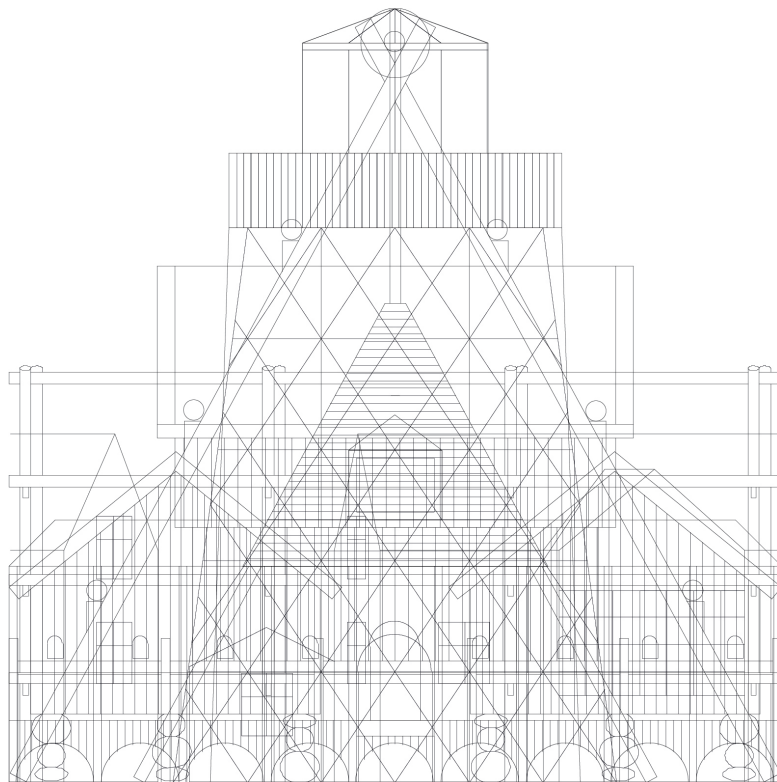


TO BELONG

site-specific characters and the narrative of a place



Joséphine Rapp Thomas

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

Examiner: Daniel Norell
Supervisor: Naima Callenberg

to belong

*site-specific characters
and the narrative of a place*



CHALMERS

Joséphine Rapp Thomas
Master's Thesis Spring 2021

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
Master's Programme in Architecture and Urban Design
Matter Space Structure

Examiner: Daniel Norell
Supervisor: Naima Callenberg

Joséphine Rapp Thomas

M.Sc, Architecture:
Chalmers University of Technology, MPARC

Matter, space, structure 1, 2018
Room for health, housing and work 2: Housing and
development, 2019
Matter, space, structure 3, 2020

B.Sc., Architecture:
Chalmers University of Technology
2014 - 2017

Internship:
Reflex Arkitekter, 2017 - 2018, 2019 - 2020

Table of content

	page
Introduction	8 - 11
Background	12 - 19
Method	20 - 23
Mapping	24 - 41
Translate	42 - 67
On site	68 - 77
Reflection	78 - 79
Bibliography	80 - 81



Preface

I started this project with an interest in how to use the collective memory that our built environment consists of, how to learn from places, make use of the knowledge they possess. I feel very respectful and humble about places we occupy, there are always stories and knowledge about, memories of and traditions linked to the place. When we as architects add structures, it will become a part of the site's history, but what does it mean for something to actually belong to a place? By observing the site-specific and interpreting what is being told, I wanted to explore ways to work with a context, create a continuity in the situation where the existing is reshaped rather than mirrored.

When I was looking for a situation to do my research, I wanted it to be a place I was not too familiar of from before, where I can document how I get to know the place, tries to understand it, to finally be able to contribute to its narrative. The Gothenburg archipelago came to my interest because of a fascination for how different these islands are, I have an incredible respect for the sea but understand that for the islanders, this is their asset. They have learned to take advantage of, adapt to and live in harmony with their surroundings.

But there is also a kind of seclusion, with the sea as a barrier, you are at a safe distance from the outside world, in a manageable, slightly smaller world, adapted to the unique circumstances. It feels like a sensitive place, many people have a strong relationship to it and there are traditions and opinions about how things have been and should be. I have no idea about these ways, but a desire in me grew in trying to understand.

One way of getting to know a place better is to read about how others portray similar situation. Tove Jansson is an author who often writes about the ocean and its unique attraction. In *Pappan och havet* (english title *Moominpappa at Sea*, Jansson, 1965), she tells a story about a father who is dissatisfied with his life, so he organizes the family to leave their home in the valley to set off on a journey and live in a lighthouse far out to sea. On the island there is a tension, between a fascination of the island as a paradise in its own way at the same time as the island begins to feel like a prison, isolated and unfamiliar. They compare things and phenomena with how it usually is at home, tries to adapt the place to their needs at the same time as they realize, they have to change their attitude according to the new circumstances. The son even begins to crouch like the trees do in the wind, in an attempt to make the strange become familiar.

This booklet could be seen as a similar journey for me, at the same time as the project has developed, I've also been getting to know this place, creating an iterative process that circles around the question how a context could be observed, interpreted and represented, used as an anchor during the whole design process.

I would like to add a big thank you to family and friends for all the support in the process of doing this project, to Eric and Elisabeth for company in isolation, to Naima for being a great tutor.

INTRODUCTION



Abstract

This master thesis seeks to investigate ways to communicate a place narrative by searching for and translating site-specific characters. To *belong* can mean, *to be in the right place or a suitable place*, but what does one have to do to belong? Can a place be described through its belongings? Its characters? Can existing characters be translated but still belong?

To explore alternative ways of understanding what a place is and can be, the thesis addresses Aldo Rossi's concept of *analogue architecture*, how materials from the past, collective memories and urban artefacts can take on new meaning when they enter unexpected relationships. *Character* as term is used to support architectural exploration driven by narratives and forms, linked to a place.

The act of getting to know, trying to understand and actively contribute to a place history, is explored through the design process of structures and additions, that together could function as a 'culture house', located in the Gothenburg archipelago. An assembled framework that collects the different characters from the past and the present, letting them interact, communicate and emphasize a narrative of the place together. But also, a place to gather the islanders and invite visitors, where stories can continue to be told.

Focus will be on developing methods to observe the situation, interpret what is being told and implement a design. This is done by mapping and constructing an archive of findings, with models and drawings, and as a next step using the archive, translating it into something else.

The end result is aimed to be a building design proposal where the present is to stand in conversation with the past, an existing narrative is emphasized, and a continuity can be perceived.

Keywords: *narrative, character, mapping, interpret, translate*

thesis questions

How to interpret site-specific characters and relate to a place narrative in a building design proposal?

How to construct and use an archive linked to a situation, using mapping as a tool?

intention

The building design proposal should be seen as a result of previous steps taken within the process and the proposed site is in that matter only used as a testbed. The thesis responds to the place narrative in a broader context.

the use of terms

belong - *to be in the right place or a suitable place*

belongings - *the things that a person owns, especially those that can be carried*

narrative - *a story or a description of a series of events / a particular way of explaining or understanding events*

character - *the particular combination of qualities in a person or place that makes them different from others*

continuity - *the fact of something continuing for a long period of time without being changed or stopped*

mapping - *the activity or process of creating a picture or diagram that represents something*

observe - *to watch carefully the way something happens or the way someone does something, especially in order to learn more about it*

represent - *the way that someone or something is shown or described*

interpret - *to describe the meaning of something; examine in order to explain*

archive - *a collection of historical records relating to a place, organization, or family*

translate - *to bear, remove, or change from one place, state, form, or appearance to another*

source: *cambridge dictionary*

BACKGROUND



Narrative of place

responding to a context

A story about a place is never finished, it continuously changes and develops, new findings can re-shape how we look at the past, parts can be forgotten, and additions are constantly made. Our culture heritage, involving both the built and the natural environment, is a big part of a place identity, it is a result of local conditions, cultures, traditions, political statements and aspirations, it reflects the past and present created by those who have inhabited the place.

How we protect and relate to the existing can be done in many ways, some environments are protected by laws while other narratives rely on the storytelling tradition to be remembered. Architects are almost always working within some sort of context but how we process and respond to the existing can be done in a more or less conscious way.

Chrisitan Norberg Schulz (1926-2000), is an example of an architect who discussed the subject of attention to place, especially in his theoretical writing and in the book *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1980). His theories were a reaction against the industrial constructions developed at the time and his texts focus more on climate, light and landscape as central for the built environment. He argues that the spirit of the place, the *Genius Loci*, would have to be taken into account by the architect in order for meaningful architecture to be created (Norberg Schulz, 1980).

I believe that it is important to be able to observe and learn rather than discover when it comes to developing our environment. But at the same time, I think that this could be done in many different ways, meaningful architecture, or architecture that belong is about being able to pay attention to the existing, but it is also about interpreting and actively contribute, in order to allow places to be dynamic in their narrative.

assemble and reconfigure

How elements of built form, collective memories of everyday objects and urban artefacts takes on new meaning when they enter unexpected relationships, was discussed by Aldo Rossi in the 1970's, using the term *Analogue architecture* (Imhof & Willengger, 2019). How to use analogue architecture as a methodology to develop contextual expansion has since then been developed by several, including Miroslav Sik, who taught on the subject at ETH until 2018. Instead of analogue, he uses the term *oldnew architecture* and describe the method like this, "I draw strength from the old to the new. I exploit the old, monuments conservators would not necessarily like what I do because I update what exists and in this way perhaps also take away its original character. I want to bring everything into play and use history actively" (p.49)

I see it as the basis of this method is developed from the act of assemble and reconfigure impressions and forms, making it into something else. Relating to an existing character without nostalgically imitating it. Marko Skoblar (2020) describes in a article called *Appropriation and drawing*, the way Rossi worked, especially with his drawings, as an act of appropriation, a process that for all of us is constant, unconscious and repetitive, "We reach out to words and form them as language, we collect objects and attach them to our identities, we inhabit spaces and make them our own. Perhaps the best example of spatial appropriation is evident in the alien feeling we encounter when inhabiting a new space, that slowly disappears as we make the space our own."

In relation to analogue architecture and the act of appropriation, in this project, I will be getting to know a place, using local references and personal exploration, in order to develop translation methods. The context will be used as an influence for a contextual expansion.

"Influence would involve a kind of intoxication: both a matter of personal interests, obsessions and predilections, on one end, and the surrounding disciplinary and cultural contexts, on the other end." (p.07)

Ana Miljacki (2014) *Under the Influence*

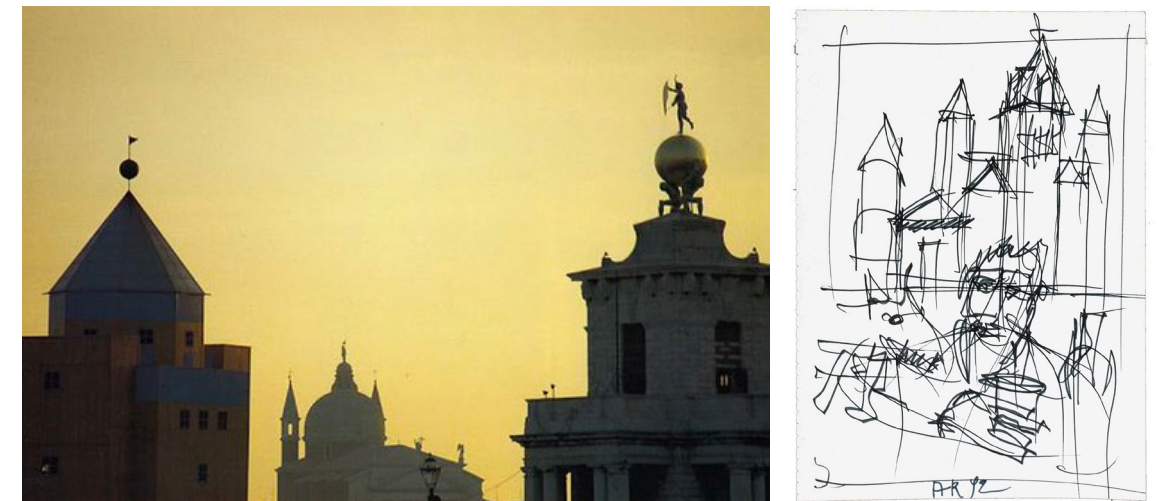


fig. 1. (left) Aldo Rossi, Teatro del Mondo (seen on the left in the image), Venice Bienalle (1979-1981). (image: lickr.com). The project is a floating theatre that was aimed to condensed the Venetian identity, its architectural and mythical reality (Labedade, n.d.).

fig. 2. (right) Aldo Rossi, Selfportrait in front of the Bonnefantenmuseum (1992). (image: drawingmatter.org)

(Re)formulate

character

When describing a place, or taking about its identity, *character* is often used as term to specify what makes the place unique. Defined by cambridge dictionary, character means *the particular combination of qualities in a person or place that makes them different from others* and applied to architecture, this could mean a lot of different things. It could mean marks of embedded history, unexpected details, it could be traits shared by many houses within a neighborhood, something that ties them together, but it could also describe how one building stands out from the others.

In the *MAS Context issue 32/Character* (2020), in collaboration with the guest editors *Design With Company*, the topic character is explored from different perspectives. Design With Company explains that they started using the term, “when we were searching for a bridge between narrative-driven architectural explorations and formally driven ones” (p.6) and describe that the interest remains because of its duplicitous use “Character can describe something completely superficial, and at the same time, it can describe something thoroughly essential”. I became interested in using the term as a tool in my project, to support me in the research of what a place is in relation to its observable environment.

Focusing on the unique and site-specific, characters that only emerges in this kind of situation, they are telling something about the place in their appearance. I’m starting to see characters as a collector of narratives and forms, together, they become storytellers and carriers of the place narrative. Linking back to the archipelago as situation, the site-specific characters seen in the built are responding the unique circumstances and needs from the past and in the present. By observing these structures, one can start to understand how questions are answered in this kind of context, handled in a site-specific way.

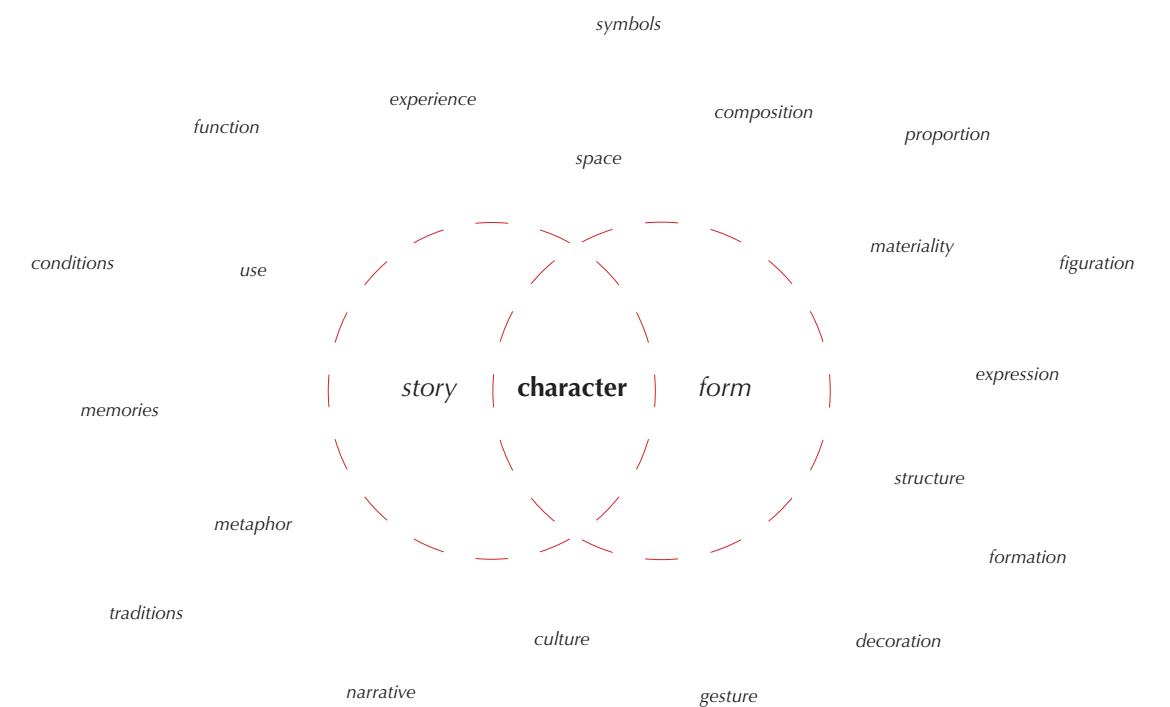
translate

The idea is to take the knowledge the character possesses and translate the findings into something else. To translate is maybe first associated with languages and literature as medium, where the aim is to imitate the original, while turning it into another form or language. Walter Benjamin (1992) has claimed that the original is given an afterlife in the translation, it is were association, new ideas and meaning occur. A translation can actually add or find new meaning within the original, could the same thing be applied to a translation within architecture?

An example of an artist who works with the process of gather and assemblage, as a way of translating maybe, is Louise Nevelson, and especially her artwork *Black wall* (1963). Wooden objects found in the same area are here boxed, painted and collaged, bringing attention to the process that gives the piece a coherent expression, rather than the objects found in their original state. The expressions of the objects are being changed but the memory of its origin is still perceived, in a context that gives them new meaning.



fig. 3 Louise Nevelson, *Black Wall* (1959). (image: tate.org)



A collection of words that could describe stories, forms and characters

Reference projects

approaches

Responding to a context within a building design proposal has been done in different ways. Reference projects are therefore collected with the purpose of understanding how approaches can differ and emphasize various aspects of the question.

While designing the Utzon Center in Århus, the architects, Jørn Utzon, was inspired by the industry and shipyard that surrounds the complex. The building responds to the surrounding in different ways, in shapes of the roof, with highly reflective, dramatically curved rooftops, and in plan of the building, providing a sheltered courtyard protected from the wind. ("Utzon Center in Aalborg / Jørn Utzon", 2016)

Studio Anne Holtorp have explored how a context can be used in the design process through material gestures in the project *Green Corner Building*

(2020), located in Muharraq, Bahrain. Elements of precasts made on the ground from nearby is assembled into a whole, being shown both on the facade and the interior. (Mollard, 2020) The casting process becomes a recording of the nature, a process where the positive and the negative carry the memory of each other.

In a project called *Can sau emergency scenery* (2019) by Unparelld'arquitectes in Olot, Spain, past stories and forms from the neighborhood are used while designing an addition to the streets facade. In an interview with Deezen (Ravenscroft, 2020) the architects explain that the project "is the construction of an unreal, symbolic history that highlights this public space. We played to change the perception of those elements that are present in the town. They are 'as found' elements with a change of meaning."

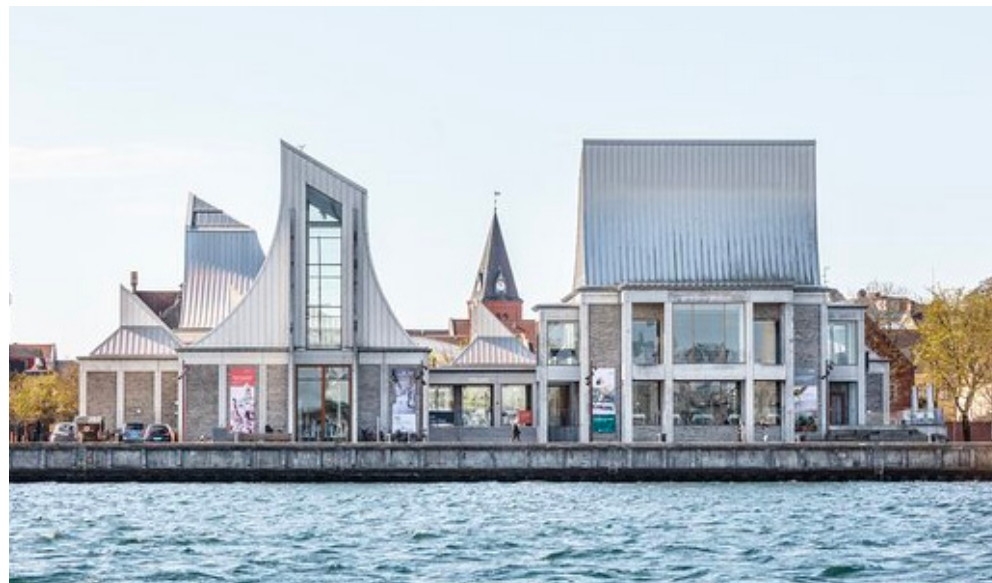


fig. 4 Jørn and Tim Utzon, Utzon Center, the shapes of the roof reflect surrounding shapes in the industry and shipyard (2008). (image: utzoncenter.dk)



fig. 5 (left) Anne Holtorp, model for Green Corner Building, in gypsum and white sand (2018). (image: Studio Anne Holtorp)

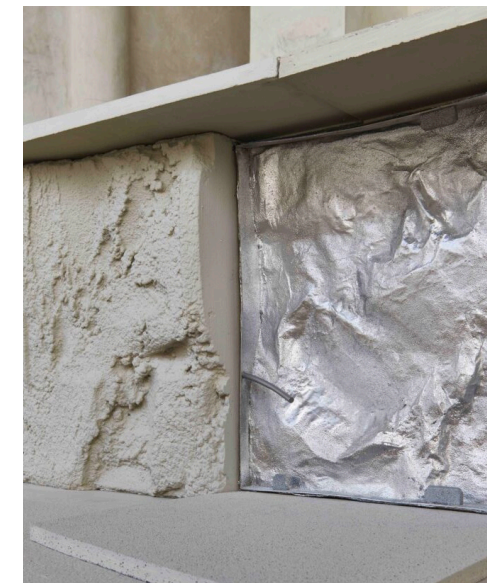


fig. 6 (right) Anne Holtorp, from the Casting and Cutting exhibition at the Shaikh Ebrahim Center in Muharraq (2018–19). (image: Studio Anne Holtorp).



fig. 7 Can sau emergency scenery, before. (image: archdaily.com)



fig. 8 Unparelld'arquitectes, Can sau emergency scenery, after, arches that could evoke the section of a church (2019). (image: archdaily.com)

METHOD



Process

to observe, interpret and implement

Focus in the project will be on developing methods to observe the situation, interpret what is being told and implement a design. This is done by mapping and constructing an archive of findings and as a next step using the archive, translating it into something else.

James Corner (2002) writes about the potentials of mapping, the creative process behind it, in a text called *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention*, he writes "the function of mapping is less to mirror reality than to engender the re-shaping of the worlds in which people live" (p.89). What and how to map can be explored and adapted to be used in a personal way and for different situation. But he claims that "The capacity to reformulate what already exists is the important step. (...) includes also the various hidden forces that underlie the workings of a given place." (p.90)

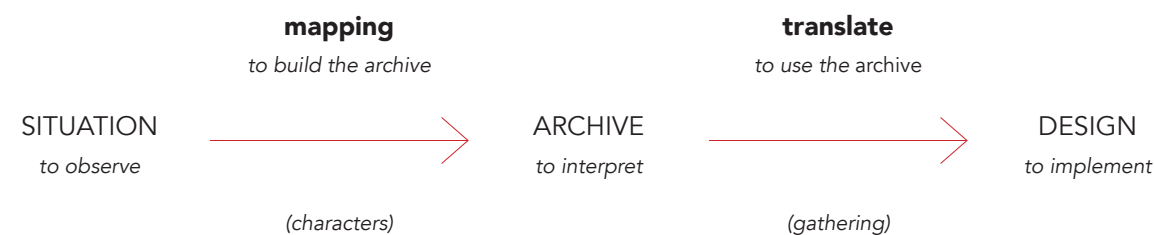
I understand mapping as to pay attention to and be present while observing, to be able to represent and understand the many dimensions of a place, which can result in hidden potentials to unfold and existing qualities / narratives to be strengthened or changed. In this project, mapping is to be seen as a activity, used as a tool for getting to know the situation and being able to represent a narrative linked to its characters.

to build and use an archive

The diagram below shows the different steps being taken, moving the project forward. The archive as a concept should be seen as a way for me to represent a chosen narrative, linked to the situation. It is where observations and impressions about the place are gathered and processed. The archive is then what will be used in a next step, to be translated into something else.

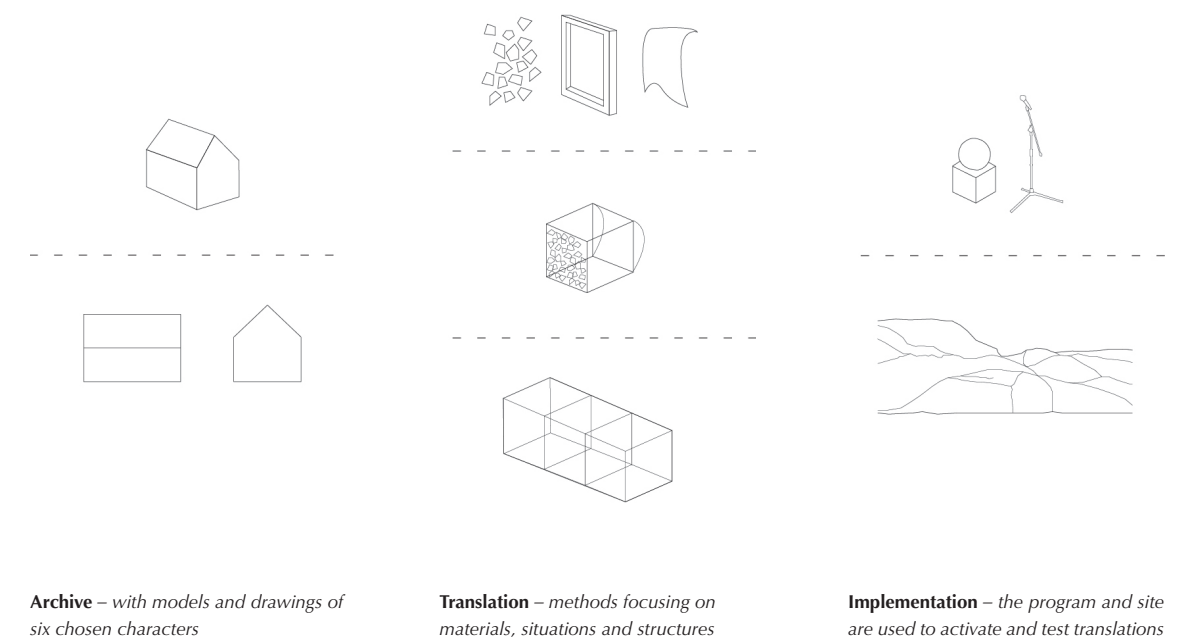
In the archive, I've focused on character as term to help me represent the place and construct the narrative. Methods to build this archive have been tested and evaluated along the way, where drawings and models came to be the most effective tools to be able to assemble, compare, and evaluate findings.

In the next step, using the archive, gathering is to be seen as a way to translate the context into a new design. The characters are brought together, creating new interactions and letting them communicate a story about the place together. To address different scales within a design proposal, different methods and tools to use the archive are developed and represented. The different ways are collected into a toolbox of possible outcomes, containing material care, configured situations and shapes of the overall structures, all given from the translation methods.



In the final step, a site in the archipelago is introduced and used as a testbed to implement a design proposal, assembled and formulated from the toolbox. The outcome should be seen as a result of previous steps taken while developing translation methods, rather than a reaction to the site.

The whole project should be seen as being developed through an iterative process, where each step has led to new insights and knowledge, about how to use the context while designing but also, steps towards getting to know the place.



MAPPING

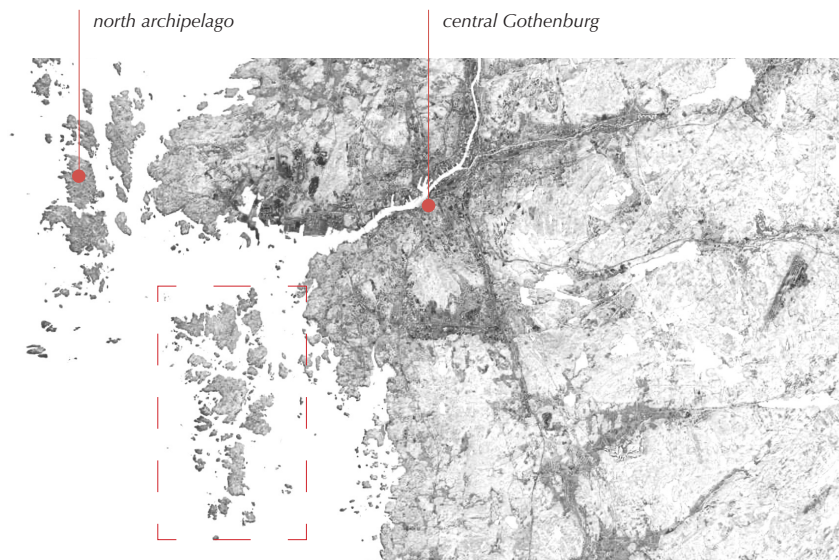


Archipelago

getting to know

The Gothenburg archipelago is divided into two separate parts, one in the north and the other one in the south, I'm focusing on the later to visit and read about. By public transportation you could get to the islands by ferry from Saltholmen which is located about 30 minutes from central Gothenburg. My journey to the islands begins, I'm starting to map the context in order to capture my impressions and represent a narrative.

I started off by visiting the island Styrso, while reading "Styrso - from ice age to present" (Andersson, 1983). The text explains that traces can be located, in the natural landscape and built environment, how man in different times have learnt to adapt to and take advantage of the unique circumstances. It has been necessary to find ways to be protected from the wind, communicate over long distances, make use of the sea. To build in these places has resulted in site-specific, sustainable ways, where it tends to be a direct relation between the expression, function and location conditions such as topography and weather. Meaning, the structures on site are direct responses to local needs and narratives.



forms and stories

The exposed situation also means that the context is governed by the maintenance of some rules and traditions, in order to protect each other and continue to build upon the long development of knowledge. In the clear and defined a compulsion also might seem to appear, in the island special conditions and in the islanders' own view of their place, in addition, what comes in and out can easily be overseen.

As a visitor, I don't know about all these ways, but this relationship between forms and stories makes structures seem to have their own language, that they are readable in their expression. I began to wonder if there is a way to learn this language, communicate in the same way.

In this chapter called *mapping*, the impressions are gathered from several site visits, readings and conversations about the islands, observations of old photos collected in a digital museum. Characters are used as term to collect stories and forms, starting off by introducing the characters that are the setting, the unique circumstances.



having / giving character

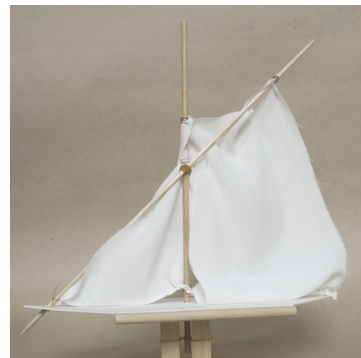
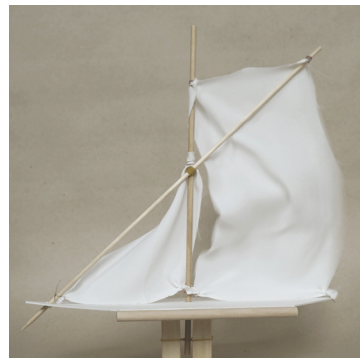
Natural formations, the characters are results of surrounding circumstances, and they can respond differently when relations changes.

~ The wind that is so tangible here, one must relate to it in some way, resist, protect yourself from, make use of or being shaped by.

~ The old rocks that are shaped and polished by wind, water and ice sheets, in a long process that can be traced back to the ice age.

~ The ocean surrounds and reflect its environment, makes light to shimmer, can mirror and distort our vision.

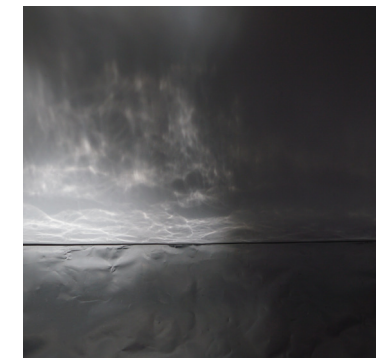
WIND



LANDSCAPE



SEASCAPE



Archive

chosen characters

With the unique conditions in mind and moving on to the built environment, the response to the circumstances, I selected a number of characters, or structures, to help me navigate in what is being told. As stated before, they are chosen based on the aspect of being unique and site-specific, characters that only emerges in this kind of situation and thereby tell something about the place in their appearance.

They are collected and represented in a so called archive, where the different characters all say something about the place in different ways, there are, for example, ways to live, to protect, to work, relations, lifestyles that have arose and disappeared, strategies for constructing and communicating.

Some of the structures aren't as present in the situation anymore, as with bath houses and drying racks, or are not being used in the same way as they did before. The villages are an example of strucutres that have changed, spaces in-between houses built to create common sheltered areas have been chopped up and fences surround the plots, the private is manifested instead, the whole experience is reversed.

tools to process

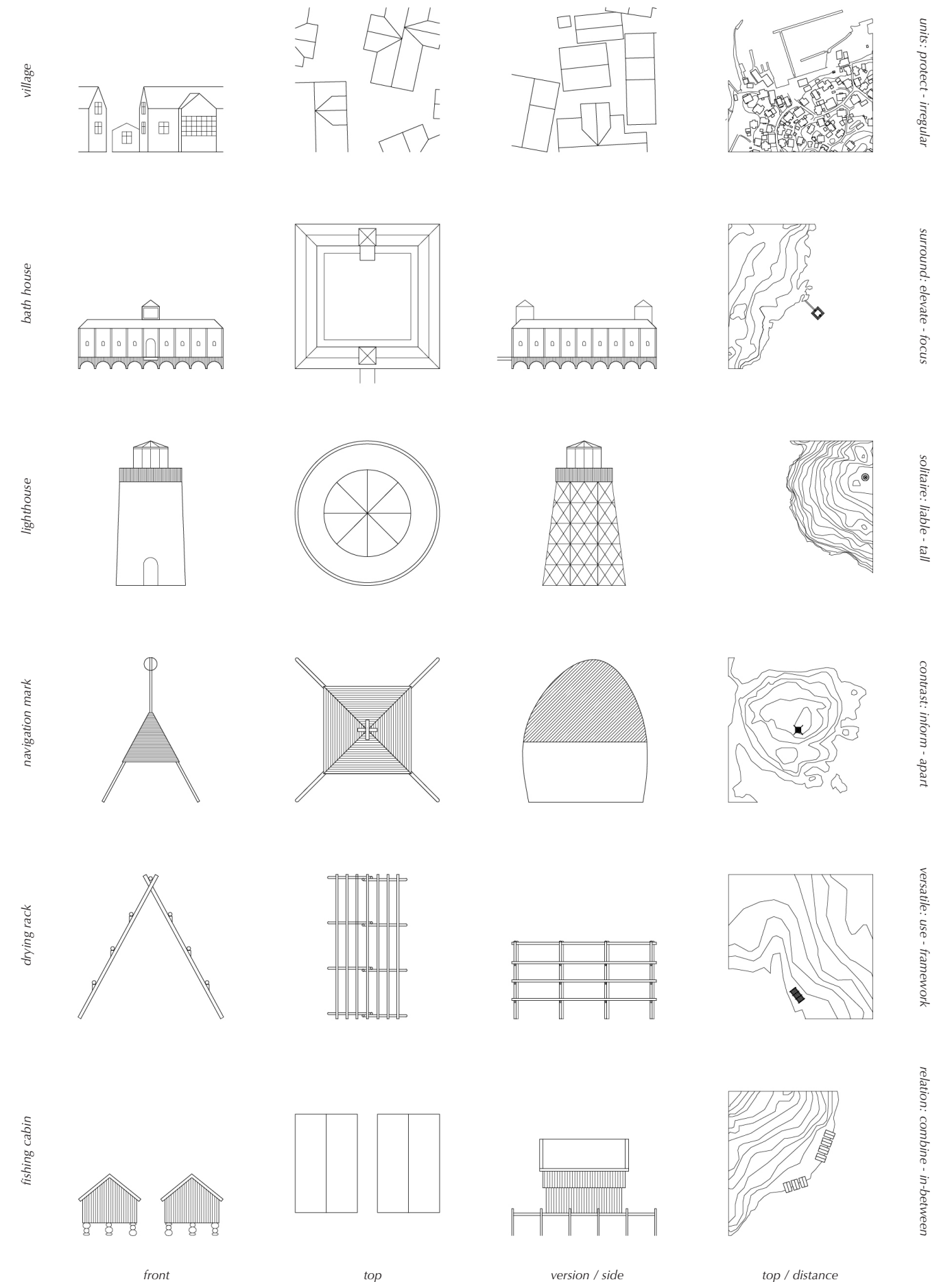
I'm starting to get to know the situation, its past and its present. While mapping the characters and constructing the archive, different tools are used to represent findings and knowledge gained:

Drawings – characters are arranged on the basis of the same conditions in order to be able to more easily compare aspects such as proportions, figurations and setting. (p. 31)

Models – it is used as a tool to explore expressions, constructions and variations for example, where the outcome is focused on chosen aspects, can be seen as interpretations of originals. (p. 34-39)

Keywords – tells something about their role, attribute and function, a way of trying to encircle their unique characteristics. Seen next to drawings and model photos.

Some background to the characters together with photos, are also represented (p. 32-33). The whole archive can be seen as a representation of the chosen narrative that I take with me into the next chapter, translation.



Simplified drawings representing the chosen characters

being characters



fig. 9 Vrångö (1935). (image: Bohuslän museum)

Village – Fishermen usually lived here with their families. The houses are located densely, to be close to neighbors, and irregularly, to protect from the wind. In the in-between spaces, a common shelter is created where one can meet and help each other out. (Andersson, 1983)



fig. 10 Cold bath house, Styrö (1908). (image: Bohuslän museum)

Bath house – These structures are results of the seaside resorts that emerged on the west coast in the middle of the 19th century. (Andersson, 1983) It became increasingly popular to swim in the sea, the cold baths are often elevated from but focused on the water it surrounds.



fig. 11 Pater Noster (1991). (image: Bohuslän museum)

Lighthouse – Provides guidance for ships through its appearance during the day and its light at night. Often located on isolated islands and used to be manned. (Fyr, n.d.) There is often a division between the enclosed space that leads up to the top where the view opens up and is all around.



fig. 12 "Båk" and "Kummel", Saltskär (2016). (image: fyrwiki.org)

Navigation mark – Other types of communication structures, but do not emit light, contrasts its surroundings to be seen. A typical design is a tapered tower-like structure built in wood. Others are built in stones from nearby and then colored to stand out. (Sjömärke, n.d.)



fig. "Sjöbod", Styrö (2021). (Author's own photo)

Fishing cabin – Buildings used as storage for fishing equipment, there are often several units combined, standing on the edge to the sea. (Bohuslänsmuseum, n.d.) Results in different approaches to nature, stacked stones, bridges or adaption in location. The in-between spaces are often narrow and windproof.

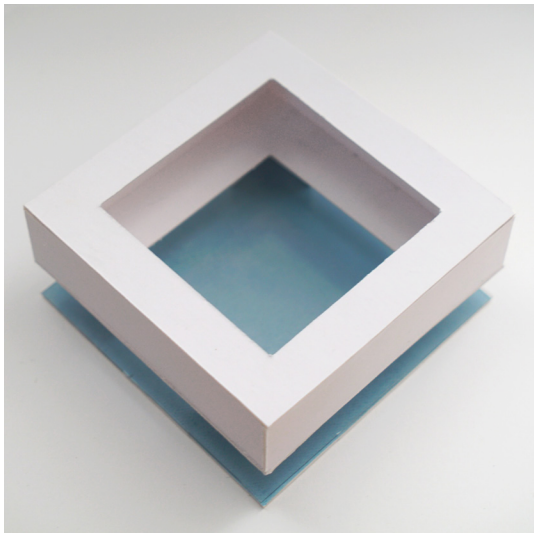


fig. 13 Drying rack (1950-1960). (image: Bohuslän museum)

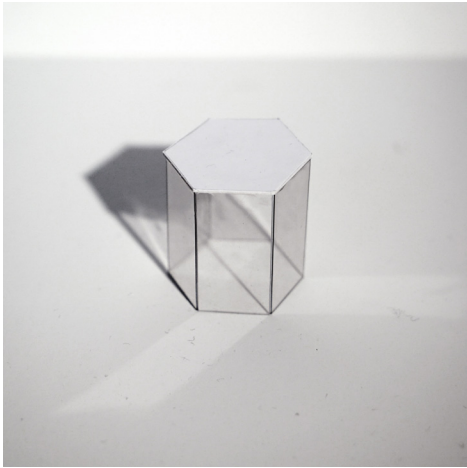
Drying rack – Function to dry fish and nets for example. They were a common feature due to the place's long history linked to fishing. (Bohuslänsmuseum, n.d.) They are structured to be flexible, a versatile framework that change in expression depending on use.



units that protect with an irregular order, bay windows welcome, the in-between is manifested



surround its focus area with a elevated approach, provides shelter and opens up, to what is high above and down below

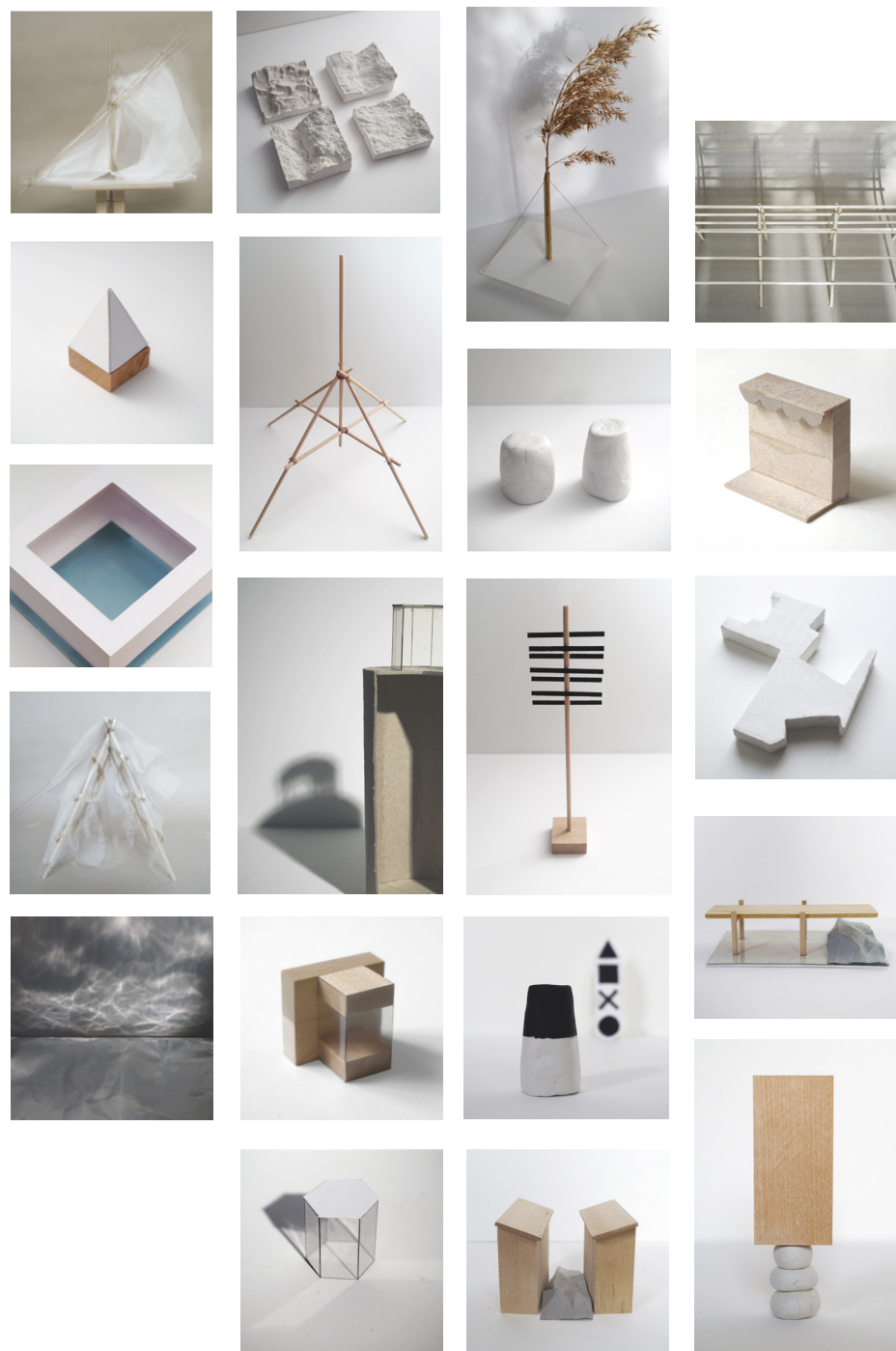


*solitaire figure with a **liable** signal, enclosed body standing **tall**, extends its reach at the top*



***contrast** the surrounding to **inform**, simple structures placed **apart**, desires to be seen*





→ *understanding the archive*

The archive should not be seen as a one and only way to understand this situation, it could be done in many different ways. It should rather be seen as a tool for me to observe and work with impressions to get a deeper understanding of the characters, what it is that make them site-specific and unique in their expression. Some summarizing conclusions can now be made:

Materials used in the structures can often be found nearby, there are simple, natural materials, treated in different ways.

There are different ways of approaching the landscape, and seascape, a lot of the expression lies in these different approaches to the surrounding.

Characters can be arranged based on similar traits. Village and bath house, function to meet in a protected space. Lighthouse and navigation mark, can communicate over long distances and provides good lookouts. Drying rack and fishing cabin, creates frameworks for different uses.

TRANSLATE



Using the archive

translation

Taking the step into translation, I see myself understanding the context better than I did before, I now have an overall perspective and I can be confident in making connections and interpretations without losing original ideas or intentions. What comes next will be a result influenced by the context.

The archive, the representations of the choses narrative linked to site-specific characters, will now be translated and reformulated. The aim is to use the knowledge, findings and phenomena that the archive possesses and interpret the existing into new structures.

To use the archive can be done in many ways, my focus now is to take the impressions and find methods that together could cover a design proposal within different scales. The idea is that the characters are brought together, being able to communicate a story about the place together.

toolbox

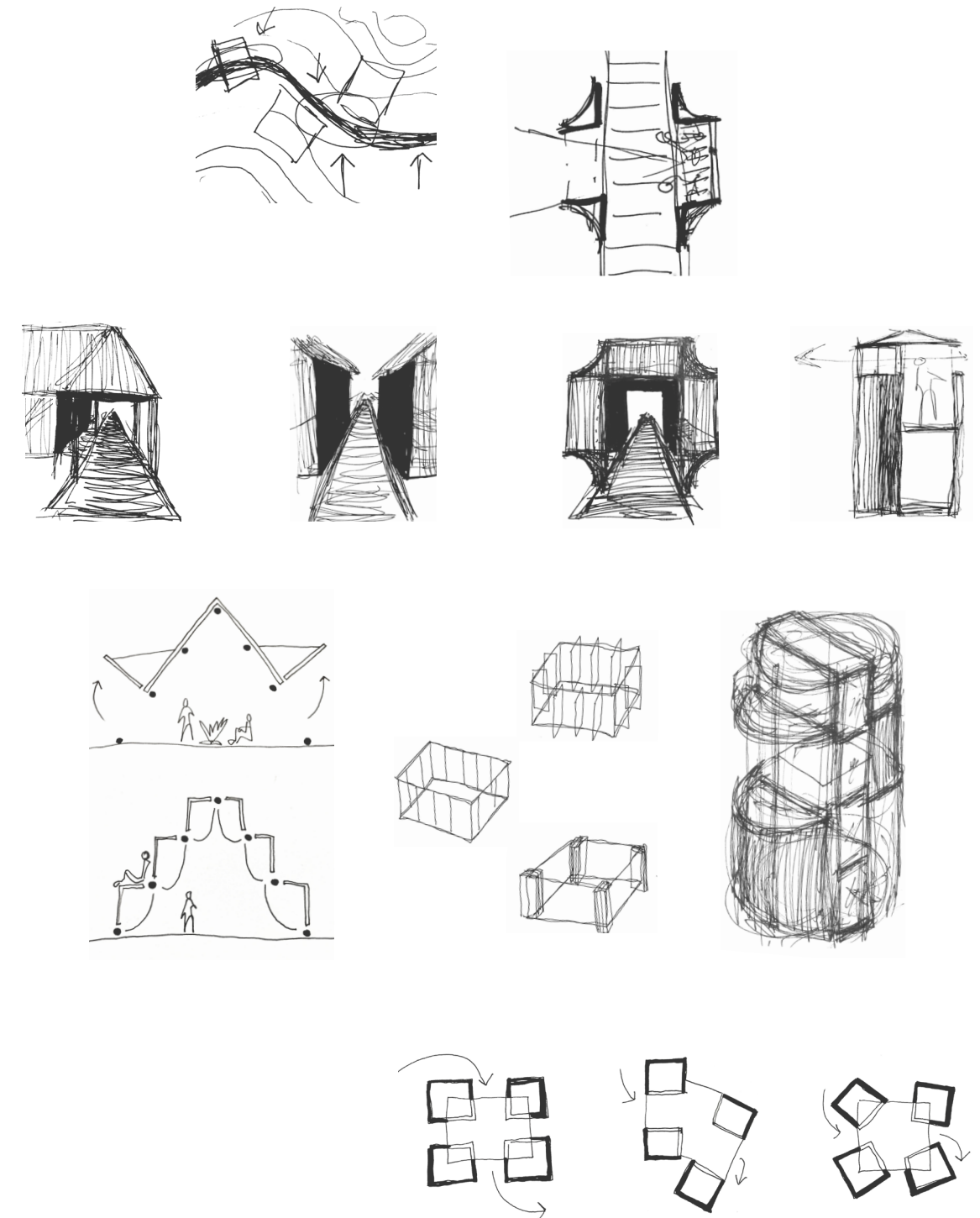
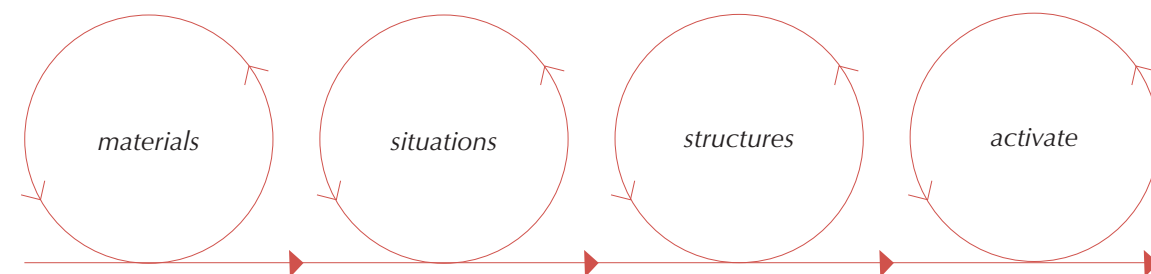
Different methods to use the archive will now be presented, tested and evaluated, building a toolbox of possible ways to use the archive. It is an iterative process where each step will generate information and knowledge to be used in a next step, building up a complexity and creating a whole. Within each step there are different focus areas:

Materials – about reusing strategies, testing out different treatments and expressions within the same framework, as found in the context.

Situations – translating the characters into isolated situations, creating a sequence of experiences.

Structures – exploring proportions and relations by layering drawings and let the characters interact.

Activate – the program is introduced and used as a tool to activate the structures, showcase how they can be used in different ways and over time.



Materials

simple but treated

Materials that are present among the characters are often naturally occurring in the surrounding, such as stones and wood, but are being assembled and treated in different ways to fill their function and desired expression. Examples from archive:

Navigation mark – stand out to be seen in their shape or color. For instance, kummel, where stones are stacked and often colored white to contrast the surrounding. Another recurring sign is a slatted panel which in different shapes change in appearance depending on where you stand.

Drying rack – a structure composed by overlaying timber posts, where the drying of nets and fishes fills the skeleton and creates different expressions depending on use.

Village – wooden structures which are often decorated with "sncikarglädje" (ornamentations in wood) in selected parts, such as around windows and where the roof meets the walls.

reuse strategy

As a method to translate the materials, I've chosen to reuse strategies I see as present within the narrative, by formulating the components of the framework and test its variations.

Wooden framing – wood is often used as a structural material, composed in ways to resist the tough conditions or fulfill a function.

Complement – matters that fill up the gaps within the structures and adds characteristics, could be a fabric that softens, a play with shadows, decorative details or claddings in wood.

Stones – the use of stones varies a lot from being a structural element to be a load or decorative in its appearance. Lying around on the islands, they are seen as building element ready to be used.

Following pages shows my own exploration of using the strategy, focusing on different expressions, functions and structural means.

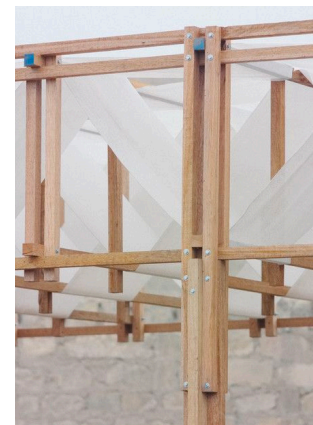
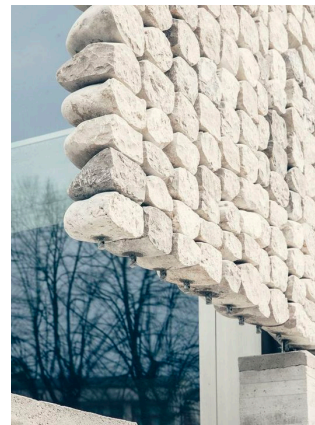
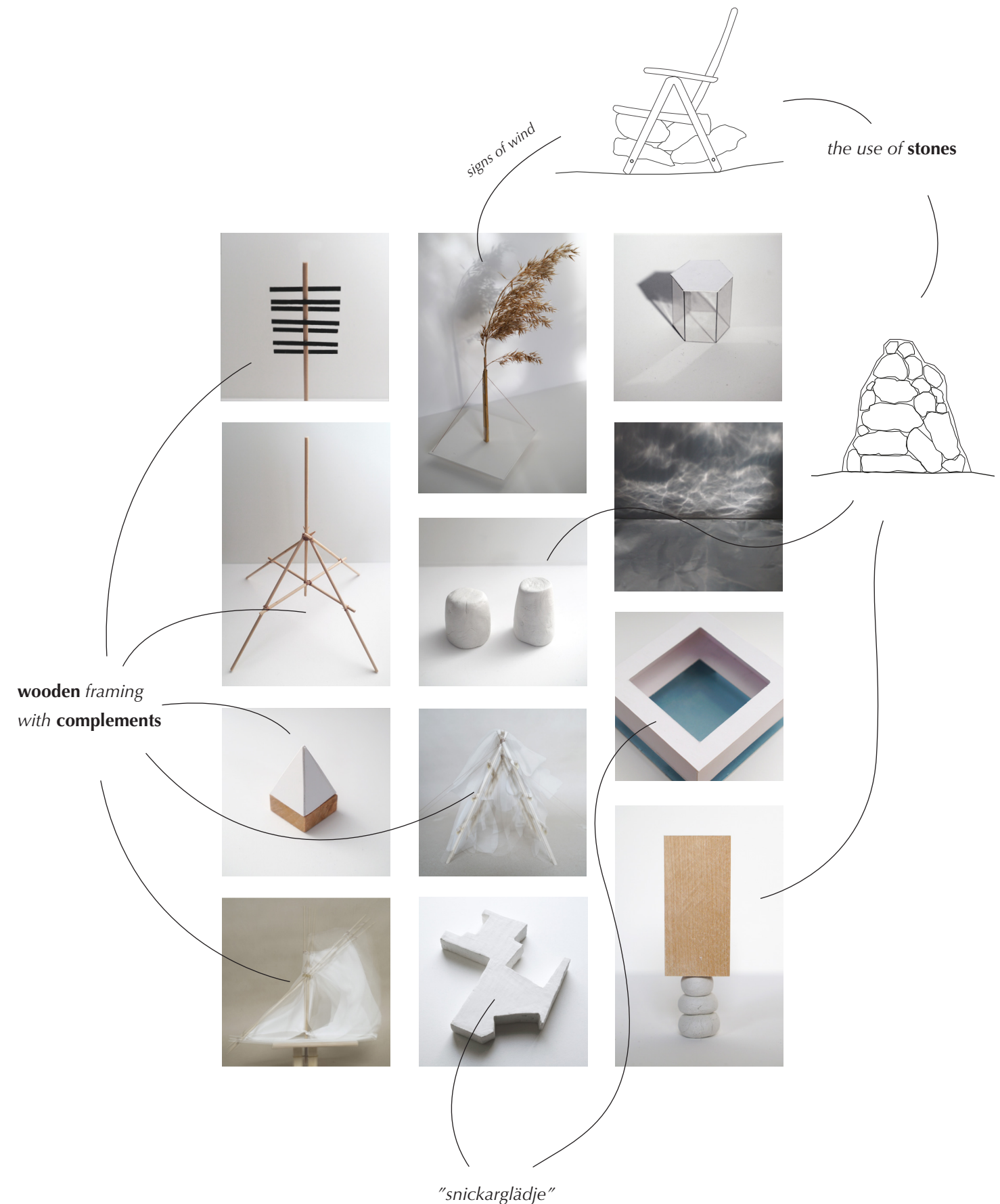


fig. 14 (left) Handling stones in new ways (image: designboom.com)

fig. 15 (middle) Using light as complement (image: dezeen.com)

fig. 16 (right) Fabric that wraps and softens a wooden framing (image: archdaily.com)



Collage from archive, understanding the origin of the components

wall - function



Models showing how a wooden framing can be filled with functions, composed in a way that gives the framing decorative details

slatted panels - light



Slatted panels within a framing could be arranged to create a play of light, passing it by in a stair as an example

stones - decorative structure



Explorations of stones ability to create different expressions, as decorative, or seen as structural elements

fabric - wind



Fabrics could be used to make the wind become visible and play a decorative part, hanging the fabric, the framing feels soft and rich in its expression

meeting ground



Adapting to the uneven surface by (left) adding a number of entities, support appears to be rising from the ground, (middle) elevate and carry within a a-frame, (right) letting straight lines within the structure meet the organic landscape

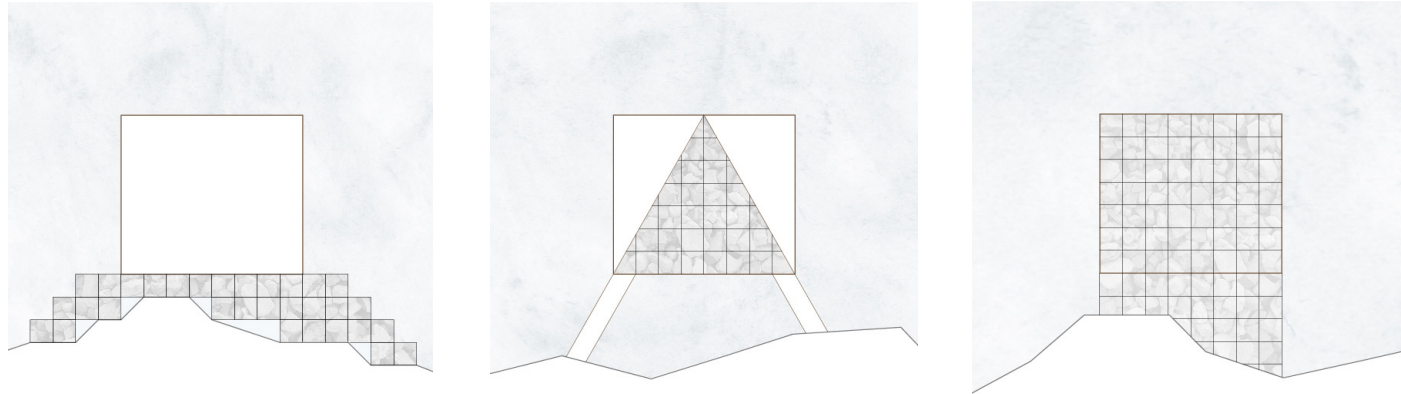
→ brought into the toolbox

The variation in the models shows how the strategy and framework can be adapted and used in different ways depending on needs and aspirations. The toolbox can now be seen to contain several ways of handling the use of material.

I see it as this method brings the notion of the place narrative into the small scale, where a recognizable surface can trigger memories within a touch or an attention to how the wind captures material becomes a way to address the surrounding condition.

The method can be seen as trying to capture the relationship between naturally created and humanly designed forms and expressions. These are ways to approach what is all around, making use of and shape in relation to their characters.

using stones



Exploring the different approaches to the ground and add stones as materials, (left) create a constructed landscape while meeting the structure, (middle) framing the stones, being decorative, (right) using stones as a structural element, adapted to the ground

Situations

sequence of experiences

As a next iteration and translation method, the characters are interpreted and configured as isolated situations. Were the sequences as a whole could create an overall experience of the characters being brought together.

Scale and proportions are now used to play with and evoke associations without mimicking an expression. For example, the shape of a building could become a stair and the plan of a structure might result in the shape of a window.

I see this method as a way to address how different characters are spatially experienced, by paying attention to both materials and forms as a carrier of the place narrative.

The references below should be seen as projects I've taken inspiration from while looking for ways to interpret the expressions in different ways.

a bridge that connects

To move through structures in a natural landscape, a bridge could become a way to create an accessible path and middle ground between what is the natural landscape and what is man-made. A similar way is often used to approach water, the bridge becomes a common structure to elevate from what is below.

The configurations can be understood to be situated along this bridge and they all have different approaches regarding relations to the surrounding and functions as a structure.

To explore the method, I started off by making models within a frame of thought. Seen on the right, they have the same basic structure, but with complements that adds features needed to evoke associations of the character's expression. On the following page, drawings are addressing ways of using materials and functions of a bridge.

configurations



Bath house – as structure and approach to surrounding, they are isolating and focusing on parts of a whole. Translated into a bench in a sheltered area with a view framed in front of you.



Village – perceived as a passer-by, the bay windows seem to welcome you, standing on the line between the private and the public. Translated into an opening or support, a transition between bridge and structure.



Navigation mark – a structure that calls for attention from far away, geometrical figures stand out in the organic landscape. Translated into a shelter or bridge that could alert passers-by that support can be found.



fig. 17 (left) *Playing with expression of support* (image: naomatsunaga.com)



fig. 18 (middle) *Using scale as a method to translate existing structure* (image: wikipedia.org)

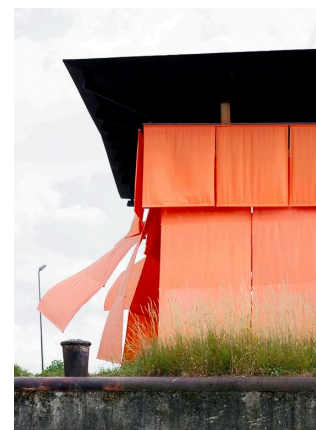
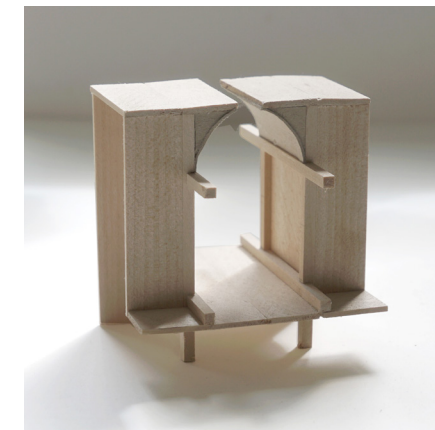


fig. 19 (right) *Facade material that catches wind* (image: archaic-mag.com)



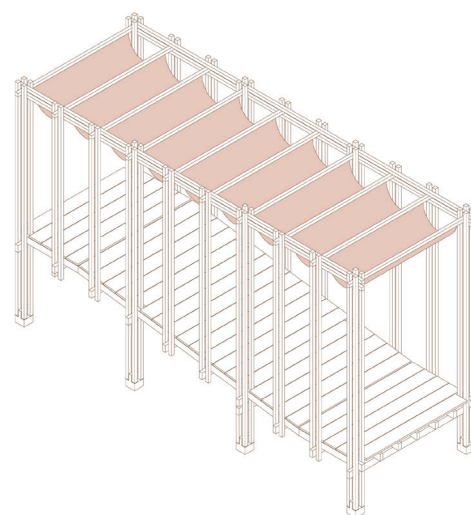
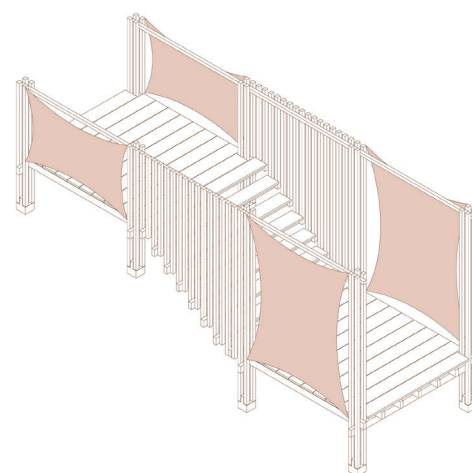
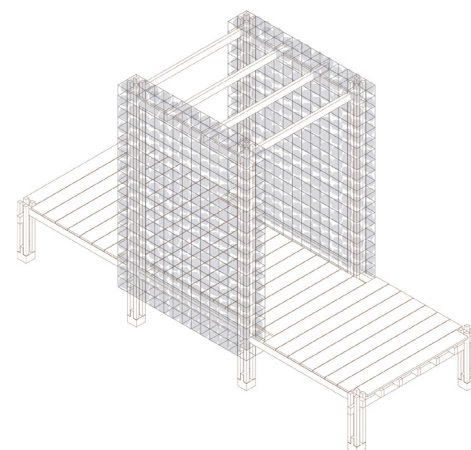
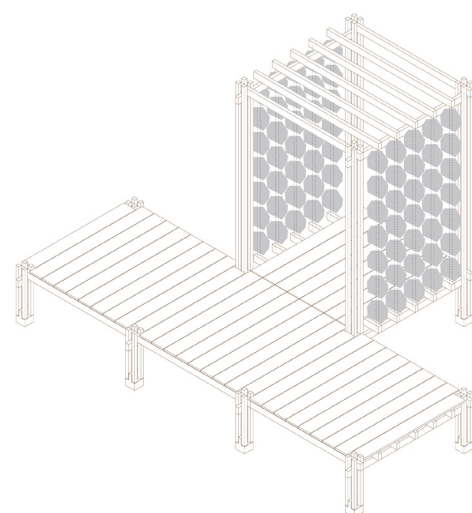
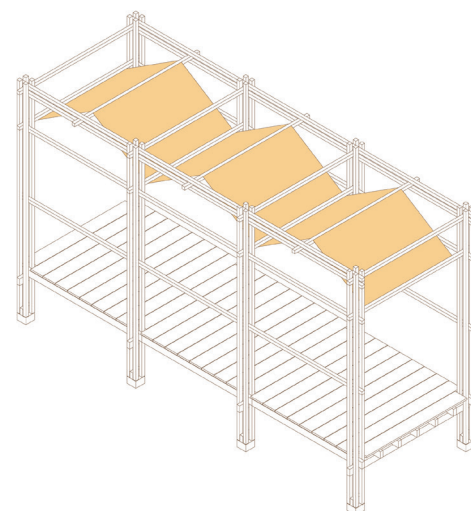
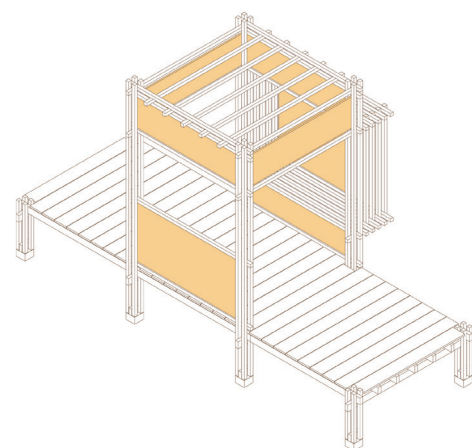
Lighthouse – its figure with a closed part that opens after a movement to the top. Translated into a staircase that highlight the movement and protrudes from the walkway.



Fishing cabin – the narrow gaps of the fishing cabins provide windproof and can be seen as embracing the in-between. Translated into a passage and break from the wind, while passing light in from above.



Drying rack – a structure that in its framework is flexible in its use. Translated into a situation where what fills the skeleton can be transformed, an entrance where the door is also a roof.



→ *brought into the toolbox*

Within this method, there are ways to deal with and translate how the characters are spatially experienced and functioned. The toolbox now includes ways to put together materials and create situations linked to the characters.

By creating a basic framework and add complements to address existing characters with new functions, expressions are highlighted, recognizable but maybe on the edge to unfamiliar.

The method draws attention to how a sequence of situations can evoke associations related to the place narrative. Movement through, relations within, ways to use and be affected by what surrounds us. These are all of importance when a place narrative is framed.

Bridge – detailing and addressing expressions, but also materials, drawings are made to test how a bridge can be adapted for different needs. Like a framed bench, a shelter from rain and sun, an entrance with hanging stones, a passage with stones in a metal net, a stair that change in expression, a ramp which both lifts and hangs.

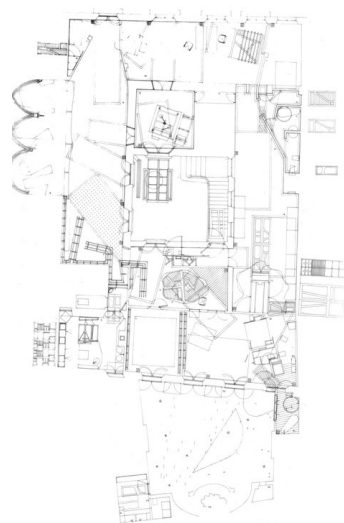
Structures

gather and interact

This method is focused on using the drawing as a tool to translate, paying attention to its capacity to reshape our perception of the existing. The method is aimed to find relations and interactions within the characters, which are then being articulated into new structures.

Drawings that are used are the facade and the plan. The facade can be seen as where the character of a building is located, the state of which we experience the architectural expression of a structure. The plan on the other hand is more about the movement and experience over time. By layering these drawings, representing the characters, an idea of how they interact can be sensed.

The drawings are not addressing scale, rather proportions, to more easily analyze similarities and symbolic values. A reference on the method is Enric Miralles who uses drawings in an operative way, and not as representations or static descriptions. (Douglas, 2009)



relations and transitions

The method is developed with the aim of using the forms and figures of the characters, letting them interact to see their relations, creating a transition towards new, additional structures. The facades are parried based on common traits and functions within the characters (p. 58-59). Creates guidelines for possible configurations of new facades, with similar expression.

Village and bath house – structures designed for people to meet and interact in a sheltered area. Bringing attention to the common and horizontal.

Drying rack and fishing cabin – structures that are flexible in use, designed as framework that can be adapted for different needs.

Lighthouse and navigation mark – has the task to communicate on a distance, shapes and colors are of great interest.

The plans are also layered within the same pairs, creating possible compositions and experiences of the structures as a whole. (p. 60)

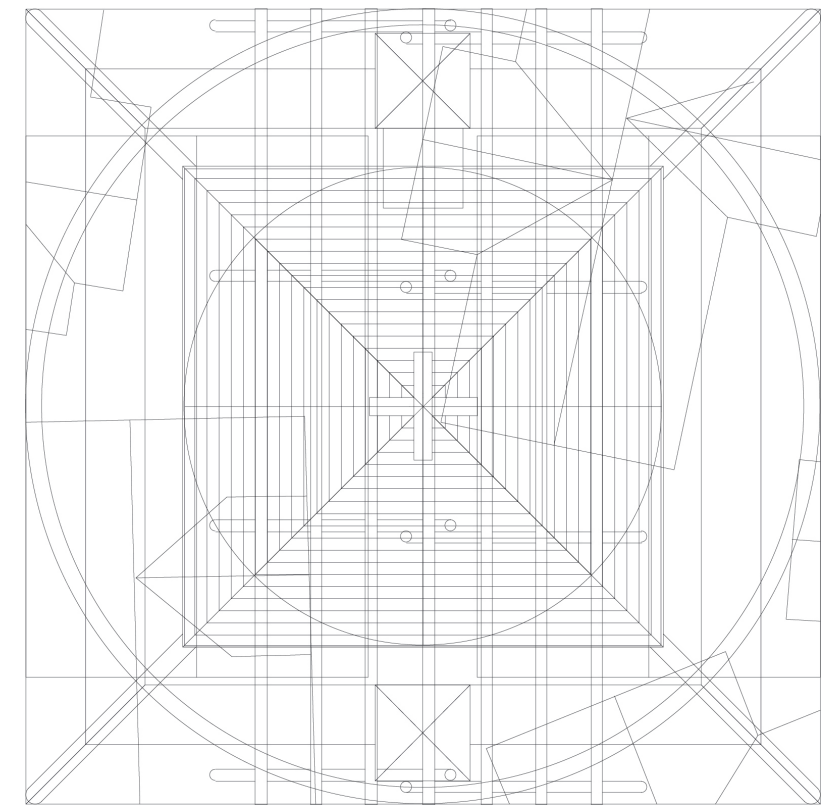
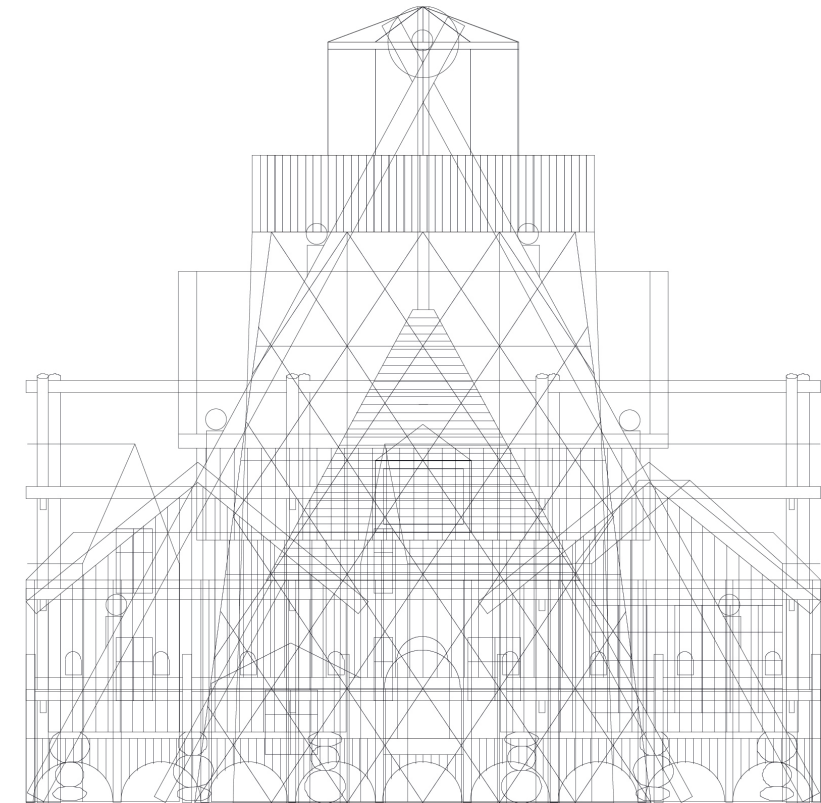
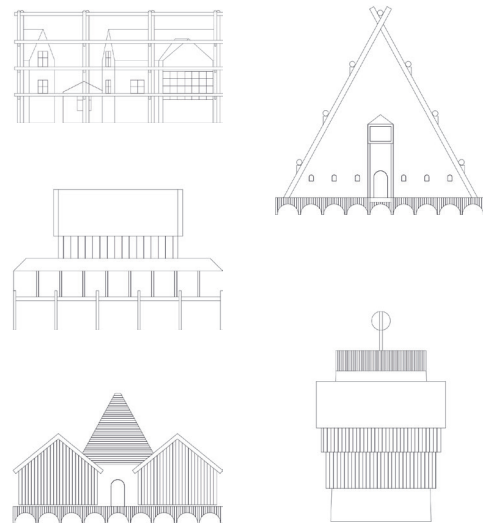
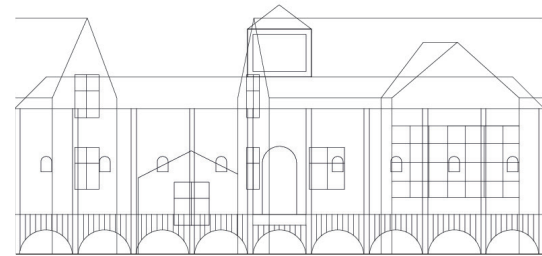


fig. 20 Miralles, the drawing of the apartment lacks hierarchy. (1995). (image: diffusive.wordpress.com)

Exercise, mixed structures, testing if it is possible to sense the originals in a reconfigured state.

All facades and plans of the characters layered

village + bath house



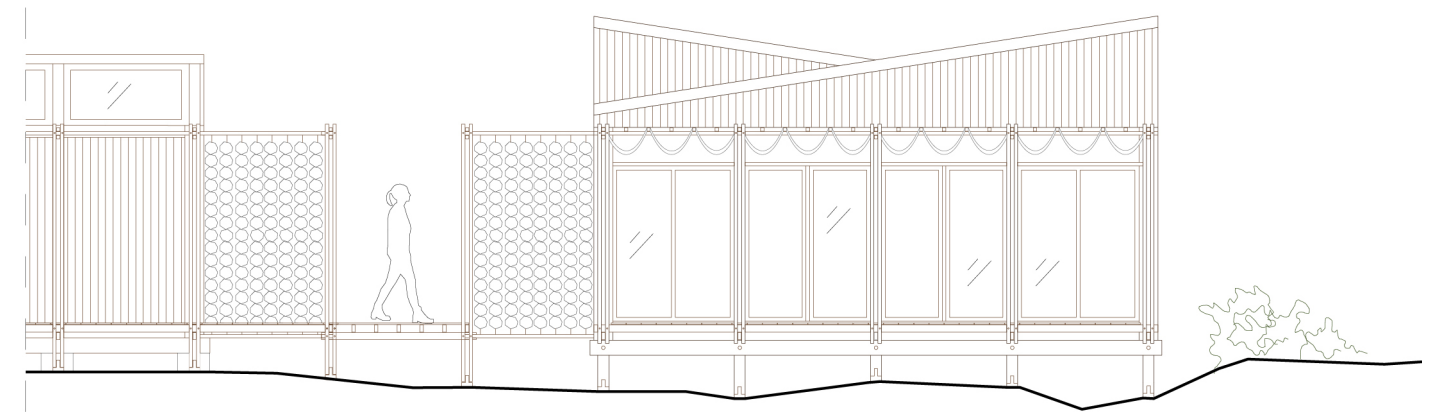
sloping roofs

rythm in facade

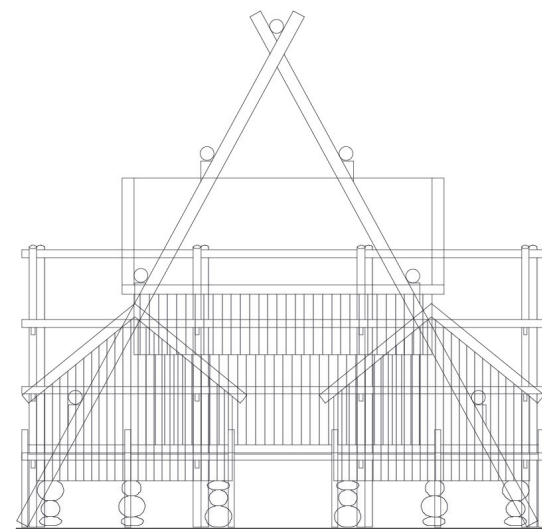
decorative bay window

elevated from ground

reconfiguration



drying rack + fishing cabin



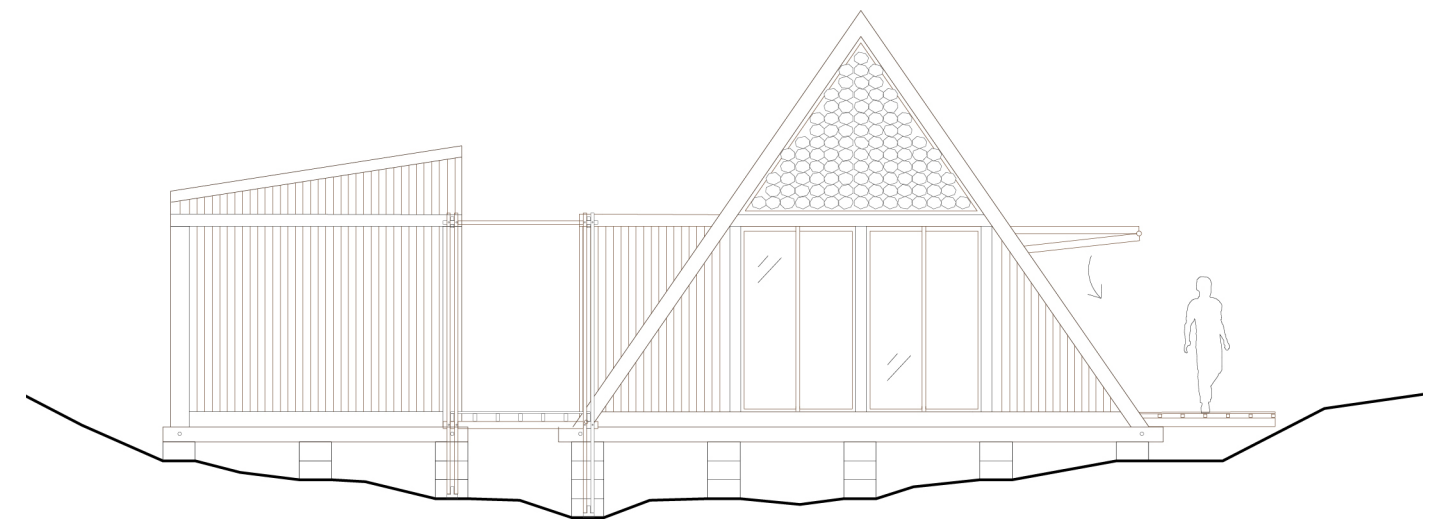
diagonal angeled walls / roof

versatille framework

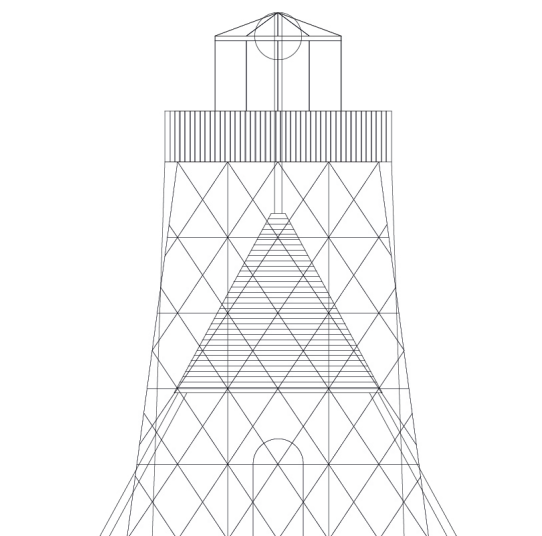
entrece in a smaller in-between space

entities adapting to the ground

reconfiguration



lighthouse + navigation mark



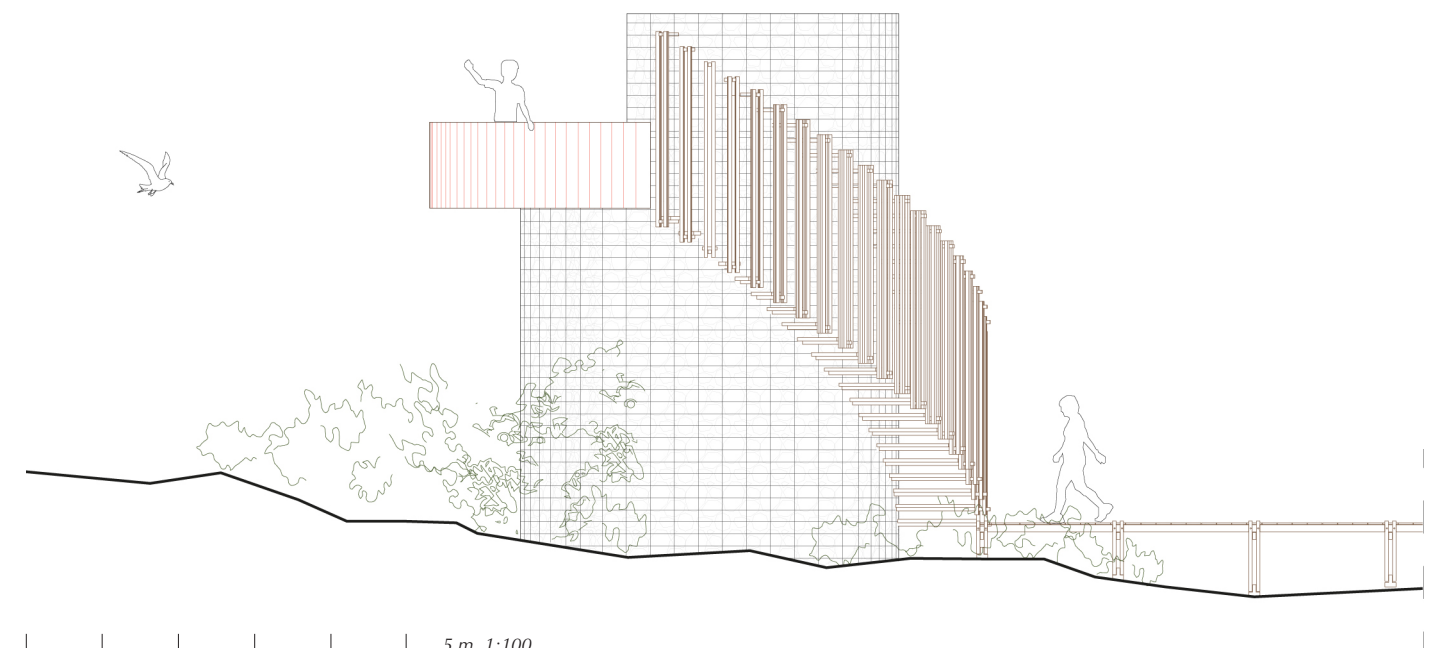
provides a view

colored, geometric shapes

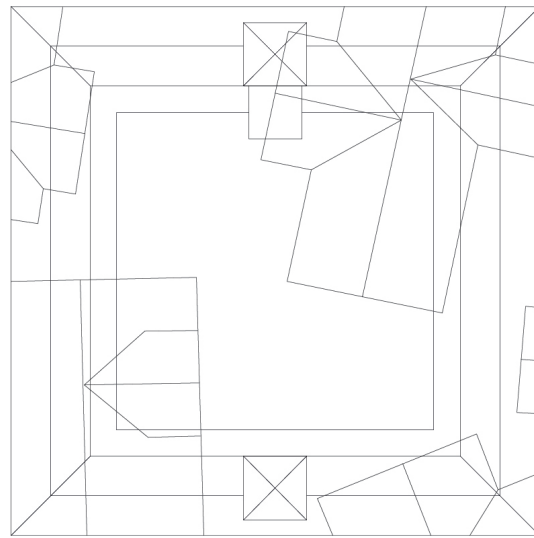
an enclosed space highlight movement upwards

whole structure meeting the ground

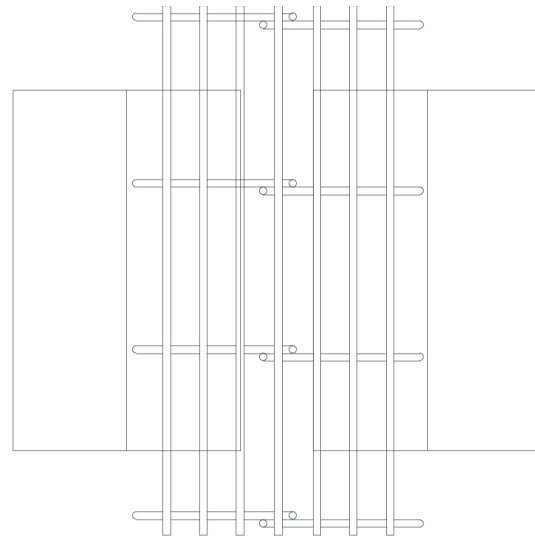
reconfiguration



5 m, 1:100



Village + Bath house – irregular structure, a sheltered in-between, focusing on the common, volumes in different sizes



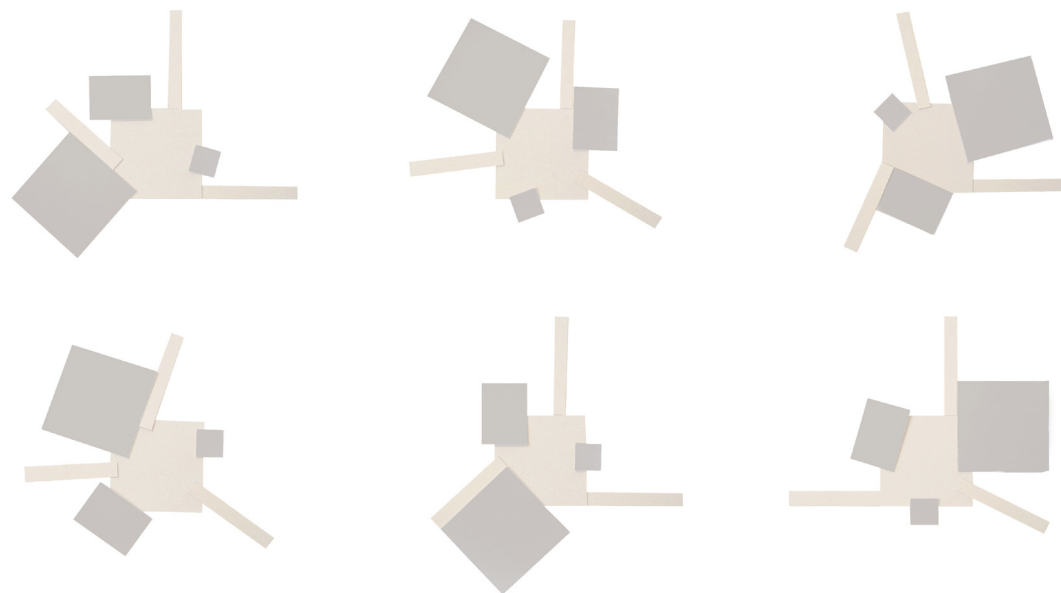
Drying rack + Fishing cabin – a connecting structure, framework that can adapt, smaller in-between spaces

→ brought into the toolbox

Focusing on overall structures, how facades and plans are composed and relates to each other, the method is using the fact that recognizable shapes of structures triggers recognition and familiarity within in the context.

Learning from how different needs have resulted in site-specific functions, the toolbox can now be seen to use the knowledge within the structures of the character. Reading their figures and interpreting what they are saying, the additional structures are results of inherent symbols, they become carrier of narratives from the past and the present.

Layering and using the plans are not as explored as the facades, but they are used to create an overall structure, bringing the structures together to create a whole.



Sketches – searching for a reconfiguration of the characters and overall plan for bringing structures together, how they can interact and be experienced over time, a structure that can be adapted for different grounds and functions.

Activate

program as tool

With the intention of bringing the characters together, the idea to also create a place to gather the islanders and invite visitor, could be seen as a 'culture house'. A complex that would tell a story about the place in its expression, but also function as a space where stories can continue to be told.

Similar functions can be seen in the context, both in the past and the present. Such as the church, the "ljugarbänk" (a bench were you gossip), the parcs that came with the seaside resort tradition, the outdoor theatre or dance-floor, seen specifically today at "Brännö brygga".

The program is now used as a tool to activate the structures, which began to be formulated in the last step, to test and showcase their different ways of being used and how it may change over time. Linking back to how the characters have been seen to function in the aspect of activity and time.

a place to gather

Looking at the characters, different functions are represented and as stated within the last method, some of them can be seen as having the same traits. These are now addressed ones again to let the structures activity and function act in harmony with their expression.

Village and bath house – can become an exhibition hall or a space to be used in different ways, where the focus is inward, towards the common.

Drying rack and fishing cabin – a framework that can open up, become a restaurant, host ceremonies, with an inherent structure that allows hanging and attachments of decorations or features.

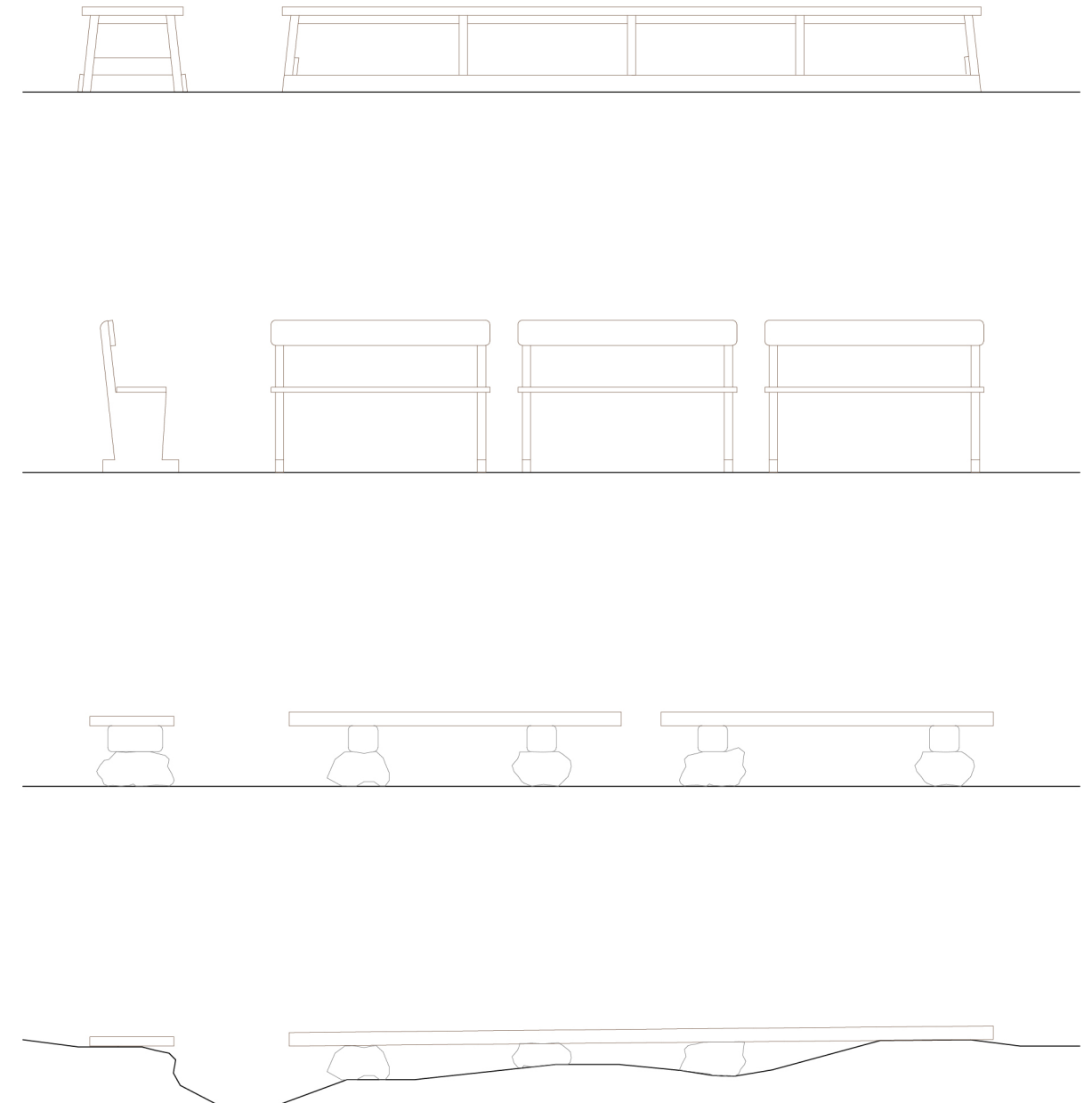
Lighthouse and navigation mark – with the function of drawing attention and stand tall, the structure is activated as a combined outdoor stage and lookout tower.



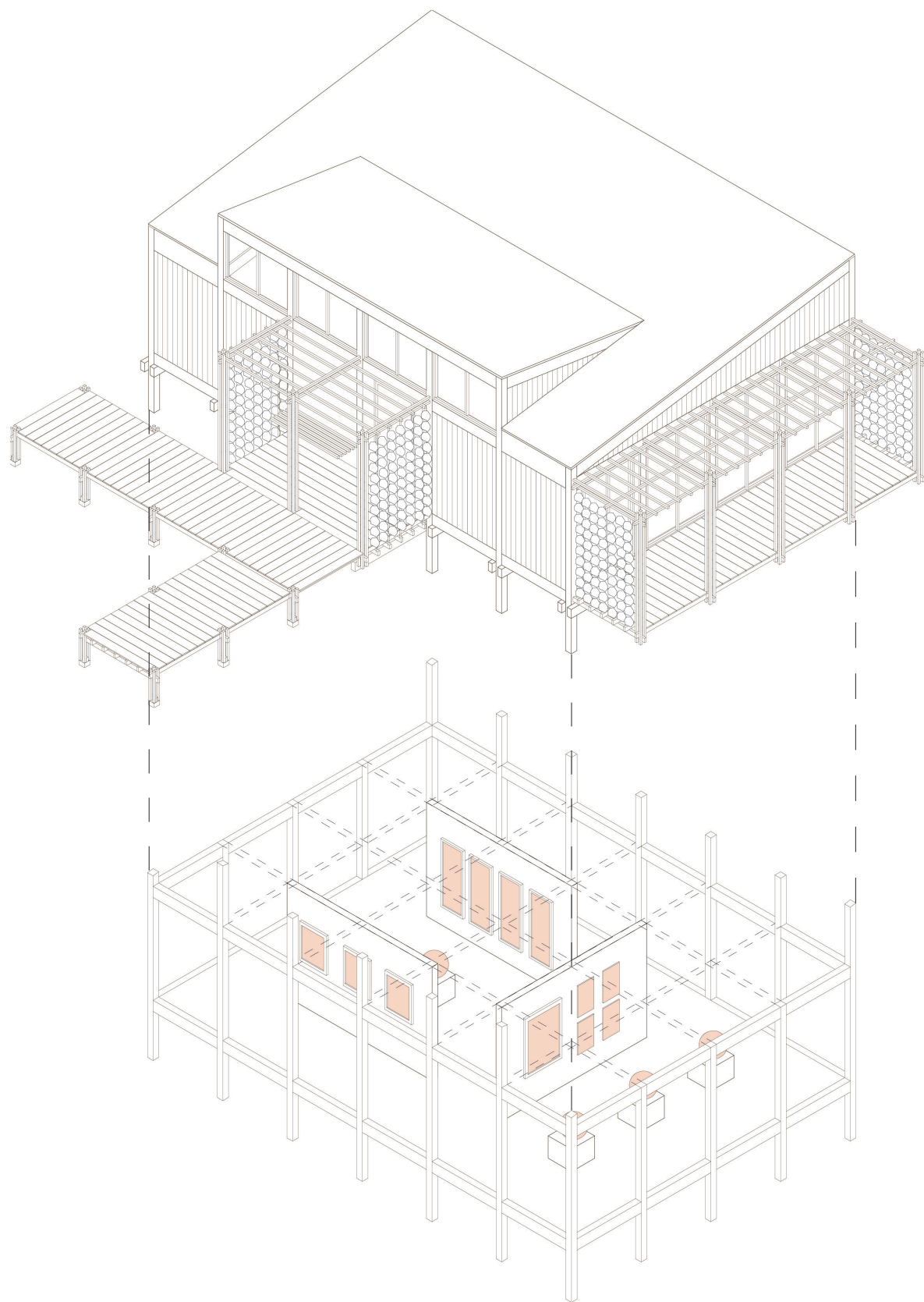
fig. 21 (left) Fisherman sitting on a bench with fishing cabin behind (1954) (image: Bohuslän museum)

fig. 22 (middle) Music pavilion in bath house parc (1900) (image: Bohuslän museum)

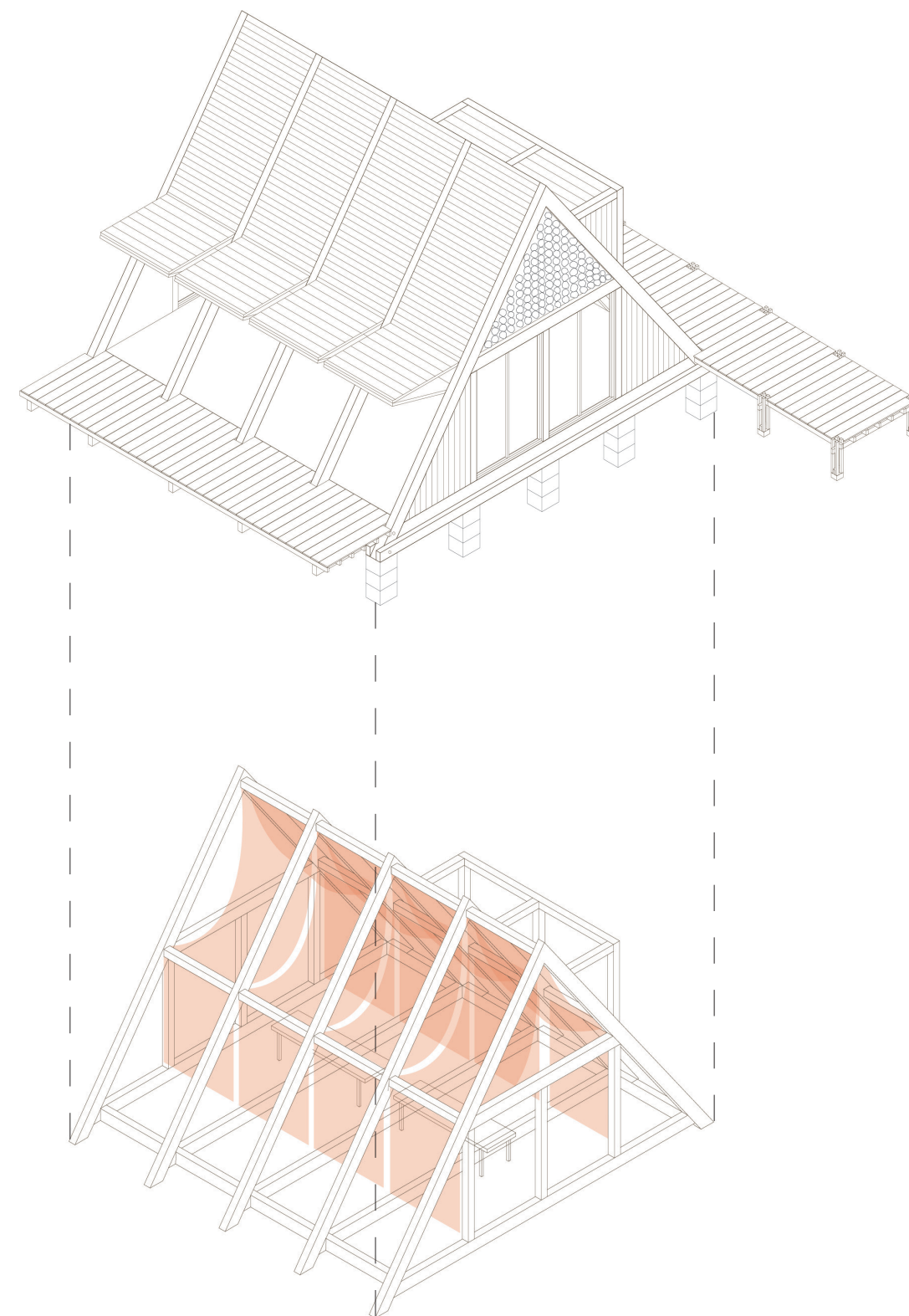
fig. (right) Brännö brygga (2021) (author's own photo)



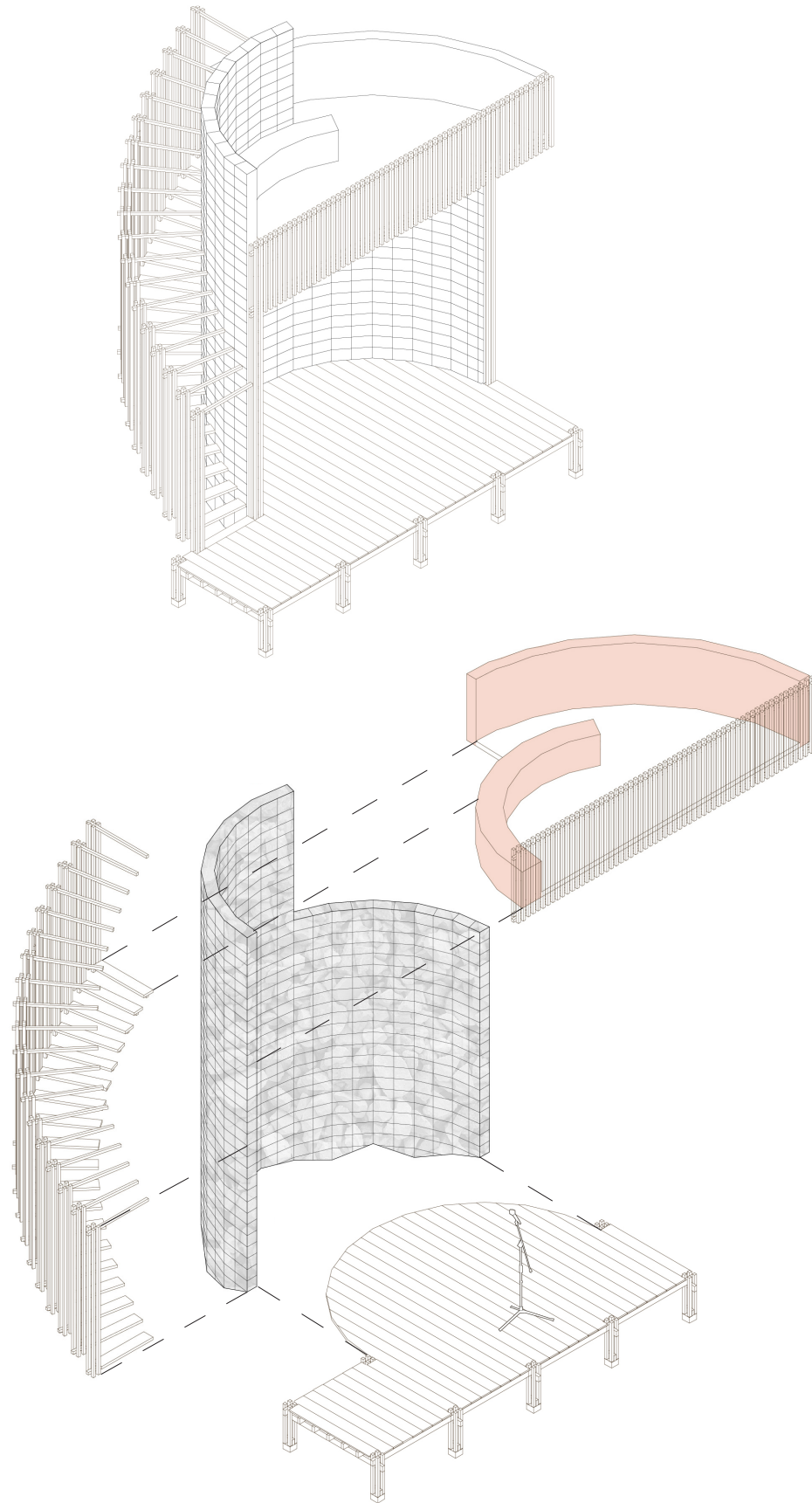
Drawings made of "ljugarbänkar" found in the situation



Village + bath house – a volume that take a step back from the bridge, connected with a decorative entrance made of stones, and in a similar way, frames a view. The attention is focus inwards towards the common, could function as an exhibition hall for example.



Drying rack + fishing cabin – can open up, take in the surrounding or be closed to protect from the wind. Inside could ceremonies or a dining take place, being able to change the space from within. The triangle contains stone in front of the window, creating a play of light.



→ *brought into toolbox*

This method is focused on how a program can be used to highlight the way that structures are activated and, in that notion, also address that functionality is a part of the narratives within the characters.

It is about how use changes over time and how the inherent structure allows an existing narrative to be emphasized. How functions can be framed and highlighted, like being able to decorate a dining with fabric, such as drying racks, where nets became a soft act in the rough landscape.

Bringing the structures together, their interactions with each other and with the visitors would become a narrative in itself. It will be about what is created within the structures, which hopefully could fulfill the requirements set by different expressions.

ON SITE



A place to gather

using the toolbox

The translations methods are now developed and tested, formulated into different ways of using the archive. The different outcomes, the results of the translations methods, can be seen as a toolbox, including ways of relating to the place narrative while designing, addressing different scales.

Using the toolbox could result in different design-proposals.. In the final chapter, one of many ways to use the toolbox is formulated, to test the potential of the developed methods.

A site is now introduced where the toolbox is used, creating an overall experience where structures and additions could function as a building. The program is to be seen as a place to gather people, to arrange events, concerts, theaters, dance performances, hold ceremonies etc. It should be an accessible building for everyone, available for the public.

site as testbed

The design proposal should in this matter be seen as a result of previous steps taken within the process and the proposed site is therefore only used as a testbed.

Brännö is chosen as the island to locate the project, because of its closeness to both the other islands and to the mainland. Also, there is a tradition of hosting cultural events on the island, "Brännö Brygga" is for example an outside stage and dancefloor located southeast on the island, a place known from being mentioned in a song about the archipelago.

Getting to the project location, one must walk through the built environment and landscape, experience the characters before reaching the complex, situated along an existing path toward the nature reserve, Galterö.

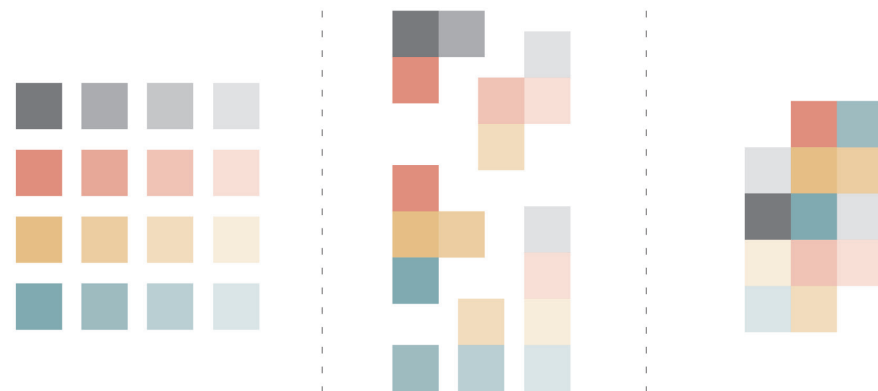
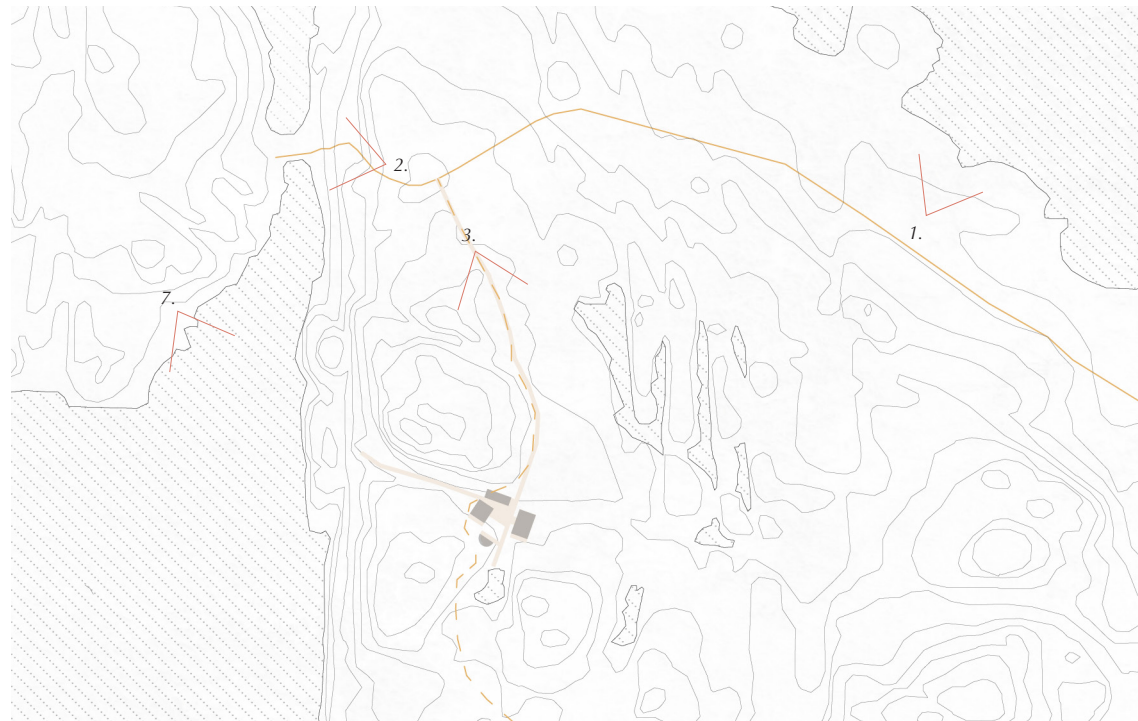


Diagram showing the concept of how the archive (left), has been translated into a toolbox of result (middle) and will now be used to create a new whole (right)



Brännö – located in southern archipelago



Siteplan – An existing path is extended with the bridge, placing the complex to be slightly hidden, possible to just pass by.

100 m, 1:3 000 ▲ N



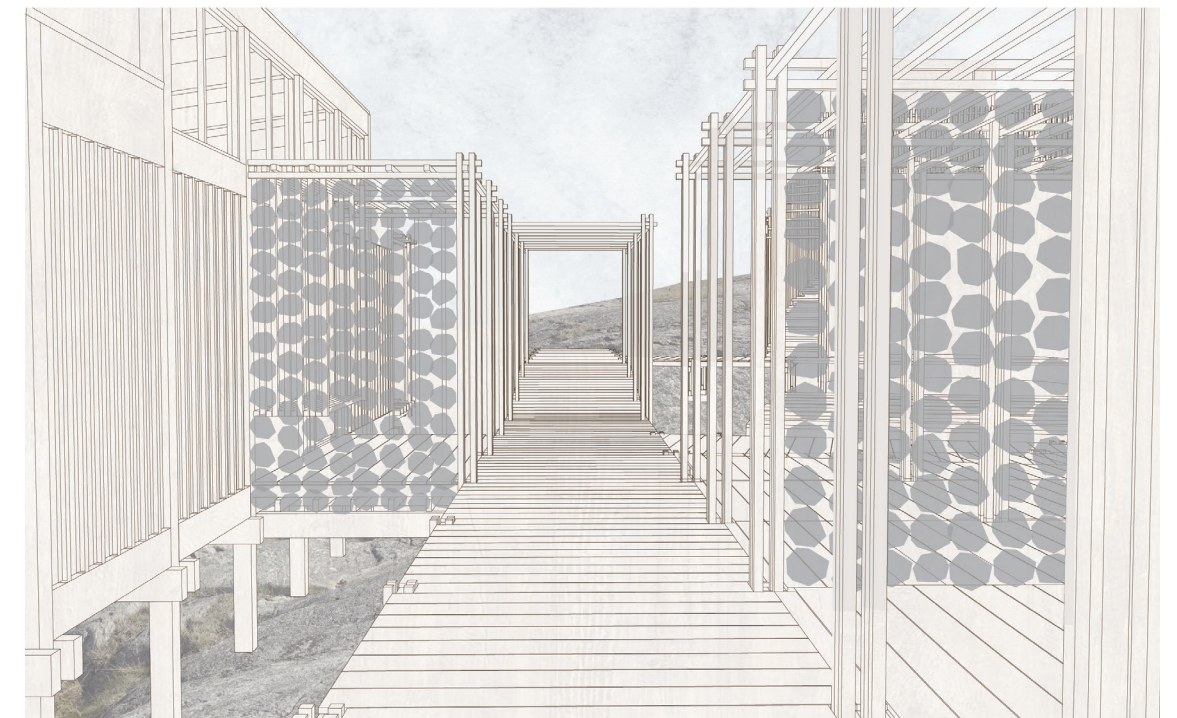
Perspective 1 – Walking in the landscape, reeds moves in the wind, in contrast to the solid rocks.



Perspective 2 – Looking towards the nature reserve Galterö, a place where sheep may accompany you.



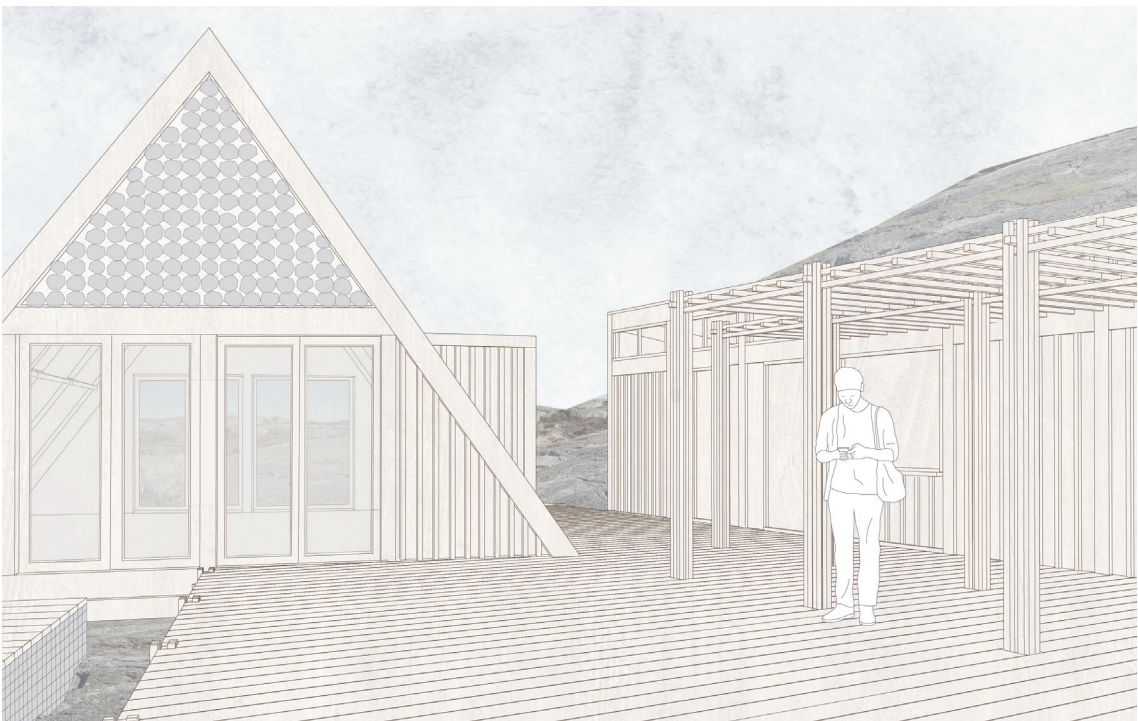
Perspective 3 – Taking steps out on the bridge, with framed views and seating, an accessible path approaching the landscape.



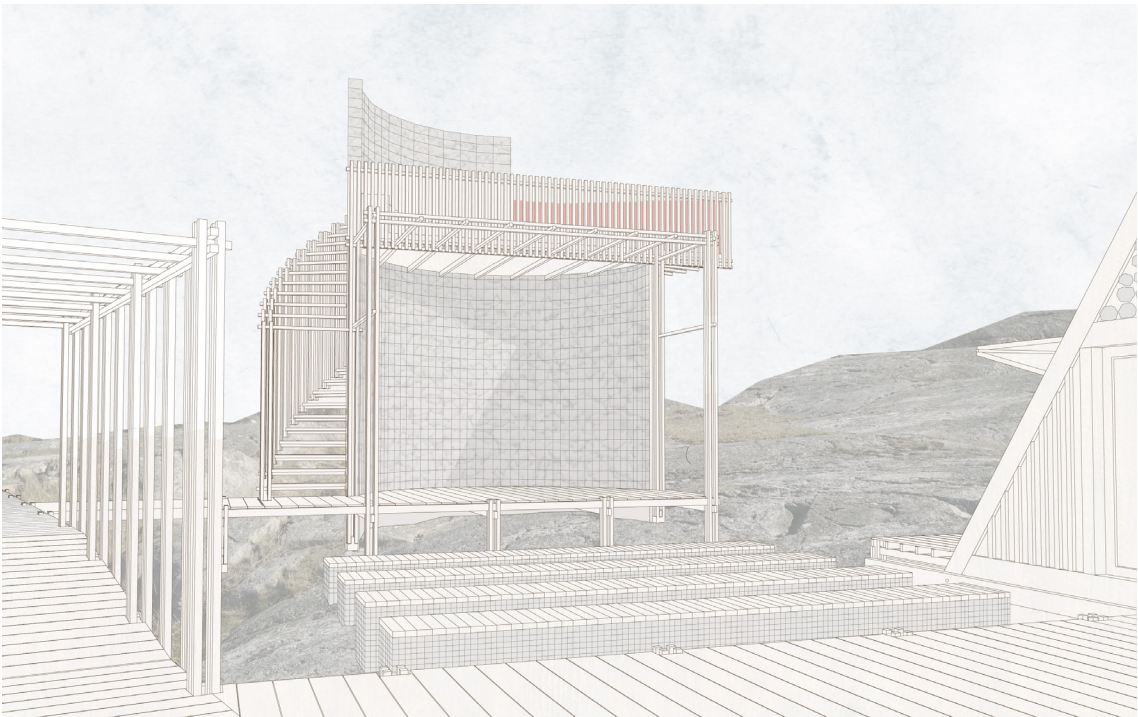
Perspective 4 – Decorative entrances meet you, gradually opening the place up. (For position, see p. 74)



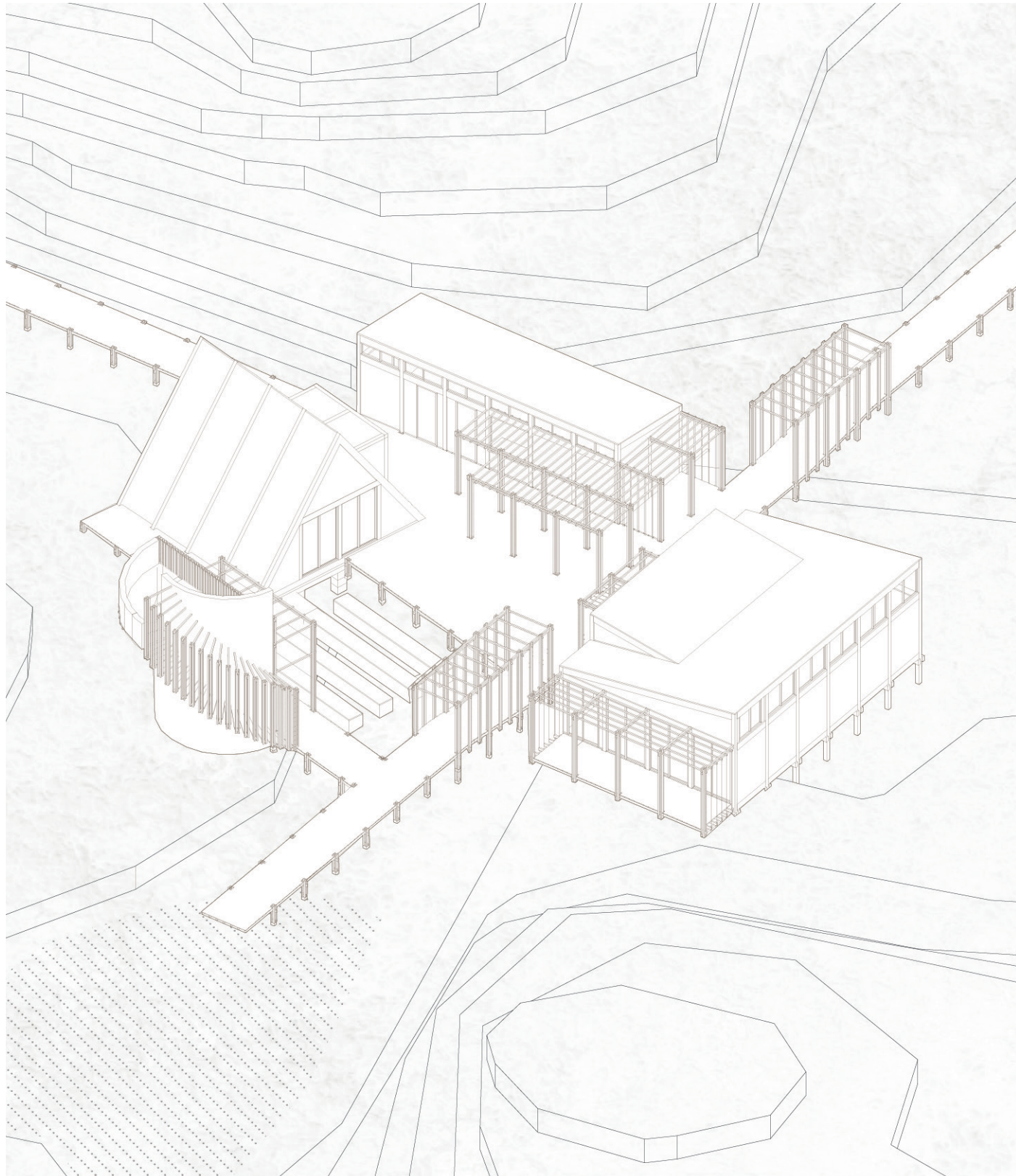
Plan 1:200 – height curves 1 m. Reaching the complex, the dining, exhibition hall and stage/tower are here gathered, with an additional structure for facilities such as toilets, kitchen and storage. The structures are places according to knowledge gained from the characters, and an irregular, sheltered space outside is created. The exhibition hall is located a bit with a distance, meeting the path with entrances, it is a more defines in-between space, found between the dining and kitchen, and the stage is more separate, standing a bit higher.



Perspective 5 – The in-between space and dining, that can open up or be sheltered, the stones in the gable talks to the rocks on similar height.



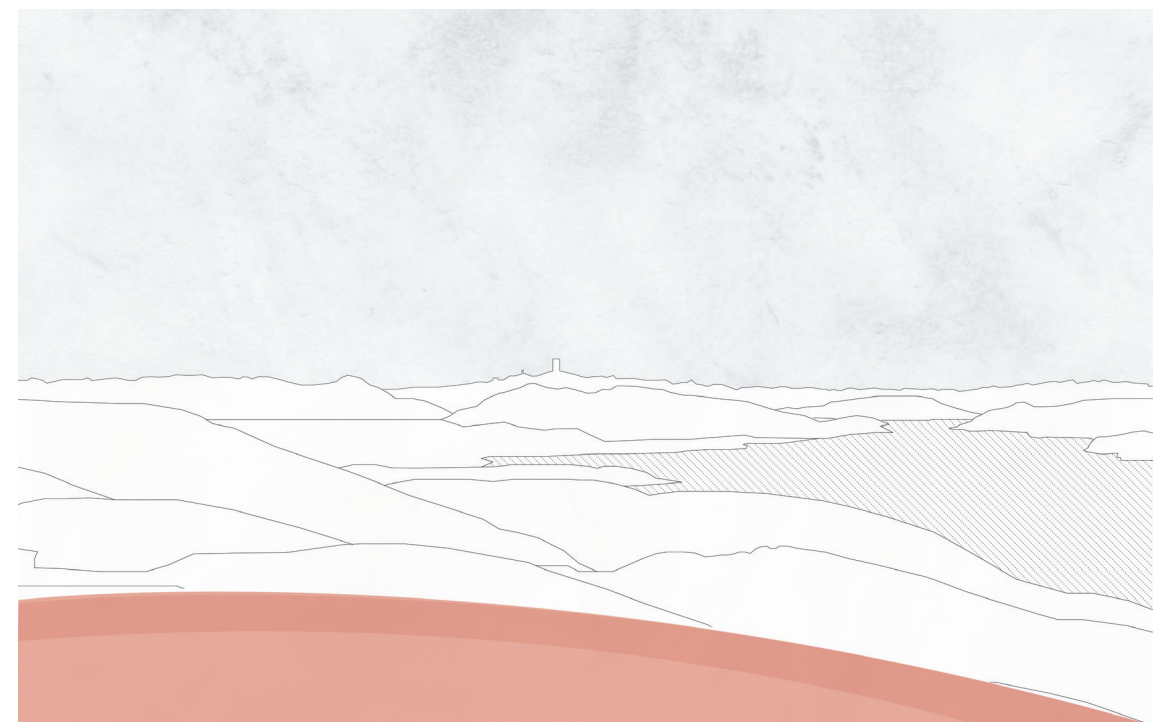
Perspective 6 – Looking towards the stage, experienced in similar materiality as ground, benches in front are constructed in similar way.



Isometric – The complex seen in a bird's eye view, the idea is that it could be extended, adapted and function for different needs, using and developing the toolbox and continue to expand on the place narrative.



Perspective 7 – Seen from accross the water, forms that diverge from the organic lines of the landscape. (For position, see p. 72)



Perspective 8 – Standing on top of the tower, a conversation has been initiated with existing characters. (For position, see p. 74)



Reflection

In the project, I've hold on to the thought of this being an iterative process, where the outcome is a reslut of the several steps being taken, in the journey of getting to know the place but also in process of using the gained knowledge while designing. The context has been the backdrop and driving force, leading me forward to constantly iterate an outcome to the question of what a place is and can be.

My intention has been to highlight the site-specific characteristics or phenomena that I've considered to be special and remarkable, the impressions that caught my attention. It is obvious that I haven't captured the full complexity of this place in either the archive or the design proposal, but it wasn't my goal either. My aim has been to showcase and develop ways where the context is used as an anchor during the whole process of designing, not only as a point of departure or placeholder in the end. The context is to be seen as dynamic, with many layers ready to be discovered.

The project is divided into different chapters, where *mapping* and *translation* are in focus. Their connection is the *archive*, how it is built and how it is used. *Character* as term is to be seen as a tool, in the process of linking forms to stories, understanding what is observed. The archive as a concept was helpful in the process of narrowing down what to look at in the context, the archive became a representation of the choosen narrative, linked to its characters. Also, in the process of creating simplified drawings and capture expressions in models, an understanding of and insights about how characters can be expressed in different ways became my great source of inspiration.

The methods developed in the translations chapter are meant to cover a width of aspects, such as materials and parts, to volumes and compositions, all addressing the question about how architecture can carry narratives about a place within thier structure. It is about relations to the surrounding, symbols that trigger an association, memories related to how they are experienced. The methods has been a play with forms and materials and how to address the context.

When it comes to how the design proposal on site corresponds to my different design studies, I think it is relevant to address the notion about and point out the fact that some aspects actually got lost in translation. My main struggle has been to tie everything togheter, when it comes to designstudies, program and site. Where I at the end focused more on larger structres with additions, rather than a composition of formulated situation, which was explored in previous steps. But I also think that it is the different translation methods developed, rather than the final outcome, that should be seen as my main focus and contribution in the discourse. Exploarations in covering all relevant aspects and levels where the aim is to relate to a place narrative.

For me, this project has been a very fun and interesting journey, it has resulted in new ways for me to observe situations, and I've developed tools to interpret and use gained knowledge. I belive that this way of working can result in structures that belong, additions that could take place in a story-telling tradition, highlighting how we encounter and share notions of our surrounding.

Bibliography

list of references

Jansson, T. (1965). *Pappan och havet*. Schildtits Förlags AB.

Norberg-Schulz, C. (1980) *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York : Rizzoli.

Imhof, L., Willenegger, E. (2019). *Analogue Oldnew Architecture*. Luzern: Quartz Verlag

Skoblar, M. (2020). Appropriation and drawing. *Drawing Matter*. <https://drawingmatter.org/appropriation-and-drawing/>

Miljacki, Ana, and Irene Wang, eds. (2014). *Under the Influence*. Cambridge: SA+P Press, MIT.

Labeledade, N. (n.d.) Teatro del Mondo, 1979-1981. *Frac Centre-Val de Loire*. https://www.frac-centre.fr/_en/art-and-architecture-collection/rossi-aldo/teatro-del-mondo-317.html?authID=163&ensembleID=528

Hicks, Stewart, and Allison Newmeyer, eds. (2020). *MAS Context 32: Character*. https://www.mascontext.com/pdf/MAS_Context_Issue32_CHARACTER.pdf

B, Walter. (1992). *The Task of the Translator* (Zorn, H, Trans.). London: Fontana Press. (Original work published 1923)

Utzon Center in Aalborg / Jørn Utzon. (2016). ArchEyes. <https://archeyes.com/utzon-center-aalborg-jorn-utzon/>

Mollard, M. (2020). *Green Corner Building in Muharraq, Bahrain by Studio Anne Holtrop*. The Architectural Review. <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/earth/green-corner-building-in-muharraq-bahrain-by-studio-anne-holtrop>

Ravenscroft, T. (2020). *Unparelld’arquitectes creates Emergency Scenery public performance backdrop in Olot*. <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/05/04/unparelldarquitectes-emergency-scenery-olot-spain-architecture/>

Corner, J. (2011). The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention. In D. M., K.R & P.C. eds. *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation* (pp. 89-101). John Wiley & Sons.

Andersson, S. (Ed.). (1983). *Styrö från istid till nutid*. Göteborg arkeologiska museum.

Fyr. (n.d.) In *fyrwiki*. <https://fyr.org/wiki/index.php/Fyr>

Sjömärke. (n.d.) In *fyrwiki*. <https://fyr.org/wiki/index.php/Sj%C3%B6m%C3%A4rke>

Bohusläns museum. (n.d.) *Bohusläns byggnadstradition*. <https://www.bohuslansmuseum.se/bohuslans-byggnadstradition/>

Douglas, C. (2009, December 02). *Operative Drawing I: Miralles*. Diffusive Agency. <https://diffusive.wordpress.com/2009/12/02/operative-drawing-i-miralles/>

image source

Figure 1. Aldo Rossi, Teatro del Mondo, Venice, Italy, (1979). [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/147316538@N02/35670166543>

Figure 2. Aldo Rossi, Self-portrait in front of the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, ‘To Maurizio Diton’, (1992). Felt pen on paper, 208 × 149 mm. DMC 3013. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://drawingmatter.org/appropriation-and-drawing/>

Figure 3. Louise Nevelson, Black Wall (1959). Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1962. © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2020. Photo ©Tate. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/louise-nevelson-1696>

Figure 4. Jørn Utzon + Kim Utzon, Utzon Center, Århus, Denmark (2008). Photo © Rasmus Hjortshøj. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://utzoncenter.dk/en/content/press-6156>

Figure 5. Anne Holtorp, model for Green Corner Building, in gypsum and white sand (2018). Photo © Studio Anne Holtrop. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://pinupmagazine.org/articles/studio-anne-holtrop-in-the-desert-bahrain-by-shumi-bose>

Figure 6. Studio Anne Holtorp, from the Casting and Cutting exhibition at the Shaikh Ebrahim Center in Muharraq (2018–19). Photo © Studio Anne Holtrop. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://pinupmagazine.org/articles/studio-anne-holtrop-in-the-desert-bahrain-by-shumi-bose>

Figure 7. Unparelld’arquitectes, Can Sau. Emergency Scenery, Olot, Spain, before (n.d.) Photo © Unparelld’arquitectes. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://www.archdaily.com/937358/can-sau-emergency-scener-unparelldarquitectes>

Figure 8. Unparelld’arquitectes, Can Sau. Emergency Scenery, Olot, Spain (2019) Photo © José Hevia. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://www.archdaily.com/937358/can-sau-emergency-scener-unparelldarquitectes>

Figure 9. Bladh, O / Bohusläns museum (1935). Flygfoto Oscar Bladh. N:o L 905. UMFA53263:4736. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011014334938/flygfoto-over-vrango>

Figure 10. Hallgren, H / Bohusläns museum (1908). Kallbadhus Styrö 4/9 08. UMFA53278:0971. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.org/011014338945/enligt-text-som-medfoljde-bilden-kallbadhus-styrso-4-9-08>

Figure 11. Andersson, B / Bohusläns museum (1991). Hamneskärs fyrplats och fyren Pater Noster - statligt byggnadsminne 2015. UMFA54531:0008. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.org/021016538950/hamneskars-fyrplats-och-fyren-pater-noster-statligt-byggnadsminne-2015>

Figure 12. Elsby, L / fyrwiki (2016). SaltskärsKäring. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://fyr.org/wiki/index.php/Fil:Saltsk%C3%A4rsK%C3%A4ring.jpg#file>

Figure 13. Skoglund, G / Bohusläns museum (1950-1960). UMFA55076:0665. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011014498735/umfa55076-0665>

Figure 14. Stefano Pujatti, STONED, Italy, (2019). Photo © Balsamini, M and Crovato, E. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/stefano-pujatti-stoned-elasticpa-01-03-19/>

Figure 15. TAAT, HALL03, (2015). [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://www.dezeen.com/2015/02/05/taat-wooden-set-interactive-theatre-slatted-solid-timber-installation-hall03/>

Figure 16. ETH Zurich, PUCP, Peru (2018). [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://www.archdaily.com/912216/the-archaeology-of-the-territory-pachamac-a-room-for-archaeologists-and-kids-eth-zurich-plus-pucp>

Figure 17. Nao Matsunaga, Only U (2019). Photo © Daniele Iodice. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://www.naomatsunaga.com/new-page-79/>

Figure 18. Jørn Utzon, Svaneke water tower, Bornholm, Denmark (1952). [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svaneke_water_tower

Figure 19. Atelier amont, Summer Pavilion (2010). Photo © Atelier amont. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://www.archaic-mag.com/summer-pavilion-atelier-amont/>

Figure 20. Enric Miralles, Calle Mercaders Apartment (1995). Drawing © Enric Miralles. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-25 from <https://diffusive.wordpress.com/2009/12/02/operative-drawing-i-miralles/>

Figure 21. Hedvall, A / Bohusläns museum (1954). Lysekil, Kornö, St. Kornö, Bryggan. UMFA53263:2623. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011014332557/noterat-pa-kortet-lysekil-korno-st-korno-bryggan>

Figure 22. unknown / Bohusläns museum (1900). Musikpavijongen med musiker, i Badhusparken, snett bakom Societetshuset. UMFA53247:0281. [Image]. Retrieved 2021-05-09 from <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011014326387/umfa53247-0281>

Joséphine Rapp Thomas
Master's Thesis Spring 2021

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

Master's Programme in Architecture and Urban Design
Matter Space Structure

Examiner: Daniel Norell
Supervisor: Naima Callenberg

