

Stacks of Blabla

——— *Sorting the ‘Past’ for the ‘Now’*

*This project attempts to explore **sorting** as both a design methodology and a collective public effort, transforming abandoned construction fragments into an urban shade with new aesthetics.*

Bowerbird is a small and brightly colored bird in Australia and New Guinea known for collecting and sorting colored objects into piles for mating purposes. It is discovered that besides flowers and twigs, its bowers are also made of scattered human detritus: Mentos wrappers, bottle tops, laundry pegs, hair ties, straws, cutlery, pen caps, etc. What people usually regard as trash are transformed into rainbow hued piles as a manifestation of sorting. This behavior rejects an irreversible manner of construction and applies an attentive approach of gathering—a **strategic selection of existing materials, followed by a creative organization for further reuse.**

If the bowerbird’s careful curation can reveal hidden rainbow within the nest, could sorting be the key to re-arranging material in our current situation and reveal their hidden values to the public? Much like poets phrase pieces of words into touching narratives and metaphors, can we sort out the mess of architecture residue (the blabla) into a powerful statement in space, bringing moments of pause and reflection?

The building industry has far advanced beyond nest building. When people build, it usually begins with a planned vision and an ideal aesthetic. But idealism comes at a price. Waste and leftover materials are inevitably produced due to the conflict between specified dimensions and available resources. **Unlike “building”, the process of “sorting” acknowledges uncertainties and varieties while bringing in new order and aesthetics.** Building starts with a blank canvas, while sorting starts with existing remnants in chaos, inaccuracy, and

disorder. Building is dictatorial, while sorting examines the ambiguous threshold between objects and can be implemented in various rules, sometimes even calls for improvisation. Building aims for substantial completion, while sorting demands a reiterative process of decision-making.

Recycling mundane objects discarded on site is no longer new today in the realm of architecture. Major exhibitions, experimental installations and research projects have been going on all over the world to explore a more sustained means of practice for the past decades. How can we think differently?

“Stacks of Blabla” is not only a built structure, but also a novel form of public engagement. Sorting is such a ubiquitous habit that can be easily extended to architecture—not unlike the simple act of separating garbage in our daily lives. Employing sorting as a design methodology offers not only a functional shelter, but also a stimulating and enjoyable experience. Each construction phase becomes a curated event, infusing vitality into the process of identifying, screening, and moving materials. Unlike conventional construction, which often hides behind barriers, on-site sorting transforms this process into a transparent and inclusive event among the local community.

We aim to delve deeper into this concept in the following sections:

I) Material Sourcing

All materials are to be collected from the waste commonly generated in construction, encompassing various sources from factories with mass production lines and large civic and commercial projects, to small-scale construction and repair work for private purposes. This may include chopped structural wood no longer deemed structurally sound, painted sheathing unfit for standard use elsewhere, and smashed concrete or assembly block with irregular edges.

II) Indexing

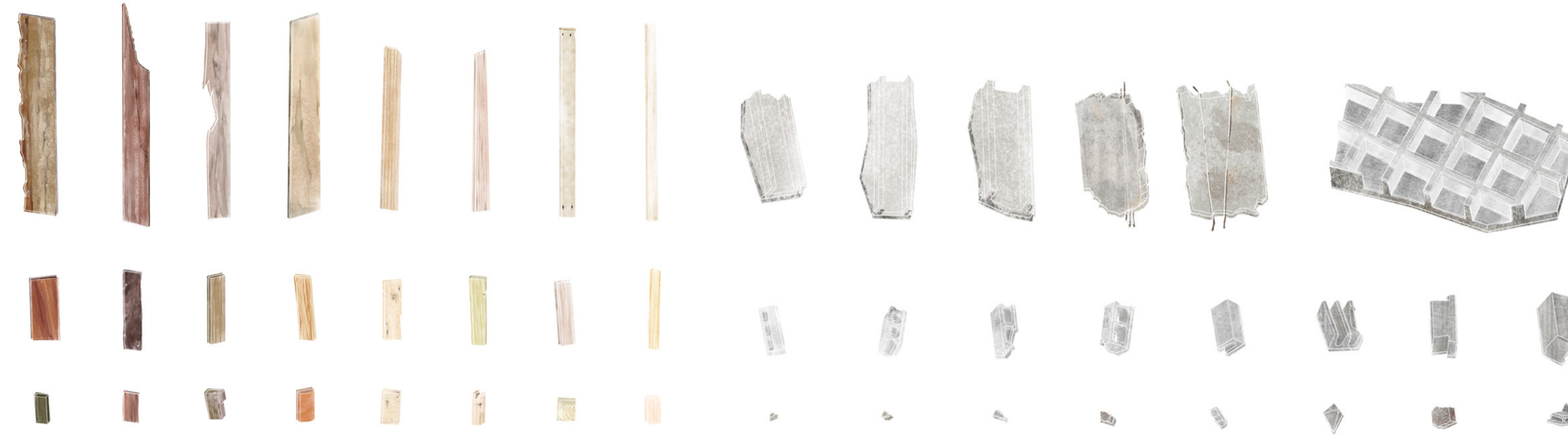
We embrace the inherent complexity of all kinds of materials. In the initial phase, a matrix of different dimensions and colors will be drawn following a modular scale. This matrix will aid in the selection and organization of the recycled materials. The local community are welcome to contribute their own materials and attend the process of screening on site.

The specific units required to compose the pavilion are not predetermined. We provide the matrix as a conceptual diagram to put materials in a certain sequence, meanwhile accommodating imprecision and misalignment that may happen during actual construction. The final form and look of the pavilion won’t emerge until we have collected and sorted out all the waste materials.

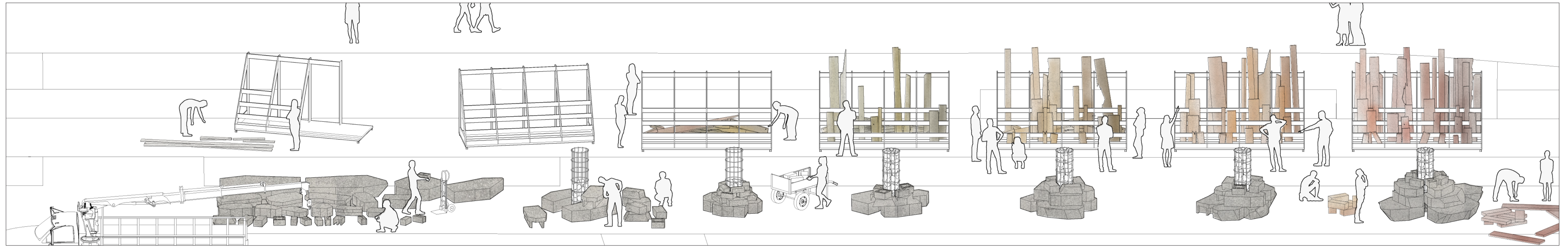
III) Stacking

After indexing, all material units will be stacked based on their properties. Heavy materials like concrete leftovers and stone or brick assemblies would be used at the bottom for foundation and potential seating, while light-weight materials like scrap wood might be used for the upper complex. Material with a longer span will be placed on top to form a shade. A hexagon grid is used for fragments to overlap on each other, thereby achieving longer spans compared to a traditional orthogonal grid. The fragments will be stacked all together to form a continuous aggregation, blurring the distinction between traditional architectural elements of foundation, column, and roof. The characteristics of the materials become the visual language of the pavilion. All materials are connected in ties and pinned joints, so that the design can be easily disassembled and repeated with flexibility in other locations.

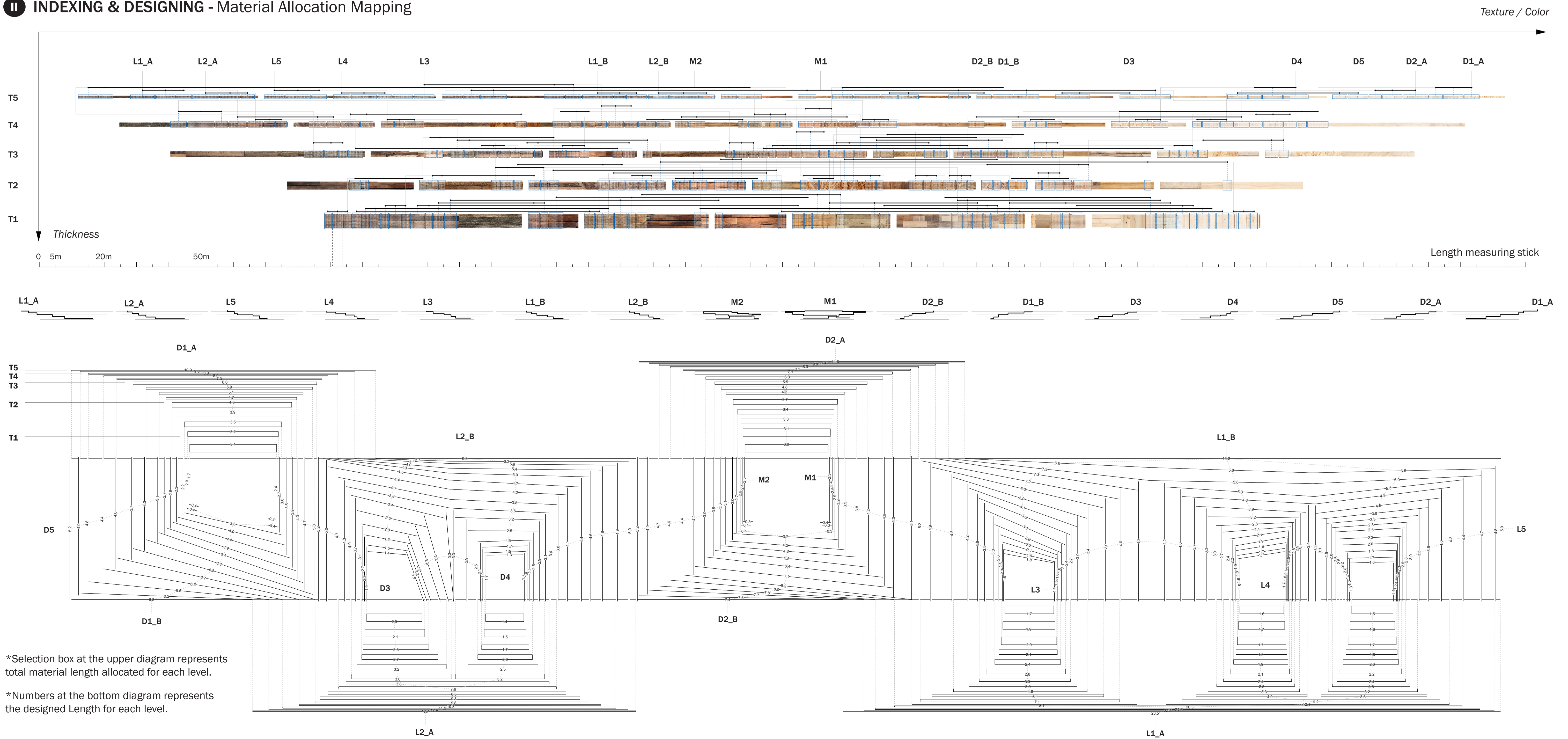
“Stacks of Blabla” raises a fundamental question: **do we need more new construction, or should we focus on meticulously sorting and repurposing what has been here already?** What if we envision a new architectural aesthetic that, instead of pursuing perfection and uniformity, embraces the differences and diversity of abandoned materials? What if construction is considered an integral part of architecture, and architecture is merely one moment within the continuum of construction? This project invites us to reconsider how we approach design, construction, and sustainability, encouraging a holistic perspective that values flexibility, inclusivity, and the inherent beauty of difference.

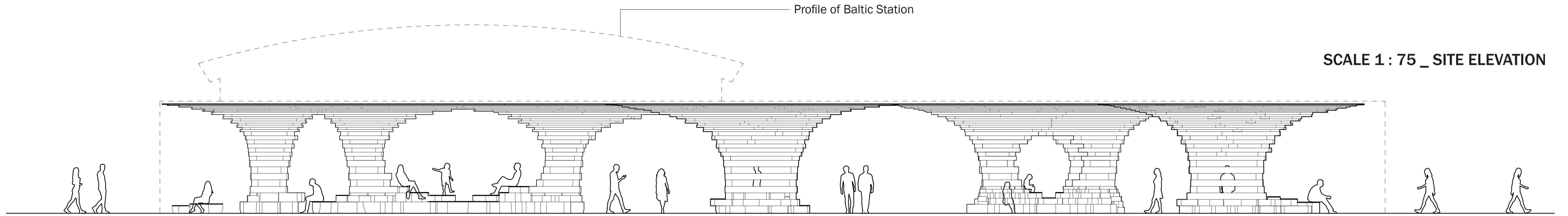


I SORTING - Public Engagement



II INDEXING & DESIGNING - Material Allocation Mapping



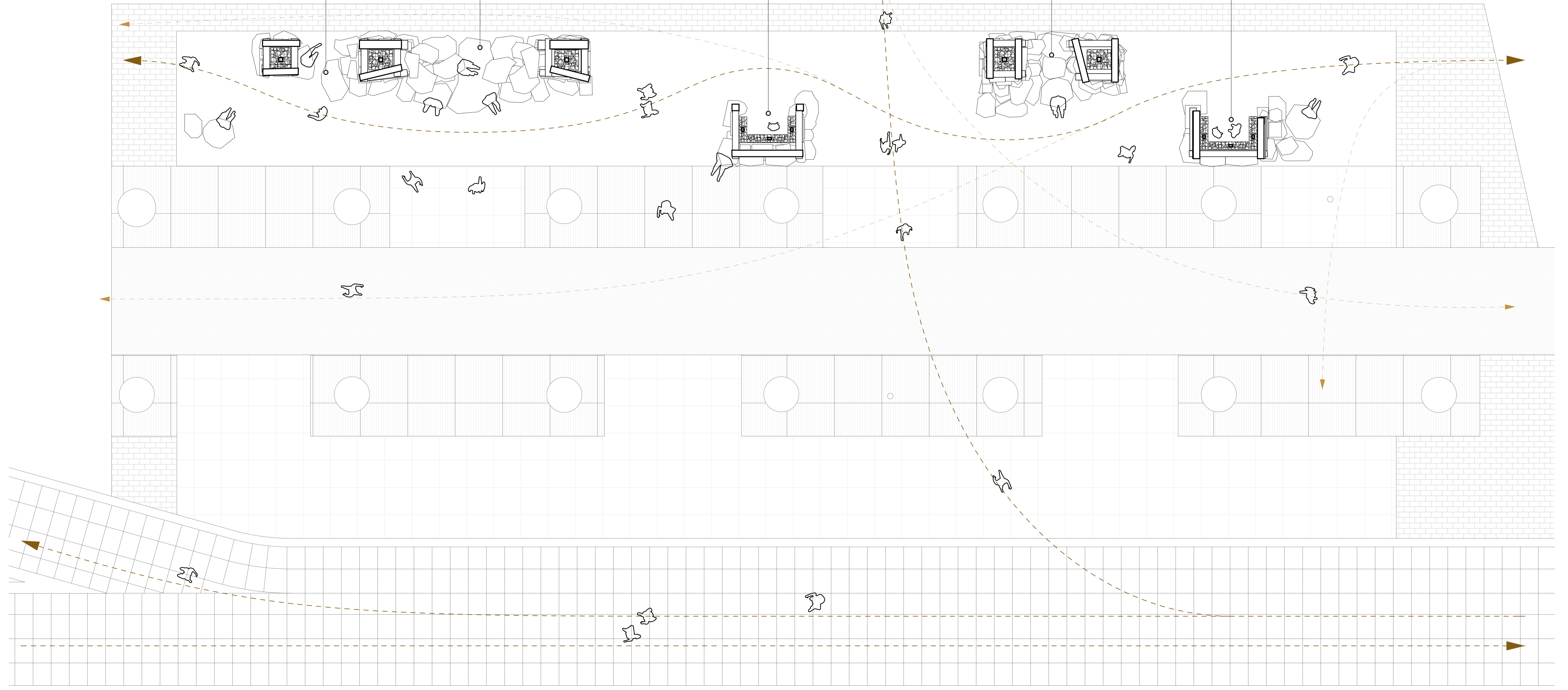


SIDE SEATING TABLE AREA LARGE SEATING PRIVATE WAITING AREA CROSSWALK PASSAGE PRIVATE SEATING PRIVATE WAITING AREA SIDE SEATING

0 1m 2m 5m

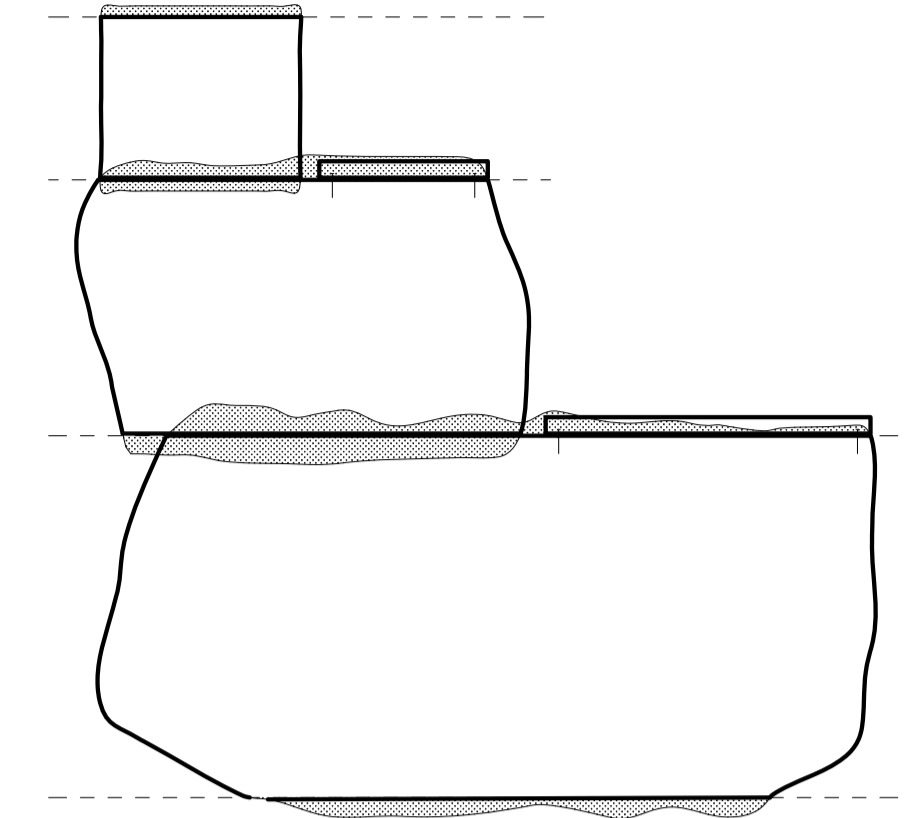
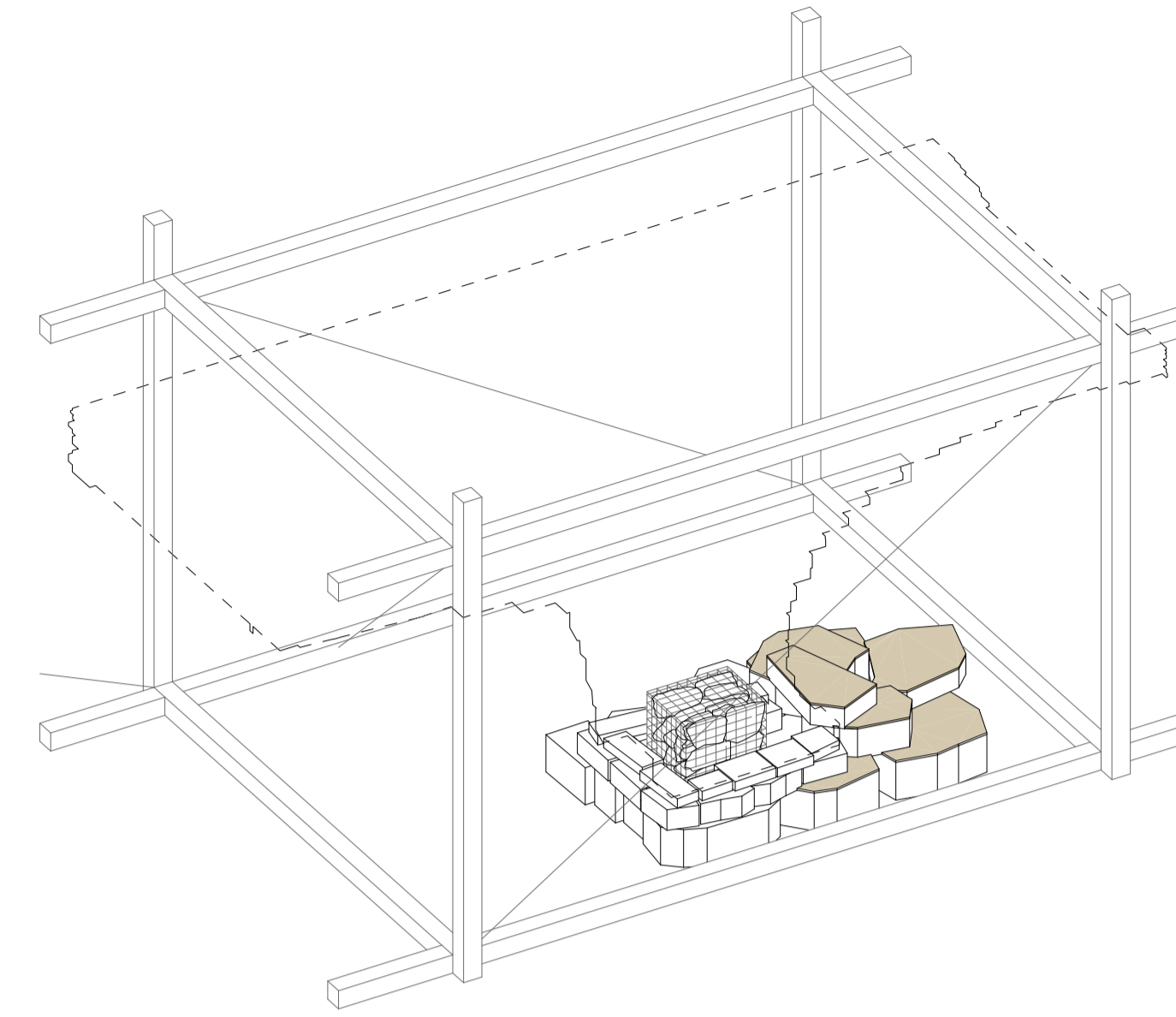
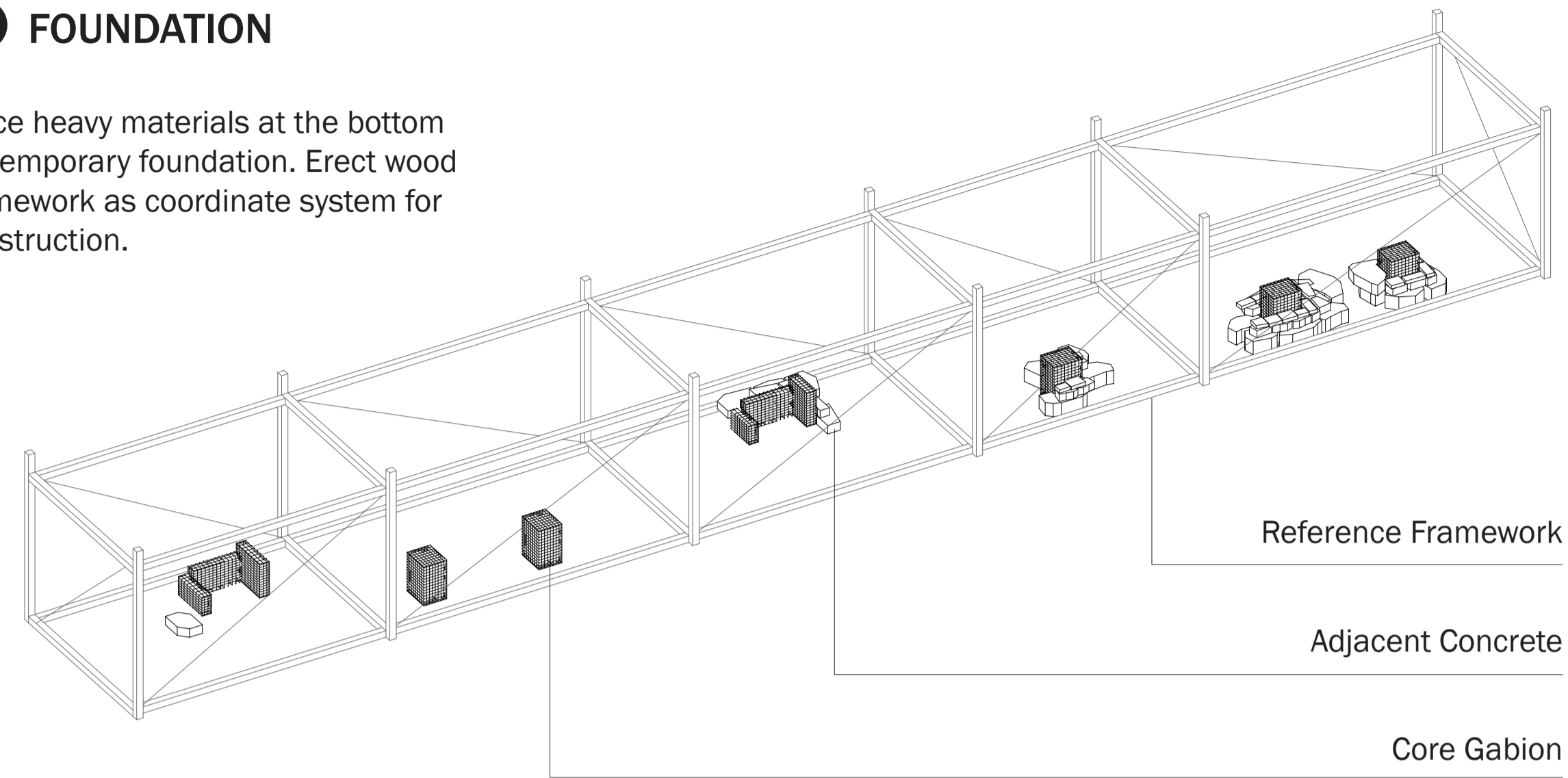


SCALE 1 : 75 _ SITE PLAN



I FOUNDATION

Place heavy materials at the bottom as temporary foundation. Erect wood framework as coordinate system for construction.

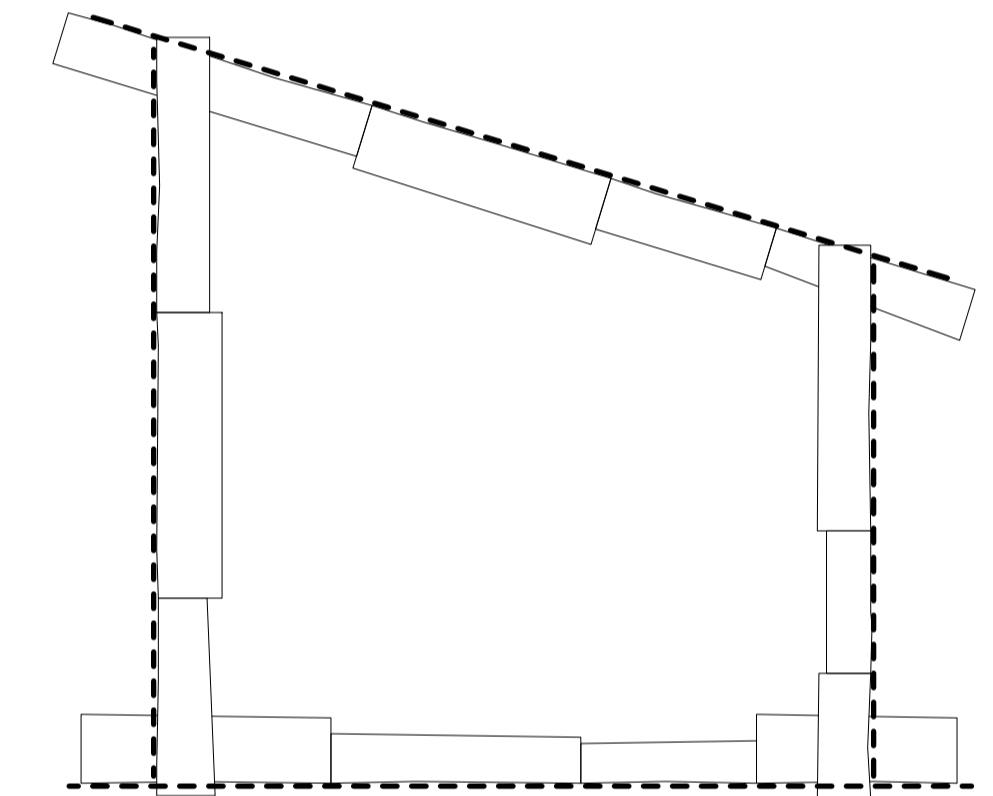
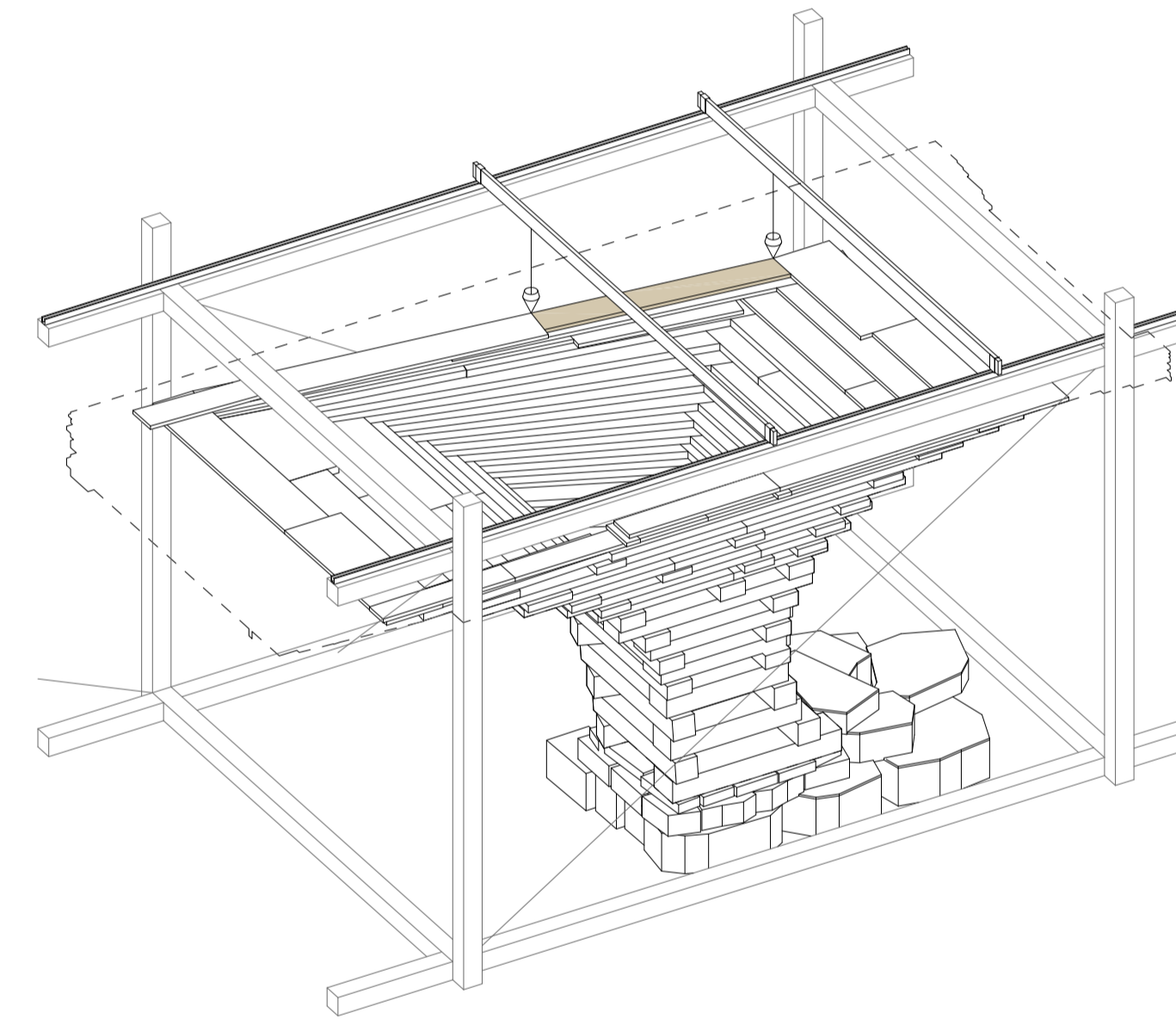
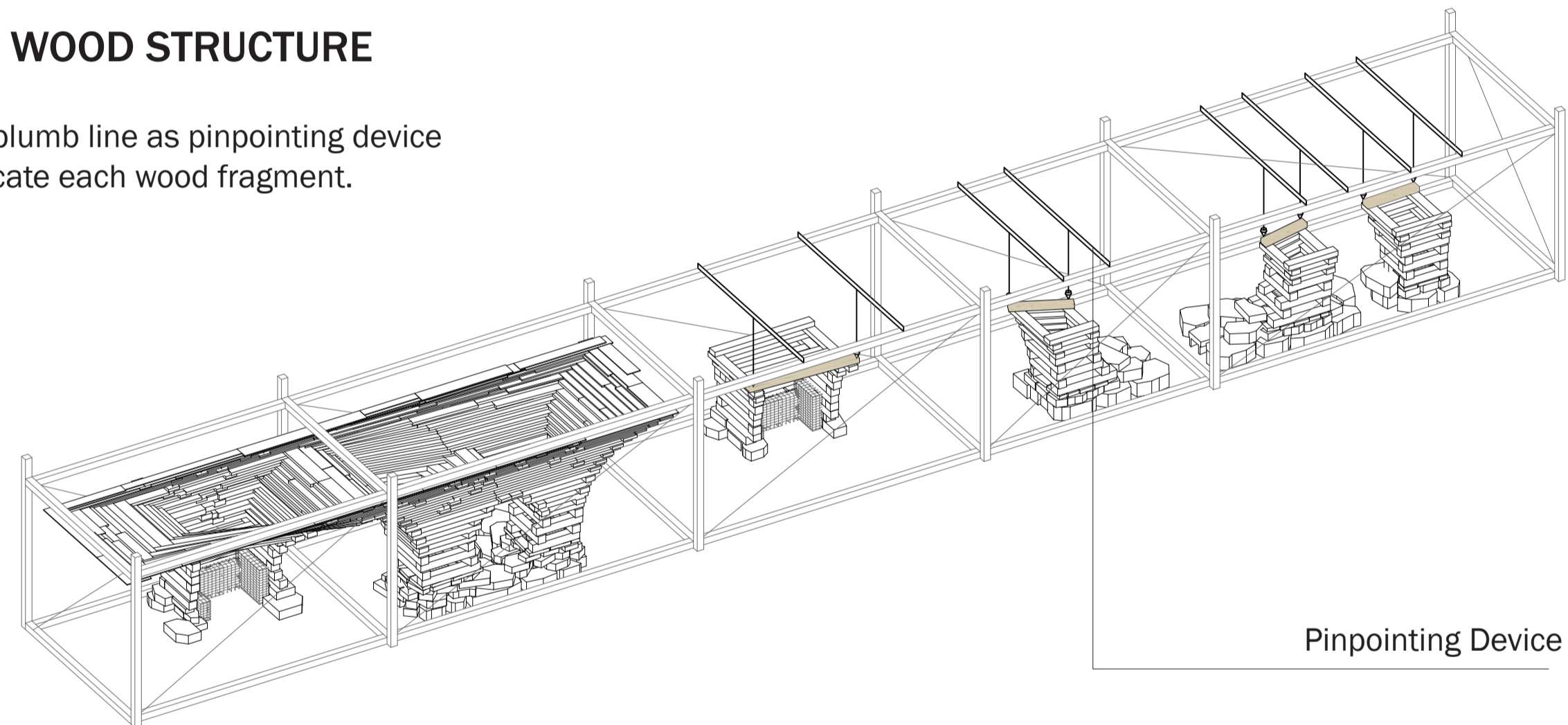


Rough / Smooth

Smooth Contacting Surfaces of Concrete Blocks & Leave the Other Surfaces As-is

II WOOD STRUCTURE

Use plumb line as pinpointing device to locate each wood fragment.

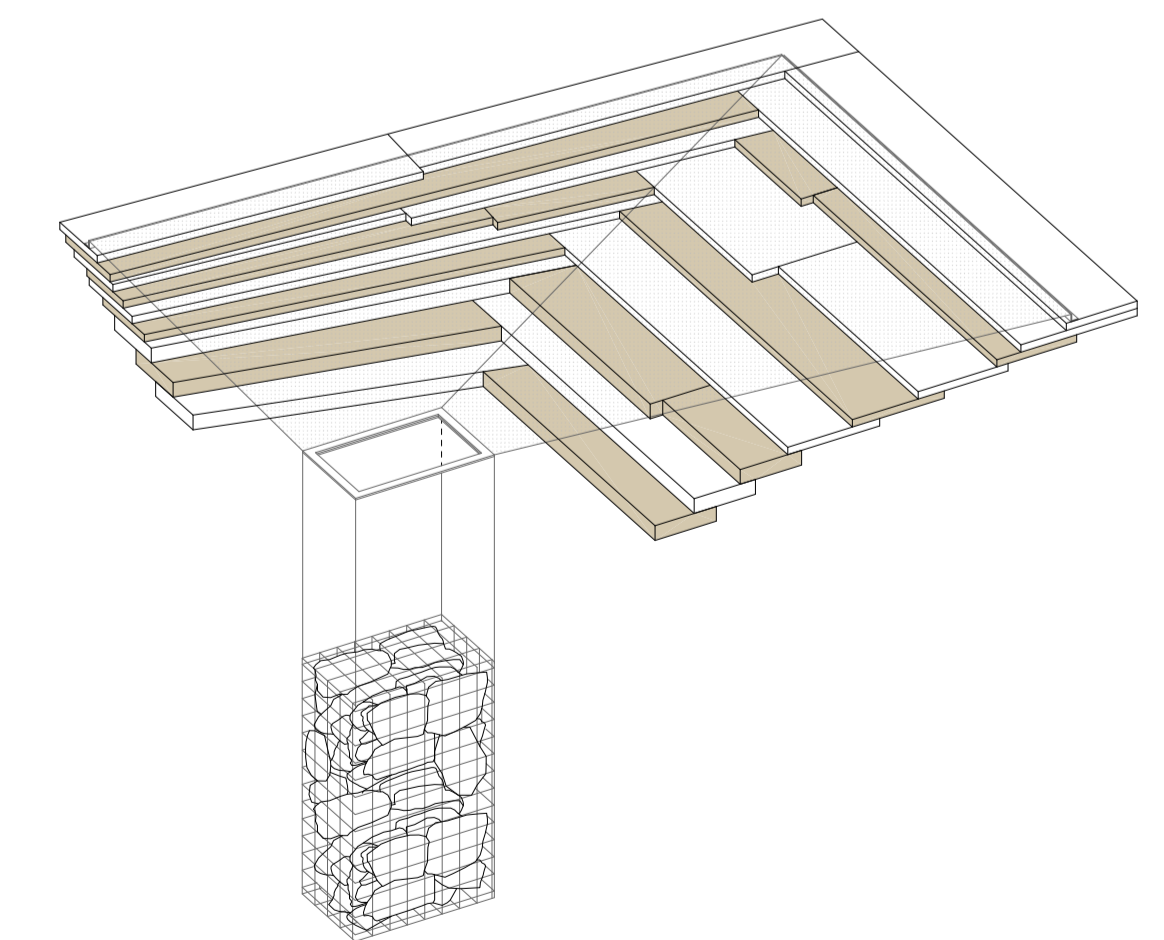
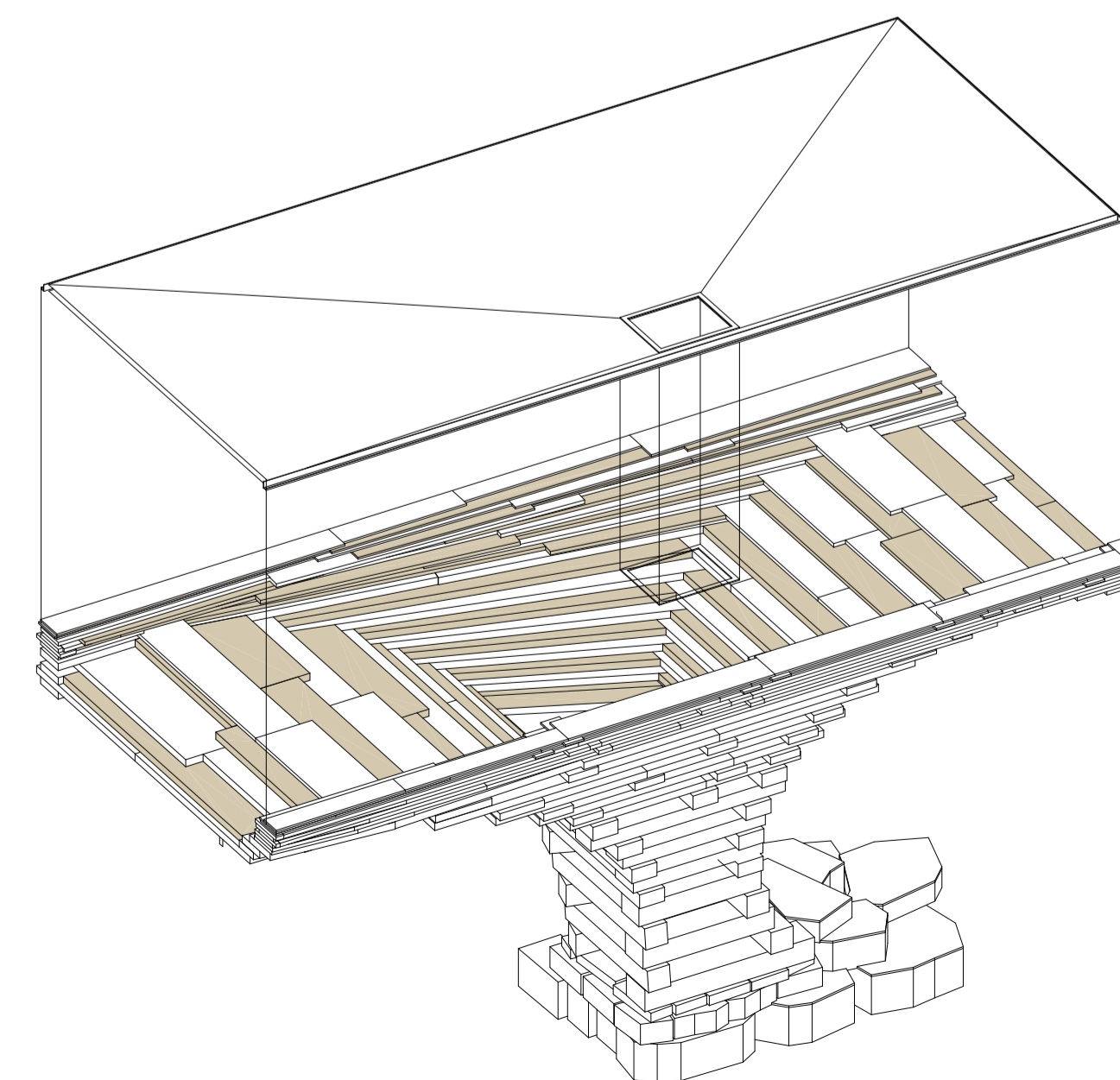
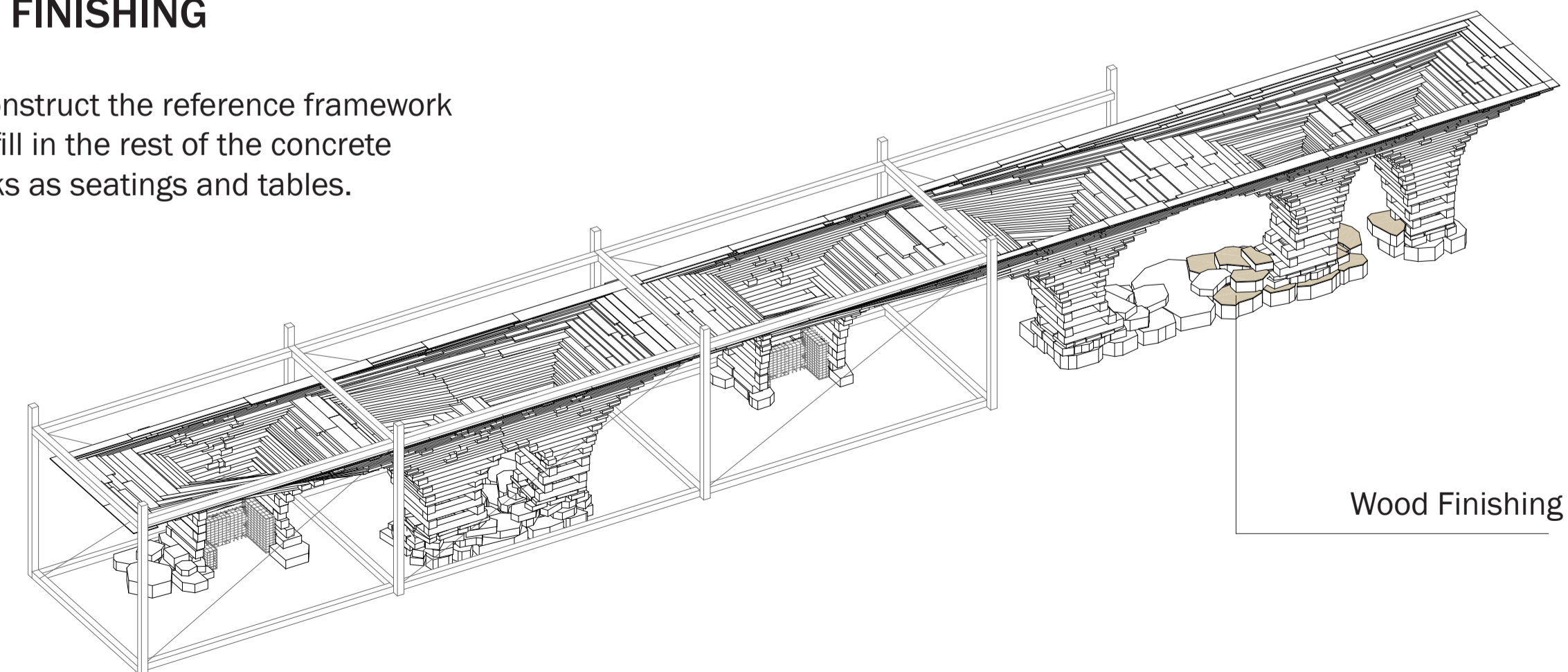


Irregularity / Alignment

Align Wood Fragments Along the Outer Edges & Leave Inner Surfaces with Irregular Finish

III FINISHING

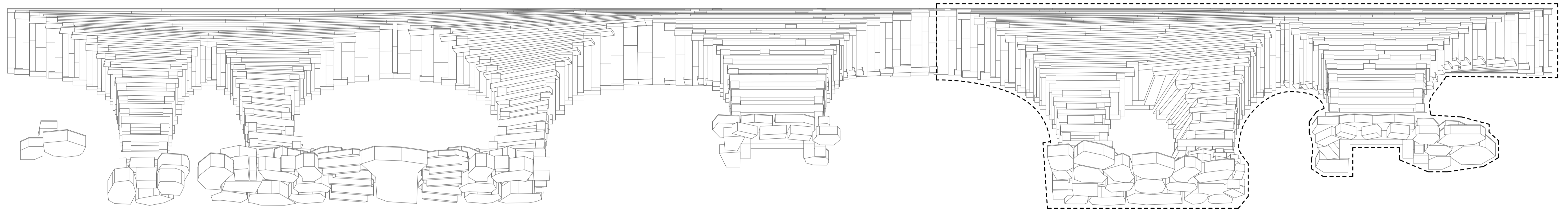
Deconstruct the reference framework and fill in the rest of the concrete blocks as seatings and tables.



Waterproofing

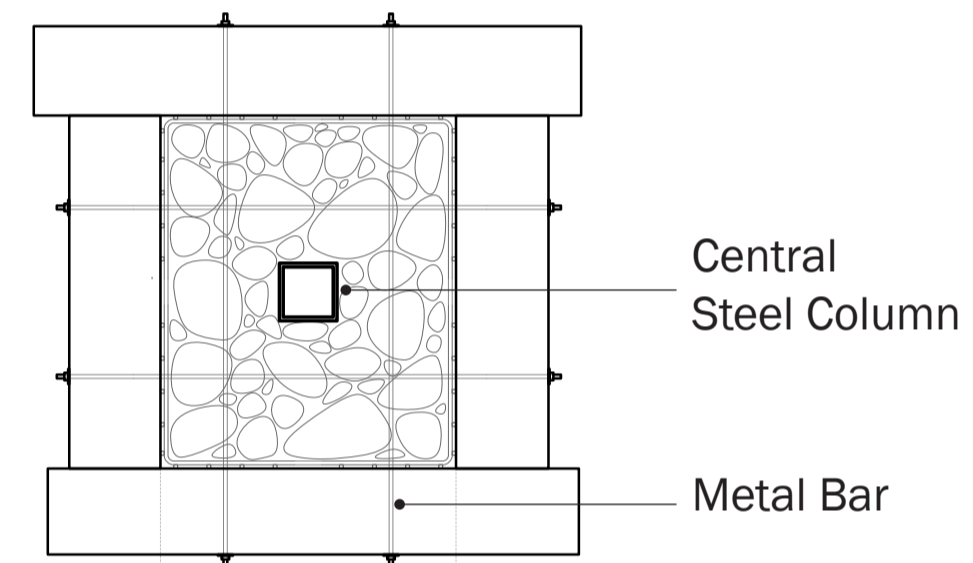
Insert wood panels at intermediate levels to protect rain from the side & Attach Translucent Polypropylene Sheets on Top for Extra Water Protection (Water is directed into the gabion for drainage)

SELECTED FRAGMENT

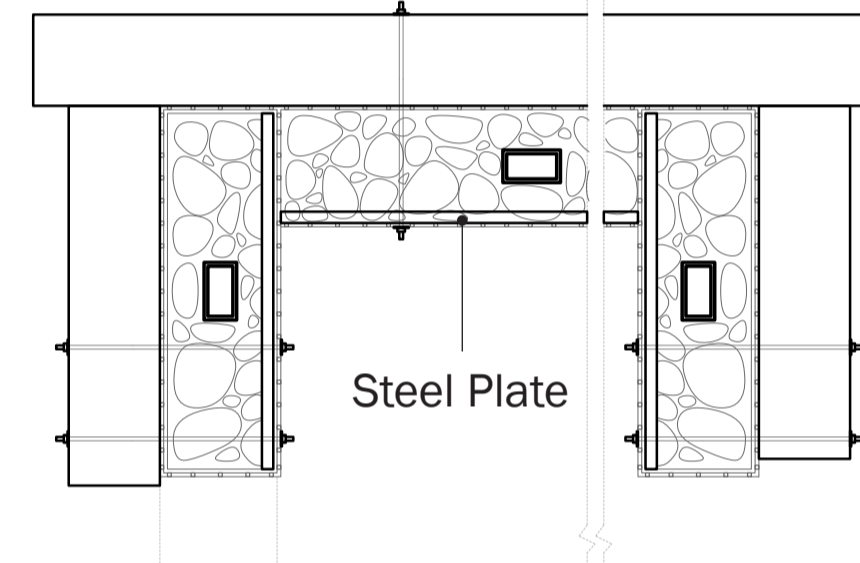


SCALE 1 : 20 _ DEATIL DRAWING

Single Gabion



U-Shaped Gabion



1 Gabion+ Wood

Material Palette



Polypropylene



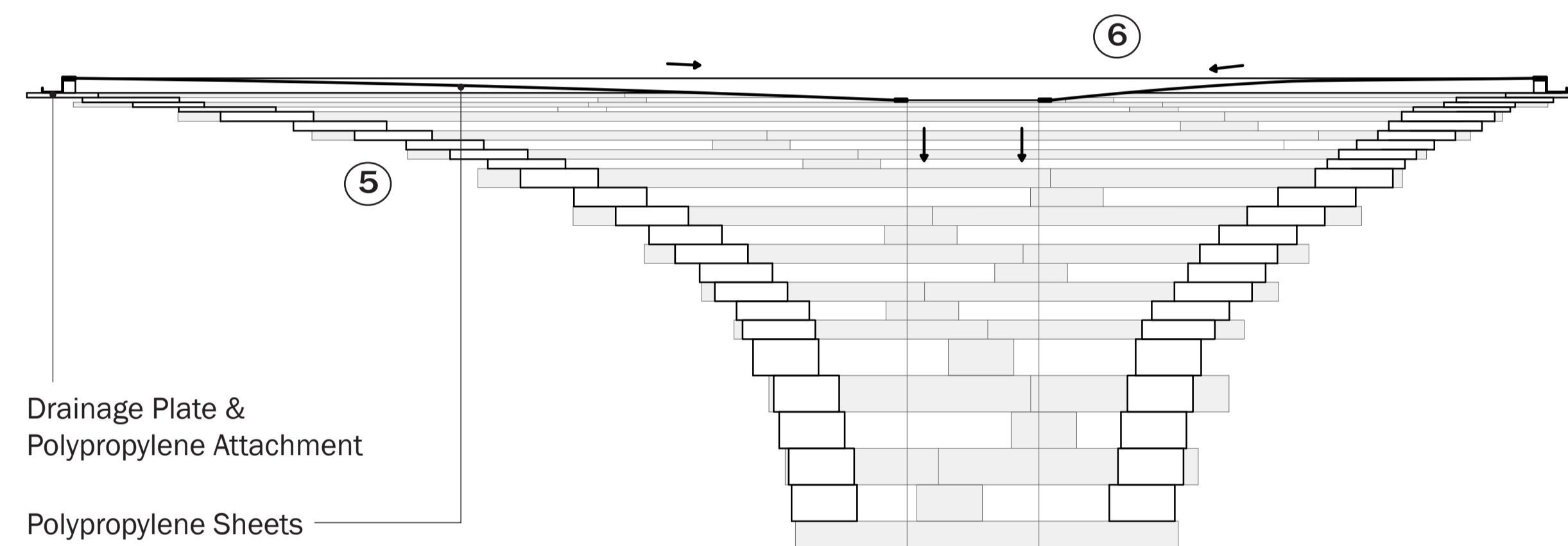
Recycled Wood Pallet



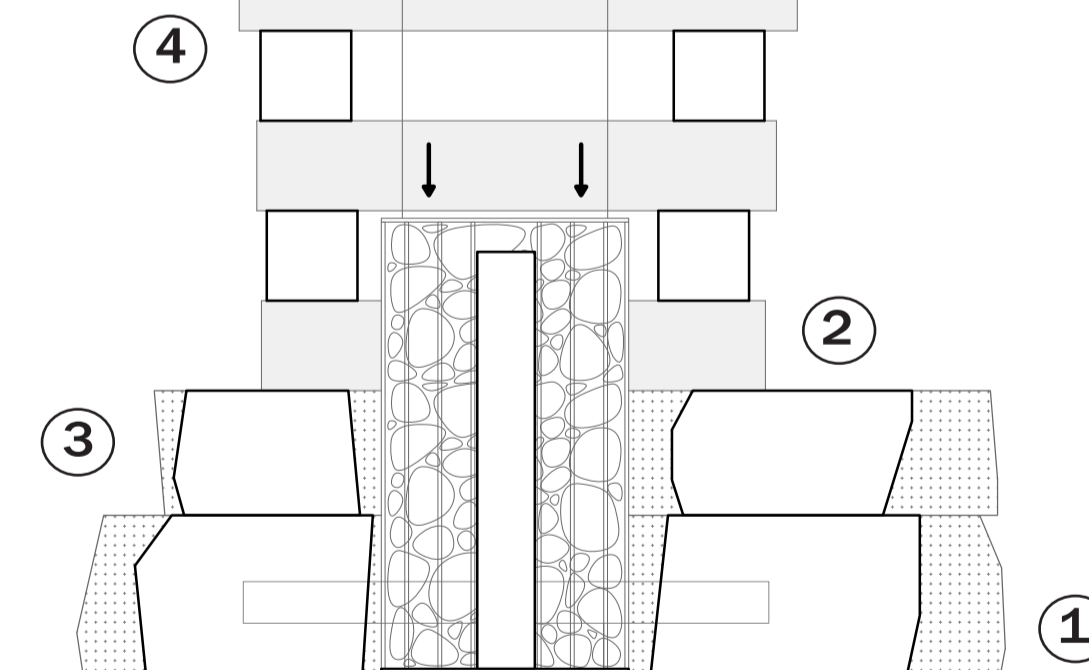
Leftover Wood



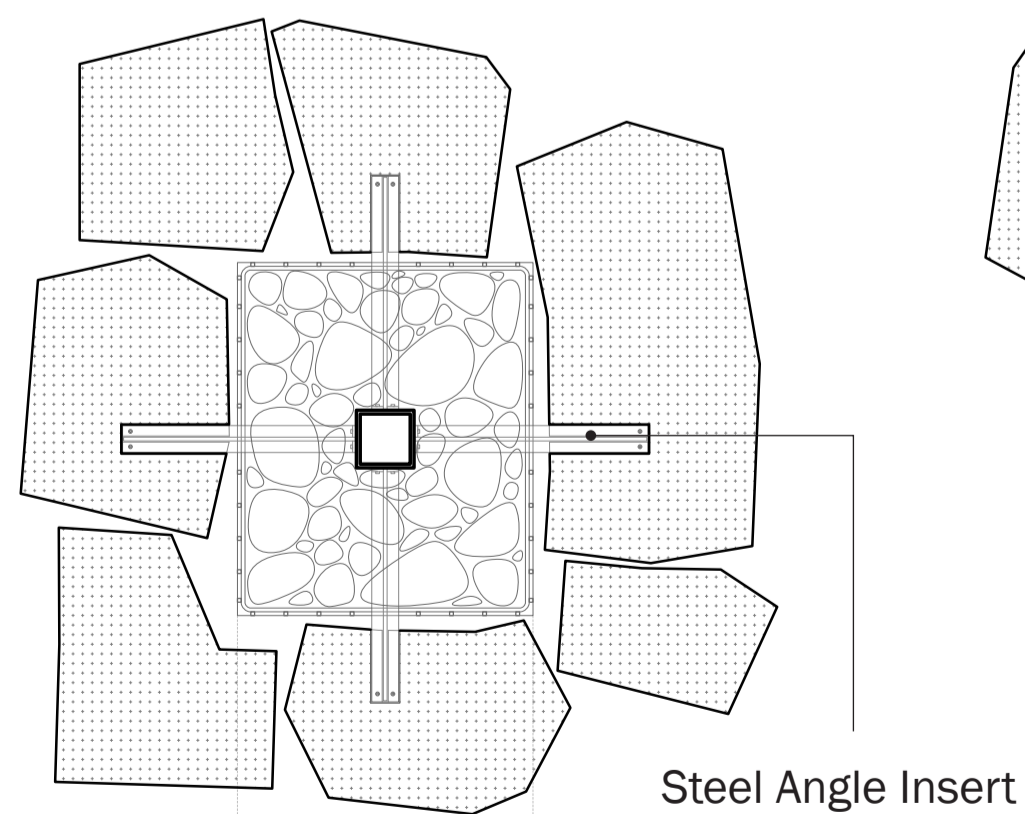
Reclaimed Concrete Waste



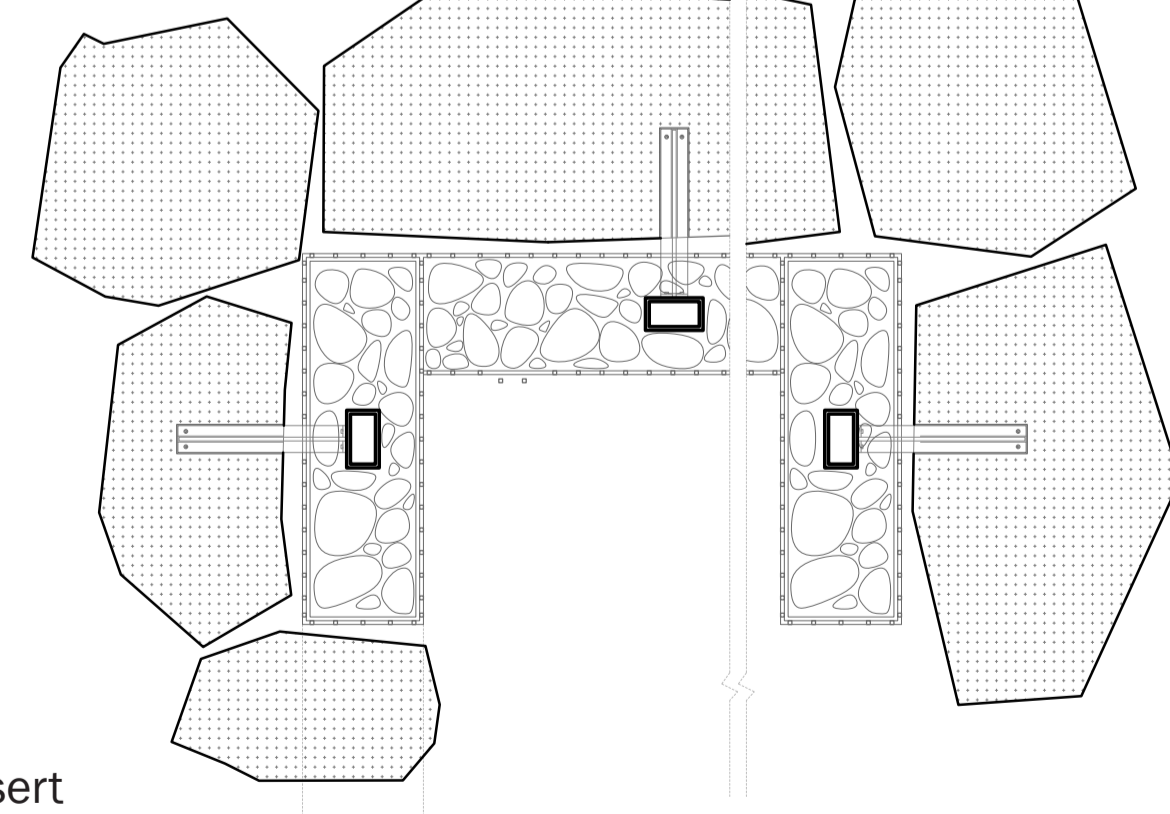
6 Waterproofing Roof



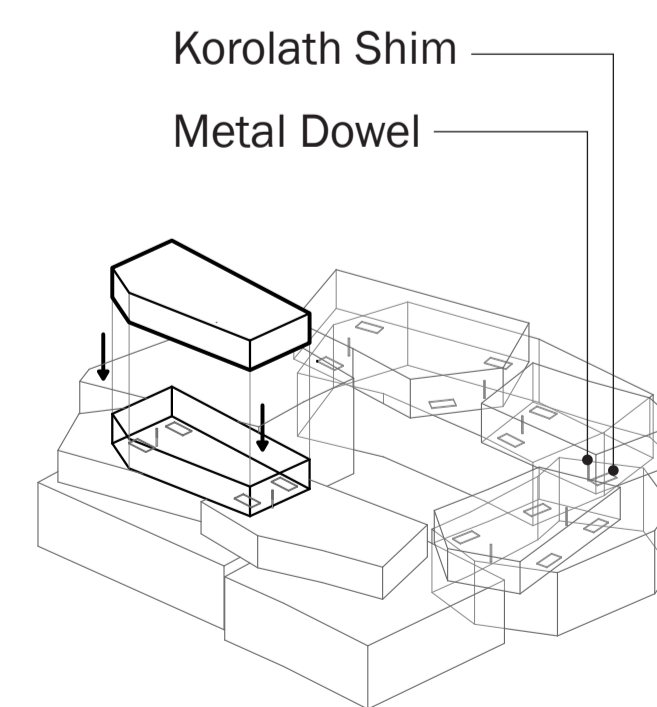
Single Gabion



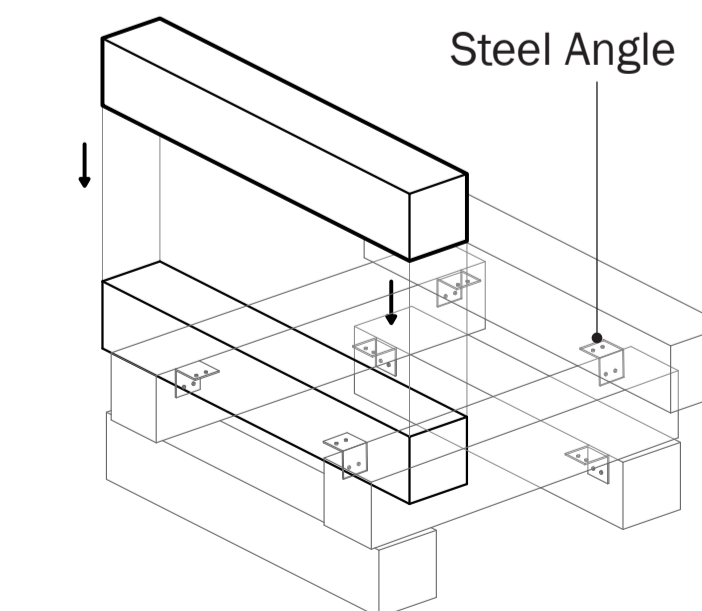
U-Shaped Gabion



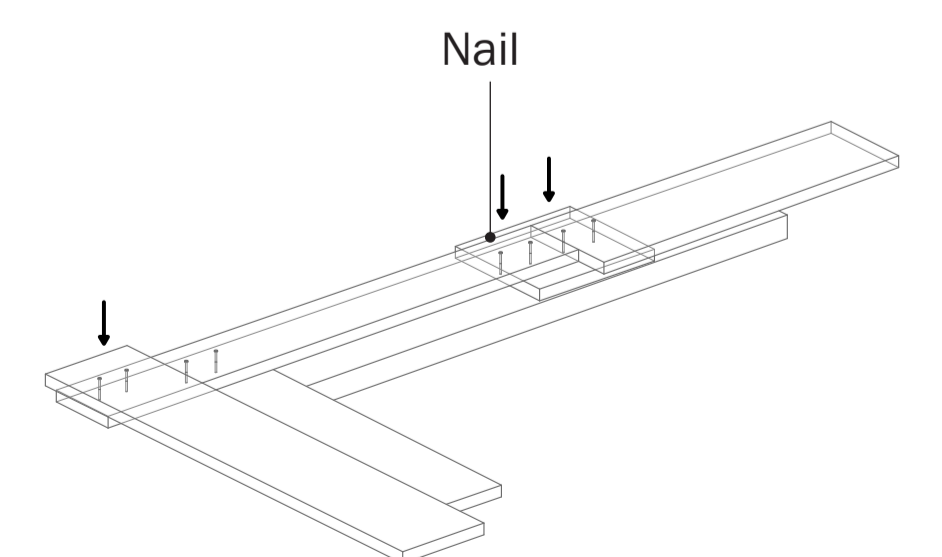
2 Gabion + Concrete



3 Concrete + Concrete



4 Wood + Wood (thick)



5 Wood + Wood (thin)

SORTING/MATERIAL SOURCING



Bowerbird sorting colored objects for its bower



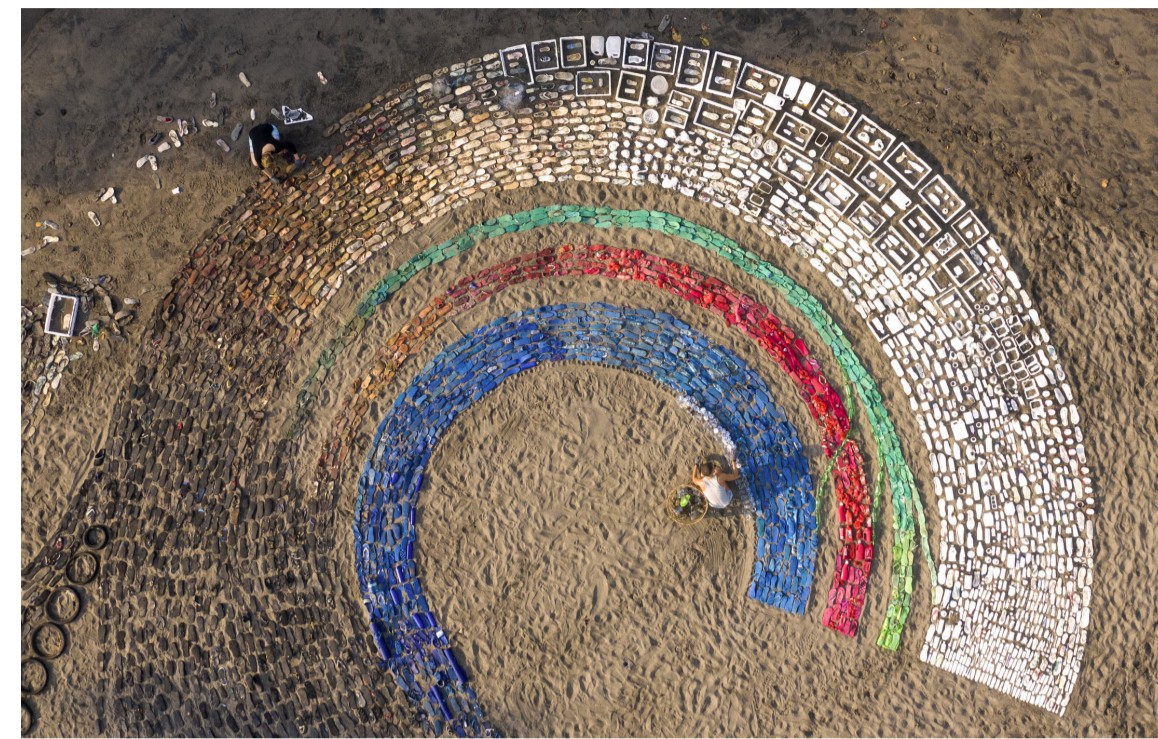
Bowerbird sorting colored objects for its bower



Art installation created by sorting out everyday objects / UrsusWehrli



Art installation created by sorting out everyday objects / UrsusWehrli



Art installation re-purposing plastic pollution on the beach / Skye Moret



Entrance pavilion of 2015 Venice Biennial re-purposing scrap metal / Alejandro Aravena



'Circular Pavilion' constructed from re-purposed doors / Encore Heureux

STACKING/REVERSIBLE CONSTRUCTION



Vernacular firewood stack in Finland



Exterior wall assembly using irregular stone blocks / Ensemble Studio



Stacked clamp joint for book binding / Talenshi



KISS Pop-Up Chapel constructed from stacks of card board panels / Z-A Studio



Pavilion constructed from fillings of oak firewood / Louis Cayol and Angela Aguilera



Trailer straps to secure heavy lumber on the trunk

IRREGULARITY/CONTROL



Pavilion constructed from scrap wood with intentional alignment to create differentiated texture on both sides / Hello Wood Architecture Camp



Use of raw wood branch cladding creates a contrast between alignment and mis-alignment / Murman Arkitekter



Ashlen Cabin clad by sliced raw wood brings in irregularity and variation to the rigid form / HANNAH