

EXPLORING RURAL MORPHOLOGY IN FARSIYAN

NAHAL KHORRAMI

INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER, TEHRAN

BEHSHID HOSSEINI

PRESIDENT, IRAN UNIVERSITY OF ART, TEHRAN

ABSTRACT

This report summarises the academic workshop Exploring Rural Morphology in *Farsiyan*. The event was organised by Dr Behshid Hosseini with the support of the Iran University of Art. The report outlines the main objectives of the workshop, introduces the research framework developed to study the historical settlement of Farsiyan, and describes the students' activities undertaken during the programme. It concludes with the key outcomes of the event and future perspectives for research and educational engagement in the region.

Communication: Nahal Khorrami

E-mail: khorraminahal@gmail.com

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Introduction

Rural settlements arise from the interaction of natural and built heritage (Hosseini & Ziaei, 2009). Local inhabitants shape and construct these environments through an integrated spatial system. The long history of rural habitations across the region has produced cohesive and well-adapted village fabrics. Spatial relationships, functions, and the multi-functional character of spaces express the social, economic, and cultural structures of the village while also responding to geographic conditions (Hosseini, Ziaei, Haghshenas, Mahdiyar, & Hosseini, 2012).

The concept of this workshop originated from the necessity for an analytical investigation of the rural fabric of the historic village of *Farsiyan*. Researchers have rarely examined this village in local morphological studies. At first sight, the architecture and spatial fabric of *Farsiyan* may appear simple, but a deeper analytical view reveals a settlement shaped through generations of accumulated knowledge and practice (Hosseini & Ziaei, 2009). The workshop aimed to offer focused insights into the significance of rural morphology for understanding a historic settlement such as *Farsiyan*. It also examined the connection between spatial forms and later patterns of village growth. Through this approach, the event built a clear understanding of the forces that shape *Farsiyan's* built environment over time.

The workshop held on 20-23 November 2025 took place in the village of *Farsiyan*, Golestan Province, Iran. The analysis addressed *Farsiyan* at multiple spatial scales, including its

Figure 1. Farsiyan, Golestan Province, Iran. Photo by Khorrami, N., in November 2025.



Figure 2. Agricultural lands of Farsiyan. Photo by Khorrami, N., in November 2025.

geographic setting, climate, spatial fabric, visual character, and housing. These dynamics are crucial for interpreting the village's overall structure, as they reflect its long-term evolution and identity (Figure 1) (Figure 2).

The event began by introducing *Farsiyan* and the theoretical framework of the workshop. The analytical investigation of the rural fabric followed the principles of the Muratorian School of Urban Morphology and Building Typology, an approach that emphasises the value of considering historical traces to inform contemporary architectural and planning decisions (Cataldi, Maffei, & Vaccaro, 2002). The workshop aimed to examine *Farsiyan* at territorial, rural fabric, and architectural scales, progressing from the large scale toward detailed levels. These concepts established a framework for analysing the spatial and functional correlations that have shaped the village's evolving form. Subsequent to the introductory overview, students joined four study groups: Contextual Studies, Fabric Analysis, Architectural Survey, and Building Technology. They conducted their studies under the guidance of faculty members and tutors.

Analytical Themes and Group Activities

The Contextual Studies group gathered information on the historical development of *Farsiyan* through field observation, interviews with the village head and elderly residents, and a review of library sources. Their work addressed the origins of the village, etymology, geographic and climate conditions, and the social, cultural, and economic structure of the community.

The Fabric Analysis group prepared a base map before the event, including topography, street network, and blocks, and shared it with all teams. They then documented public spaces, such as the mosque, bathhouse, and mill, along with routes, nodes, and rural attractors, and analysed these elements as key components of the village's spatial structure (Camiz, 2018).

The Architectural Survey groups studied vernacular architecture as a set of adaptive responses to environmental conditions and local needs (Hosseini & Ziaei, 2009). They surveyed twenty-one residential and public buildings that retained vernacular architectural features and remained in active use, producing architectural documentation that included site, floor plans, elevations, and sections (Figure 3) (Figure 4).

The Building Technology group examined construction methods, structural systems, materials, and specific building details across selected examples to understand the technical logic that underpins the built environment of *Farsiyan*.

This gathering encouraged dialogue among architects, researchers, and students from diverse backgrounds and engaged them in fundamental discussions aimed at highlighting the value of studying the past to achieve a deeper understanding of the present and future.

Conclusion and Future Perspective

In conclusion, this workshop used a morphological perspective to provide profound insights into the connection between past and present in the village of *Farsiyan*. It drew attention to a significant gap in regional research, where historic villages receive limited consideration within architectural and mor-

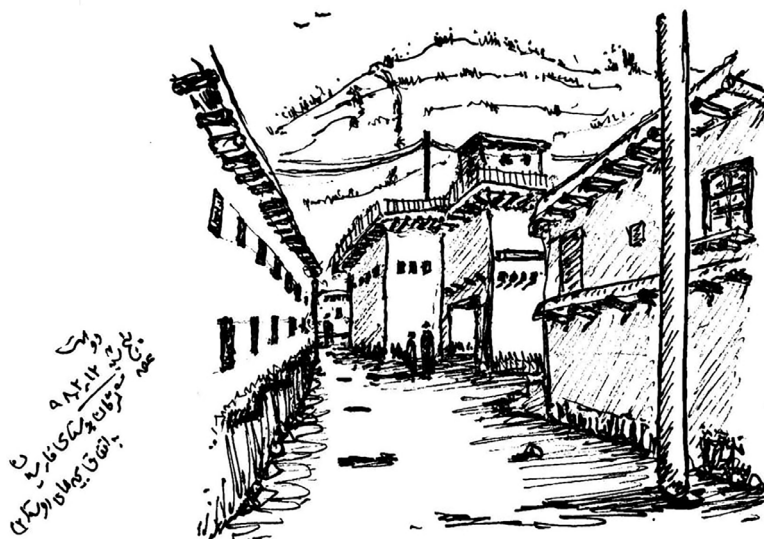


Figure 3. Hand-drawn sketch of the Farsiyan Settlement. Sketch by Hosseini, B., in May 2019.



Figure 4. Rural habitation of the Farsiyan Settlement. Photo by Rezaee, A., in November 2025.

phological studies. The event emphasised the importance of rural morphological studies for Iranian researchers and positioned this field as a vital tool for interpreting settlement dynamics. The diversity of participants, both in background and experience, enriched dialogue and fostered a collaborative environment.

Exploring Rural Morphology in Farsiyan marks a positive milestone in advancing morphological studies and strengthening connections among local researchers.

Considering future perspectives, we emphasise the need for ongoing dialogue and knowledge exchange in the field of rural morphology in the region. This initiative aims to expand engagement with researchers and encourage deeper scholarly collaboration. In addition, the faculty and students involved in the workshop plan to organise the collected materials for presentation in national seminars and international webinars.

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