

Göteborg Bathing Culture

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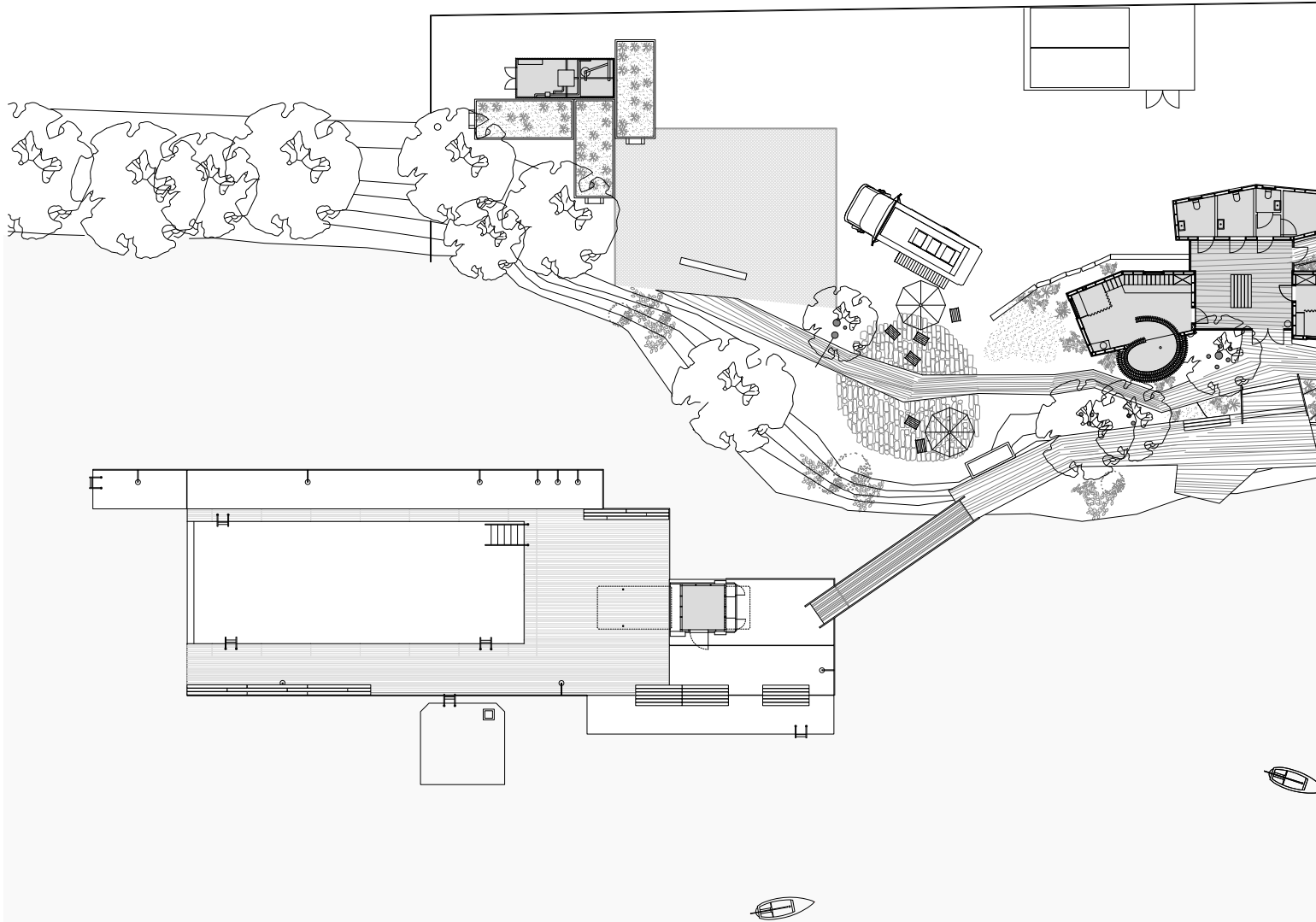
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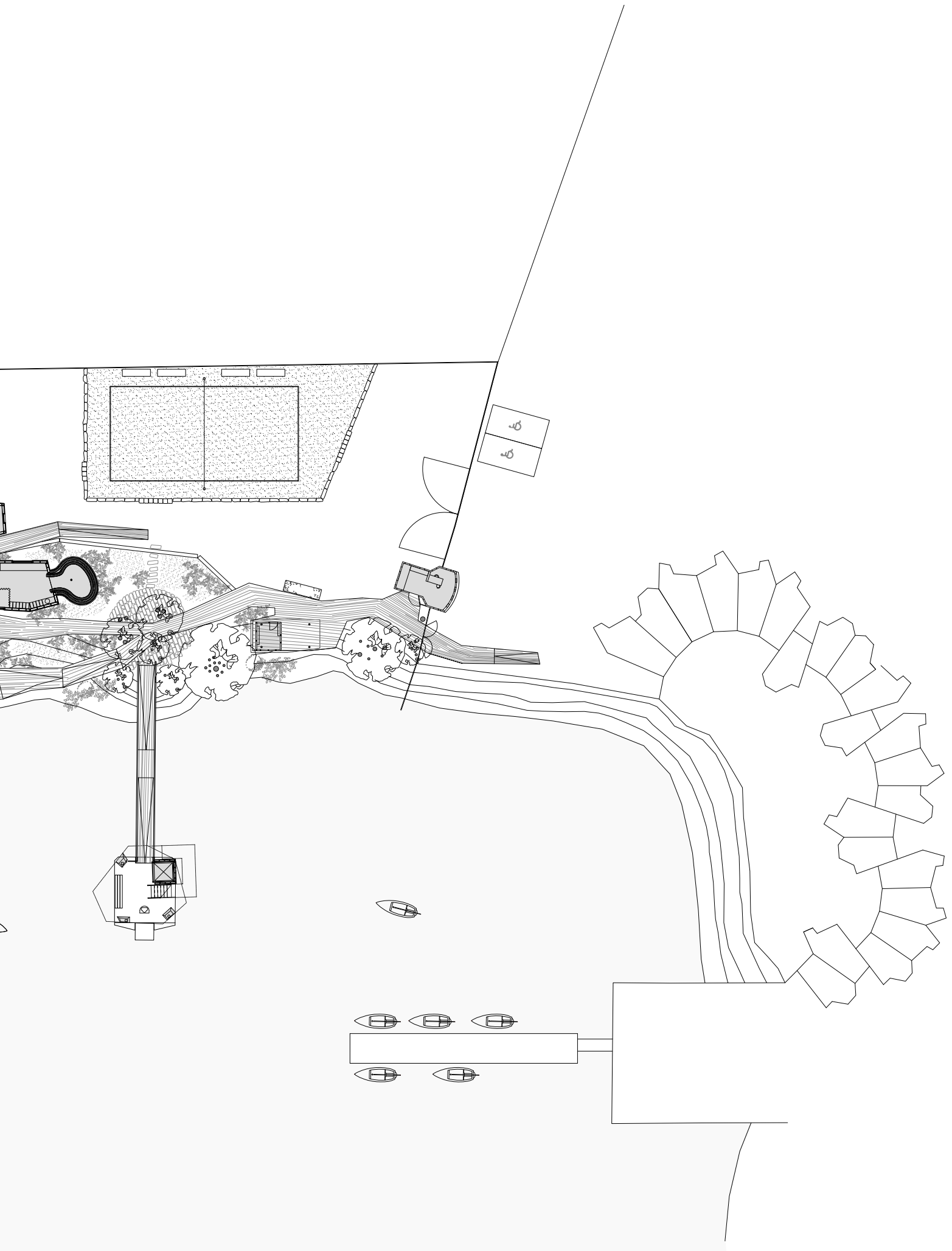
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“The City of Gothenburg will present the Jubilee Park with a proposed development timeframe of seven years, 2014-2021. If used effectively, the timespan between planning and implementation could contribute to creating a new common space; a platform in the city that is both physical and relational.”

In this framework, raumlaborberlin is working on the realization of a public bath. As a first step the sauna tower and the changing rooms were completed in 2014.







Bath as a forum

Public baths were once an intense place for social gatherings in our cities. They were places not only for relaxation and sport but also for politics, discussion, business deals, eroticism, hedonism and crime. This has been lost in our cities and substituted with the more bleak and leisure-based public swimming pools and spas. We see the baths as a social space to meet people, spend time together and discuss life. The sensorial qualities of the baths provide us with a place where there is no competition, consumption or spectacle, but where the focus is purely on sharing spaces and thoughts, and enjoying and benefiting from the water.

The docks, created for turning ships, will lose their former function in the future. Imagining new uses and types of experiences, as well as links between the water, the land and the neighbourhood, are crucial for the development of the whole area. Introducing a traditional bathing culture, into this rough industrial landscape opens up new perceptions of the city.

City planning as a process

Working on an abstract level of city planning, Raumlabor has specialised in dynamic master planning. Activation through use is the central approach. Multifaceted use of public space is a driving force for the development of vibrant, contemporary and adaptive neighbourhoods. We seek to invent new, user-based applications and involve various urban players as early as possible in the transformation processes.

Research-based design

Raumlabor are committed to dealing with places 1:1, discovering and using what we find within the conditions at the site. In the process of doing, we learn more about the investigation site through active design and finding new methods that are open to appropriation and upgrading existing methods. We do not always solve problems; we initiate processes that give players the opportunity to get to know, understand and use the city and its dynamics, as well as its possibilities.

„Living together“ is not an end in itself but a process. That is why it is important to plan and build the prototype together with the people who will in the future use and manage it. „Building together“ is also an opportunity to bring people from different social classes and with different ethnic backgrounds together for a meaningful experience. The idea is to give them an opportunity to do something that they would normally never do: to expand their city living by giving them the chance to create their own space in the cities.







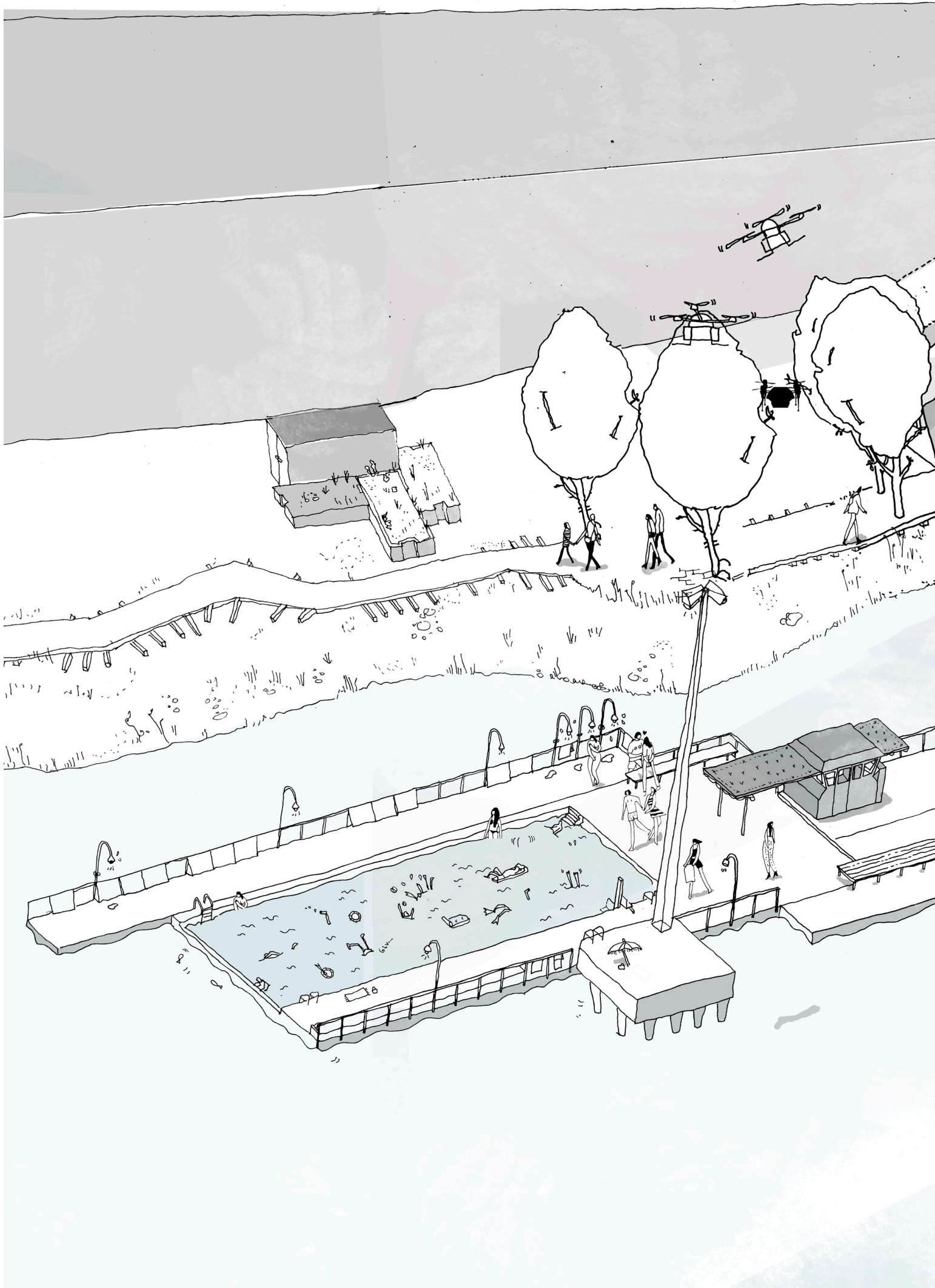
First of all we found the site. We were fascinated by the heavy concrete pier out in the water. It stands on angled pillars that go 40 meter down into the ground. It looked like the possible foundation for a tower. After the harbor has moved out it was absolutely out of use. It appeared to us like the foundation of a monument that has never been built. The second aspect for the building is the visual connection to the inner City of Goteborg. Even so, the free harbor "Frihamnen" is situated very central just across the river from the main station, for the people living in the central districts this place feels very remote. Due to its free harbor functions it has always been closed for public.

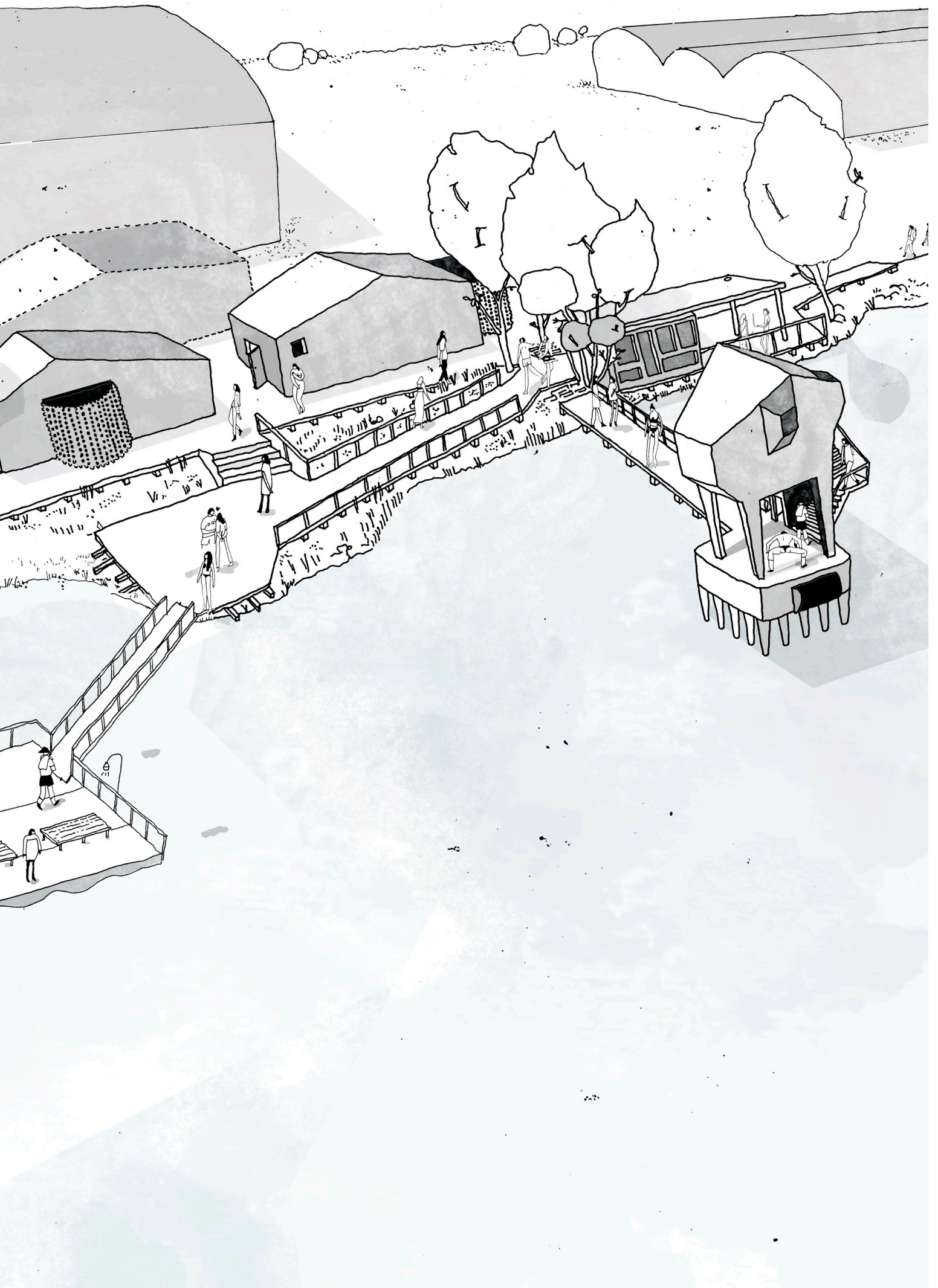
Now this area is going to develop into an inner city working and living quarter within the next few years. The intention of the Sauna and the bath is to bring as much people as possible to this place in transition. To make people aware of the beauty of the harbor as a place, to make them care about the place before its future is all defined.

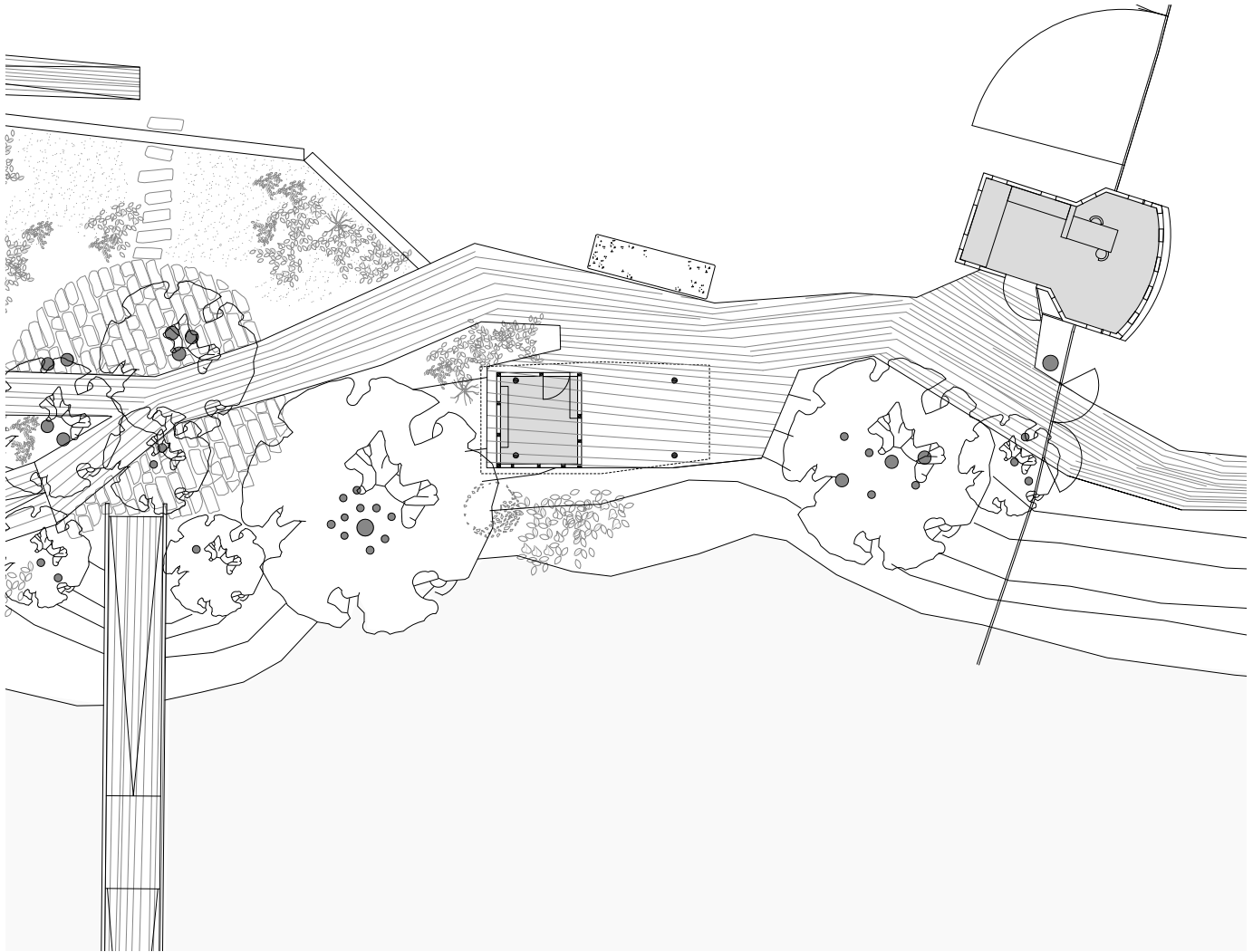
We thought it would create a great tension to sit in the sauna in the middle of a post harbor emptiness and look through the big panoramic window onto the heart of your city. We also needed to elevate the sauna not to block the view from the beach that was already established by "Mycket" another team that worked on the Jubilees Park 0.5 project. From these parameters the sauna started to gain shape, the idea to use recycled corrugated steel also caused formal decisions. We wanted to create a kind of character which looks like it belongs to the harbor, like the old cranes or some storage buildings.

The building was designed in a very dynamic process. We started on site with a very open brief. We were asked by the curators that worked for the city to work with bathing culture as a possible program for a future park. We started with a workshop on site. Bringing people of our team from Berlin together with people from Goteborg that were willing to participate in an open design and build process. Under these conditions we did build the entrance building and the wooden piers. In the same time we designed the sauna, partly on site, partly in Berlin.

Everything went very fast! It was supposed to be a temporary structure. In the same time it needed to fit with all the building codes and regulations. We had to incorporate an elevator for accessibility and many other extras within a very short planning time. Starting in September we finally could not open before the winter, which made the construction and especially the final cladding with the corrugated steel quite a challenge!







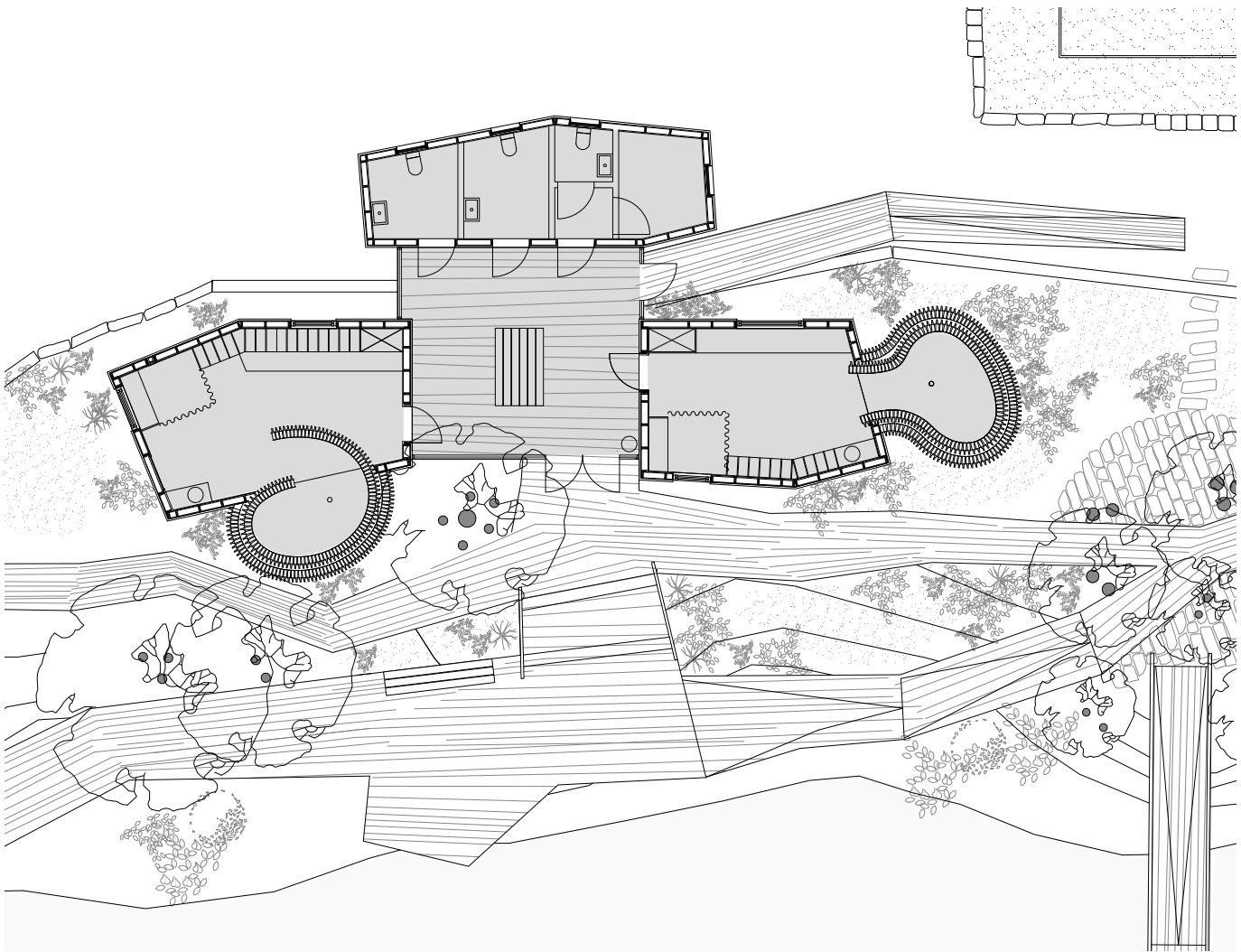
Frihamnen, one of the harbor areas of Gothenburg, is gradually losing its industrial character and is steadily becoming a new, central part of the city, open to be discovered and adopted by the citizens. The present state of transition, the traces of its former uses and the huge undefined spaces together make the area very attractive for the establishment and implementation of different kinds of cultural activities. Apart from polluted land and water, the heritage of this industrial port area is a series of fascinating functional objects and buildings and the spontaneous and fragile nature that somehow exists between asphalt, concrete and water.

For sustainable urban growth and the creation of a specific harbour park at Frihamnen it is necessary to preserve the memory of the site by attempting to intertwine with old structures, both physically and emotionally, the feeling and the qualities of the current state of 'waiting' for new uses, buildings and temporary interventions.

Establishing bathing in this rough and hostile environment is, above all, a way to change the perception of it: creating intimate spaces, new leisure experiences and the opportunity for communication between different groups of people. Since water pollution does not allow, for the moment, direct bathing activities in the docks, the establishment of Bathing Culture activities will generate a form of prediction for the future of this particular setting.

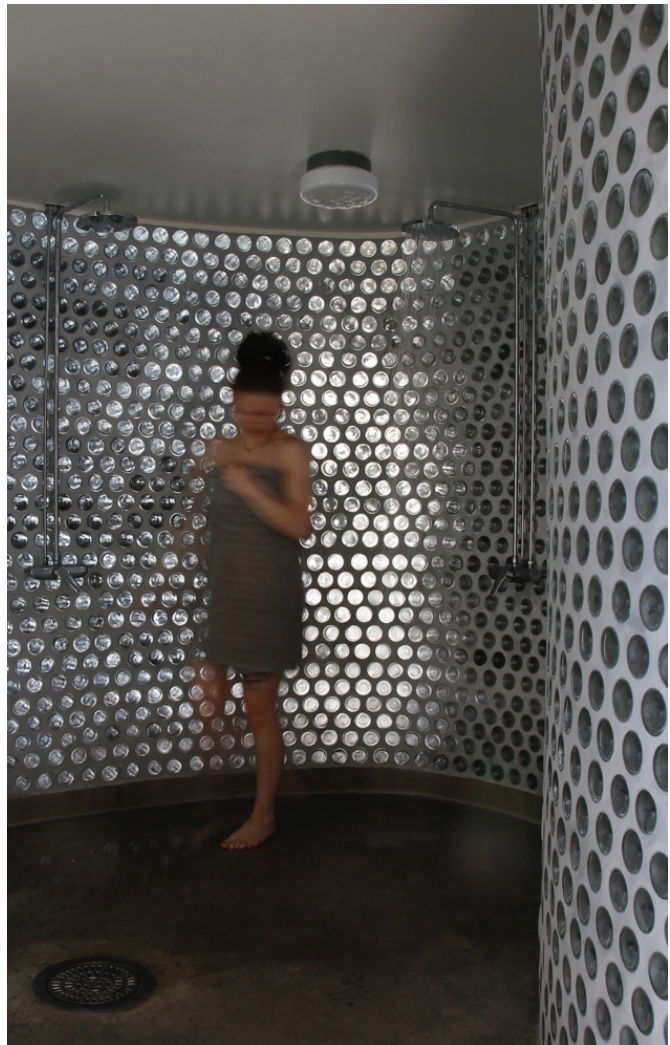


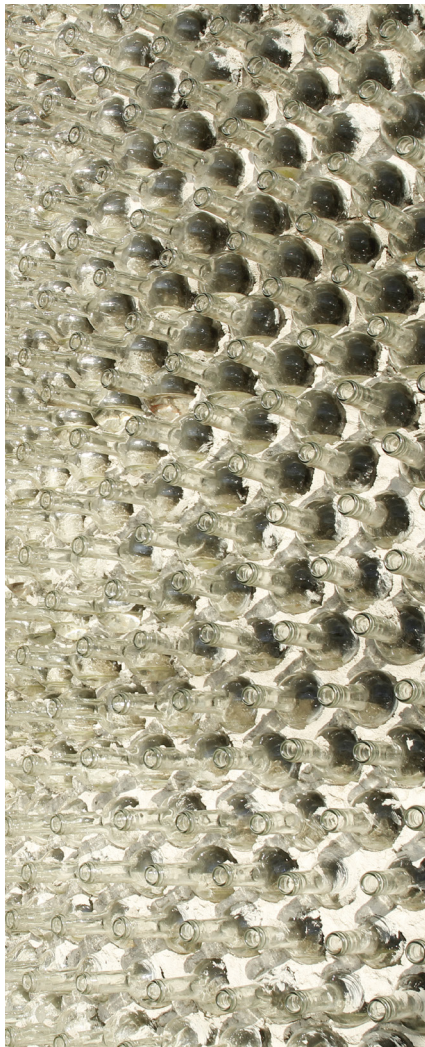


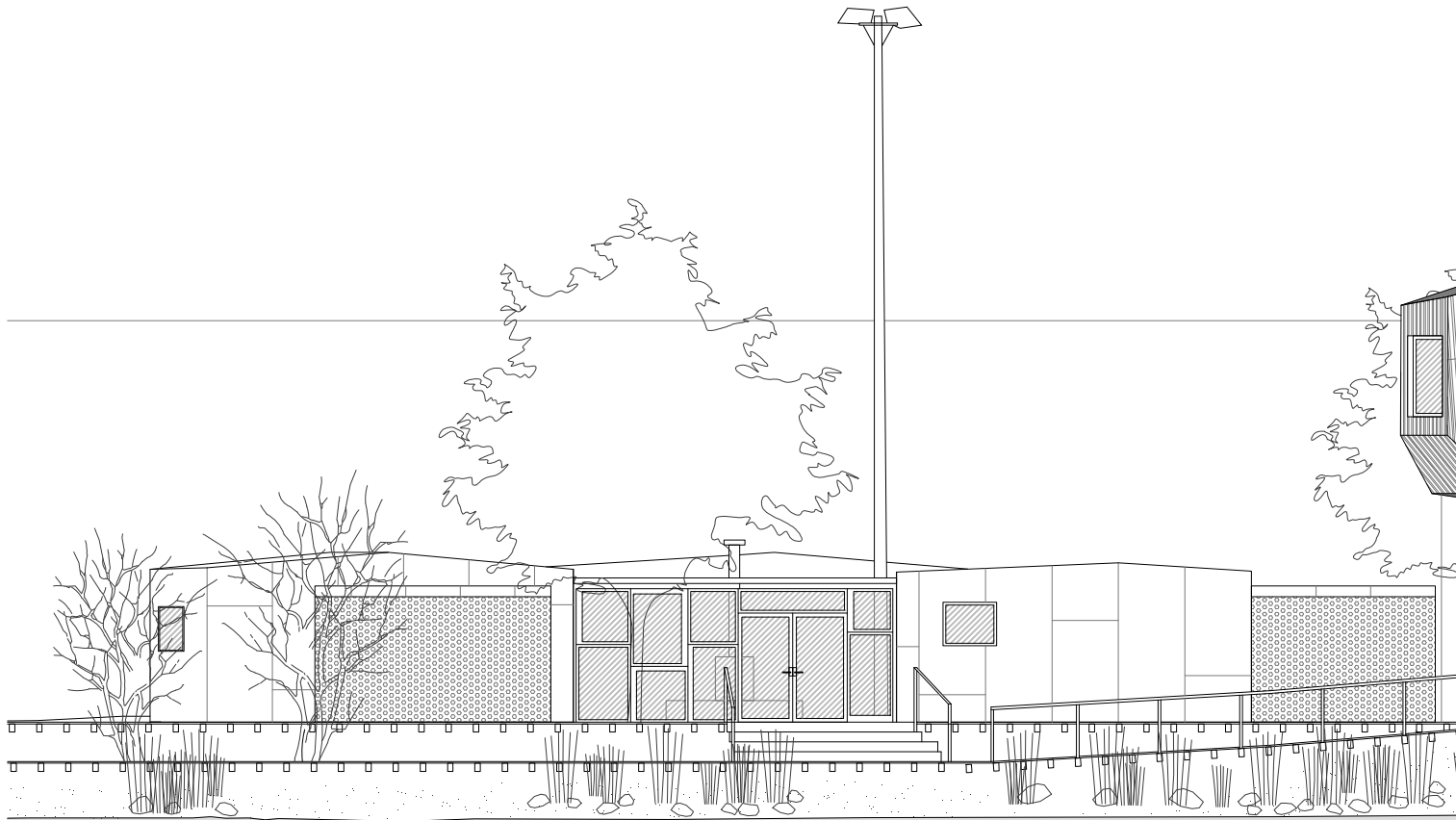


The bottle walls we have first tested in a project called “Officina Roma” in the MAXXI in Rome, where we did a building workshop with high school kids from all over Italy. The bottle wall is a typical material of scarcity. You can find it in self constructed shelters all over the world. It is recycling of old bottles that you usually get very cheap or even for free. We do like the simplicity of the brick laying process. We invited people from Goteborg to join the building, who had never worked in construction before.

With the bottles you have to be very precise and careful, but everybody who cares can learn to build bottle walls within a few hours. We also intended to give the changing rooms strong identity. We wanted the users of the bath to remember this showers. They can allways see the showers at night from the bridge went they pass by in a late night tram.









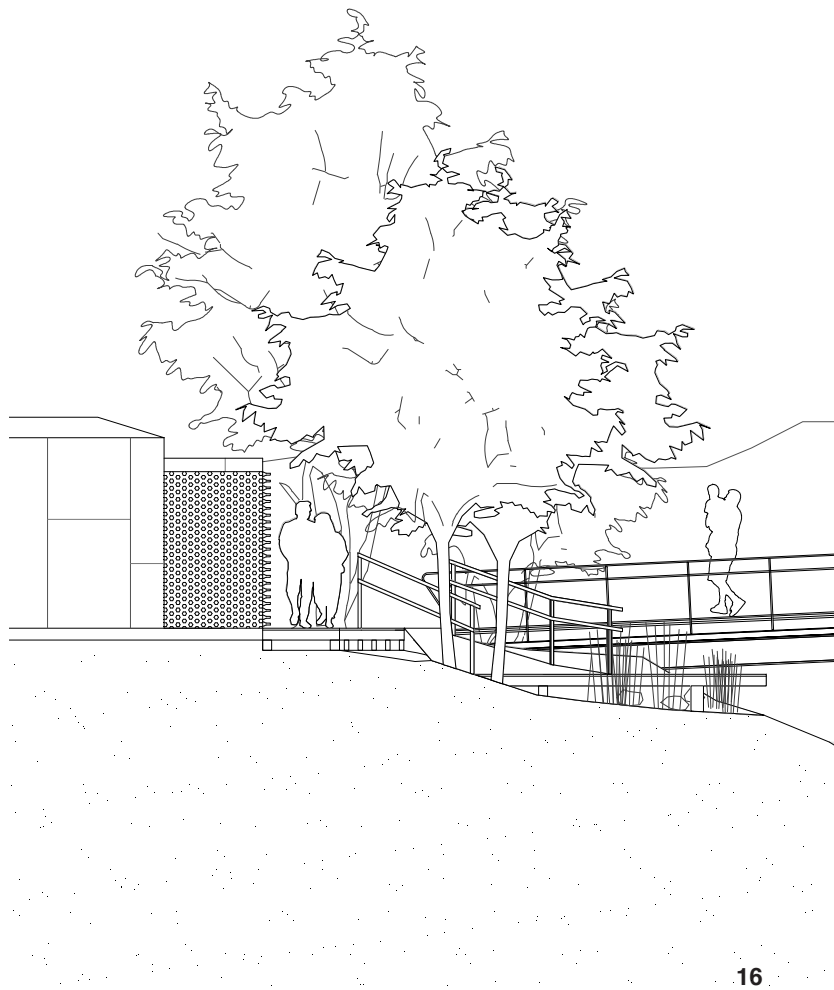


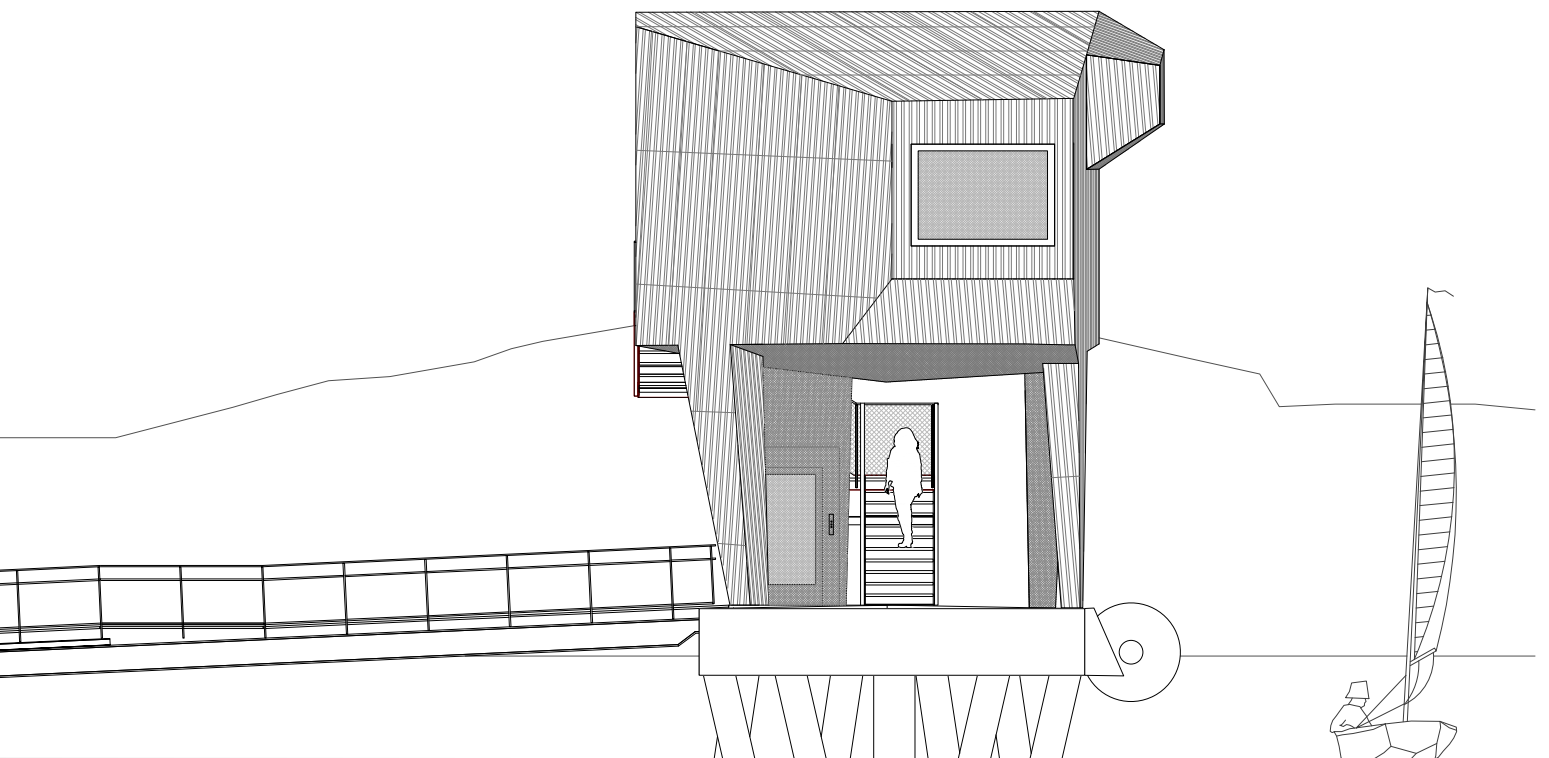
Enclosed in the warm sphere of the sauna, overlooking the harbor, a new, distinguish room is created. A social hub of conversations and bathing culture develops a new use of the harbor. It invites people from different backgrounds and ages in a very equal circumstance. The materiality of the inside differentiates itself towards the harsh surrounding while the exterior facade melts into it. Through the visual connections, the interior room still keeps a strong bond to the outside. And so the view towards the ships and the activities of the harbor, recollects and preserves the memories of the docks legacy.

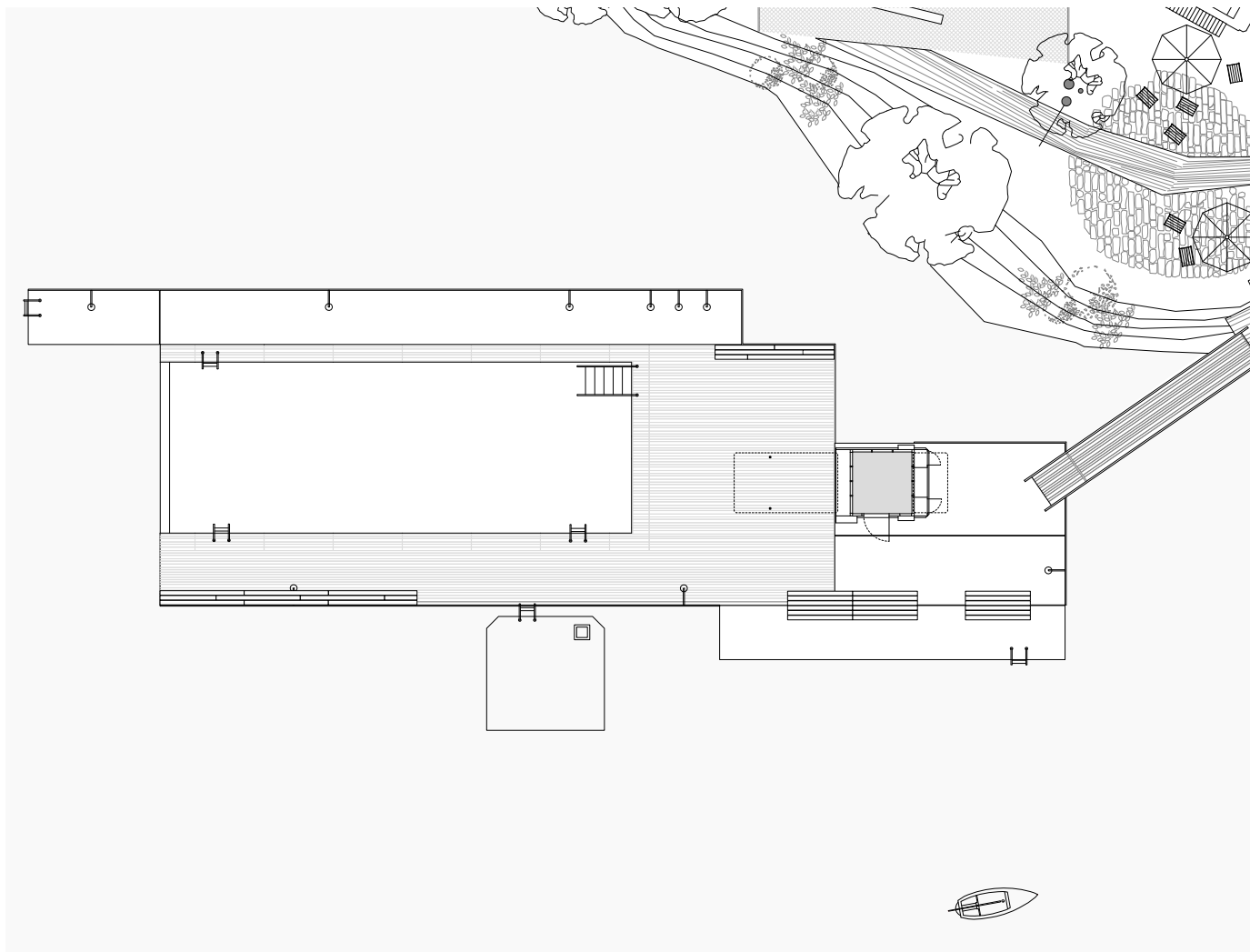
The gap inbetween the once industrial harbor and the urban condition of the city is shifted, through the visual proximity between the two, inside of the sauna. Thereby establishing an idea how the future settlement of the area could reinforce the city initself.

The inner body is a wood construction, like most saunas, that stands on a steal frame. Important for us was the interior of the sauna itself. Here we have used wooden shingles, to make a very soft space that feels like it breathes. It was important to us to create a very cosy space in contrast du the harsh outside shell. The shingles allowed us to have a very dynamic space that is very silent and calm in the same time.

The technique used on the sauna interior is a self invented variation of a shingles cladding. Due to budget reasons we were not able to use real shingles. Therefore we started to make tests with different dimensions of simple pine wood veneer. The veneer also allowed us to use more horizontal formats, that worked much better with the dynamic of the space. The fact that the veneer pieces roll up once the dry out also makes the space feel ever changing almost like it was breathing.



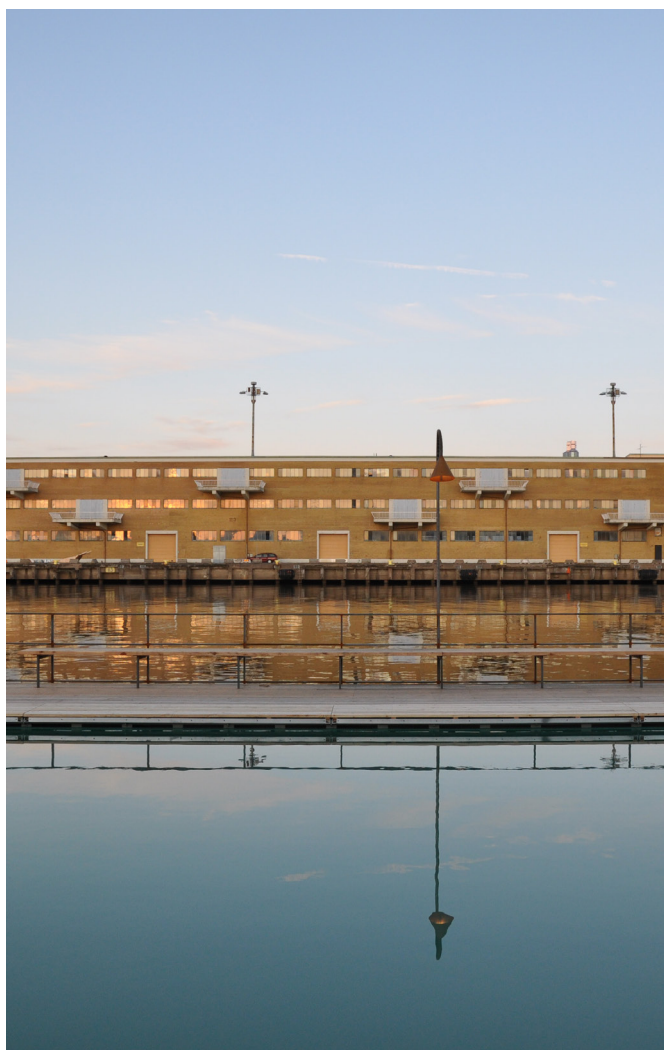




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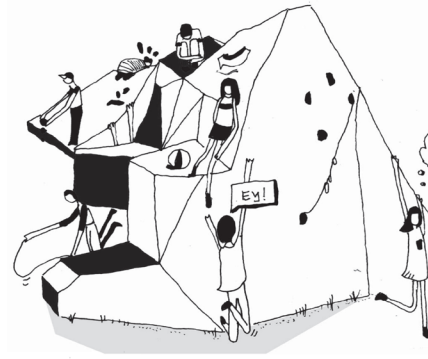
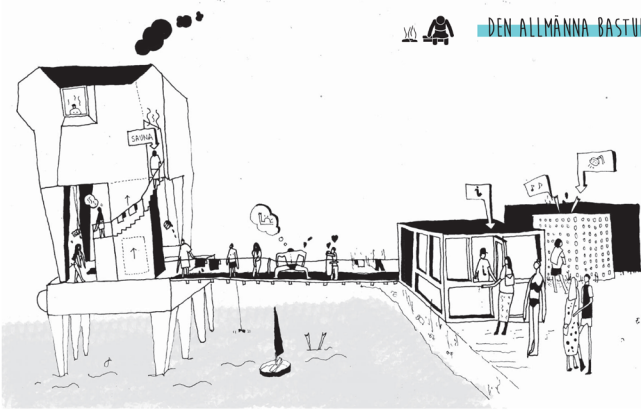




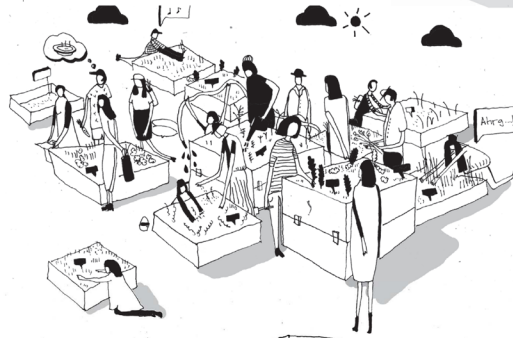
DEN ALLMÄNNA BASTUN



VATTENLEK VATT



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DRONE

