

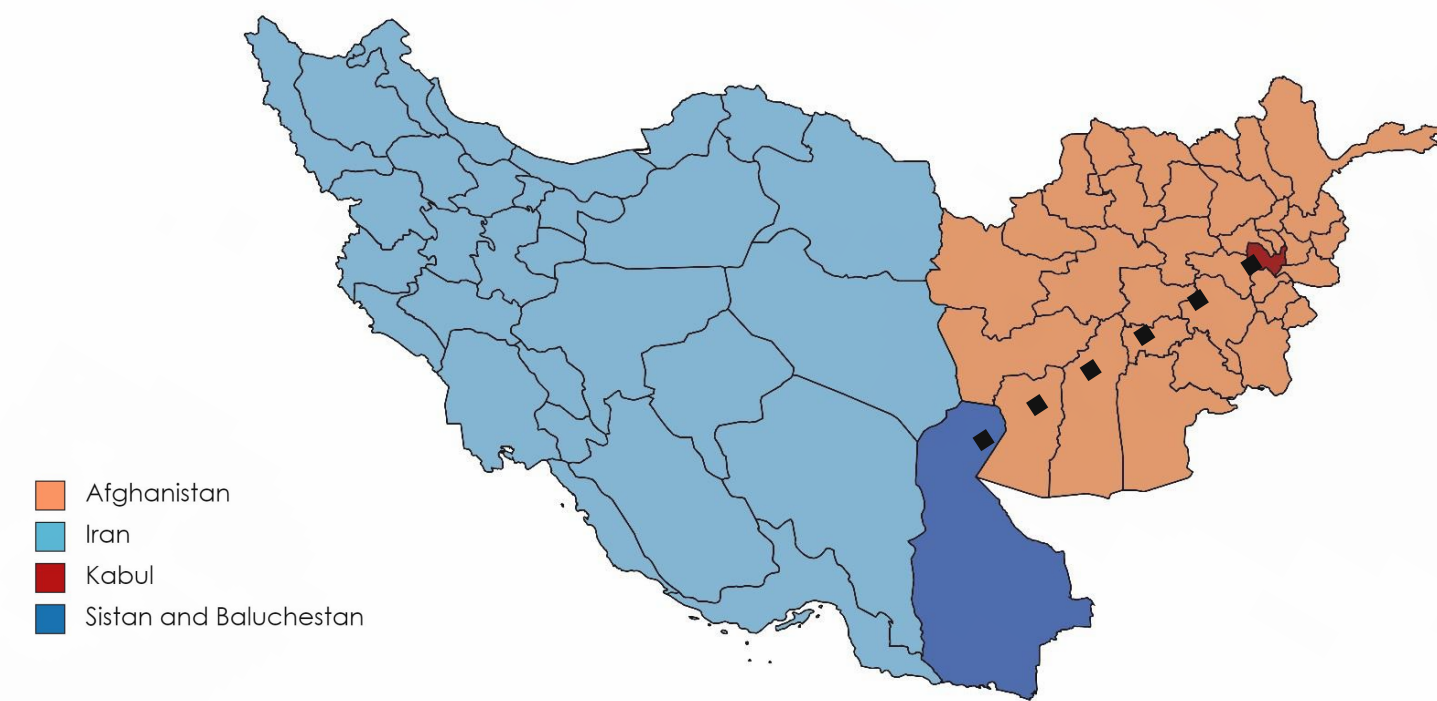
MOSAIC REFUGEE SHELTER

Narrative

On August 15, 2021, the Taliban entered the Afghanistan capital of Kabul, replacing the democratic government with one rooted in extremism. Millions of Afghans struggled with hunger and poverty as their country was thrown into an economic crisis, after the United States withdrew their troops in early May and the Taliban began their siege. Though nearly 125,000 civilians were airlifted out of the country, many more must escape by car or on foot to neighboring countries. For Najaf and his family of six, departing Taliban-controlled Afghanistan was a matter of life and death. Najaf had been an interpreter for the United States; if the Taliban found out about his cooperation and had captured him, he and his family would be executed.

Najaf and his family sell all of their possessions except for what they can take in their suitcase and head towards Southwest Afghanistan. They are met by smugglers who help secure safe passage across borders under the safety and secrecy of nighttime darkness. The UN estimates that as the Taliban controls more of Afghanistan, nearly 4,000 Afghans cross the border into Iran every day.

It is finally time for Najaf and his family to depart. His family is escorted into a beaten car - his two youngest children both sitting on his lap - and drive towards the border in the complete darkness of early morning. There stands a mile-long scramble over churned-earth trenches, a 15-foot-high border wall topped with barbed wire and a vast stretch of scrubland flush with Iranian security forces. Najaf holds his breath as the smuggler stops the car at the security checkpoint. Then, he feels the car move forward. He exhales. At the UNICEF refugee camp, Najaf is given a temporary shelter. His family pitches their new home near another Afghan family that used to live in a nearby town. Like the millions of other Afghan who have chosen to flee, Najaf does not know what the future holds in an unfamiliar country.

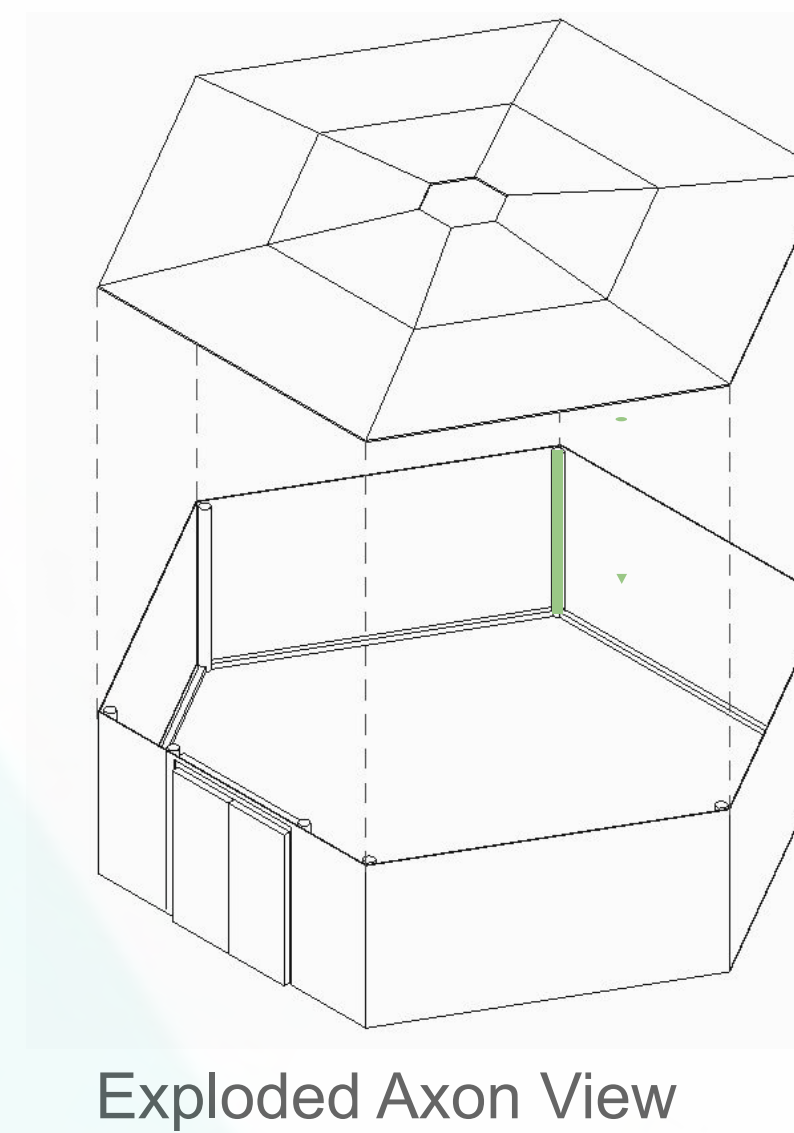
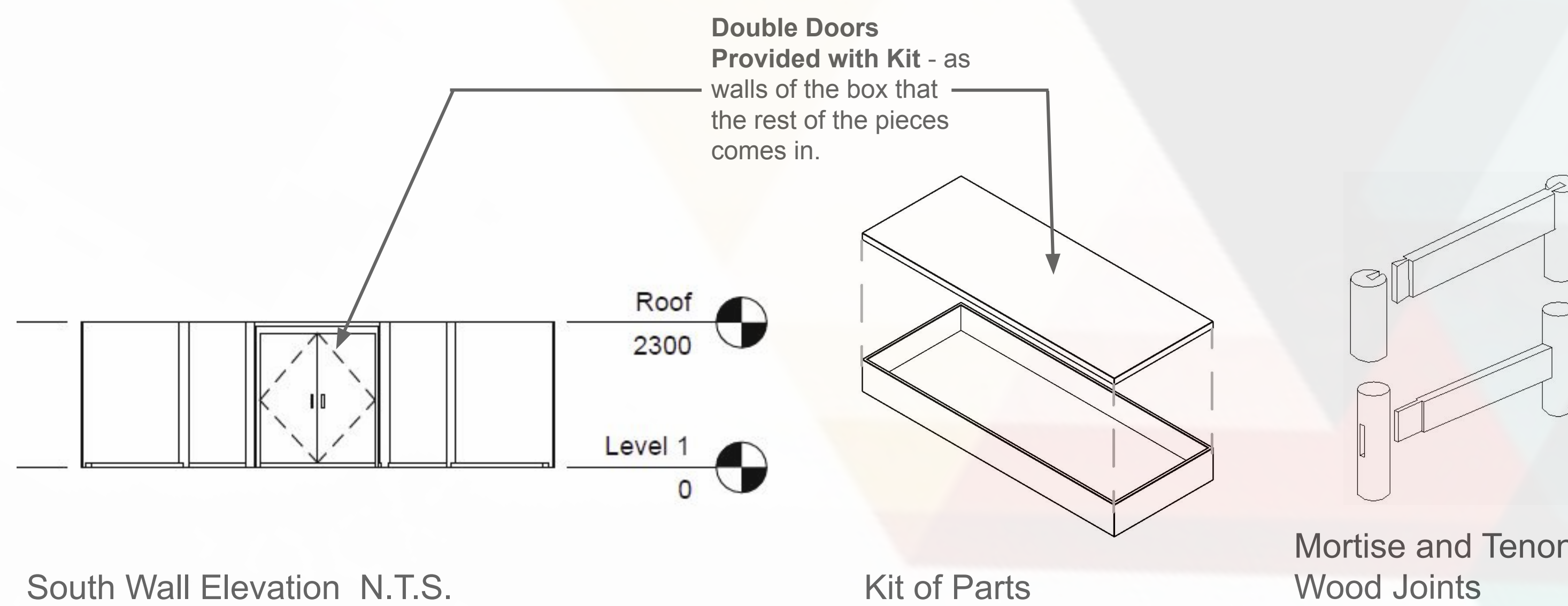
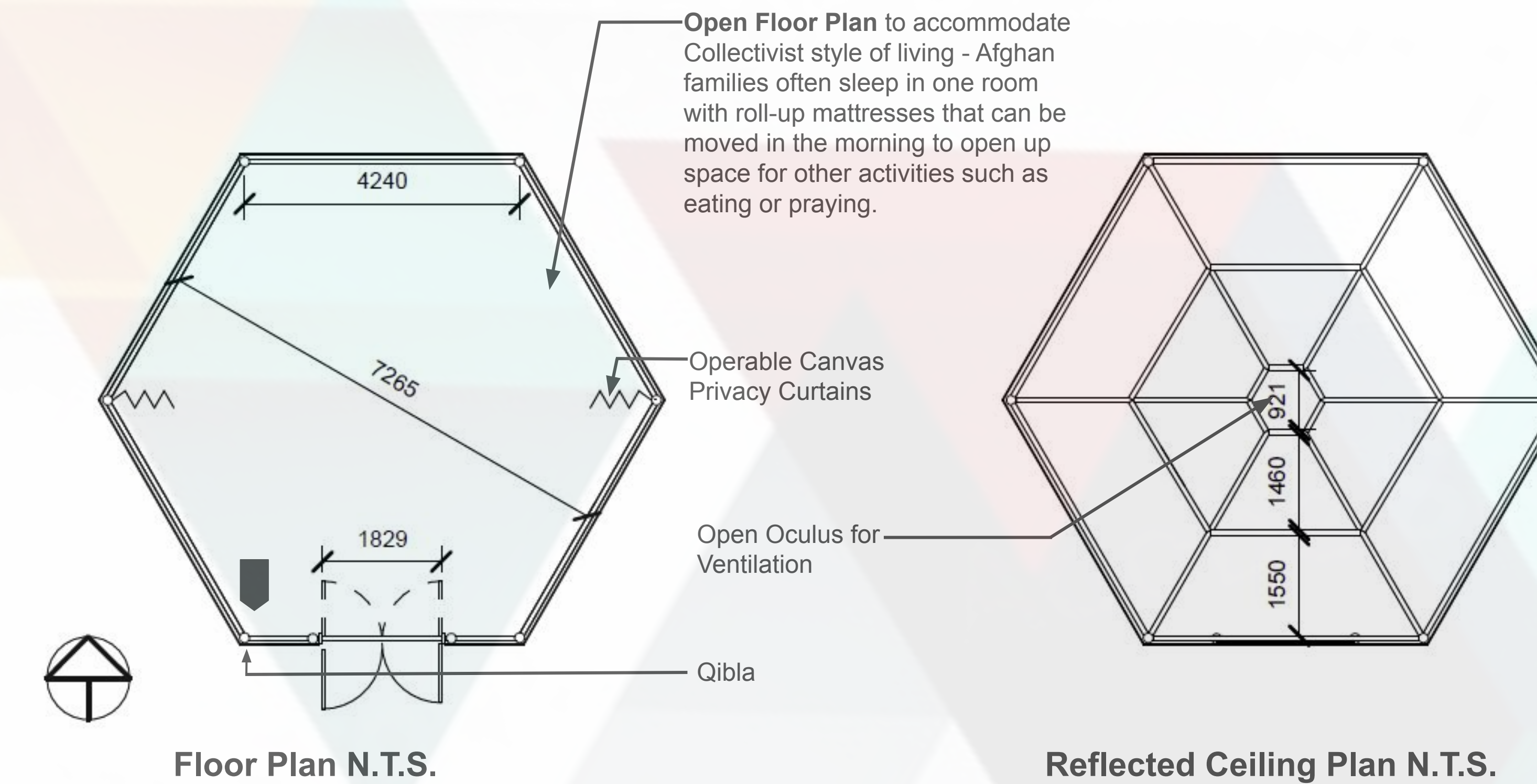


Concept

Inspired by the vibrant colors, hexagonal patterns, and cultural significance of Islamic mosaic art, these shelters are intended to provide a sense of **familiarity** in a new environment. The hexagonal shelters are modular, allowing for unique configurations that fit family needs and maintain the **collectivism** that is integral to the Afghan community. When several shelters are placed together, their color and shape create a mosaic pattern that serves as a reminder that we are all **stronger together**.



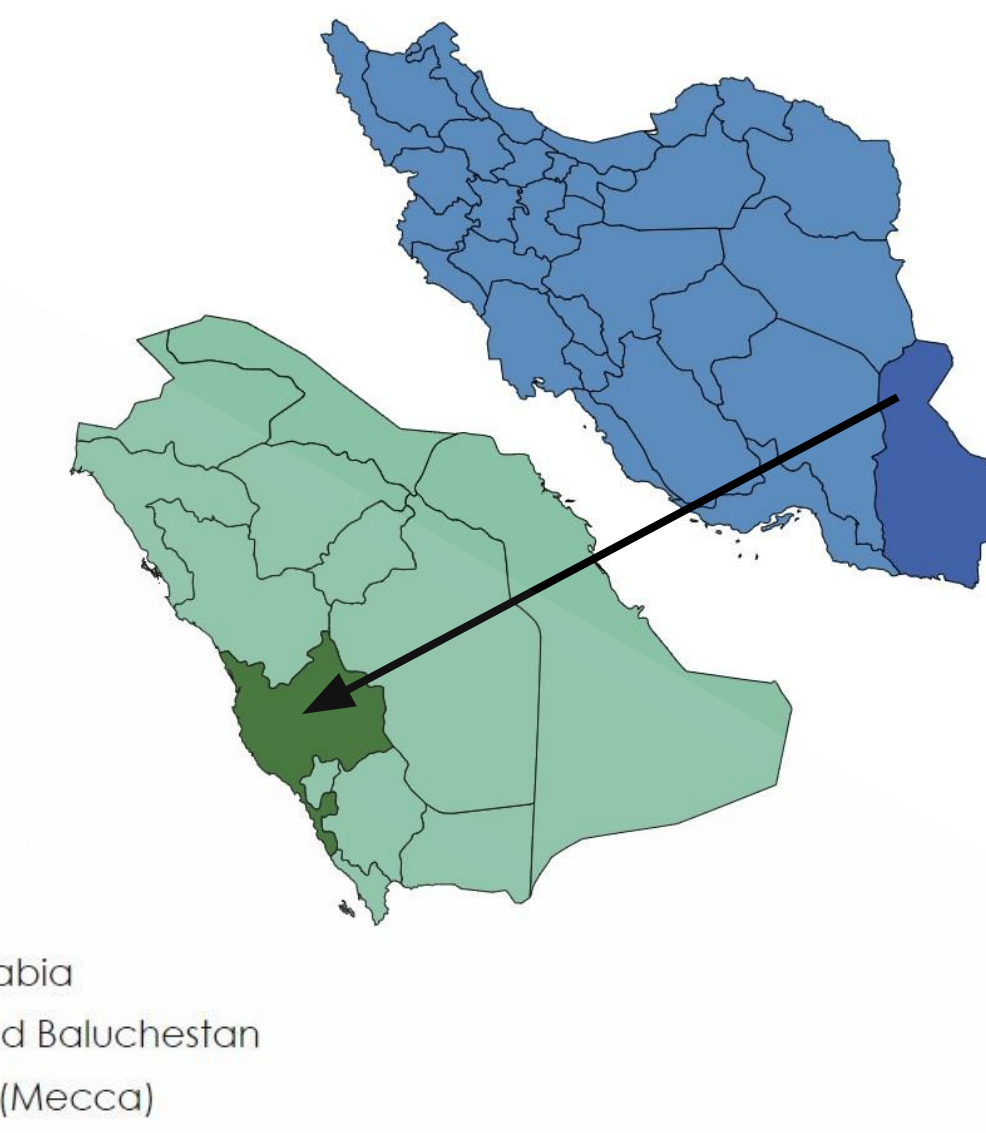
Interior View



Exploded Axon View

Qibla

In the kit of parts will include a green column, a color that is often associated with Islam, to be set (based on orientation of the yurt in field) in the direction of Mecca (Southwest), to help guide daily prayers of the family.



Afghan Culture Research

- Afghans have a Collectivist culture, meaning that family is the most important part of their culture
- 3 or 4 generations of a family will often live together in one household, sons will often continue living with their parents, even after getting married and having children.
- Families often sleep together in one big room, utilizing roll-up mattresses that can be moved to accommodate other activities in the space.
- Extended families will often live together in larger compound-like building structures, with smaller family units like couples taking smaller rooms. This allows families to be close enough to see each other often and even share meals together.
- Meals will often be large platters laid out either on a table or the ground, and will be shared dishes, that often do not need utensils to eat.
- Men and Women are often separated, generally socializing in different spaces, it is also important for Women to have a safe private space away from any men that are outside of the family.

Research Citations

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- Evason, Nina. "Afghan Culture." Cultural Atlas, 2019. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-family>.
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Multiple Yurt configuration with center courtyard to encourage collectivism via sharing of resources. Families are also able to stay together by sharing a courtyard.