

THE NORDIC HAMMAM

A CULTURALLY INTEGRATED NORDIC HAMMAM IN THE CITY OF GOTHENBURG

DESIGN & PLANNING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION 2014 - CHALMERS ARCHITECTURE
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Abstract

Gothenburg is a multicultural city in constant transformation. Some of the city's residents have roots in countries where the traditional Hammam culture is still vibrant, and have taken these traditions with them to Sweden. In this project we set out to study how the existing Hammam culture finds its place in Gothenburg, and to understand the social function of the traditional Hammam as well as the habits and needs of those who live in this culture.

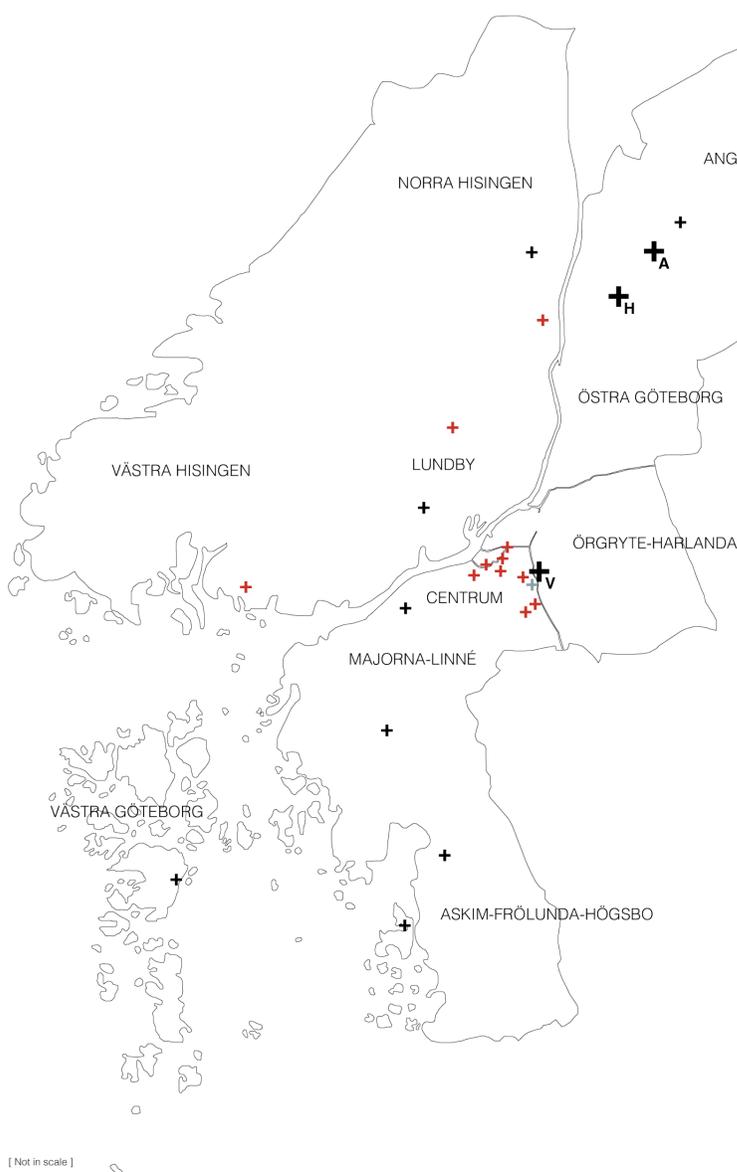
With a theoretical approach and the investigation of the informal bathing culture in Gothenburg as a base, the project deals with the creation of a design framework for a new kind of Public Bath that merges the traditional Nordic sauna culture with that

of the traditional Hammam, which could be a new type of social node in the city.

So why create a Nordic Hammam?

In Sweden the traditional sauna rituals are still appreciated and a part of the culture. This traditional sauna culture share many similar aspects to that of the Hammam. Heat, steam, water, cooling down, resting and meetings are embodied in both cultures.

A Nordic Hammam in Gothenburg could develop into a meeting place that is inclusive and supportive of the different communities within the city.



[Not in scale]

Map of Baths in the city

- + SPA & WELLNESS
- + SPA & HAMMAM
- + PUBLIC BATH

H	[TYPE] HAMMARBADET
[PROGRAM] 17-metres Pool, Gym and Sauna	
[AVAILABILITY] Monday-Friday: 16 ⁰⁰ -20 ⁰⁰ 15 ⁰⁰ -17 ⁰⁰ 09 ⁰⁰ -11 ⁰⁰ adults / 17 ⁰⁰ -20 ⁰⁰ women 15 ⁰⁰ -17 ⁰⁰ 15 ⁰⁰ -20 ⁰⁰	
Entrance Fee: 40/90 SEK a day / 850 SEK a year	
[CONNECTIONS] Tram 4, 8 and 9	

A	[TYPE] ANGERED ARENA
[PROGRAM] Activity Pool, 25-metres Pool, Heated Pool, Relaxation, Gym, Ice Rink, Sports Arena and Gym	
[AVAILABILITY] Swimming Pool: 07 ⁰⁰ -21 ⁰⁰ / 07 ⁰⁰ -19 ⁰⁰ (10 ⁰⁰ -17 ⁰⁰) Relax: 14 ⁰⁰ -18 ⁰⁰ / 09 ⁰⁰ -17 ⁰⁰ Mon: Men only Tue: Women only	
Entrance Fee: 60/40 SEK Day / 1600 SEK Year for swimming 85/65 SEK Day or + 25 SEK extra for Relax	
[CONNECTIONS] Tram 4, 8 and 9	

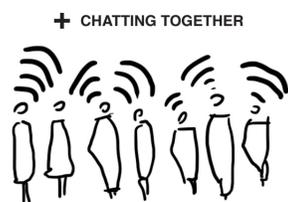
V	[TYPE] VALHALLABADET
[PROGRAM] 50- and 25-metres Pool, Heated Pools, Wellness, Gym, Roman Relaxation, Hairdresser, Cafe and Shops	
[AVAILABILITY] Swimming Pool: 07 ⁰⁰ -20 ⁰⁰ / 07 ⁰⁰ -19 ⁰⁰ 09 ⁰⁰ -20 ⁰⁰ 09 ⁰⁰ -19 ⁰⁰ (07 ⁰⁰ -11 ⁰⁰ -15 ⁰⁰) Roman Relax: 13 ⁰⁰ -19 ⁰⁰ / 09 ⁰⁰ (11 ⁰⁰ -15 ⁰⁰) Women/Man everyday day	
Entrance Fee: 60/40 SEK Day / 1600/1050 SEK Year for swimming 80 SEK for Roman Relax	
[CONNECTIONS] Tram number 2, 6, 8 and 13	

PARTICIPATORY METHOD & STATISTICS

To research the current bathing culture and conditions, a survey was conducted in three Public Baths in Gothenburg: Valhallabadet, Hammarbadet and Angered Arena.

A Likert Scale was adopted to collect the guests opinions on the baths in relation to their perception and preference. In addition, interviews were conducted with the administrators of the respective baths to get a more complete picture. The surveyors also observed user habits and experienced the different atmospheres at the respective baths.

The data collection techniques used in this project is questionnaires, interview schedules and observational checklists.



Country of Origin

Most of the guests in Valhalla cited Sweden as their country of origin, but many also cited other regions of the world. As the central bath in Gothenburg, Valhalla attracts many different guests from all walks of life and is said to mirror the population of the city.

The guests of Angered Arena represents a mixed clientele, but with Swedes and guests with African heritage as the two largest groups.

In Hammarbadet the situation is quite different, and recorded no visitors from Sweden. Hammarbadet is a very local bath, and an important social node in its local community.

In relation to this, the survey results might also be a reflection of Hammarkullen as a segregated part from the more central city.

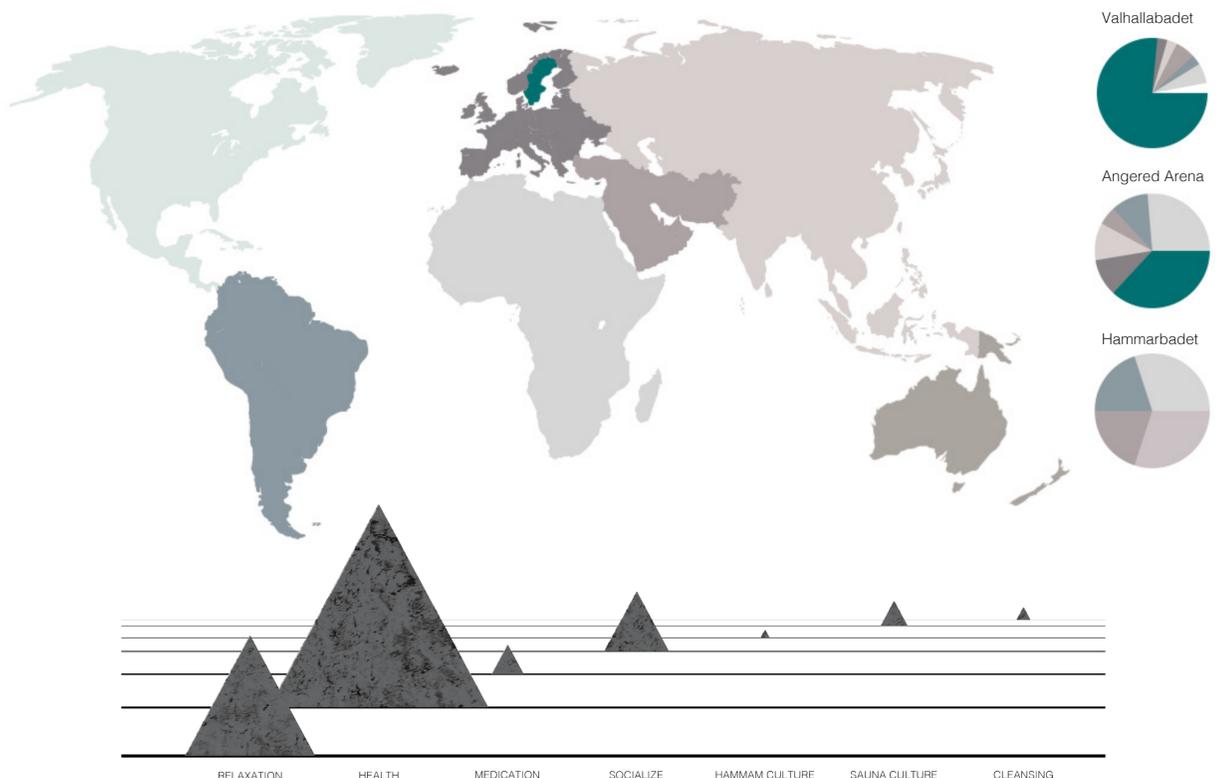
The location is a large factor when it comes to user groups, and it needs to be considered carefully in the further development of the project.

Could we create a public Hammam that is accessible to all, and attracts guests from different cultures and backgrounds?

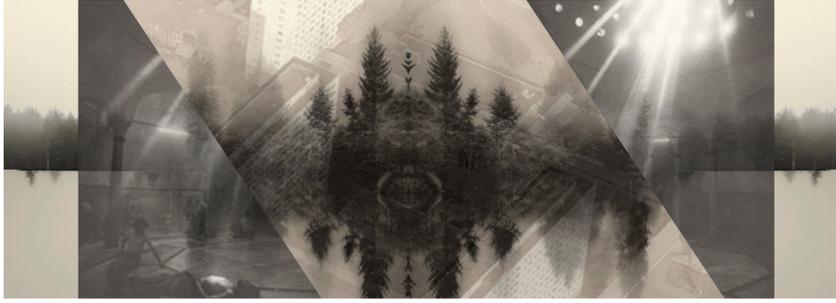
Reason for Visit

Health and relaxation were cited as the main reasons for visiting the Public Baths in Gothenburg. Many guests also cited that they go for socialization and for medication purposes, but only one cited Hammam Culture. However, there are many aspects such as cleansing, socializing, relaxation and general health that contribute to the definition of the Hammam Culture. These aspects were chosen separately in the survey. As one of the managers of Valhallabadet said, there has been a shift of focus in the Public Baths from being places for personal hygiene to being places for fitness and wellbeing, and the questionnaire answers confirm this.

Could we create a public Hammam that would revive the focus on the cleaning process, not as a luxury ritual for a few, but as a part of a routine for the general public?



THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Design Framework

HOW CAN WE CREATE A DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE NORDIC HAMMAM THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED IN GOTHENBURG WITH MINIMAL SITE-SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENTS?

The idea behind the design framework is that it should be flexible enough to be implemented in different contexts in Gothenburg without large adjustments. There are many different scenarios: It could be 'plugged in' to an already existing structure, such as a Public Bath, it could be an entirely new structure in the city centre as a part of the new development for Gothenburg 2021 or it could be placed in the suburban nature as a node between the city and landscape. We have chosen to exemplify the latter.

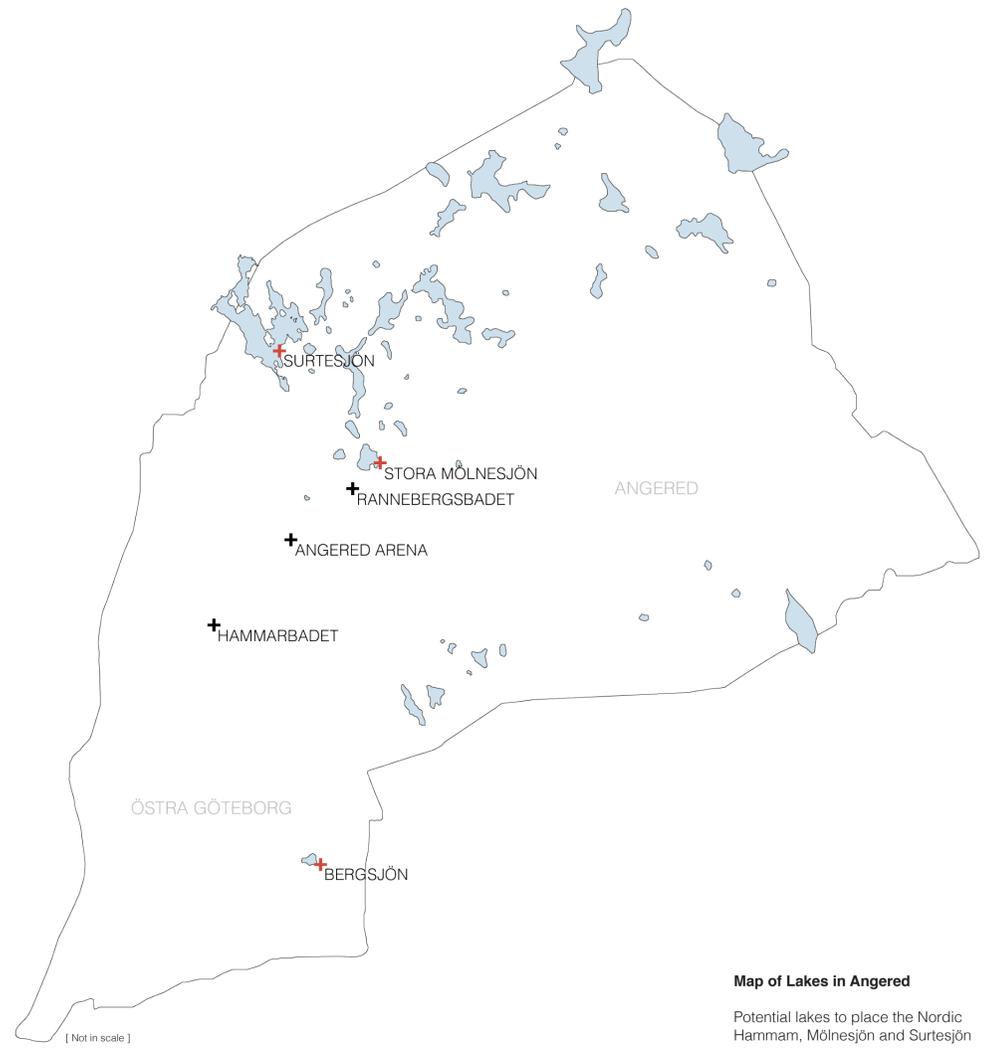
The suburban areas of Gothenburg are surrounded by an abundance of green space, and placing a new social attraction in this environment could potentially encourage more use

and appreciation of the nature. **The Nordic Hammam will not be the same as the old Hammams known from the Middle East, but a fusion between the Nordic sauna culture and the Hammam culture.**

There is an on-going political discussion about the future of the two public baths Hammarbadet and Rannebergsbadet. Both baths are important social nodes in their local community, as well as important institutions for improving the general swimming ability in the Angered area. Placing the Nordic Hammam in this area is not meant as a competition to, or a replacement of these institutions. It is meant to be a complementary addition. As the first public Nordic Hammam in Gothen-

burg, it will be a new attraction in Angered for both locals as well as guests from other parts of the city. It will be for those interested in experiencing the Hammam and sauna rituals, for those who are familiar with these traditions as well as for those who are new to them. The Nordic Hammam will be a place where guests can meet across age, gender and cultures and interact through the global rituals connected to cleaning, water and wellbeing.

A project like the Nordic Hammam has to be rooted in, and have support from the local community. The diagram below is strategy of how the local community can be an active part and stakeholders in the development and use of the project.



Map of Lakes in Angered
Potential lakes to place the Nordic Hammam, Mølnesjön and Surtesjön

ANALYZE 1st Phase

PREPARE 2nd Phase

IMPLEMENT 3rd Phase

USE & DEVELOP 4th Phase



+ THE NATURE AS SOCIAL SPACE



PLAYING +



+ FISHING



+ RECREATION



+ FISHING



+ THE NATURE AS SOCIAL SPACE



+ BUILDING WORKSHOP



+ BUILDING WORKSHOP



+ RECREATION



+ RECREATION



+ WOOD-CHOPPING



+ SAUNA RITUAL SESSIONS



+ WOOD-CHOPPING



+ SAUNA RITUALS SESSIONS



The architects are stakeholders and the instigators of the project. First step is to research the current situation in terms of local needs and conditions. For the project to be rooted in, and supported by the community there should be strong partnerships with local schools and associations as well as the municipality.

To create public awareness of the project, beyond the partnerships, temporary installations can be placed at the site to mark that something new is being developed. Together with the local partners, workshop related to Hammam and sauna culture can be developed.

Invite the public to take part of the incremental building process through various workshops. Start building the entrance area, which is flexible enough for multiple purposes and can be used throughout the entire process. Let the building site be open for the public to interact with through the construction phase.

Develop the remaining programs according to the needs and wishes of the local community. By the end of the construction phase, let the building be continuously used, developed and maintained by the local stakeholders as well as the general public.

WHAT IS A HAMMAM ?



History and its Role

'Hammam' translates from both Arabic and Persian to Heat or Sweat, and have been centres of public space in many regions for hundreds of years since the Greek empire. **The main role of the Hammam in the Islamic culture has been to provide a venue for health and cleanness for people, as well as a space for gathering and socializing.** Cleanliness of both body and soul is of utmost importance in the Islamic culture, due to this, the first of Cairo's Hammams were attached to mosques. Yet, a Hammam could just as well function independently from a mosque: It serves many functions in its districts, both socially and economically. The Hammam is a meeting place for neighbours and specifically for women.

The Sequence of Spaces

When entering the Hammam, it's about the smooth movement from neutral to hot rooms. The visitors are guided through a series of spaces, starting in a neutral and dry room followed by hot and wet rooms before returning back to the beginning. The rooms are constructed with high domes and vaults, built with local building materials with high thermal mass as well as renders and plasters that respond to the varying levels of heat and humidity.

Neutral Room

The visitor gets changed, hand over the clothes to the manager, choose a masseuse, and after the ritual is over, changes back into the daily attire. The neutral room is a domed windowless space, illuminated by geometric

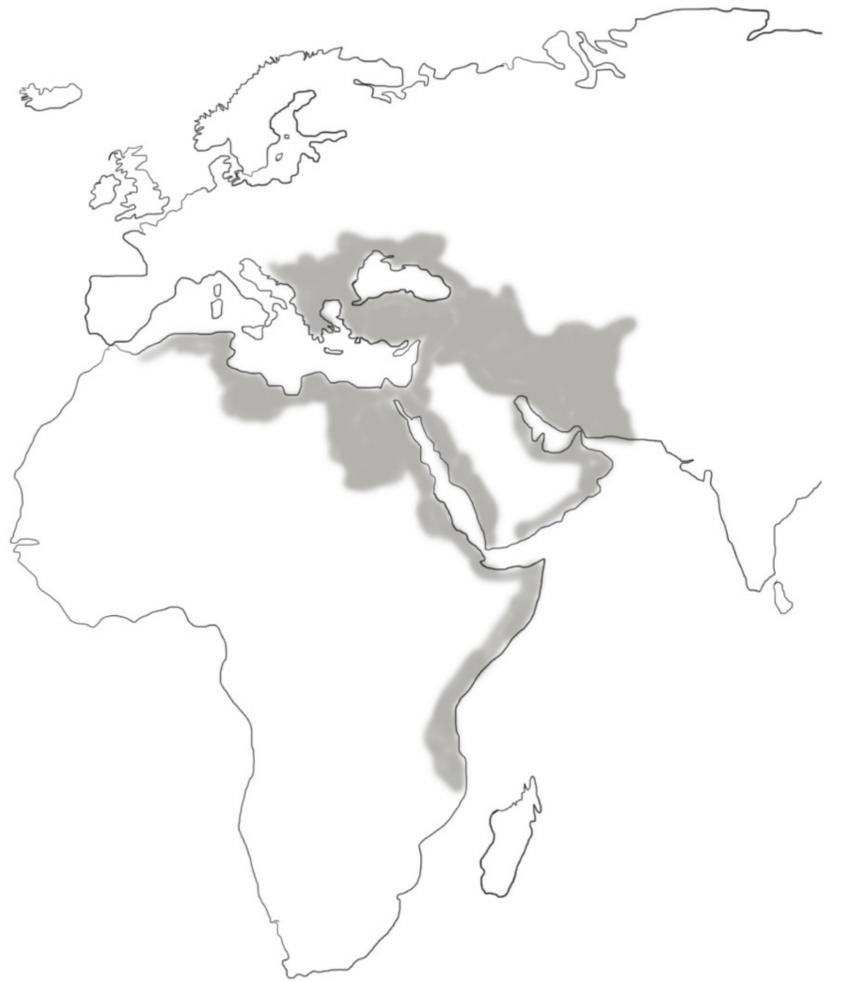
patterns of qammeriettes that let the daylight in.

Warm Room

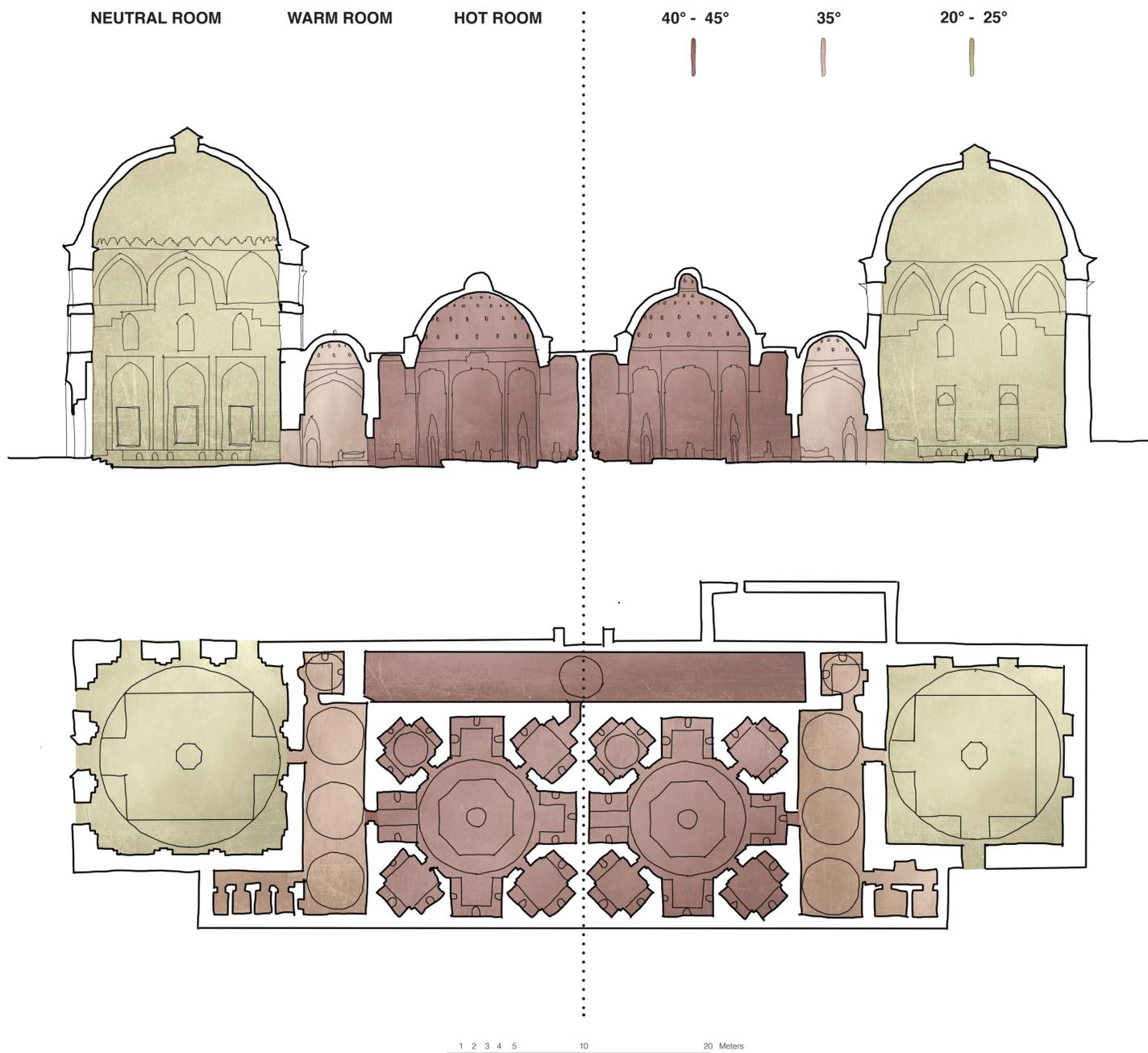
The warm room is a place for relaxations before and after the visitor spends their 'hot time'. It is where they get a massage, wash their hair, where they feel comfortable in a suitable temperature.

Hot room

The Hot Room is a steam room, and incredibly hot and humid. Every visitor only stays here as long as he or she feels fine. There is a comfort in knowing that the warm room is just next-door.



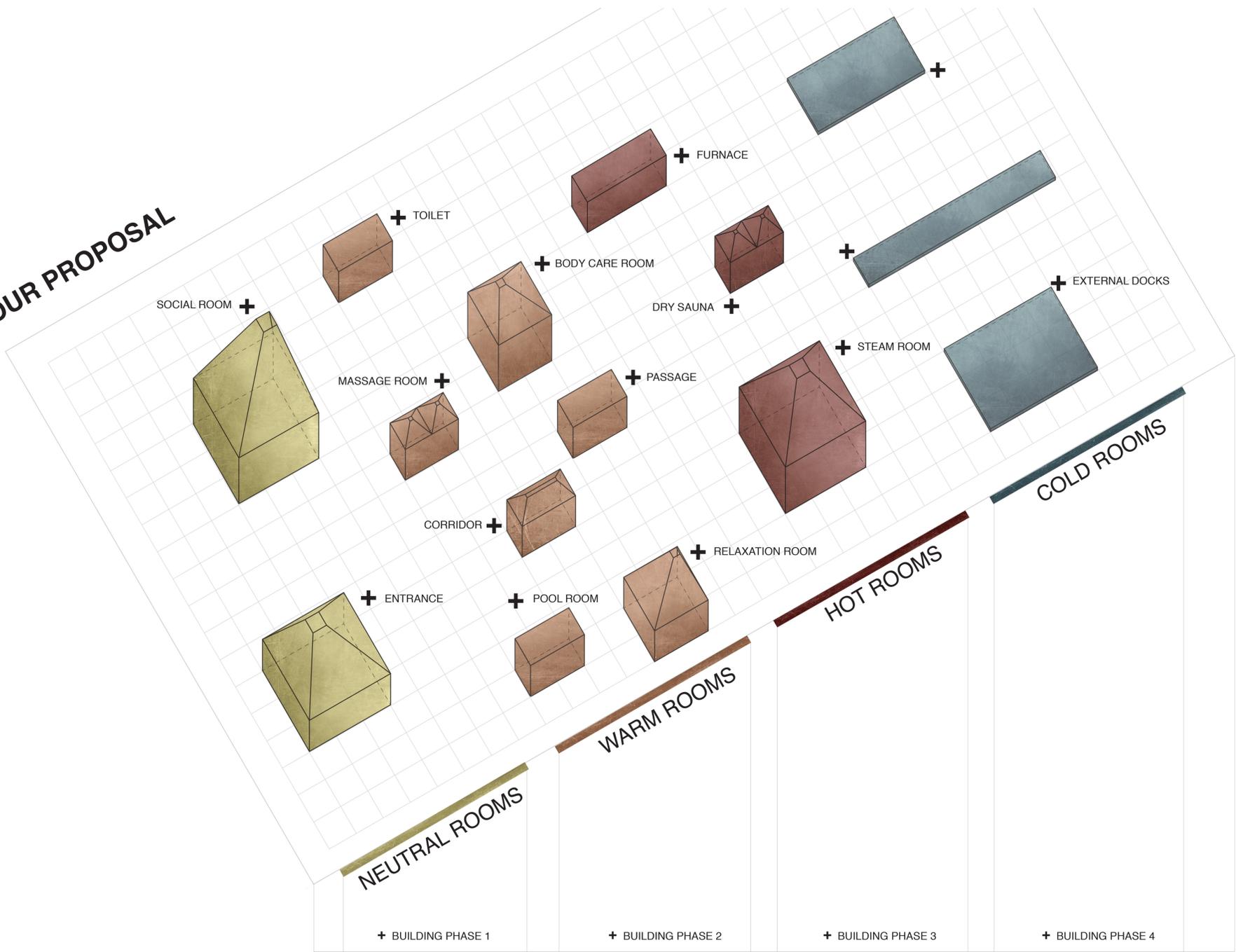
Heidi Dumreicher, Richard S. Levine, Magda Sibley-Behloul - HAMMAM REHABILITATION READER - Sonderzahl 2012
Fodil Fadil, Magda Sibley - HAMMAMS OF NORTH AFRICA - PLEA2009 - 26th Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture, Quebec City, Canada ; 22-24 June 2009



AYASOFYA HAMAMI

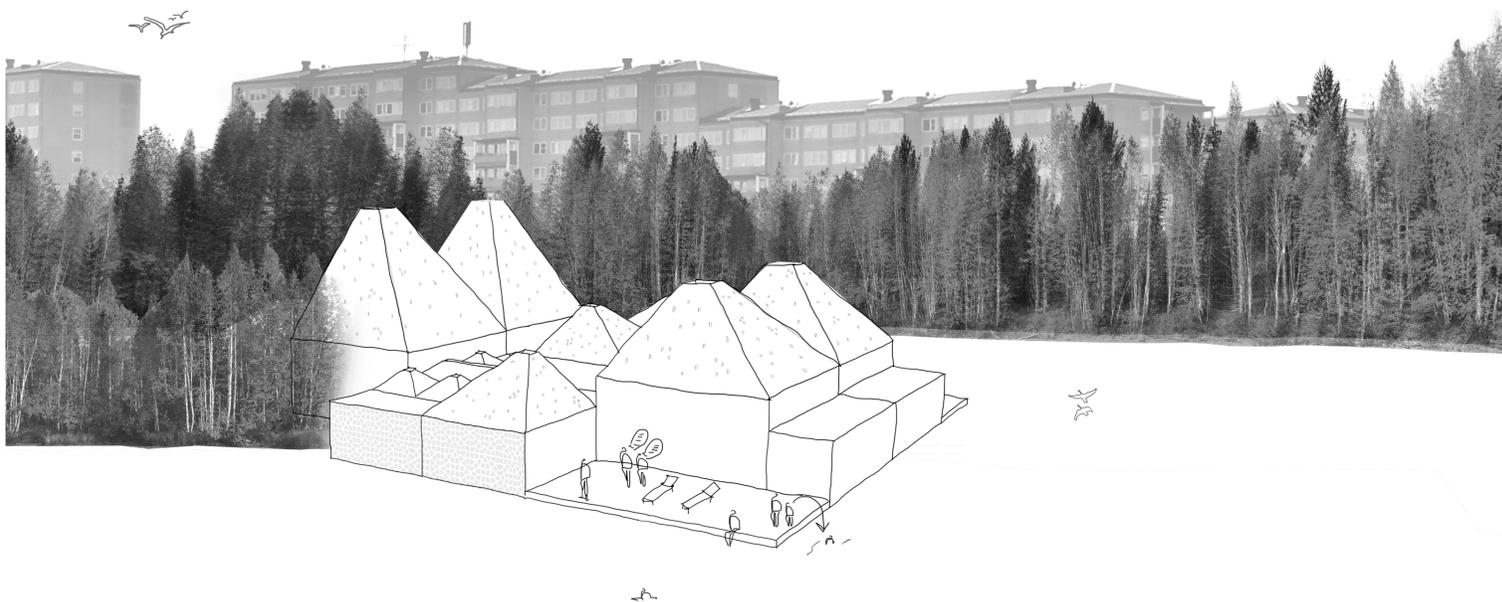
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OUR PROPOSAL



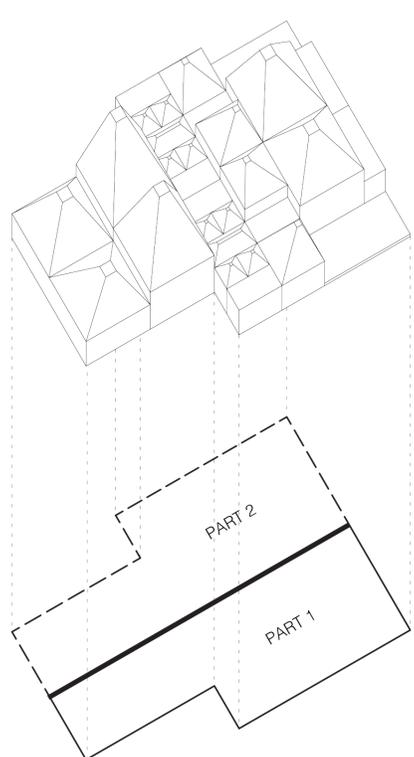
BUILD YOUR OWN NORDIC HAMMAM!

PLEASE USE THE MODEL TO CONFIGURE YOUR OWN VISION OF A NORDIC HAMMAM!



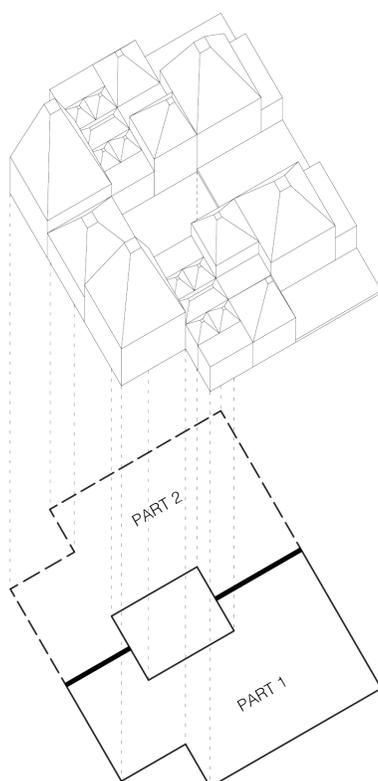
POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS

COMBINATION 1



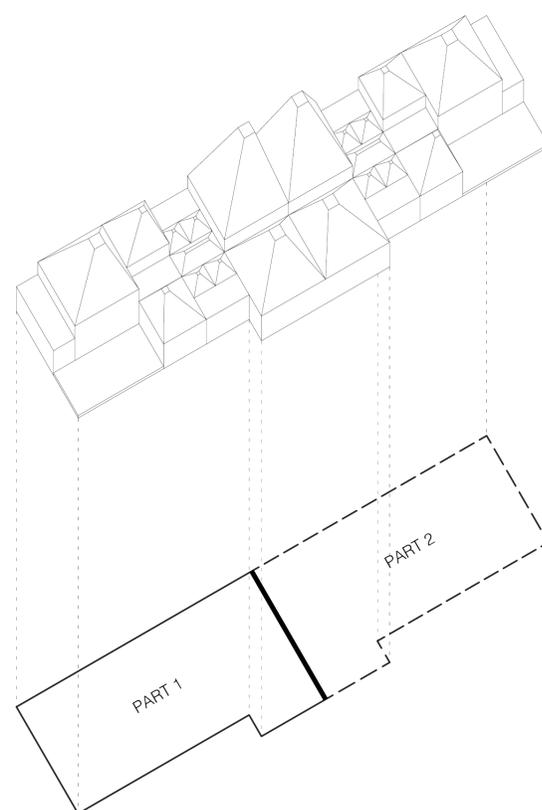
Here the Nordic Hammam is mirrored on the long end. By mirroring the Nordic Hammam, there can be one part for women and one for men. By having two separate parts connected by a common entrance, women and men can go the Nordic Hammam on any given day of the week and socialize before or after the process.

COMBINATION 2



The second configuration is closer to the European 'Open-Air' Baths known from cities like Zürich. Placed on the lake, it has a courtyard for taking a dip in the water. It is more private and protected, but it would be shared between the female and male side of the Nordic Hammam.

COMBINATION 3



When the Nordic Hammam is mirrored on the short end, it gives both parts a similar view of the lake and forest. However, as it is not as compact as the two other configurations it could be experienced as a barrier to the lake from the land.