

04

## ***Multi-functional Community Center for the TGR Immigrants***

Independent Research and Design  
Teamwork

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I travelled downstream the Yangtze River from Chongqing to Yichang in the summer of 2015, the year before entering college. It was a famous route because it was going to see the Three Gorges Dam.

Since a very young age, the story of the construction of the TGD was a grand show of the development of China. It became the symbol of advanced technology and political power.

But the movie *Still Life* told another story. It is not a story of construction, but a story of destruction. Cities of 2000 years were destroyed in two years, and submerged in a moment. What was also submerged was the hometown of 1.4 million Three Gorges Immigrants. They were forced to immigrate to a new town or other provinces hundreds of miles away. They have to start from the ground.

It is now twenty years after the immigration. Young peasants have come to middle age, children have grown up, and the elderly have passed away. After the period of a generation, how are they doing now?

***Have they reconstructed what was lost?***

***Have they savaged their spiritual hometown?***

***Have they mended their cracked memory and broken social relationships?***

*What combines people together?  
Where are you from?*





Power:  
Political Power for Hydropower

As one of the biggest infrastructure projects, the Three Gorges Dam Project aims to mitigate the risk of flooding and generate large amount of hydroelectricity. The water level in the Three Gorges Reservoir (TGR) area will rise by more than 40 meters, meaning that the homes of 1.4 million people will be submerged underwater.

Few of them left voluntarily. Even though the government put the immigration project prior to all other affairs, it is still obvious that to generate great amount of hydropower, the government executed great power to relocate these people.

1.4 Million:  
The Three Gorges Immigration

As the water level rose from 135 meters to 175 meter, approximately 10,000 square kilometers of land was submerged, leaving 20 counties underwater.

The immigration project was the most important project during the construction of the dam, 1.4 million people sequentially left their home and moved to a new place in almost ten years. The immigration project was divided into three stages, parallel with the rise of water level from 135m to 150m

and finally reached 175m.(See Fig.1)

In the history of PRC, there were two times of large scale involuntary immigration. The first one was during the Cultural Revolution, and the second one was the Three Gorges Immigration.

Underwater:  
Submerged Homes And Stories

*Hometown, villages and counties which were built along the past two thousand years, were demolished in two years, lying underwater as ruins.* Houses, ancestor halls, tombs with no significant historical values were all destructed. In Chinese culture, ancestor worship is a vital part of the spiritual life. It is not only buildings that were submerged, but also the physical existence of the spiritual life and the material carrier of their memory and identity.

In 2002, the Three Gorges Immigrants were rewarded the Moving China Award, honoring their sacrifice for the “great project of the nation”. Media coverage about the life of immigrants always seems harmonious and prosperous. However, more and more field studies and researches began to review the covered stories, which were not as wonderful as described.

As the social problems were covered, there is no sufficient resources and researches to solve these problems. What was damaged remain damaged.

Relocation:  
The Hidden Problems

There are two relocation types: moving upwards to mountain area and leaving Sichuan to other provinces, such as Guangdong, Shanghai and Guangxi. A big family or a clan might be separated and assigned to different relocation destinations. Despite the government provided certain amount of economic support to the immigrants, they still suffer a lot in an unfamiliar place.

Divided into different groups, they were separated from their relatives and neighbours. They have nowhere to come back to, as their homes were under water. Besides, these immigrants were mostly peasants, they have no other skills to earn a living when their land and field were lost. (see Fig.2)

- 1 Break of social network
- 2 Loss of cultural identities
- 3 Lack of source of income

Community Center as a Social Connector

A multi-functional community centre will be constructed along the bank, serving as a spatial and social node of the community.

- 1 Reinforce social relations
- 2 Providing professional assistance

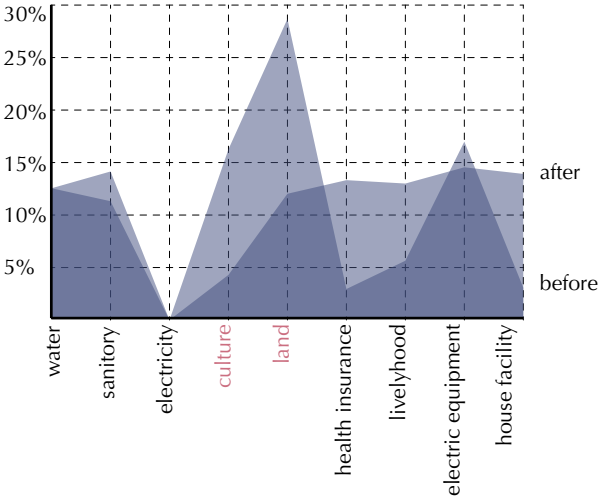


Fig.2 The contribution to poverty

Factor contributing to the poverty condition changed rapidly. Losing local culture and plowland directly led to the decrease of income.

1 Source photo of the cover image credit to Simon.JN, Li Feng  
2 Zeng Wei, Wang Linlin. Study On The Optimization Of The Three Gorges Immigrant Community From The Perspective Of Social Network: A Case Study Of Fengle Street Community, Kaizhou District, Chongqing [J]. Chongqing Architecture, 2017,16 (07): 5-10  
3 Yue Liu, Chuanmin Shuai, Huimin Zhou, How to identify poor immigrants? - An empirical study of the Three Gorges Reservoir in China  
4 Zhou Yujin. Cultural Adaptation Of Local Backward Migrants In The Three Gorges Project [D]. Southwest University, 2014  
5 The Three Gorges Immigration Project Report

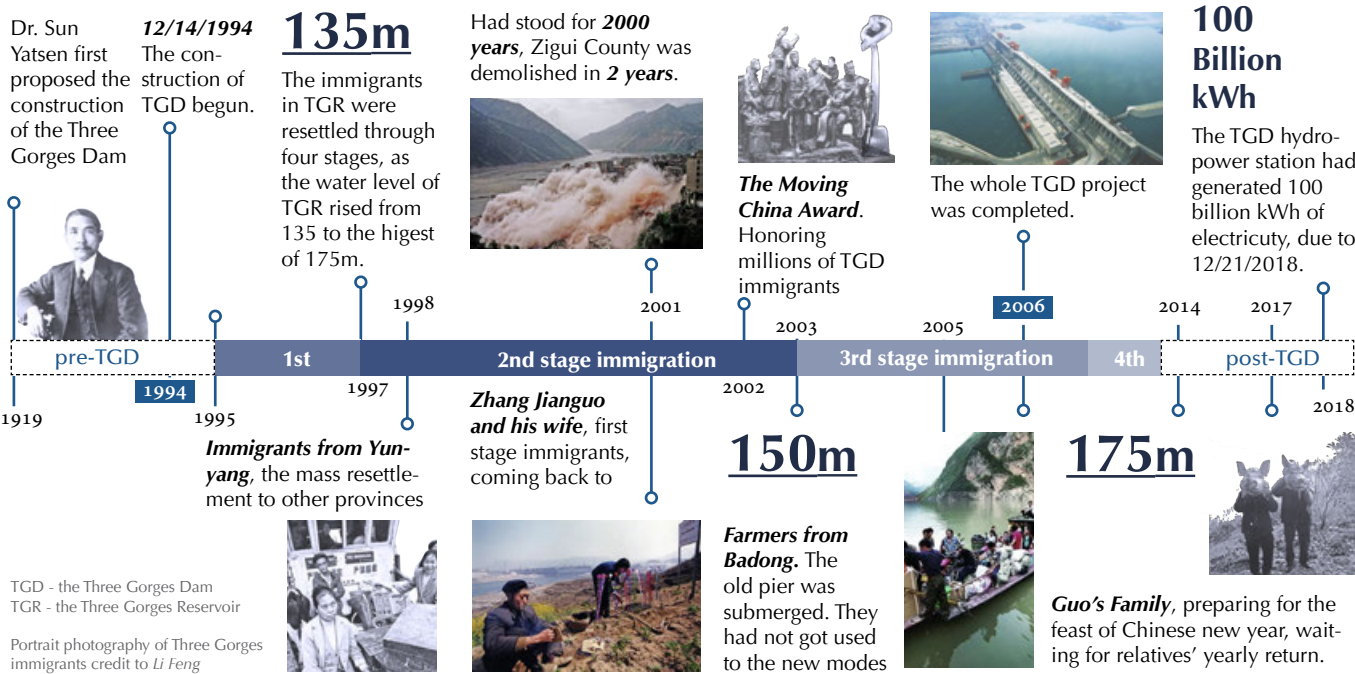
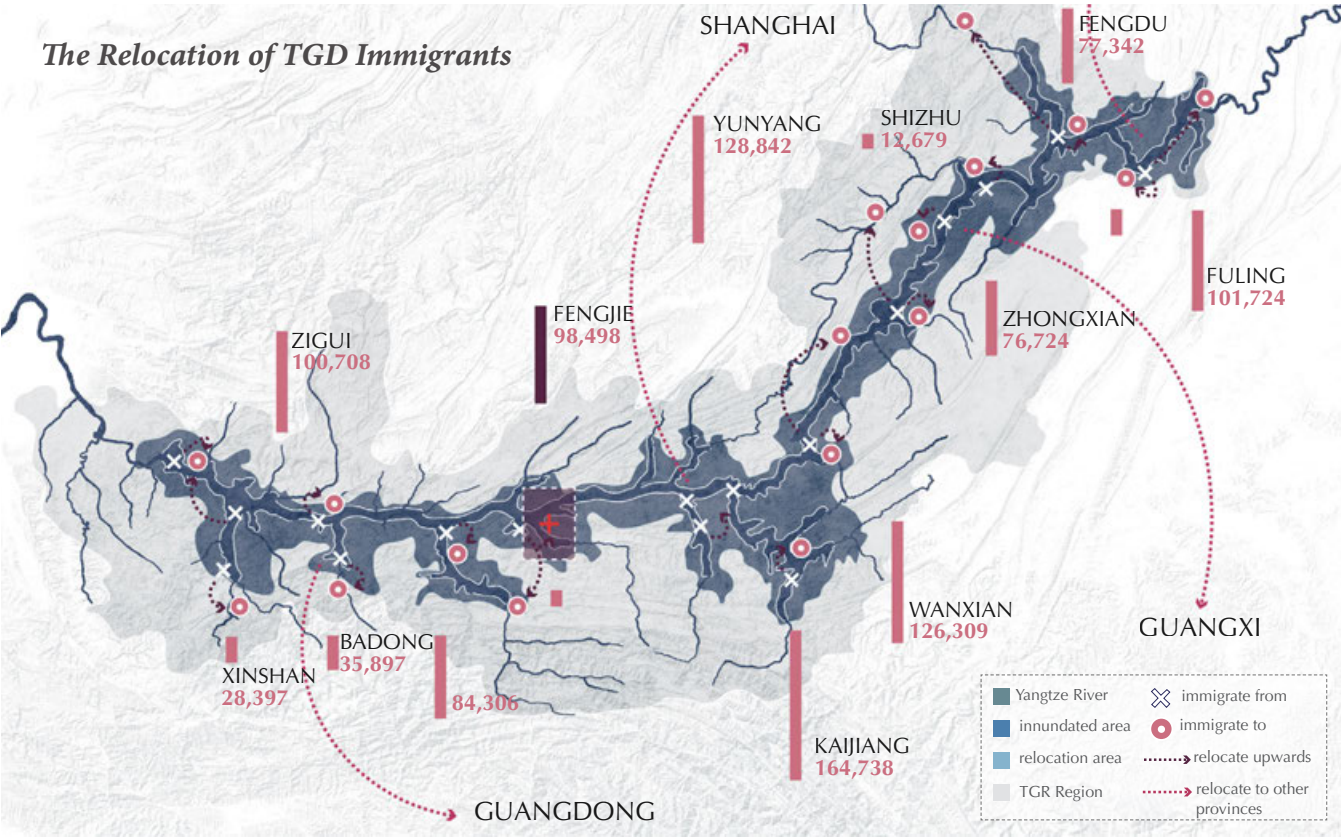


Fig.1 Timeline of the Three Gorges Dam Project (above: construction history; below: the immigration history)







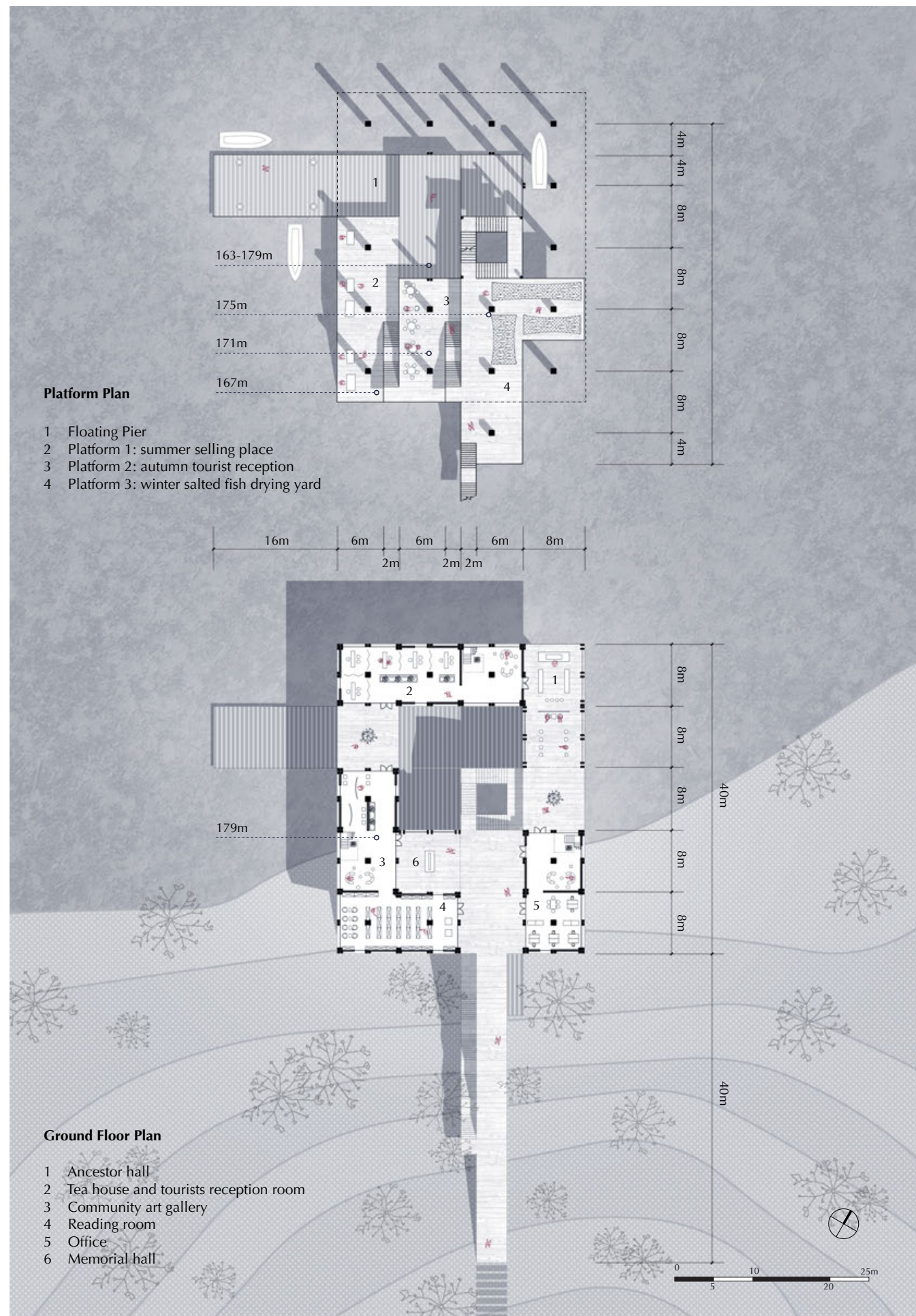


## Symbol of the Community

Looking from the Yangtze River, the community centre is like a beacon, announcing the adjacency to home. The projection of the structure reminds immigrants of their submerged home. Critical rooms serve as the new clan hall for gathering and ancestor worship. This is the spiritual space floating on Yangtze River, memorizing the past and directing towards the future. Every new town in the Three Gorges Reservoir can build this community centre and customize it to their own form and functions. Series of community centres representing the submerged memory of the villages will again reveal its identity to people passing through.



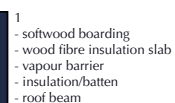




*Above the water: community center*

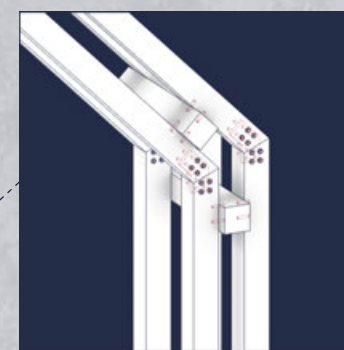
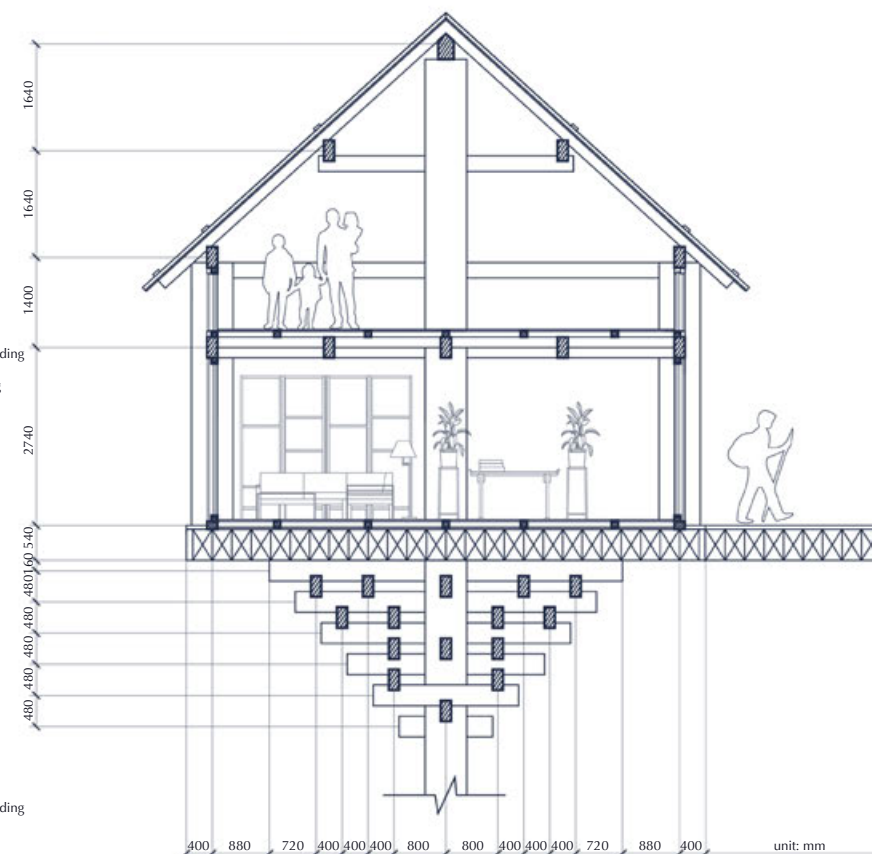
Functional units serve as memorial halls to worship ancestors, lecture room for skill training and education, tea house for leisure time and tourists reception and workspace to handle fish.



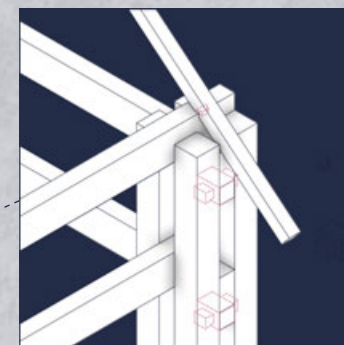


Technical drawing of a window frame cross-section. It shows a double-pane window with a thermal break (indicated by a dashed line). The frame is mounted on a wall, and a drainage system is visible at the bottom, consisting of a channel and a pipe. The number '2' is labeled on the left side of the frame.

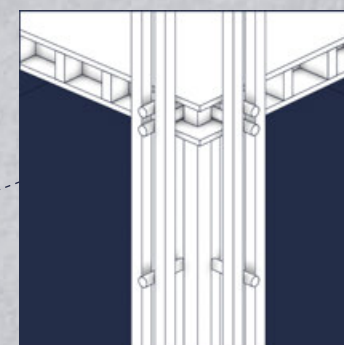
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### Wooden Frame



### Wooden Frame



Sliding Rail



## Bucket Arch



