

ly stopped from building. Nevertheless, he said, "I felt less discrimination in Iran than in the United States."

In a shop or a restaurant, he said, "You are always a Persian. One time I went to buy a tie or a shirt, and the shop owner said this is not what the Iranians buy. In the South I could expect something like that, in Alabama or Mississippi or Kentucky I would expect the locals to resent that an immigrant group would come in so prosperous. Not in Great Neck or Kings Point, not on the North Shore."

turned to Iran in 1972 to build and manage a government refinery. He came back to New York in 1979 and settled in Forest Hills. In 1985 he moved to Manhasset. Recently, he purchased a home on an acre plot in Kings Point that he intends to knock down and rebuild. The architectural review process was not easy. His plans were turned down twice before being approved. Though he said the board was right, he believes he was given a hard time because he is Persian.

"What puzzles me is how the local municipalities, the local villages, our own neighbors, our people, absolutely feel that we are a threat to their communities," he said. "Everything is divided between Iranian-Persian and American, right down the line. None of these villages had architectural review boards until Iranians started to buy homes. The way they are handling it they are pitting neighbors against neighbors."

"All the people who are criticizing the homes are Americans," Mr. Nematzadeh continued. "All the people who are building the homes are Persian."

The style of Iranian homes, Mr. Nematzadeh said, is high ceilings, bright, open, sunny spaces and materials like granite and marble — a recipe for houses that are sure to clash with Great Neck's ubiquitous dark Tudors. And the Persians' homes are big for a reason, he said: It is not uncommon for a Persian family to have 30, 40 or 50 guests for dinner each Sabbath.

"This goes back to the lifestyle of Iranians," he said. "Their homes are more visited than a typical American family, who is more private. Our homes are our pride and showcase."

"The review boards, to me, are imposing," Mr. Nematzadeh said. "The experience is not good for Iranian people to go before the board. You feel so humiliated when you go there."

"When the Iranians sit in that room it is like a court, it's so imposing, like a tribunal," he said. "This is not an architectural review board, it's a citizens review board."

No one, Mr. Nematzadeh said, is ultimate-

**PREJUDICE**

**Enduring 'Tribunals' Over Building Houses**

But Fariba Mobasser, 40, said that there is more prejudice now than when she moved to Great Neck almost 30 years ago.

"With the Persians taking over Great Neck with the real estate, the Americans just aren't used to that," she said. "Why don't they leave these little houses that they are knocking down? It's not that we are doing anything bad. We are making Great Neck more beautiful."

Mr. Nematzadeh, a builder, was a student in the United States in the 1960's but re-

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Chris Maynard for The New York Times

Fred Ohebshalom, left, president of the Great Neck Sephardic Heritage Alliance, and Raymond Iryami, president of the Iranian American Democrats of Nassau County.