

## ARCHITECTURE OF CONTEMPORARY SPA HOSPITALITY - CURRENT TENDENCIES IN DESIGNING SPA HOTELS

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**Abstract.** *The emergence of spa tourism as a sector of the wellness tourism marketplace is reflected in contemporary architecture of spa hotels. These facilities are essentially accommodation facilities that offer a variety of individual treatments and services for spa-seeking tourists focused on their health and wellness. The primary objective of the research is to investigate current tendencies and strategies in the field of architectural design of spa hotels, as well as to explore successful design approaches. The research begins with elaboration of basic characteristics of modern wellness tourism, followed by the definition of spa hotel as a special type of hospitality facility. Later, classification of modern spa hotel modalities is elaborated and further clarified using relevant case studies. The second part of the research is the analysis of recognized design tendencies in terms of spatial organization of spa hotels. In the conclusion, their further applicability in wider practice is discussed, and certain disadvantages and limitations are listed.*

**Key words:** *spa hotel, hotel architecture, hotel design, wellness, tourism*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world of speed, relaxing spaces have been given a prominent role. People look for places where they can relax, feel good and 'charge their batteries' in a relatively short time. Over the past few decades wellness tourism has been experiencing continuous rise in number of guests, and it is predicted to continue to grow by more than 9% per year, almost 50% faster than overall global tourism. As spa tourism, a popular form of wellness tourism, contributes with approximately 41% of wellness tourism revenue, it is often referred to as wellness & spa tourism [1]. Medical rehabilitation is not the only reason for visiting spas anymore. The motivation for modern spa goers broadened to include leisure and relaxation which resulted in ongoing transformation of spas into modern centers of pleasure and entertainment for the whole family [2].

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The emergence of spa tourism as a sector of wellness tourism marketplace is reflected in the contemporary architecture of spa hotels. In recent years, along with the rediscovery of the relaxation tourism, more attention has been paid to the architecture of spa centers. The diversity of services that hotel program includes, carefully and pleasantly designed spaces and environments, as well as the thoughtful selection of materials, lighting are the key elements of modern spa tourism. [3] Today's spa hotels are essentially accommodation facilities that offer a variety of individual treatments and services for spa-seeking tourists focused on their health and wellness [1].

The main topic of this research is architecture of contemporary spa hospitality, specifically hotel buildings. The literature review shows that there are several papers that explored characteristics of hospitality infrastructure in certain regions – Tofan [4] investigated current tendencies regarding the touristic infrastructure of Drăgoiasa-Tulghes region, Frangou et al. [5] analyzed hotel design in Greece, while Brzaković et al. [3] investigated whether existing hotels in Niška Banja can fulfil the requirements of modern spa tourism, as well as successful design approaches for their potential upgrade. In their research Varolgünes et al. [6] suggested new methodology that would improve the design quality in buildings, specifically in a building of a thermal hotel. Nikolić [7] et al. explored the relationship of the hotel, the city and its architectural heritage, as well as some of the factors that led to the eruption of alternative models of hotels. Social studies investigated different things that involve spa hotels – from customer satisfaction [8] to factors promoting wellness travelers' post-purchase behavior [1].

The primary objective of the research is to investigate current tendencies and strategies in the field of architectural design of spa hotels, and to explore successful design approaches. The research begins with the elaboration of basic characteristics of modern wellness tourism which is followed by the definition of spa hotel as a special type of hospitality facility. Later, classification of modern spa hotel modalities is elaborated and further clarified using relevant case studies. The second part of the research is the analysis of recognized design tendencies in terms of spatial organization of spa hotels. In conclusion their further applicability in wider practice is discussed, and certain disadvantages and limitations are listed.

## 2. DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING SPA HOTEL AS ARCHITECTURAL TYPE

The term spa hotel is closely related to the terms like 'spa tourism', wellness tourism' 'relaxation tourism' or even 'health tourism' – term usually considered a hypernym of all the previously mentioned forms. There is no universally accepted definition of health tourism (or its subforms), which results in a number of different explanations of the term, depending on authors as well as on contexts and country. However, its primary purpose is the improvement of health and quality of life, while services it offers generally rely on the natural characteristics of the place, such as the favorable climate, natural hot springs, sources of mineral waters and other treatments and services based on local healing substances [9, 10].

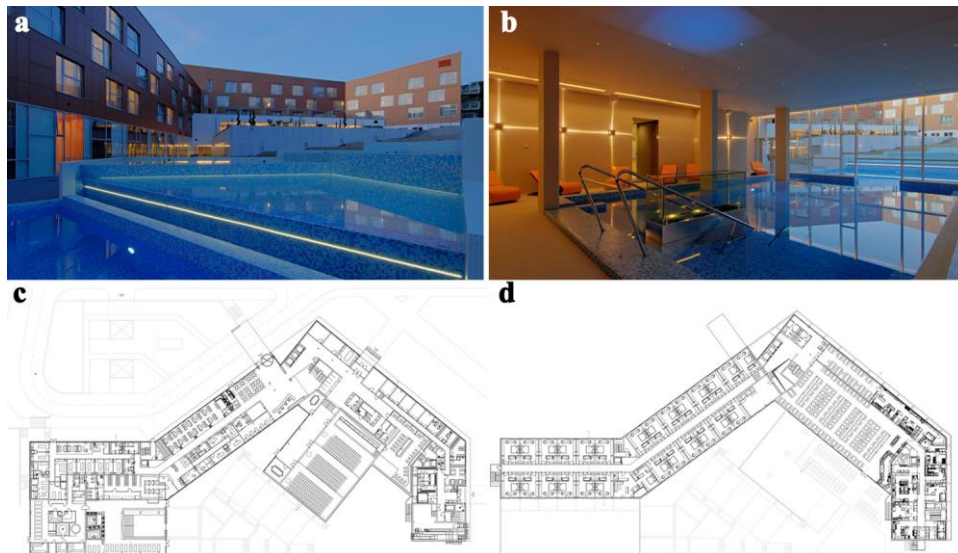
By its initial definition, spa hotel is a hotel located in an area where scientifically approved deposits of therapeutic substances and the necessary wellness & spa facilities exist and may be used, with the primary purpose of providing individual services and treatments, with focus on health. Programs of these facilities combine luxurious accommodation, spa services and fitness activities, but can be enriched with healthy cuisine, yoga classes, wellness education, special interest programming, etc. In Serbia, the legislations for hotel categorization do not

stipulate any specialization which means that spa hotels do not have specific standards in order to differentiate them from others. Spa hotels can either be profit-oriented and market-oriented toward a self-paying client, or partially integrated into the public health system or connected to private health insurance companies. The choice of a preferred business operating model does not affect their architectural characteristics.

In terms of their relationship with wellness & spa facilities, spa hotels can be divided into two groups: (1) hotels that include a full service wellness & spa center as an integral part of the facility (“all-inclusive hotels”), and (2) hotels that are directly connected to an independent wellness & spa center in close neighborhood (“accommodating hotels”).

Hotels in the first group have programs that tend to include all possible needs of the guest and are usually built in locations that do not have a highly developed spa infrastructure. The absence of an established infrastructure forces developers to include as many amenities as they can in order to keep their guests entertained during their stay.

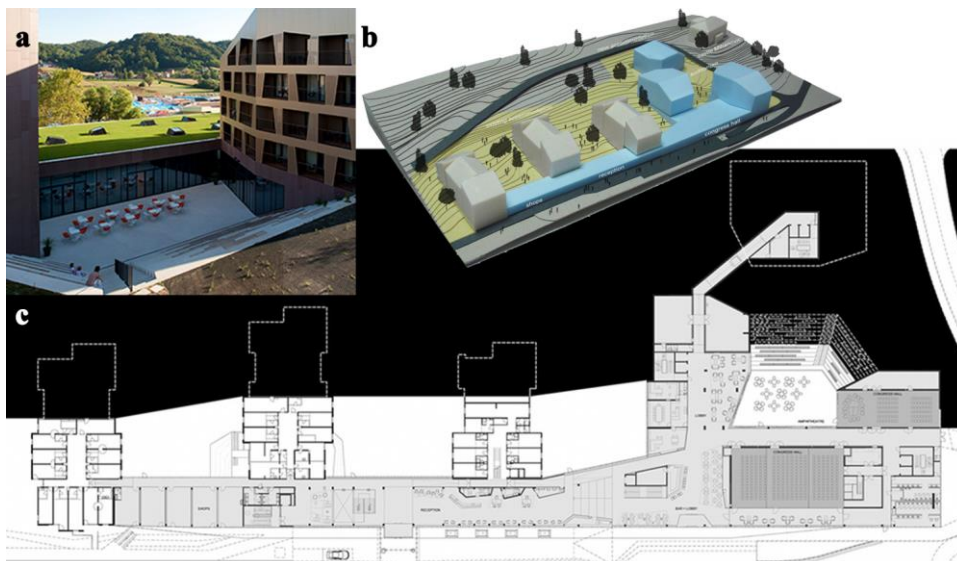
Since 1911, when an international oil company carried out explorations in their search for oil and instead found thermal water, the area in which Spa & Golf Resort Saint Martin (Figure 1) is located at present has gone through a number of programmatic and spatial changes. The hotel which comprises 157 guestrooms, including 151 standard double rooms, and 6 suites, is located on the northwest side of the hill, between outer pools and golf courses. The building’s linearly developed polygonal form consists of two wings – one that is oriented toward outer pools on the Northwest, and the other that is connected with golf courses on the northeast. The hotel’s program is vertically separated – guestrooms occupy upper floors, while numerous public activities are located in the basement, ground floor and mezzanine. Its all-encompassing public area program includes: wellness & spa area with indoor and outdoor pools as well as beauty center, diverse catering facilities (2 restaurants, cafe, lounge and nightclub), conference halls, and kindergarten [11].



**Fig. 1** Spa & Golf Resort Saint Martin: a) exterior photo; b) indoor pool; c) ground floor plan; d) first floor plan. Source: [https://www.archdaily.com/40560/spa-golfer-hotel-studio-sangrad?ad\\_source=search&ad\\_medium=projects\\_tab](https://www.archdaily.com/40560/spa-golfer-hotel-studio-sangrad?ad_source=search&ad_medium=projects_tab)

The second group consists of hotels that primarily focus on bedroom revenue, and do not include wellness & spa facilities, but are positioned next to an already built center to which they often have a direct connection. These hotels are common for spa settlements with already established traditions, and usually represent the phase in the long-term development of a spa settlement – in the first phase a wellness center is built, while in the next phase (or phases) accommodations are added. Their program usually concentrates on complementary functions such as conferencing and catering facilities.

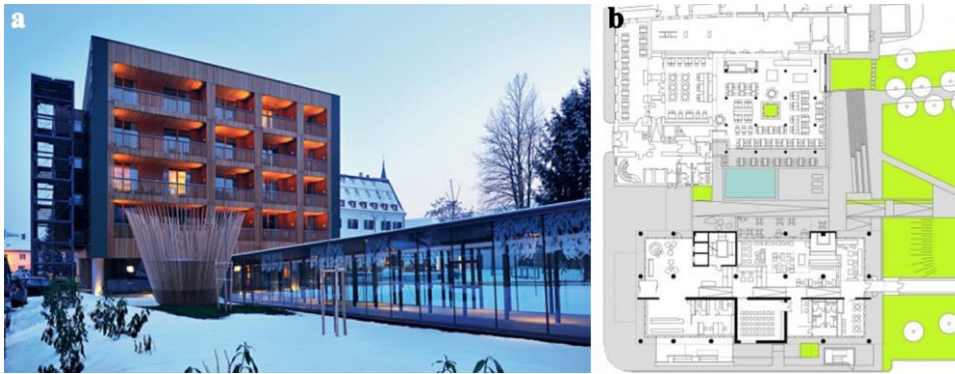
Within the Tuhelj spa complex individual buildings of various temporal origins harmoniously coexist with the hotel Well (Figure 2) being the newest addition to the ensemble which includes the old swimming pool around the corner, Mihanović Castle at the center, hotel pavilions from the 1980s, and the new swimming pool complex. The project originated with the idea of preserving existing pavilions and constructing new facilities that will connect all these elements and provide new space for public activities. The result is the layout that successfully assimilates old and new elements into a single coherent building and complex architectural form consisting of a multitude of elements. The program of the newly formed complex is vertically separated – public areas are located in ground floor while upper floors are used only for guestrooms. The dominant features of the addition are the three hotel monoliths (hosting 126 rooms) and a strong elongated floor plan [13]. The main entrance to the hotel is located directly opposite the entrance to the new wellness center. These two facilities are visually and spatially connected via a shared canopy that covers both entrance areas.



**Fig. 2** Hotel Well: a) ground floor plan; b) model; c) photo of amphitheater in the center of the building with Terme Tuhelj Spa Resort in background. Source: [12]

In 2003, the Balnea wellness center was constructed in the spa complex, with a varied range of modern pleasure centers. In late 2008, right next to the renovated Hotel Kristal (dating from 1899), owners built a new hotel, modern and quite adequate for demanding

customers, called Balnea (Figure 3). The hotel, located next to Hotel Kristal, connects the hotel complex and surrounding small structures. The floors of the old and the new hotel buildings are connected by a three-story glazed communication corridor, creating a joint and closed functional whole. The ground level between the buildings has an open public passage, preserving the old pedestrian axis for outside users, going from the congress center, across the river, the square and the park, to the wellness center. The latter can be accessed by guests from the interior of the new hotel through the ground-floor glazed corridor with columns along the edge of the park. Guests are provided with pleasant communication between different areas of the spa complex, with careful spatial arrangements and aesthetically designed passages, so the paths are dynamic and interesting, like a walk in nature [13].



**Fig. 3** Hotel Balnea: a) exterior photo with ground-floor glazed corridor connecting hotel and wellness center; b) ground floor plan. Source: [13]

A special type of spa hotels are health or medical hotels – beside usual tourist amenities, these hotels offer health care services and facilities. Hotels that offer health services possess the extensive health infrastructure, as well as professional guest-care provided by licensed medical personnel and are available to the guests [9, 14].

Thermal Bath, Therapy and Hotel (Figure 4) is tourist complex in a protected park in Gleichenberg that includes four star hotel, several restaurants and cafes, public thermal bath open for both patients and other guests, as well as treatment area with about 50 rooms for different medical treatments. A full treatment in this facility usually lasts for several days and involves a number of different treatments, such as various types of massages or baths, a cold or salt room therapy, etc. Considering the amount of time clients spend in waiting rooms during these multi-day treatments, the architects' intention was to create a sense of spaciousness to the public areas, while keeping the overall size of rooms within the limits allowed by the program.

The main volume of the building is a simple monolithic form that includes 3 floors and stretches all along the Brunnenstrasse. In contrast to this simplicity, the other side of the building is split in two parts consisting of complex curved forms. In the south half of the building, where treatment rooms are located, elevated ground floor extends towards the park and envelopes irregularly shaped, fully glazed inner courtyards. The ground falls away towards south, allowing the park to flow continuously under the elevated ground floor. Inclusion of courtyards into spatial layout creates the impression that the enclosed



exterior spaces are a part of the building. Around these courtyards, waiting areas for medical treatments are organized. A view to the outdoor greenery provided by these courtyards provide gives the clients the impression of waiting in the actual park. The difference in the design strategy of public waiting areas and treatment areas is also reflected in their architectural layout and form – the private treatments rooms are rationally sized, orthogonally organized around minimal utilitarian courtyards without greenery that only provide natural light and outdoor views. Unlike its south part, the north half of the building is not elevated, and it includes the indoor and outdoor pool area.



**Fig. 4** Thermal Bath, Therapy and Hotel: a) ground floor plan; b) the park side seen from the restaurant terrace, c) The roof of the treatment area seen towards the south. Source: <https://www.jsa.no/Therme-hotel-Bad-Gleichenberg>

Spa hotels are generally located in a relatively urban setting (spa settlements), location that can result in a lack of outdoor amenities. Therefore, some authors may introduce another type of spa hotel – spa resort. In comparison to a usual hotel, resort offers a wider spectrum of services and amenities – particularly those intended for outdoor entertainment and recreational activities. Furthermore, resorts tend to have many more food and beverage seats per room than regular hotels, because offering dining variety keeps guests on the property throughout their whole stay. Length of stay influences the number and size of resort amenities. Today's resort may have as much as 25% of its accommodation capacities allocated to suites, and many luxury properties are made up largely of standalone villas [15].

Enchantment Resort and Mii amo Spa (Figure 5a) is a first class retreat that includes outdoor pool and deck area that serves as the focal point of the spa experience, as well as main treatment building, clubhouse and 6 freestanding guest villas – 'casitas'. The main treatment building is located on the west side of the plot and composed of five brick

volumes that house private treatment rooms, organized along a horizontal axis. Parallel to the main treatment building, next to the pool area is a high-ceiling glass enclosed lounge space offering breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. In visual contrast to the stunning beauty of Boynton Canyon, all the buildings are conceived as a series of shifting volumes, clad in earth-toned stucco, brick and stone.

The Banyan Tree Cabo Marques (Figure 5b), is the premier all-pool villa resort which features 70-key luxury villas, a world class spa, two specialty restaurants, a beach club and a fitness center. The resort's 370 m<sup>2</sup> two-story spa pool villa each offer a 55 m<sup>2</sup> private pool and a second-story outdoor massage area that overlooks a manmade lagoon.



**Fig. 5** a) Enchantment Resort & Mi Amo Spa, Source: <http://www.fiedlermarciano.com/commercial/amo.html>; b) Banyan Tree Cabo Marques Resort, Source: [15]

### 3. CURRENT TENDENCIES IN SPA HOTEL DESIGN

Extensive review of built spa hotels reveals that current approaches favor transformation of existing hotels that became obsolete due to radical shifts in spa tourism, as well as programmatic tendencies that modify features and spatial organization of most important zones of spa hotel – wellness & spa area and guestroom floor. These trends are closely observed and discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.1. Transformation of existing hotels as a tool of sustainable development of spa settlements

The shapeshifting and steady rise of spa tourism that we are witnessing in recent years has catalyzed the transformation of existing spa hospitality. Until recently, their capacities were primarily adapted to the curative treatment of the sick and the injured during rehabilitation, which would not meet the needs of today's extremely varied customers. Furthermore, spa settlements are usually recognized for their preserved natural heritage which makes any new construction in these areas highly debatable. Transformation of existing buildings serves as a tool for keeping built footprint in spa settlements under control. Therefore, many spa hotels have been renovated, modernizing their capacities and introducing new services inside the old complexes. Some spas use modern and attractive architecture to completely change their appearance, while others build on tradition and use modern methods to adapt to the old spa architecture.

Atlantida Boutique Hotel (Figure 6) in the protected zone of the Rogaška Slatina health spa exemplifies a successful transformation of existing hotel that needs spatial and programmatic boost in order to satisfy requests of modern tourism. The building, situated along the slope, facing towards a plateau, and the surrounding area are protected as a cultural and natural heritage.

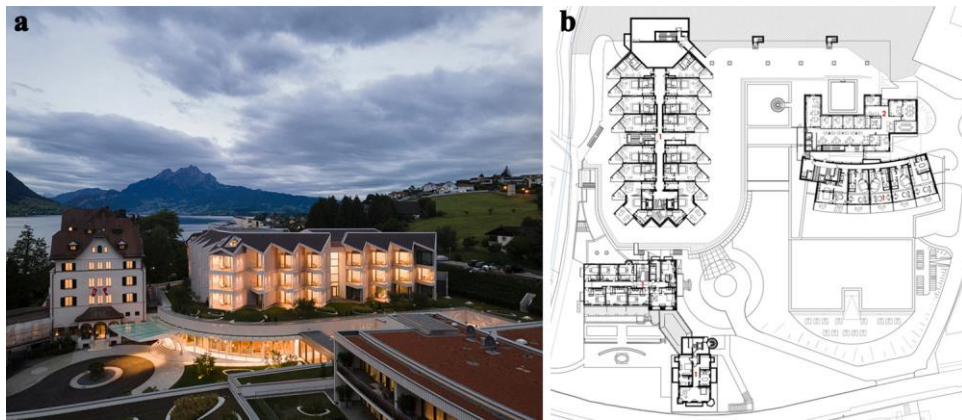
As a part of the process of program-spatial renovation, the architectural layout of the old hotel was entirely altered, while its façade was reconstructed into the original state of its modest historical character. Modest hotel that dates back 90 years is radically changed by introducing new wing hosting guestrooms oriented towards light and nature. This addition stands perpendicular to the original building, with dominantly glazed central element hosting central entrance hall and common areas such as a swimming pool and a restaurant. As a result, public areas are spread across all floors, with no common vertical separation of hotel program.



**Fig. 6** Atlantida Boutique Hotel: a) exterior photo; b) first floor plan. Source: <https://bigsee.eu/atlantida-boutique-hotel-by-api-arhitekti-slovenia/>

Completed in 2020, Chenot Palace Weggis Health Wellness Hotel (Figure 7) extends over 20000 m<sup>2</sup> and includes the renovation of existing hotel buildings, the addition of a new guestroom block, medical spa and wellness area. The accommodation capacities include 97 hotel rooms – 52 in existing building and 45 in the new addition. In order to preserve the view to the charming turn-of-the-century palace from the lake, the new addition has been set back above the entrance area. Furthermore, the new addition consists of volumes staggered in such a way that is never fully visible. The architecture of the new addition references symbolic treats of the historical building – the character and proportions of the vernacular are recalled and reinterpreted in a completely chromatic contemporary manner that combines organic with geometric forms. The medical spa lies in the heart of the complex. Set across 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with over 100 treatment rooms and offices, the spa and medical department is organized by department: aesthetic, hydrotherapy, and medical. The reception areas and doctors' offices are set around courtyards, bringing in natural light and maintaining a constant consonance with nature.





**Fig. 7** Chenot Palace Weggis Health Wellness Hotel: a) exterior photo; b) first floor plan.  
Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/946818/chenot-palace-weggis-health-wellness-hotel-davide-macullo-architects>

### 3.2. Rise of wellness & spa facility as the most important part of spa hotel

The central component of the spa hotel's recreational facilities is its wellness center. A list of amenities a wellness center includes can vary and mostly depends on the potential of the location. The most usual set of wellness center amenities consists of pools, gym equipment and specialized spa content, such as steam bath, Jacuzzi and sauna. Wellness centers in larger hotels may also include beauty salons, multipurpose rooms for aerobics, yoga etc. The most important, but also most divisive part of a wellness center is the swimming pool area. Recent research shows that guests use the pool less, but they expect the hotel to include swimming pool as a part of its recreation area [9]. The swimming pools included in wellness centers can be very diverse: indoor, outdoor, with sea or fresh water, thermal or mineral water, prehistoric seawater, and for the children.

In the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century spa resort boom, spas tended to have a strong thematic component evocative of a real or imagined warm-weather setting. Spas being developed today are much more diverse in design and attempt to capture a strong sense of place by relying on vernacular ingredients, techniques and architecture. An excellent example of this approach is the Hotel Therme Vals (Figure 8) at the foot of Alp Vallatsch in Switzerland, over the only thermal springs in the Graubünden canton. Although there was a long history of spa in in this location, the resort struggled until the 1980s, when the village of Vals bought the property, with its utilitarian 1960s hotel rooms. Eventually, architect Peter Zumthor was retained to transform the spa facility into a site-specific setting that, according to Zumthor, focuses on the quiet primary experience of bathing. The spa's roof, jutting out from the side of the mountain below the main hotel block, forms an extension of the lawn and opens up to reveal the pool below in a way that resembles an archaeological dig and invites exploration. The overall effect is dramatic yet calming, the perfect ambience for a mountain spa [15].



**Fig. 8** Therme Vals: a) exterior photo; b) ground floor plan. Source: <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/thermal-baths-in-vals-switzerland-by-peter-zumthor>

It is a widespread opinion that natural light promotes the use of wellness centers and upgrades the experiences of guests which is why contemporary wellness center designs prioritize natural light. As a result, wellness facilities are moving above the ground – ground floors and rooftops are becoming the most desirable space for wellness, embracing the hotel view (in case there is one), they often include private outdoor space and even provide spaces to meet and socially interact with other guests. The growing popularity of groups attending spas together has inspired special areas for these guests so that they do not disturb other spa-goers. There are even children's spa, where kids can get treatments on their own or side by side with a parent. Consequently, wellness & spa facilities became central space in terms of social life within the hotel.

Some authors believe that post-pandemic times will bring an even greater emphasis on spas' outdoor spaces and a link to nature. Guests want to escape hermetically sealed artificial environments and embrace the outside, and therefore amenities as natural pools, yoga deck, 'forest bathing' area, curved seating around a fire pit and spa gardens will be even more sought after. A spa garden does not have to include expensive hydro pools and heat cabins. It can be a garden, courtyard or roof terrace or just a view through an open window. Outdoor sensory experiences could include individual relax zones dotted around an aromatic herb garden, daybeds arranged around a fire pit, or playful swinging seats alongside a trickling water feature.

Located in the Logar Valley nature park, Hotel Plesnik (Figure 9) is a boutique family hotel that poses a tradition longer than eighty years. Situated at the end of a glacial valley, it offers an impressive view of the peaks of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps which serves as the central motif for the renovation of the hotel's wellness area in the partially cut-in basement of the building. The unusual floor plans of the interior owe their appearance to a previous spatial arrangement centered around a small, organically shaped pool which opened onto a tanning deck directly in front of the building. Original layout heavily underutilized the existing space and renovation process started with optimization of space and program. Therefore, the pool was replaced by a large whirlpool, while a part of the

former pool shell closer to tanning deck and view of the valley was transformed into a sunken circular resting area featuring a fireplace. The sun deck has been significantly extended to include a swimming pool with natural water, compensating for and expanding on the reduced interior water surface, while the beautiful view it provides is further accentuated by the reflection in the water.



**Fig. 9** Hotel Plešnik: a) existing floor plan; b) new floor plan; c) exterior photo. Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/887178/wellness-plesnik-enota>

Wellness facilities may also serve outside members and visitors as well as hotel guests. Therefore, their reception and parking areas may be up to twice the size at other resorts. Wellness requires a separate reception area for the health spa, which should be easily accessible to guests from the hotel lobby. A special elevator may be provided, serving the guestroom floors and allowing guests to move freely between their room and the wellness without moving through the lobby [15].

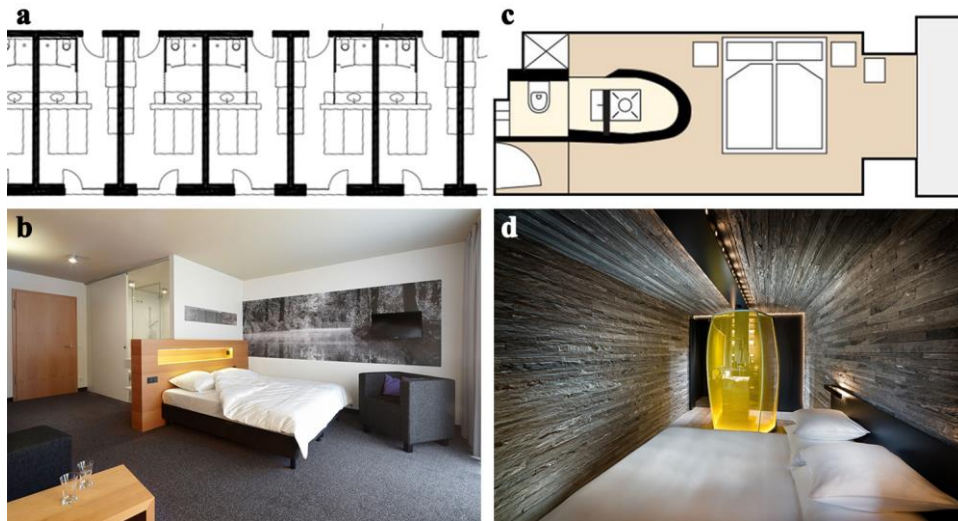
Providing retail space associated with the spa is a vital component of a successful spa operation. As much as 40 percent of a hotel spa's revenue can come from the sale of skin- and hair-care products and spa-related clothing items [15].

Considering the changes in trends, technology or even hotel capacities, the design and operation of wellness center needs to be flexible and easily adaptable to future growth, avoiding the underutilization of space and the need for expensive retrofitting.

### 3.3. Guestroom design – somewhere between conventional and radical solutions

The starting phase of the most basic planning for a hotel must include the guestrooms – not only do they occupy the majority of space within a hotel (65-85 % of total floor area), but a large part of a hotel experience is in the guestroom. Because of the guestroom's residential character, these spaces provide the most private part of the hotel experience. Many hotel operators believe that the guestroom makes a more lasting impression on the guest than does any other single interior space or the exterior architecture. Design of the guestroom, while clearly more an internal layout problem than an architectural one, is still an important part of the architect's responsibility [9, 15].

The 1900s brought dramatic changes in the experience and design of hotel architecture. However, the structure and spatial organization defined at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the archetypal Statler model, did not change significantly. The design of the hotel room reflects the same tendency. Initial spatial structure of hotel room is deformed in some way – its basic elements remain the same, but the relationship between them changes. Bathrooms take up more and more space, overlap with the space of the room, transparent glass and/or movable bathroom walls are introduced, and in some cases they completely disintegrate and drown in the volume of the room. Sanitary elements often become the most attractive places in the room (Figure 10 a, b) [16, 17]. An example of this kind of transformation can be found in the latest addition to the Hotel Therme Vals (now renamed 7132 Hotel) where four renowned architects – Thom Mayne, Tadao Ando, Kengo Kuma and Peter Zumthor – have been assigned to design guest rooms. Four of the new guest rooms have been designed by Thom Maynes studio Morphosis – all containing a transparent shower cabin in the center of the room and a balcony overlooking the landscape (Figure 10 c, d). Ando, Kuma and Zumthor have designed a room a piece, also using material as a central motif. Although less adventurous with their spatial organization, these rooms also represent unconventional solutions that put bathroom elements in the center of the room.



**Fig. 10** Spreewald Thermenhotel: a) typical floor plan; b) interior photo; Source: <https://4a-architekten.de/projekte/spreewald-thermenhotel-burg> Hotel 7132 – house of Architects, guestroom design by Thom Mayne (Morphosis); c) floor plan; d) interior photo; Source: <https://7132.com/en/rooms-and-suites/7132-house-of-architects/room-detail/id/1710/mayne-stone>



In the renovation project of the Onsen Hotel (Figure 11), Kengo Kuma went even further in exploration of the relationship of functional zones within the hotel room. Original building stands at the bottom of a valley abundant with hot springs. It was severely damaged by a flood in 1913, but snapped back with three to four-storied buildings that had the distinctive design of that time, the Taisho period in Japan. What Kengo Kuma did architecturally was a large-scale refurbishment, rather than a construction of an entirely new building. In this modern interpretation of the traditional Japanese inn or guest house central every guestroom includes traditional Japanese baths that use volcanic hot spring water (“onsen” in Japanese), known for its healing properties and benefits to the skin, which are integrated into guestrooms. There are five different versions of baths using five different natural materials – granite, sandstone, Japanese hiba, Japanese cypress and bamboo. Natural ventilation is essential in the bathroom where water is drawn directly from the source of the hot spring, so the sky light and openings are designed to ventilate the air continually [18]. Baths are completely disintegrated and blended into space of the hotel room, thus blurring the boundary between two usually separated spaces. By introducing traditional elements into contemporary typology, and masterfully applying materials, Kuma truly transformed hotel room.



**Fig. 11** Hotel “Ginza Onsen Fujiya”: a) first floor plan; b) hotel room, c) “onsen” bath tub. Source: <https://kkaa.co.jp/en/project/ginzan-onsen-fujiya/#gallery-3>

In spite of the exciting and fresh design, these new variants of spatial organization of hotel room that have been present for some time now, do not bring a radical change in the architectural design of hotel buildings. Their free interpretation of the hotel room functional zones is not acceptable for the wide market, while the structural and economic rationality of the previously defined models is unattainable. Therefore, vast majority of newly designed accommodation consist of traditionally organized hotel rooms. As spa hotels became popular destinations for family vacations, hotels adapted to their demands making family rooms (2 double rooms internally connected) more frequent in their accommodation structure.

The experience of staying in a spa hotel is deeply connected to the location and its surroundings. Therefore, it is highly important for a guestroom in a spa hotel to include a balcony because of the large amount of time spent within the room. The absence of balconies should be compensated by increasing the size of the room and introducing large windows.



As high-tech and sophisticated fitness equipment became available and present in many homes, expectations of hotel guests have changed to include those same luxuries. Hoteliers concluded that they can no longer satisfy their guests with the usual standard fitness amenities. As a result, hotels are incorporating in-room fitness amenities that include a wide range of exercise accessories and equipment to use conveniently in the privacy of one's room. In order to satisfy wellness seekers and stay competitive in the hospitality industry hotels are putting effort into renovating and upgrading the customer fitness experience. Incorporation of suitable in-room wellness and exercising amenities enables hotels to maximize their revenue [10]. As a result, even large international hotel chains develop new models of hotel rooms that include in-room fitness amenities. Hilton launched an in-room wellness concept named "Five Feet to Fitness" that brings over 11 different fitness equipment and accessory options into the hotel room, while MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas offers 171 "Stay Well" rooms with vitamin-infused shower water, blackout shades, and protection from electromagnetic fields. In 2012 IHG Hotels & Resort launched their new brand Even Hotels that also offers in-room exercise equipment to their guests and now have ten properties under the brand.



**Fig. 1** Hotel rooms with in-room fitness amenities: a) "Five Feet to Fitness", Source: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20170531005111/en/Hilton-Launches-Revolutionary-New-Guest-Room-Five-Feet-to-Fitness>; b) "Even Hotel", Source: <https://www.ihg.com/evenhotels/hotels/us/en/brooklyn/bxyev/hoteldetail>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The complete research is divided into two parts. The first part briefly presents important terminology in the field of tourism, while its central topic is the definition of a spa hotel as a special type of hospitality facility primarily characterized by its location, suitable for purposes of relaxation and recovery. Furthermore, elementary types of spa hotels based on the features of their programs were established and analyzed.

Second part of the research covers current trends and tendencies. With the rising popularity of old spa hotels renovation and expansion, as well as tendencies related to the two most important zones of the spa hotel – wellness and accommodation, have been analyzed and illustrated in detail.

Radical changes in spa tourism have caused a new wave of complete transformations of some existing hotels. Case studies have been used to illustrate the extent to which once exclusively accommodation hotels are expanding their offer.

The wellness area has become a central motif of spa hotels. It has become so important that in some situations it is planned as a separate entity that has a direct connection with the hotel building in order to maximize its external business. It took over the role of the center of social activities from restaurants or lobby areas, while it caused almost complete disappearance of traditional hotel facilities – salons. Their programs are extending toward outside making it compulsory for a modern wellness facility to include sunbath terrace, natural water pools etc. Today, the wellness & spa area is expected to stand out with its original concept and diverse program.

New concepts for spatial organization of hotel rooms have appeared continuously over the last few decades, but their application remains limited and reserved usually for the luxury sector of hotel accommodation. Radical increase in the number of tourists, as well as change in social structure of guests, affect the choice of widely accepted and expected patterns of guestroom floor organization.

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## **ARHITEKTURA SAVREMENOG BANJSKOG UGOSTITELJSTVA – AKTUELNE TENDENCIJE U PROJEKTOVANJU BANJSKIH HOTELA**

*Banjski hoteli predvode trend u rastućem sektoru banjskog turizma na tržištu wellness turizma. Ovi objekti su smeštajne jedinice koje nude individualne tretmane, masaže i usluge za posetioce čiji je fokus na zdravlju i relaksaciji. Primarni cilj istraživanja je da se ispituju aktuelne tendencije i strategije i uspešni pristupi u oblasti arhitektonskog projektovanja banjskih hotela. Istraživanje počinje pregledom osnovnih karakteristika savremenog wellness turizma, nakon čega sledi definisanje banjskog hotela kao posebne vrste ugostiteljskog objekta i klasifikacija njegovih modernih modaliteta, pojašnjena i precizno ilustrovana korišćenjem relevantnih studija slučaja. Drugi deo istraživanja je analiza prepoznatih projektantskih tendencija u pogledu prostorne organizacije banjskih hotela. U zaključku se razmatra njihova primenljivost u široj praksi i navode se određeni nedostaci i ograničenja.*

**Ključne reči:** *banjski hoteli, hotelska arhitektura, arhitektonsko projektovanje, wellness, turizam*