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RESEARCH PLAN  
210108

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

1. This project investigates the possibility for a public bath in today's Belgrade. The program and its architectural types are a recent interest of mine, based on the wonderful variety and generosity of public baths I experienced in the past years in Zuerich, CH.

But the choice of public bathing as a field of investigation in the city of Belgrade traces back to the beginning of the studio and its orientation towards a more inclusive building environment for Belgrade.

2. In the first weeks of the Msc3 we were asked to approach the city of Belgrade from afar and dive into it by pulling one thread of its complex fabric. Along that single thread we could start analysing the built environment of the city. Susanne, Linda and I, as a group, were interested in the memories of the city, fascinated by the various cultural forces that contributed to today's Belgrade and that surely will play a role in its future developments. With this in mind, we started analysing the cemeteries of the city and we eventually focussed on the New Cemetery of Belgrade. To our surprise, our focus shifted in a few weeks from the immense topics of Memory and History to small observations regarding how people live through and around the cemetery.

Moving from the monumental scale of monuments to the scale of flowers and gifts laid by visitors, we realised that a key element in the cemetery is the care that people take of its spaces. Simple gestures of caring such as lighting

up a candle of cleaning a tomb, allow people to get closer to their memories. Moreover, such intimate gestures leave traces which stay there, for other visitors to see. In my eyes now, the cemetery is a space which is taken care of by the people and, in change, bears the traces of their care, making them aware of each other.

After presenting the analysis of the cemetery as a landscape of love, I was determined to keep investigating the topics of Care and Intimacy in the city of Belgrade, focusing on spaces which encourage people to be comfortable in the city as in their homes, and trigger awareness of being part of the city itself.

To this, I added in early presentations, the word Contexts, referring to the possibility for people to relate to the city.

3. The project for a public Bath in Belgrade responds to the absence of such program in the city, despite the long tradition of public bathing that the city elaborated through its centuries of varied history and cultural influences. From the ancient Roman Thermae to the Ottoman Hamam, from the Festive Austro hungarian baths to small public showers available to the population, the city bears traces of different ways of relating to public access to water and bathing. Such traces are still present in the architectural types that once characterised such spaces, now present and transformed in the urban fabric.

The last public bathhouse to be shut down in 2004 was the Krsmanovic Bothers' Steam Bath. The Bath offered public showers and access to an original Ottoman steam bath and a cooling pool. The vertical and horizon-

tal section of the building reveal its growth around a central Turkish Hammam via the addition of volumes through time. Resulting in an industrial cluster-like presence, the building is now listed as a monument, leaving no open baths in the city for the last fifteen years.

The lack of public bathing infrastructures deprives a small and fragile part of the city inhabitants of a neat and safe place where to take care of their personal hygiene. Beyond being a self care space, public baths have been historically spaces for reflection and social gathering around a common resource shared in the city. What would a bath look like in today's Belgrade? And how would it reflect on the life of the city?

4.  
I imagine my approach to the research as an 'orthogonal projections' exercise. I first identify different spheres, which are the different topics I am interested in and their scales. After selecting them, I line them up in a view where each of them stands on their own and there is no overlap. I imagine here the topic of personal care, the collective sphere, the varied traditions, the city of Belgrade, its relation to the River and to the context. In the first view the spheres don't touch each other, but they are close enough to imagine connections between them. In a second orthogonal plane, a parallel view from above allows to see how the spheres intersect and touch each other, overlapping for a small part of their volume. This type of view reminds me how small connection can manifest first and allow to link in a chain small phenomena to bigger ones. Lastly, so far, when shifting the plan by ninety degrees, so to observe the spheres from the side, they seem to over-

lap one within the other in the parallel projection. In from this view it is possible to see them as contained one in the other. Their outlines are distant on the top, but almost tangent on the lowest part. I imagine that post exactly as a great aim for the project. To work through the bath, on topics that range from the intimacy of a visitor, to the relation the city has to the river, making sense of both scales in a bath that hints at the traditions of the city and of its public life and broader context.

It is, in the end, a matter of point of view.

PS Imaginary polaroids on the side consider that we don't see in parallel projections but rather in perspective

**PROXIMITY**  
themes and scales

1

SCALE OF THE PROJECT / from detail to site

- Collective
- Bath house
- Commons
- Encounter
- Context
- Individual
- Hamмам
- Shower
- Intimacy
- Care

City - Water  
Infrastructure  
Rivers  
Bathing traditions  
Cultural History

**TANGENT POINT**  
design investigation

3

SCALES OF THE PROJECT  
The Building, the body,  
Perhaps during the design these scales  
will get close to / hint at the other big-  
ger scales of the city and the territory

TANGENT ZONE  
Where intuition and deduction allow  
to see the different scales as close to  
each other: possible aim for the design.

**INTERSECTIONS**  
punctual research

2

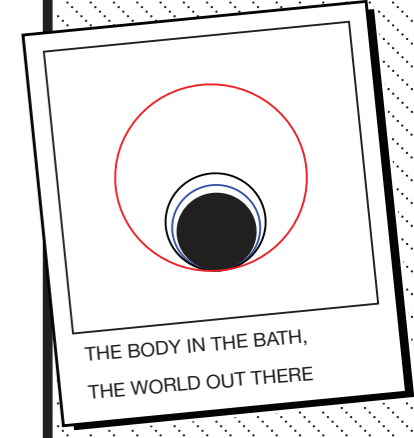
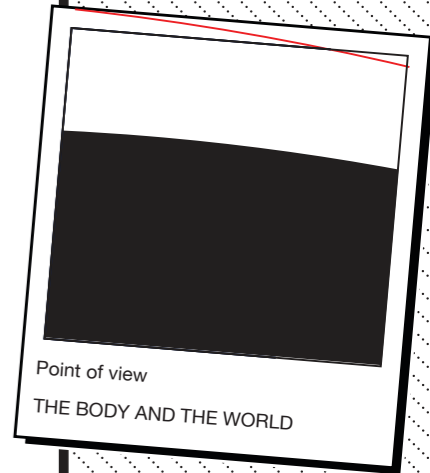
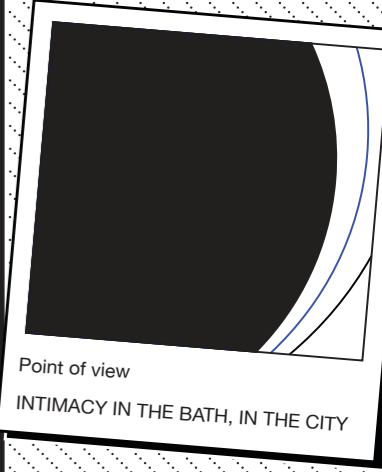
1. lateral plane  
2. top plane  
3. front plane

INTIMACY IN THE BUILD ENVIRONMENT  
Individuals in the community scale

RELATION TO BELGRADE  
The bath in the city  
The city shores

RELATION TO THE WATER  
Culrues of Bathing  
Development of the city

1. identification of different scales, possibly related to one another, intuition of relation
2. find intersections through research, aim at connecting and relating scale to scale
3. study through design process a possible perspective that frames the smallest scale in the big scale and works on the tangent point



ANDREA FERRARINI RESEARCH PLAN 21.01.08  
ORTHOGONAL PROJECTIONS OF SCALES IN THREE POINTS OF VIEW  
MEDIATING INBETWEEN A SMALL SCALE AND A LARGE SCALE THROUGH ARCHITECTURE. (AND ACKNOWLEDGING A BIGGER SCALE)

## 2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### 2a Key Terms, Concepts, Theories

The analysis of the New Cemetery brought Susanne, Linda and me to reflect on intimacy in the city and the possibility for people to act in the built environment, leaving traces that weave a network of care which is visible for others to see.

The program of a bath seemed to me a good chance to keep reflecting on the topics of intimacy and care in the built environment.

In relation to such program the acts of undressing performed by the people and the act of covering that the building can perform to shelter the users could lead to reflect on the relation of the inhabitants with their city and its environment. From this point of view the project could assume phenomenological tones, and investigate the architecture in relation to the body and the individual. At the same time, the typology and organisation of the bath, as well as its architectural expression, frame such intervention in a historical discourse that draws inspiration and tools from eastern to western traditions. Perhaps the program itself draws on slightly ambiguous conditions, in-between intimate and collective, open and introspective, festive and private, banal and extravagant.

### 2b Methods and Methodology

The topic of public bathing offers a chance to reflect on broader issues in the city, from the individual act of undressing in a protective space out of home, to the relation of the city to water and the awareness of citizens towards the river and the natural context of the city. On the small

scale history, typology and phenomenology will offer a guide to shaping intimate spaces that articulate the relation of the individual with the urban.

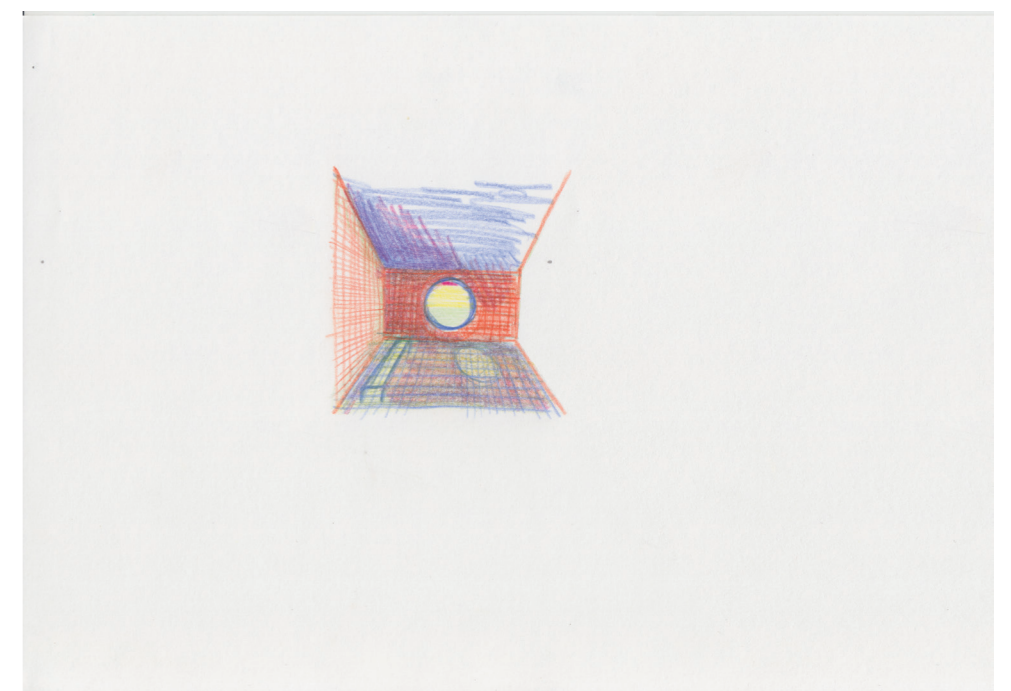
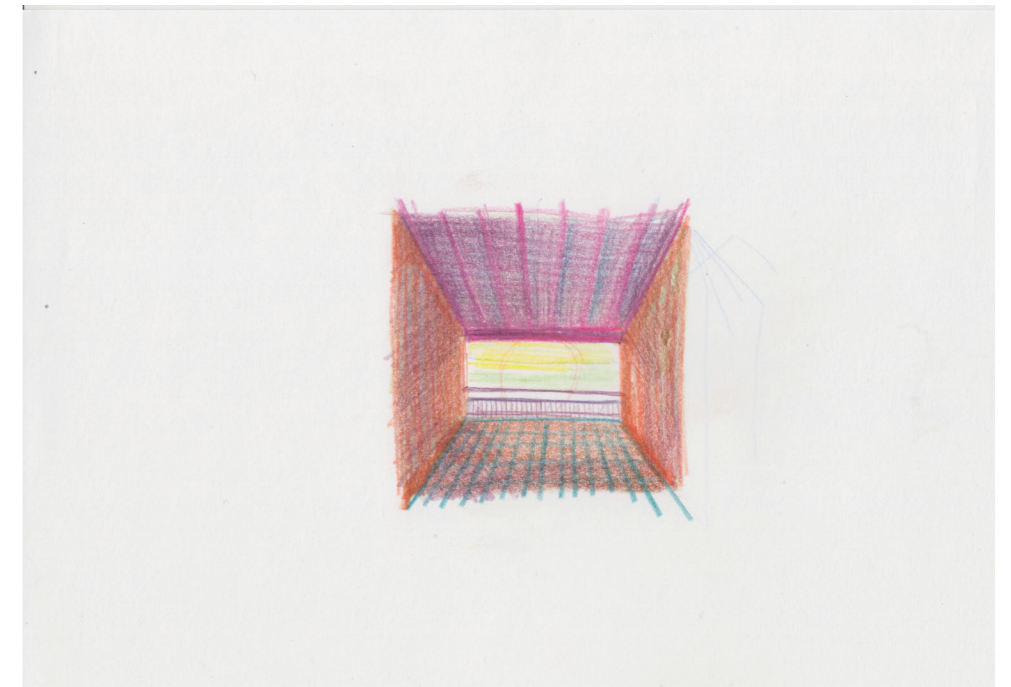
On a city scale, the setting of the bath can be used to reflect on the relation of Belgrade with the its rivers, the Sava and the Danube, of the city and the water.

The design starts from the two scales, trying to mediate and connect the different spheres through architectural solutions.

From the point of view of methodology, the studio offered a clear framework based on the two categories of absence and presence. I found such framework useful in structuring the analysis and I would like to preserve the attitude that seeks in single, constructed instances, knowledge of broad issues, making them tangible in their concrete manifestation. Because of the specific tools I can experiment with, I imagine the design as a key part of the research, a field where to test theoretical ideas in their possibility of coming together in the built environment. This part will be explored through sketches, technical drawings, images, 3D models and handmade ones, and through the techniques that the process will suggest and might emerge during the work.

### 3. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION CHOICES AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

The first interest of the project for a Bath in Belgrade was the Krsmanovic Bath in the centre of the city. In the first weeks of research I considered entering the project on such building. I soon had two points that made me change my mind. First, the Bath is a great and consistent building which grew through time and proved to be capable of adapting to the evolution of its program, coming together as one and many at the same time. This made it hard for me to imagine to change such inspiring building. In this work, the KB will stay as the Bath in the City. Second, because of its urban setting and history, the KB maintained a quite introverted character and I think it could be significant to imagine how this character can be combined with extroverted moments which open up to the city and allow people to look at it, perhaps to feel comfortable in its sight. In the search for a site that would allow a close relation to Belgrade and its context, I started looking at the river shores. They developed historically as industrial zones and are now vividly discussed because of different visions about their future and the relation of the city to the river in general. The Waterfront projects prospect for these areas an architectural approach which excludes citizens from the determination of the future of the city. In the transformation of the shores, a strategic role is played by the Old Railway of Belgrade which ran from the Marina, around the fortress and south to the main station. The hundred years old railway used to enclose the shores between its line and the river, determining their development as industrial areas. As the railway will be removed, along its trace there is space for transformation.



## 00. Immediate Context

The chosen site for the intervention is the dock by the Sava River, where the Kalemegdan fortress gets the closest to the water and the Old Railway will be removed, allowing to reimagine the site.

The plot is currently empty but charged with interesting conditions. There, the fortress steps down the hill getting the closest to the river Sava. At its base, a busy road and the railway cut off the site along its length. The river runs along the other edge of the site, which is elevated 5 meters above the water by a plinth of corrugated steel and concrete, where boats would dock for port activities, now abandoned.

The elements which surround the site speak different architectural languages: the fortress is a landscape defined and contained by thick masonry walls, where passages and moats are carved. Beton Hala is an industrial hall that hosts a tunnel and covers its space with a car park at the level of the street. The small restaurant Bela Vista is a small and ambitious construction that pushes itself on the edge on the water, hosting its program in, rather than below, a wide pitched roof.





## 00. Programmatic Contexts

In this work I refer to two main contexts for the Bath. The first is the most immediate typological reflection on the different bathing cultures that the bath expresses. This context indirectly relates to various cultures which are present in the city today.

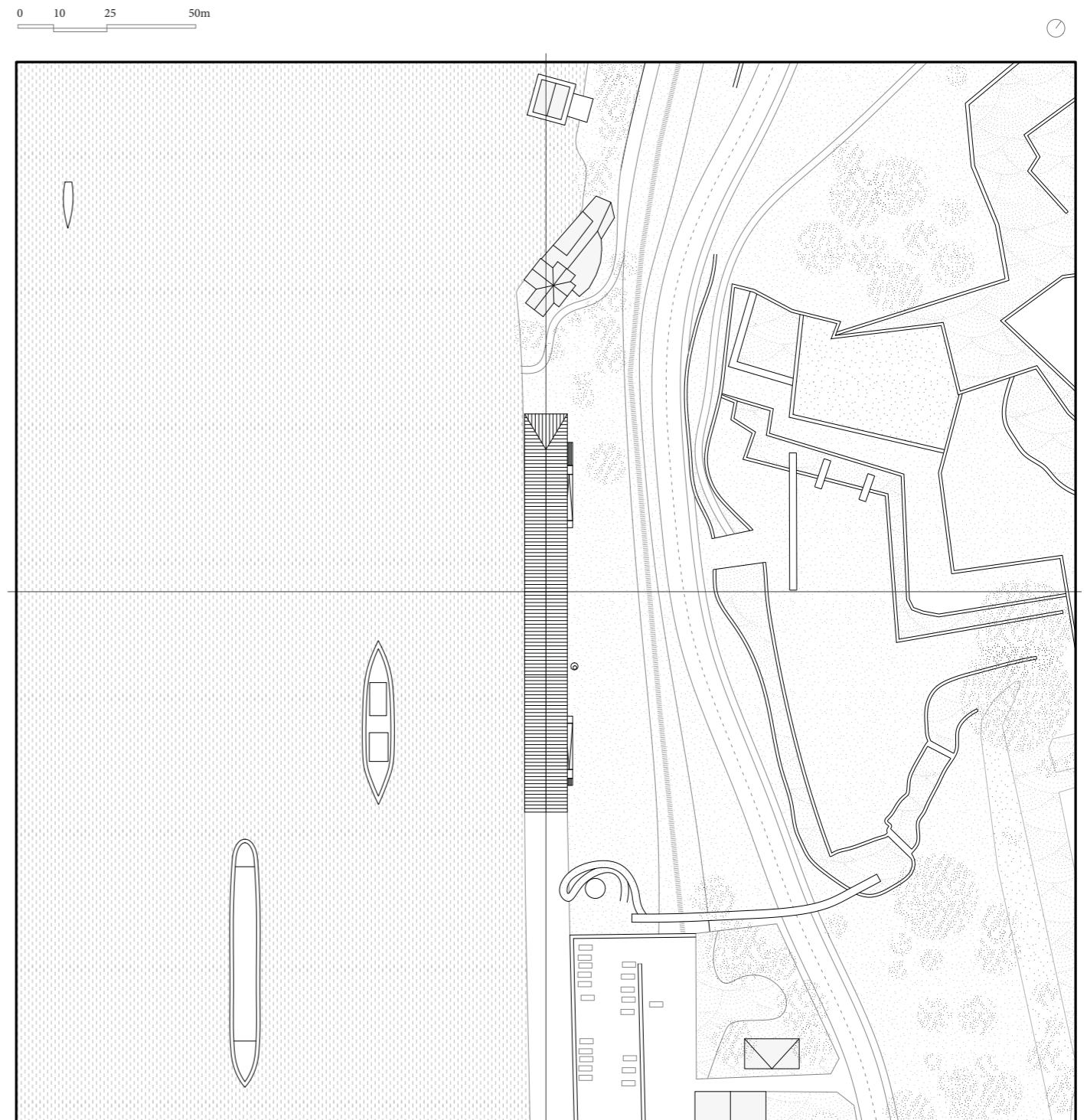
The main roots of the bathing culture I referred to are the Roman Thhermae, the Ottoman Hamam and the Austri-hungarian Bath.

The second typology emerged lately because of the reflection on intimacy. And perhaps quite literally I fo-cussed on houses and the way and tools which they use to articulate and filter the relations between their users and ultimately, the relation of the users to the world.

## 01. Use

The program for the project is based on the KB's program. The double character of the KB is preserved, but rather than a dense cluster, the new bath stretches for 110 metres and spans for 10 meteres. As in a Roman bath, different spaces are lined up in a sequence. The more private baths and the more collective program meet in the middle of the building, around the Hammam.

To the program of the KB I ad two living rooms, one interior and one exterior in the form of a loggia onto the river. The entrance is doubled and the bath offers to the city an open loggia overlooking the spot where river Sava meets the Danube.



## 02. Form

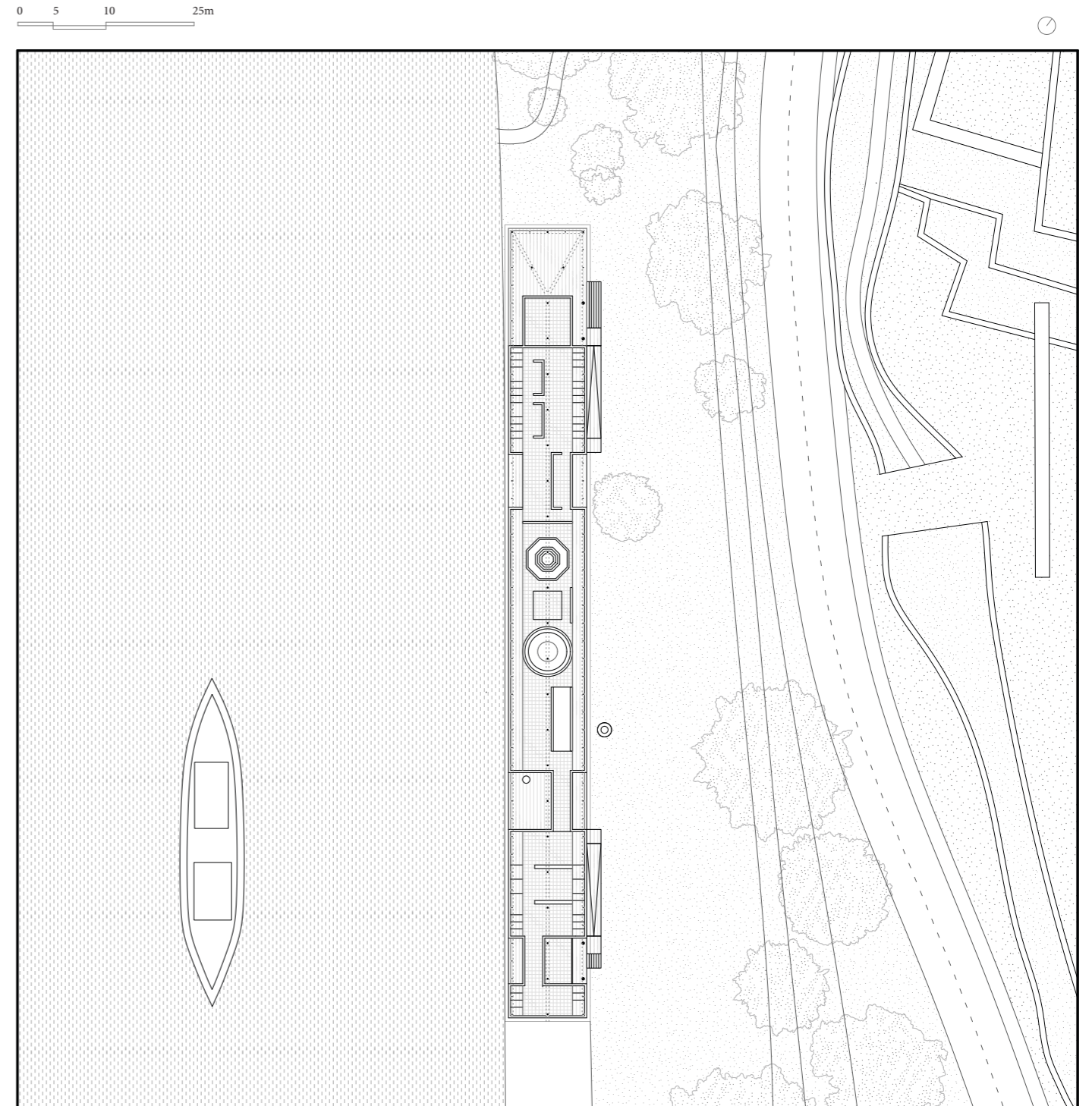
In elaborating on the relation of the bath to the city and to its visitors, I approach the design from two scales and try to meet halfway to make sense of both together.

On the scale of the site, I tried to imagine the presence and character of the bath in relation to its volume and construction. The first studies related to the volume of the object in the site. In the end, combined with the idea of a sequence inside the building and referring to the elongated industrial constructions along the shore, I decided to layout the program of the BK in a line building, following the lines of the site.

The location of the building follows the edge of the site, enclosing a garden in-between the bath and the road. Approached from Beton Hala, the building offers its short side. To maintain its volume as a whole, I decided to gather the program below one long roof. The pitch of the roof allows for different levels of compression of the interior space, and defines a low edge towards the park. The building is lifted on a 1 m plinth that grounds it on the site and elevates its floor.

On the scale of the visitors, I focused on the possible intimacy of visitors when protected by the building and when offered an opening to the city. This way I imagined fragments of architectural conditions, both individual and collective and tried to combine them in the sequencing of space. I use the pitched roof to embrace both compressed and high spaces in order to vary the relation of the building to the visitors. I here started exploring the basic elements of the program as the shower and the changing cabinet, the hammam and the changing room.

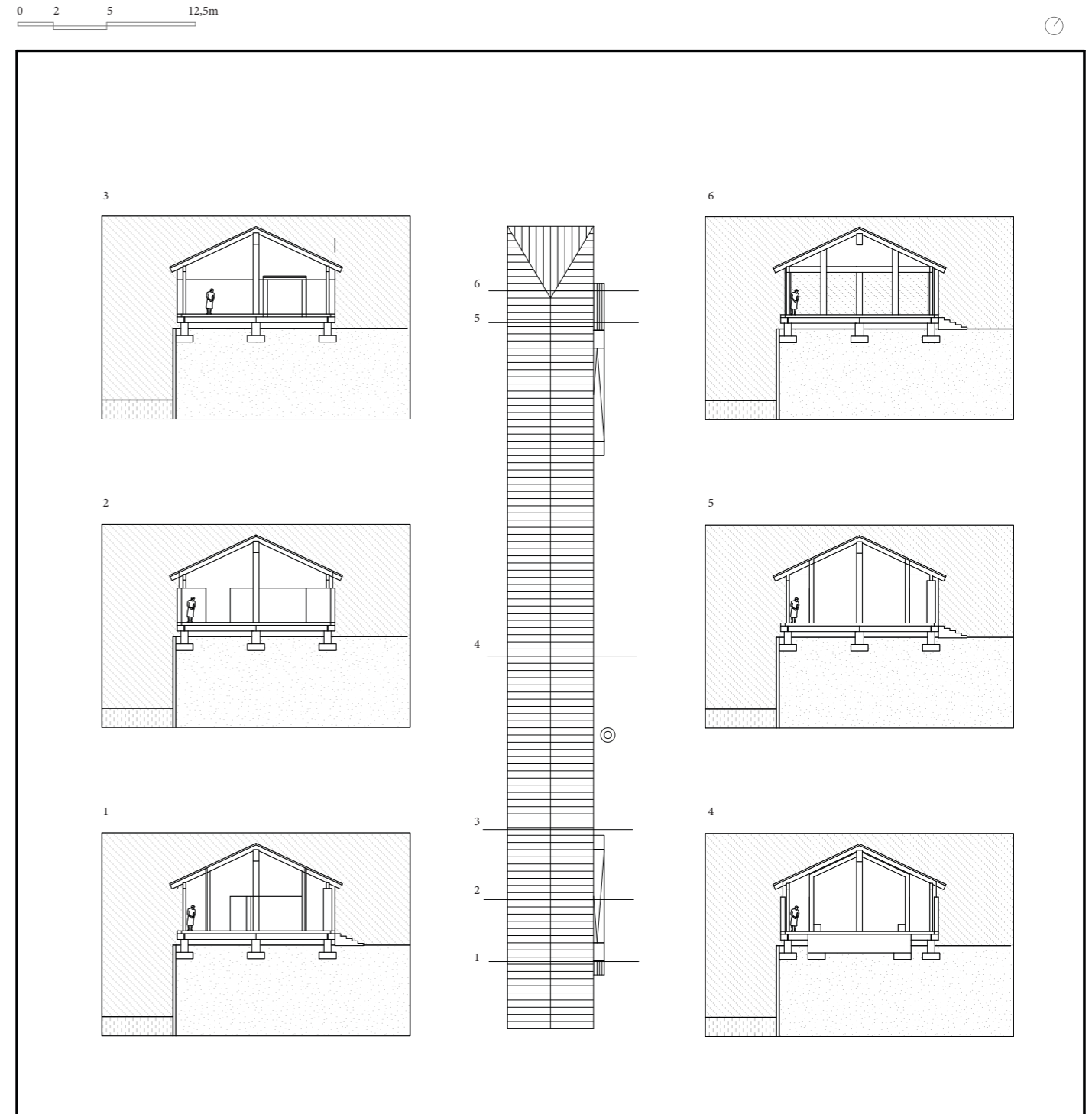
I think the relation of the building to the outside is crucial because of the program, the aim, and the site. Therefore I will keep investigating the openings, the loggias and the entrances which moderate the relation of the visitors to the inside.



### 03. Technique

The current idea for the construction is to cover a long raised floor with a wooden roof which is lifted by columns. The feature of the roof is a central topic to me. Its potential lays in the variety of coverings that the section of the KB, relating to the various techniques and expression of its expanding moments.

In semperian terms, I imagined that the building could keep a distinction between the loggia, the columns and the roof, which defines the space vertically and the walls which define the horizontal limits. Long openings in-between the top of the walls and the canopy could enhance the idea. The structure is imagined as a frame construction, the elevated floor could be lifted on plinths and beams. At this stage I imagine a wooden construction, but steel could play a role too. The walls are imagined as light wooden walls, but they could also investigate other techniques. One interesting technique from Serbian rural houses, employs earth blocks in a frame construction. The central part of the building, which contained the Hammam and the pool suggest a heavier construction, at least in terms of foundation. In this part a box-in-box technique could be employed in order to separate climate areas within the volume of the roof. Following a text by Mark Pimlott I thought of the relation of structure and enclosure in terms of covering and stripping. In this first attempt the result is that the walls reveal or conceal the columns, never touching them. The relation between structure and enclosure could develop further in the project. This part would definitely benefit from a more detailed reflection of climates, energy, techniques and materials.



#### 04. Communication

Respecting the private character of part of the program, I wonder what tools there are to dignify a space for self care. Part of the users of the KB were people who do not have proper access to personal hygiene. The project investigates the possibility of providing such basic personal care within a wider program for leisure bathing.

I would like to challenge the idea of luxury through the design of basic luxuries such as a warm shower in a clean and comfortable environment or undressing in a protected spot with a view on the river. I experienced such simple yet luxurious possibilities in the wide range of public baths in Zurich, Switzerland. Especially, I was fascinated but the simplicity of materials and construction that allows for a great personal comfort in the city. Therefore I started investigating the potential of tiles and wood in providing such cleanliness and comfort. Because of the double character of the program, personal care and leisure, I payed the plan out as a double building, with two entrances, one for a personal bath, one for a collective bath. In this first attempt at a long building with two entrances I try to mark the entrances with clarity. Both are set back from the outer line of the roof, offering shelter, and are marked by thick columns, which bear the importance of the entrance, rather than higher loads.

The volume of the bath looks in four main directions. Towards Beton Hala the bath turns a face that could remind of a house, a splav or a small warehouse. Towards the North, where the building faces the small Bella Vista restaurant, the roof stretches over a covered loggia with three pitches, sloping down towards the visitor, as a house, a pavilion or a canopy.

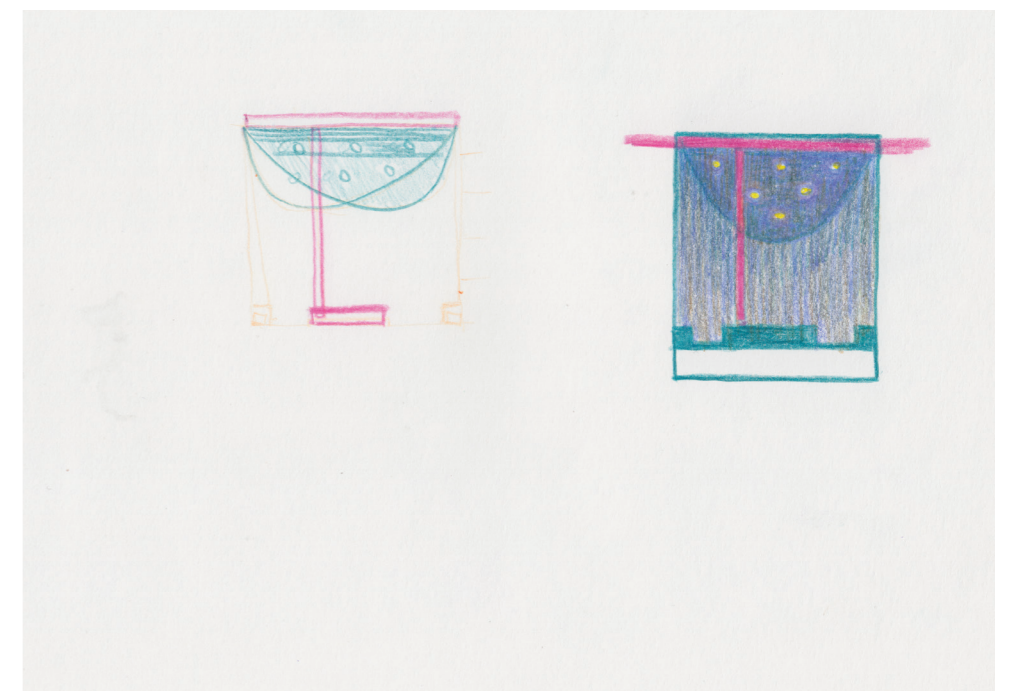
Towards the street and the river the bath exposes its full length and volume. The elevation towards the street and the park is more solid, the one towards the river can be more porous.



## SO FAR, AND NEXT STEPS

The main finding we extracted from the research on the New Cemetery of Belgrade was, at a city scale, the demystifying a dichotomy. In the first weeks Susanne Linda and I addressed the Novo Groblje as a 'city in the city'. Following the opposition of life and death, past and present, we eventually realised that memory is kept alive by those who live through their simple everyday gestures, which express love and care. Therefore the cemetery made sense in an unforeseen way to our small research group. The cemetery IS a fundamental part of the city. The wall separating the cemetery is no barrier to the life of Belgrade.

In approaching a project for a Bath along the Sava River in Belgrade, I am also facing contrasting forces. Or perhaps seemingly contrasting forces and apparently unrelated scales. I am interested in this design as an investigation on intimacy in the city, as well as participation to the city itself. I am curious about the scale of the individual but I also hope to elaborate, through the design, ideas about the way the city relates to its varied history and the two rivers which meet around its centre.



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