

The Packaged House System (1941-1952)

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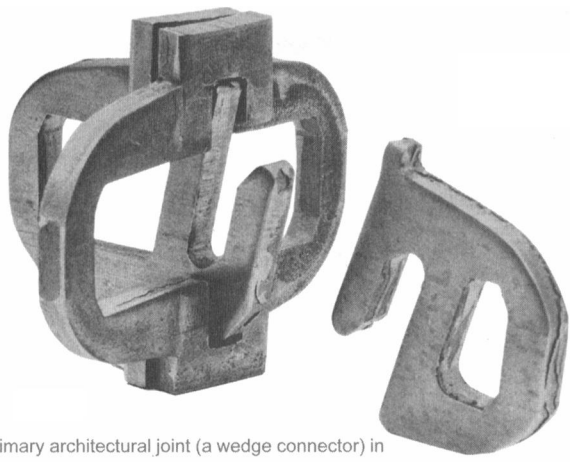
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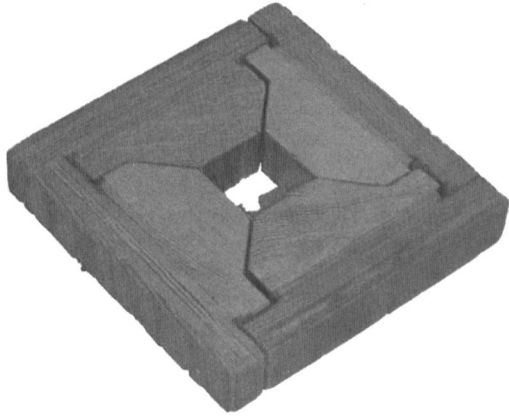


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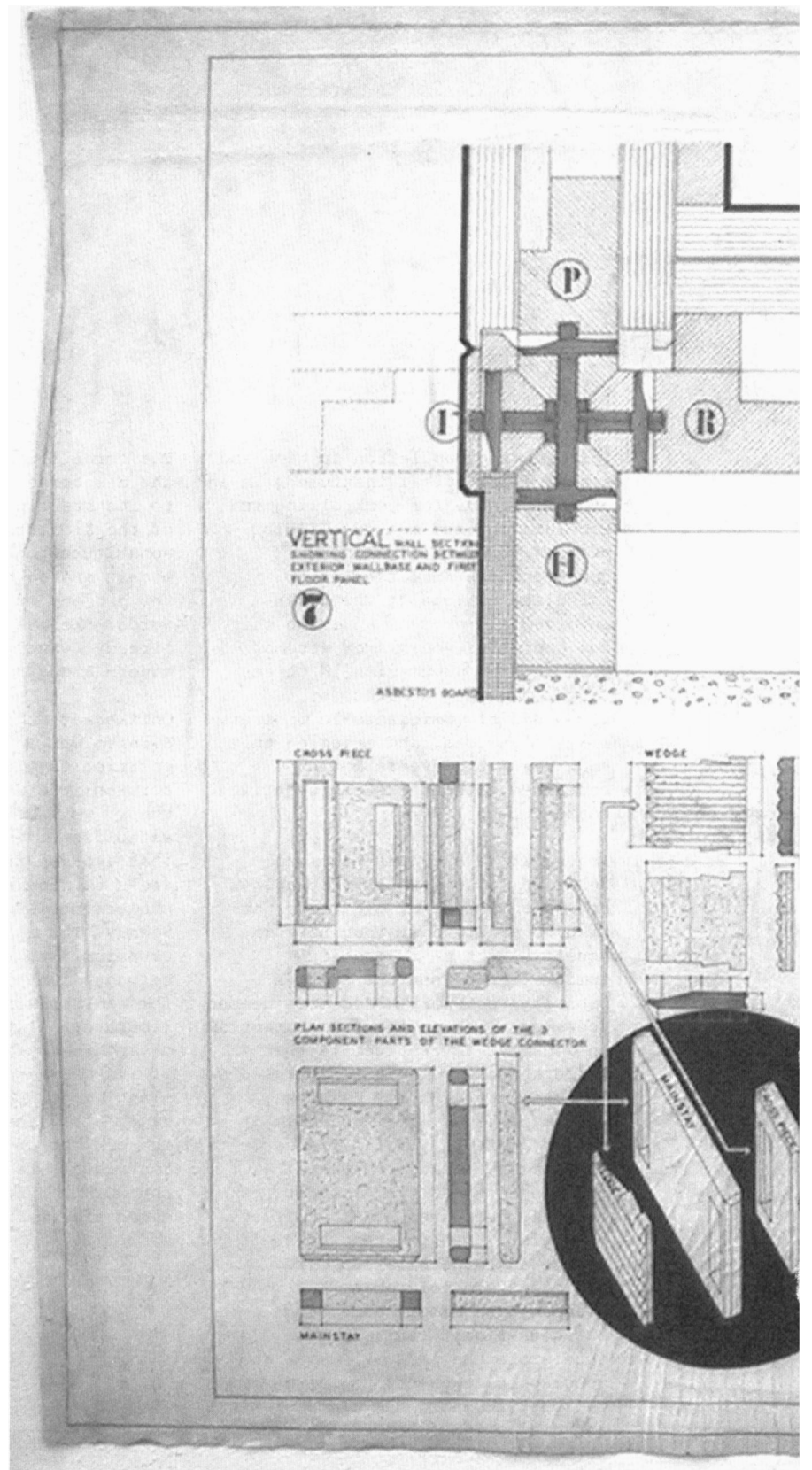
↑ Primary architectural joint (a wedge connector) in the final stage of development.



↑ Four panel corners brought together by a wedge connector.



↑ Disassembled architectural joint.

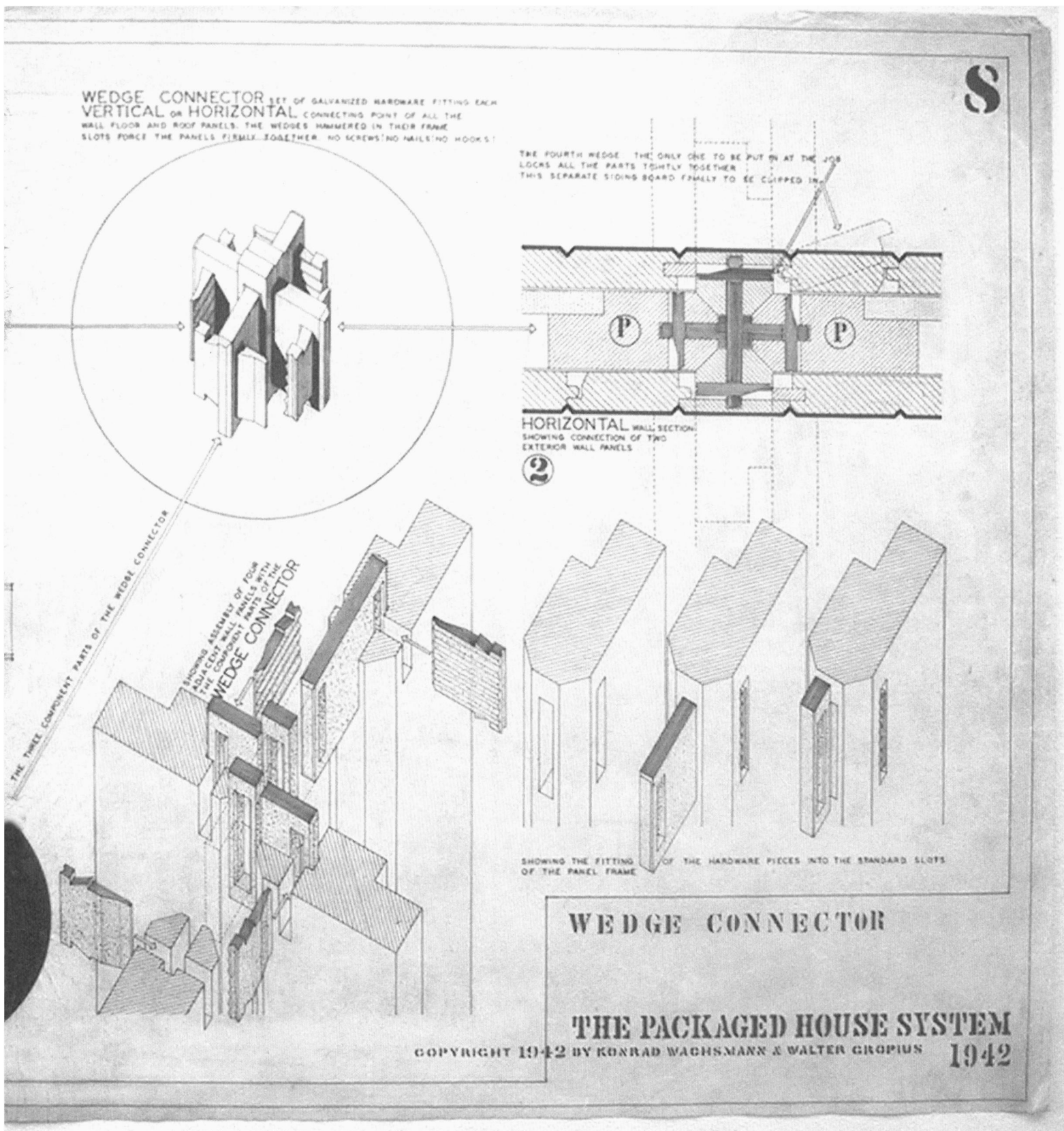


THE PACKAGED HOUSE SYSTEM (1941–1952)

Konrad Wachsmann and Walter Gropius (curated by Michael Tower)

In the Packaged House System, Konrad Wachsmann and Walter Gropius directly applied the ideals of universal architectural space to the crowded field of manufactured housing. Drawing from experience with industrialized building in their native Germany, the two architects saw great potential to capitalize on recent U.S. government efforts to provide immediate housing for war veterans.

Wachsmann and Gropius attempted to use a serialized network of joints to create a flexible design and construction system. The primary joint of the Packaged House is a discrete fastener that connects modular panels from any primary axis; without nails or screws, the same joint provides connection between floor, wall, and roof panels. Not

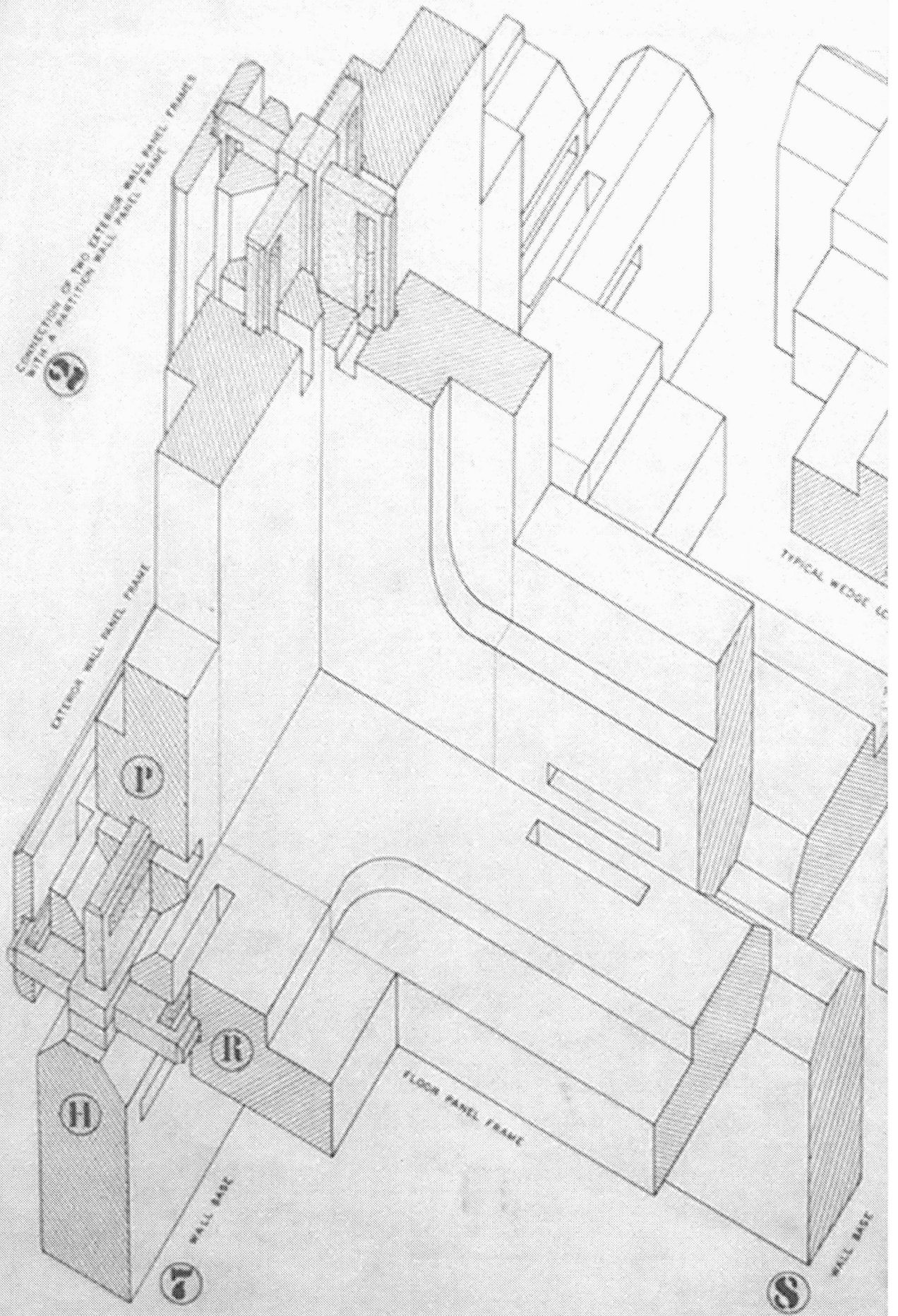


↑ Architectural joint at an early stage of development, describing assembly process.

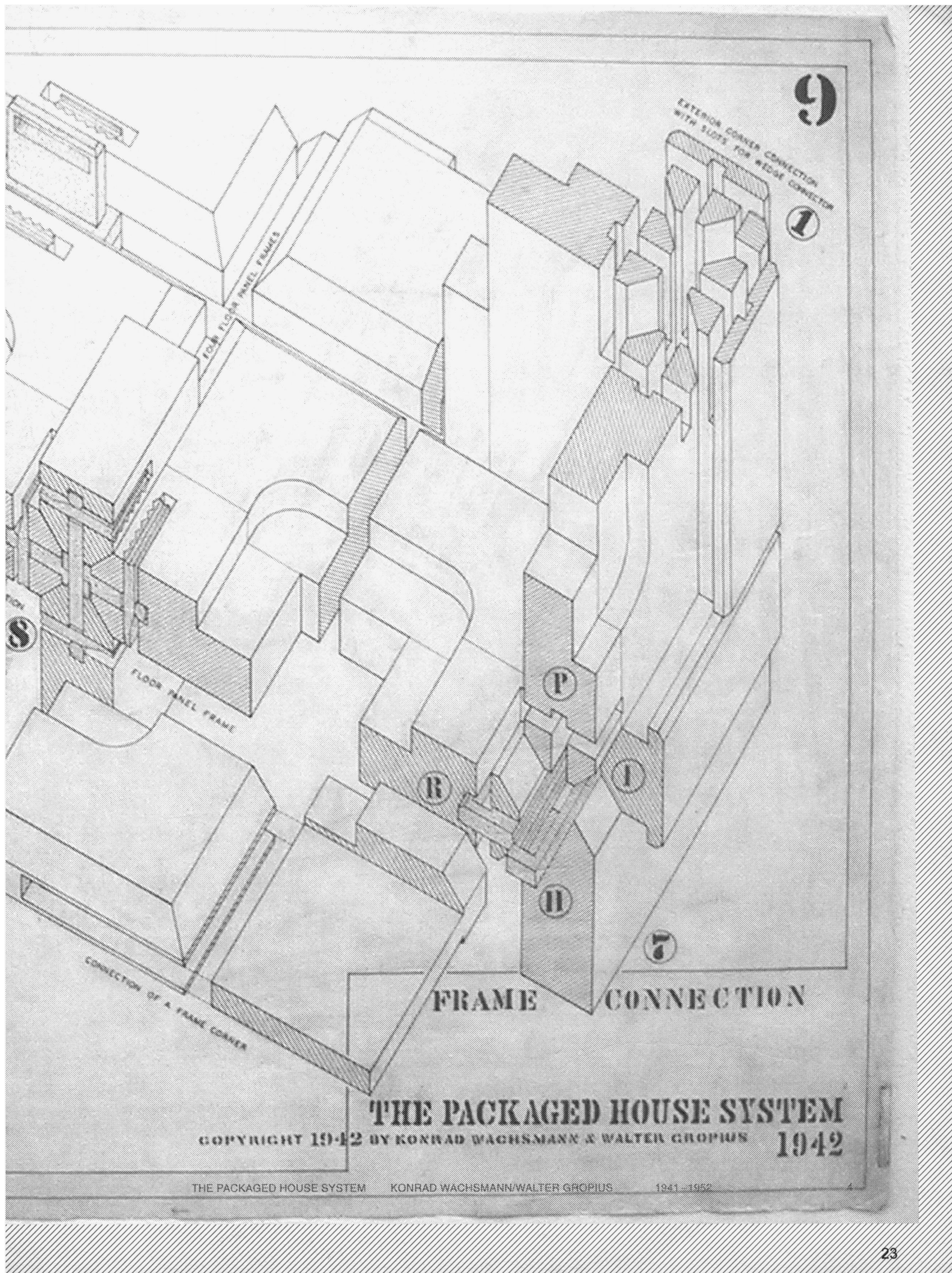
unlike the efficiency and flexibility of balloon and deck framing, the serial connections for the Packaged House System promised to deliver the physical and economic catalyst for the larger modernist ideal of the modular.

From the outset Wachsmann and Gropius foresaw a system that could be repeated at larger scales and in more complex configurations. Unfortunately, as the Packaged House System developed, the structure turned from a house as a universal spatial construction into a more spatially limited and proprietary structure. Although the system met with both financial and critical failure, the drawings and details that follow illustrate the hope and aptitude that the two architects applied to one of manufactured housing's greatest possibilities.

Michael Tower's research on Konrad Wachsmann has been generously supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.



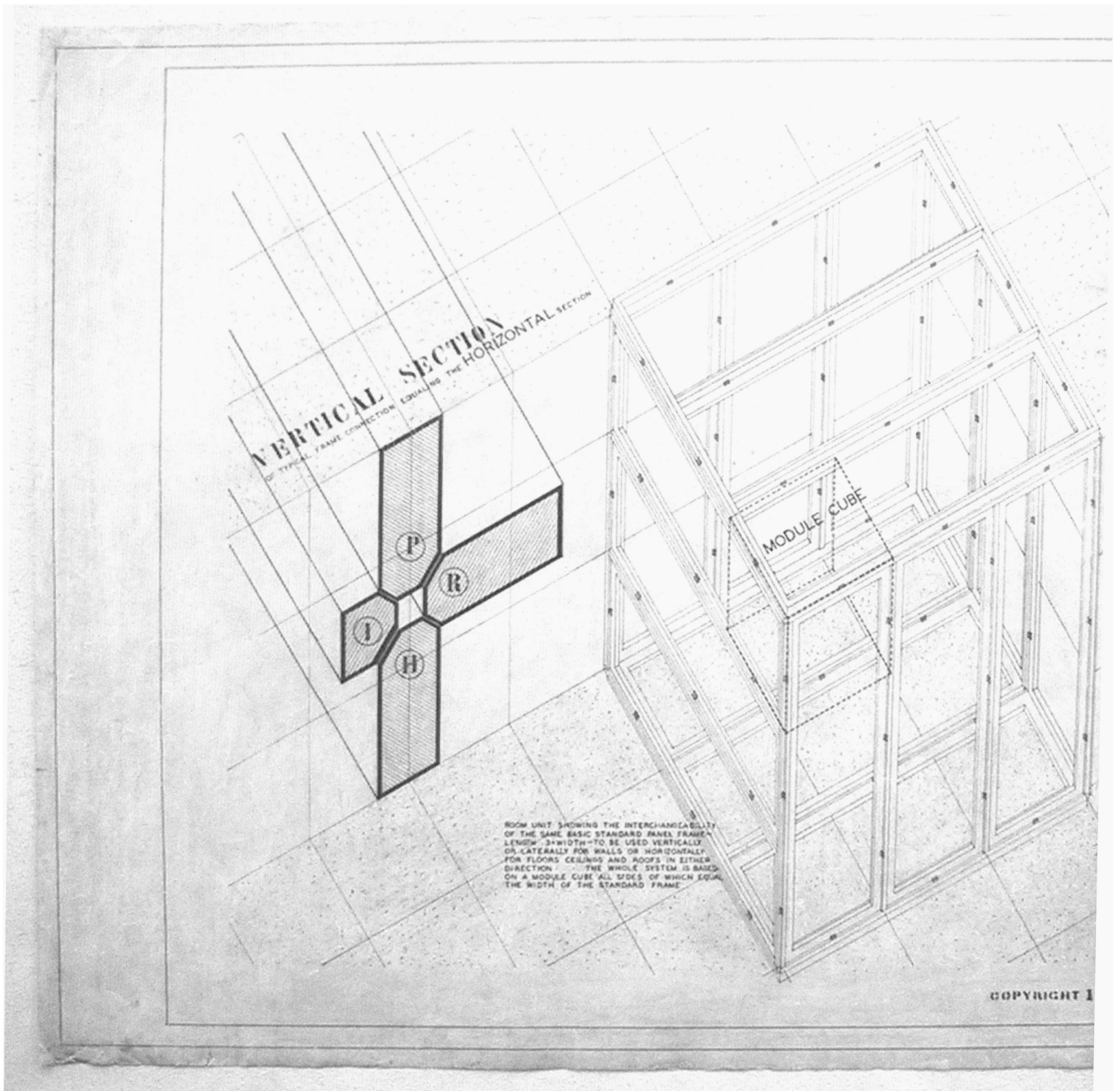
THE PACKAGED HOUSE SYSTEM KONRAD WACHSMANN/WALTER GROPIUS 1941-1952
 † Axonometric of connections at three critical axes.



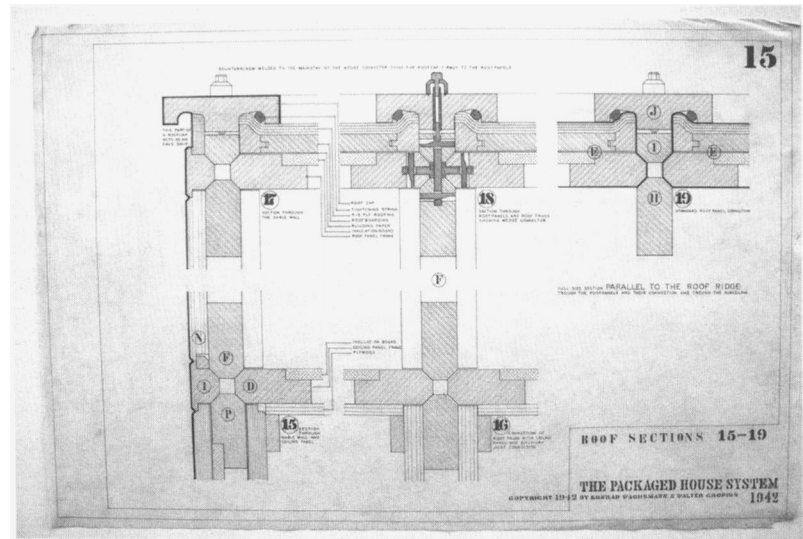
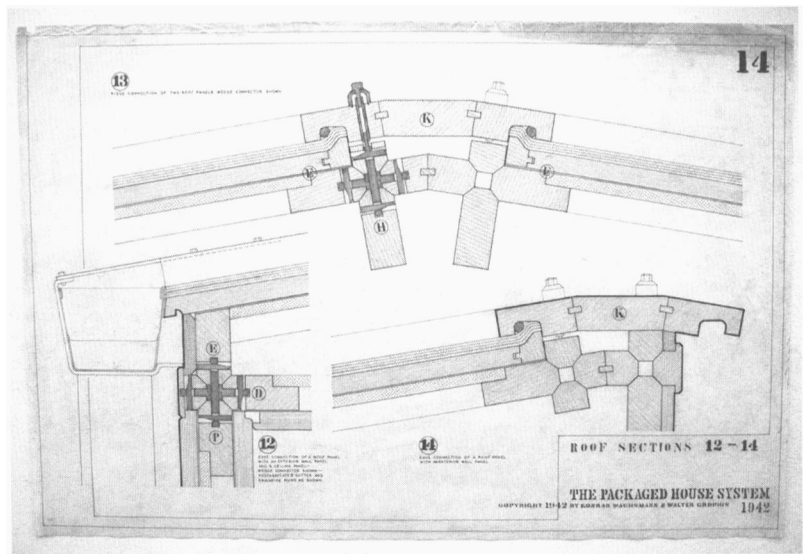
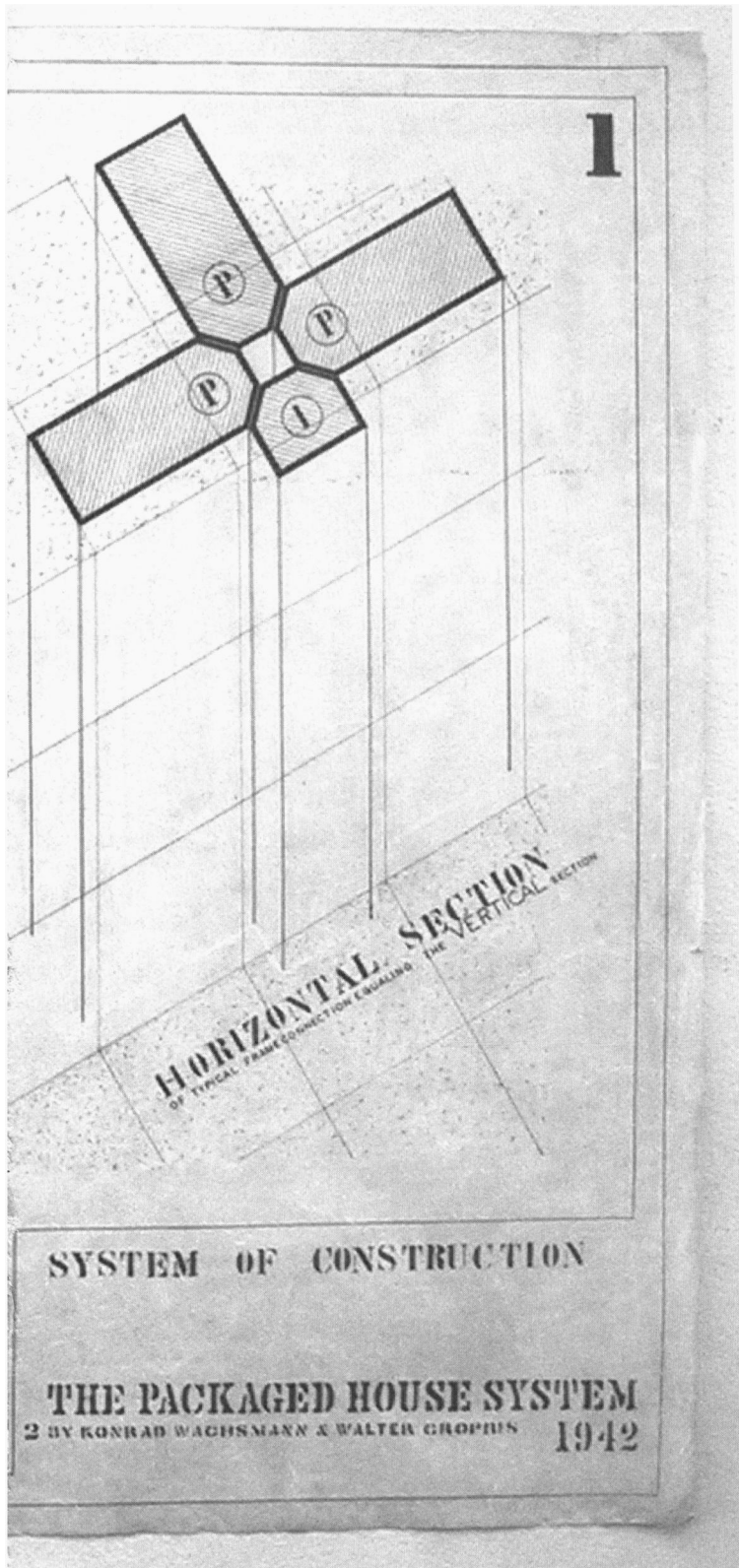
THE PACKAGED HOUSE SYSTEM

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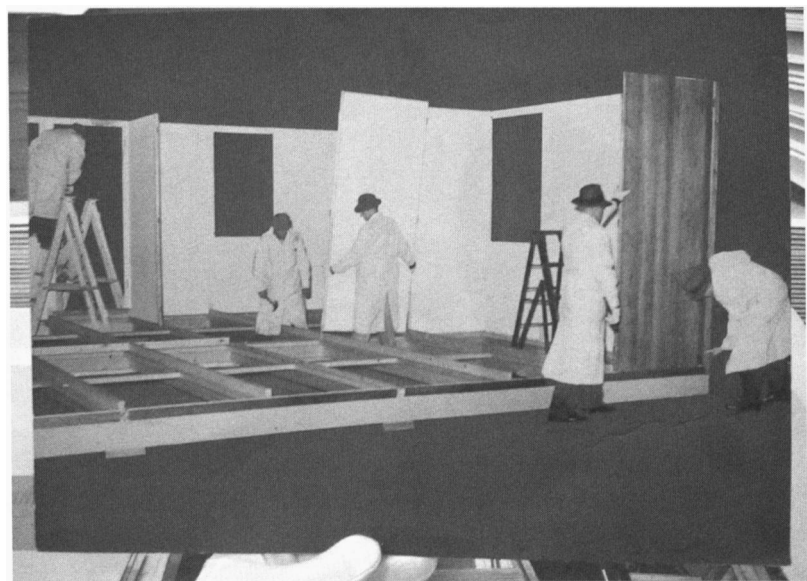
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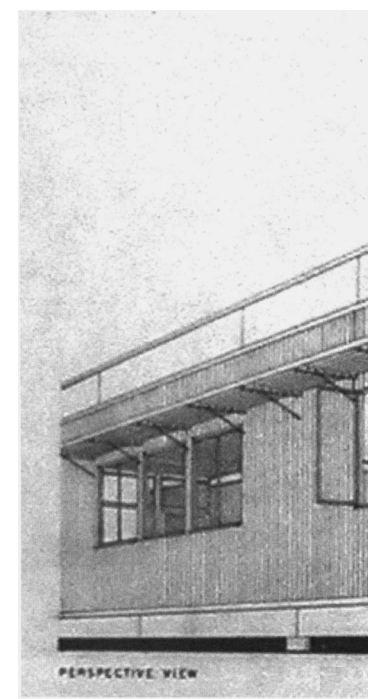
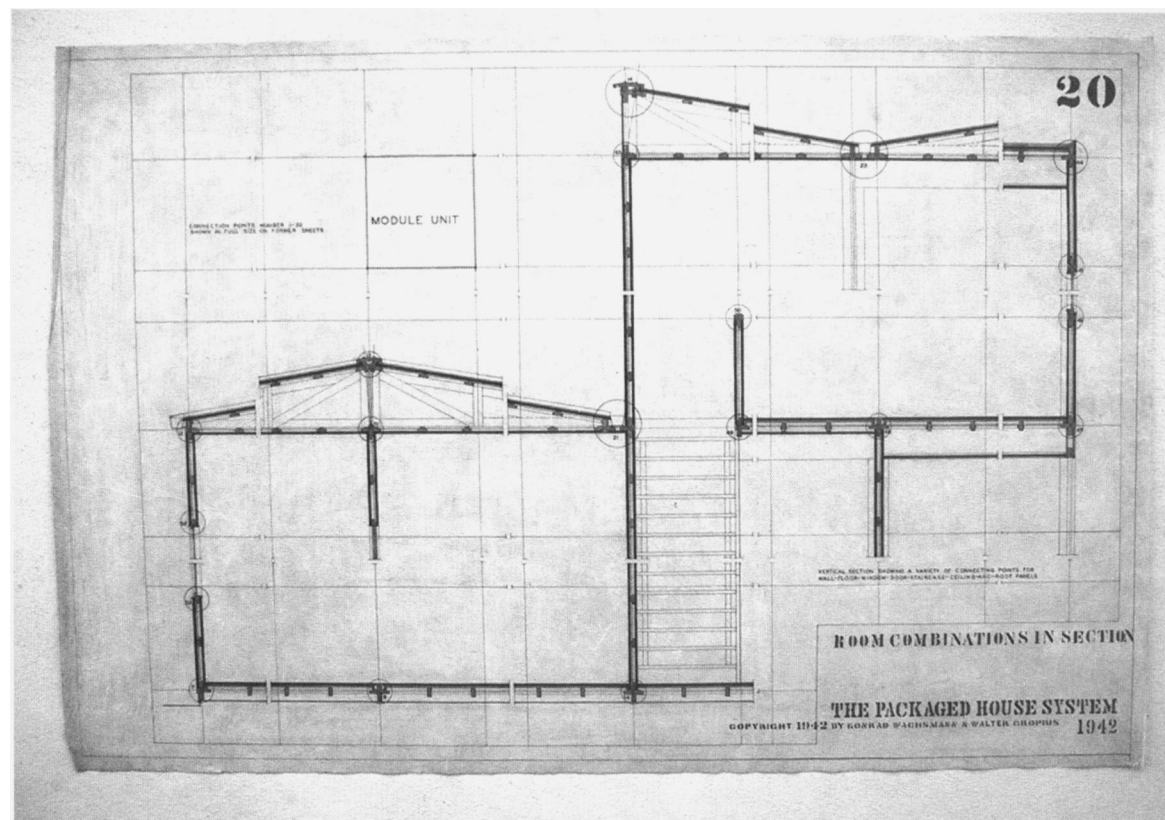
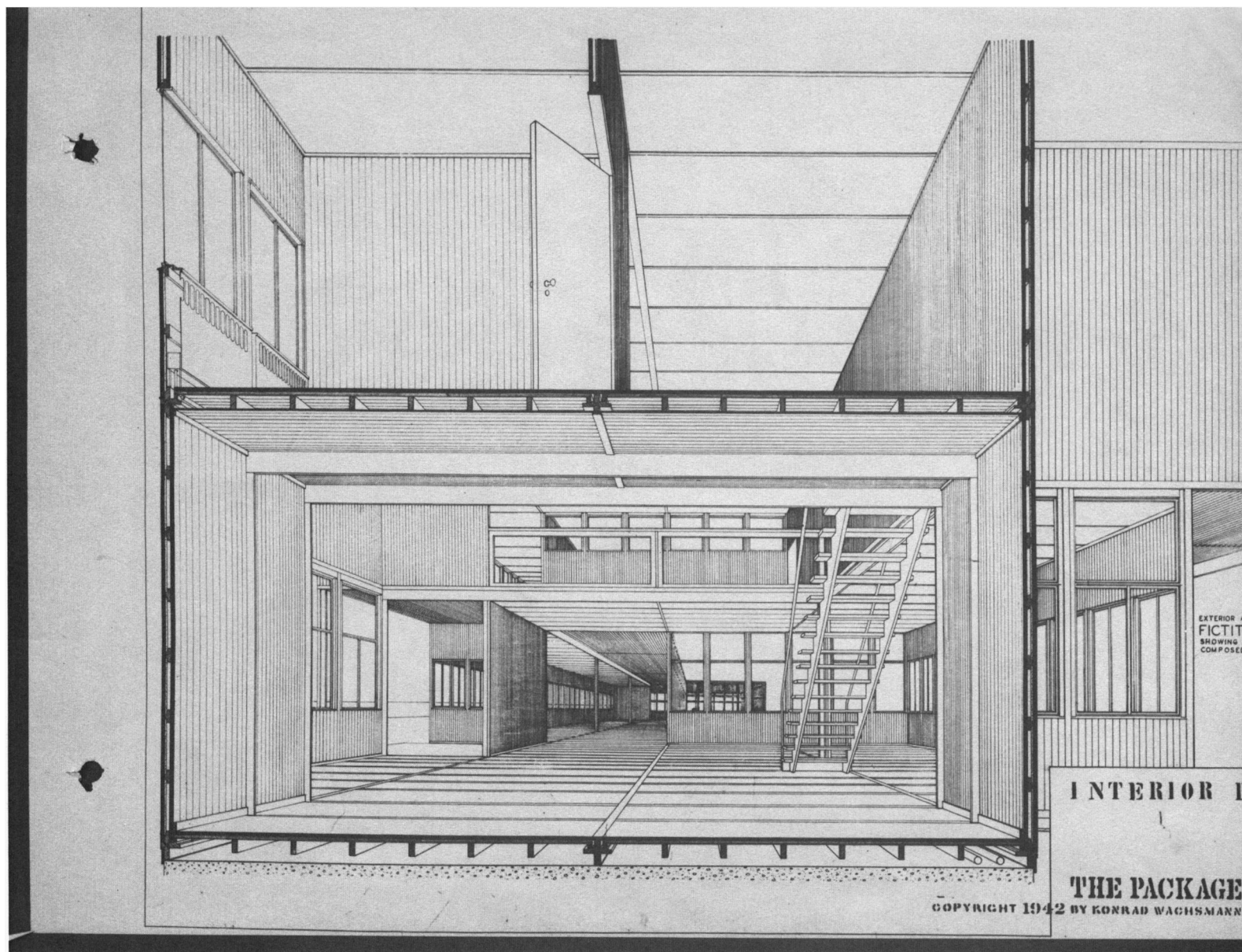
↑ Axonometric of modular system.



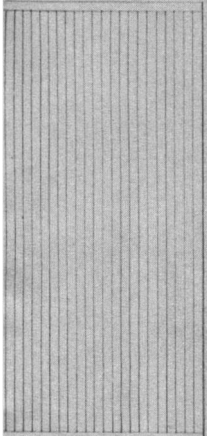
↑ Joint and modular panel integration.



↑ Montage of the Packaged House assembly.



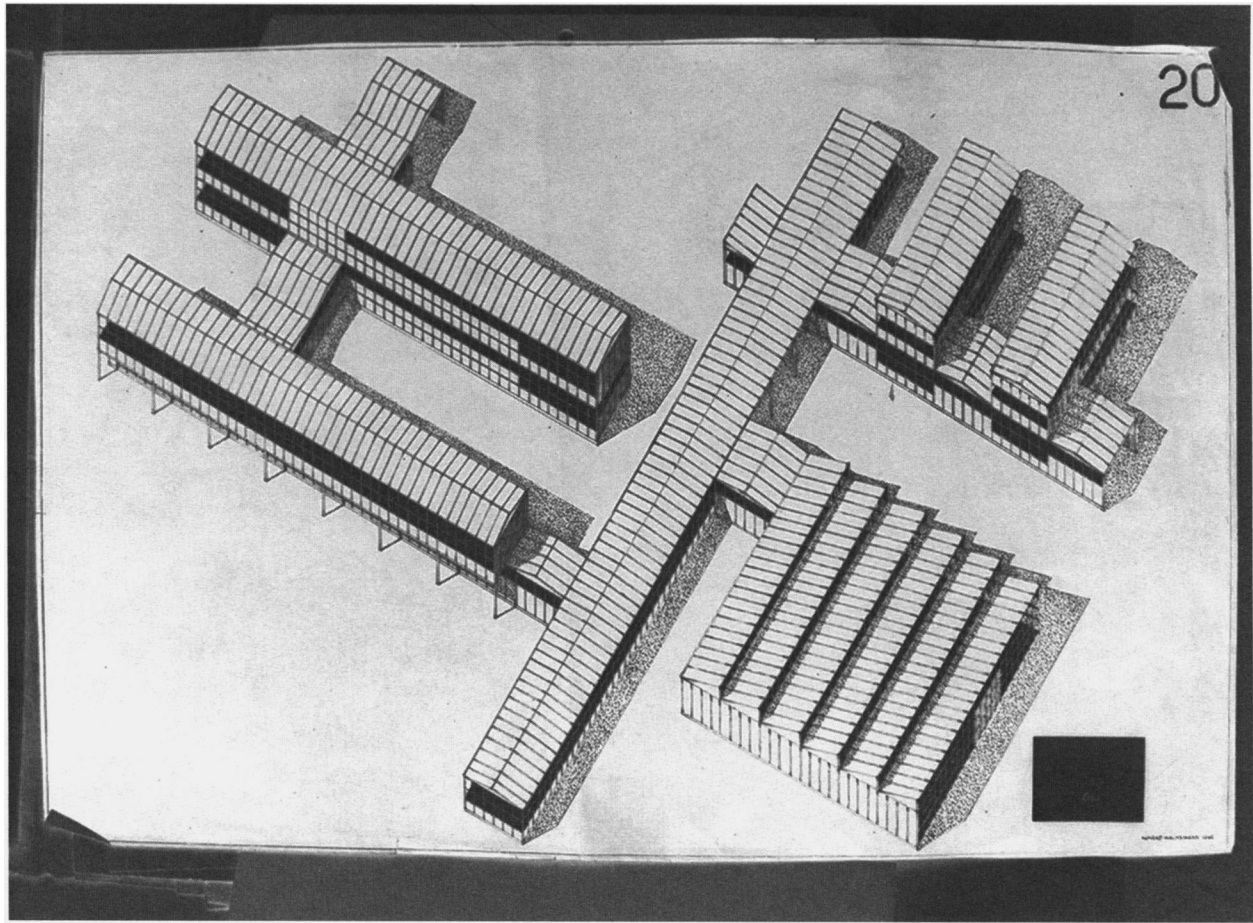
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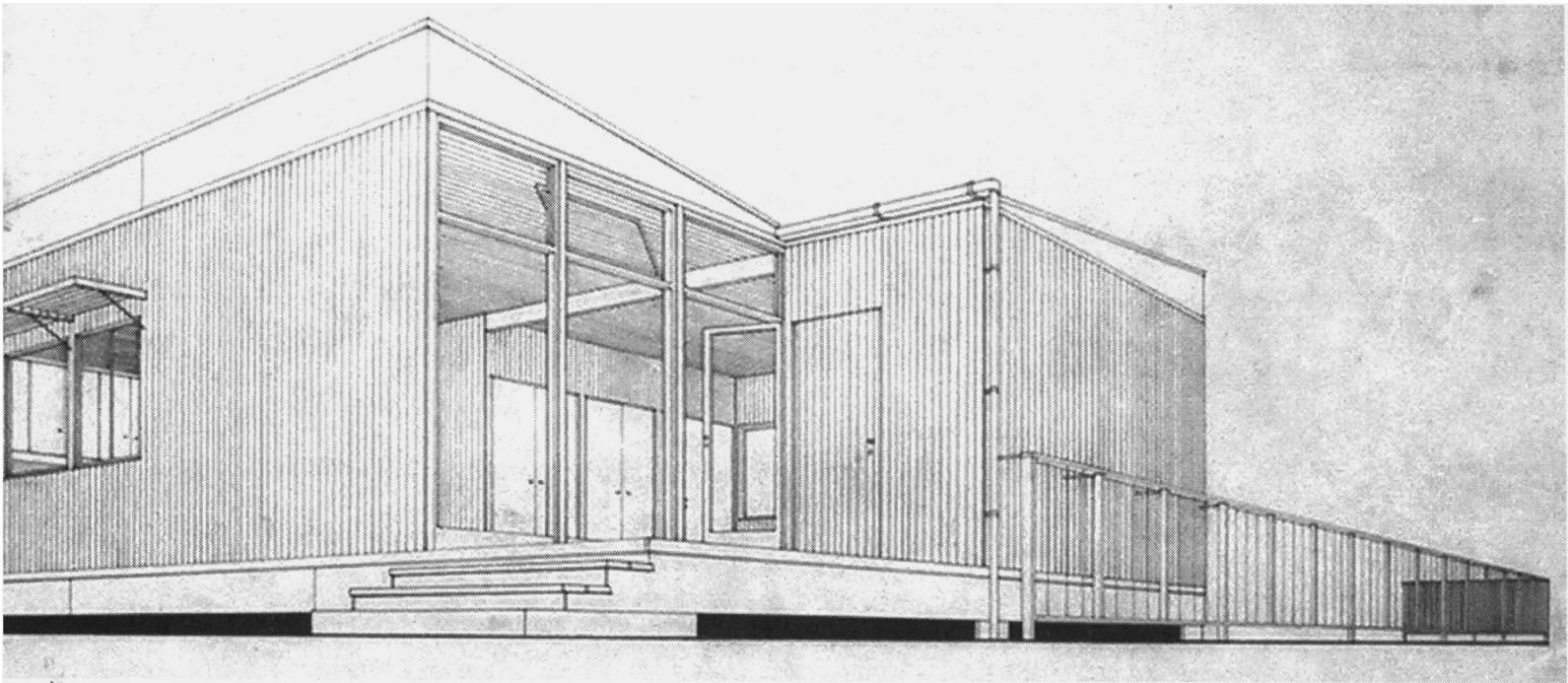
FOR PERSPECTIVE OF A BUILDING OF COMBINATIONS OF STANDARD PARTS

PERSPECTIVE

HOUSE SYSTEM
WALTER GROPIUS 1942



- ← Interior perspective illustrating the possibilities of the modular system.
- ✓ Cross section of the house illustrating the modular system's full integration.
- ↑ Expansion of the modular system proposed for barracks.
- ↓ Exterior perspective of an early example of the Packaged House, later to be called the General Panel House.



THE PACKAGED HOUSE SYSTEM

KONRAD WACHSMANN/WALTER GROPIUS

1941-1952

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