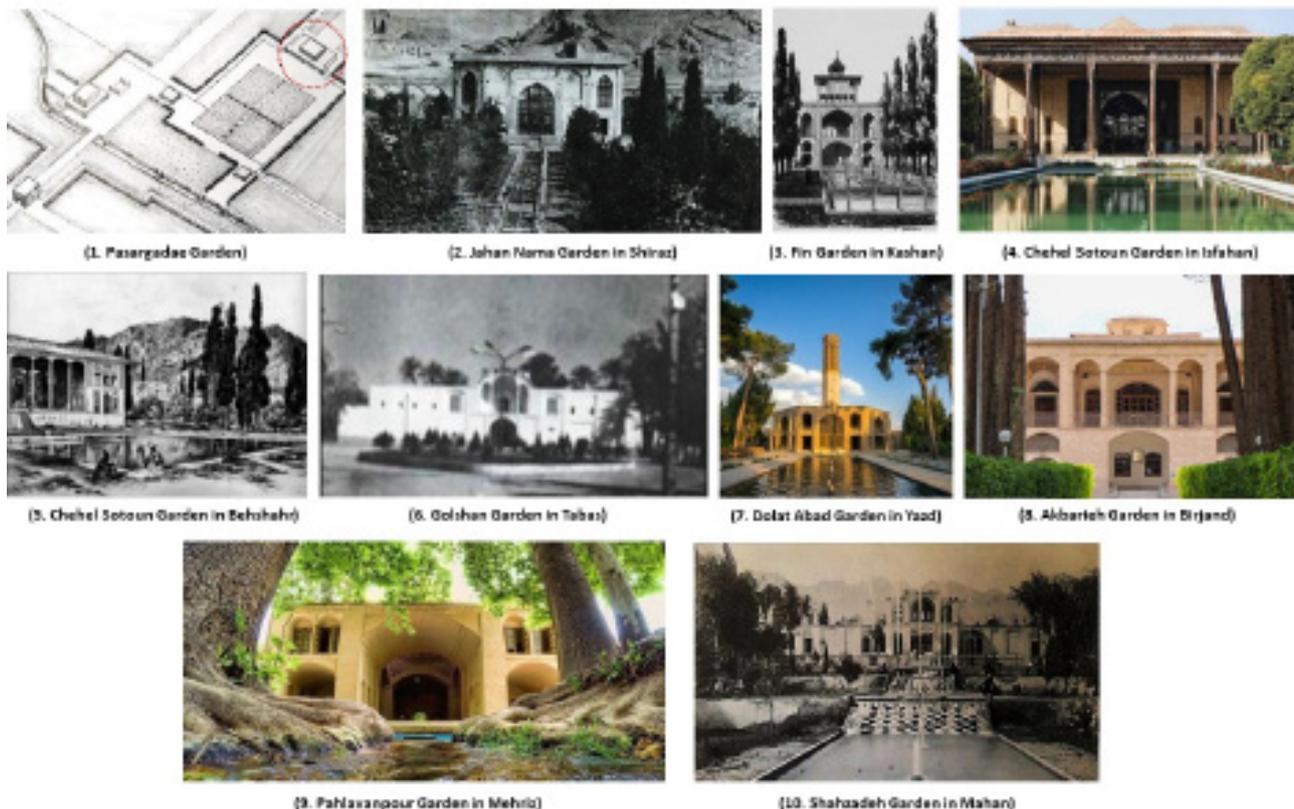


Fig. 5. Kiosks of selected Gardens. Source: (1): Stronach 1991, (2): Alai, 2009, (3): Naeima, 2006, (4), (5) & (6): Khansari et al., 2004, (7) & (8): www.isna.ir, (9): www.farsnews.ir, (10): Shahcheraghi, 2019.

Table 4. Roles of pavilions in selected gardens and their abundance, the predominant role, and related architectural features of each role are indicated by a distinct color in each row. Each star assigned in the table is equivalent to 5% of the role. Source: Author.

Cases	Structure Form	Façade skyline	Iwan or Mahtabi	Poolhouse	Façade decorations	Place	Role of Kiosk				
							Functional-climatic	Formal	Spatial	Socio-cultural	Symbolic
Pasargadae	Elongated	Higher middle section	Iwan Elongated	None	Exists	At the end of the main garden	**	*****	*****	*** Iwan	*** Height
Jahan Nama	Centralized	The middle section partly higher	4 small Iwans	Exists	Limited wood and brickwork	The center of the garden, at the intersection of the two main axis	*****	**** Height of the middle section	***	***	*****
Fin	Centralized	Higher middle section	Multiple short Iwans Tall	Exists	Tiling, colored plaster, woodwork	At the intersection of the two main axis	***	****	****	****	****
Chehel Sotoun of Isfahan	Centralized	The middle section partly higher	Multiple Iwans Elongated and tall	Exists	Brick, wood, and mirror work	Almost in the center of the main axis	***	****	****	****	****
Chehel Sotoun of Behshahr	Elongated	Linear	Iwan Elongated and tall	Exists	Woodwork and ...	Almost in the center of the main axis	***	****	****	****	****
Golshan	Elongated	The middle section partly higher	Two moonlight room and Iwan	None	Limited tiling	Front of the main axis	****	**** Height of the middle section	****	****	***
Dolat Abad	Centralized	Higher middle section	Multiple Iwans Small	Exists	Woodwork and colored glasses	End of the main axis	****	****	****	****	****
Akabariyeh	Elongated	The middle section partly higher	Iwan Elongated Small Iwans	None	Limited brickwork	End of the main axis	****	****	****	****	***
Pahlavanpour	Elongated	Higher middle section	Iwan Elongated and tall Small Iwans	Exists	Limited plaster and brickwork	Main axis	****	****	****	****	****
Shazdeh	Elongated	Higher middle section	Mahtabi Small Iwans	None	Limited plaster and woodwork	Near the end of the main axis	****	****	****	****	***
The abundance of predominant roles of kiosks in selected gardens							6	8	9	8	6

Discussion

Walls in Iranian gardens are often simple and functional. The functional aspect of garden walls directs the viewer’s attention towards the garden space itself, rather than the walls. The walls, when they take on a built or formal shape, often incorporate frames for stability and aesthetic purposes, acquiring symbolic significance as well. Regardless of time and place, walls primarily serve a functional-climatic role and then a symbolic role. Form and structure have had less prominence in Iranian architecture. Special forms and structures, if they exist, are primarily driven by reasons other than aesthetics, such as structural stability. In the Iranian kiosk (pavilion), the emphasis on form and structure is not prominent, although attention is paid to symmetry, divisions in the facade, and the arrangement of open and enclosed spaces. However, form and structure do not play a dominant role and do not overly assert themselves. If attention is drawn to them in certain cases, it is often due to the architectural play with the form of the *Iwan* and its perspective, which harmoniously emerges in line with the symmetry axis of the garden. In Iranian gardens, the incorporation of semi-open spaces, such as *Iwans* and *Mahtabies*, in pavilions and entrances to establish a stronger connection with nature (indicating the ceremonial nature of the pavilion or entrance) has intensified the spatial aspect and emphasized the garden space. That is why pavilions in Iranian gardens are often spatially oriented. However, over time, their functional-climatic role has gained more importance. Greater diversity can be seen in the entrances of Iranian gardens, with the most prominent roles observed in the Safavid period entrances, which have evolved over time. Sometimes, pavilions or entrances also had a social-cultural role and provided a space for social interactions. The presence of *pirneshin* -spaces for sitting and lingering in the entrances- gives them a social-cultural role, and the *Iwan* or *Mahtabi* in the entrance or pavilion serves as a place for social interactions. In an Iranian garden, everything comes into existence with a purpose and meaning. Everything tells the story of the

creators’ perspective on the created world. Whenever materials such as tiles or glass (decorative materials) are used that do not naturally exist in nature, it conveys the message of reaching a higher goal. Additionally, when a pavilion or entrance becomes grand, it becomes symbolic. Garden gates, or entrances, are often symbolic and leave a profound impact (Table 5). In Table 6, one can observe the abundance of predominant roles of architectural elements in selected gardens. It can be seen that their predominant role is symbolism. Symbolism plays the highest role in the architectural elements of the garden and can define the essence of the garden itself.

Conclusion

Walls, entrances, and pavilions each have their predominant role, directing human attention towards the garden and nature. Walls serve with simplicity and functional-climatic characteristics, entrances with their symbolic nature, preparing the audience for entering the garden, and pavilions with their spatial and perspective qualities, providing a place for contemplation and introspection. This is the same research hypothesis that can serve as a criterion for the design of elements in Iranian gardens. The garden is the result of a holistic perception of the entire existence, where the two principles of respect for humans and respect for nature are artistically combined. Humans and nature, as parts of the cosmic order, deserve respect. Respecting the garden and nature is the noblest way to serve humanity, the noblest of creations. Nature does not become more important than humans; rather, it is planned for the benefit of humans. Furthermore, nature itself sets limits and boundaries for humans, as human existence is dependent on nature. The architectural elements in Iranian gardens are also shaped by this perception: respect for humanity that goes hand in hand with respect for nature. In another study, the element of the street in an Iranian garden, when combined with the two natural elements of water and plants, can be examined to complement the architectural elements and fulfill their role in the garden.

Table 5. Predominant Roles of Architectural Elements in Iranian Gardens. Source: Author.

Roles Elements	Functional-climatic	Formal	Spatial	Socio-cultural	Symbolic
Wall					
Entrance					
Kiosk (pavilion)					

Table 6. Abundance of Predominant Roles by Selected Gardens. Source: Author.

Cases		Roles				Cases		Roles			
		Functional-climatic	Spatial Formal	Socio-cultural	Symbolic			Functional-climatic	Spatial Formal	Socio-cultural	Symbolic
Pasargadae	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Jahan Nama	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Fin	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Chehel Sotoun of Isfahan	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Chehel Sotoun of Behshahr	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Golshan	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Dolat Abad	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Akbariyeh	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Pahlavanpour	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Shazdeh	Wall										
	Entrance										
	Kiosk (pavilion)										
	Summary										
Predominant role of architectural elements						4	5	4	1	8	

Endnote

* This article is taken from the ongoing research project at Nazar Research Center for Art, Architecture and Urbanism with the title "Detailed Design of Iranian Garden Landscape Elements".

1. Refer to the article "Reinterpretation of the original appearance of the garden of Shah Ashraf al-Balad (Behshahr) in different historical periods" written by Samira Mansouri Rudkali and colleagues.

2. In this way, the sum of stars (percentage of roles) in each garden is equal to 20 stars (one hundred percent) for the relevant architectural element as much as possible.

3. In valuing the role of spatial orientation of the entrances, the entrance is considered with an open door and not a closed one. Because the door of the garden is closed, it reduces the spatiality of the entrance.

Reference list

- Alai, A. (2009). Diversity of design in historical gardens of Shiraz. *Soffeh*, 19(1-2), 5-20.
- Bina, M. & Etezadi, L. (2015). Hasht-Behesht Pavilion Isfahan Its Study as a Viewpoint. *Soffeh*, 25(3), 35-64.
- Etezadi, L. & Bina, M. (2017). Identifying Types of Open Space in Historical Gardens of Birjand Rahim Abad, Amir Abad, Shokat Abad, Bahalgard, and Akbariyyeh Gardens. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 14(47), 5-16.
- Khalilnezhad, S., & Tobias, K. (2016). The productive landscape in Persian Gardens; Foundations and features. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 13(38), 3-16.
- Khansari, M., Moghtader, M. & Yavari, M. (2004). *The Persian Garden: eshoes of paradise*. Tehran: Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Publication.
- Mansouri, S. (2016). Phenomenology of the Surrounding Wall in Persian Garden. *MANZAR*, 7(33), 6-13.
- Mansouri, S. (2022, 30 Sep). Personal interview.
- Mansouri Roudkoli, S., Daneshduost, Y. & Abouie, R. (2016). Retrieving the original image of Bagh-e Shah of Ashraf Al-Belad (Behshahr) in different historic Periods. *Journal of Architecture and Urban Planning*, 9(17), 41-59.
- Medghalchi, L., Ansari, M., & Bemanian, M. (2014). Spirit of place in Persian garden. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 11(28), 25-38.
- Medghalchi, L. (2017). Recognizing the concept of "Threshold" in Persian garden. *MANZAR*, 9(39), 6-19.
- Mehrabani Golzar, M. & Fatemi, M. (2016). The structure of the Kiosks in Khorasan Gardens; a Model for Permanent Residence. *Journal of Art and Civilization of the Orient*, 4(13), 42-51.
- Memarian, Gh. (2005). *Seyri dar mabani nazari-ye memari* [An overview of the theoretical foundations of architecture]. Tehran: Soroush Danesh.
- Motedayen, H. & Motedayen, R. (2016). Pavilion In Persian gardens; A review on nine-part Pavilions. *MANZAR*, 7(33), 32-39.
- Naeima, Gh. (2006). *Bagh-ha-ye Iran* [Persian Gardens]. Tehran: Payam.
- Razavi, N. (2014). Garden wall, the Safe Realm of Fantasy. *MANZAR*, 6(28), 7-11.
- Rezaeipour, M., & Irani Behbahian, H. (2022). Historical morphology of rural fabric between Bagh-i-Kohneh and Fin Gardens. *Journal of Iranian Architecture Studies*, 5(9), 7-23.
- Shahcheraghi, A. (2019). *Paradigms of Paradise: Recognition & Re-Creation of The Persian Garden*. (5th ed.). Tehran: Tehran University Jihad Organization.
- Stronach, D. (1991). Formation of Pasargard Royal Gardens and Their Impact on Iranian Gardens (K. Abdi, Trans.). *Athar*, 14(22-23), 54-75. [in persian]
- Mansouri, S., Atashinbar, M. & Aghabozorg, N. (2022). *Designing the Details of Iranian Garden Elements* (Unpublished research project in consultant engineer of Nazar). Nazar research center for art, architecture & urbanism, Tehran, Iran.
- Taghvaei, V. (2011). A restudy of the form of Isfahan's palace of Hasht Behesht [the eight paradises]. *Journal of Architecture and Urban Planning*, 3(5), 153-167.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the authors with publication rights granted to Manzar journal. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Aghabozorg, N. (2024). The Role of Architectural elements in Iranian gardens. *MANZAR*, 15(65), 6-19.

DOI: [10.22034/MANZAR.2023.414317.2257](https://doi.org/10.22034/MANZAR.2023.414317.2257)

URL: https://www.manzar-sj.com/article_185245.html?lang=en

