

15 C4 Model Diagrams

2025-10-19

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1 C4 Model Diagrams

1.1 Vision-Based Pick and Place Robotic System

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1.2 Table of Contents

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-

1.3 1. Introduction

1.3.1 1.1 Purpose

This document presents the system architecture of the Vision-Based Pick and Place Robotic System using the **C4 model** (Context, Containers, Components, Code). The C4 model provides a hierarchical way to visualize software architecture at different levels of abstraction.

1.3.2 1.2 C4 Model Benefits

- **Hierarchical abstraction:** Zoom in/out from system context to code details
- **Audience-appropriate:** Different stakeholders focus on different levels
- **Communication:** Clear, unambiguous diagrams for technical and non-technical audiences
- **Documentation:** Living documentation that evolves with the system

1.3.3 1.3 Notation Legend

Person/System ← External entity (users, external systems)
[Type]

Container ← Application/data store
[Technology]

Component ← Logical grouping of functionality
[Details]

 > Relationship (synchronous)
- - - > Relationship (asynchronous)

1.4 2. C4 Model Overview

1.4.1 2.1 The Four C's

Level	Name	Audience	Abstraction	Purpose
C1	Context	All stakeholders	Highest	System scope and external dependencies
C2	Container	Technical leaders, architects	High	Runtime applications and data stores
C3	Component	Developers, architects	Medium	Logical components within containers
C4	Code	Developers	Lowest	Classes, interfaces, data structures

1.4.2 2.2 Our C4 Documentation Structure

C1: System Context

 > Robot System interacts with Operator, Manager, Engineer, MES, ERP

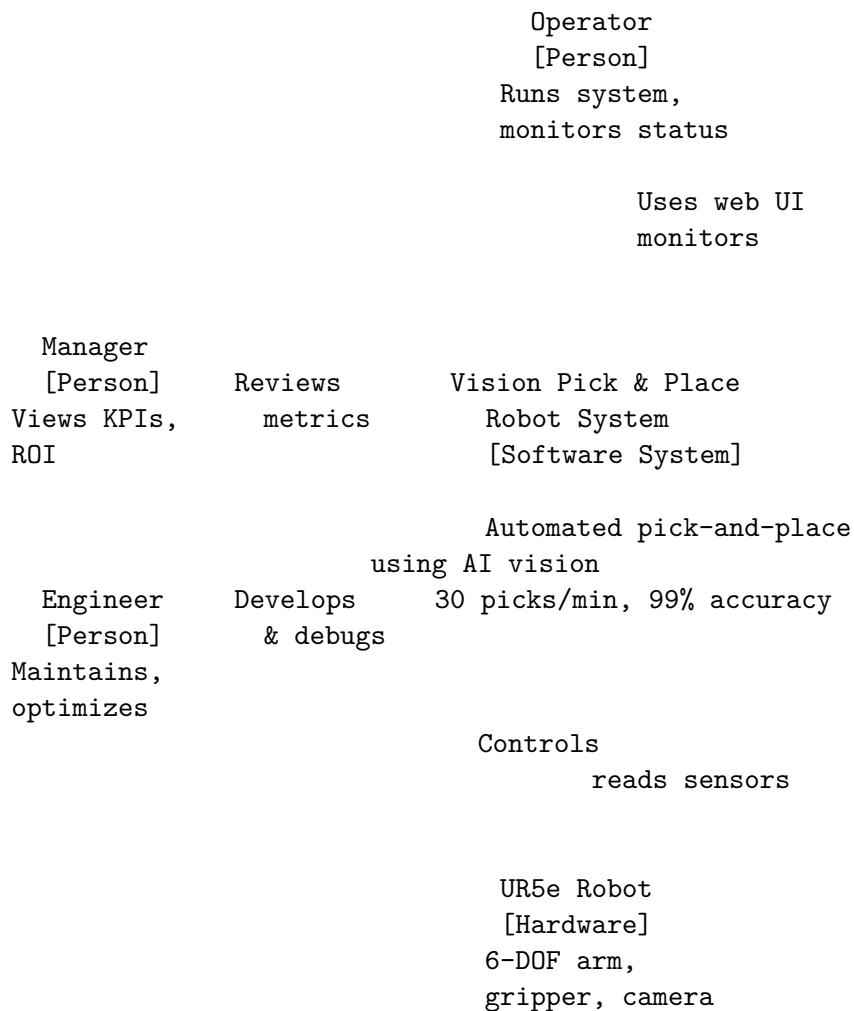
C2: Containers

 > Vision Pipeline (Docker container)
 > Motion Planning (Docker container)
 > Control System (Docker container)
 > Orchestrator (Docker container)
 > Web Backend (FastAPI container)
 > Web Frontend (React container)
 > Database (PostgreSQL container)
 > Monitoring (Grafana/Prometheus containers)
 > Message Bus (ROS2 DDS)

- C3: Components (per container)
- > Vision Pipeline: Camera Driver, Object Detector, Pose Estimator
 - > Motion Planning: MoveIt2 Planner, Collision Checker, Trajectory Generator
 - > Control: ros2_control Manager, Joint Controllers, Gripper Controller
 - > Orchestrator: Task Manager, Behavior Tree, State Machine
- C4: Code (selected critical components)
- > YoloDetector class
 - > GraspSynthesizer class
 - > PickPlaceServer class
-

1.5 3. Level 1: System Context Diagram

1.5.1 3.1 Context Diagram



MES [External System] Manufacturing Execution	Sends status pick data
ERP [External System] Enterprise Resource Planning	Sends metrics inventory
Safety PLC [External System] Emergency stop	E-stop signal safety status

1.5.2 3.2 Context Description

1.5.2.1 3.2.1 People

Person	Role	Interaction
Operator	Runs daily operations	Uses web UI to start/stop system, monitor status, handle errors
Manager	Oversees performance	Reviews KPIs, ROI metrics via dashboard
Engineer	Develops & maintains	Deploys code, debugs issues, optimizes performance via ROS2 tools
Maintenance Technician	Repairs & services	Diagnoses faults, performs preventive maintenance
Data Scientist	Trains AI models	Collects training data, updates object detection models

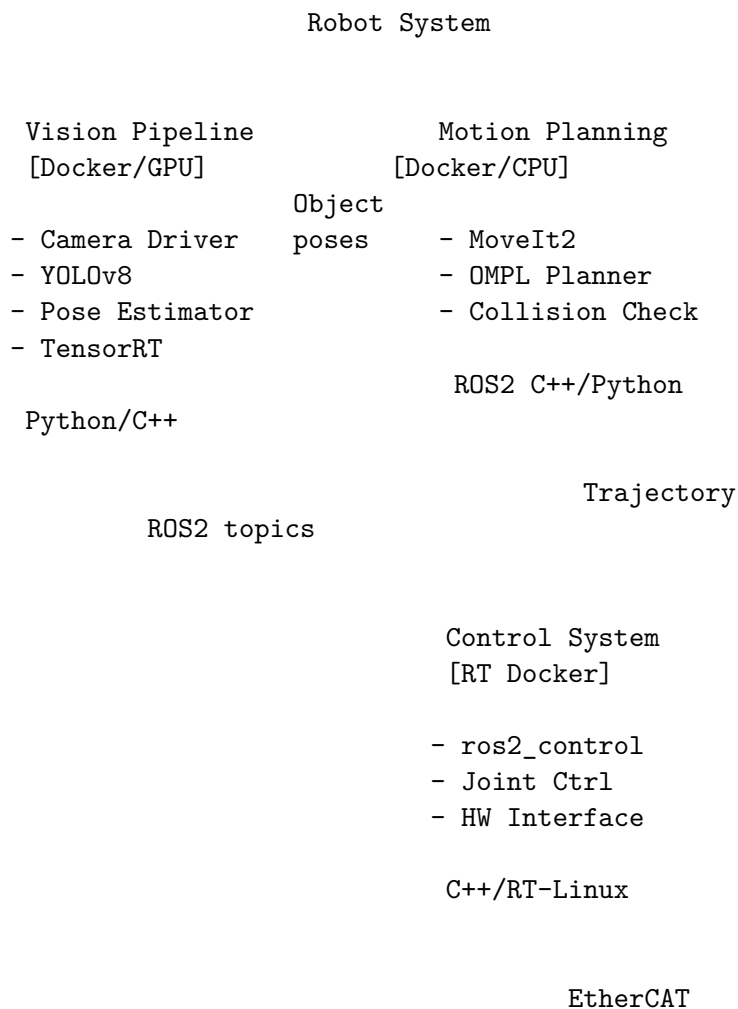
1.5.2.2 3.2.2 External Systems

System	Purpose	Integration
MES (Manufacturing Execution System)	Work orders, production tracking	REST API (bidirectional)

System	Purpose	Integration
ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)	Inventory, analytics	REST API (robot → ERP)
Safety PLC	Emergency stop, safety zones	Digital I/O, Modbus TCP
Robot Hardware (UR5e)	Physical manipulation	EtherCAT, URScript
Camera (RealSense D435i)	Vision sensing	USB 3.0, librealsense2 SDK
Gripper (Robotiq 2F-85)	Grasping	Modbus RTU over RS-485

1.6 4. Level 2: Container Diagram

1.6.1 4.1 Container Diagram



Task	Gripper Control
Orchestrator	[Docker]
[Docker]	Grasp
	cmd
- Behavior Tree	- Robotiq Driver
- State Machine	- Force Control
- Task Manager	Python
C++/Python	
	Modbus RTU
ROS2 actions	
ROS2 DDS	(CycloneDDS message bus)
Web Backend	
[Docker]	
- FastAPI	
- REST/gRPC API	
- SQLAlchemy	
Python 3.11	
HTTPS/WS	
Web Frontend	
[Docker/Nginx]	
- React 18	
- Next.js	
- Chart.js	
TypeScript/JS	
HTTPS	

Operator [Browser]	PostgreSQL [Container]
Chrome/Firefox	Operational data (picks, configs)
	v15.3
Grafana [Container]	
- Dashboards	InfluxDB [Container]
- Alerts	
v10.0	Time-series metrics
	v2.7
Prometheus [Container]	Metrics Collector [Container]
Scrapes metrics from all nodes	Publishes to Influx/Prom
v2.45	
	Python

1.6.2 4.2 Container Descriptions

1.6.2.1 4.2.1 Vision Pipeline Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	Python 3.10, C++17, ROS2 Humble, PyTorch 2.0, TensorRT 8.5
Runtime	Docker with NVIDIA GPU support
Responsibilities	- Capture RGB-D images- Detect objects (YOLOv8)- Estimate 6DoF poses (PCA/PVNet)- Publish object poses via ROS2

Attribute	Details
Data In	Raw camera frames (USB 3.0)
Data Out	/vision/object_poses (ROS2 topic)
Dependencies	RealSense D435i camera, CUDA runtime
Scaling	Single instance (stateless, can scale horizontally with multiple cameras)

1.6.2.2 4.2.2 Motion Planning Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	C++17, ROS2 Humble, MoveIt2 2.5, OMPL 1.6
Runtime	Docker (CPU-only)
Responsibilities	- Plan collision-free trajectories- Inverse kinematics- Cartesian path planning- Collision checking
Data In	Target poses (grasp/place) via ROS2 actions
Data Out	Joint trajectories
Dependencies	Robot URDF, collision meshes
Scaling	Single instance (stateful due to planning scene)

1.6.2.3 4.2.3 Control System Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	C++17, ROS2 Humble, ros2_control 2.27, RT-Linux kernel (PREEMPT_RT)
Runtime	Docker with real-time capabilities (-cap-add=SYS_NICE, -ulimit rtprio=99)
Responsibilities	- 1kHz control loop- Execute joint trajectories- Low-level robot communication (EtherCAT)- Safety monitoring
Data In	Joint trajectories from motion planner
Data Out	Joint states (positions, velocities, efforts)
Dependencies	UR5e robot (EtherCAT interface)
Scaling	Single instance per robot (not scalable)

1.6.2.4 4.2.4 Task Orchestrator Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	C++/Python, ROS2 Humble, BehaviorTree.CPP 4.0
Runtime	Docker

Attribute	Details
Responsibilities	- High-level task sequencing- State machine management- Error recovery logic- Workflow coordination
Data In	System triggers, sensor data
Data Out	ROS2 actions to subsystems (vision, motion, gripper)
Dependencies	All subsystem ROS2 action servers
Scaling	Single instance (stateful orchestration)

1.6.2.5 4.2.5 Web Backend Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	Python 3.11, FastAPI 0.104, SQLAlchemy 2.0, gRPC
Runtime	Docker with Gunicorn (4 workers)
Responsibilities	- REST/gRPC API for UI- Database CRUD operations- Authentication (OAuth2/JWT)- ROS2 bridge (rclpy client)
Data In	HTTP requests from frontend
Data Out	JSON responses, ROS2 messages
Dependencies	PostgreSQL, ROS2 nodes
Scaling	Horizontal (stateless, load balanced)

1.6.2.6 4.2.6 Web Frontend Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	TypeScript, React 18, Next.js 14, Chart.js, WebSockets
Runtime	Docker with Nginx (static file serving)
Responsibilities	- User interface- Real-time dashboard- System configuration forms- Live video feed
Data In	REST API responses, WebSocket streams
Data Out	HTTP requests to backend
Dependencies	Web Backend API
Scaling	Horizontal (CDN-ready static files)

1.6.2.7 4.2.7 PostgreSQL Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	PostgreSQL 15.3
Runtime	Docker with persistent volume

Attribute	Details
Responsibilities	- Store operational data (picks, configs, calibrations)- Transactional guarantees- Query analytics
Data In	SQL queries from Web Backend
Data Out	Query results
Dependencies	None (standalone)
Scaling	Vertical (read replicas for scaling reads)

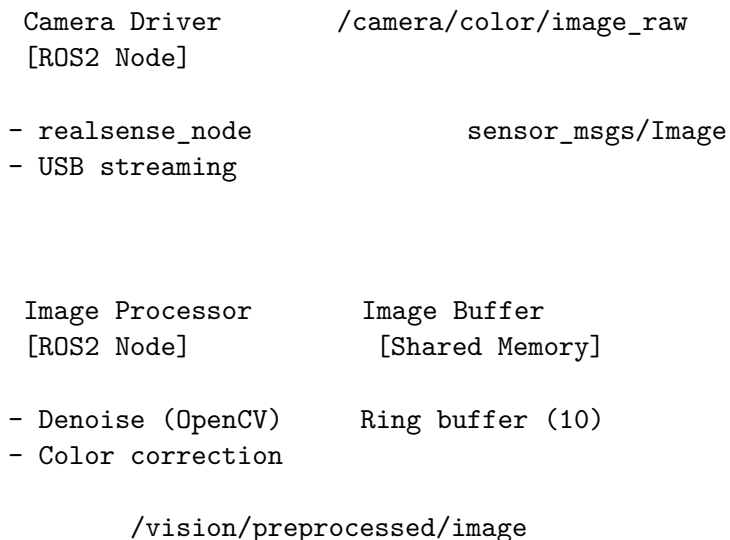
1.6.2.8 4.2.8 InfluxDB Container

Attribute	Details
Technology	InfluxDB 2.7 (time-series database)
Runtime	Docker with persistent volume
Responsibilities	- Store time-series metrics (cycle time, latency, joint states)- High-write throughput- Retention policies
Data In	Metrics from Metrics Collector
Data Out	Query results for Grafana
Dependencies	None
Scaling	Horizontal (InfluxDB Enterprise clustering)

1.7 5. Level 3: Component Diagrams

1.7.1 5.1 Vision Pipeline Components

Vision Pipeline Container



Object Detector [ROS2 Node]	/vision/detections
- YOLOv8 inference	vision_msgs/Detection2D
- TensorRT engine	
- GPU acceleration	
Pose Estimator [ROS2 Node]	Detection Sync [ApproxTimeSynch]
- PCA-based pose	Sync depth +
- Point cloud proc	detections
- TF2 broadcaster	
	/vision/object_poses
	/tf (object frames)
Visualization [ROS2 Node]	/vision/debug/detections
- Draw bboxes	For debugging in RViz2
- Overlay poses	

1.7.2 5.2 Motion Planning Components

Motion Planning Container

Pick Place Server [ROS2 Action]	/pick_place (action server)
- Sequence pick/ place motions	

Calls

MoveGroup
Interface
[MoveIt2 API]

- setPoseTarget()
- plan()
- execute()

Uses

OMPL Planner
[Plugin]

IK Solver
[KDL Plugin]

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| - RRTConnect | - Analytical IK |
| - RRT* | - Numerical IK |
| - PRM | - Multiple sols |

Queries

Planning Scene
[Shared State]

- Robot state
- Collision objects
- Allowed collis.

Checks

Collision Checker
[FCL Library]

- Self collision
- Env collision
- Continuous check

Trajectory
Processor
[Time-optimal]

Publishes smoothed trajectory

/joint_trajectory (topic)

- Velocity limits

- Accel limits
- Jerk limits

1.7.3 5.3 Control System Components

Control System Container

Controller Main control loop (1 kHz)
 Manager
 [ros2_control]

- Load controllers
- Update loop
- State publishing

Updates (1 kHz)

Joint Trajectory
 Controller
 [Plugin]

- Interpolate traj
- PID control
- Feedforward

Commands

Hardware
 Interface
 [Custom Plugin]

- read() (state)
- write() (cmd)

EtherCAT

UR Driver

[Library]

- TCP/IP socket
- URScript
- Real-time client

Joint State Publishes current joint states
Broadcaster
[ros2_control] /joint_states (topic, 100 Hz)

- Position
- Velocity
- Effort

Safety Monitor Monitors limits, publishes alerts
[ROS2 Node]

- Joint limits /safety/alerts (topic)
- Velocity limits
- Force limits

1.7.4 5.4 Task Orchestrator Components

Task Orchestrator Container

Task Manager Main entry point
[ROS2 Node]

- Start/stop tasks
- Error recovery

Executes

Behavior Tree
Engine
[BT.CPP]

- Load XML tree
- Tick nodes
- Blackboard

Ticks

Action Nodes
[Plugins]

- CaptureImage
- DetectObjects
- PlanGrasp
- ExecutePick
- ExecutePlace

Condition Nodes
[Plugins]

- ObjectDetected
- GraspValid
- WaitForTrigger

Calls ROS2 services/actions

Service Clients
[ROS2 Clients]

- /vision/detect
- /grasp/compute
- /pick_place

Blackboard
[Memory Store]

Shared state between BT nodes

- detections
- target_object
- grasp_pose
- error_count

State Publisher
[ROS2 Publisher]

Publishes orchestrator state

/task/status

TaskStatus msg (10 Hz)

1.8 6. Level 4: Code Diagrams

1.8.1 6.1 YoloDetector Class Diagram

YoloDetector

```
- model: torch.nn.Module
- device: torch.device
- bridge: CvBridge
- confidence_threshold: float
- iou_threshold: float
- image_sub: Subscriber<Image>
- detections_pub: Publisher<Detection2DArray>
- debug_image_pub: Publisher<Image>

+ __init__()
+ load_model() -> None
+ image_callback(msg: Image) -> None
+ run_inference(image: np.ndarray) -> List[Detection]
+ parse_detections(results) -> Detection2DArray
+ draw_detections(image, detections) -> np.ndarray
- preprocess_image(image: np.ndarray) -> torch.Tensor
- postprocess_results(outputs) -> List[BBox]
- apply_nms(boxes, scores) -> List[int]
```

uses

TensorRTEngine

```
- engine: trt.ICudaEngine
- context: trt.IExecutionContext
- input_shape: Tuple[int, int, int]
- bindings: List[int]

+ __init__(engine_path: str)
+ infer(input_tensor: torch.Tensor) -> torch.Tensor
- allocate_buffers() -> None
```

1.8.2 6.2 GraspSynthesizer Class Diagram

GraspSynthesizer

```

- service: Service<ComputeGrasps>
- num_candidates: int
- gripper_max_width: float
- friction_coeff: float
- quality_evaluator: GraspQualityEvaluator

+ __init__()
+ compute_grasps_callback(req, res) -> Response
+ generate_box_grasps(req) -> List[Grasp]
+ generate_cylinder_grasps(req) -> List[Grasp]
+ generate_generic_grasps(req) -> List[Grasp]
- compute_grasp_pose(obj_pose, approach, rot) -> Pose
- check_force_closure(grasp) -> bool

```

uses

GraspQualityEvaluator

```

- metric_type: str # "ferrari_canny" | "volume"

+ evaluate(grasp: Grasp, object: Object) -> float
- compute_ferrari_canny(contact_pts) -> float
- compute_grasp_wrench_space(contacts) -> np.ndarray

```

1.8.3 6.3 PickPlaceServer Class Diagram

PickPlaceServer

```

- action_server: ActionServer<PickPlace>
- move_group: MoveGroupInterface
- gripper_client: ActionClient<GripperCommand>
- planning_scene: PlanningScene

+ __init__(node_options)
+ handle_goal(uuid, goal) -> GoalResponse
+ handle_cancel(goal_handle) -> CancelResponse
+ handle_accepted(goal_handle) -> None
- execute(goal_handle) -> None
- plan_pick(target, approach_dist) -> Plan
- plan_place(target) -> Plan
- execute_trajectory(plan) -> bool
- close_gripper(width, force) -> bool
- open_gripper() -> bool
- retreat(distance) -> bool

```

- publish_feedback(handle, status, progress) -> None

uses

MoveGroupInterface (MoveIt2)

- robot_model: RobotModel
- planning_scene_monitor: PlanningSceneMonitor
- trajectory_execution_manager: TrajectoryExecutionMgr

+ setPoseTarget(pose: Pose) -> None
+ setJointValueTarget(joints: List[float]) -> None
+ plan(plan: Plan&) -> MoveItErrorCode
+ execute(plan: Plan) -> MoveItErrorCode
+ computeCartesianPath(waypoints) -> double
+ getCurrentPose() -> PoseStamped
+ getCurrentJointValues() -> List[float]

1.9 7. Cross-Cutting Concerns

1.9.1 7.1 Logging Architecture

All ROS2 Nodes
(Vision, Motion, Control, Orchestrator, etc.)

rclcpp::Logger
(stdout/stderr)

Docker Log Driver
(json-file or syslog)

JSON logs

Filebeat
(Log shipper)

Forwards

Logstash

(Log parsing, enrichment)

- Parse JSON
- Add metadata (hostname, container)
- Filter by log level

Indexes

Elasticsearch

(Log storage & search)

- Index: logs-robot-YYYY.MM.DD
- Retention: 30 days

Queries

Kibana

(Log visualization)

- Dashboards
- Alerts (error rate > 10/min)

1.9.2 7.2 Monitoring & Metrics

Metrics Collector (Python ROS2 Node)

- Subscribes to /task/status, /joint_states, etc.
- Publishes Prometheus metrics on :8000/metrics
- Writes to InfluxDB

Scrapes (15s interval)

Prometheus

(Metrics storage & alerting)

- Time-series DB
- Retention: 15 days
- Alert rules (uptime < 99%, cycle_time > 3s)

Queries (PromQL)

Grafana

(Dashboards & visualization)

- Real-time dashboard (refresh 5s)
- Historical trends
- Alerts to Slack/email

1.9.3 7.3 Security Architecture

User (Browser)

HTTPS (TLS 1.3)

Nginx Reverse Proxy

- TLS termination
- Rate limiting (100 req/min per IP)
- Firewall rules (deny all except 443)

HTTP (internal network)

Web Backend (FastAPI)

- OAuth2/JWT authentication
- RBAC (Operator, Engineer, Admin roles)
- API key for MES/ERP

SQL (prepared statements)

PostgreSQL

- TLS encryption
- User permissions (least privilege)
- Audit logging enabled

ROS2 Security:

ROS2 DDS (CycloneDDS)

- DDS Security (SROS2)
- Encrypted topics (AES-256)
- Authentication (X.509 certificates)
- Access control lists (permissions.xml)

1.10 8. Deployment View

1.10.1 8.1 Physical Deployment (Production)

Intel NUC (Main Compute)

CPU: Intel i7-12700H (12 cores)

RAM: 32 GB DDR4

Disk: 1 TB NVMe SSD

OS: Ubuntu 22.04 LTS + Docker

Motion Planning (Docker)	Orchestrator (Docker)
-----------------------------	--------------------------

Control System (Docker RT)	Web Backend (Docker)
-------------------------------	-------------------------

PostgreSQL (Docker)	Prometheus (Docker)
------------------------	------------------------

Gigabit Ethernet

Jetson Xavier NX (Edge Compute)

GPU: 384-core NVIDIA Volta

CPU: 6-core NVIDIA Carmel ARM64

RAM: 8 GB LPDDR4

OS: Jetson Linux (L4T) + Docker

Vision Pipeline (Docker GPU)	Metrics Collector (Docker)
---------------------------------	----------------------------------

- YOLOv8 +
TensorRT
- Pose Estimator

USB 3.0

RealSense D435i
(Camera)

EtherCAT

Modbus RTU

UR5e Robot
(6-DOF Arm)

Robotiq Gripper
(2F-85)

1.10.2 8.2 Logical Deployment (Docker Network)

robot_net (Bridge Network)
Subnet: 172.20.0.0/16

Vision Pipeline	172.20.0.10
Motion Planning	172.20.0.20
Control System	172.20.0.30
Orchestrator	172.20.0.40
Web Backend	172.20.0.50
Web Frontend	172.20.0.60
PostgreSQL	172.20.0.70
InfluxDB	172.20.0.71
Prometheus	172.20.0.80
Grafana	172.20.0.90
Metrics Collector	172.20.0.100

(All containers communicate via this internal network)
(No external access except Web Frontend on port 443)

Host Network Ports:

- 443 (HTTPS) → Nginx → Web Frontend
- 3000 (Grafana UI) → Grafana
- 5432 (PostgreSQL) → Blocked externally
- 9090 (Prometheus) → Blocked externally

1.11 9. Dynamic Views

1.11.1 9.1 Pick and Place Sequence (Simplified C4 Dynamic)

Operator	Web UI	Backend	Orchestrator	Vision	Motion	Control
----------	--------	---------	--------------	--------	--------	---------

```

Click "Start"
  >
    POST /start
    >
      StartTask()
      >
        Capture()
        >
        Objects
        <
        PlanGrasp()
        >
        GraspPose
        <
        ExecutePick()
        >
        Done
      <
    200 OK
  <
Status update
<

```

1.11.2 9.2 Error Recovery (Dynamic Behavior)

Orchestrator	Vision	Grasp Planner	Motion	Control
--------------	--------	---------------	--------	---------

```

DetectObjects
  >
  Empty[]
<

```

```

[Retry 1/3]
DetectObjects
  >
  [cube]
<

```

```

ComputeGrasps
  >
  Grasp
<

```

```

ExecutePick
  >
  FAILED

```



```

<

[Retry 1/3 with adjusted force]
ExecutePick(force=25N)

>

SUCCESS
<

```

1.12 10. Summary

1.12.1 10.1 C4 Model Completeness

Level 1 (Context): System scope, external actors, external systems
Level 2 (Containers): 11 runtime containers (Docker) with technologies
Level 3 (Components): Detailed breakdown of Vision, Motion, Control, Orchestrator
Level 4 (Code): Class diagrams for critical components (YoloDetector, GraspSynthesizer, PickPlaceServer)

1.12.2 10.2 Key Architectural Patterns

Pattern	Application
Microservices	Each subsystem is an independent Docker container
Pub/Sub	ROS2 DDS for asynchronous communication
Request/Reply	ROS2 services for synchronous operations
Action Pattern	Long-running tasks (motion planning, pick/place)
Layered Architecture	Clear separation: Hardware → Firmware → Middleware → Application → UI
Repository Pattern	Database access via SQLAlchemy ORM
Dependency Injection	Constructor injection for testability

1.12.3 10.3 Technology Summary

C4 Level	Diagram Count	Technologies Visualized
C1: Context	1	Operator, Manager, Engineer, MES, ERP, Safety PLC, UR5e, Camera, Gripper
C2: Containers	1	11 Docker containers (Vision, Motion, Control, Orchestrator, Backend, Frontend, PostgreSQL, InfluxDB, Prometheus, Grafana, Metrics)
C3: Components	4	20+ components (Camera Driver, YOLOv8, Pose Estimator, MoveIt2, ros2_control, Behavior Tree, etc.)
C4: Code	3	3 critical classes (YoloDetector, GraspSynthesizer, PickPlaceServer)

C4 Level	Diagram Count	Technologies Visualized
Cross-Cutting	3	Logging (ELK), Monitoring (Prometheus/Grafana), Security (OAuth2/TLS)
Deployment	2	Physical (NUC + Jetson) and Logical (Docker network)
Dynamic	2	Pick-place sequence, Error recovery

1.12.4 10.4 Next Steps

1. **Validation:** Review diagrams with stakeholders (operators, engineers, architects)
2. **Implementation:** Use C3/C4 diagrams as blueprints for coding
3. **Documentation:** Generate PlantUML or Structurizr DSL for automated rendering
4. **Updates:** Keep diagrams synchronized with code changes (living documentation)

Document Status: v1.0 Complete **Next Document:** Building Block Diagrams (module decomposition, data flow) **Dependencies:** High-Level Design (08), Low-Level Design (14), Technical Stack (05)
