

# AGNOTOLOGY OF PREFABRICATION

INDIVIDUAL WORK

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ELECTIVE- CONSTRUCTION ECOLOGIES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE  
VISUAL/TECH  
INSTRUCTOR- THOMAS SCHAPERKOTTER

PROJECT-HEMEROSCOPIUM HOUSE  
LAS ROZAS, MADRID, SPAIN (2008)  
BY ENSEMBLE STUDIO

Agnotology is the field of study that examines the cultural production of ignorance. It is a form of knowledge that considers on how ignorance is developed and gains momentum.

The project Hemeroscopium House by Ensemble Studio is known for its unconventional usage of heavy prefabricated elements. It is often described as ecofriendly prefab house. But there are many things ignored while talking about this project.

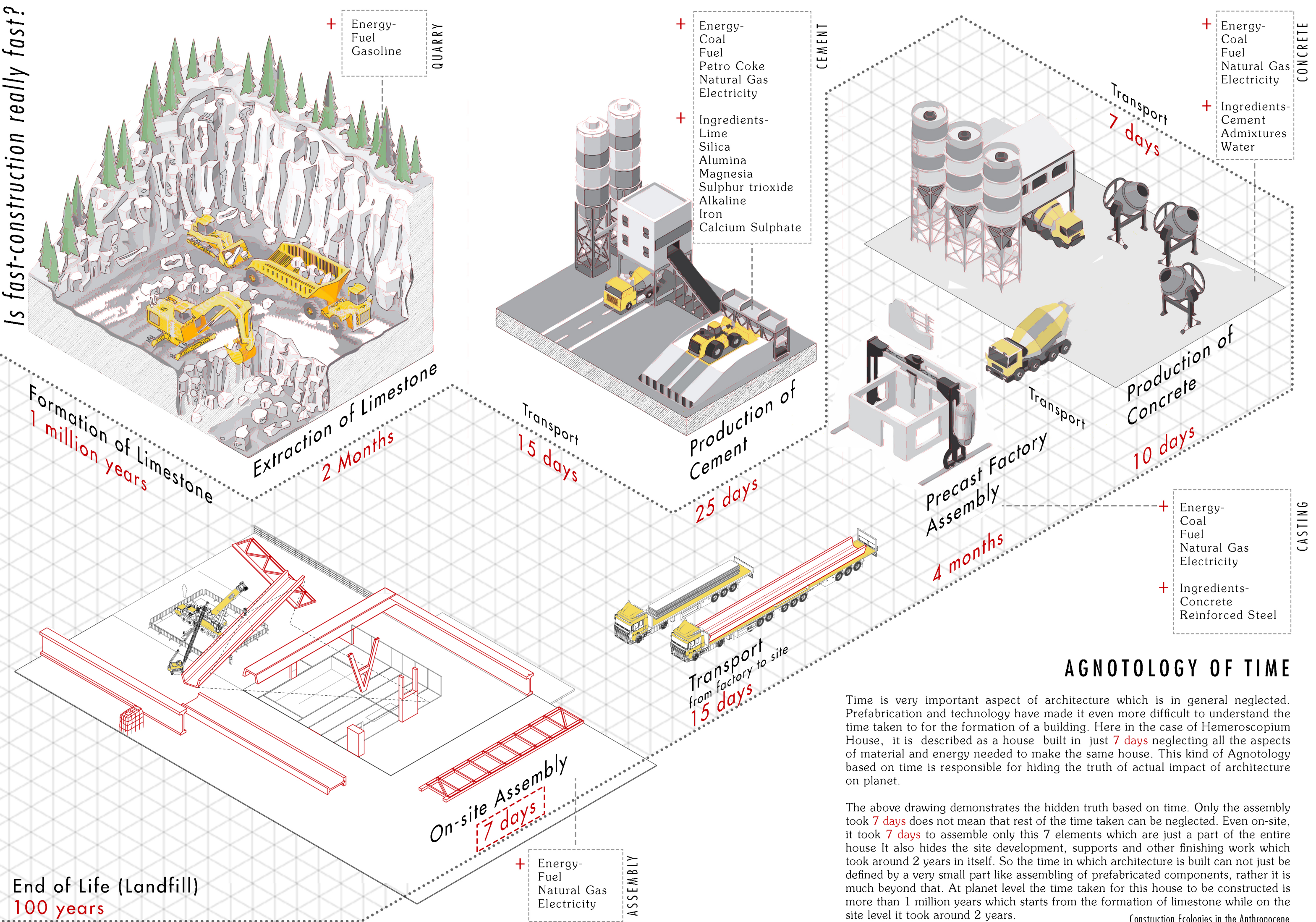
Through my project I would like to unfold some of the ignorance and agnotology that is based on prefabrication through examining this house. Prefabrication is also successful in shifting the visible on-site process of construction to hidden industrial process of construction hiding many truths and impacts on various levels. So here, I will try to unfold the agnotology based on three aspects-

- 1- TIME
- 2- LIGHTNESS
- 3- NARRATIVE

I would also like to highlight this ignorance keeping in mind the ecological aspect of construction and material formation. There can be many more ways through which this can be unfolded and interpreted. Here, the major aim is to question and highlight the materiality and environmental impacts of the architectural decisions on the planet. The aim is also to see different kinds of narrative that surrounds architectural practice at various levels.



Is fast-construction really fast?



## AGNOTOLOGY OF TIME

Time is very important aspect of architecture which is in general neglected. Prefabrication and technology have made it even more difficult to understand the time taken to for the formation of a building. Here in the case of Hemeroscopium House, it is described as a house built in just 7 days neglecting all the aspects of material and energy needed to make the same house. This kind of Agnotology based on time is responsible for hiding the truth of actual impact of architecture on planet.

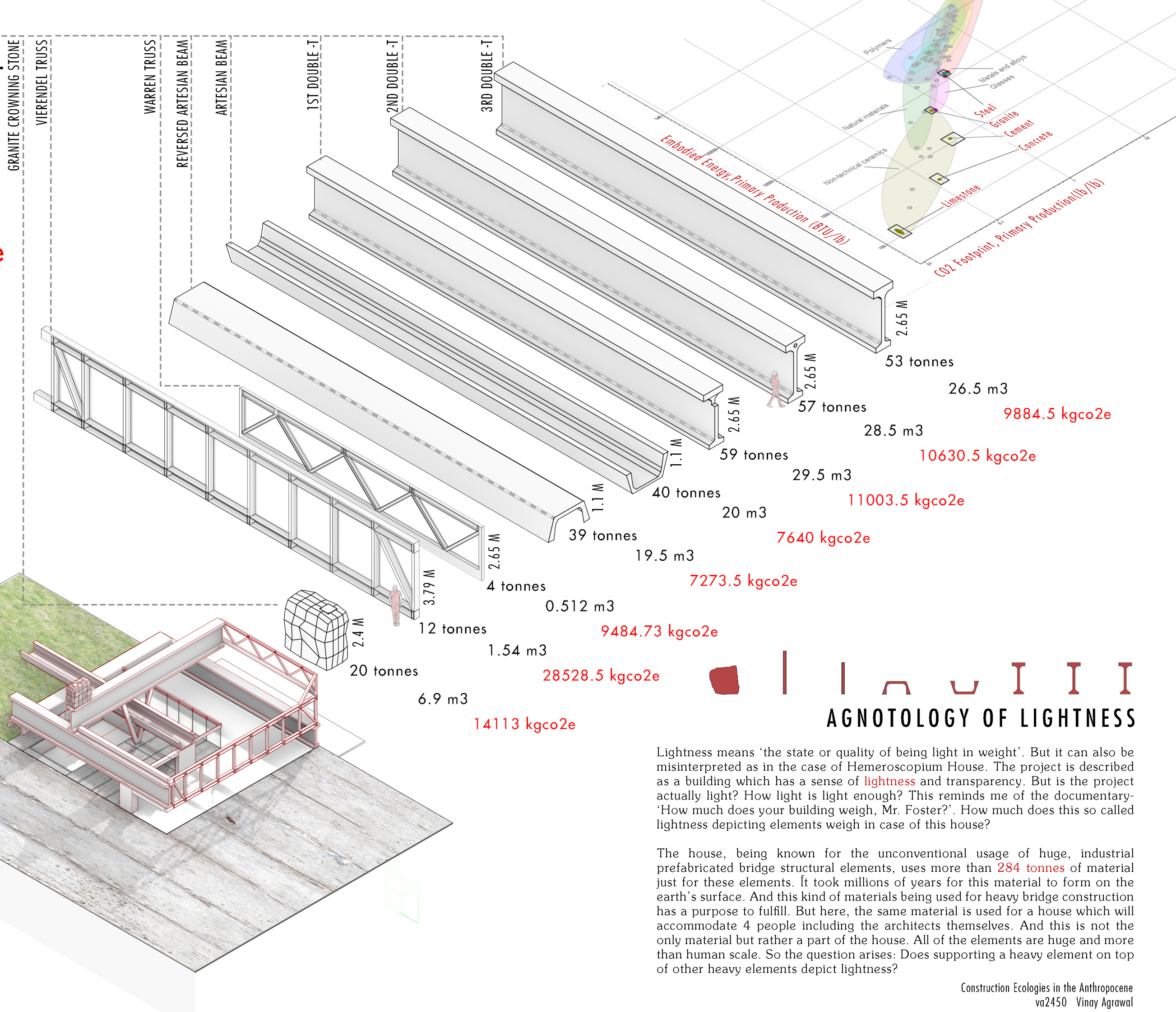
The above drawing demonstrates the hidden truth based on time. Only the assembly took 7 days does not mean that rest of the time taken can be neglected. Even on-site, it took 7 days to assemble only this 7 elements which are just a part of the entire house It also hides the site development, supports and other finishing work which took around 2 years in itself. So the time in which architecture is built can not just be defined by a very small part like assembling of prefabricated components, rather it is much beyond that. At planet level the time taken for this house to be constructed is more than 1 million years which starts from the formation of limestone while on the site level it took around 2 years.



284 tonnes  
of material for  
structure

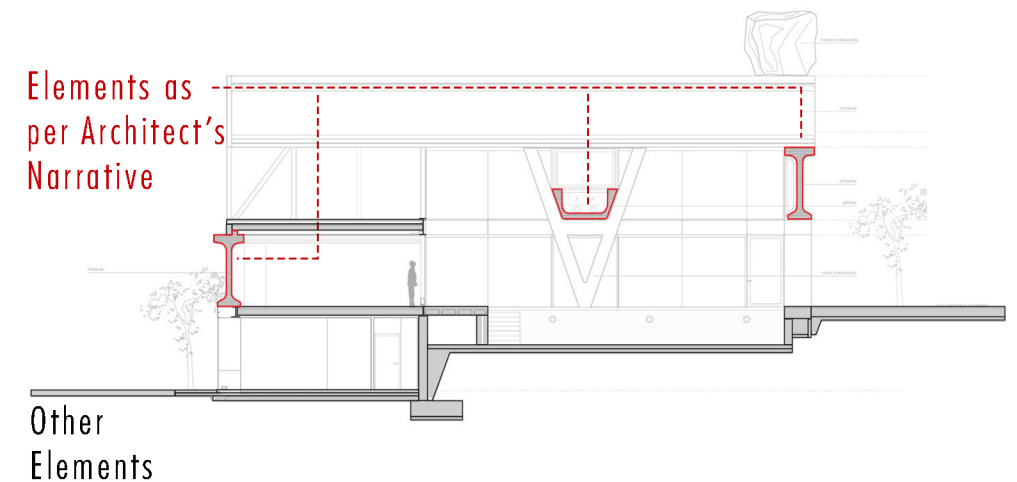
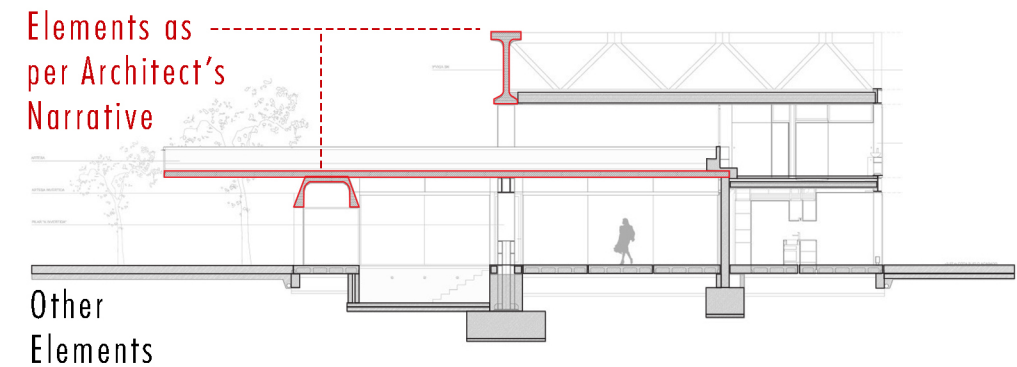
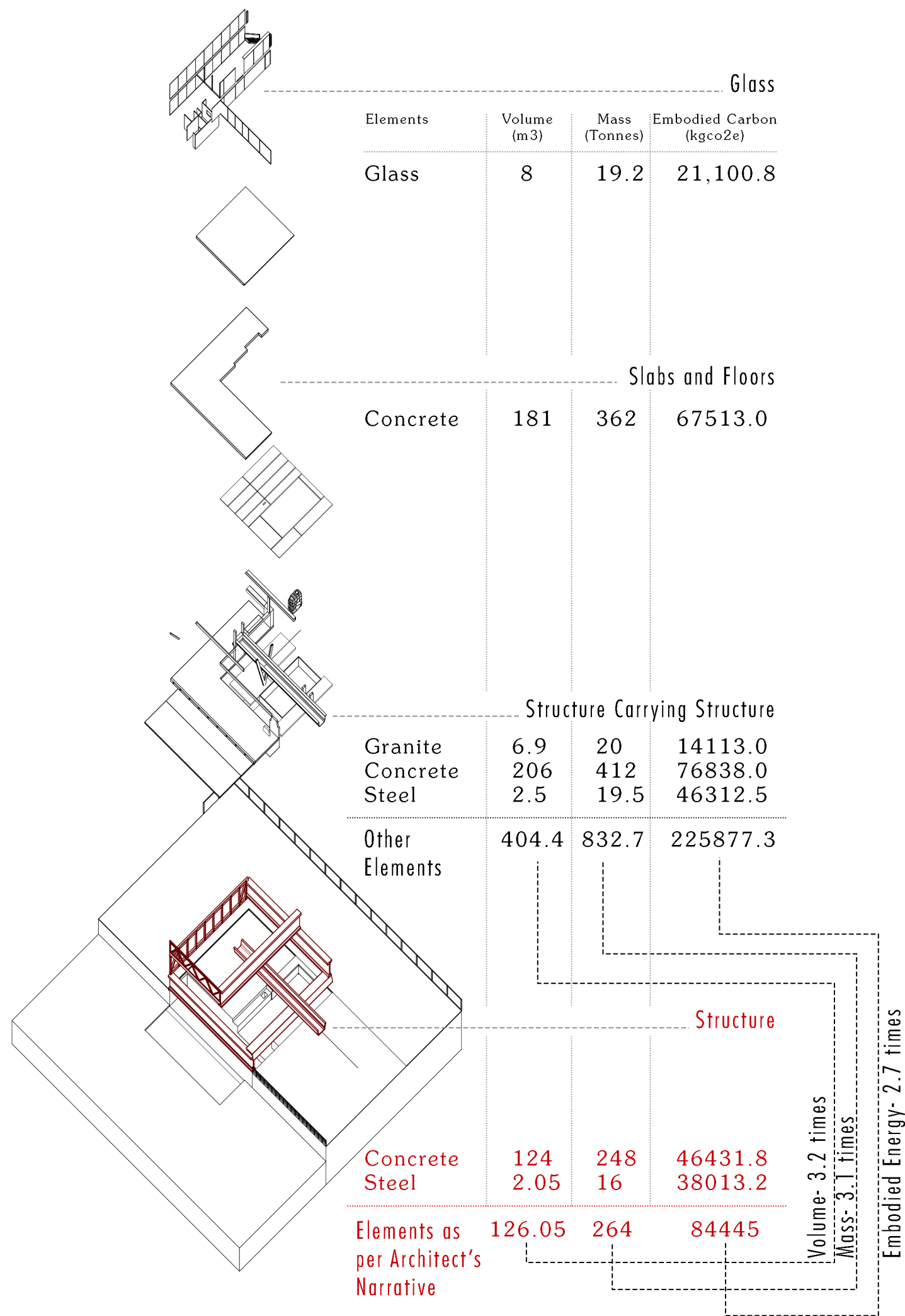
Embodied  
Carbon  
98558 kgco2e

How light is light enough?





Which elements makes a building?



## AGNOTOLOGY OF NARRATIVE

Narrative plays an important part in architecture. It helps architects sell their idea through a story. In case of Hemeroscopium House, it is usually described as a house built with just **7 elements**. But this kind of narrative is most of the time misunderstood. So the question here arises: What elements make a building?

The elements shown in red in the above drawings are the elements that make the house as per the narrative. But the rest of the elements are not part of the narrative as sold by the architect. So is it possible to consider this as a house without **other elements** that are not considered by the architect in its narrative? **Other elements** comprise of supports that are needed for these **7 elements** to stand. It also consists of slabs and glass for enclosures. Other elements can be many things which are neglected. Here it can be seen that the neglected elements consist of almost 3 times more volume, mass and embodied carbon than the narrated elements. It can also be seen in sections that how many elements are neglected. There is a huge conflict between how the architect narrates a building and how a building is actually narrated on a planetary level.