Memory and Myth: Storytelling as a Design Tool for a Youth Camp in Haida Gwaii

by

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ABSTRACT

Located at Swan Bay on the islands of Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands) in Pacific Northwestern British Columbia, this thesis uses the mode of 'storytelling' to design a cultural education camp for the Rediscovery Organization. In these camps, Haida youth learn about traditional Haida culture from the elders of Haida Gwaii.

This thesis explores the use of architecture to help re-establish Indigenous identity. I believe that by incorporating elements of Haida stories and Haida methods of storytelling, I can develop an architectural language that begins to speak to the Haida, as well as for them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Richard Kroeker, and my advisor, Christine Macy, for their invaluable contributions to this thesis. It was an honour to learn from you both.

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Haw'aa

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Storytelling in Haida Culture

North America is home to a vast array of unique Indigenous cultures, each containing their own rich repository of myths and traditions borne out of centuries of living within and learning from their respective environments. Nowhere is this more prevalent than with the Haida of the Pacific Northwest. Balanced between a tempestuous sea and a towering forest of cedar, spruce, fir and hemlock (fig.1), the culture of the Haida is steeped in this mythic landscape. Upon visiting Haida Gwaii, one can understand the image conjured by Bill Reid's description of the power of Haida totem poles:

> Perhaps they told more - a story of little people, few in scattered
> numbers, in a huge dark world of enormous forests of absurdly
> large trees, and stormy coasts and wild waters beyond, where
> brief cool summers gave way forever to long, black winters,
> and families round their fires, no matter how long their lineages,
> needed much assurance of their greatness.[1]

As in many Indigenous cultures, stories are a primary element of Haida identity. Stories and storytelling are the means by which the Haida understand the world and their place in it, as well as how this knowledge is passed from generation to generation. In this the Haida are not alone. In their book 'Storytelling: Process and Practice,' authors Norma Livo and Sandra Reitz describe stories as structural devices, frameworks upon which people - or groups of people - can organize information and ideas.[2] Reitz and Livo propose that a culture's stories, or oral literature, are the collective creation of the group. Through stories, a culture can begin to "represent and re-create their shared cosmology or model for how the universe works."[3] The conception of stories as a framework, upon which data can be sorted and arranged, enables cultures to establish cultural archetypes, defined as "models, prototypes, or patterns," which can be found in the collective memories of the people, past and present.[4] Because cultural stories are owned by the collective and not the individual, they are highly adaptable, able to shift and adjust to constantly

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[1] Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, *Solitary Raven: The Essential Writings of Bill Reid* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2000), 100.

[2] Norma Livo and Sandra Reitz, *Storytelling: Process and Practice* (Littleton: Libraries Unlimited, 1986), 2.
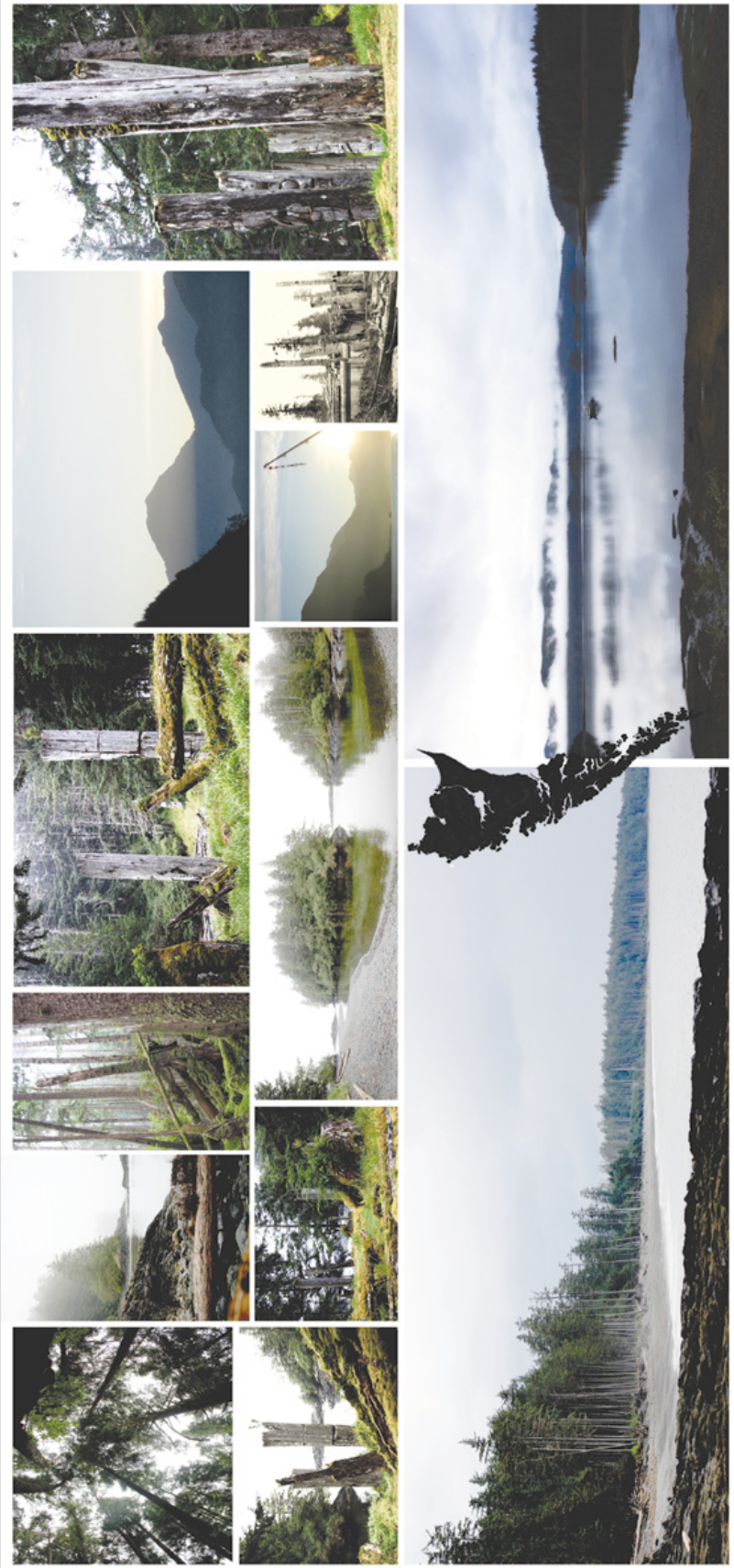
[3] Ibid., 14.

[4] Ibid., 15.

Fig. 1: The mythic landscape of Haida Gwaii.

changing world views.[5] As a result, stories, specifically oral stories, are incredibly durable. Their ability to adapt to a shifting cultural landscape ensures their survival, since the wisdom they can impart is always relevant.

As a traditionally oral culture, the Haida possessed no written language. Instead, their stories could be found in their carving, weaving and painting, literally embedded in the material culture (fig.2). Stories could also be told through elaborate songs, dances and poems, performed most often (but not exclusively) during the winter, when the weather forced the people into their homes to wait out the violent storms that swept up the coast.[6]

The ways in which storytelling imbued every aspect of their lives ideally situated the Haida to exploit stories and storytelling as tools for conceptualizing their surroundings and passing on that knowledge. It is very likely this did not happen simply by chance. In his book, *Dancing With a Ghost*, Rupert Ross states:

> If I have one strong conviction about Native people in traditional survival times, it is that they lived **in their minds** to a much greater extent than we ever imagined. At the same time, those minds were required to operate in a fashion which we seldom employ.[7]

Ross argues that, for hunter-gatherer people - which the Haida could be considered - survival was dependent upon ensuring that you were not only in the right place to harvest whatever resource you were after, but also that you were there at the right time.[8] For the Haida, this could mean knowing when and where the salmon were running, or when a particular group of spruce trees would yield the best roots for weaving. Such knowledge was the result of close observation of innummerable environmental variables. Given enough time and attention, it would be possible to discern patterns within those variables, which could then be overlaid upon the highly detailed mental maps a person develops in a lifetime of living in one place. This mental map, according to Ross, can be considered "the

5   Ibid., 18.

6   George MacDonald, *Haida Monumental Art: Villages of the Queen Charlotte Islands* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), 2.

7   Rupert Ross, *Dancing With A Ghost: Exploring Indian Reality* (Markham: Octopus Publishing, 1992), 69.
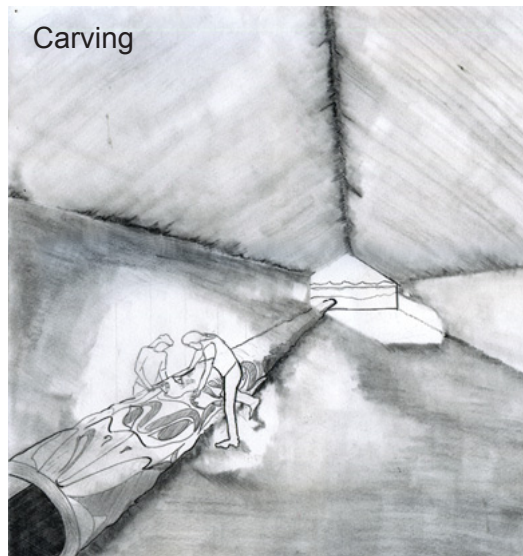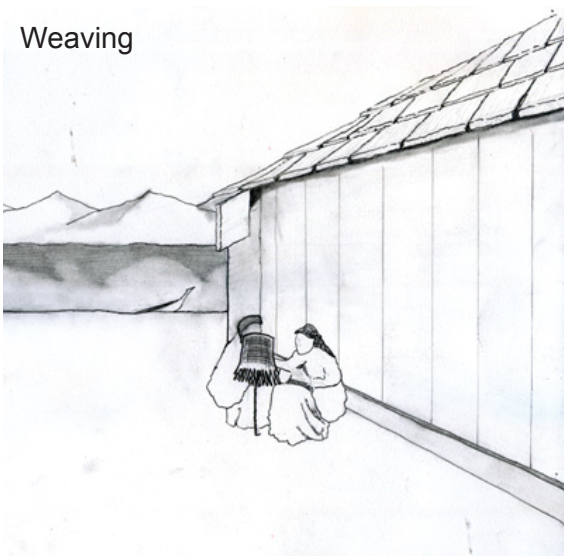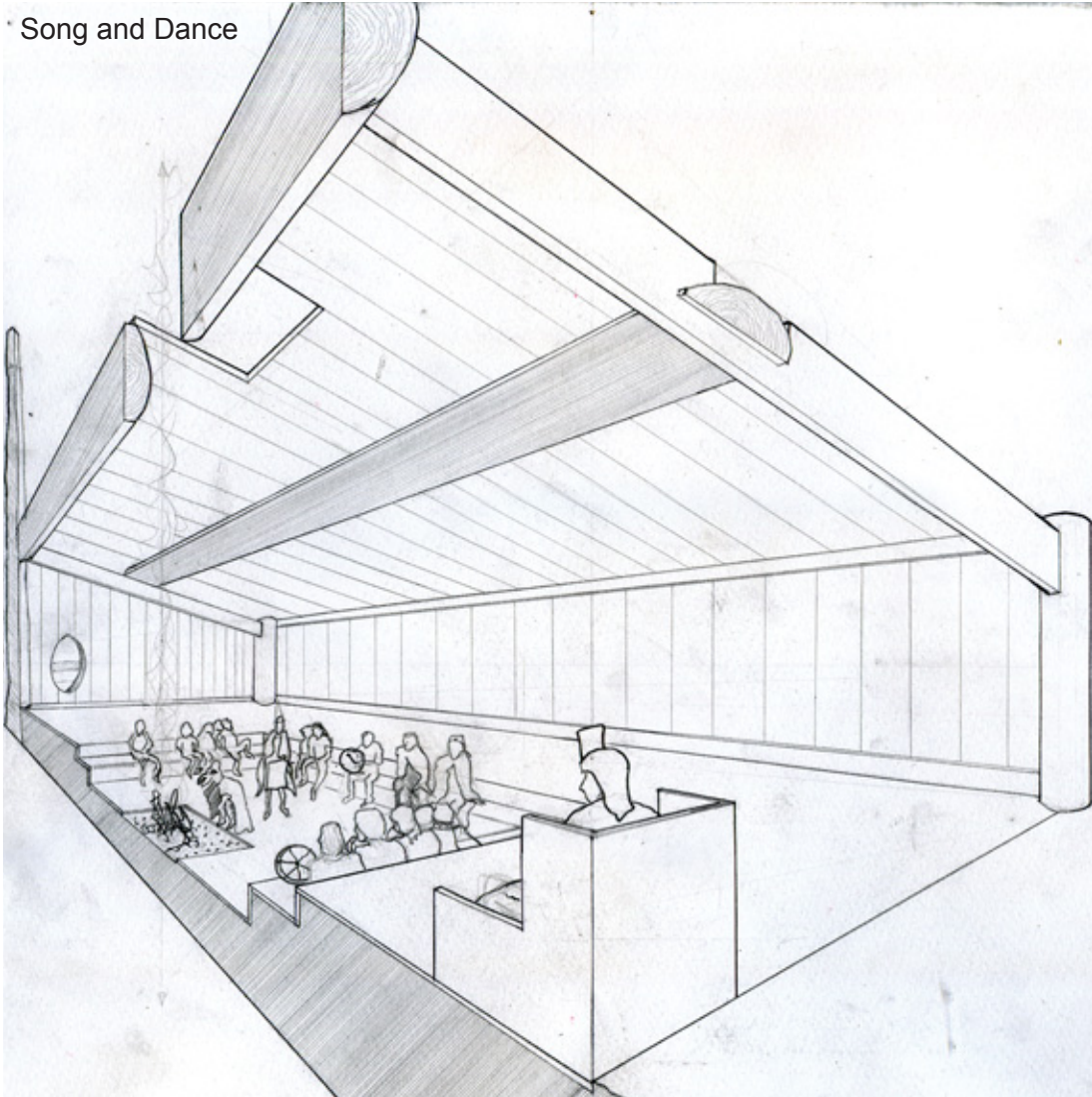
8   Ibid., 70.

Song and Dance

Weaving

Carving

Fig.2: Traditional Haida methods of storytelling.

spiritual plane" described by many hunter-gatherer cultures.[9] Ross asserts that "at every step, the task is to collect all observations, read all patterns, sift through all experiences and rank all possibilities in order of likelihood. In short, it is a task of mental anticipation"[10] This ability to project themselves into their environments through this spiritual plane, and to overlay patterns based on years of memory and experience, gave hunter-gatherers the ability to make highly accurate predictions about their surroundings, enabling them to experience the sights, smells, tastes and feelings of a place without having to physically go there (fig.3). Taken further, this meant that a hunter-gatherer could not only imagine himself in such an environment, he could also imagine himself as elements within that environment; in essence he could be hunter and quarry simultaneously, reading the signs available to both, sensing fully what each sensed.[11] This treatment of the hunter-gatherer mentality gives a greater insight into the spirituality of certain Indigenous groups, such as the Haida. We can see now that when they describe the idea of all things having a spirit, they do not mean little cartoon ghosts that live within objects, but that since we can imagine *ourselves* within things, they can speak to us, can be felt, and therefore have spirit.

Given this worldview, we can see how stories very directly shape the Haida conception of reality and their cultural identity. Firstly, as an example of the structural devices described by Livo and Reitz, stories are the vehicles of pattern-thought necessary to organize seemingly unrelated environmental variables into a coherent pattern. As repositories of cultural archetypes, they are also the means by which the spiritual plane can be experienced collectively: as each person can project themselves into the story being told, and share their experiences with other members of the group.

The use of stories to pass knowledge from one generation to the next is an elegant solution. In an environment where survival depends on the development of keen observational skills, it is best to begin practicing those skills as early as possible. Ross observes:

> The ability to make accurate predictions rest on the accumulation of individual memory, observation and pattern-thought skills. It does not seem to permit teaching, as we know it. Instead, it requires that one watch, and watch again, as the only way to build up a store of memory images, to develop perception skills and a
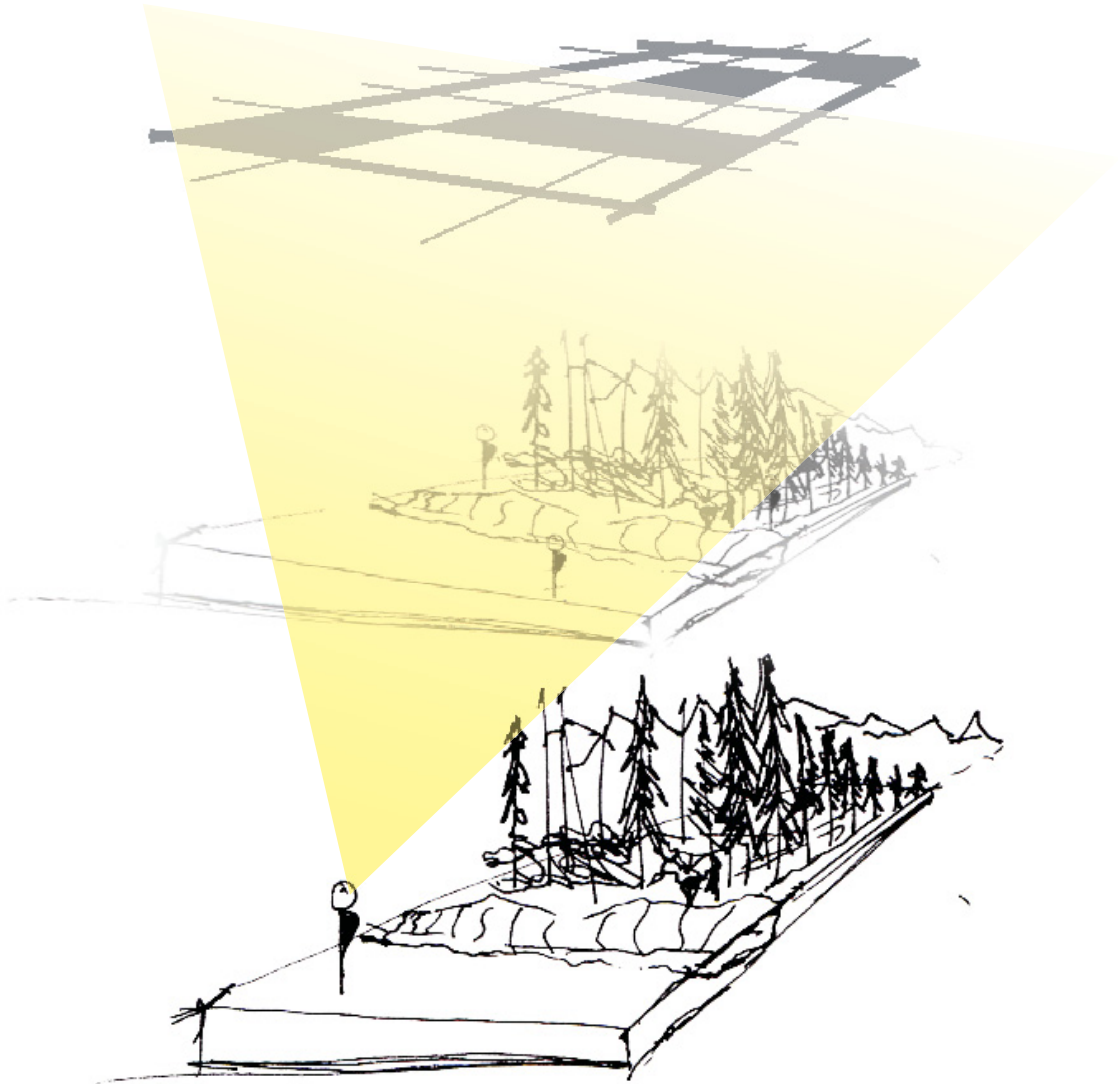
9   Ibid., 68.

10   Ibid., 77.

11   Ibid., 81.

Fig. 3: Diagram showing my understanding of the 'pattern-thought concept'. A mental projection of a particular landscape is projected in the mind of the viewer, and then overlaid with a patchwork of collected experiences.

capacity for thinking in terms of pattern correspondence. What
had to be learned could not be expressed easily in words.[12]

Stories, as frameworks for the patterns that preceding generations have elucidated from nature, allow children to begin developing their own pattern-thought processes very early in their lives (fig.4). Since the patterns and lessons are not explicit, they must be discerned. In other words, in much the same way a child watches an elder clean a fish or build a fire, he or she can experience a story about the the spirits of the forest. In both cases, information is gathered through careful observation, the fruits of which are added to the child's mental framework, and the *process* of pattern recognition is reinforced.

The practical value of stories to Indigenous cultures is only part of the tale. The stories of the Haida are treasures not only for them, but for all human beings. In his book, *The Tree of Meaning: Thirteen Talks*, Robert Bringhurst proposes that the poetry of Haida Gwaii, as recalled by the poets Sgaay of Qquuna Qiighawaay and Ghandl of Qayahl Llaanas, are every bit as beautiful as more celebrated oral masterpieces such as the Iliad, Odyssey, or Beowulf.[13] Indeed, "fools can ride in limousines, and Sokrates and Ghandi can walk naked, or the other way around. And Ghandl of the Qayahl Llaanas can make a poem that is as complex and as beautiful as a string quartet by Mozart, and the other way around."[14] Sadly, these works and their potential contribution to Canadian literature has gone largely unnoticed by the academic community. According to Bringhurst, the Indigenous literatures of North America have been ignored or "ghettoized" within academic circles.[15] While we celebrate classical examples of literature from abroad, we remain largely oblivious to the wealth of stories in our own backyard.

European Contact

While the reasons for this academic relegation may not be clear, the marginalization of Haida literature highlights a larger, and far more distressing fact: for many Indigenous cultures, including the Haida, contact with Europeans was culturally devastating.

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12 Ibid., 81.

13 Robert Bringhurst, *The Tree of Meaning: Thirteen Talks* (Kentville: Gaspereau Press, 1998), 29.

14 Ibid., 22.

15 Ibid., 29.

gyaan.uu xuyaa qa7yaalas gyaan ´laa ts´aanuuradaas. 7ising qigwaay 7angra ´laa sk´ast´aasii gyaan 7angra randlaay ´laa cutl´lgaangaasii ´laaragi ´ll gudang- gaangaasii gam 7waa gwii ridraangaas- ii tllgaay rii ´laa k´ujuus gyaan hlgaa k´ilgaanggaasii. gyaan.uu 7agang ´laa 7is ruganxagaas. "hll cutl´aasga," han ´laa suus gyaan hlk´inxagi ´laa qa7ihls. gyaan ´ll hlgadaayaas jaadaa dajingra

Then Raven and his mother left, they say. After they had walked along for a while, they say they found some furbearing ani- mals at the end of the trail across the point [Rose Spit]. His mother skinned them and she sewed them together. Then she stretched it and when she had scraped it, she leaned it up [to dry]. It dried and they say she put it around her son's shoulders. He was the future nang kilsdlaas, they say.

Fig.4: Excerpt from 'Raven Who Kept Walking' Narrated by Sgaay of Qquuna Qiighawaay. The passage not only tells a story about Raven and his mother, it also shares practical information about the preparation of animal skins, and societal relationships. Found in John Swanton, *Skidegate Haida Myths and Histories* 1995.

Physically, new diseases such as smallpox swept through the population like wildfire, decimating entire villages. It is estimated that anywhere between three quarters and nine tenths of the Haida population of Haida Gwaii was lost to the ravages of smallpox between the spring and fall of 1862 (fig.5).[16] For any group, such a loss would be heart-rending, but for a people who relied on the stories and experiences of their ancestors for physical and spiritual survival, such a loss is beyond words. This loss was compounded by the systematic oppression of Haida culture through the enactment of Canadian government policies. On April 19, 1884, the Potlatch, the central ceremony of the Haida and many other First Nations of the Pacific coast, was banned by an act of Parliament.[17] Around the same time, the government began removing Haida children from their homes, sending them to residential schools with the hopes of "civilizing" them and stamping out any traces of their "heathen" culture.[18] The combined result of these tragedies was a severe degradation of Haida culture. Where once there was a rich tapestry, there is now a tattered rag, full of holes. After visiting the village of Sgaang Gwaii, which lost its entire population to disease, archaeologist and anthropologist Wilson Duff wrote,

> Little remains of the thriving community known to the early traders, and the territories of the Kunghit people are more deserted now than they have been for many centuries past... what was destroyed here was not just a few hundred individual human lives. Human beings must die anyway. It was something even more complex and even more human...what was destroyed was one more bright tile in the complicated and wonderful mosaic of man's achievement on earth. Mankind is the loser, we are the losers.[19]

Moving Haida Culture Forward

While much of the Haida way of life has been lost, fortunately some has prevailed. Recently, there have been attempts to re-establish Haida culture. Progress has been made in repatriating ancestors and artifacts from museums all over the world, while programs such as SHIP (Skidegate Haida Immersion Program) strive to preserve Haida language. At the same time artists such as Bill Reid and Robert Davidson have opened

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16 Reid and Bringhurst, *Solitary Raven,* 129.

17 Ibid., 83.

18 CBC News, "A History of Residential Schools in Canada." Last modified May 16, 2008. Accessed November 28, 2011. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-residential-schools.html.

19 Reid and Bringhurst, *Solitary Raven,* 127.
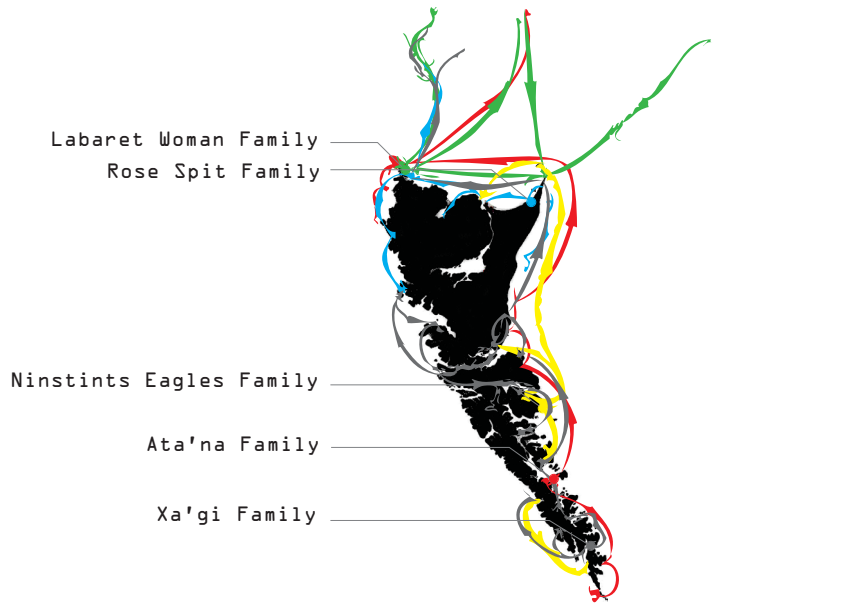
The Origin and Movement of Families on Haida Gwaii

Labaret Woman Family
Rose Spit Family
Ninstints Eagles Family
Ata'na Family
Xa'gi Family

Coastal Mountain Range Boundary

Yatze
Dadens
Yaku
Kiutsa
Tian

Kung
Yan
Masset
Kayang
Hiellan

Skidegate
Lina
Haina
Cumshewa
Kunhalas
Skedans
Tanu

Chaatl
Kaisun

Summer Camp
Winter Camp

S'Gaang Gwaii

Haida Villages
(Pre-Contact)

Coastal Mountain Range Boundary

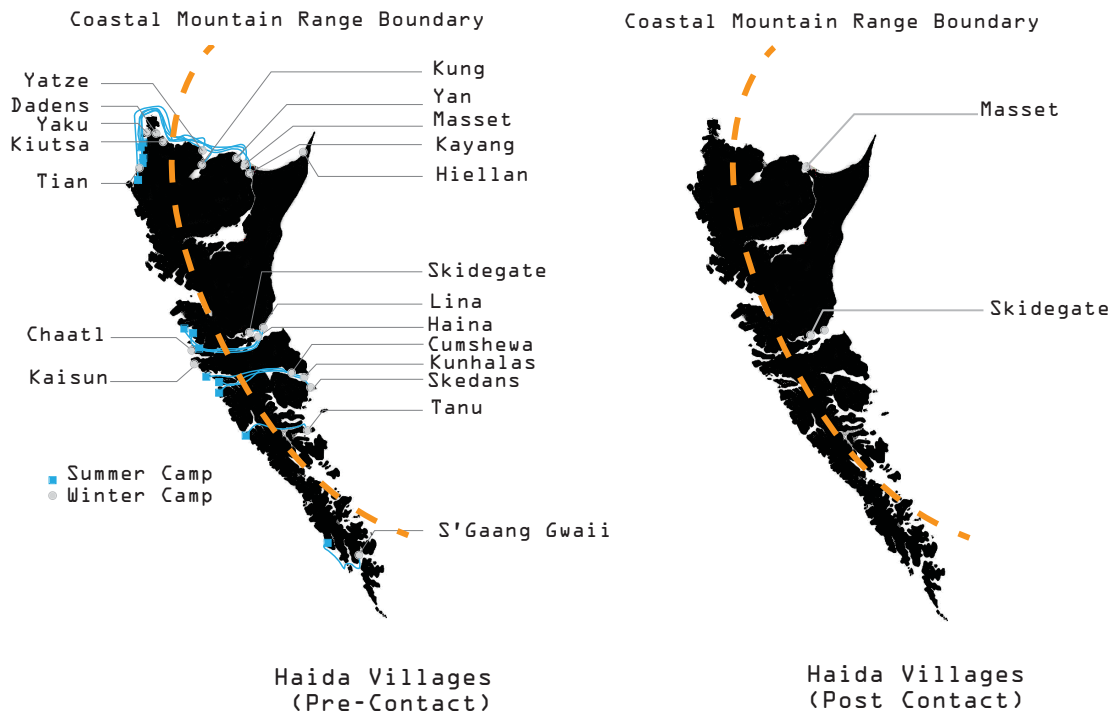Masset

Skidegate

Haida Villages
(Post Contact)

Fig.5: Diagram showing the proliferation of the original Haida families, and the results of European contact.

the door to understanding the art of their forebearers while exploring where to take it next. In 1978, the Rediscovery Program was launched with the goal of reconnecting the youth of Haida Gwaii to their past by tapping into the wealth of knowledge held by the remaining elders of Haida Gwaii.[20] The program has since expanded beyond Haida youth to include any who wish to learn about Haida culture (fig.6).

However, this is no easy task. With so much lost how can the Haida ever hope to re-establish a connection to the past? Some do not think it is possible. Haida artist Bill Reid has long asserted,

> Haida culture has just about reached the end of its string, I'm afraid. There are stong attempts to bring back something of the feeling of it, but these are based, as I've said many times, on memories of memories. Maybe something new will arise, but the old ways are pretty well gone.[21]

While at first this statement may seem fatalistic, I think it points towards a way of moving Haida culture forward. Rather than try to ignore or skip over the immediate history - immediate being from the present to first contact with Europeans - to create a snapshot of 'how things used to be,' perhaps the way forward is through acknowledging and possibly even integrating the historical relationship between the Haida and European influence into the larger narrative of Haida culture and history. This approach is one Reid himself seems to agree with. In subsequent writings, Reid has clarified his message: it is not that Haida culture is dead, but rather what Haida culture *used to be.* He goes on to say that we should by all means acknowledge the past, but that the way out of the "horrible morass" that the Haida are currently trapped in does not "follow the dust-covered pathways of the past."[22]

The idea of acknowledging the shared history of the Haida and European settlers as part of a strategy for moving Haida culture forward is explored in James Clifford's article, "Four Northwest Coast Museums." In the article, Clifford compares the approaches taken by four museums - The Royal British Columbia Museum, The UBC Museum of Anthropology, The Kwagiulth Museum and Cultural Centre, and the Umista Heritage Centre - towards the management and display of artifacts of the Indigenous Pacific Northwest

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20 The Rediscovery Program. Accessed November 28, 2011. www.rediscovery.org.

21 Reid and Bringhurst, *Solitary Raven,* 212.

22 Ibid., 186.

Yaal Kiignganggang by Robert Davidson.
Epoxy Coated Aluminum Sculpture 2004

Swan Bay Rediscovery
L'aanaa Dagang.a

A unique and enriching experience.

The new skills learned and experiences shared together last a lifetime.

Herb Jones teaches children Haida language as part of the SHIP program.
From Farah Nosh, "The Tyee" 2011

Swan Bay Rediscovery Program is a cultural camp where youth learn about Haida cultural skills and knowledge while acquiring new life skills, self-esteem and confidence.

HAIDA GWAII, CANADA

Laana Daagang.a. Swan Bay Redicovery Camp Brochure. http://www.swanbayrediscovery.ca/Newsletters/SBbrochure.a.pdf

Fig.6: Examples of the efforts being made to re-establish Haida culture.

(fig.7). This exploration also serves to compare the different ways the Indigenous/European dynamic has been explored, as well as how Indigenous cultures have begun to regain control of their own destiny, so they may begin to move forward again, on their own terms. One of the conclusions Clifford draws is that while each museum contributes, the 'right answer' cannot be found in any one approach. Instead, 'exchange and complementarity, rather than hierarchy," should guide the dynamic between culture and institution.[23] This dynamic, give/take relationship would be of great benefit to both European and Haida culture.

Clifford's discussion of museums highlights the potential for architecture to contribute to the Haida's cultural narrative. As we have seen, storytelling has played an integral role in the formation, propagation and reclamation of Haida culture. Therefore, if any modern attempts at Haida architecture are to be successful, the importance of narrative cannot be understated. This then raises the question: *what is the role of architectural narrative in conveying a sense of story in architecture?* How can a building evoke the primal elements of storytelling?

Architectural Narrative

The concept of architectural narrative is a difficult idea to define. Its close relationship to human experience, which by its nature is "an elusive and ambiguous sensibility," means that it is wrapped in many layers of subtlety and nuance. The most concise definition of this research I have uncovered so far is that of Lee Kimber:

> Architectural narrative implies a series of events or impressions of space that can be "read" through the sequence of experiencing a building. In practice this can lead to a manipulation of the user as the architect attempts sequence spaces through a careful construction of viewpoints and events.[24]

The idea that a space can be 'read' as one moves through it is a common theme found in writing on architectural narrative. The correlation to works of literature is often made literally, other times figuratively. In both cases, narrative is a method by which the author/

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23 James Clifford, "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. James Clifford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 139.

24 Lee Kimber, "Truth in Fiction: Storytelling and Architecture," (MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, School of Architecture, 2010), 2.
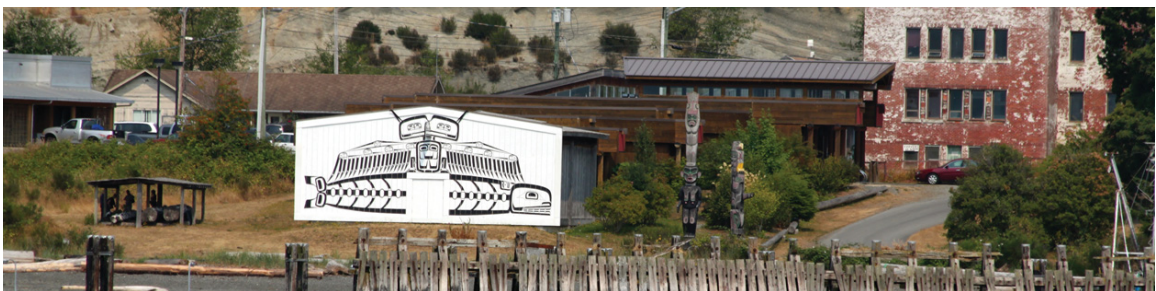
The UBC Museum of Anthropology. Vancouver, BC. Photograph by Alex R. Arthur, http://www.tribalartmagazine.com/pictures/lieu_expo_img/raw_786.jpg

The Royal British Columbia Museum. Victoria, BC. http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-s/01/8e/01/8b/front-entrace-to-the.jpg

Kwagiulth Museum and Cultural Centre. Quadra Island, BC. http://www.nuyumbalees.com/downloads/NCC-Exhibit-Guide.pdf

Umista Heritage Centre. Alert Bay, BC. http://v12.lscache6.c.bigcache.googleapis.com/static.panoramio.com/photos/original/42404632.jpg

Fig.7: The museums discussed in James Clifford's "Four Northwest Coast Museums".

architect may arrange particular parts, whether words, phrases, bricks or beams to create a conceptual whole.[25] Such an approach to architectural narrative often implies a linear progression through a space, where the user moves through a carefully constructed and choreographed sequence of spaces prescribed by the architect in order to evoke a particular experience. The idea that these spaces are 'read' implies that the experience is one primarily of the Mind and how it orders this "abstract realm of formal and spatial relations."[26]

Taken in this light, current narrative design seems to be largely concerned with abstractions of Space and procession in a very linear manner. There seems to be little consideration given to sensorial elements that also largely relate to the experience of a space. In essence, architectural narrative seeks to impact how spaces make us feel, without considering how the space literally feels, which directly impacts how it makes us feel. This paradox is can be imagined as a connected series of sterile white rooms, each housing an object or a view (fig.8). The severe limiting of our senses means that the only way to connect to the space is intellectually, through a 'reading' of architectural intent through our mind's eye.

I think such an academic treatment of architectural narrative does not fully exploit the design potential of such a powerful tool for creating Place. While *knowing* is a vital aspect of identifying with a particular location or structure, *feeling* is equally important. It is my contention that if architectural narrative were to incorporate elements of all five senses, it would be a much more powerful design tool. By connecting a narrative not only to our minds but also to all five senses, we may begin to develop an emotional reaction as well as an intellectual reaction to a space. Such a relationship is described by Marxist Antonio Gramsci as an "organic cohesion,' in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge; not mechanically, but in a way that is still alive."[27]

One example of such an approach can be found in the work of the architect Peter Zumthor. In his book, *Thinking Architecture*, Zumthor states "In order to design buildings

25 Sophia Psarra, *Architecture and Narrative: The Formation of Space and Cultural Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 5.

26 Ibid., 2.

27 Andy Merrifield, "Between Process and Individuation: Translating Metaphors and Narratives of Urban Space." *Antipode* 29. no. 4 (1997): 417-436.
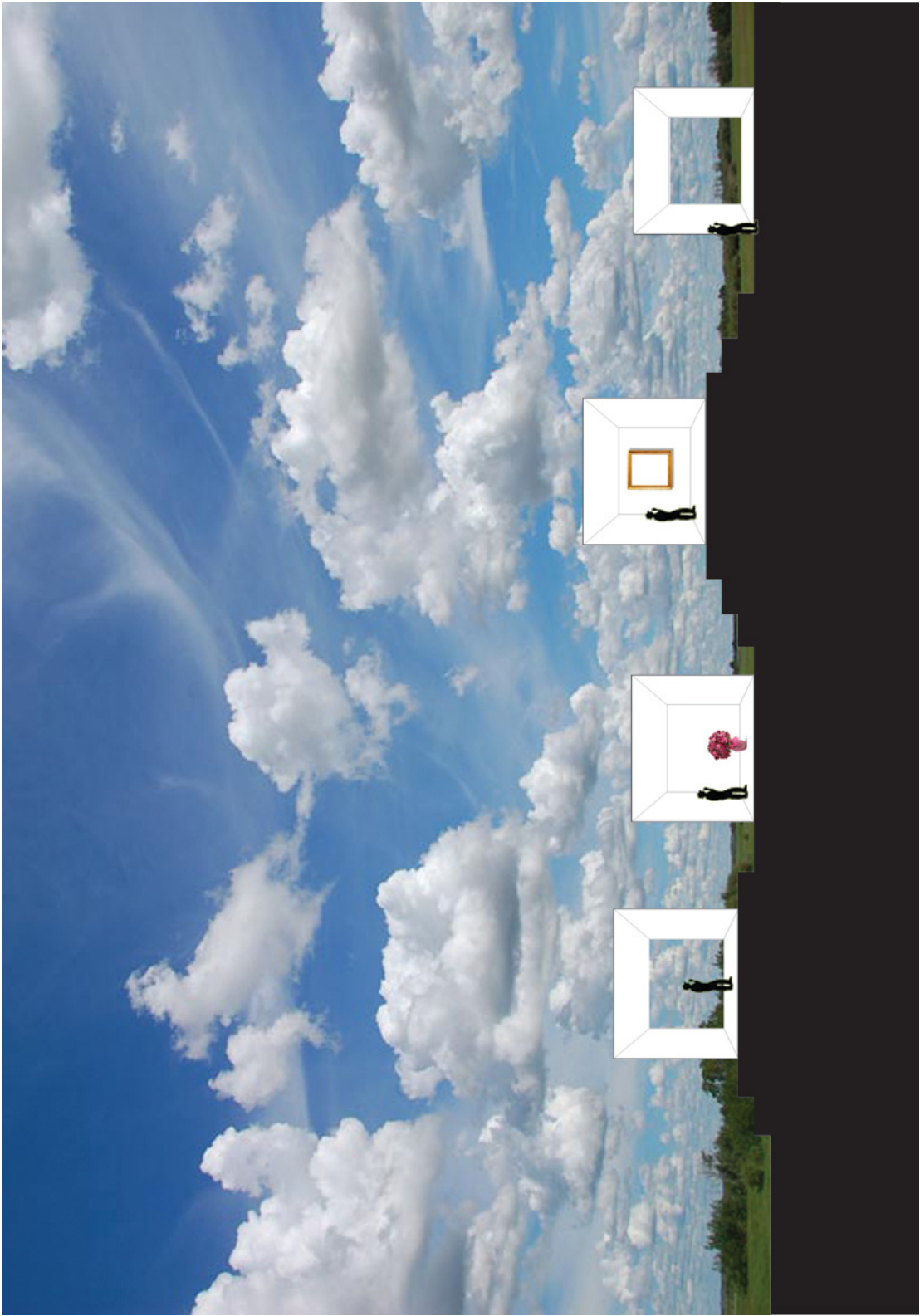
Fig.8: Sterile, white rooms, each housing an object or a view along a linear path.

with a sensuous connection to life, one must think in a way that goes far beyond form and construction."[28] Similar to the concept of organic cohesion, Zumthor strives to look beyond the cerebral aspects to touch something deeper, and more emotional. His careful attention to material, as well as "inner visions of specific moods and qualities," he is able to masterfully craft works of architecture that, while conceptually clear, touches us on an emotional level as well (fig.9).[29]

As we have seen, storytelling is a crucial element of Haida culture, both as a way to understand the world, and as a conduit for propagating that understanding from the past into the future. Unfortunately, European contact destroyed a large part of the culture upon which those stories were based, and it has taken the tireless efforts of many to begin to rebuild the shattered pieces; to re-interpret the Haida's place in the world, and where they will go from here. Clifford's article began to hint at the potential role architecture could play in this journey, which was further developed by an examination of architectural narrative and the concept of organic cohesion, as exemplified in the work of Peter Zumthor. It is my belief that these concepts are ideally situated to be explored through the design of a cultural education camp for the Swan Bay Rediscovery Program. Indeed, what better place to strive to imbue architecture with a sense of story than a camp where the primary method of teaching is storytelling?

Design Method

My method for design has been one of accretion, or botanizing. I began my research with as few goals as possible, hoping instead that directions and questions would arise out of my readings, site research and discussions with various involved parties such as professors and administrators for the Rediscovery Program. This has allowed me to come to ideas naturally, rather than trying to force my preconceived opinions into a misguided thesis. In the past, I have run into difficulties when designing because I went through a design process with an end goal already in sight. Because of this, I was not open to refinements to my concept, or shifts in thinking that would have ultimately led to a stronger project. I have found that my work is at its strongest when I simply gather as much information as possible, with no preconceptions about where it will lead me. It is

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28 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2002), 11.
29 Ibid., 12.

Fig.9: Peter Zumthor - Brother Klaus Chape l. Photograph by Samuel Ludwig. *Arch Daily*. November 2011

usually while I am combing through this data that seemingly unconnected facts, opinions, and approaches will slowly begin to resolve themselves into a conceptual whole. Taking this approach allows me to work in an iterative fashion as well; since the project will naturally alter as new information is uncovered, either through further research or as a result of design development.

Based on the theme of accretion, I have used collage as my primary means of design. I began doing a two-dimensional collage for each programmatic space, which allowed me to explore spatial qualities, materials, scale and occupation in a fluid way. Collage also complimented the accretive, iterative process I had established for myself, since its very nature lends itself to addition and subtraction of pieces. Through collage I was able to establish a series of haptic, conceptual and programmatic criteria, which could be tested through modelling and drawing. This process led to a cycle of collage, followed by modelling/drawing, which led to a refinement of collage, and back to modelling/drawing.

Chapter 2: Design

Site

Swan Bay is located on Burnaby Island, at the southeastern end of Haida Gwaii (fig.10). Due to its position in the North Pacific Ocean, Haida Gwaii is part of the temperate rainforest that characterizes much of the British Columbia Coast. As a result, it is heavily forested, with groves of old-growth red and yellow cedar covering much of the islands. Almost all life on the islands revolves around the seasonal cycle of harsh winter storms that blow up from the southeast from approximately October to March every year. As these storms move up the coast, they pull nutrients and plankton up from the ocean floor, pushing them up towards Alaska and along the panhandle. Salmon, which are born in rivers all along the coast, including the rivers of Haida Gwaii, follow these nutrients up the coast, before looping back home to spawn (fig.11). This cyclical relationship was mirrored by the Haida before European contact. In the summer, the Haida would establish temporary fishing camps along the West Coast, harvesting salmon and halibut that were migrating at that time (fig.5). As the first storms in October approached, the Haida would retreat to their winter villages, which were predominantly on the East Coast of the Islands. The East Coast is protected from the exposed West Coast by the San Cristobal Mountain Range, which splits the Islands longitudinally, creating a buffer between the winter villages and the full fury of the Pacific Ocean in winter. It was during the winter, while they waited out the storms, that the Haida held the majority of their ceremonies, such as potlatches.[30] It was at these ceremonies, through songs, dances and recitations that stories came to life. Because of the strong association between storytelling and winter villages, as well as the location of the Swan Bay site on the East Coast of Haida Gwaii, my site strategy will take cues where necessary from winter villages, and winter village homes.

The site at Swan Bay, like all Haida settlements, is a coastal site. Like the rest of the islands, Swan Bay is rimmed by cedar rainforest on one side, and a tidal beach on the other. The inhabitation of the thin margin between forest and sea is a key component of Haida settlements. Indeed, "to the Haida, their world was like the edge of a knife, cutting between the depths of the sea, which to them symbolized the underworld, and the for-

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30 MacDonald, *Haida Monumental Art,* 6.

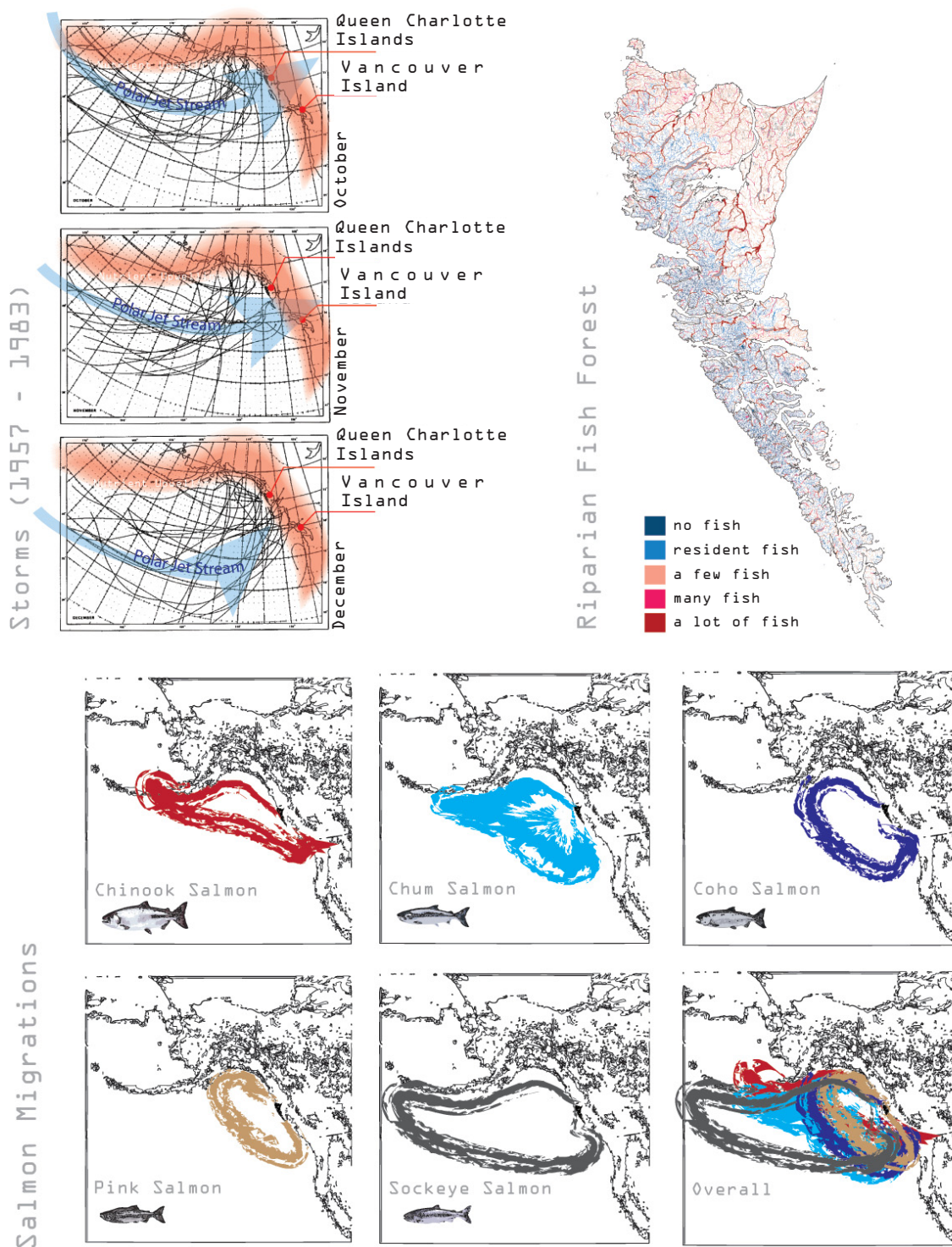Fig.10: The location of the Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp.

Fig. 11: The migration patterns of salmon on the Queen Charlotte Islands. These patterns are mirrored by the Haida, who migrate to the West Coast during the summer to fish, and then retreat to the East coast during the winter. Hogan and Schwab, "Precipitation and Runoff Characteristics, Queen Charlotte Islands." http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/docs/mr/Lmr/Lmr060-1.pdf

ested mountainsides, which marked the transition to the upper world."[31] Therefore, while my site strategy will certainly incorporate aspects of a winter village, my primary concern is the thoughtful negotiation of the margin condition.

The Margin

Traditionally, Haida villages were arranged along the coastal margin. In essence, they respected the margin by following it. Recent works of Haida architecture have taken the same approach, the singular buildings as a village, and arraying programmatic elements along an axis that follows the margin. An example of this strategy is the Haida Heritage Centre and Museum at Qay 'llnagaay, Haida Gwaii, designed by David Nairne and Associates. This project breaks the program into 'houses,' such as the 'eating house,' or the 'carving house' which are then arrayed along a circulation spine (*fig.12*). Another example of this approach is Arthur Erickson's UBC Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver. Rather than employ a circulation spine, Erickson arranges his gallery spaces in a linear fashion, leading the user through a procession of smaller rooms before culminating in the Great Hall, where the museum's totem pole collection is housed (*fig.13*).

While the Haida village is a useful reference for large, exhibition based projects, I chose to explore the Haida *house* as a touchstone for my site and programmatic strategy (*fig.14*). I believe that the house, rather than the village as a whole, creates a stronger connection to stories and storytelling. According to George MacDonald, the house functions "in the secular realm as a dwelling as well as in the spiritual realm as a ceremonial centre...entering into it marked a clear transition from the profane world to the spiritual world of the ancestors, bringing the Haida into intimate association with their cultural traditions."[32] While the Haida people inhabited the marginal zone between sea and forest, the Haida home marked the exact intersection, not only between these earthly environments, but also between the physical world and the spiritual plane (*fig.15*).

I also believe that there are other ways to acknowledge a margin without simply following it. A margin can be transected, straddled, encompassed, followed, or some combination thereof. For my site strategy, I chose to both encompass and transect the margin.

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31 Ibid., 3.

32 Ibid., 18.

The Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'llangaay

David Nairne and Associates
July 2007
Second Beach, Haida Gwaii

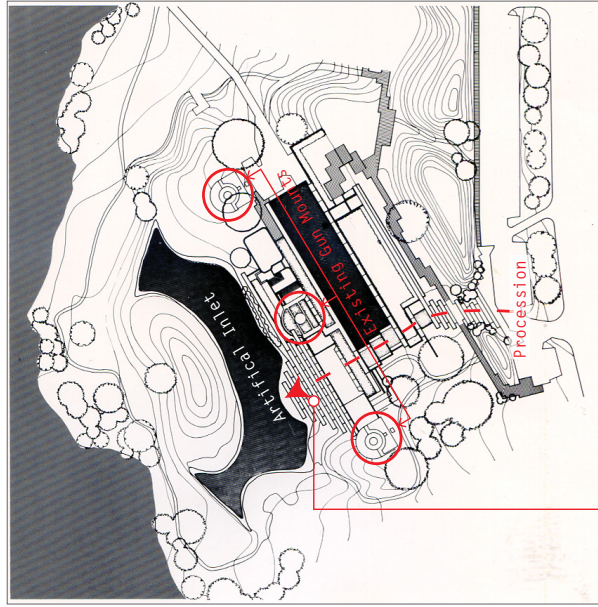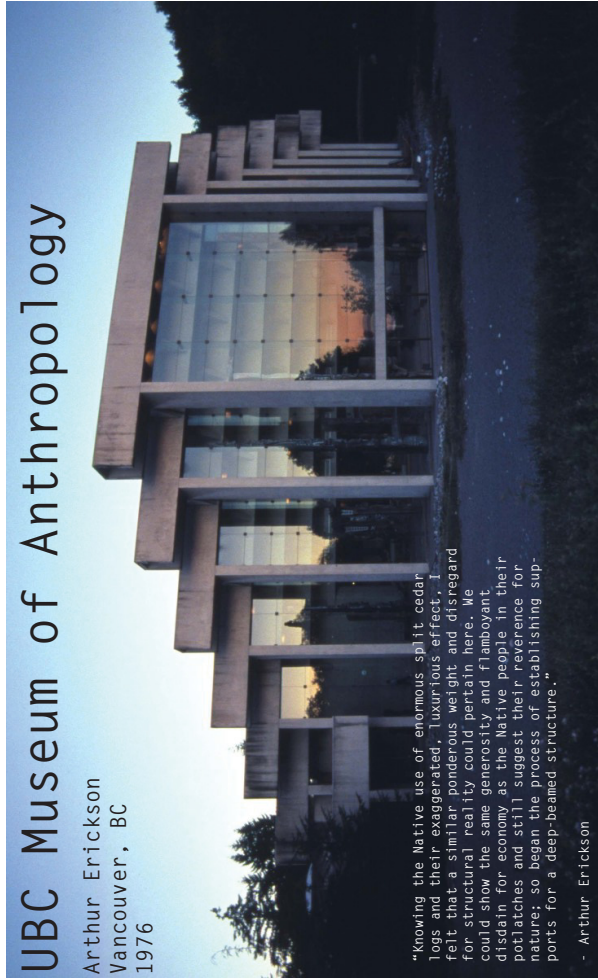*"The purpose of the Heritage Centre I think is … its primarily a community facility … that it's here for us to tell our own story from our own perspective, and show that we're still a living culture, show that we're still alive. So we still carve poles, we still do our art, we still dance and sing and take out the canoes."*

The 46,000 square foot facility is a series of long-houses connected by interior walkways, and fronted with six traditional totem poles, representing 14 clans.

the Heritage Centre is a living museum, a multi-function facility, where you'll find artists working, and passing their knowledge on … and students who are learning new skills and trades.

Fig. 12: The Haida Heritage Centre at Qay 'llnagaay Analysis.

UBC Museum of Anthropology

Arthur Erickson
Vancouver, BC
1976

"Knowing the Native use of enormous split cedar logs and their exaggerated, luxurious effect. I felt that a similar ponderous weight and disregard for structural reality could pertain here. We could show the same generosity and flamboyant disdain for economy as the Native people in their potlatches and still suggest their reverence for nature; so began the process of establishing supports for a deep-beamed structure."

- Arthur Erickson

Artifical Inlet

Existing 'Gun Mount' 25

Procession

The Great Hall, which houses the museums carving collection. It is the heart of the building. The bunkers and attached gun mounts on either side of the hall help define the space. The centre mount has been adapted to house Bill Reid's 'Raven and the First Man' carving. The placement of the Great Hall on the artificial inlet is meant to evoke the imagery of a Haida village.

"The proud houses and massive carvings stood along the curve of a beach, poised between the temperamental ocean and a forbidding forest curtain. Here were a people who respected the powerful spirits of land and sea and lived on the narrow margin between." -Arthur Erickson

Visual connection to landscape

Decompression

Great Hall

Procession through the Museum

Compression   Procession

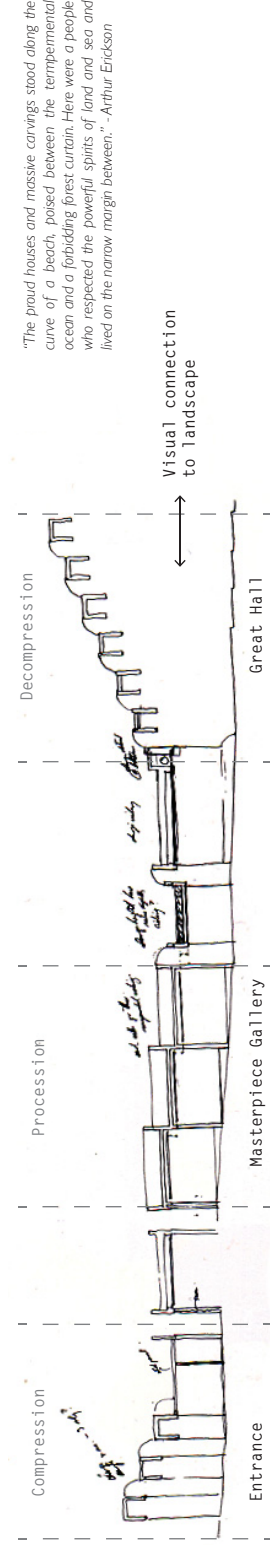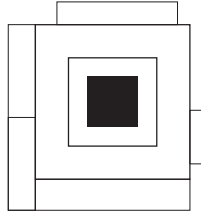Entrance   Masterpiece Gallery

Fig. 13: UBC Museum of Anthropology Analysis. From Arthur Erickson, *The Architecture of Arthur Erickson.*

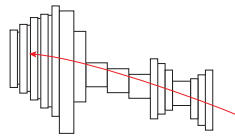## Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp Proposed (?)

Program spaces emanate out from the centre. Spatial hierarchy places the most important space (the storytelling space) at the centre, with supporting spaces serving around it.

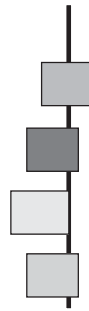## Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp Existing
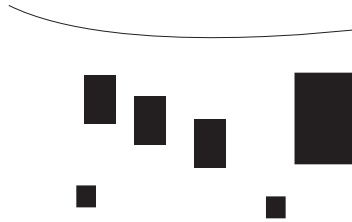
Program spaces are separated and arrayed along the shoreline. No spatial hierarchy.

UBC Anthropology Museum

Program spaces are arranged along a linear procession. Spatial/programmatic hierarchy places most important space at the end of the procession.

Qay'llangaay Heritage Centre

Discrete program elements are arranged along a circulation spine. No spatial/programmatic hierarchy.

Fig. 14: Adjacency analysis for noted programs and theoretical adjacencies for Swan Bay Camp.

I chose to transect the margin for a number of reasons. If the traditional Haida home represents the intersection of multiple axes, the axis that crosses the margin longitudinally - that is, transects from sea to forest - links the three environments, both in the physical plane and the spiritual one. Haida stories almost never take place in only a single plane, they are constantly shifting from forest to sea, or the underworld to the upper world. Transecting the margin provides a literal link between these environments - sea, margin, forest - to accompany the link found in Haida stories (fig.16).

Transecting the margin also acknowledges another key marginal relationship: the social margin between the camp's primary inhabitants: elders and youth. If the three groups of inhabitants of the camp - elders, youth and staff - form a circular relationship, then the transition from youth to staff member, and staff member to elder, could be considered quite smooth, where each group straddles the social margin between before settling into their new group. The margin between elder and youth, however, is much different. There is no smooth transition between these groups. Indeed, along with age, these children and elders inhabit two very different worlds. In order to link these worlds, the margin between needs to be transected (fig. 17). In a sense this is the primary aim of the Rediscovery Program: to teach children about Haida culture by reconnecting them to the elders of Haida Gwaii.

This transection was expressed architecturally through the placement of programmatic elements. As seen in figs.18 and 19, I began with the idea of placing a programmatic element within each environment (one in the forest, one in the sea), creating an implied line that transected the margin area. However, tied closely to the idea of transection is the concept of transformation. In Haida stories, as you cross through boundaries, you also transform. For example, when spirit beings cross into the physical world, they transform from their 'true' nature, into the beings/animals we see in nature. Therefore, in order to strengthen the strategy of transection/transformation, the selection of programmatic pieces that would be placed in each environment (forest and sea) was very important. To highlight this, I chose to invert the placement of programmatic elements based on their environment associations. That is, I put a programmatic element associated with the forest in the sea, and an element associated with the sea in the forest. The program I chose to represent the forest was the carving shed, since most of the carving is performed in cedar,
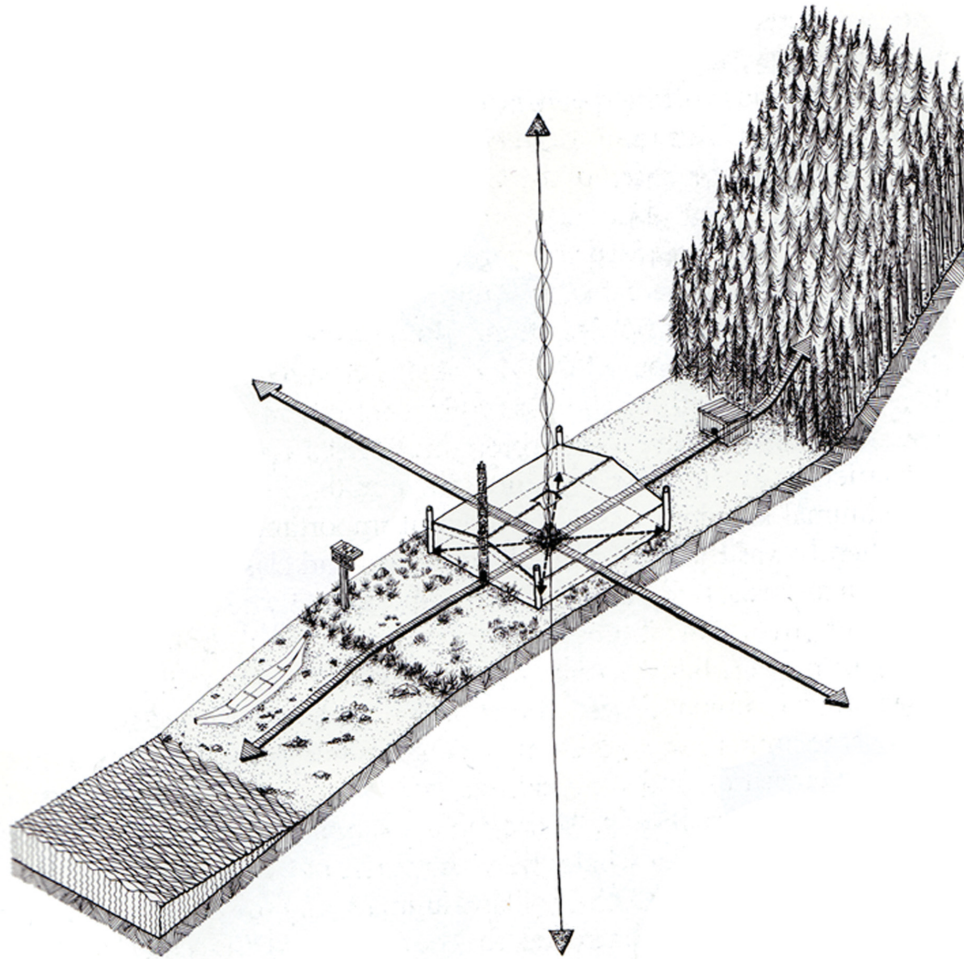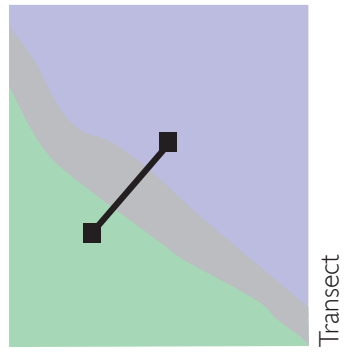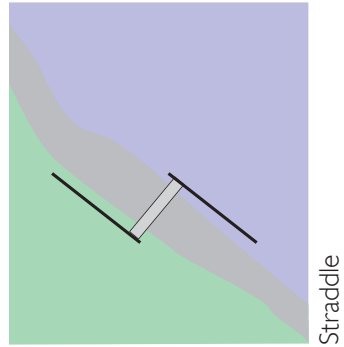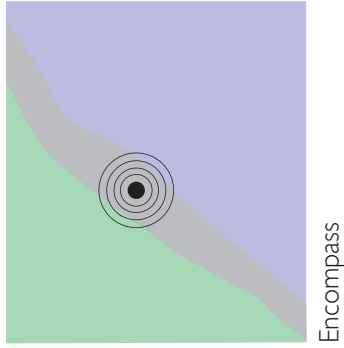
Fig.15: Diagram showing axis connecting the realms of Haida Gwaii, Centred on the hearth. From MacDonald, *Haida Monumental Art.*

Transect   Straddle   Encompass   Follow
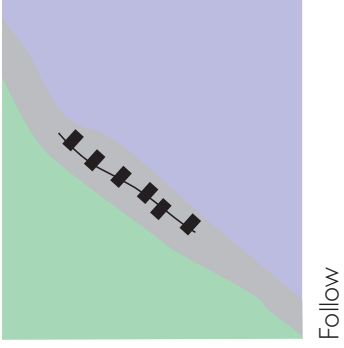
Fig.16: Acknowledging physical margins.

Elder   Story   Youth   Staff
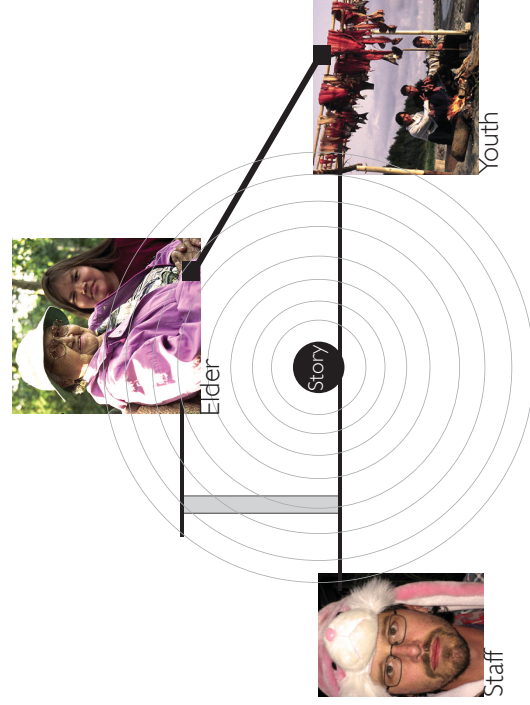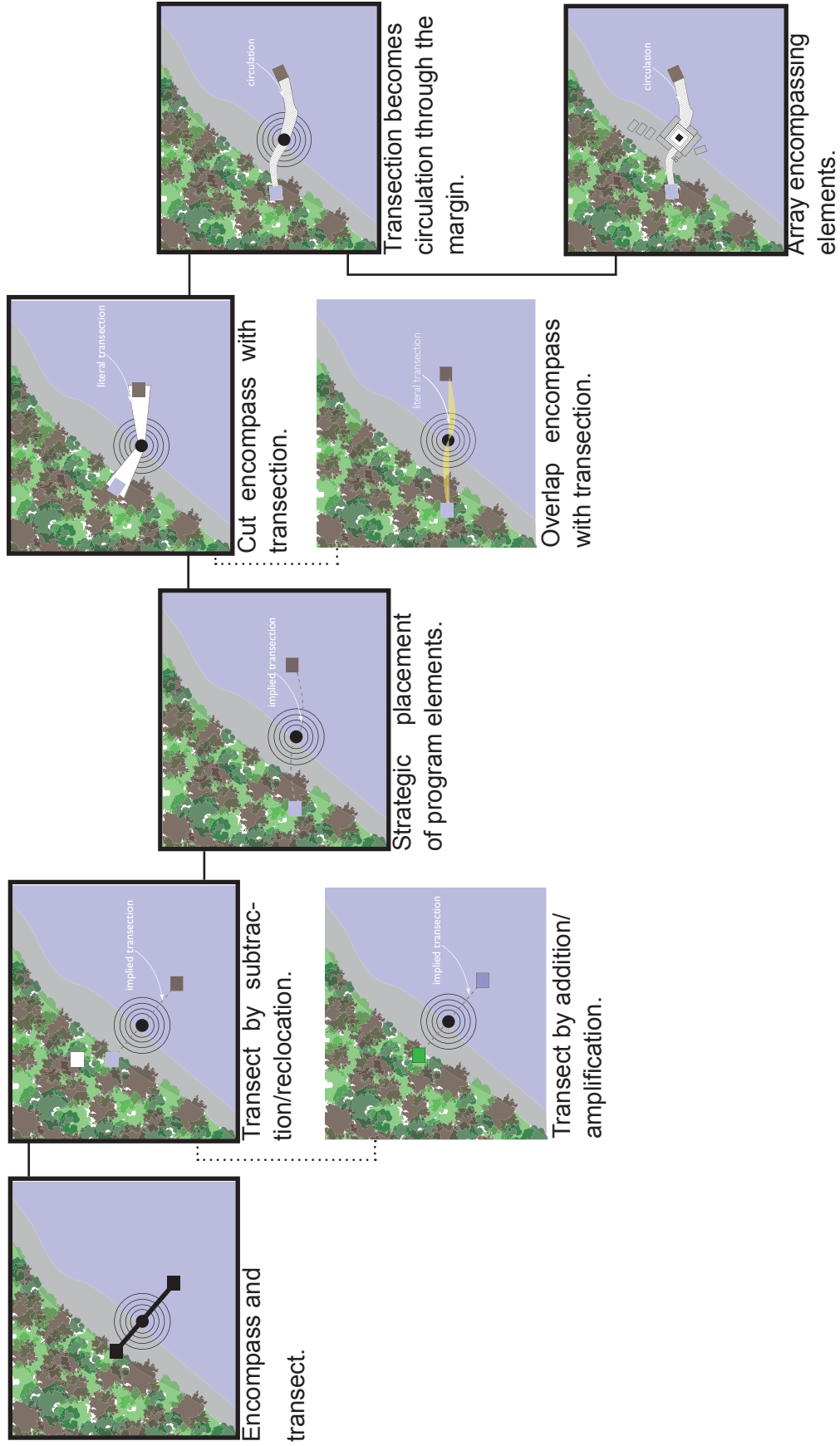
Fig.17: Acknowledging social margins.

Fig.18: Diagram exploring methods of transecting and encompassing the margin.

Fig. 19: Collage exploring methods of transecting and encompassing the margin, as well as the feel of transformation through the three worlds (ocean, margin, forest).
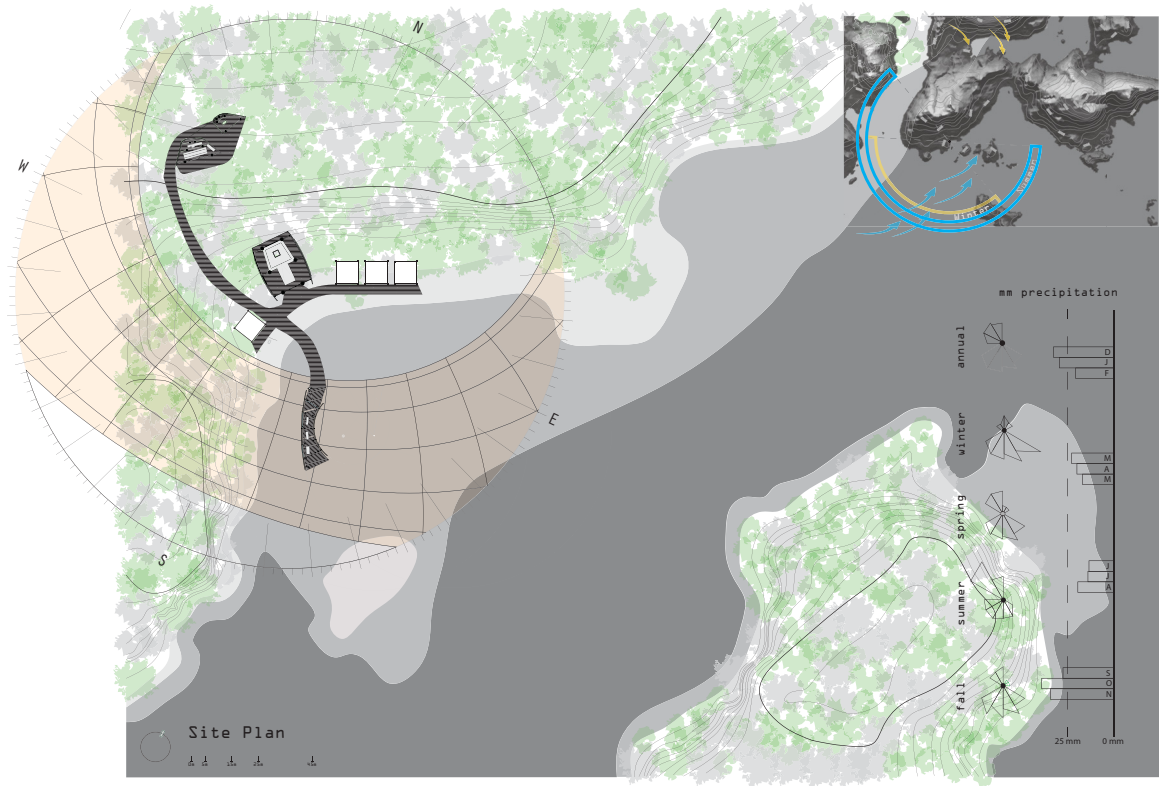
Site Plan

Fig 20: 1:400 site map and model showing the placement of programmatic elements

a material of the forest. The program I chose to represent the sea is the smokehouse, since it is fish, a resource of the sea, that is primarily smoked. I feel this juxtaposition of environments strengthens the idea of transection as well as transformation. In terms of transection, situating an element of one environment in its opposite creates a mental transection, as the mind projects itself across the margin into the original environment of the program element. having a piece of program 'transform' its environment as it moves across the margin also strengthens the notion of transformation through transection.

I chose to encompass the margin as well in order to mirror the concept that the overarching theme both in Haida culture and at the Rediscovery Camp of storytelling. Stories, and storytelling are the unifying element that encompass not only the physical and spiritual margins of Haida Gwaii, but the social margins as well. As such, I believe that the primary storytelling space of the Rediscovery Camp should radiate out from its centre, and occupy the entire margin (figs.18 and 19).

Program

The program for the Swan Bay Rediscovery Program has the potential to contain a surprisingly large degree of complexity. As such, great consideration has been taken to ensure that the program remains clear and focused. I have chosen to focus my program around two themes: storytelling and intimacy.

As a cultural education camp, storytelling is a very important component in how children are educated about Haida culture. As noted earlier, the Haida were traditionally an oral culture, they passed knowledge on through stories.[33] These stories came in many forms: they could be recited, sung, danced, carved, painted or woven. One of the primary goals of the program, therefore, was to ensure spaces for storytelling, whether formal or informal, were themselves imbued with a sense of story.

A large part of what makes storytelling an effective tool for relaying culture is the sense of intimacy, or collective closeness, it evokes. Indeed, "when people gather to listen to stories, they enter into a form of cultural communion using the oral literature as the

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33 John Swanton and John Enrico, *Skidegate Haida Myths and Histories* (Skidegate: Queen Charlotte Islands Museum Press, 1995), vii.

vehicle and the storyteller as the medium."[34] Regardless of whether are two people or ten, intimacy gives an added richness to stories and a deeper connection between all involved. If the primary programmatic concern for this thesis was to imbue the architecture with a sense of story, the creation of intimate spaces was a key strategy towards this goal. This does not mean, however, that in order to foster intimacy all the spaces needed to bring people physically closer together in small, dark, warm rooms. The vignettes displayed in fig.2 are three examples of intimate encounters, none of which take place in 'close' spaces. While physical closeness can aid in creating an intimate space, intimacy is more closely related to the interaction between people, and in order for such interactions to take place, the inhabitants of a space need to feel comfortable, safe, and free to share. Therefore, in addition to including formal spaces for storytelling, where a safe environment can be implied in many ways, 'opportunities' where stories - whether formal or informal - may take place have also been included where possible. Such opportunities may manifest themselves in many ways: a nook created by exterior walls, or the arrangement of beds within the sleeping cabins create the potential for a feeling of collective closeness. Furthermore, providing opportunities, rather than prescribed spaces where possible has the added benefit of giving the user greater control in appropriating the built environment as their own.

This appropriation is particularly relevant to this thesis. One of the overlying themes driving the Rediscovery Program is a search for cultural identity. Because Haida culture is steeped in oral traditions, who they are is very intimately tied to what they say. Unfortunately, the devastating loss of population that occurred as a result of contact with Europeans meant that much of who the Haida are was lost to smallpox epidemics and the residential school system. The Rediscovery Program is an attempt to repair some of the holes in Haida culture left by what was lost.

With that in mind, I believe that culture must come from within; that is, no outside group - no matter how well intentioned - can impose their conceptions of what Haida culture is on the Haida.This is not to say that only the Haida can influence Haida culture, or to extend the argument to this thesis, that only the Haida can design 'Haida' architecture. In fact, the presentation of an 'outside' perception of a culture can sometimes reveal valuable

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34 Livo and Reitz, *Storytelling,* 14.

and unexpected truths. Indeed, during the early days of the Haida's struggle to recover their culture, they often referred to the records of ethnographers, photographers and linguists who had visited the islands and documented aspects of Haida culture.[35] What is more important than *who* is presenting an opinion, is *how* that opinion is presented. Therefore, to expand my earlier contention: no outside group - no matter how well intentioned - can impose their conceptions of what Haida culture is on the Haida, but they can certainly present a perception. The design of formal storytelling spaces, as well as opportunities for appropriation may be one way to balance the presentation of an outside view with chances to make the space their own.

At this point, I would like to take an aside to clarify my own relationship to this thesis. Throughout this paper, I have referred to the Haida as 'they,' or 'them.' However, I myself am Haida. I have chosen not to refer to the Haida as 'we,' or 'us,' not because I am ashamed of my heritage - in fact, I could not be more proud - but rather I have excluded myself from description because I was not born on Haida Gwaii; I have come to my heritage relatively recently - I was in my teens when I made my first trip to Haida Gwaii - and as such I believe I have much left to learn about what it means to be truly Haida. For me to speak of the horrors the Haida have had to endure, or the deep connection they have to the islands as if they were my own would feel disingenuous, at least until I feel I truly understand what it means to be Haida. In part, this thesis is another step towards my own personal understanding; I hope that one day soon I will have learned enough to consider myself worthy the honour of calling myself Haida.

Because this thesis is based around an existing summer camp for children aged ten to seventeen, the current facilities at Swan Bay are a good place to begin determining programmatic requirements for this project. These requirements were augmented through interviews with representatives from the Swan Bay Rediscovery Program, and precedent studies of the Haida Heritage Centre at Qay 'llnagaay.

The Swan Bay site is comprised of three sleeping quarters (for staff, boys, and girls) a larger multipurpose building, and a woodshed. Also, because of the site's isolation (access is currently by float plane or boat) there is no electricity or running water.

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35 MacDonald, *Haida Monumental Art,* 1.

The program for the Haida Heritage Centre at Qay 'llnagaay contains a number of spaces that would enrich the program for the Swan Bay Camp. Of particular interest are the carving shed and the performing house. Because both activities are part of the program at Swan Bay, I chose to include elements of both of these spaces.

The carving shed is a covered outdoor space, with a fireplace for warmth, and storage for carving tools and materials. The shed at Qay 'llnagaay is approximately 42' x 72', allowing it to accommodate projects as large as totem poles and canoes (fig.21). It is unlikely that the children at Swan Bay would undertake such demanding projects, since the average camp session is only eight days, nowhere near enough time to complete a project of that magnitude. Rather, the carving space at Swan Bay would house a number of small projects. The sparse requirements for the carving shed - space, storage and a heat source - are similar to the requirements for weaving and painting. It is possible that all three of these activities could share one space (fig.22).

The Performance House is modelled after a traditional Haida Longhouse. The house contains a ceremonial house pit or *da* for dances, ceremonies or any large gathering. Traditionally, the house pit was the sacred centre of the home, and by extension, the Haida universe.[36] The performance house at Qay 'llnagaay is large enough to support approximately 100 people (fig.23). Because the the maximum number of people occupying the Swan Bay camp is unlikely to ever approach that many people, a similar space would likely be much smaller (fig.24).

While there is currently a kitchen in the multipurpose house, according to the staff, there is not enough adequate food preparation space. In a study commissioned by the Canada Mortage and Housing Corporation titled *Architecture for Elder Health in remote British Columbia: A Nisga'a-led Research*, the importance of access to a traditional diet for elder health is highlighted as an essential design criteria.[37] To that end, along with ensuring cooking facilities are accessible to elders, many of whom have issues with mobility, I would like to include a smoke house. One of my most formative experiences on Haida Gwaii was the day I spent smoking salmon that I had caught the day before (fig.25). As a

36 Ibid., 6.

37 Marcelle Marie Gareau, *Architecture for Elder Health in Remote British Columbia: A Nisga'a-led Research* (Ottawa: CMHC, 2005), 2.

Fig. 21: The Carving Shed at Qay 'Ilnagaay.

Fig. 22: Conceptual collage exploring ideas for the Swan Bay Carving shed. The collage seeks to establish a 'feel' for the carving shed.

Fig. 23: The Performance House at Qay 'llnagaay .

Fig. 24: Conceptual collage exploring ideas for the performance space. The collage seeks to establish a 'feel' for the storytelling space.

traditional method of food preparation, as well as an important gathering spot, a smoke house would be a very important addition to the Swan Bay Camp (fig.26).

The lack of running water and electricity on site could be explored through off grid solutions. The addition of space for bathing/showering and hygene spaces would be very beneficial to the camp, particularly for the elders.[38]

Currently, the camp is able to handle up to ten children, four staff, and two support staff for people with special needs. Unfortunately, the rustic nature of the present camp makes it inaccessible to elders. As a result, the elders stay at one of the 'Watchmen' camps that dot the southern islands of Haida Gwaii (fig.28). For the sake of brevity, I have chosen not to elaborate on the Watchmen program.[39] These camps are better equipped to suit the needs of elderly guests, so as a result, day trips are taken from the Swan Bay camp to visit the elders at either the Sgaang Gwaii or Hotspring Island camps. This limits the amount of time the campers are able to spend with the elders, thereby greatly inhibiting the opportunity for informal storytelling. Ideally there would be an Elders cabin at Swan Bay. Such a space would need to be warm, dry and comfortable. Accessibility throughout the camp would also be very important.

Storytelling through Haida Art: An Architectural Translation

The derivation of form for the program elements I chose to add to the Swan Bay camp was a very important consideration. Traditionally, Haida architecture has had a very strong tectonic expression (which will be discussed later in this paper), as represented by the iconic longhouse (fig.29). While the longhouse is a powerful symbol of the Haida and of Place, I do not believe it is the only form Haida architecture can take. For my additions to the Swan Bay Camp, I chose to explore the two dimensional forms of Haida art as the vehicle for architectural expression.

Similar to Haida architecture, Haida art is created within a rigid, yet remarkably refined framework. Bill Reid described Haida artists as:

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38 Ibid., 5.

39 Information can be found at Parks Canada, "The Watchmen Program" http:/www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/edu.aspx.

Fig.25: Les Collinson in his smokehouse.

Oh the Cedar tree!

If mankind in his infancy
had prayed for the perfect substance
for all material and aesthetic needs,
an indulgent god
could have provided nothing bett[er]
Beautiful in itself,
with a magnificent flared base
tapering suddenly to a tall, str[aight]
wrapped in a reddish brown b[ark]
like a great coat of gentle fur,
gracefully sweeping boughs,
soft feathery fronds of grey-green needles

Fig.26: Conceptual collage exploring ideas for the smokehouse. The collage seeks to establish a 'feel' for the smokehouse.

Showers/Toilets — 300 ft²

Elder's Cabin — 400 ft²

Staff Cabin — 600 ft²

Girls Cabin — 600 ft²

Boys Cabin — 600 ft²

Storage — 500 ft²

Smoke House — 225 ft²

Cooking/Eating Space — 1500 ft²

Singing/Dancing Space — 1500 ft²

Carving Space — 1400 - 1500 ft²

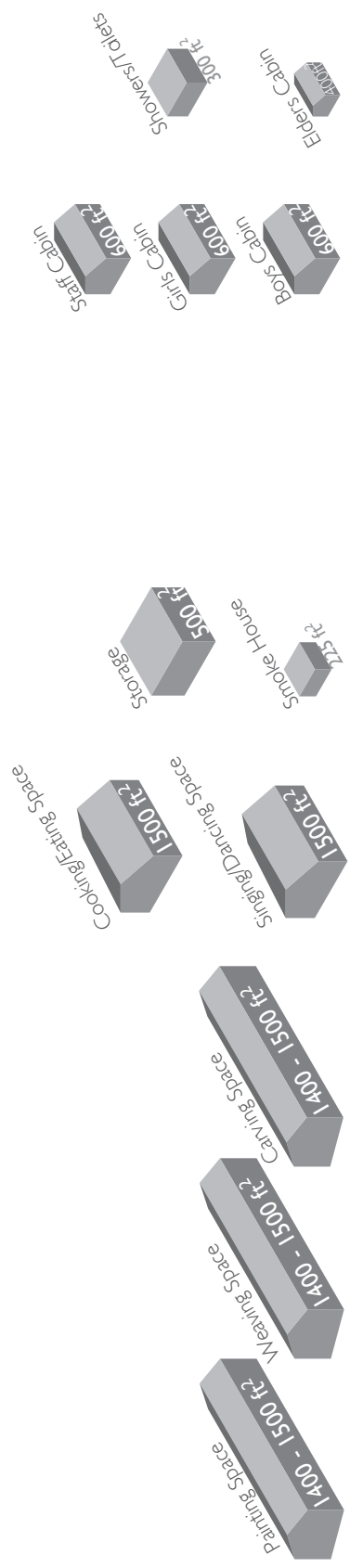Weaving Space — 1400 - 1500 ft²

Painting Space — 1400 - 1500 ft²

Fig. 27: A summary of the required program spaces.

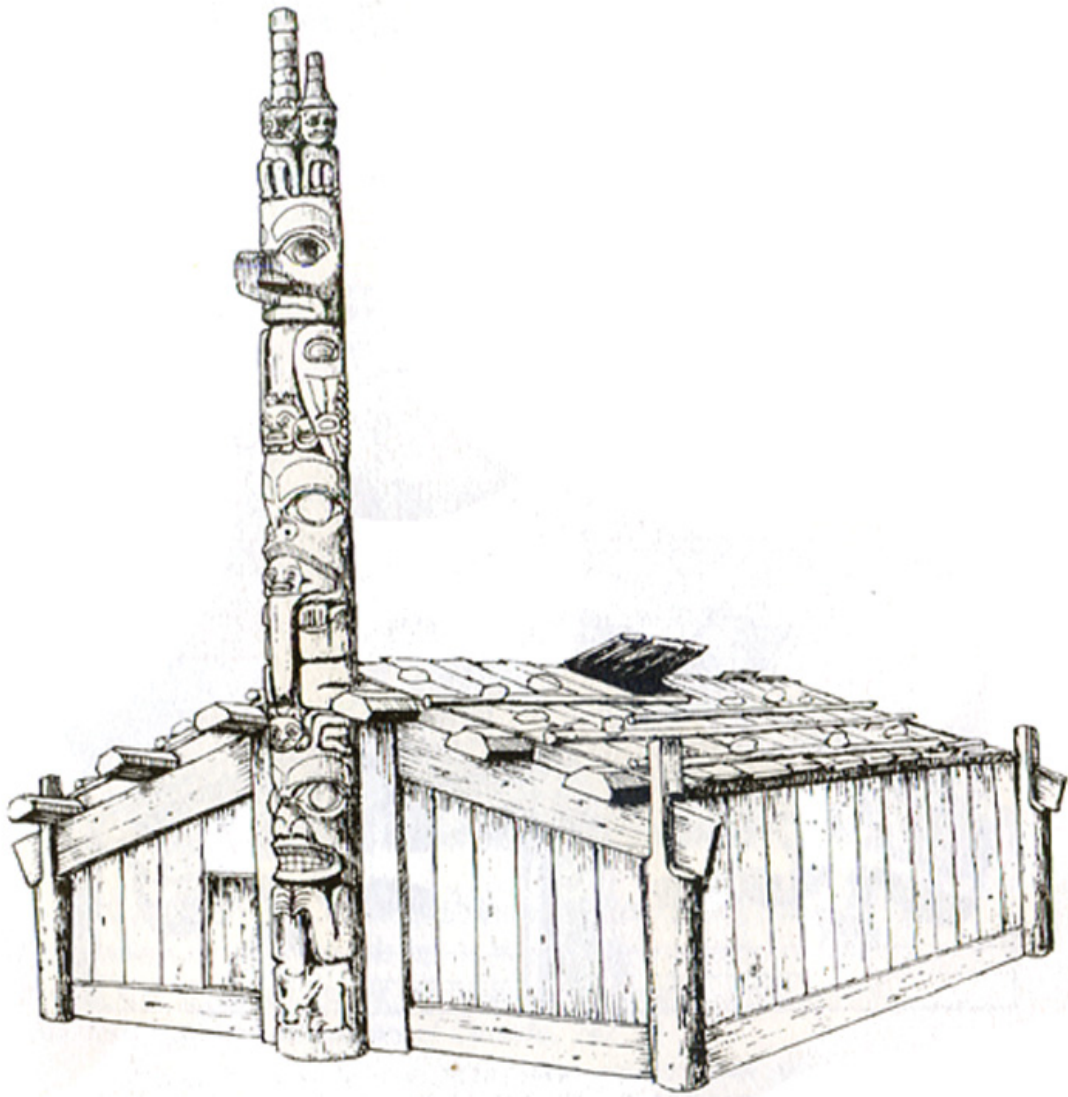Fig.28: Map showing the location of watchmen camps. From Parks Canada, "The Watchmen Program," http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/edu.aspx.

Fig.29: An example of a Haida longhouse. From MacDonald, *Haida Monumental Art.*

> the classicists, working always within a strict convention, explor-
> ing and refining it with infinite subtle varations, preserving always
> a conservative austerity, sacrificing movement and expression
> for unity and form.[40]

The basis of this framework is in the four basic components of Haida art: the ovoid, the U-shape, the S-shape and formline (fig.30). Though the exact origin of these forms is debatable, it is undeniable that they are as inextricably connected to Haida Gwaii as the longhouse. This connection to place, as well the existence of a system through which these elements are arranged to create a harmonious whole, makes Haida art an excellent analog for architectural expression. Furthermore, along with the spoken word, art is a primary method of storytelling. By basing the formal language on the components of visual storytelling, another link is created between the architecture and storytelling.

The following pages outline the process through which the formal language of my additions to the Swan Bay camp was developed (figs 30 - 35).
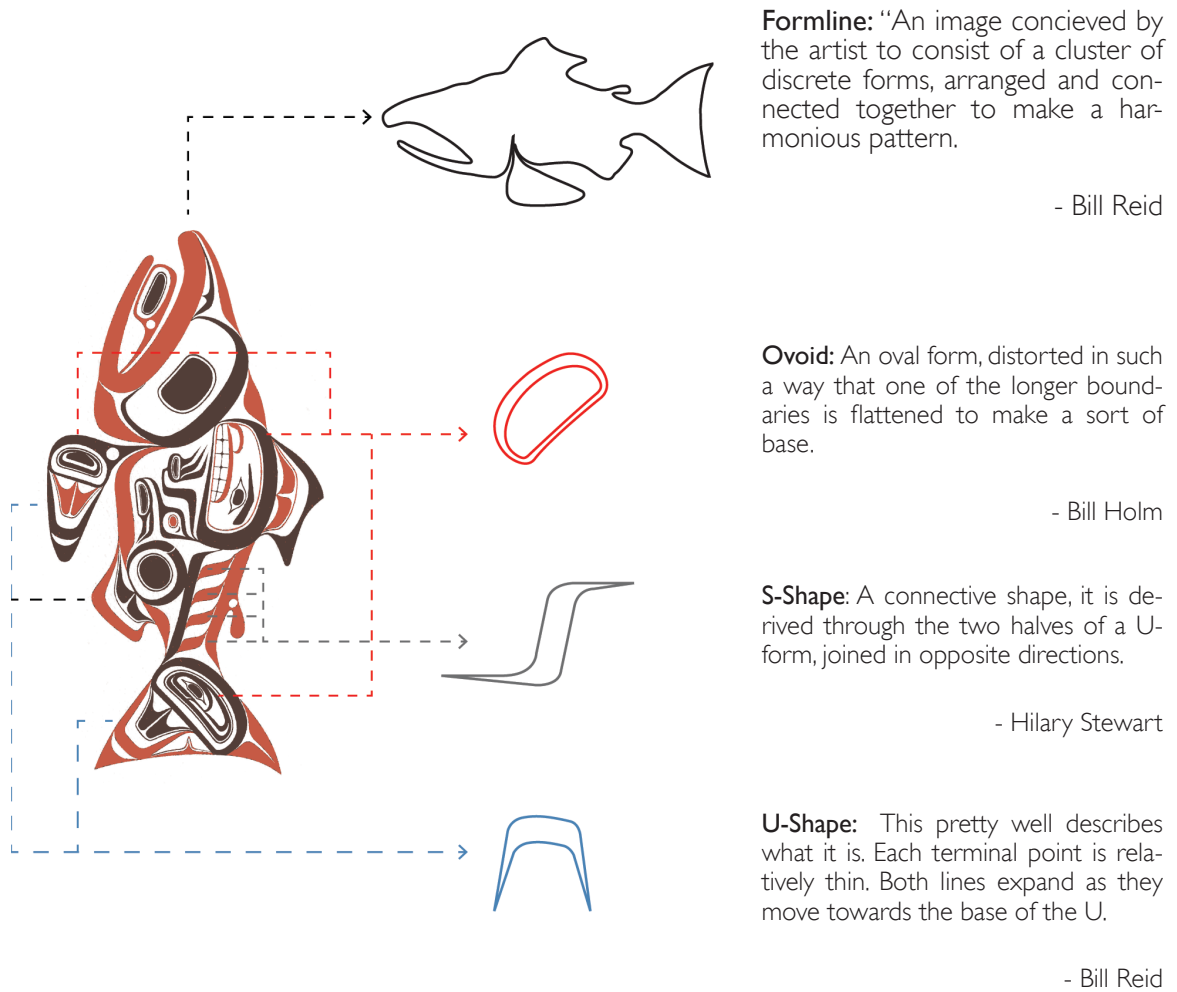
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40 Reid and Bringhurst, *Solitary Raven,* 83.

Formline: "An image concieved by the artist to consist of a cluster of discrete forms, arranged and connected together to make a harmonious pattern.

- Bill Reid

Ovoid: An oval form, distorted in such a way that one of the longer boundaries is flattened to make a sort of base.

- Bill Holm

S-Shape: A connective shape, it is derived through the two halves of a U-form, joined in opposite directions.

- Hilary Stewart

U-Shape: This pretty well describes what it is. Each terminal point is relatively thin. Both lines expand as they move towards the base of the U.

- Bill Reid

Fig.30: Diagram explaining the four primary components of Haida art. This analysis formed the basis of the exploration into developing an architectural language based on Haida art.

Fig.31: Paper collage of the primary elements of Haida Art #1. I began by cutting out the shapes at various scales and experimenting with their configurations in three dimensions. The adaptability of the forms led to some interesting forms. Through subsequent iterations of these collages, a language began to emerge.
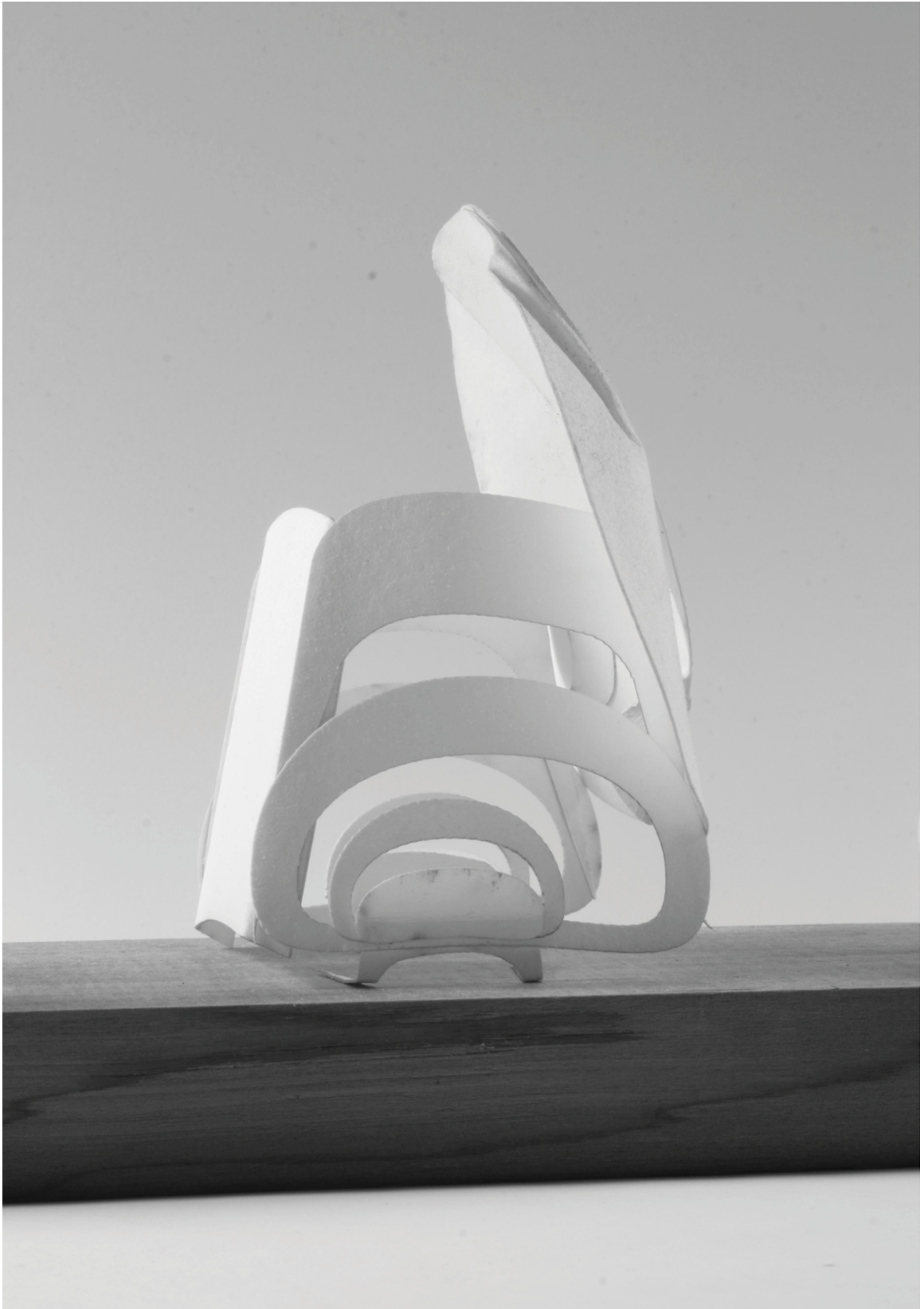
Fig.32: Paper collage of the primary elements of Haida Art #2.

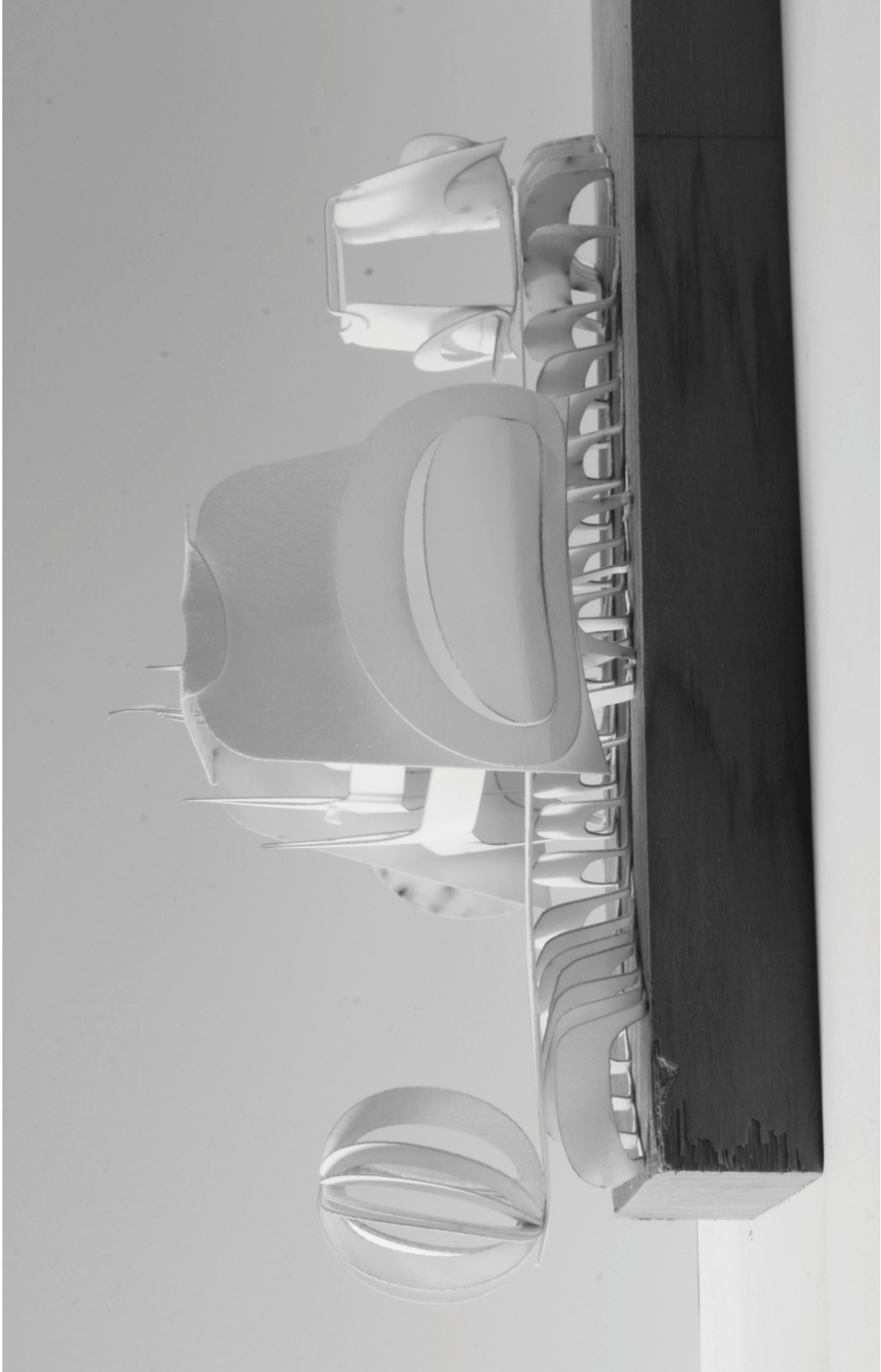Fig.33: Paper collage of the primary elements of Haida Art #3.

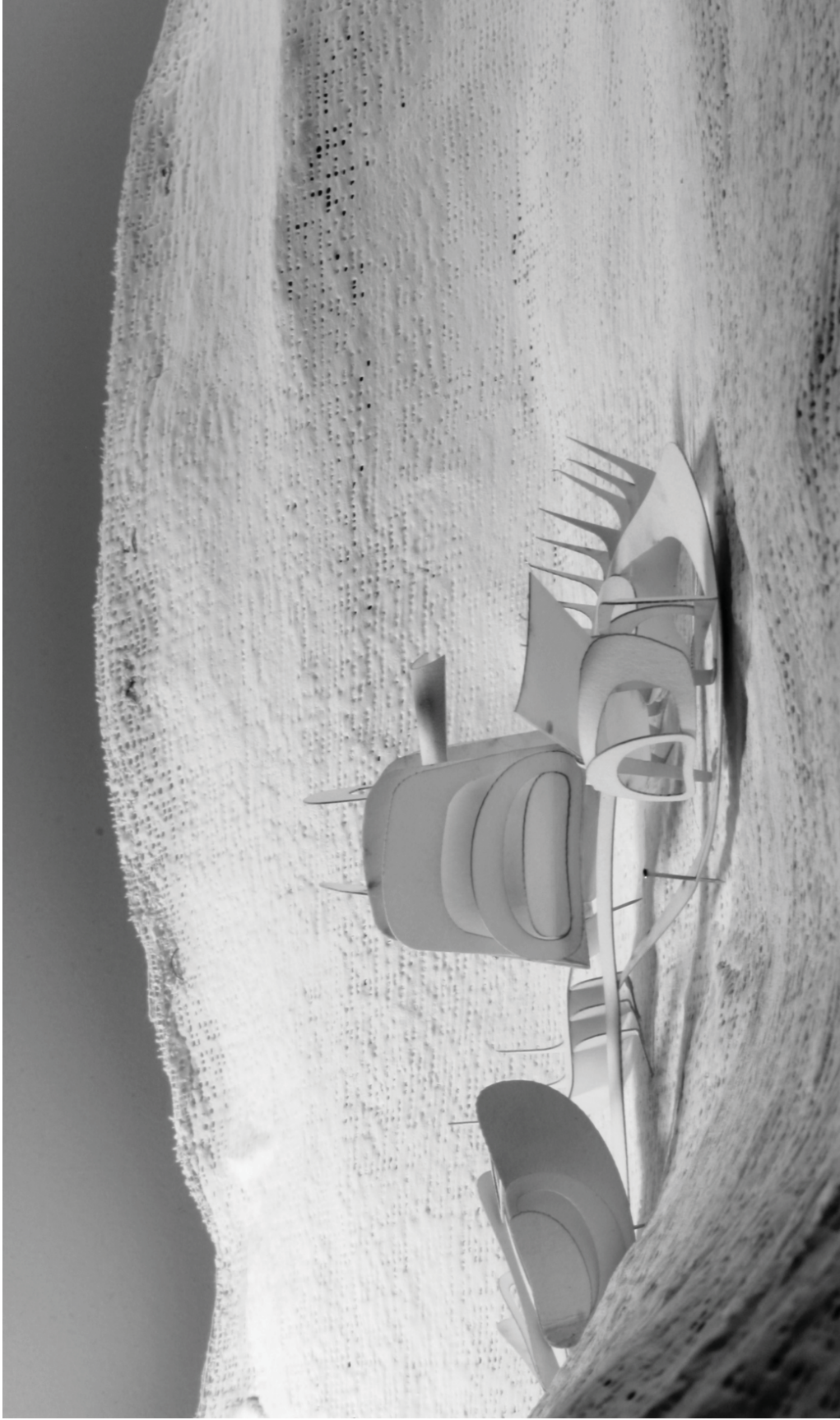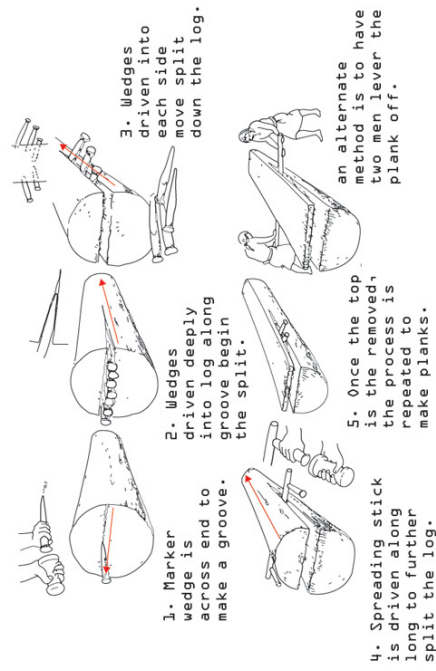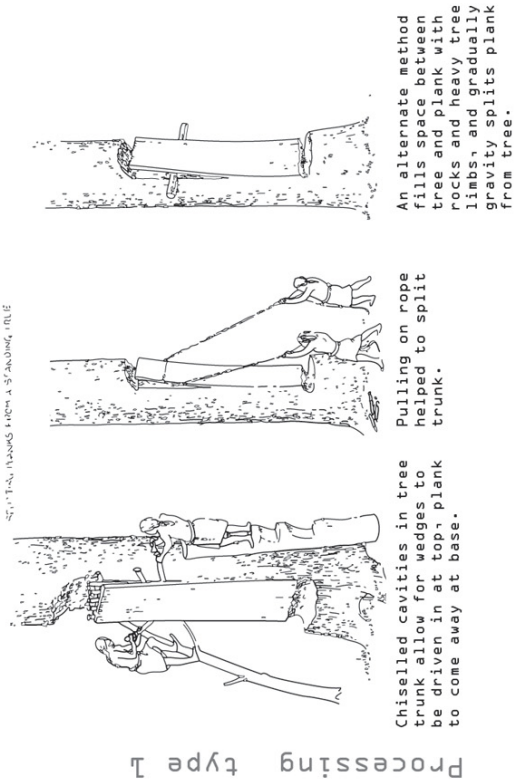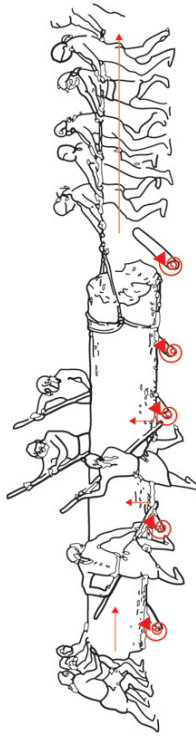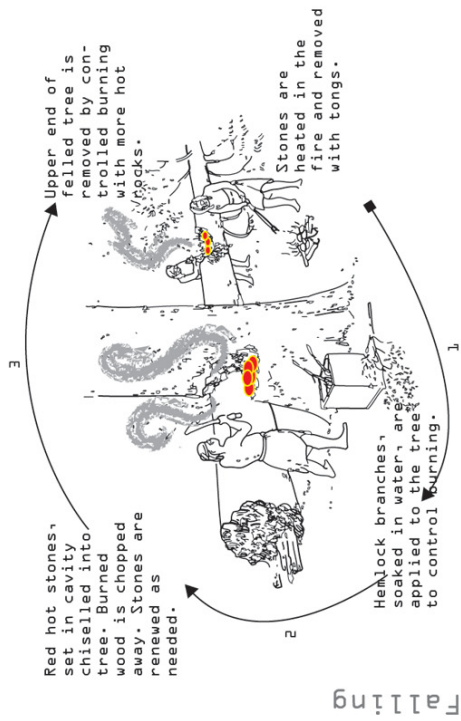Fig.34: Paper collage of the primary elements of Haida Art #4.

Fig.35: Paper collage of the primary elements of Haida Art #4. The next step was to begin imagining these collages situated within the context of the site. To have them begin to respond to the conditions of their environment.

Interpreting Haida Building Culture

Of equal importance to the development of a formal language for this thesis is the integration of traditional Haida building culture. Like the formal language of Haida art, the way the Haida build is distinctly of that Place. Borne directly out of the groves of massive cedar trees that cover the islands, the Haida have developed construction techniques that display a deep reverence for this most versatile of materials.

The following pages outline the process through which I sought to gain an understanding of Haida building culture, and then incorporate that understanding into my own buildings (figs. 36 - 58). The incorporation of Haida building culture into my design allows these buildings to tell the story not only of their construction, but also of the traditions from which they emerged.

Harvesting and Processing Cedar

Red hot stones, set in cavity chiselled into tree. Burned wood is chopped away. Stones are renewed as needed.

Upper end of felled tree is removed by con-trolled burning with more hot rocks.

Stones are heated in the fire and removed with tongs.

Hemlock branches, soaked in water, are applied to the tree to control burning.

Falling

Transporting

Chiselled cavities in tree trunk allow for wedges to be driven in at top, plank to come away at base.

SEVERAL PLANKS FROM A STANDING TREE

Pulling on rope helped to split trunk.

An alternate method fills space between tree and plank with rocks and heavy tree limbs, and gradually gravity splits plank from tree.

Processing type 1

1. Marker wedge is across end to make a groove.

2. Wedges driven deeply into log along groove begin the split.

3. Wedges driven into each side move split down the log.

4. Spreading stick is driven along long to further split the log.

5. Once the top is the removed, the process is repeated to make planks.

an alternate method is to have two men lever the plank off.

Processing type 2

Fig.36: Diagram of traditional methods of harvesting and processing cedar. Images from Stewart, *Cedar.*
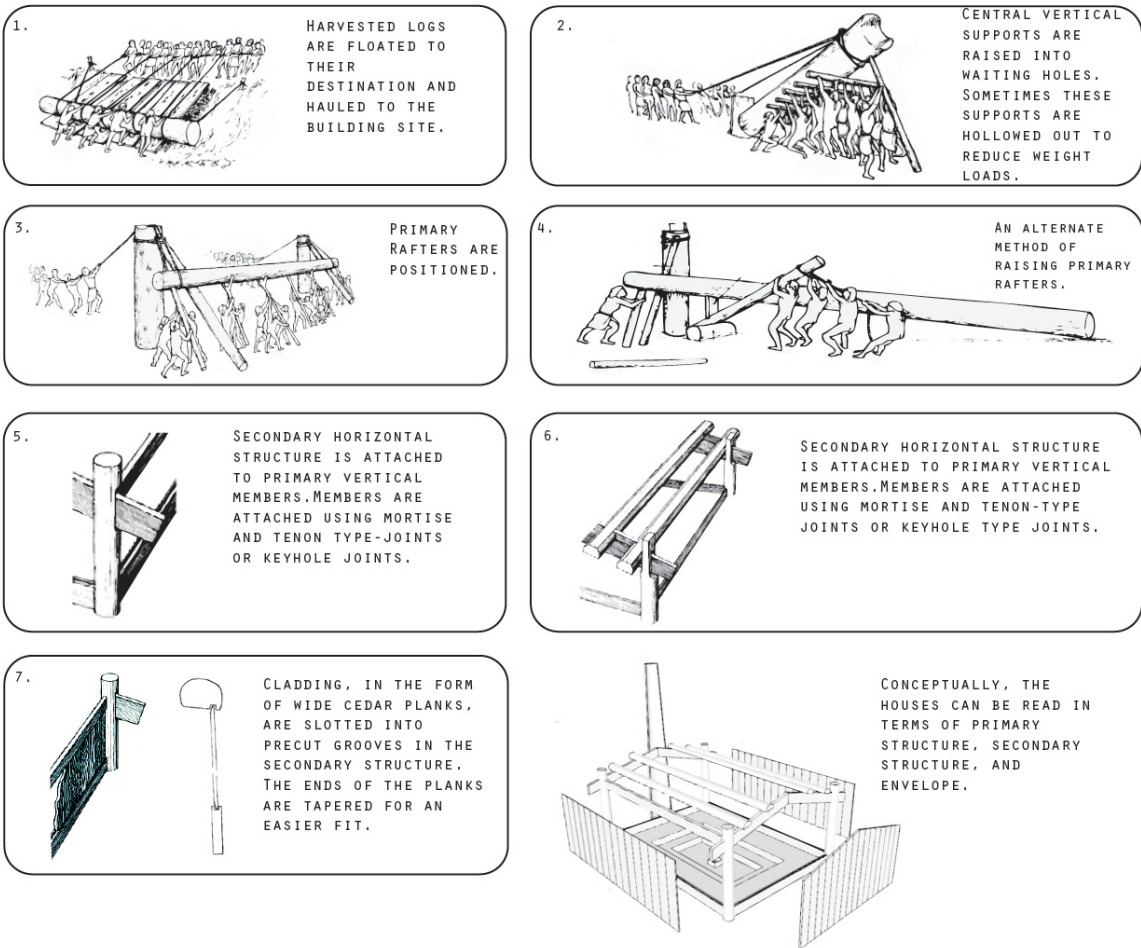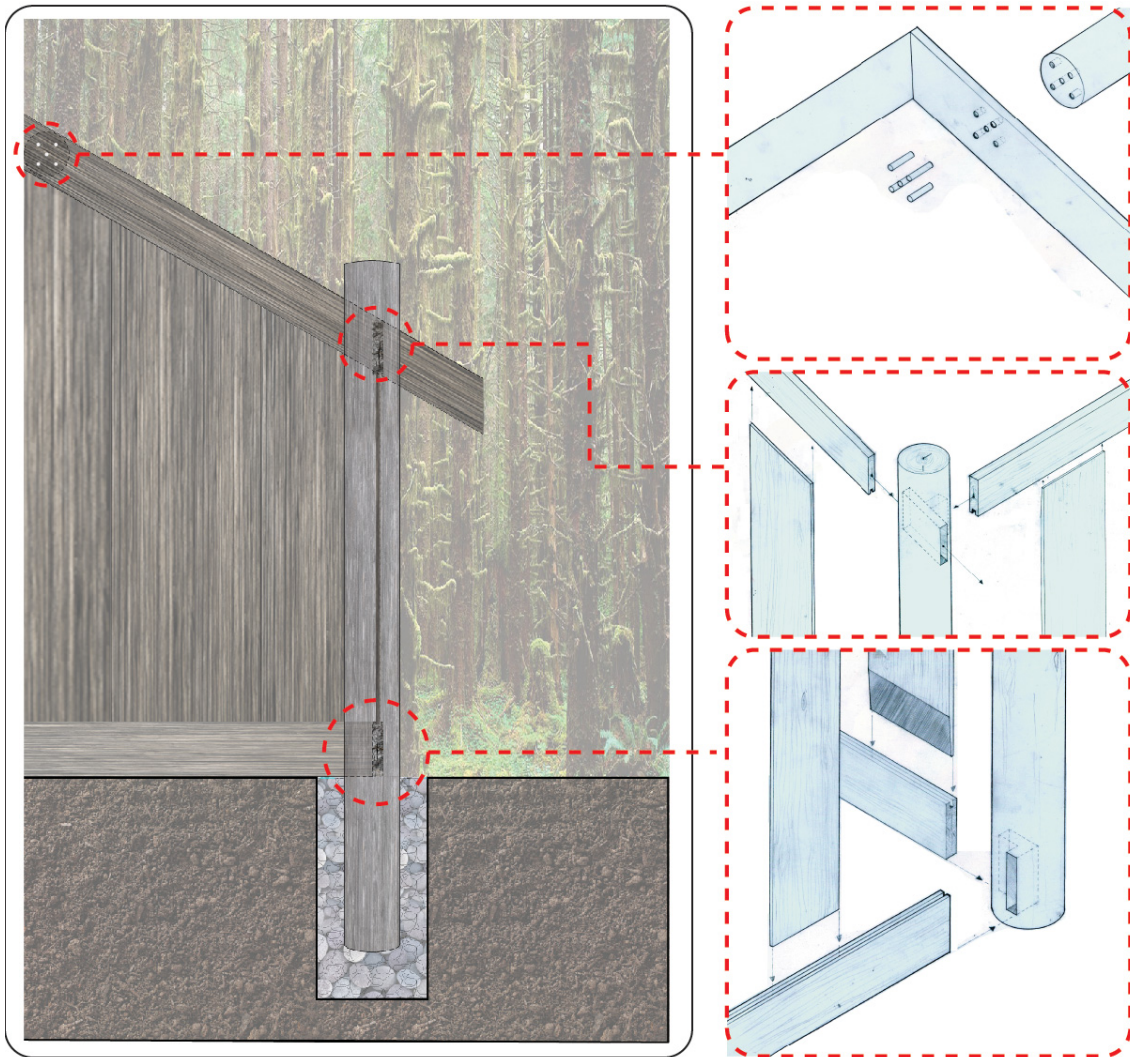
Haida Building Tradition

1. Harvested logs are floated to their destination and hauled to the building site.

2. Central vertical supports are raised into waiting holes. Sometimes these supports are hollowed out to reduce weight loads.

3. Primary rafters are positioned.

4. An alternate method of raising primary rafters.

5. Secondary horizontal structure is attached to primary vertical members. Members are attached using mortise and tenon type-joints or keyhole joints.

6. Secondary horizontal structure is attached to primary vertical members. Members are attached using mortise and tenon-type joints or keyhole type joints.

7. Cladding, in the form of wide cedar planks, are slotted into precut grooves in the secondary structure. The ends of the planks are tapered for an easier fit.

Conceptually, the houses can be read in terms of primary structure, secondary structure, and envelope.

Fig.37: Diagram of traditional Haida building culture. Images from Stewart, *Cedar.*

SEction: Connection Detail Analysis

Fig.38: Analysis of Haida building details.

CONSTRUCTION LANGUAGE

A 'skeleton' of primary and secondary structure is erected, then a 'skin' of wide plank cladding is clipped over top.

Form is generated by the material and environment: large, tall and straight trees that split easily into planks. The wet, windy climatecalls for sturdy structures that shed water.
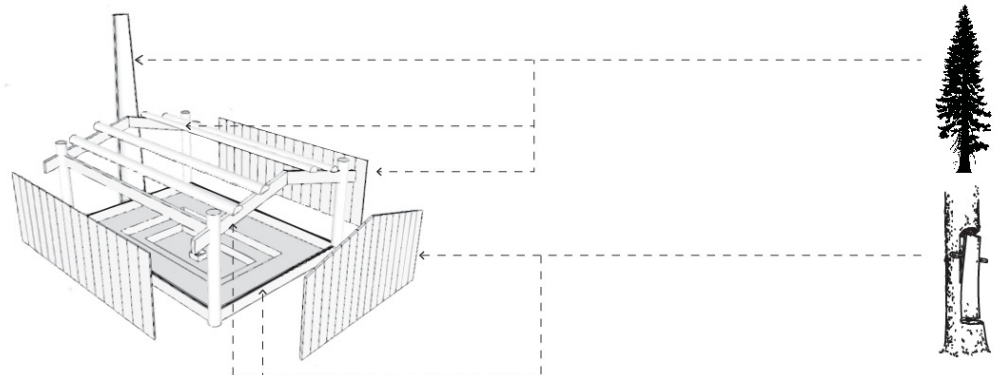
TRANSLATION

The forms found in 2 dimensional Haida Art can be adapted to architectural expression.

The planar nature of the forms is adapted to laminated panels. These panels form the cladding and secondary structure.
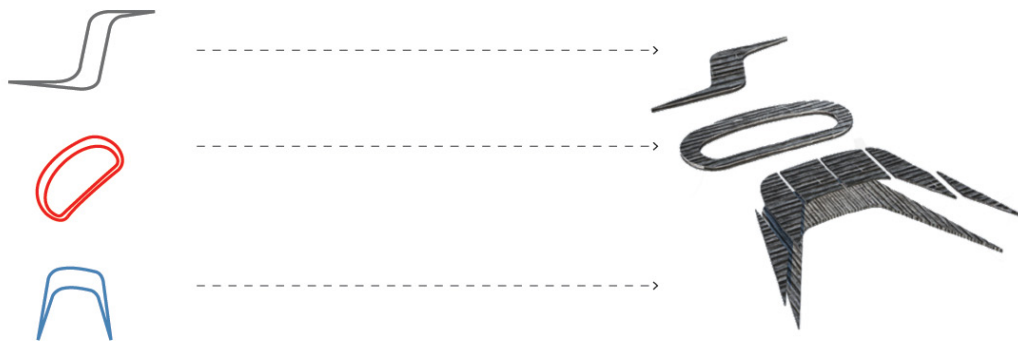
Fig.39: Diagram exploring the translation of Haida building language.

FOUNDATION HOLES ARE DUG. THE BOTTOM IS LINED WITH LARGE STONES FOR DRAINAGE.

A FRAMEWORK OF PRIMARY VERTICAL MEMBERS AND SECONDARY HORIZONTAL MEMBERS IS ERECTED FLAT ON THE GROUND AND THEN RAISED IN A FASHION SIMILAR TO TOTEM POLES.

THE PROCESS IS REPEATED FOR EACH PAIR OF FOUNDATION HOLES.

CLADDING PANELS ARE CLIPPED OVER TOP.

CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE
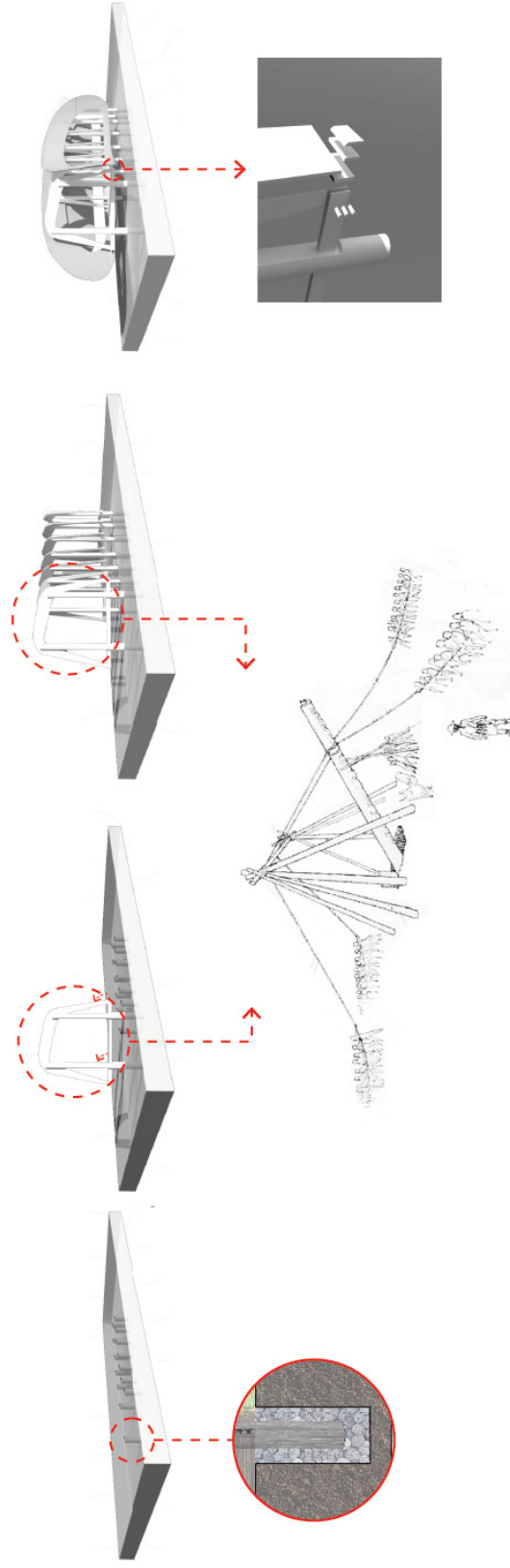
Fig.40: Proposed Construction Sequence for additions to Swan Bay Camp. These principles could be applied to all the buildings being erected.
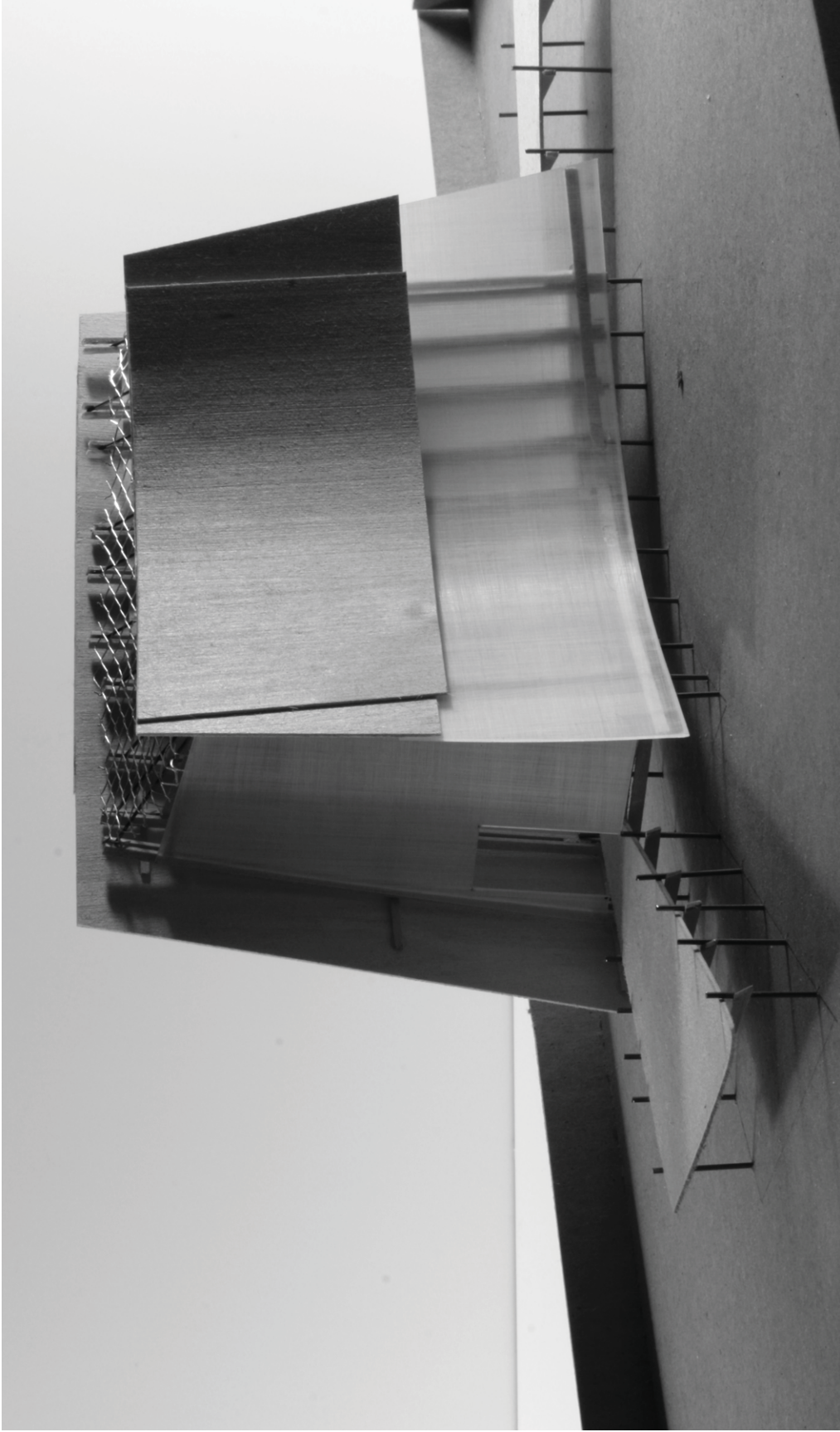
Fig.41: Sketch model of the smokehouse/kitchen - 1st iteration. While formally interesting, the language of this model does not speak to the Haida formal language or building culture. In my opinion, a step was lost in the translation betwen this model and the earlier paper sketch models.
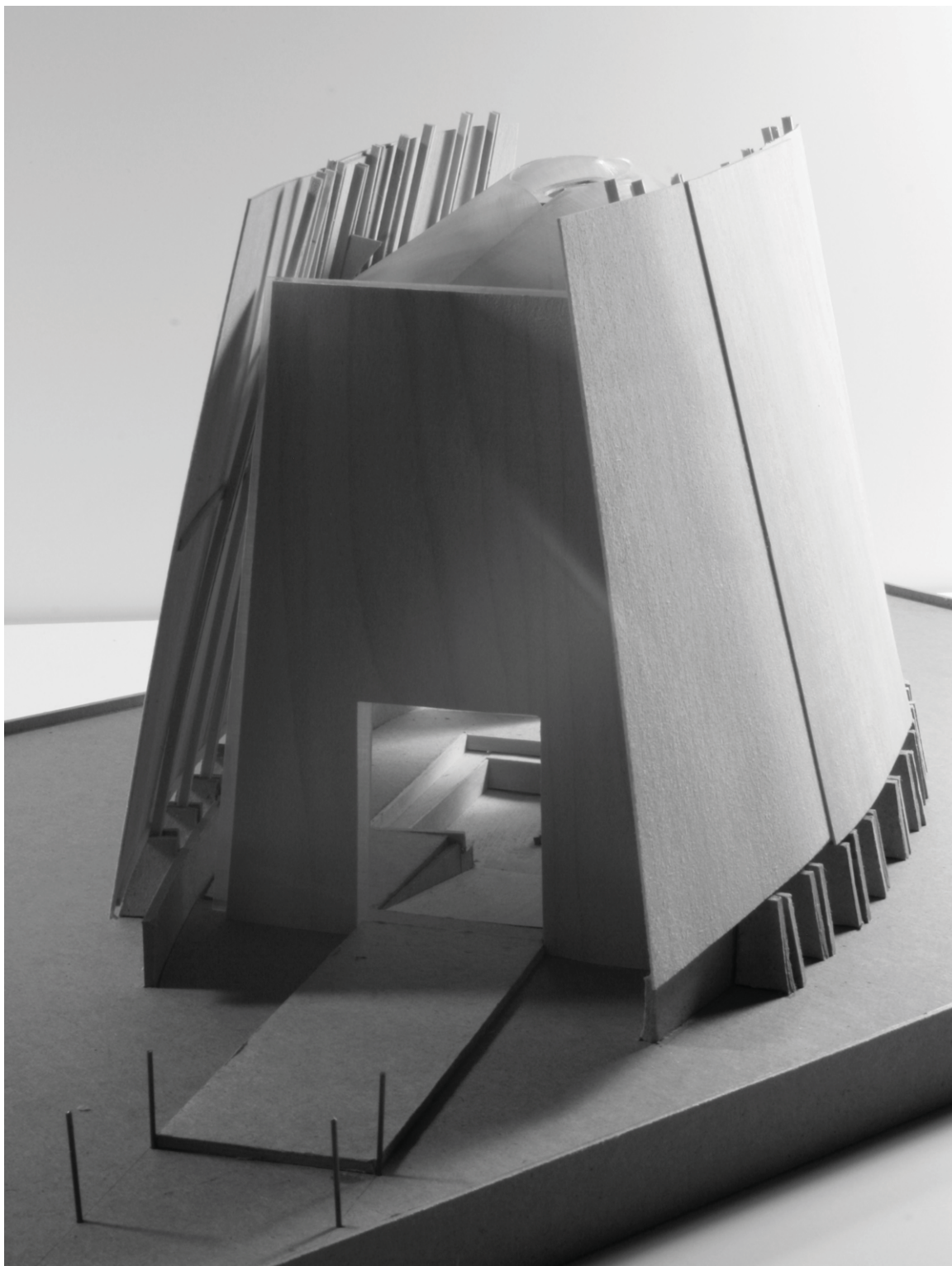
Fig.42: Sketch model of the storytelling space - 1st iteration. While formally interesting, the language of this model does not speak to the Haida formal language or building culture. In my opinion, a step was lost in the translation betwen this model and the earlier paper sketch models. Furthermore, the use of concrete at the base feels to 'heavy' and is not sensitive enough to the ground condition.

Fig.43: Sketch model of the carving shed - 1st iteration. While formally interesting, the language of this model does not speak to the Haida formal language or building culture. In my opinion, a step was lost in the translation betwen this model and the earlier paper sketch models.

Fig.44: Sketch model of the carving shed - 2nd iteration. This iteration takes more cues from the Haida art and building culture analysis'. The language of construction is more expressive than the first iteration, and the formal language is more recognizable as Haida.
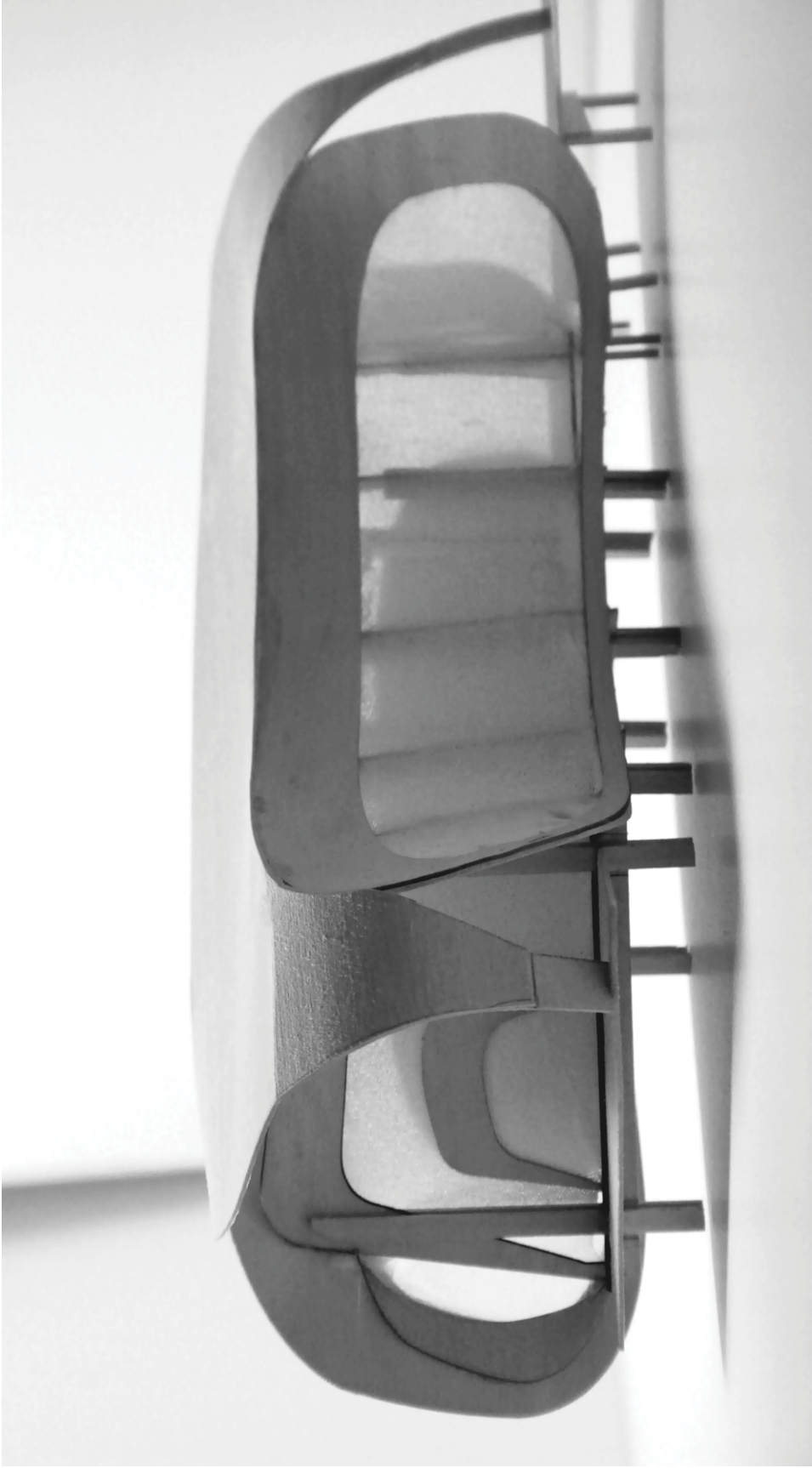
Fig.45: Sketch model of the carving shed - 2nd iteration. This iteration takes more cues from the Haida: art and building culture analysis'. The language of construction is more expressive than the first iteration, and the formal language is more recognizable as Haida.

Fig.46: Sketch model of the carving shed - 3rd iteration. This iteration incorporates a more integrated roof based on the 'U' shape form. Unfortunately the ovoids have been flattened, which damages the form. The glazing material has been replaced with canvas, which will be discussed in more detail later on.

Fig.47: Sketch model of the storytelling pavillion - 3rd iteration. This iteration incorpoates a more integrated roof based on the 'U' shape form. The glazing material has also been replaced with canvas, which will be discussed in more detail later.
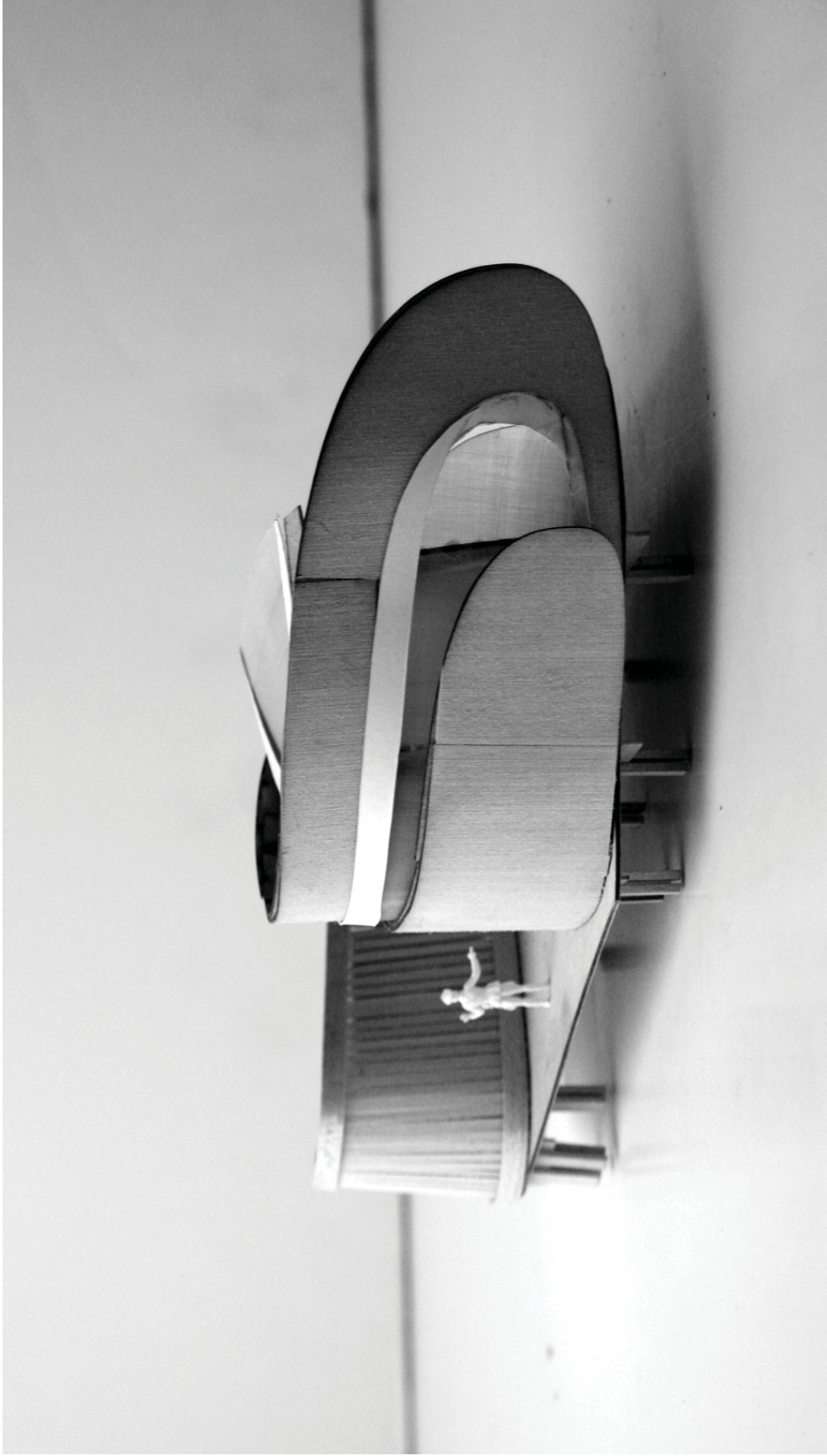
Fig.48: Sketch model of the smokehouse/kitchen - 2nd iteration. Taking cues from previous iterations, this model incorporates the use of canvas as a glazing material. It also begins to articulate the flashings at the transfer from cedar to canvas. The addition of flashing creates another layer of texture in the envelope.

Fig.49: Sketch model of the carving shed - 4th iteration. The curve has been replaced in the ovoids, adjusting the profile of the building. It also begins to articulate the flashings at the transfer from cedar to canvas. The addition of flashing creates another layer of texture in the envelope.
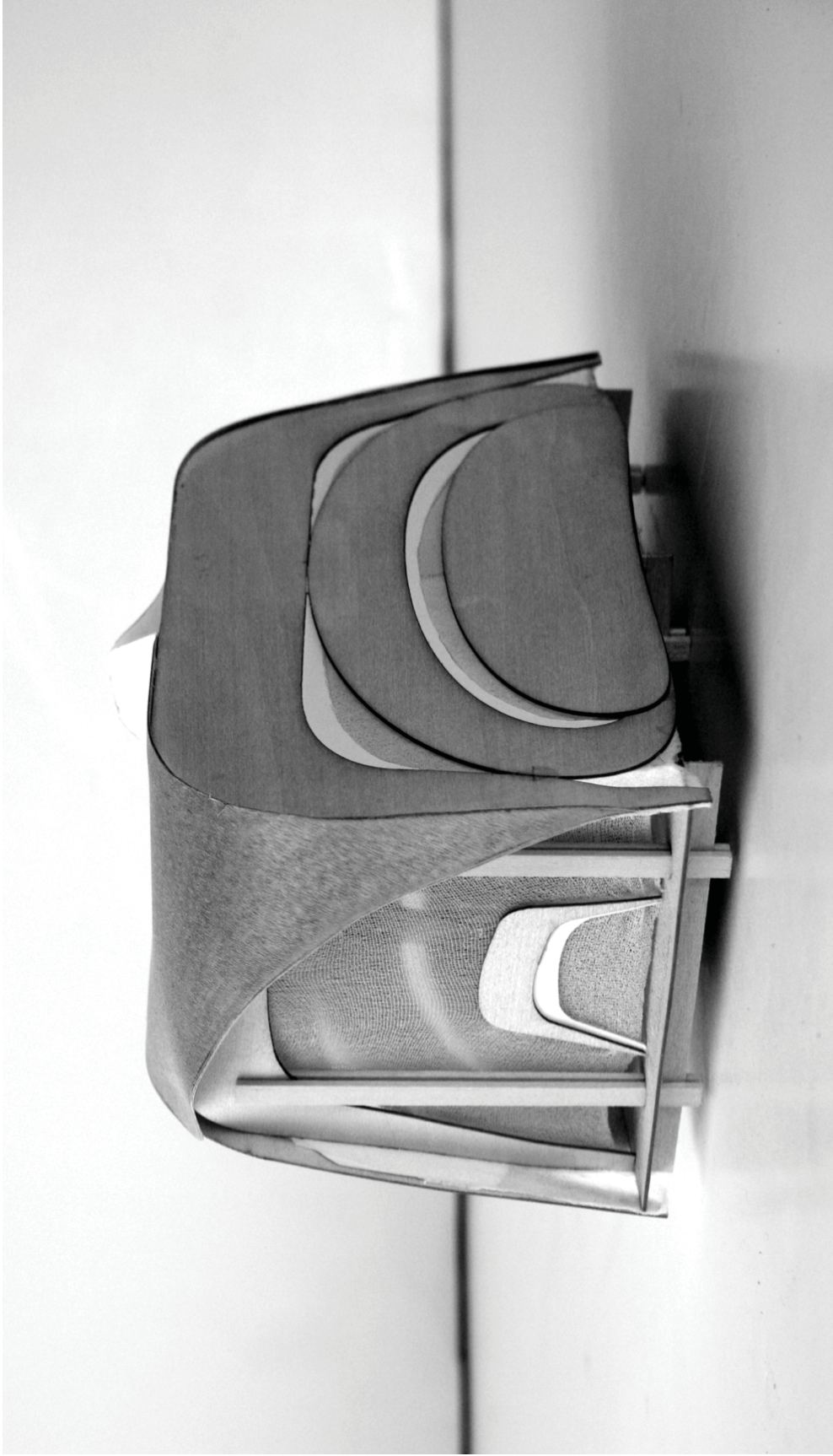
Fig.50: Sketch model of the storytelling pavillion - 4th iteration. The previous iteration neglected to incorporate a smokehole, so it has been split, and flashing has been added to articulate the opening.
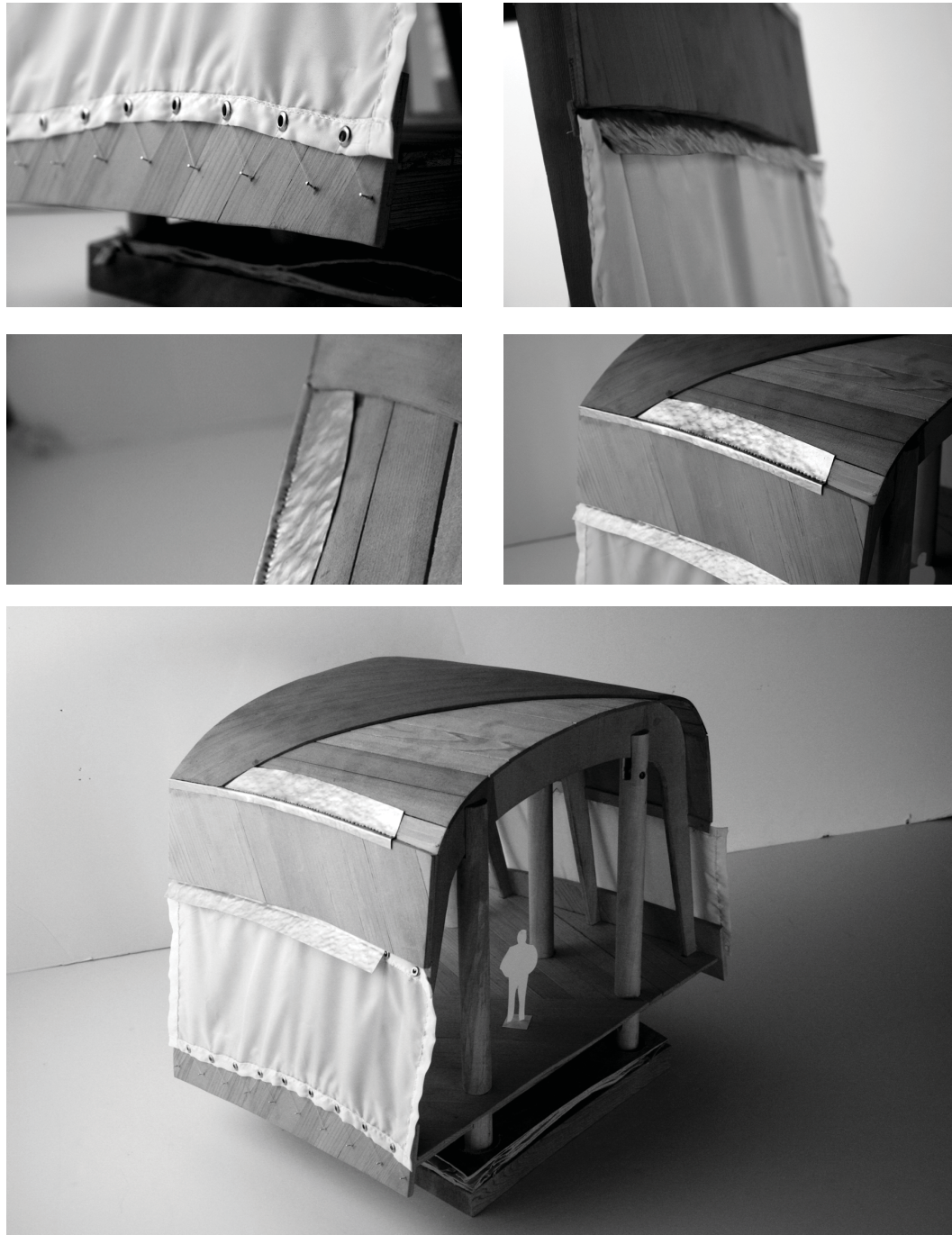
Fig.51: Sectional detail model. This model illustrates the relationship between the cedar cladding, the canvas glazing, and the copper flashing. Because the camp is seasonal (it only runs in the summer), the canvas has become a seasonal element. At the end of summer the canvas is re-moved, marking the end of the camping season. Without the canvas, the building become relics, weathering the winter storms. With the addition of canvas in the summer, the buildings become re-animated. The cedar cladding is cross-laminated, and steam bent as needed. Both the cross-lamination and curvature introduced by bending contribute to the lateral stability of the structure.

Fig.52: Seasonal renders of the carving shed. The character of the buildings changes with the addition/removal of the canvas.
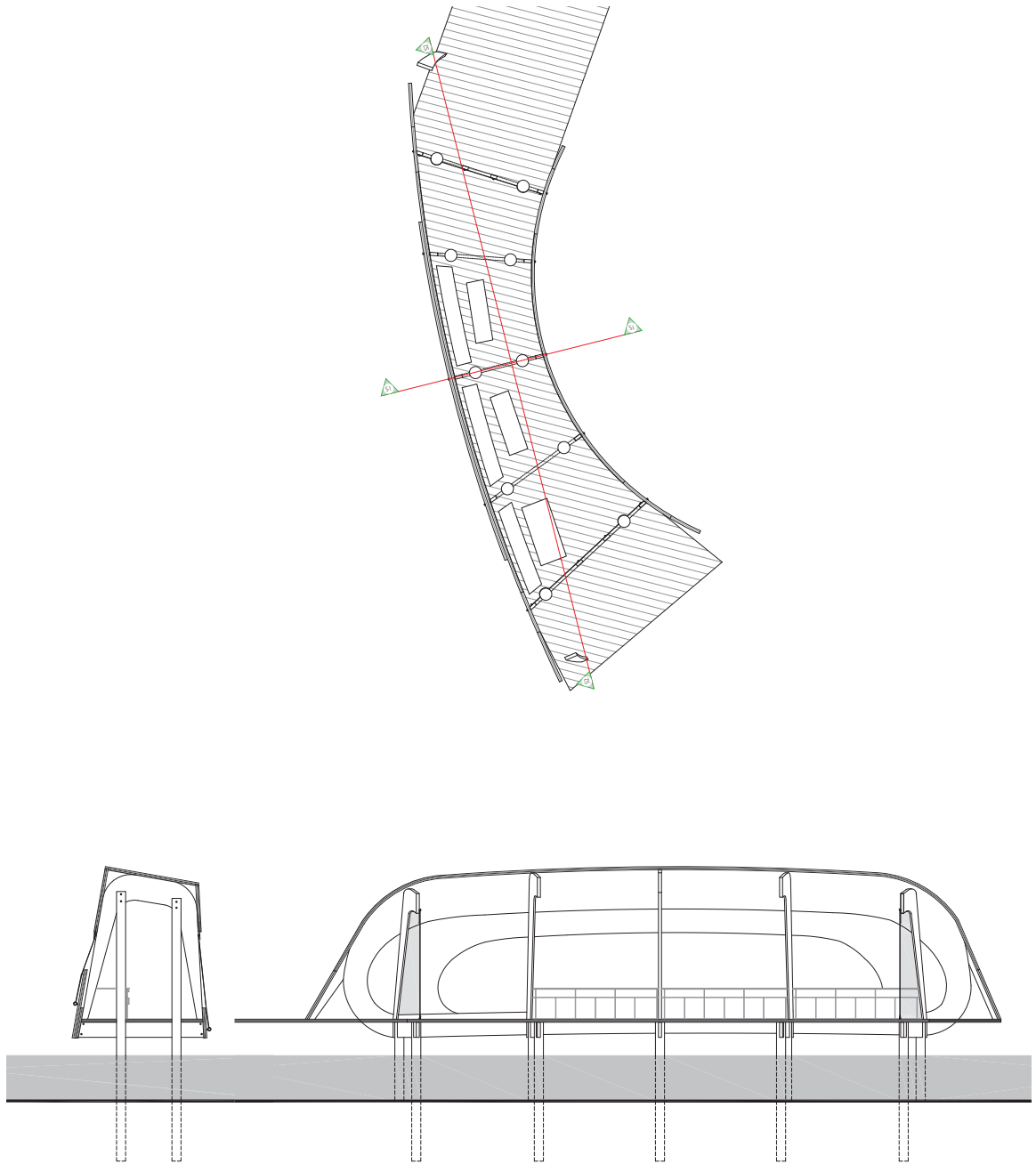
Fig.53: Plan and sections of the carving shed.

Winter

Summer

Fig.54: Seasonal renders of the storytelling pavilion. The character of the buildings changes with the addition/removal of the canvas.
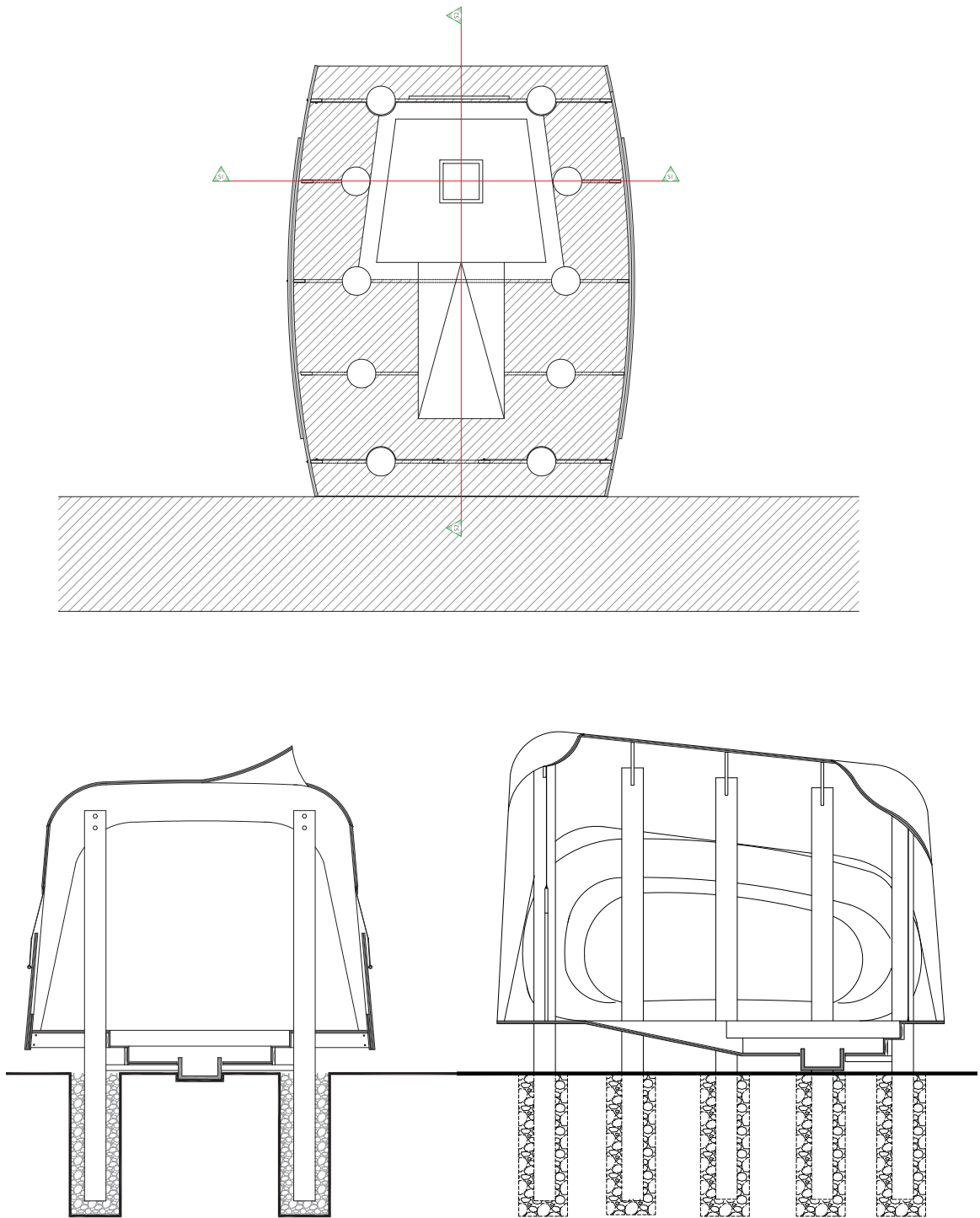
Fig.55: Plan and sections of storytelling pavilion.

Fig.56: Seasonal renders of the smokehouse/kitchen. The character of the buildings changes with the addition/removal of the canvas.
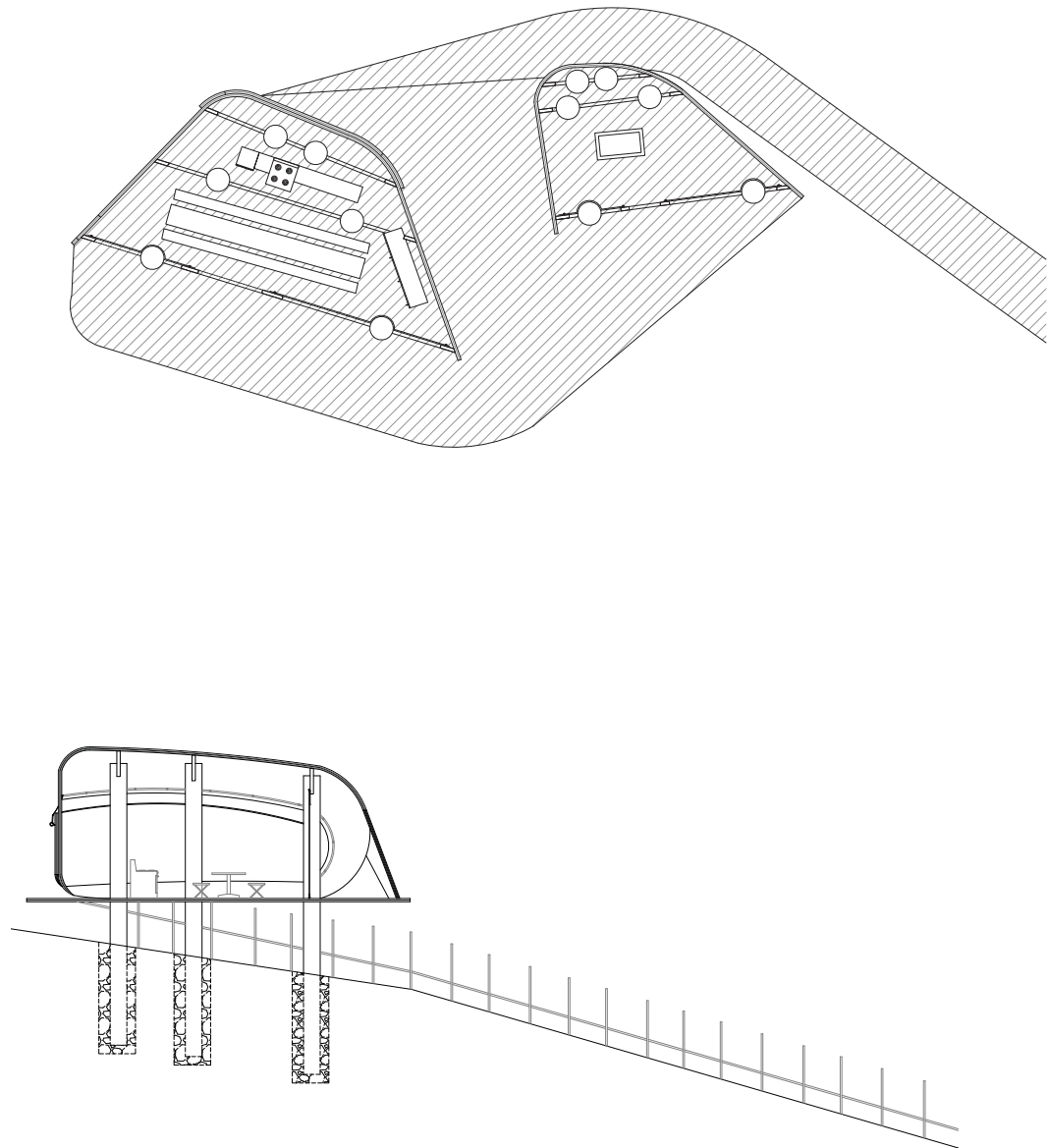
Fig.57: Plan and sections of smokehouse/kitchen.

Fig.58: 1 to 100 site model. The buildings are placed within the site context. An elders cabin, executed in the same building language as the existing sleeping cabins is visible within the margin. A raised walkway connects all of the elements within the site.

Chapter 3: Conclusion

This thesis began with the question: "how can storytelling be used as a design tool in order to help re-establish indigenous identity?"

As the work developed, I learned that storytelling is much more than a collection of words; it is the armature upon which a culture hangs. To me storytelling has become more than a simple collection of events and deeds: it is the cultural DNA of a people, constantly evolving as new information is added or adjusted. It was this quality of storytelling that I sought to capture with this thesis. By composing the buildings based on the fundamental elements of Haida art, the buildings could become armatures for the stories told within. They could be characters or places, adjusting their role according to the needs of the storyteller. The greatest challenge I came across in translating the forms of Haida art into architecture was retaining the essence of the simple paper sketch models created early in the project (figs 31-35). Though I feel I came close with iterations 3 and 4, the models are still not quite there, though I think it will be many years before they are.

A close examination of Haida building traditions led to the development of a construction language that was rooted in the vernacular of Haida buildings. In the same way that traditional Haida structures are composed of primary, secondary, and tertiary layers, I attempted to mirror this hierarchy within my own structures, thereby enabling the building to tell the story of how it came to be. As a first step I think this translation of Haida building traditions was successful, however there were a few issues that I am hopeful subsequent iterations will be able to address. Of particular interest are the primary vertical support members. Though they currently support the vertical load of the structure, this function could be integrated into the secondary structural member that spans between them, allowing for their removal, which would 'clean up' the interior spaces created by this system.

As an armature upon which stories (old and new) can be placed, I am hopeful that the additions to the Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp can become a first step towards developing an architecture that speaks not only for the Haida of Haida Gwaii, but also to them.

Haw'aa

Fig.59: The final design presentation.

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