






Architecture

Sungnyemun

Seoul, South Korea



-  Booklet available in English on
-  Livret disponible en français sur
-  Folleto disponible en español en Architecture.LEGO.com

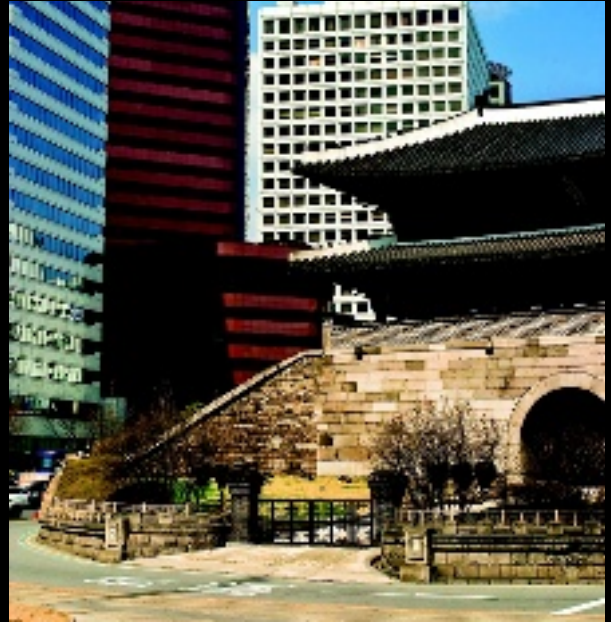
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Sungnyemun

Sungnyemun (Gate of Exalted Ceremonies) stands majestically in the heart of the South Korean capital of Seoul. Seen as one of the most complete examples of Joseon Dynasty architecture in South Korea, the gateway is listed as the country's foremost National Treasure.



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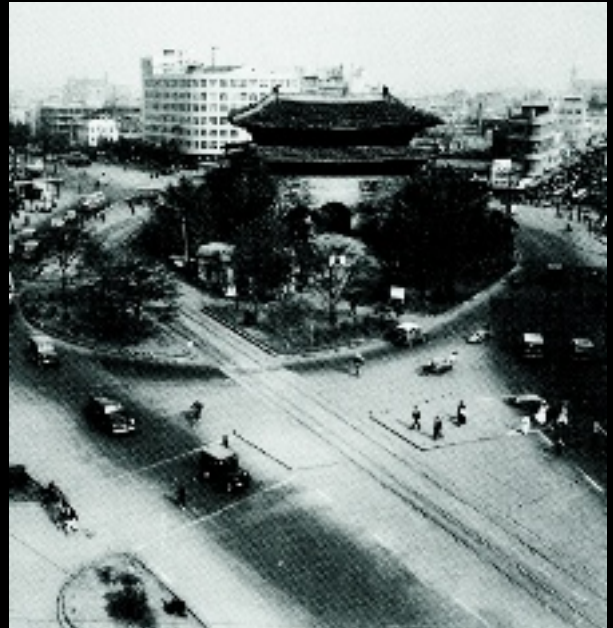


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Historical Setting

By the time King Taejo established the Joseon Dynasty in the late 14th century, the country that we recognize today as Korea was a kingdom in turmoil. Ruled by the faltering Mongol Empire, under attack from Japanese pirates and weakened by political intrigues, the kingdom needed a strong leader. Yi Seong-gye, later to become King Taejo, was a talented general who repelled foreign threats, gained independence from the Mongols and established the “Kingdom of Great Joseon” in 1392.

One of his first actions was to move the capital to Hanseong (Seoul) and initiate a building program that included a 6.1 m (20 ft.) high and 18.2 km (11.3 mile) long wall to protect the growing city. Four major gateways were built into the wall to control access in and out of the city, and Sungnyemun would become the most impressive of these gates. Sungnyemun consists of an imposing stonework base and archway with a two-story wooden pagoda construction sitting above.



Construction

The construction of Sungnyemun began in 1396 during the fifth year of the reign of King Taejo of Joseon and was completed in 1398. Taejo had ordered his architects to build the gate facing Mount Gwanaksan as a way of warding off the feng-shui fire energy associated with the mountain.

Further additions were made to the gateway in 1447 by King Sejong, the 4th King of the Joseon Dynasty, and further work was carried out in 1479 by King Seonjong, the ninth King in the dynasty. It was at this point it was given the design that we still associate with the gate today. At that time Sungnyemun was already the finest of all the gateways into the city, and the stone and two-tiered wooden structure with a pagoda-shaped tiled roof rose high above the rest of the city.

Further alterations and renovations continued over the next 600 years. The walls on both sides of the gate were removed in 1907 to make way for a tramway. During the



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Korean War (1950-1953) Sungnyemun suffered damage from bombing. In 1962 the gateway was officially designated as Korea's first national treasure and an extensive reconstruction program was carried out.

During the work that was carried out on Sungnyemun in 1962, hidden records were discovered under a ridge beam of the second roof. These placed the precise date of the original construction as 1396 and went on to record that 6,817 soldiers were conscripted to perform the manual labor. The inventory also listed that twenty-eight stonecutters, forty-four carpenters, sixty-three riveters, and five sculptors, along with 1,400 laborers took part in the gate's construction. The record even detailed the feast at the beam-raising ceremony: 10,700 bottles of Arak-Ju (Korean rice-based grain liquor), 3,800 barrels of Tak-Ju (traditional Korean wine), and 1,500 head of cattle.



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Sungnyemun Today

Once the tallest building in Seoul, today, Sungnyemun is surrounded by the skyscrapers and bustling traffic of a modern city. The gate provides a visible contrast between ancient and contemporary Korea, and is one of the few physical links to the Joseon Dynasty.

The pagoda building on top of Sungnyemun was the oldest existing wooden structure in Korea until February 10, 2008, when fire totally destroyed it. A complete restoration project began two years later in 2010 and it's expected that an exact reproduction of the original will be completed by the end of 2012.

The entire reconstruction is being carried out using traditional methods. Conventional hand tools are made in a smithy set up on-site and workers wear 'hanbok', the traditional Korean costume, when working on the gate. As much timber as possible from the surviving frame is being recycled and put together with wood from dozens of pine trees to become pillars of the new structure. A traditional ritual was performed at a ceremony prior to the start of construction, praying for a smooth restoration process as well as protection from further disasters to Korea's most important National Treasure.



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Facts about Sungnyemun

Location:..... Seoul, South Korea
Architect: unknown
Style: Joseon Dynasty
Construction type: ... City Gateway
Construction materials:..... Stone base with wooden structure
Date:..... 1396-1398, Rebuilt 1447 & 1479
Size: Stone base - 28.97m x 14.79m
(95.05 ft. x 48.52 ft.)
Wooden structure - 22.29m x 7.65m
(73.13 ft. x 25.1 ft.)

LEGO Architecture launches its model of Sungnyemun as a celebration of the EXPO 2012 exhibition in Yeosu, South Korea.

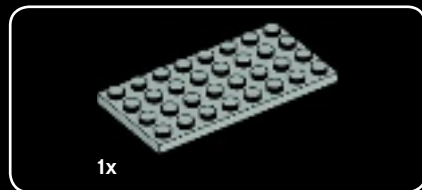
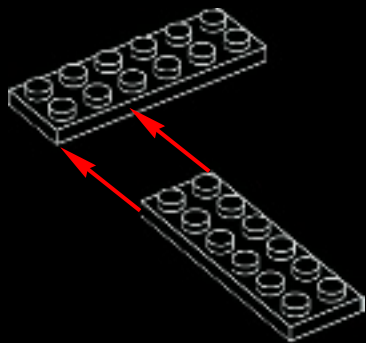
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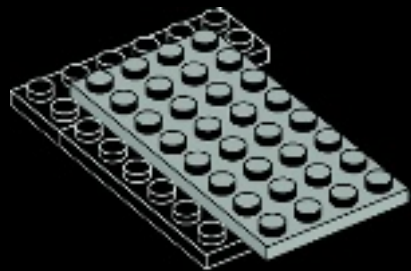
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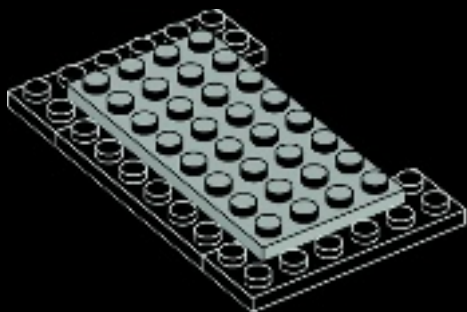
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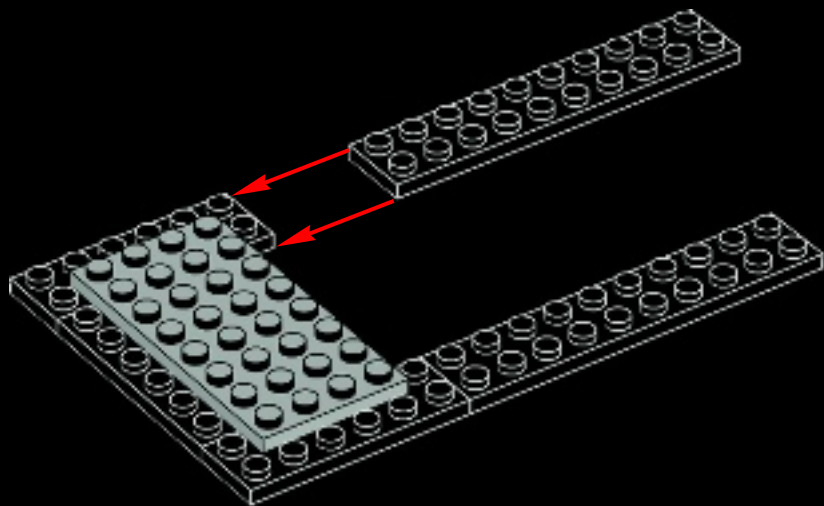
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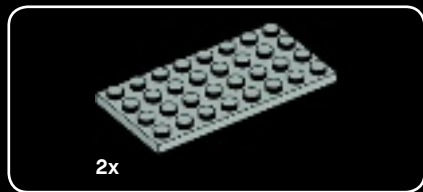
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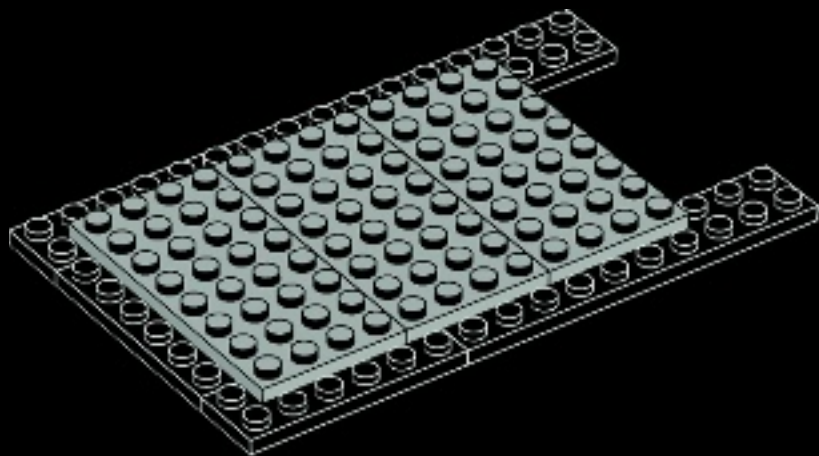


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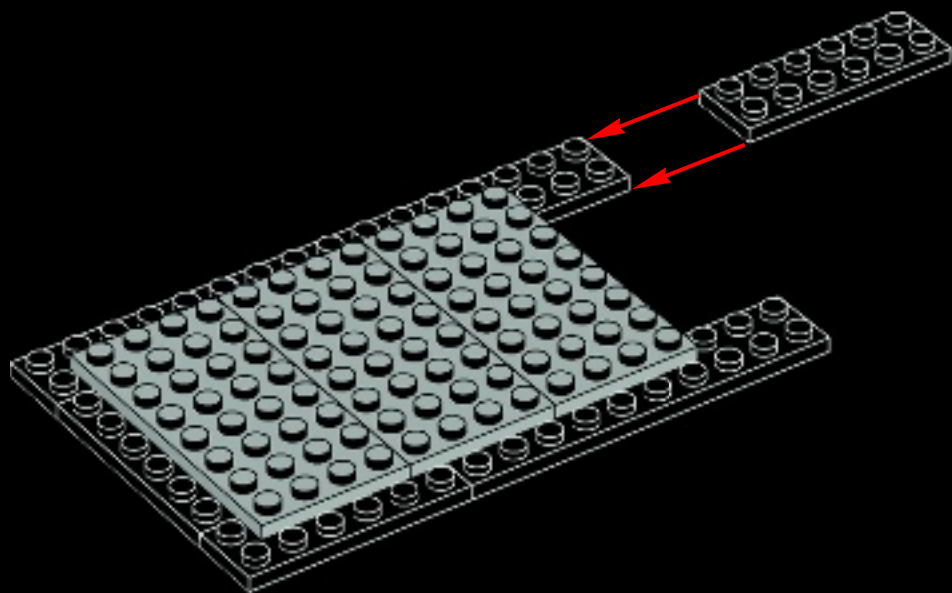


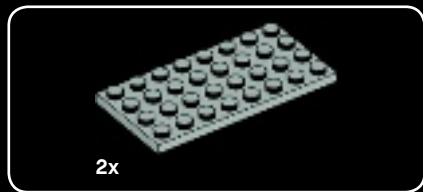
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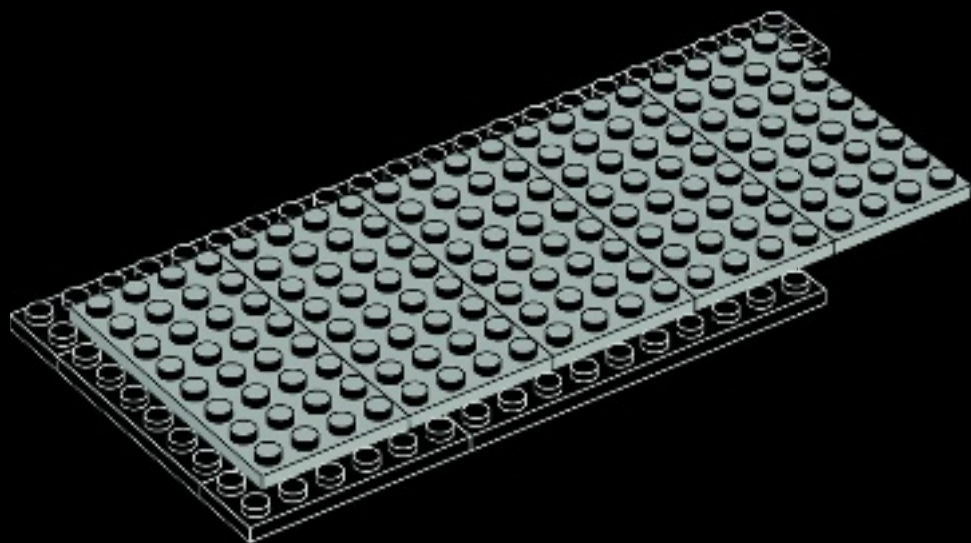


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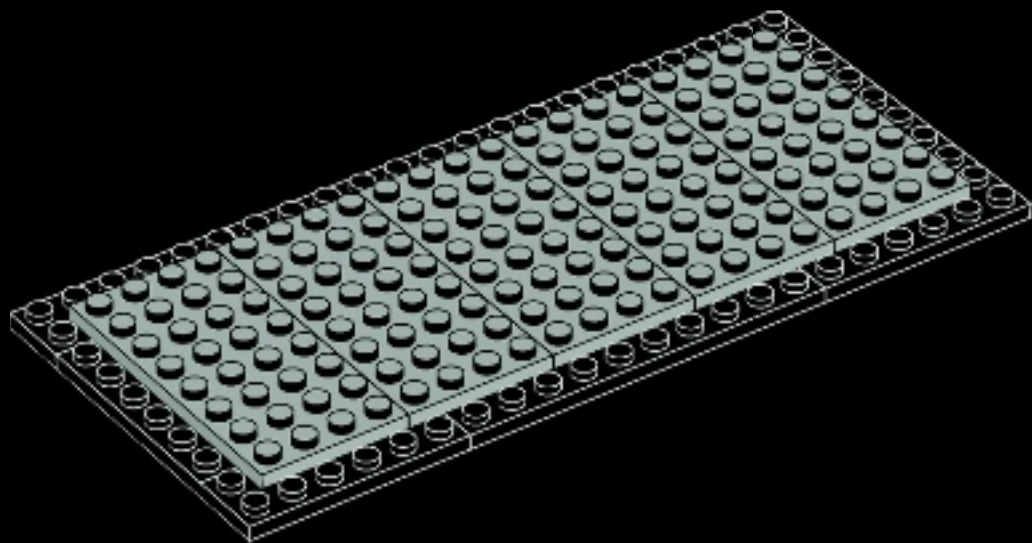
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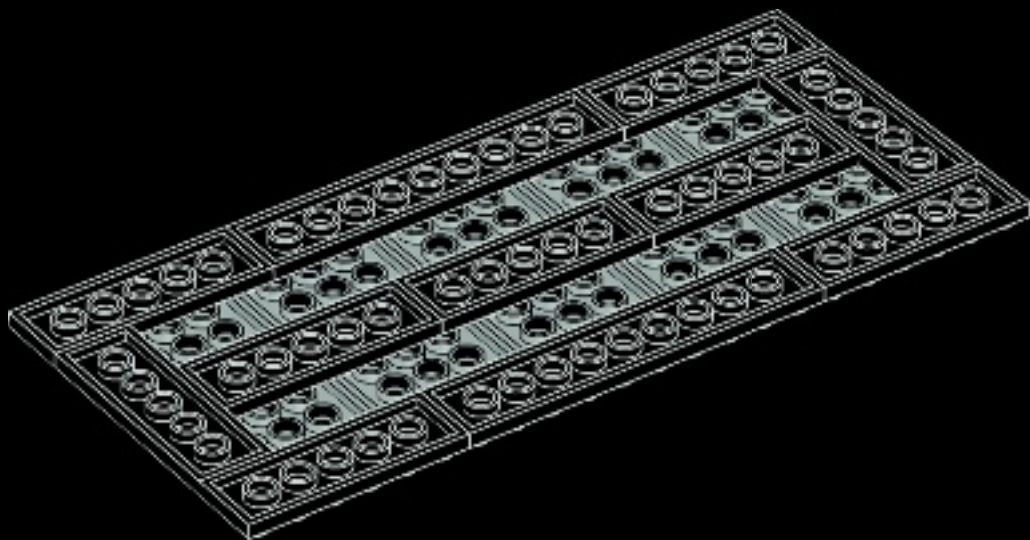


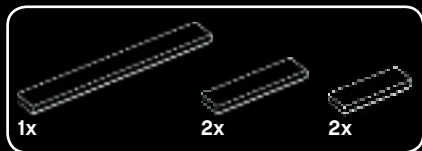


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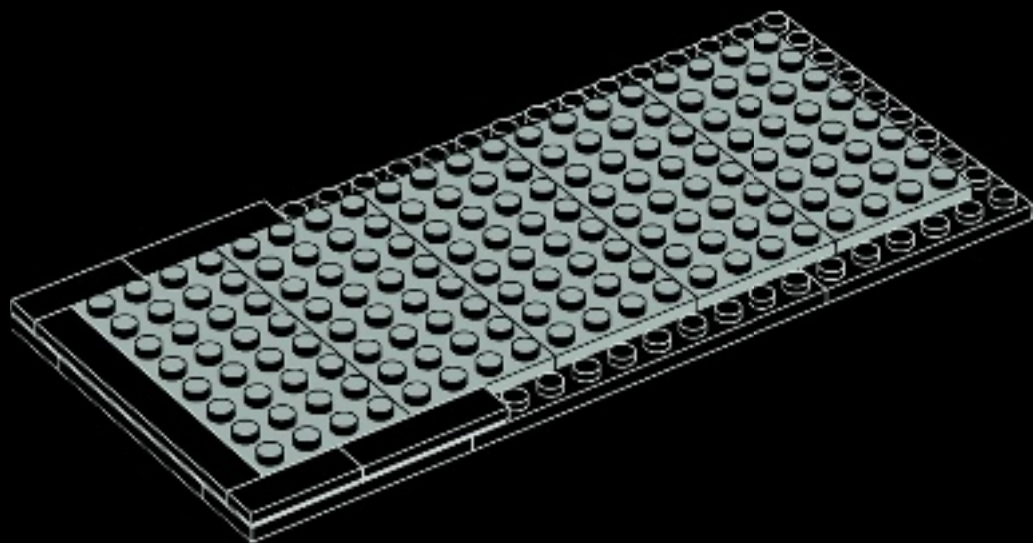


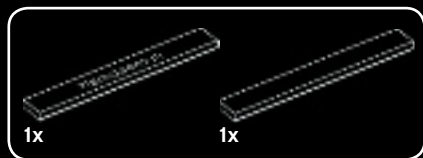
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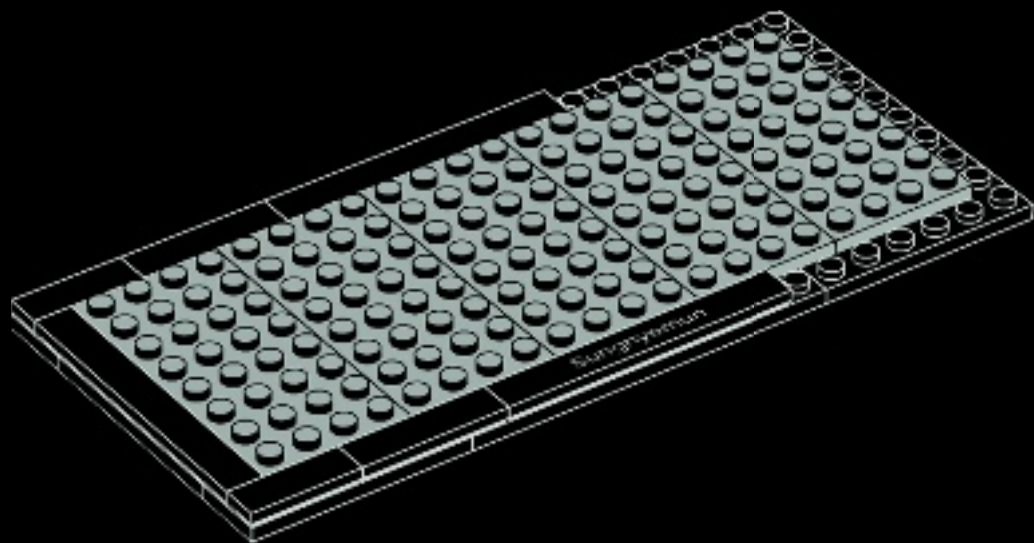


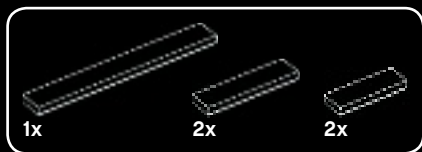
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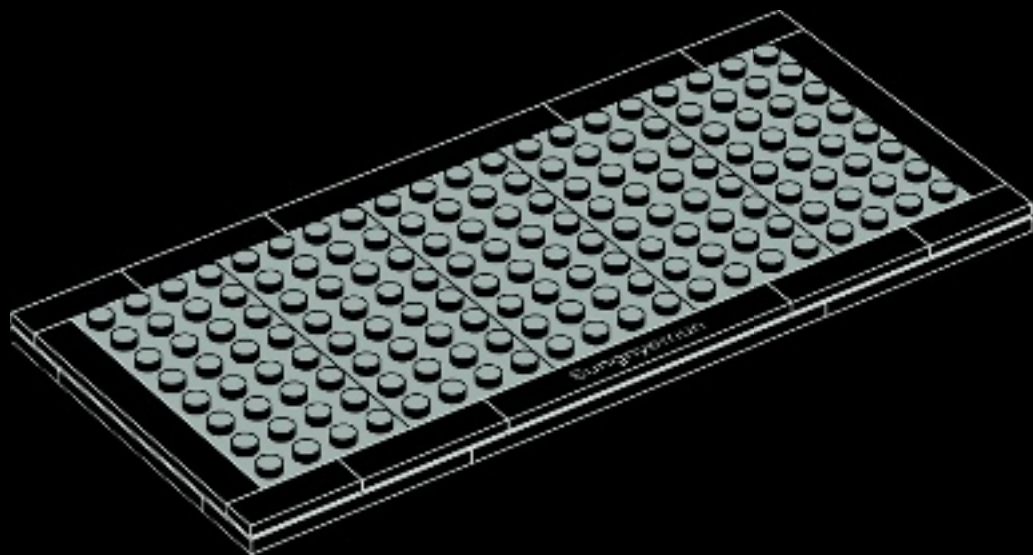


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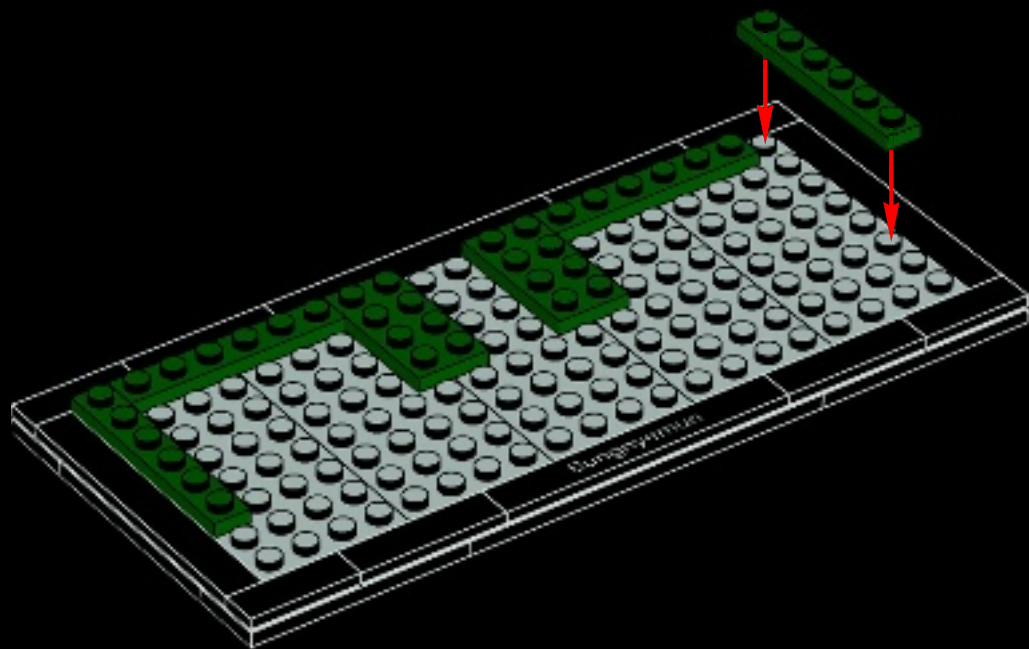


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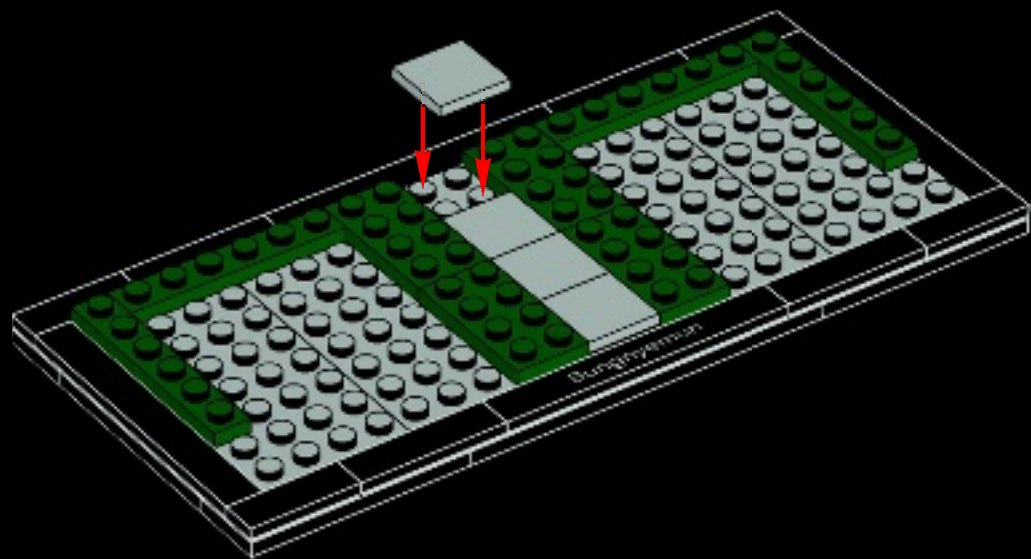


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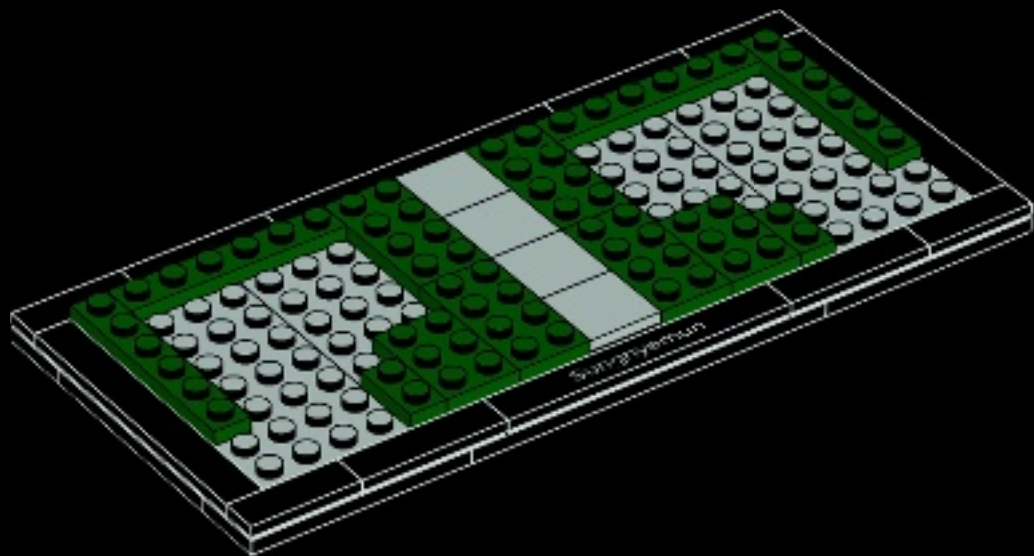


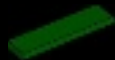
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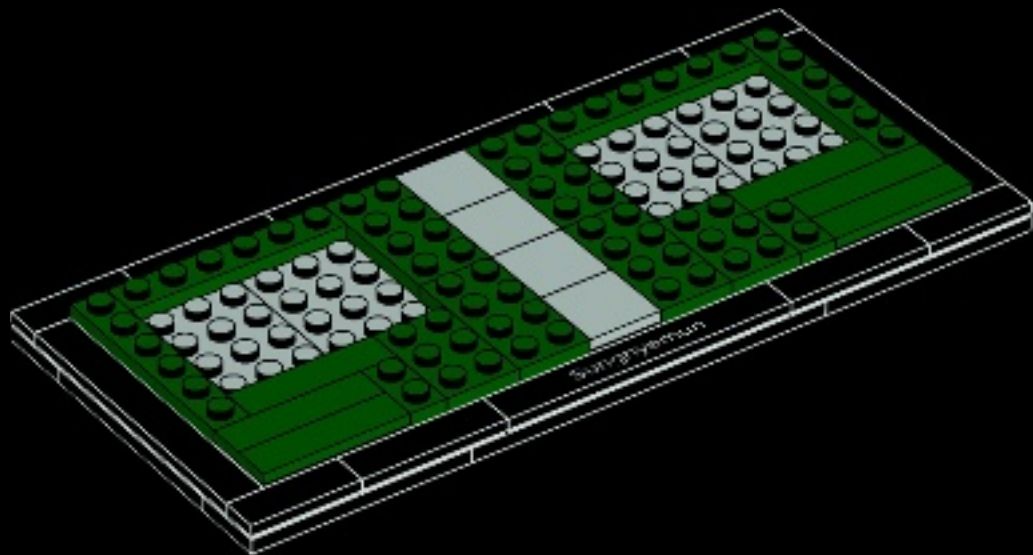
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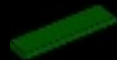




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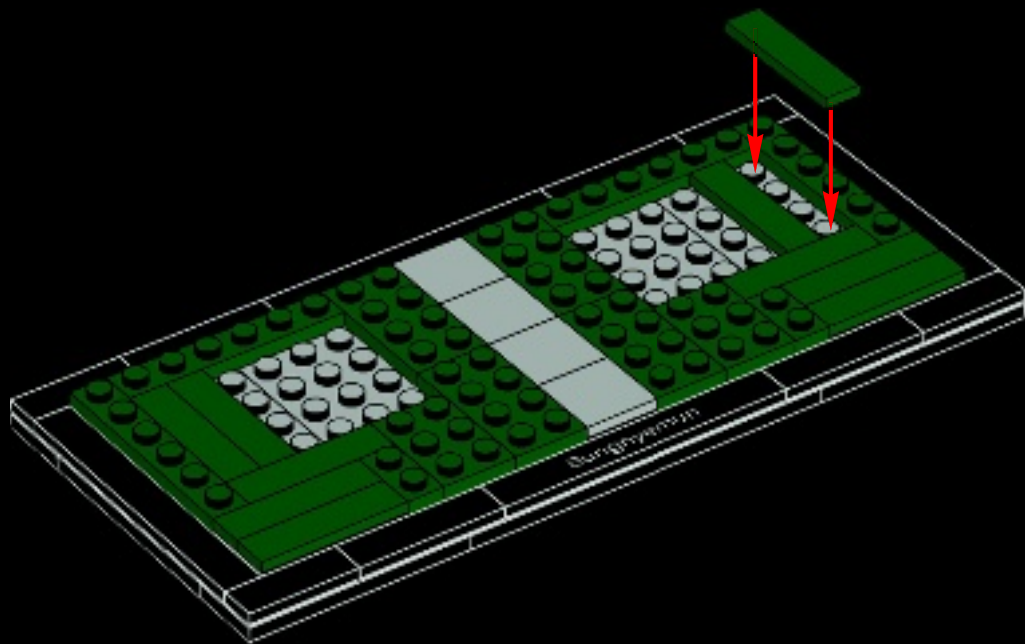
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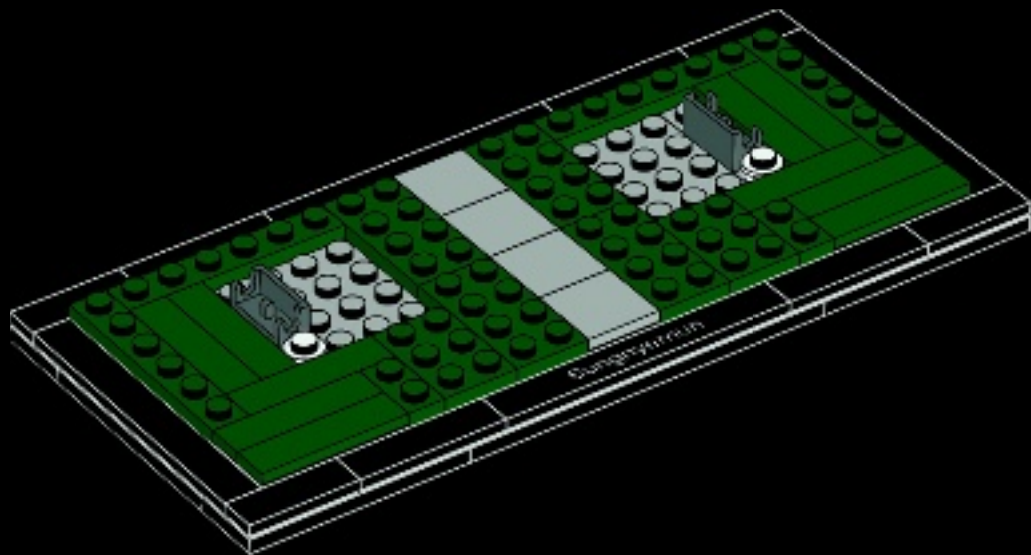


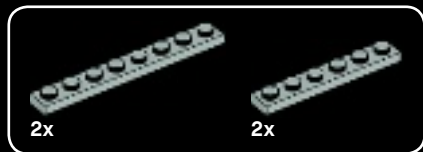
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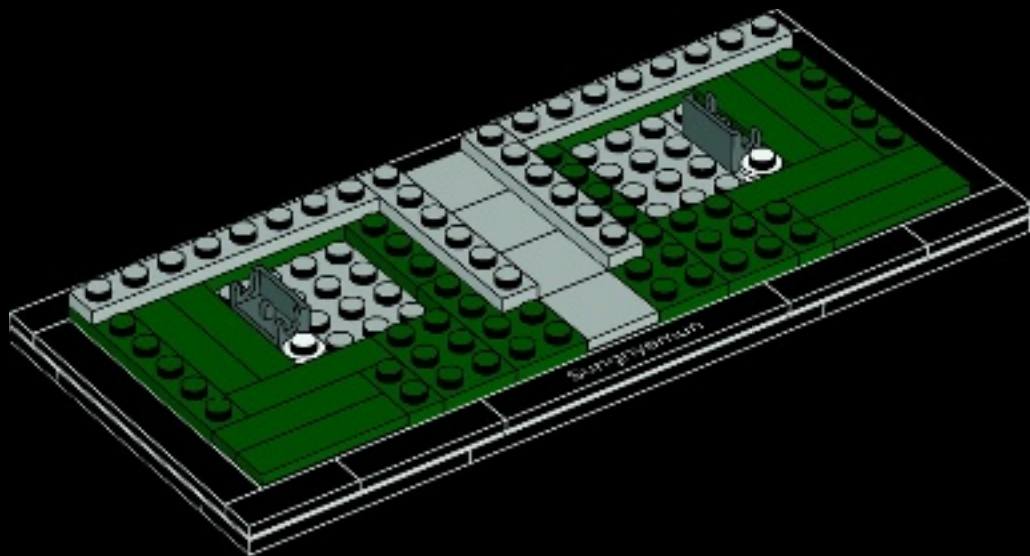
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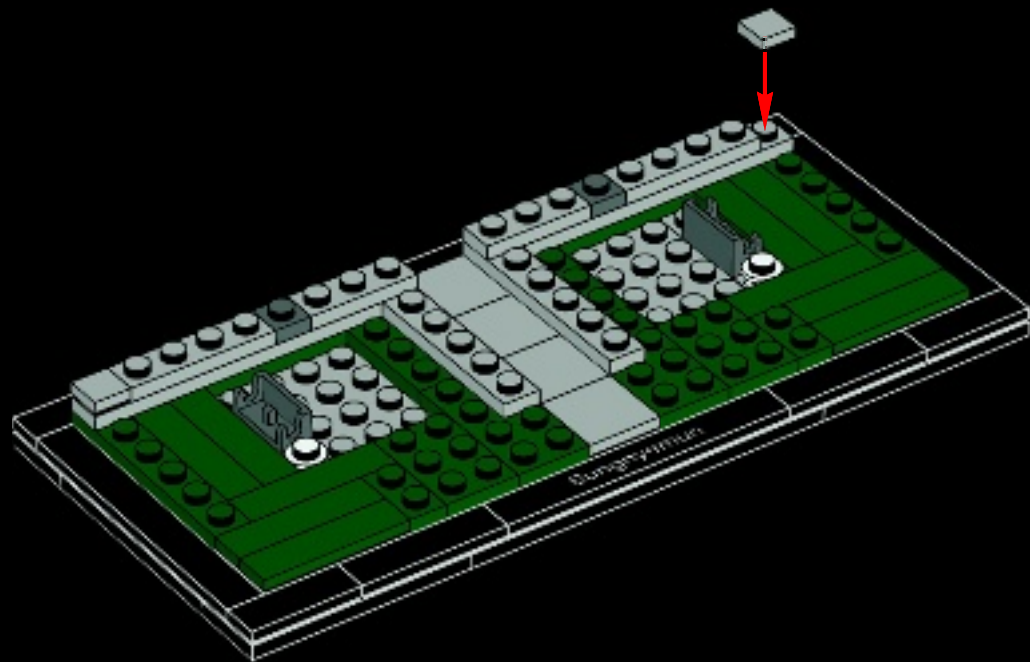


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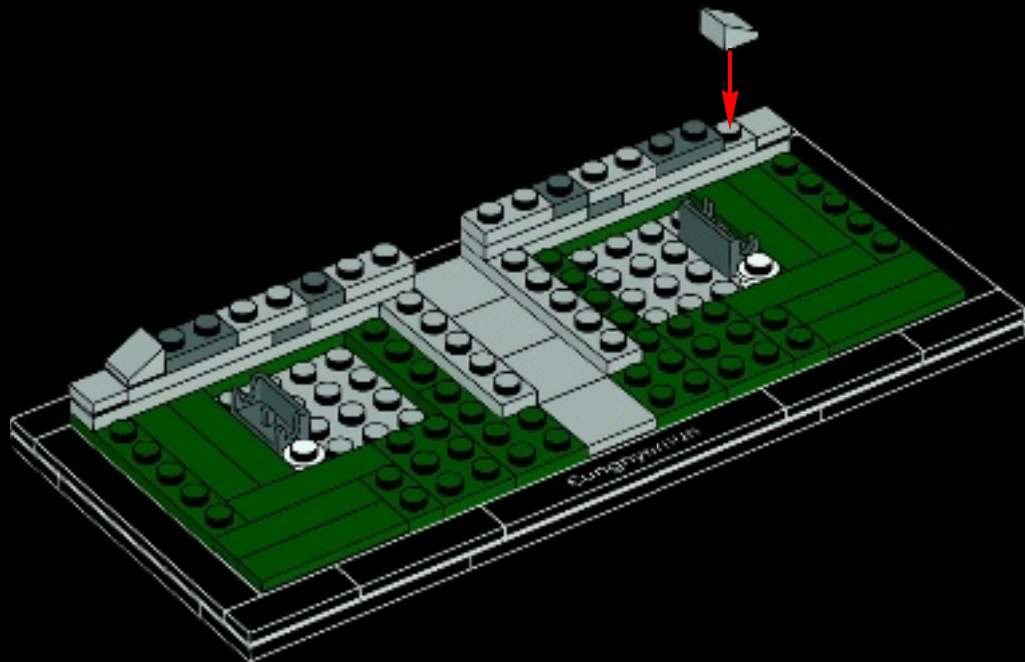


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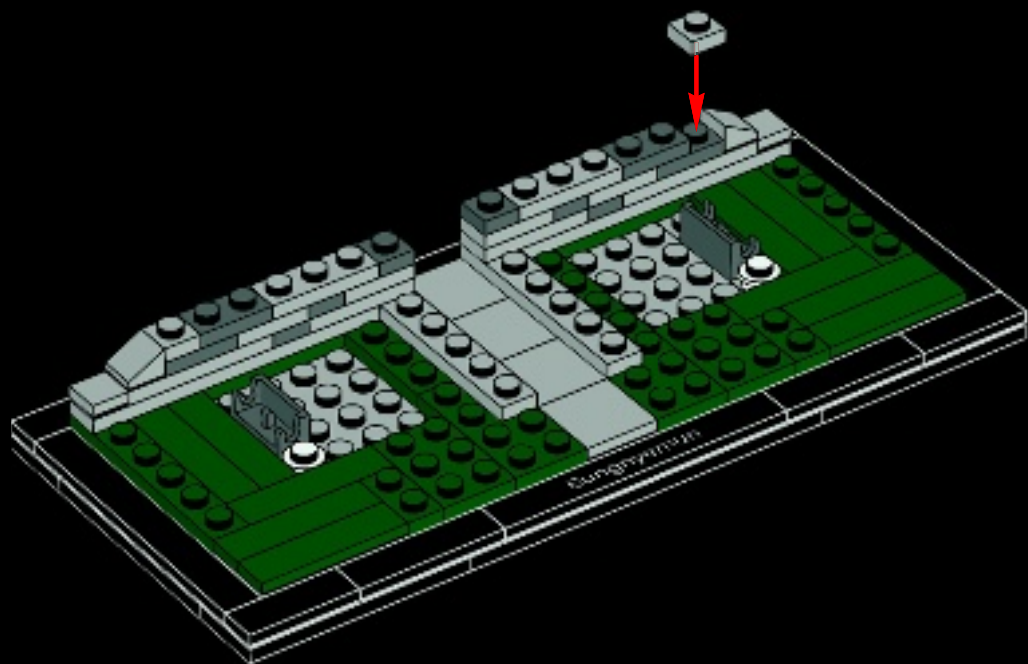
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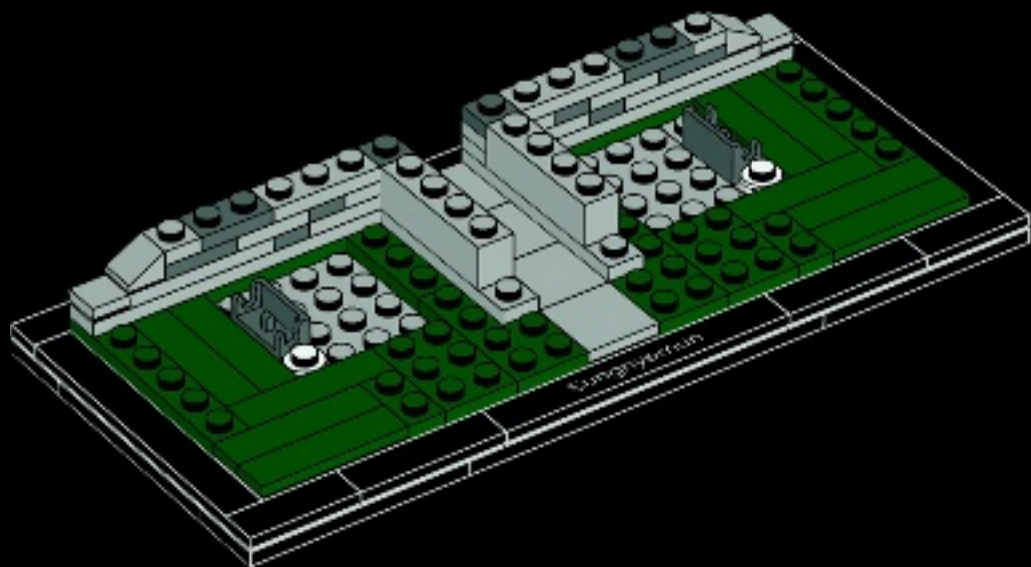
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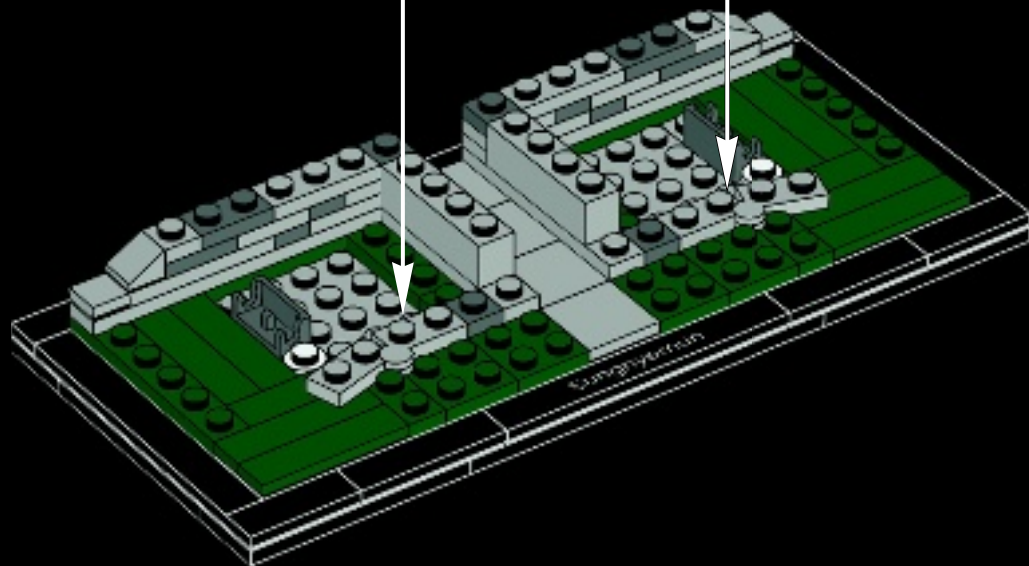


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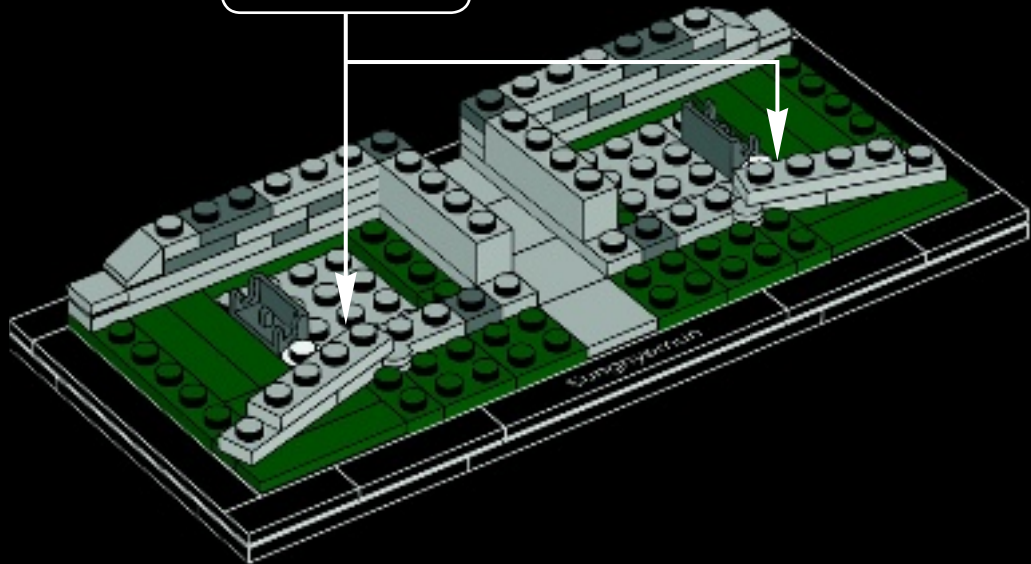
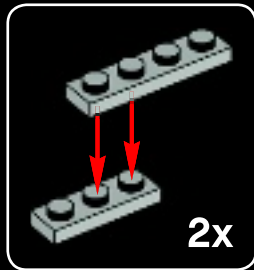
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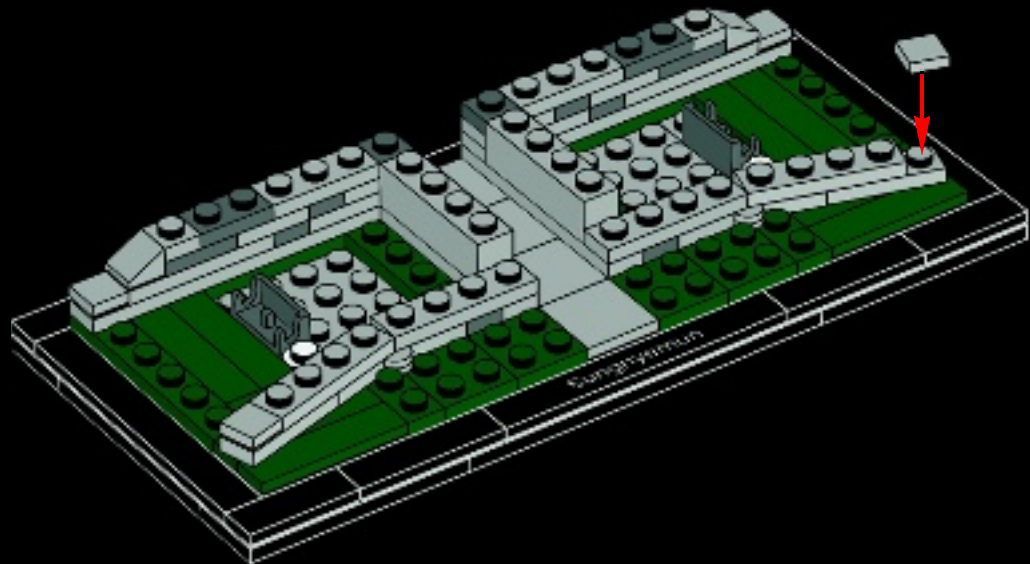


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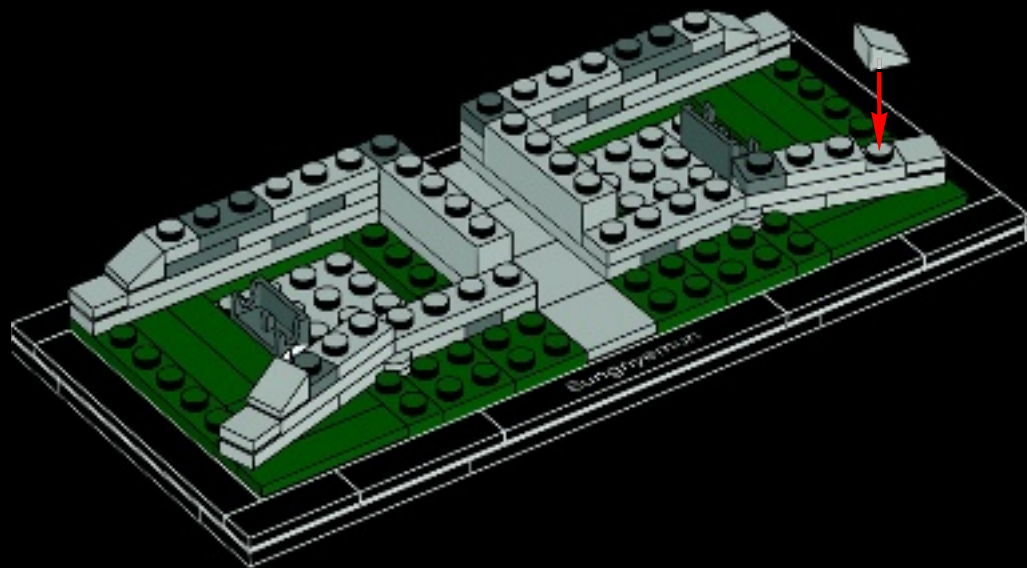


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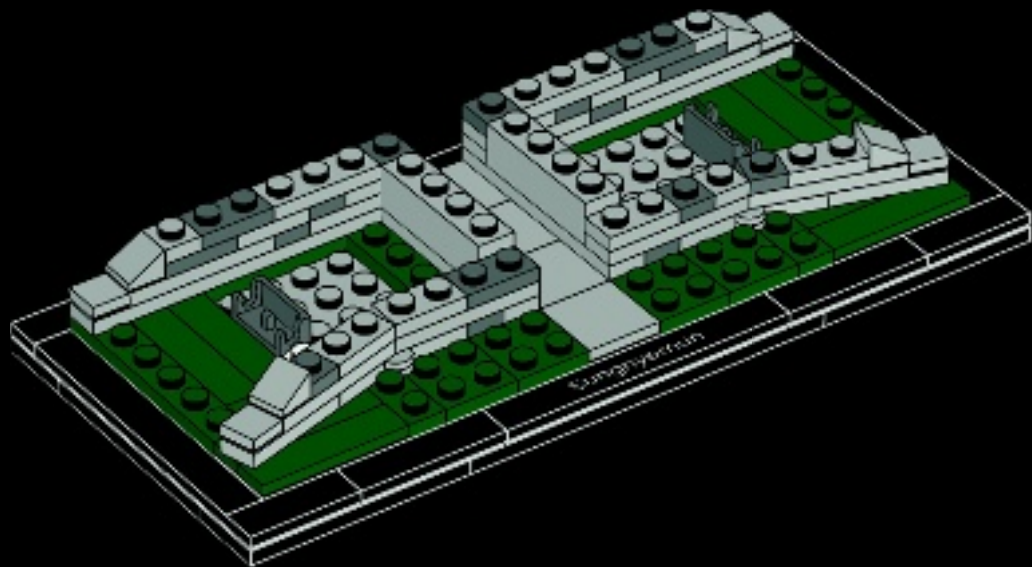


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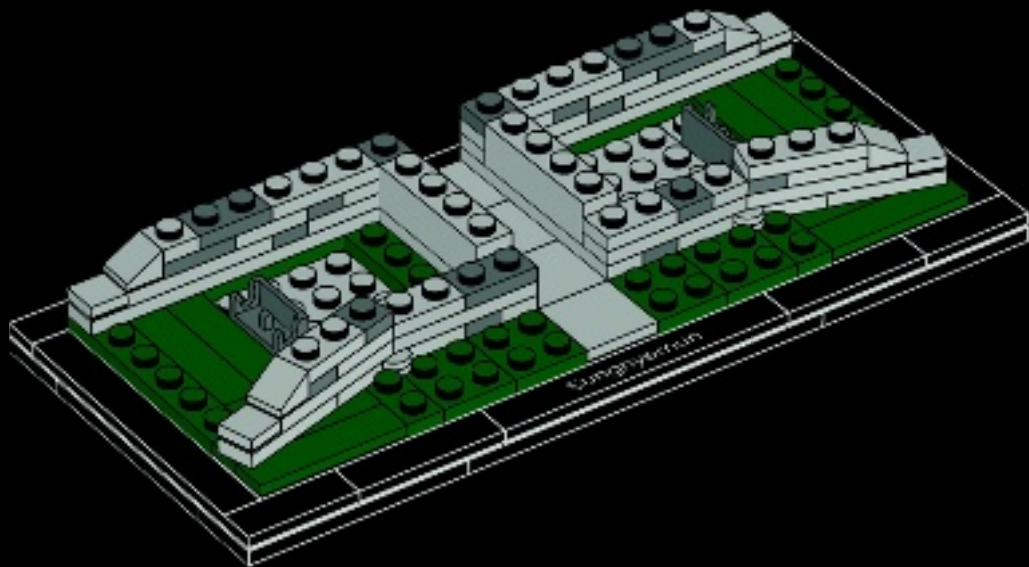


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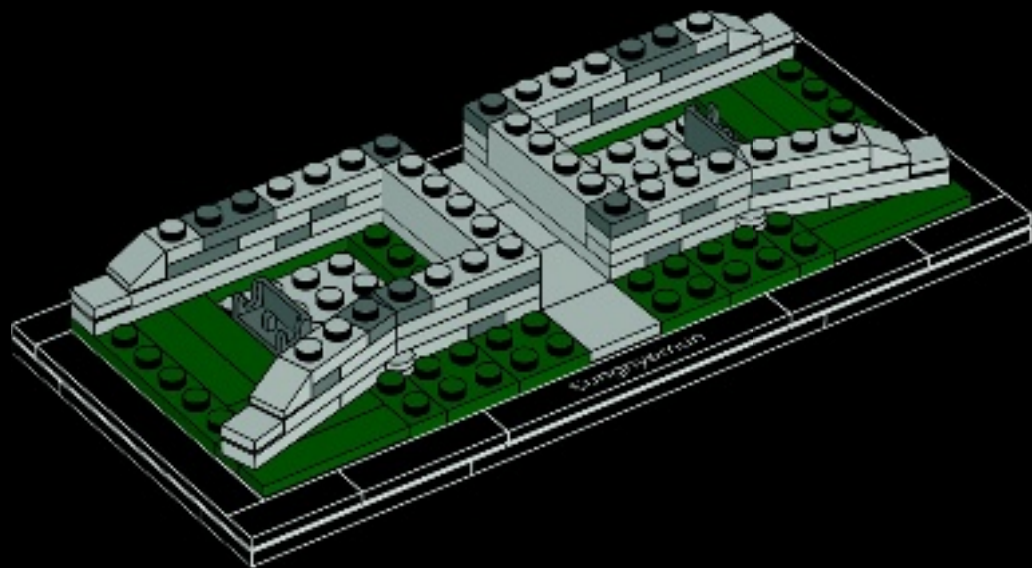


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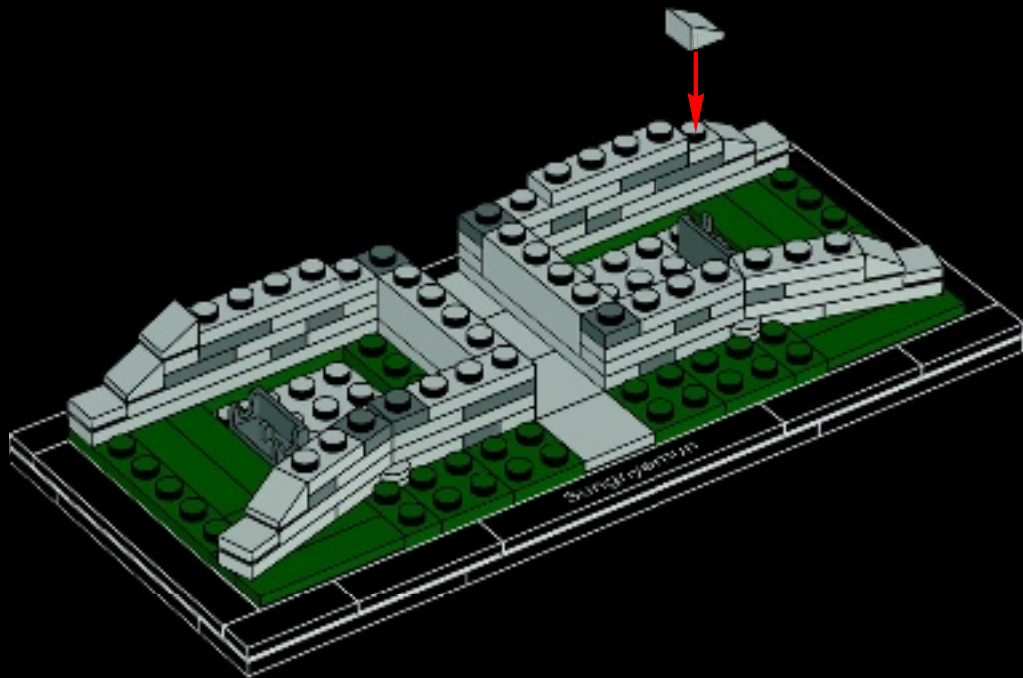


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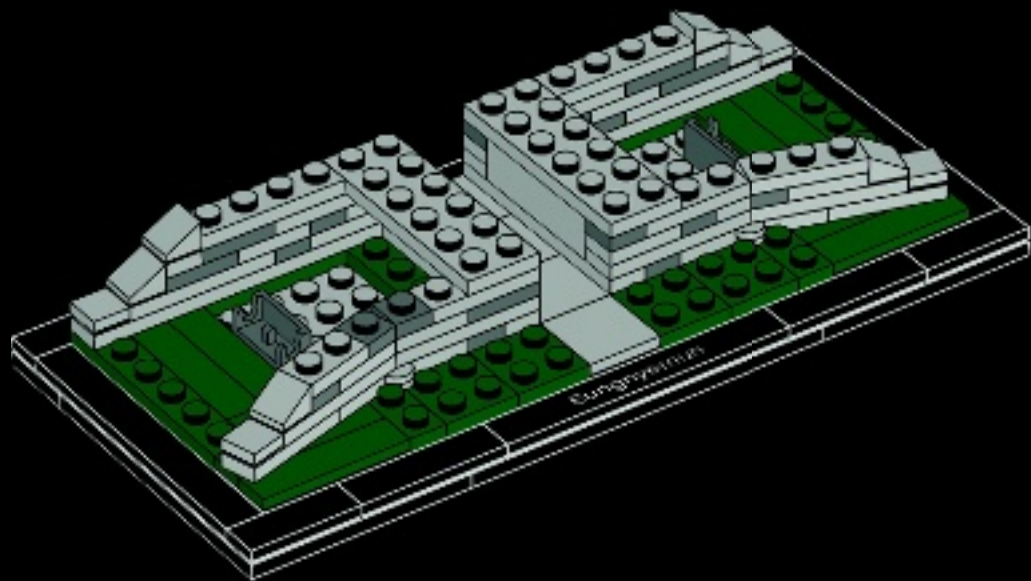
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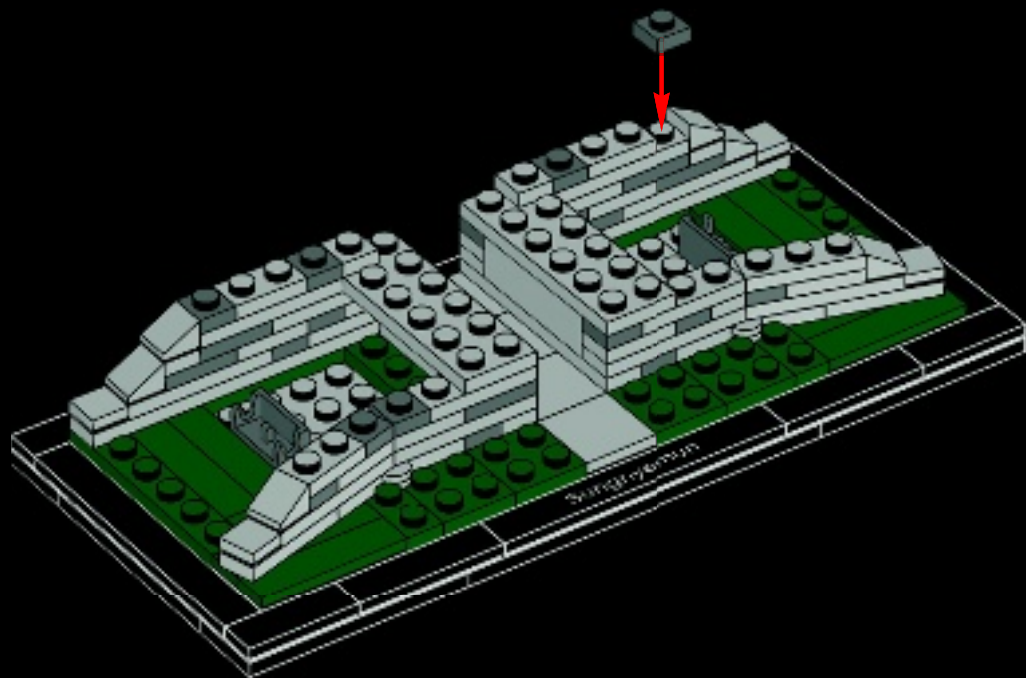


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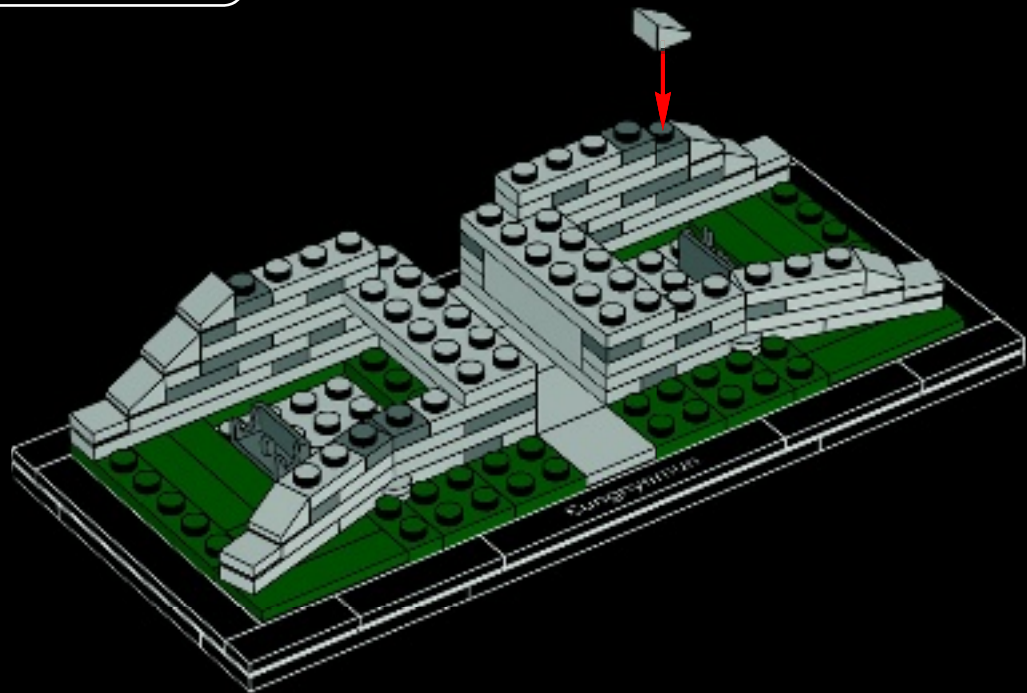


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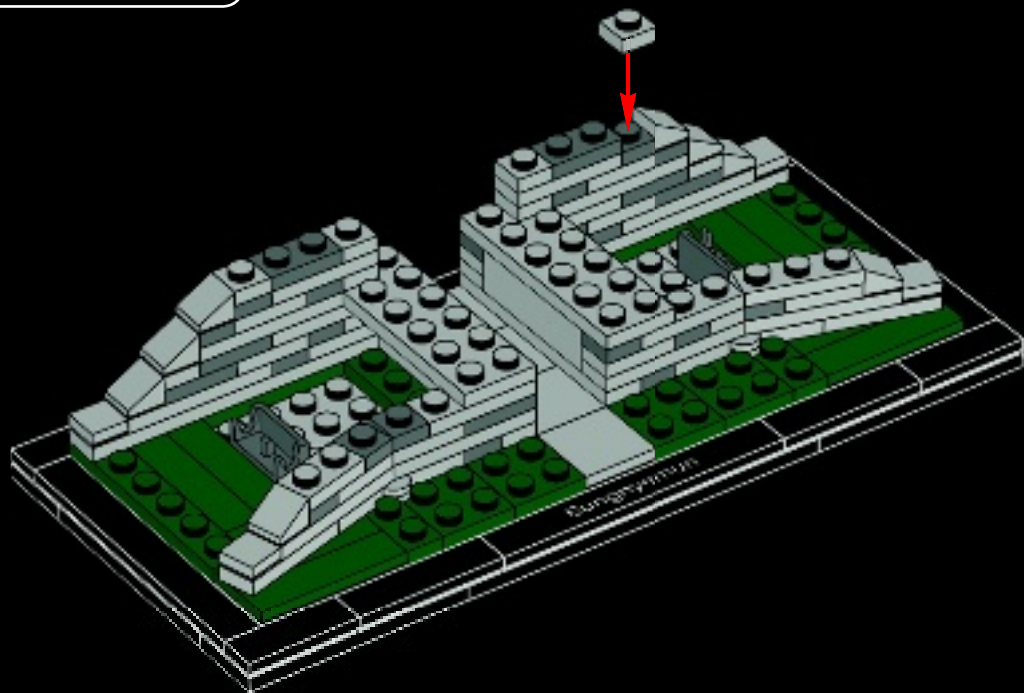


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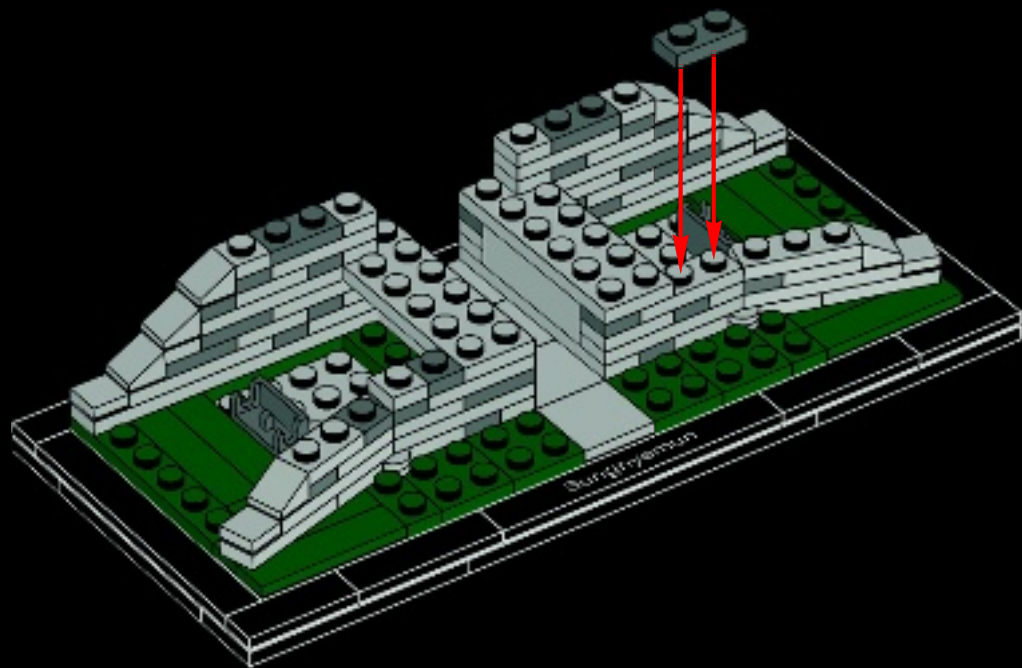
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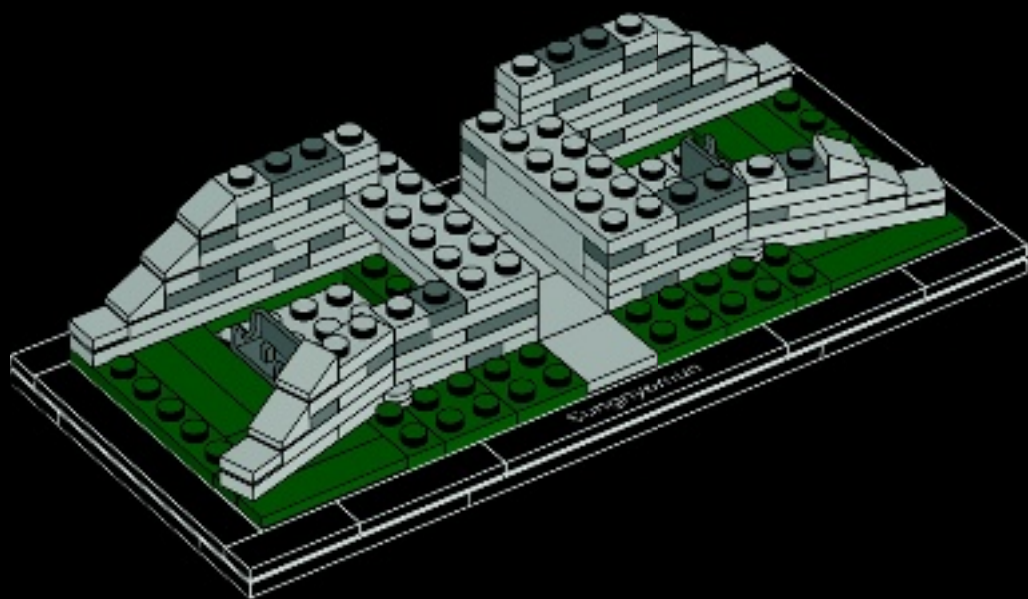


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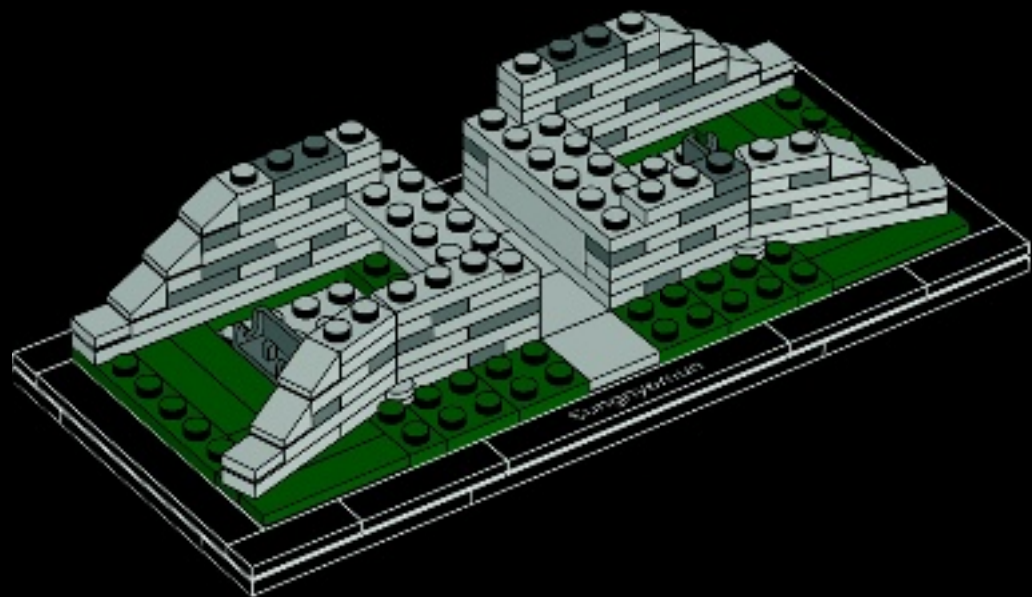


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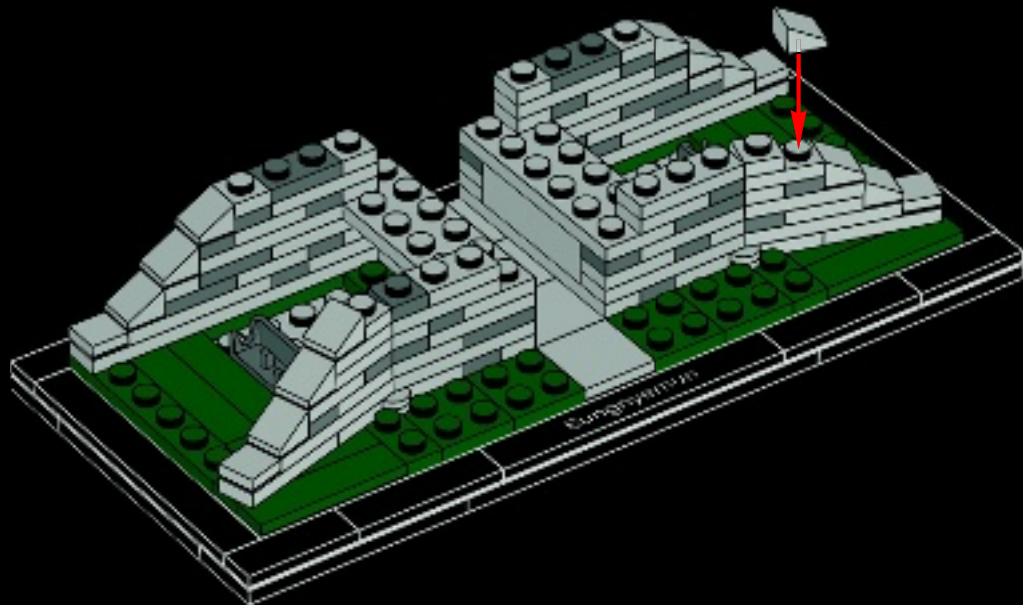
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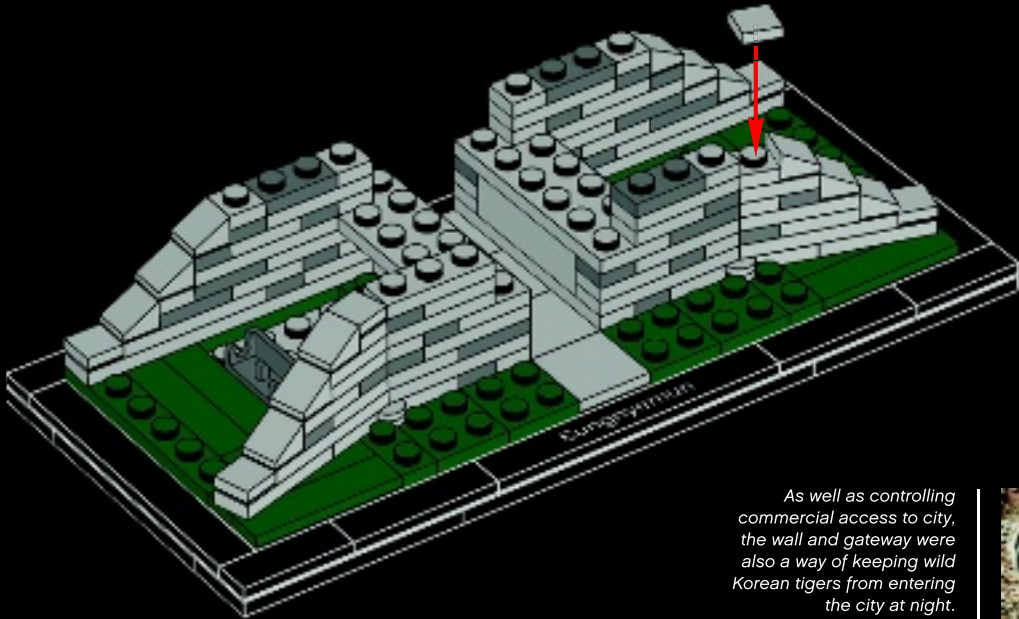


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As well as controlling commercial access to city, the wall and gateway were also a way of keeping wild Korean tigers from entering the city at night.

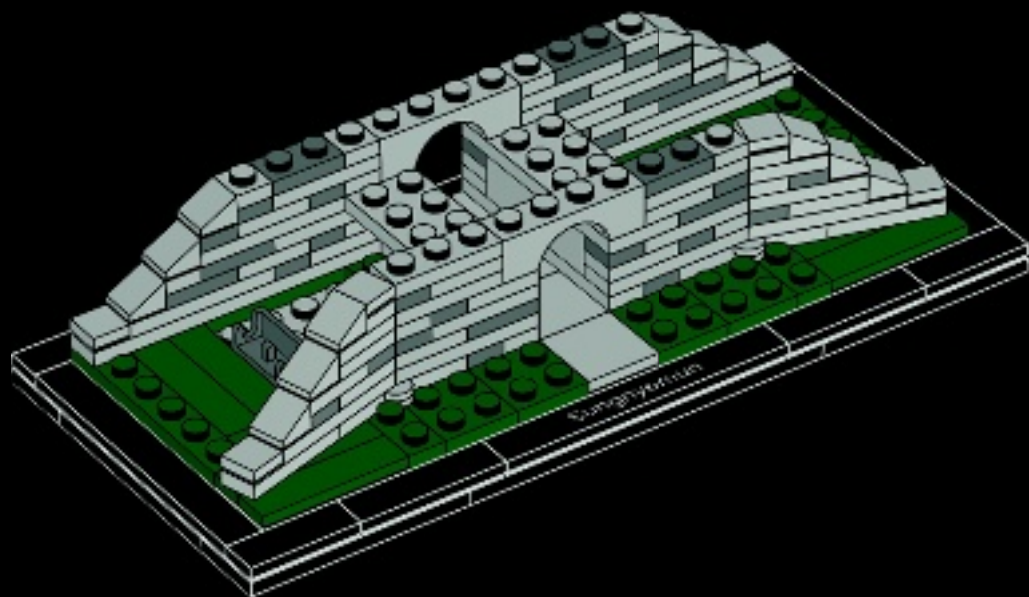


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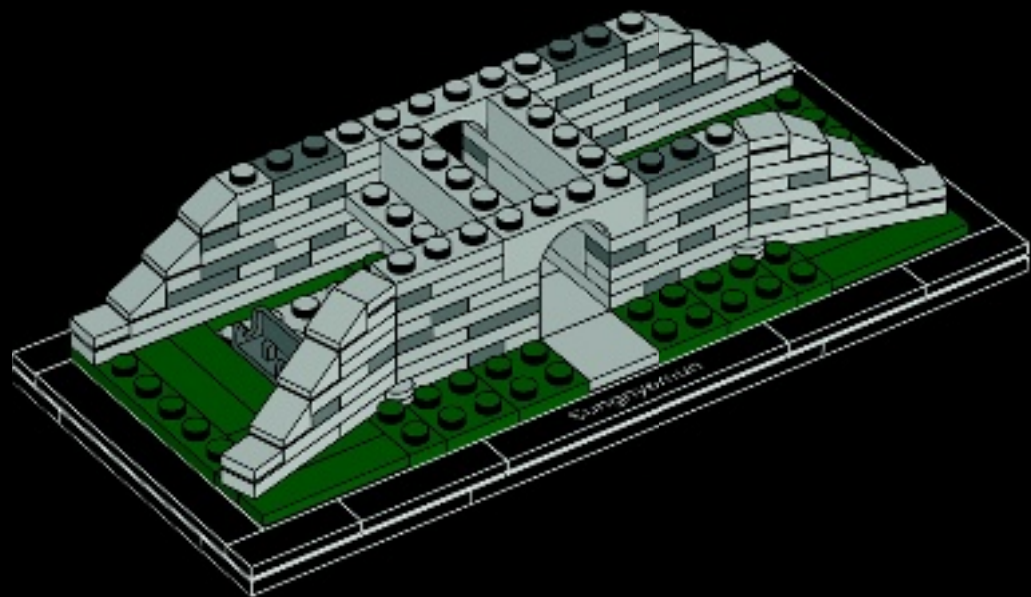


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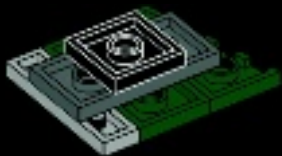
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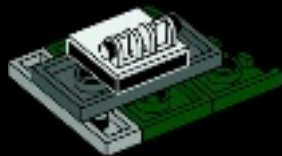
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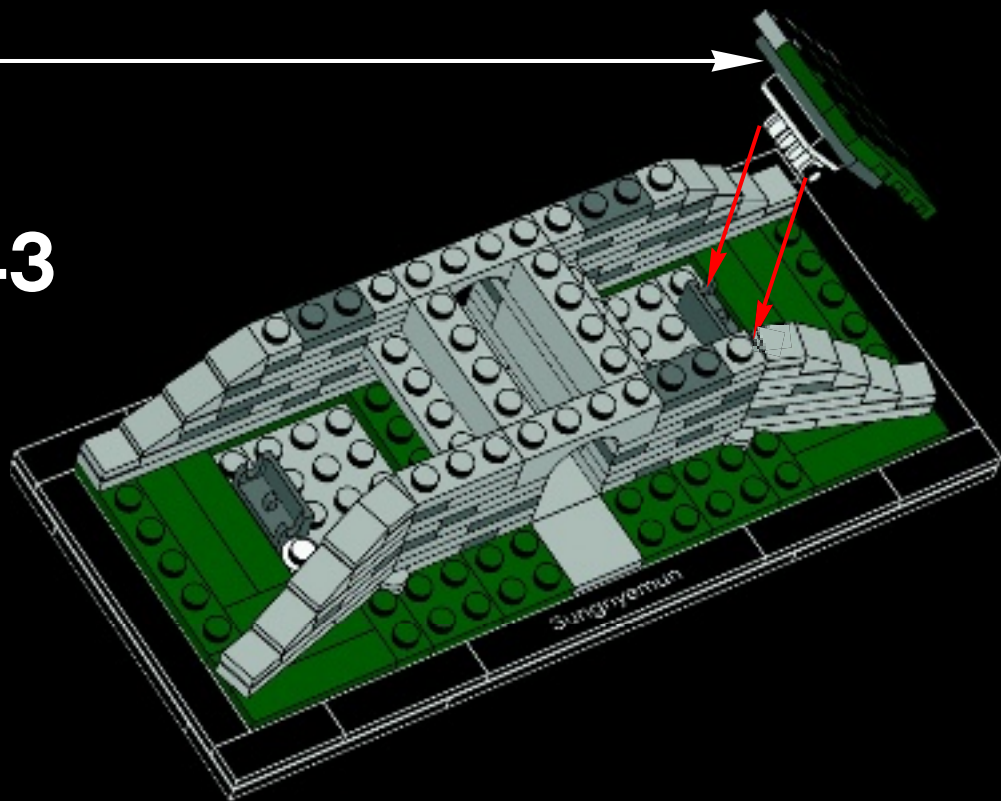


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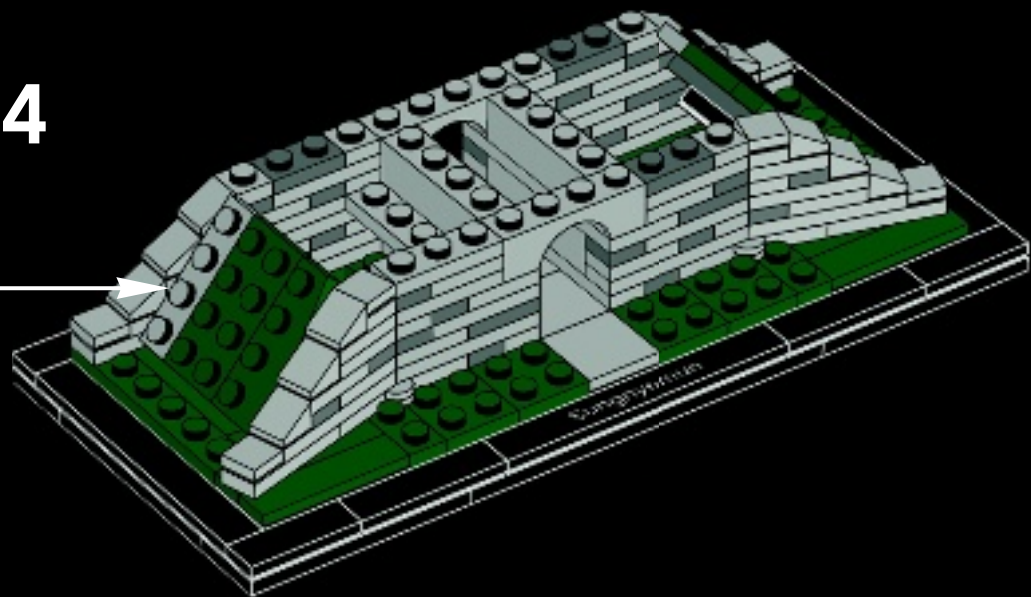


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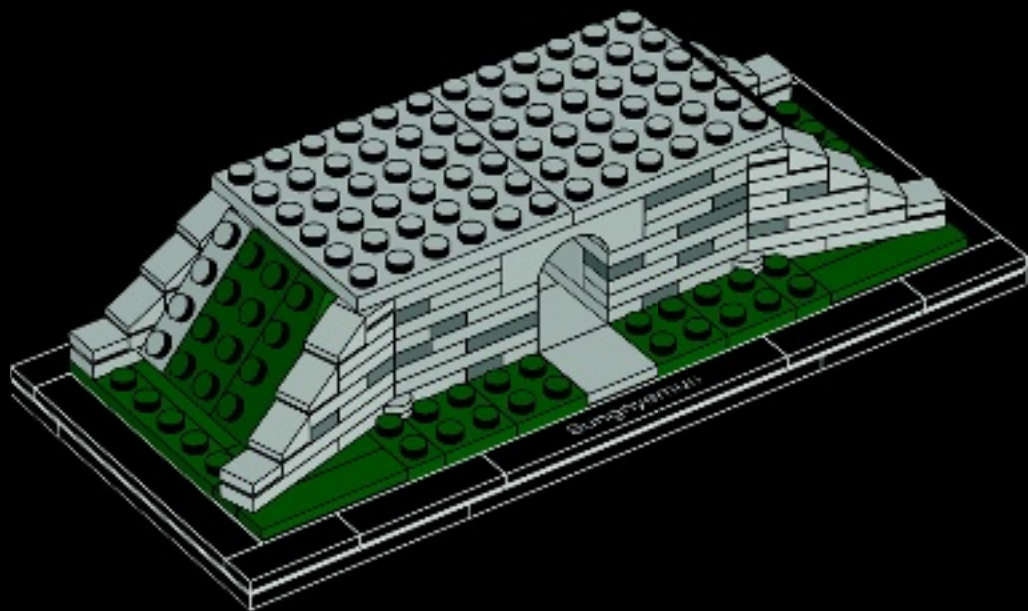
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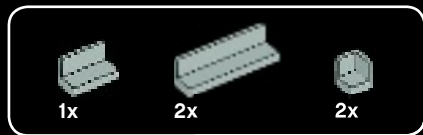




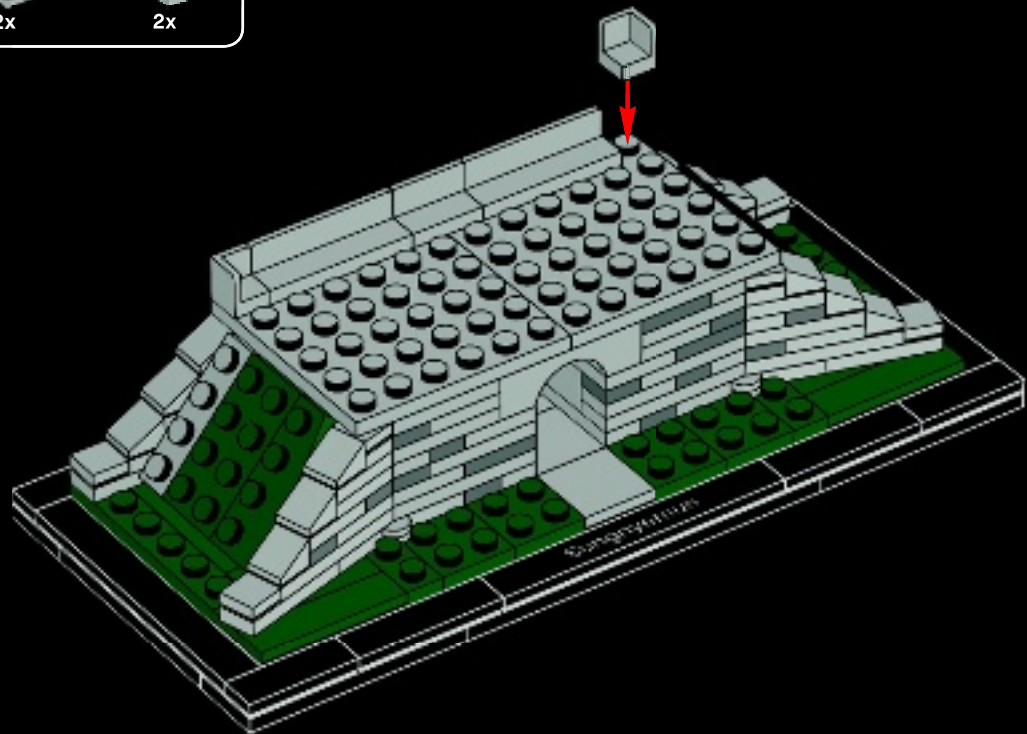
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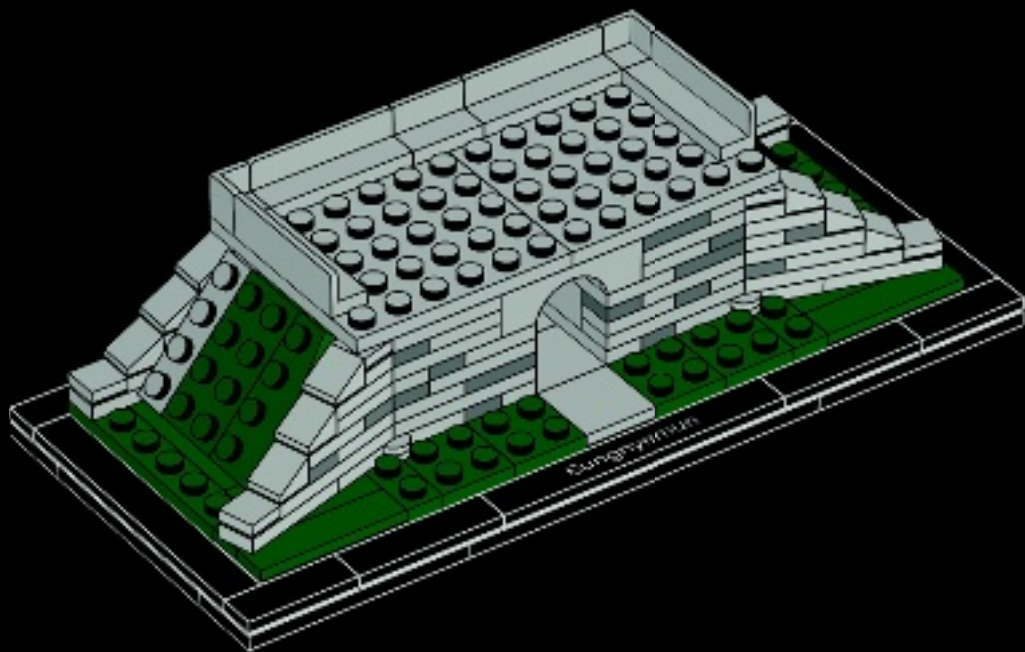
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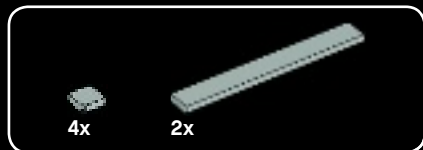




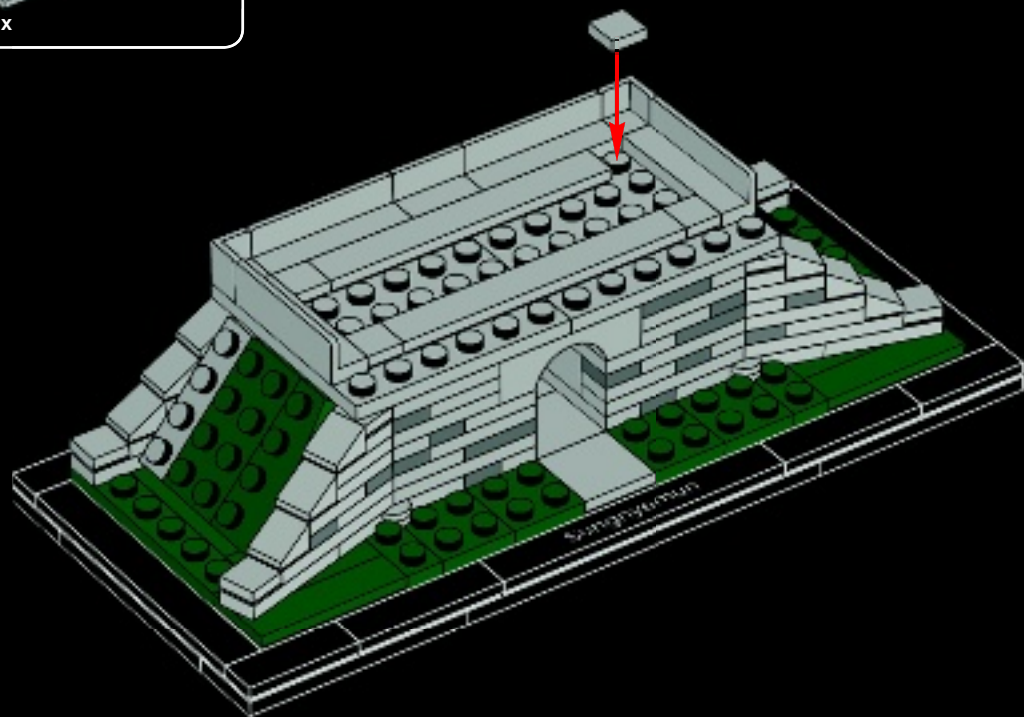
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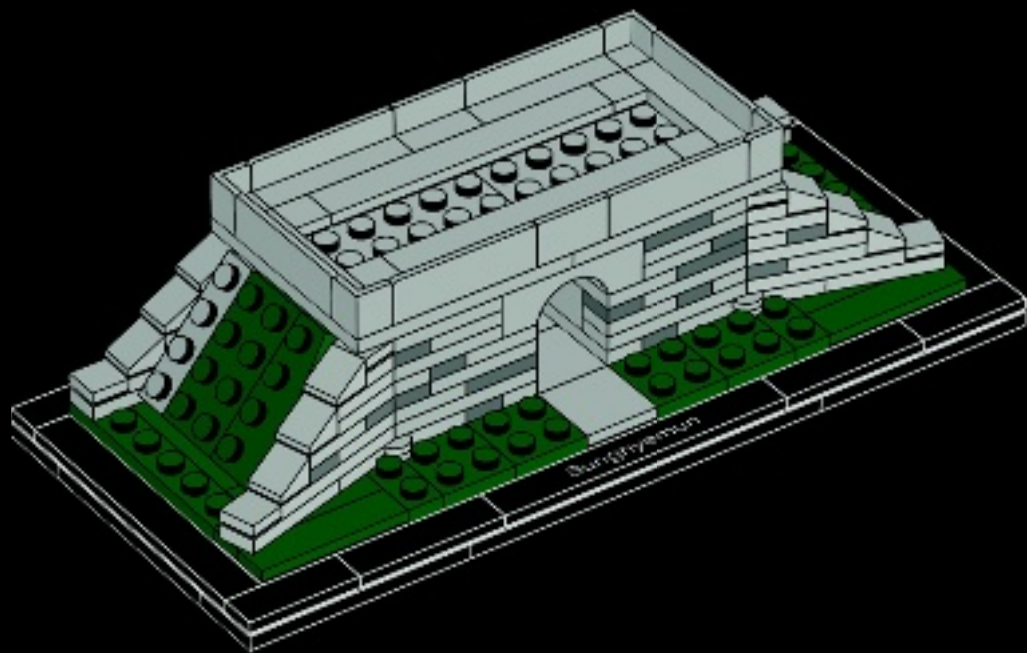


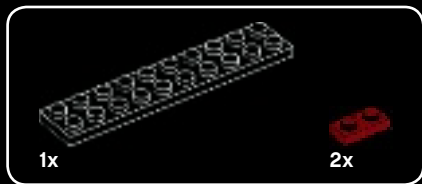
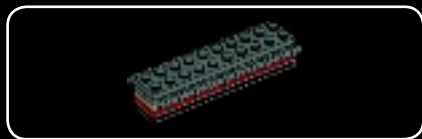
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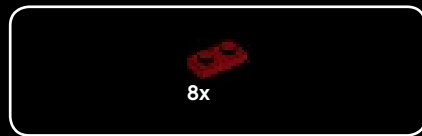
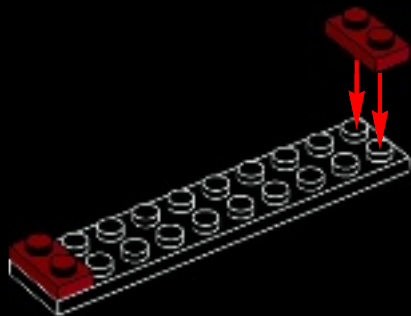
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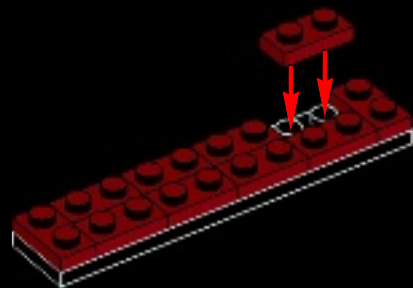




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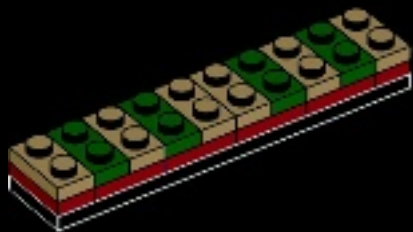


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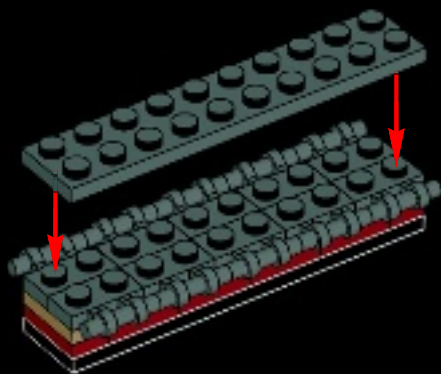
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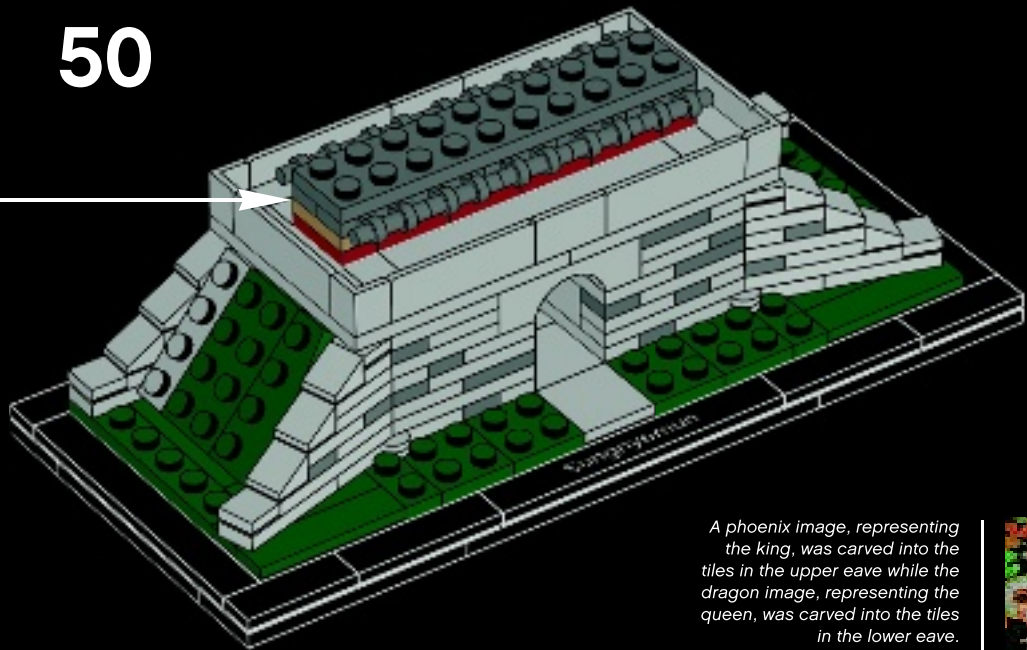
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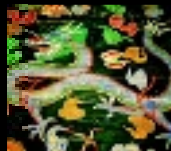
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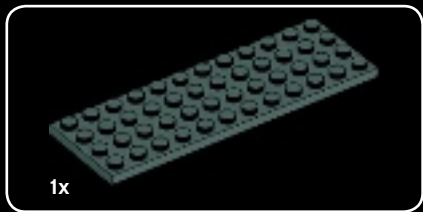
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A phoenix image, representing the king, was carved into the tiles in the upper eave while the dragon image, representing the queen, was carved into the tiles in the lower eave.

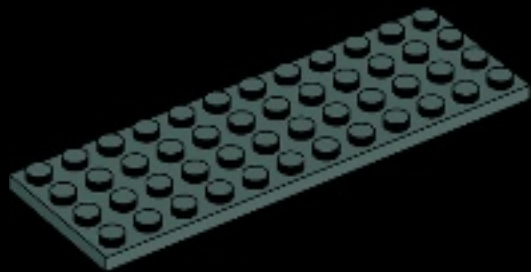


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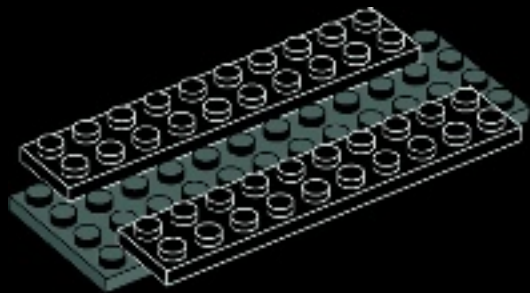
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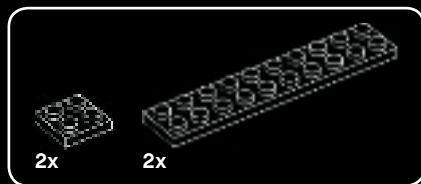
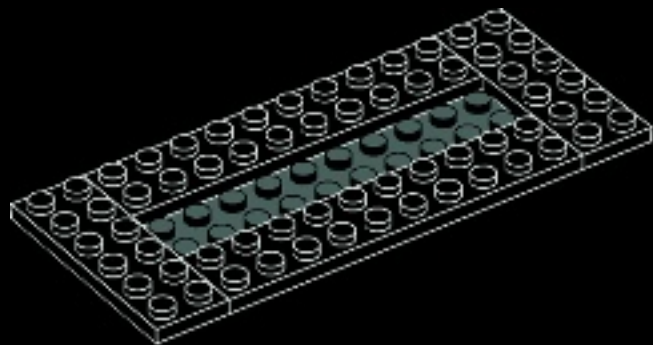
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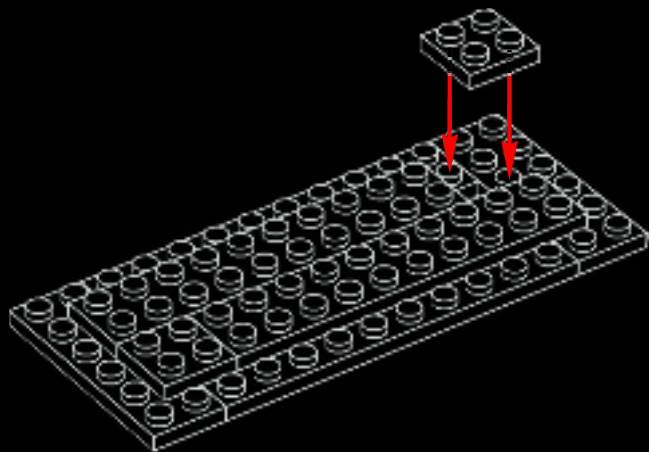




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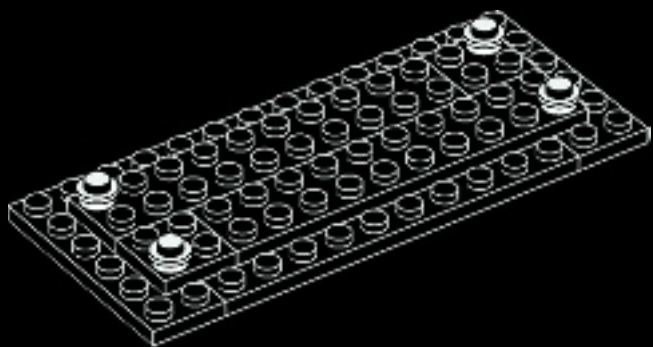
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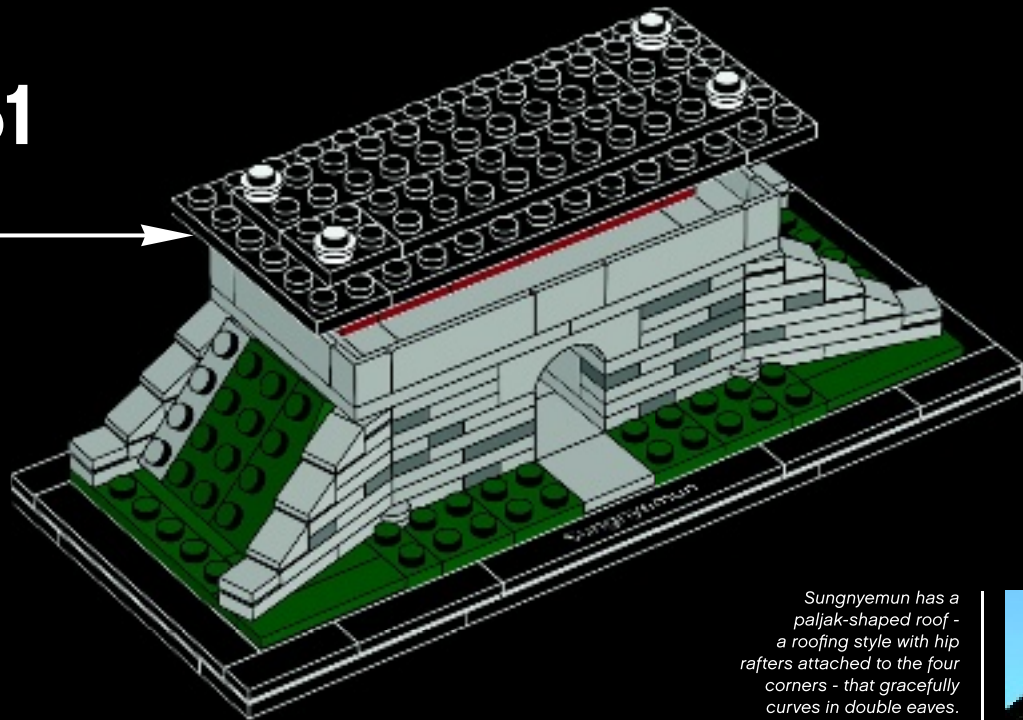


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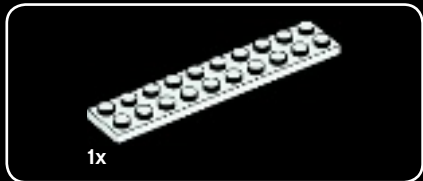
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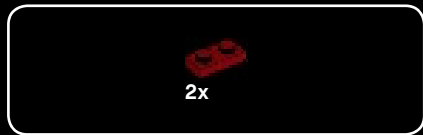
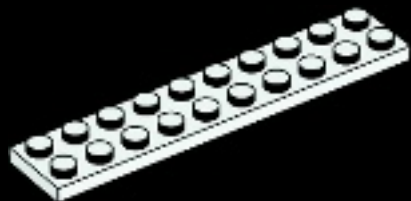
Sungnyemun has a paljak-shaped roof - a roofing style with hip rafters attached to the four corners - that gracefully curves in double eaves.



© ImageKorea



1



2

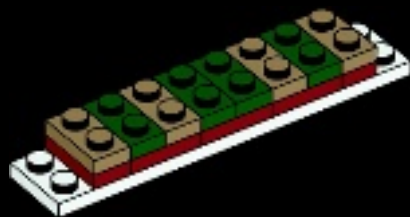




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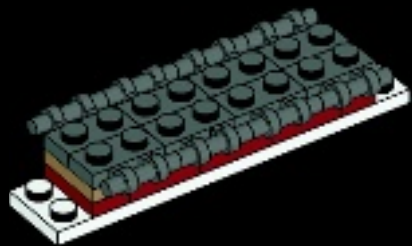
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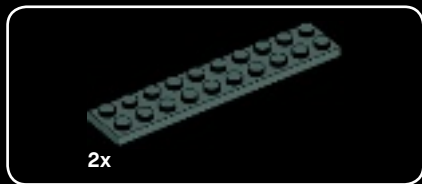
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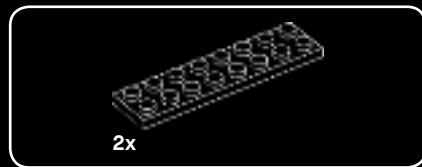
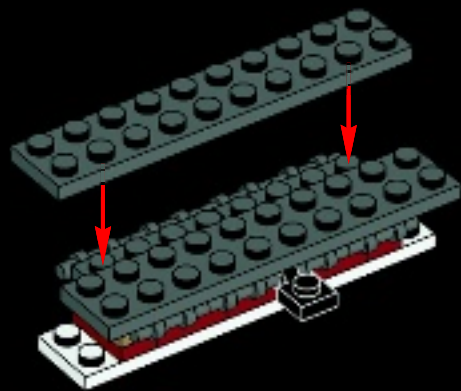
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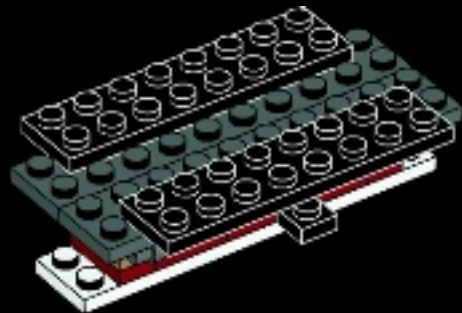




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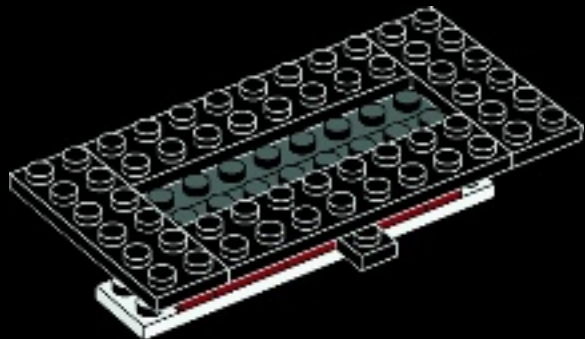
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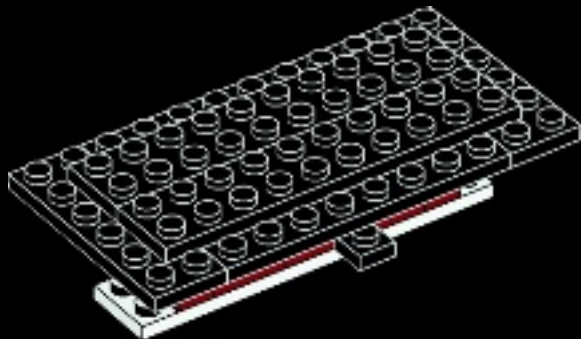
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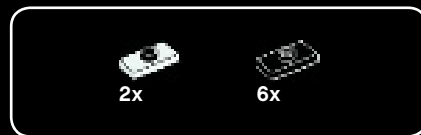
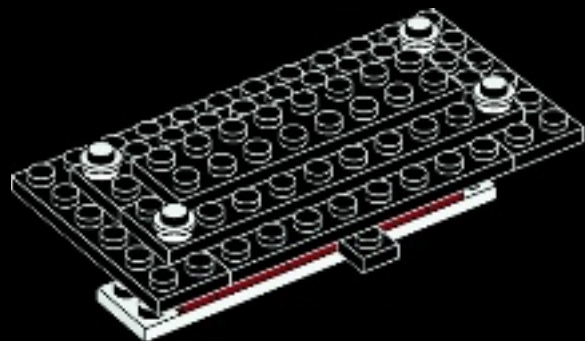
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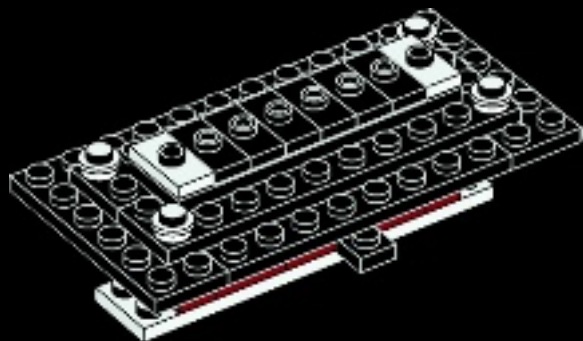




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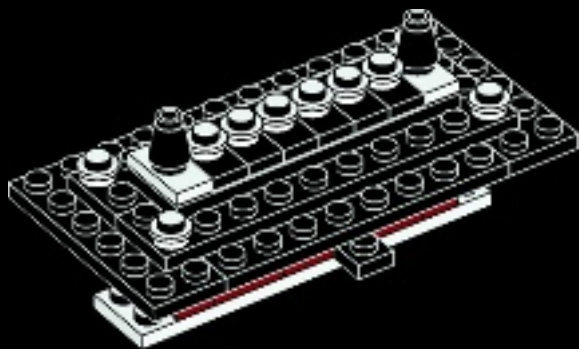


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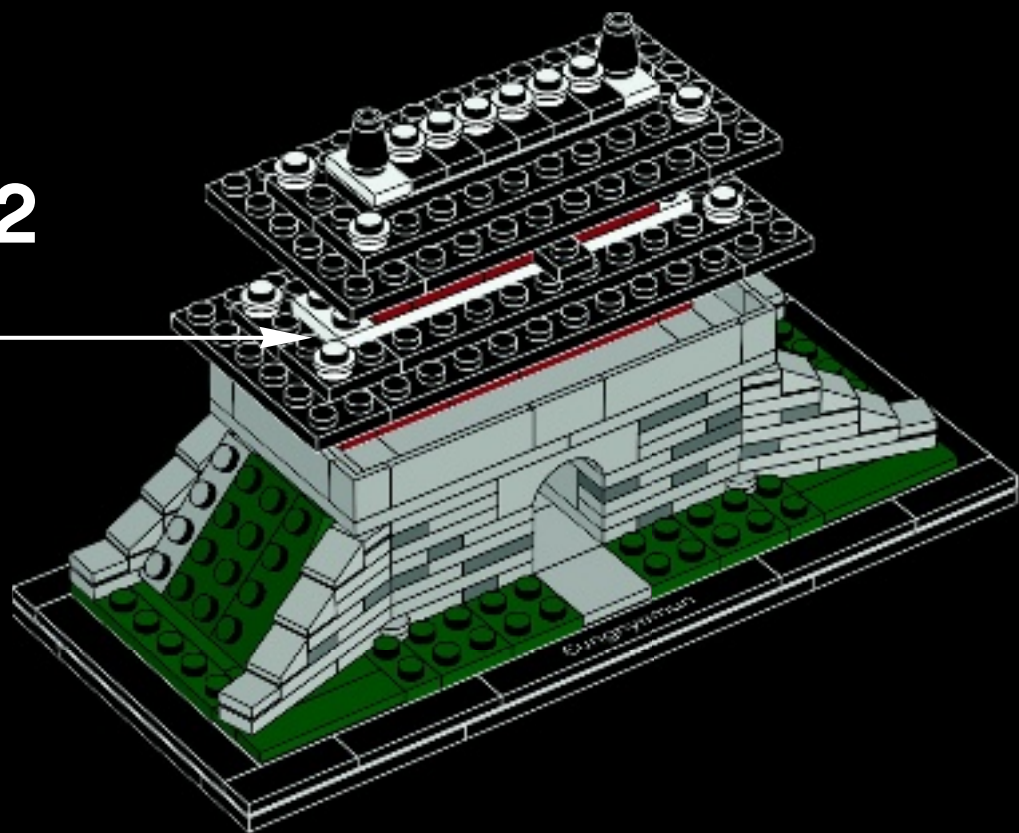


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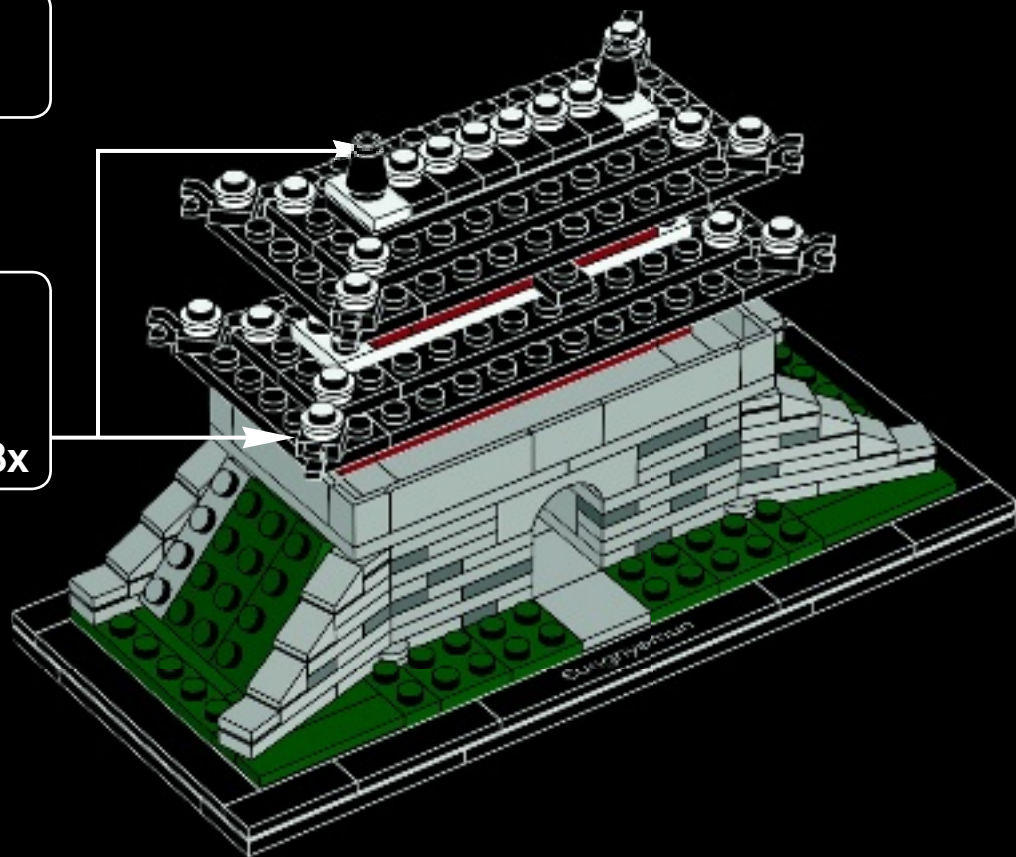
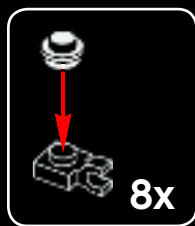


8x



8x

53





2x
379401



24x
614101



2x
4612342



1x
383201



18x
4539097



2x
4529236



4x
302226



9x
4517925



6x
379426



4x
4558170



4x
243126



13x
379526



1x
6024587



3x
416226



3x
303426



9x
383226



10x
4528604



10x
6013102



1x
4648340



1x
4648342



2x
4650244



10x
4543949



6x
4586057



4x
4245566



10x
4211445



2x
4219256



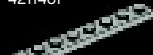
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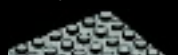
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2x
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2x
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2x
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5x
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12x
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14x
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10x
4211415



4x
4215513



16x
4211398



2x
4211515



4x
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14x
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6x
4211769



2x
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4x
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24x
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9x
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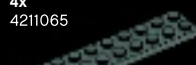
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A Word from the Artist

As an Architectural Artist, my desire is to capture the essence of a particular architectural landmark into its pure sculptural form. I first and foremost do not view my models as literal replicas, but rather my own artistic interpretations through the use of LEGO® bricks as a medium. The LEGO brick is not initially thought of as a material typically used in creating art or used as an artist's medium. I quickly discovered the LEGO brick was lending itself as naturally to my applications as paint to a painter or metal to a blacksmith. As I explore how to capture these buildings with the basic shapes of the bricks and plates, I find the possibilities and challenges they offer almost magical.

21016 - Sungnyemun

In general, architecture itself encompasses a broad spectrum of subject matter. In this case Sungnyemun survives as a symbolic icon or historic marker of a lost place in time. Capturing the essence of this type of structure relies more on the statement of its aesthetics rather than its place as a marvel of construction and engineering.

Specifically, it is the use of color, textures, patterns, and hierarchy of materials that define the spiritual DNA of a given culture. Visually, Sungnyemun is comprised of two main features. These can be simply identified as the massive stone base anchored beneath the refined artisan expression layered above. This base represents strength and longevity, while the tiered structure above indicates craft, skill, tradition, and collectively serves as a beacon of pride. The cold, rough and neutral colored stone base contrasts sharply from the colorful and delicate wood detailed terraces resting so eloquently as if almost floating above the stone base.



Adam Reed Tucker



The 'Scale Model' line – LEGO® Architecture in the 1960s

The history of current LEGO® Architecture series can be traced back to the beginning of the 1960s when the LEGO brick's popularity was still steadily increasing. Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, the then owner of the company, began looking for ways to further expand the LEGO system, and asked his designers to come up with a set of new components that would add a new dimension to LEGO building.

Their answer was as simple as it was revolutionary: five elements that matched the existing bricks, but were only one third the height. These new building 'plates' made it possible to construct more detailed models than before.

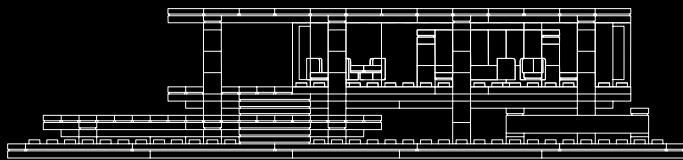
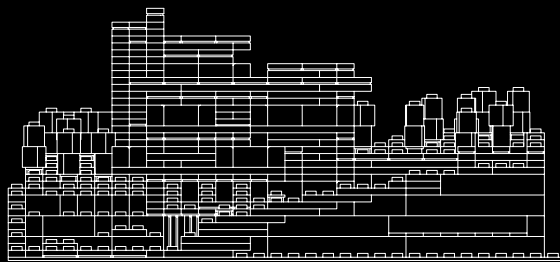
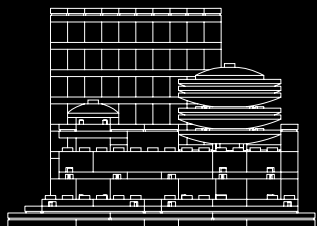
This greater LEGO flexibility seemed to match the spirit of the age; where modernist architects were redefining how houses looked, and people were taking an active interest in the design of their dream home. It was from these trends that the LEGO 'Scale Model' line was born in early 1962.

The name itself was a direct link to the way architects and engineers worked and it was hoped that they and others would build their projects 'to scale' in LEGO elements. As with LEGO Architecture today, the original sets were designed to be different from the normal brightly colored LEGO boxes, and also included 'An Architectural Book' for inspiration.

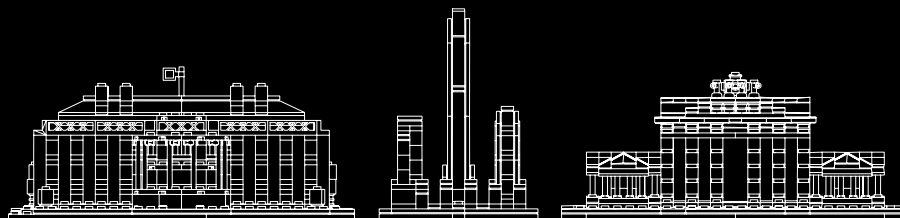
Though the five elements remain an integral part of the LEGO building system today, the 'Scale Model' line phased out in 1965 – it would be over 40 years before its principles would be revived in the LEGO Architecture series we know today.



Architecture series



Landmark series



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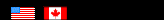
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Architecture



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