

# **SITES OF MERIT IN ICELAND - VARDA**

Mission for Ministry of Industries and Innovation, Department of Tourism

## **Mission Final Report – Graphic Documents Volume 2B / JOKULSARLON**

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Anne Vourc'h, Advisor to Grands Sites de France Network, Head of Mission

Alain Freytet, Landscape Architect Advisor to Grands Sites de France Network

Yoann Bit-Monnot, Landscape Architect, Assistant

In cooperation with



# CONTENT OF THE FINAL REPORT

## VOLUME 1 Synthesis of recommendations for Sites of Merit approach

Context, objectives of the mission and programme

Proposal for an innovative approach

- Natural & cultural sites and Sustainable development
- Sites of Merit Commitments

Testing the Grands Sites de France approach and methodology in Iceland

- A method based on the recognition and experience of the values of the site
- The key points of the method
- The interest of the exercise
- Translating these elements into action: the Landscape Intention Scheme

Recommendations for translating the Sites of Merit commitments to each site

- The vision, the principles for action in the sites
- The working method at each Site of Merit
- Site development

Recommendations for national policy steering

- Steering and governance at national level
- Position of the 4 test sites in relation to the Sites of Merit commitments
- The labelling process
- What types of sites should be involved in the Site of Merit Policy ?
- Involvement of private partners and private owners of the sites
- Local governance of projects
- Involve architects, landscapers and contractors
- Create a site managers network

Conclusion

Annexes: List of documents transmitted to MII, Programm, List of Participants

## VOLUME 2 Graphic Documents (drawings, photos, Landscape Intention Schemes)

2A Introduction

2B Jokulsarlon

2C Geysir

2D Gullfoss

2E Thingvellir

**Note 1: In Volume 1, numbers in brackets refer to Volume 2 slides.**

**Note 2: In this document, "Sites of Merit" and "Varda" are used interchangeably.**

**Note 3: All drawings, maps and LIS are by Alain Freytet.**



Road 1, on the way to Jokulsarlon. The promise of the glacier. Wonderful road, with absolutely no advertising boards polluting this outstanding landscape.





The splendor of the first view of the lagoon upon arrival at the site (1): the visual prominence of parking so close to the lagoon, so disappointing





The wonder of the first view on the lagoon upon arrival on the site (2): the magical removal of parking, thanks to photoshop!



The promise is somewhat spoiled...





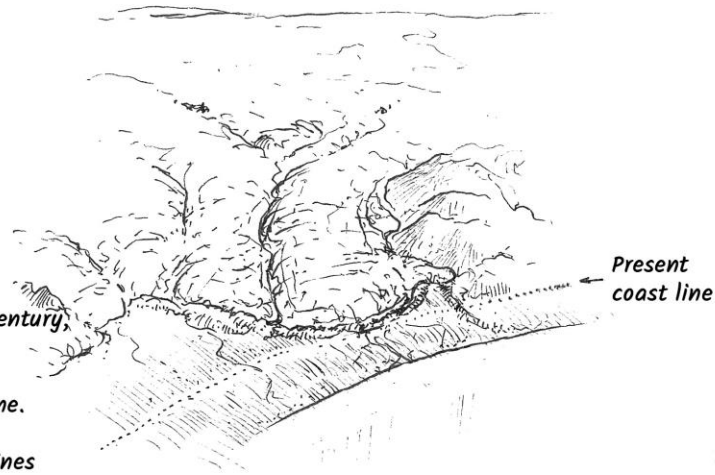
All together, walking around the site, taking time, having the visitor experience of the site.





5 septembre 2021  
Jérôme Savin

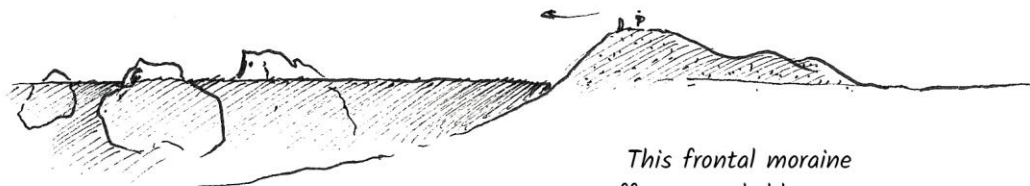
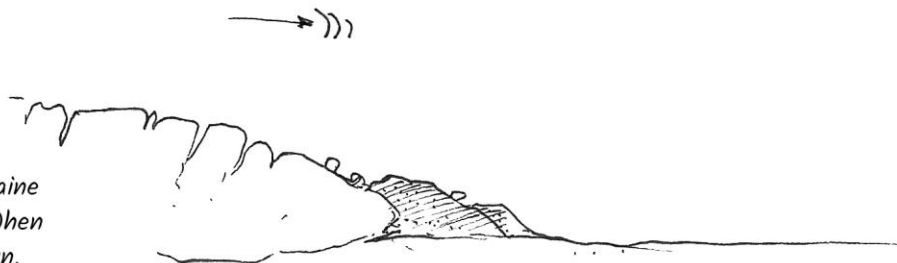
Today,  
the glacier is melting and  
since 1930 it  
has left a lagoon  
open to the sea  
through a  
small channel.



At the end of the 19th century,  
the shoreline extended  
more than a kilometre  
from the current coastline.  
The glacier extended  
to the edge of the moraines  
and the lagoon did not exist.

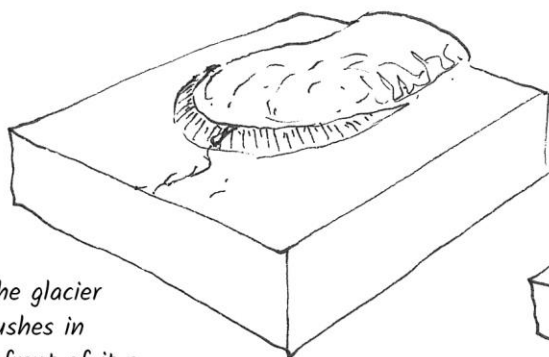
Present  
coast line

The glacier has pushed a moraine in front of it. When it was withdrawn, a frontal arch remained giving the banks of the lagoon a rough terrain.



This frontal moraine offers remarkable overhanging views.

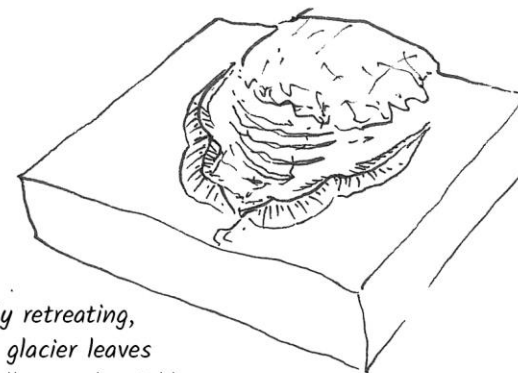
The glacier pushes in front of it a frontal moraine



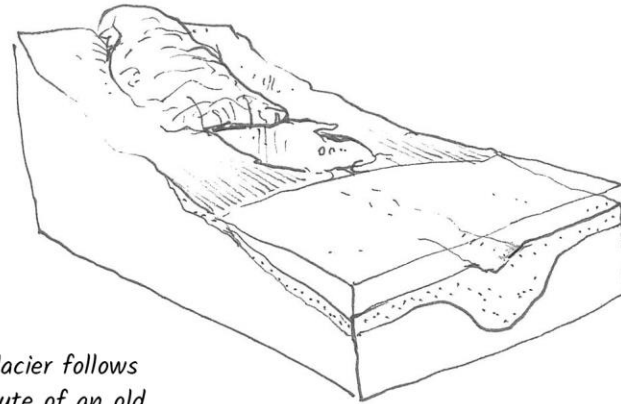
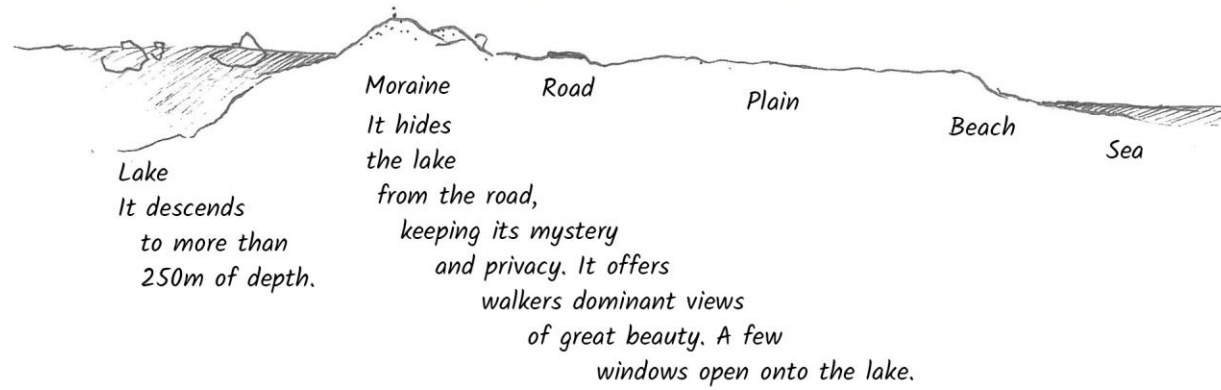
A more central arm reactivates the moraine leaving an older formation on the sides.



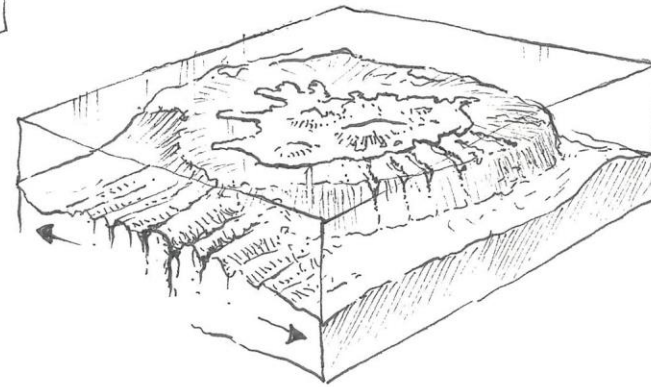
By retreating, the glacier leaves small annual wrinkles associated with winters. Dating is sometimes possible.



September 5, 2021  
Jökulsárlón



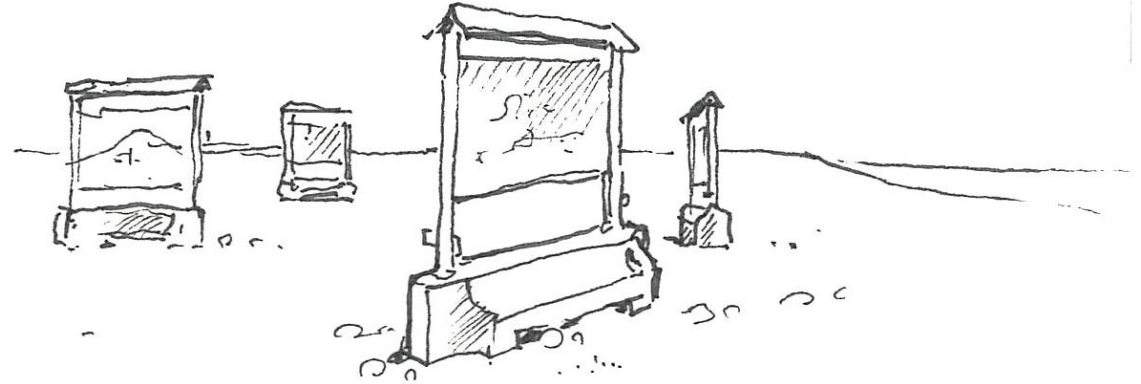
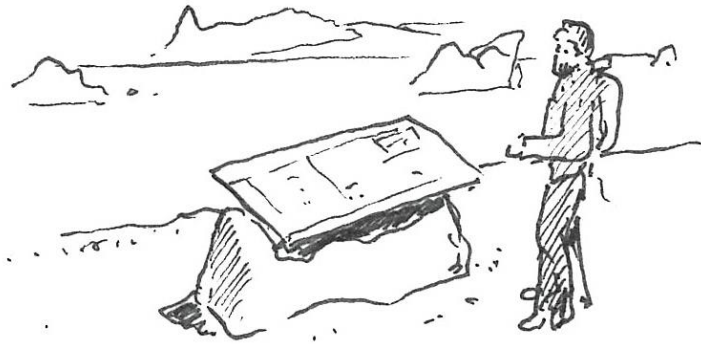
The glacier follows  
the route of an old  
channel which dives  
far below the sea. This  
depression is filled with alluvium.  
The meltwater under the glacier  
cleared these more loose materials and  
found the old relief. When the glacier melts,  
it gives way to this hollow that fills  
with water and blocks of ice: the lagoon



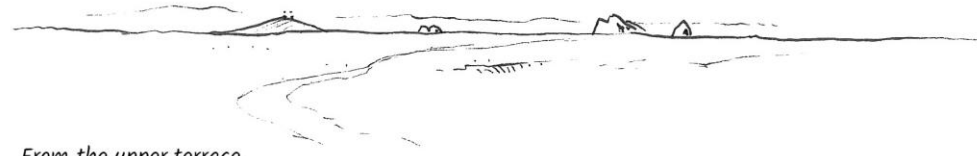




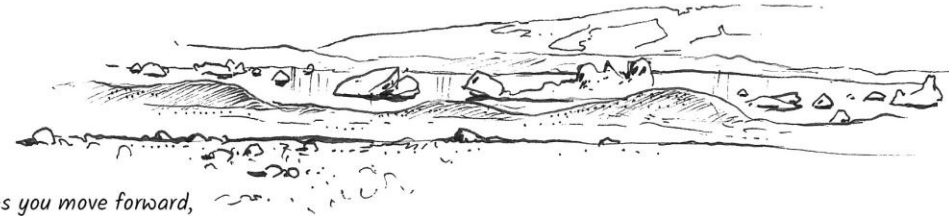
Consensus on the poor quality of present infrastructure. Interpretation boards are definitively not in a good place!



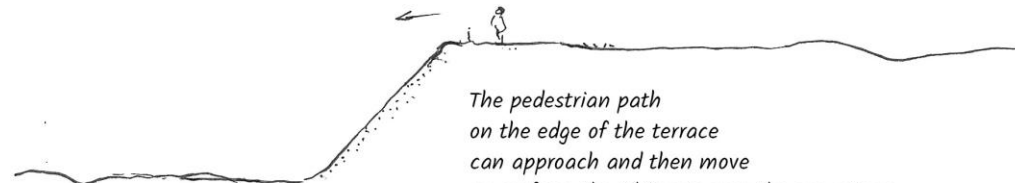
*The panels are soberly placed  
on the blocks. Is the information well  
positioned in front of the iceberg spectacle ?  
The panels of the photos are stranger. Why burden  
an exceptional landscape with photographs of other landscapes ?*



*From the upper terrace,  
a first perception of the  
old alluvial plain from which pieces of  
ice emerge, strange and unusual.*

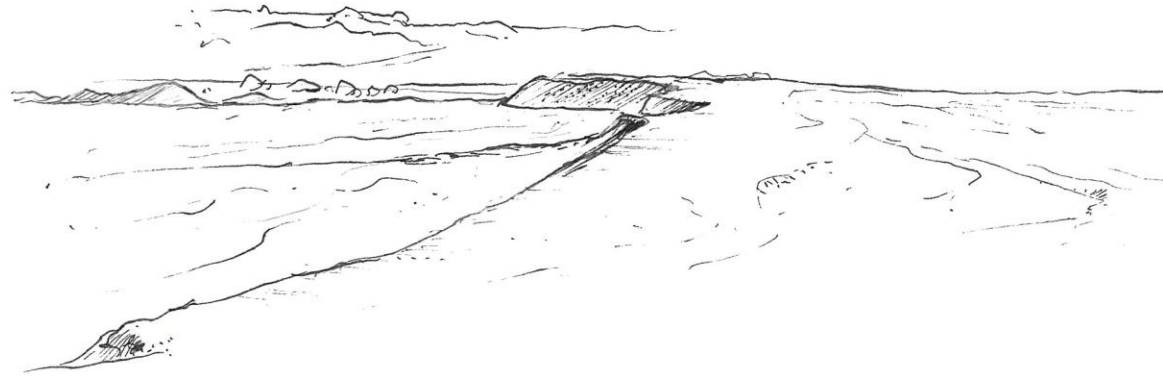


*As you move forward,  
the lagoon is revealed,  
the blocks float !*



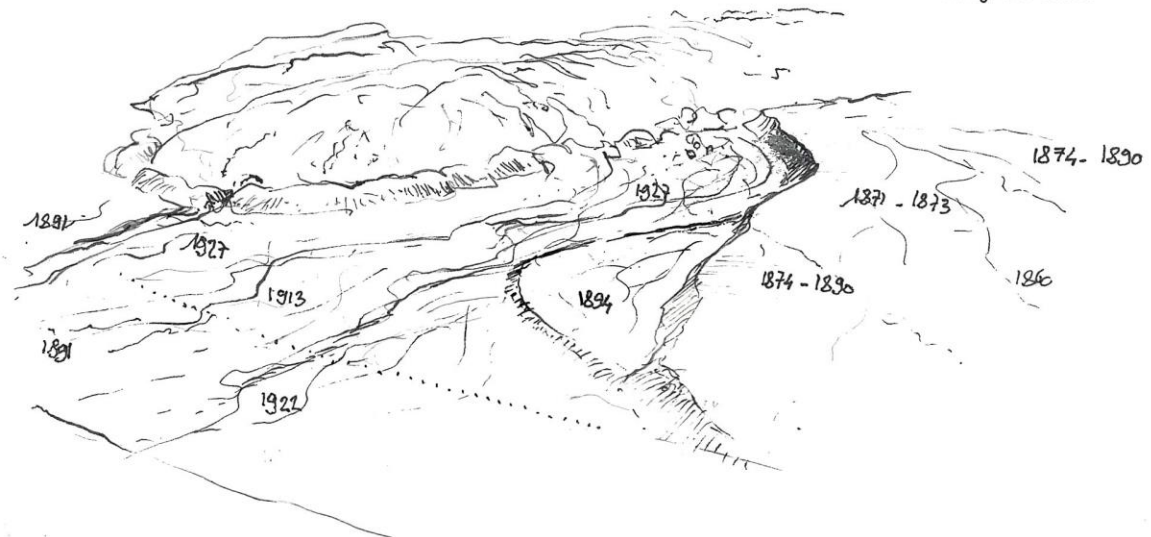
*The pedestrian path  
on the edge of the terrace  
can approach and then move  
away from the tilting to vary the sensations.*





1870, the road traverses the glacier to cross this point which remains one of the most difficult to go around the island.

All the alluvial terraces fit into each other. They are dated





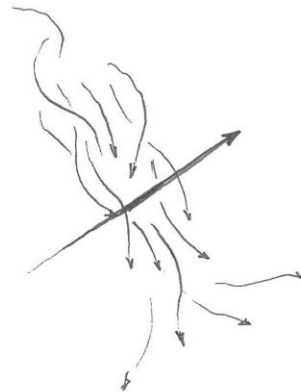


A glacier was flowing into the sea. Manhandled.  
It retracts, withdraws, exhausts itself, leaving behind the memory of old channels and orphan moraines.  
A mixed water on which float blue icebergs trying to find the sea to end up in sparkling diamonds on the beach.



A way seeks to cross this intimate connection by the glacier by the waves, by a bridge, another bridge, fragile link, risky place of a journey around the island, way of transport, energy, memory of horses in the waves, the junction point between two flows.

How on this site to evoke the power of these relationships, to bring them to life from the inside, outside in direct connection with the elements, to make it a physical, symbolic experience, to live it in contact with the stone, the water of ice, rain, sun, wind

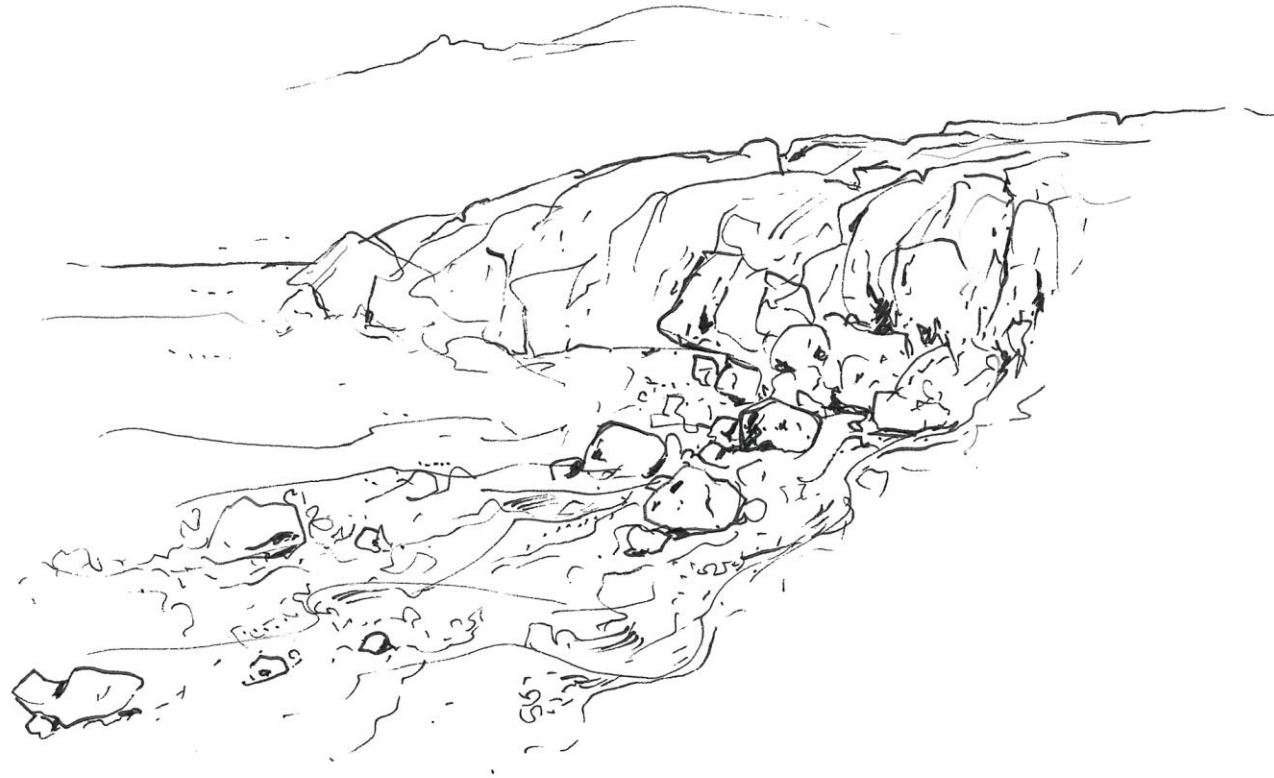


Two streams cross, two different dynamics

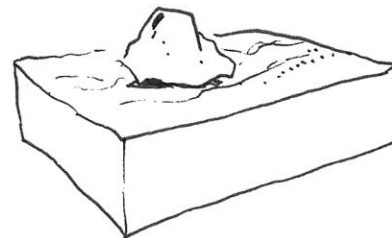
- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| Water      | Road          |
| Ice        |               |
| Alluvium   |               |
| Interwoven | Straight      |
| Curves     | Unique        |
| Multiple   | Rigid         |
| Supple     | Selfconfident |
| Uncertain  | Masculine     |
| Female     |               |



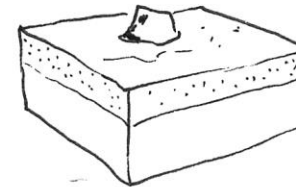
September 5, 2021  
 The periglacial  
 alluvial terrace  
 reveals its secrets  
 thanks to Snoevarr



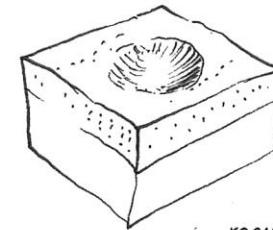
September 9, 1927  
 The glacier suddenly calves,  
 releasing both enormous blocks  
 of ice and a large quantity of water.  
 Like ephemeral icebergs, the ice is  
 scattered across the river bed.



The blocks come  
 to a standstill when  
 the waves calm



Alluvium buries  
 them before  
 they melt,



giving rise  
 to strange  
 regular depressions



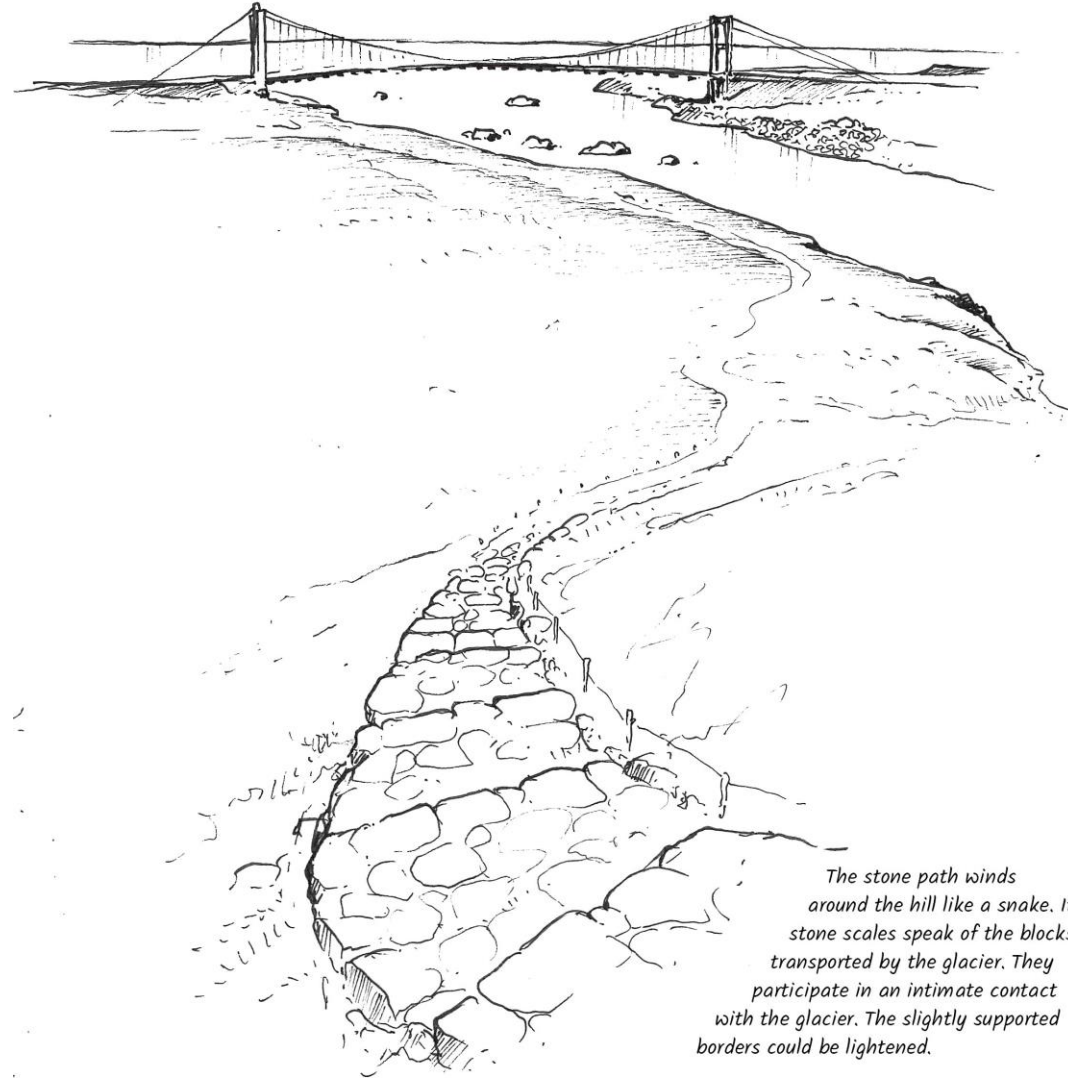
The beautiful stone staircase and pathway were built by volunteers, under the supervision of the Environment Agency and the National Park. A very good example of a sober construction, using local materials.





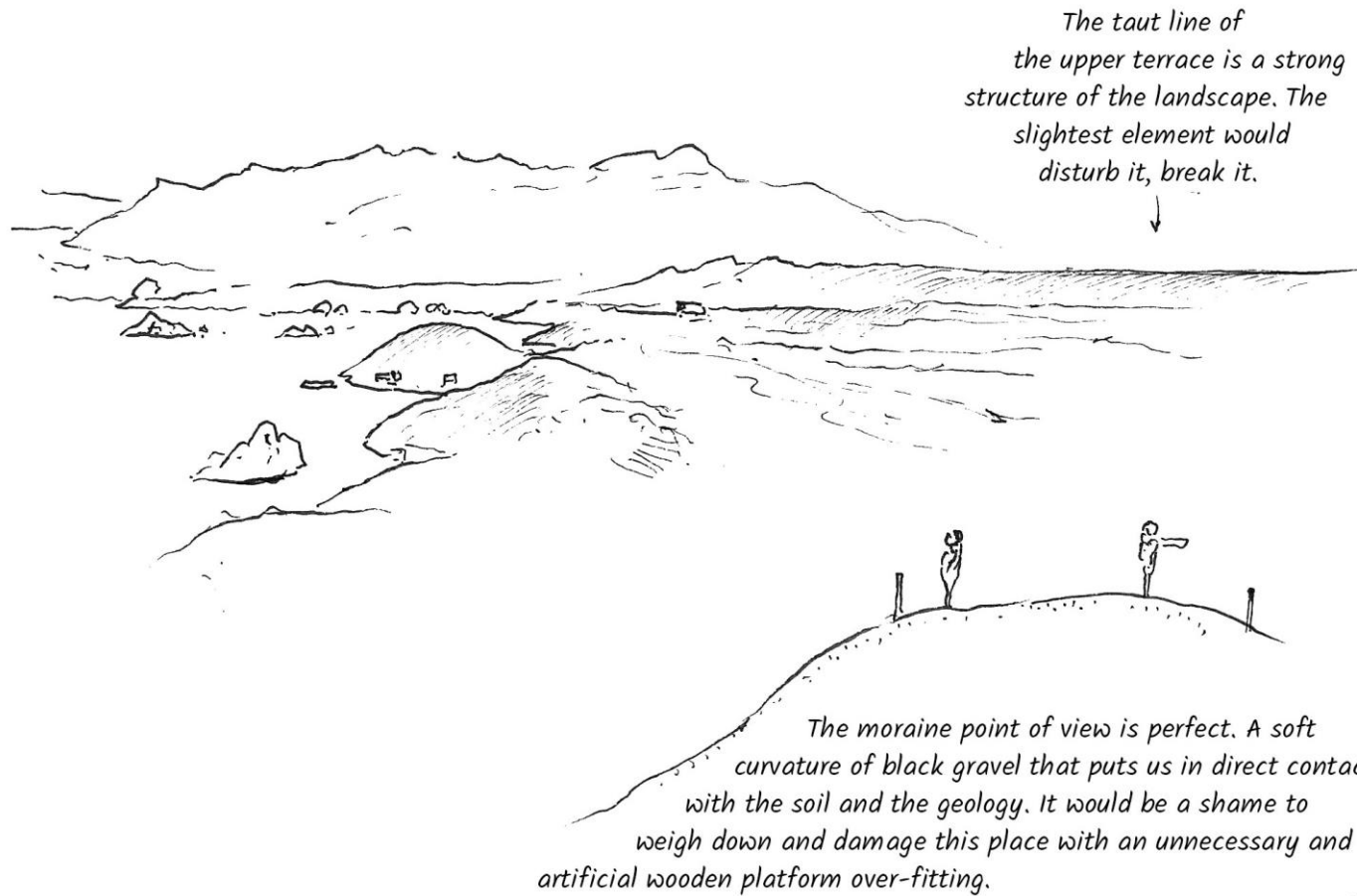
A suggestion to lighten the work. Every detail counts.

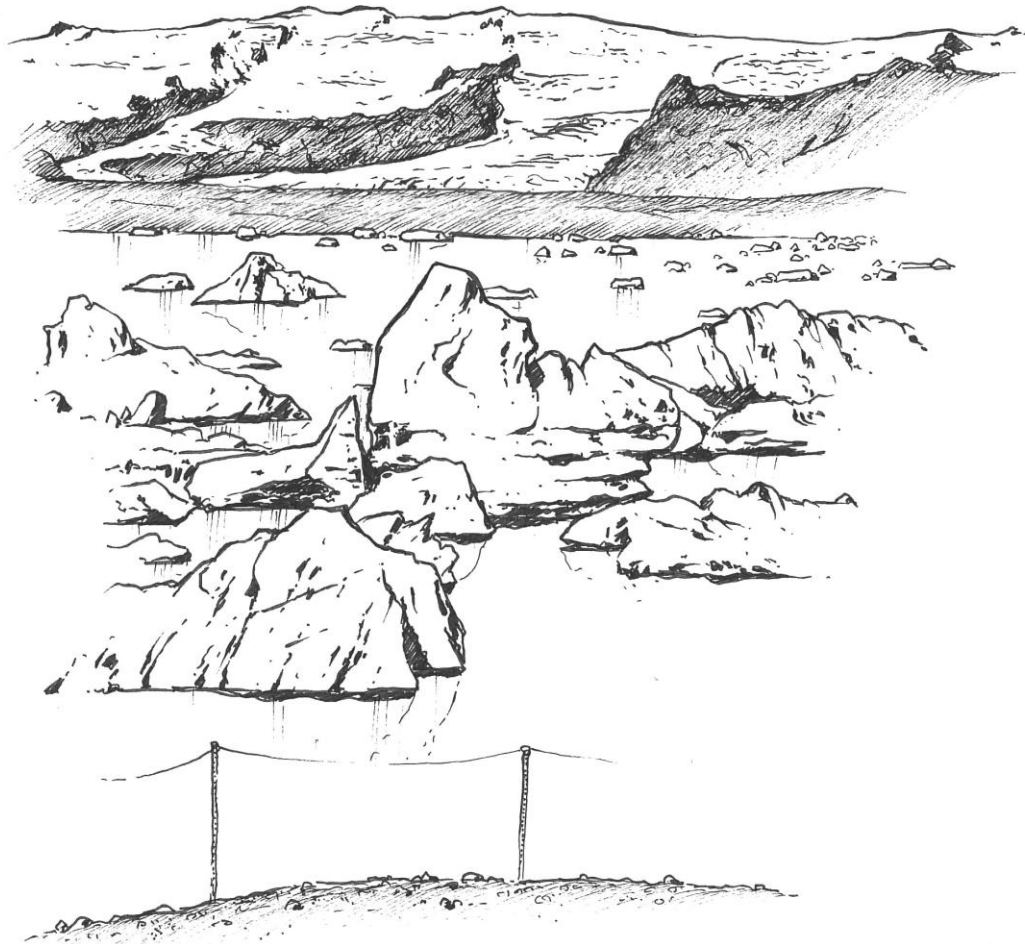
September 7, 2021  
Jökulsárlón



*The stone path winds around the hill like a snake. Its stone scales speak of the blocks transported by the glacier. They participate in an intimate contact with the glacier. The slightly supported borders could be lightened.*



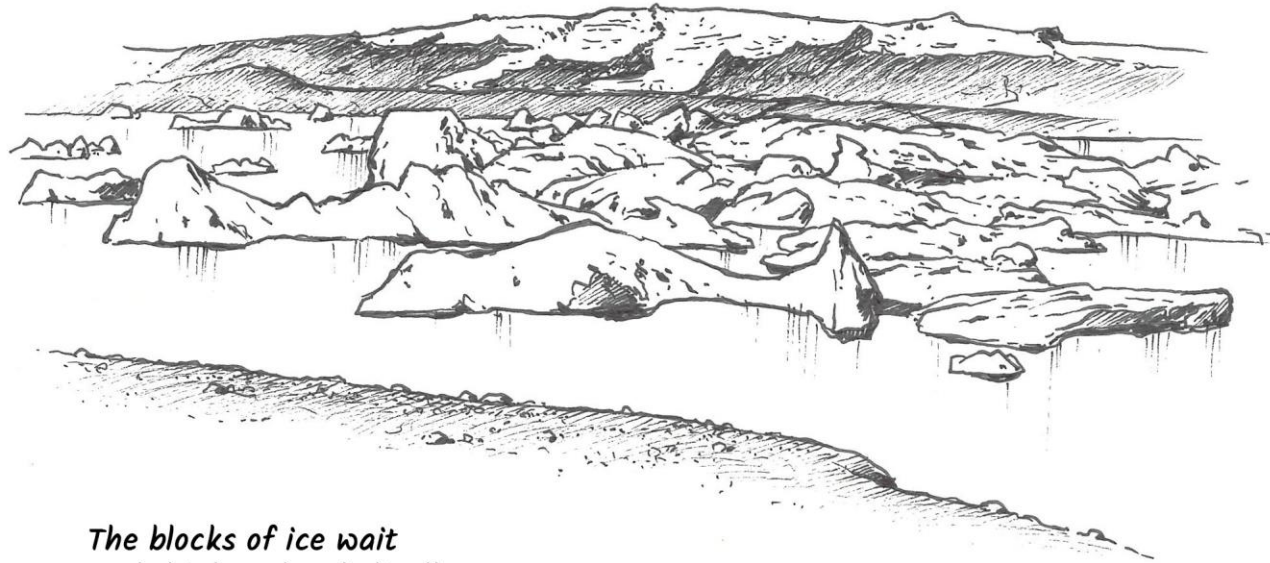




*The contemplation of this extraordinary landscape  
puts everyone in a state of calm, of floating  
concentration, of sensitive attention.*

*You see, Varda's ultimate goal :  
To give happiness to those who come to soak up the landscapes of Iceland.*

Jökulsárlón



*The blocks of ice wait  
and think melancholically  
of their impending end  
and the sea horizons.  
Sometimes one of them  
turns in anger against  
the men whose inconsistency  
will put an end to their  
mother glacier, the spirit of Iceland.*



In the lobby of Fosshotel Glacier Lagoon: Jokulsarlon inspires artists.





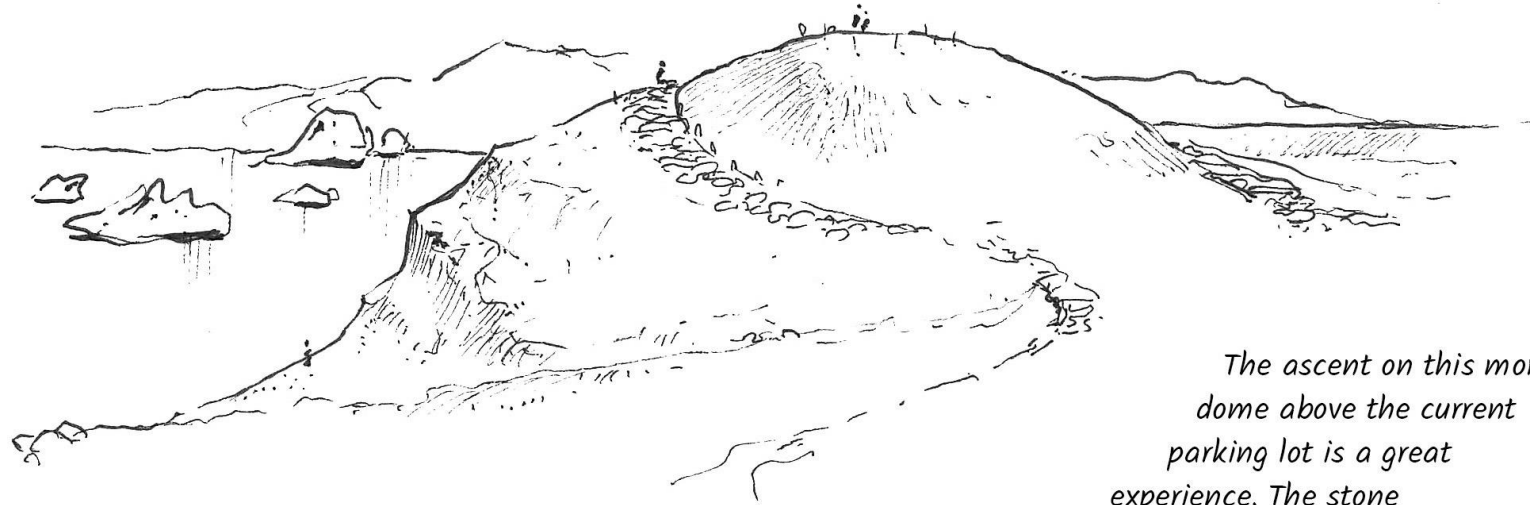
View from the lagoon: On the ridges, all the elements stand out strongly on the horizon. On the ridges, or on the top of the alluvial terraces, all the elements stand out strongly on the horizon. This should be borne in mind when choosing the location of the future car park and visitor centre.





This plastic will inevitably end up in water and soil. The ecological impact of developments must be taken into account.

September 6, 2021



*The ascent on this moraine  
dome above the current  
parking lot is a great  
experience. The stone  
staircase gently embraces  
the round globe like a breast.  
The path on the lake side  
requires the same attention.  
Plastic has to be avoided*

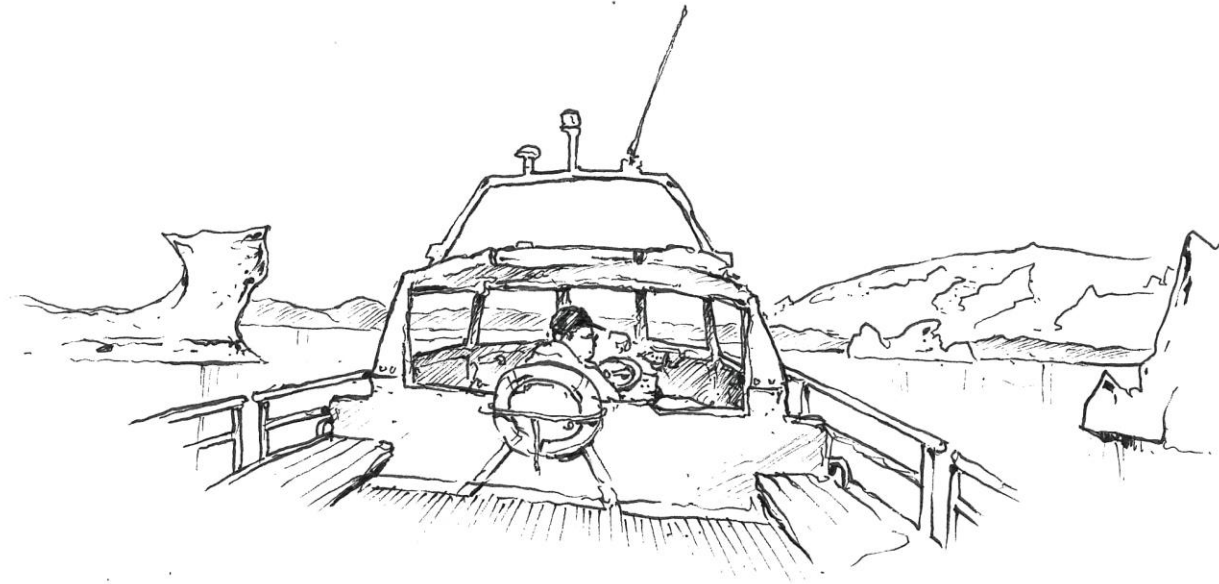






September 7, 2021  
Jokulsarlon

The boat ride  
is an other  
lagoon experience.  
We approach  
the ice giants  
who hide most  
of their bodies  
underwater.



Without slowing  
down, the boat rolls  
then floats in the lagoon



Complicity of  
the mustaches

A seal  
observes us



Cars and buses  
are extremely visible.  
Rear parking  
is necessary.



Seagulls line up on Icebergs  
like visitors on the moraine.

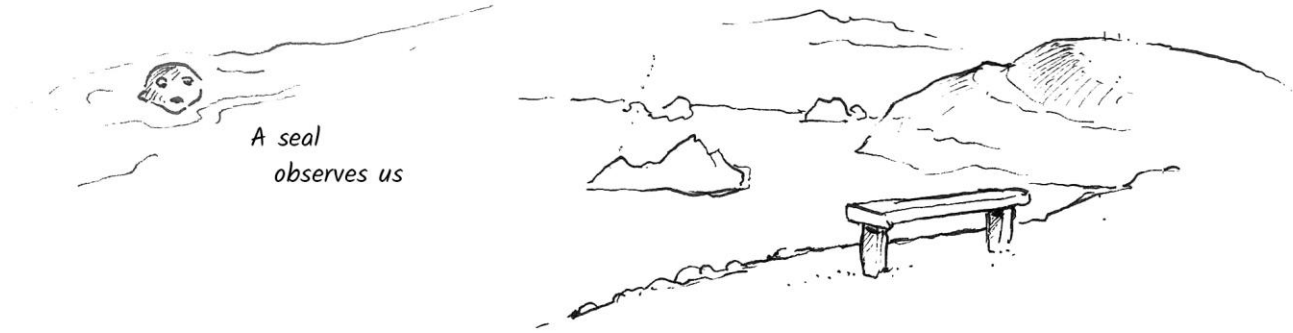








September 7, 2021  
Jökulsàrlòn

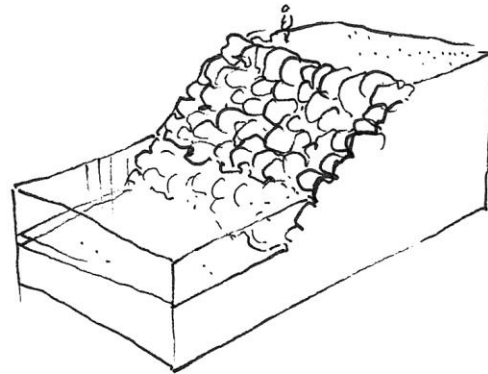
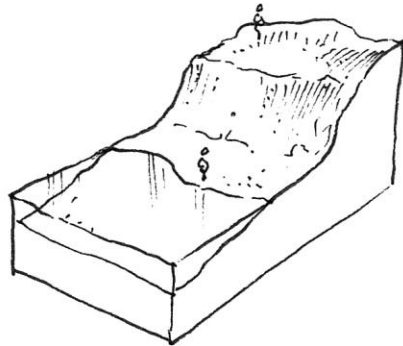


A seal  
observes us

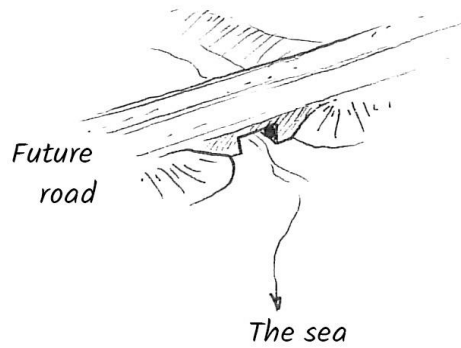
"the visitor's eye is  
full of wisdom"  
Saying Icelandic



Strange little benches remain  
discreet. Their material,  
wood, remains out of step  
into places without wood or forest

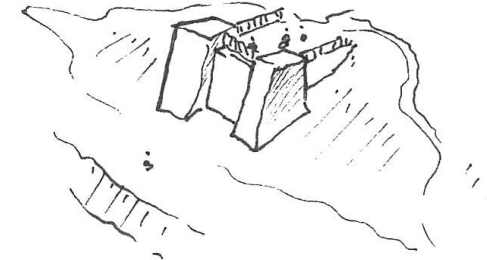


Contact with the  
lake, above the  
riprap is distant,  
rough, contrived.

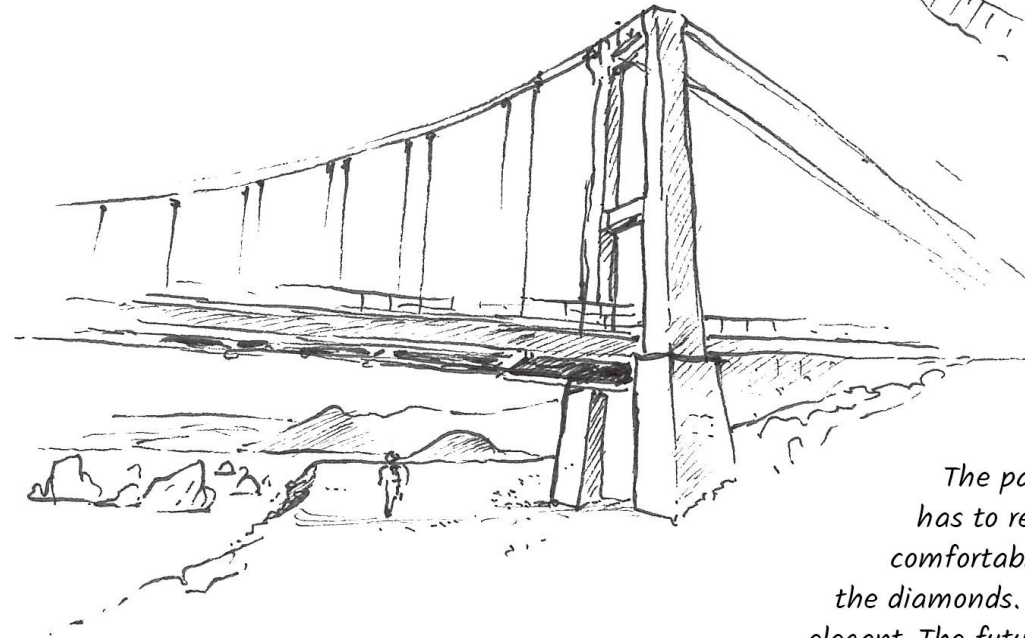


The design of the pedestrian crossing under the bridge will be very important. It should be large, bright, pleasant.

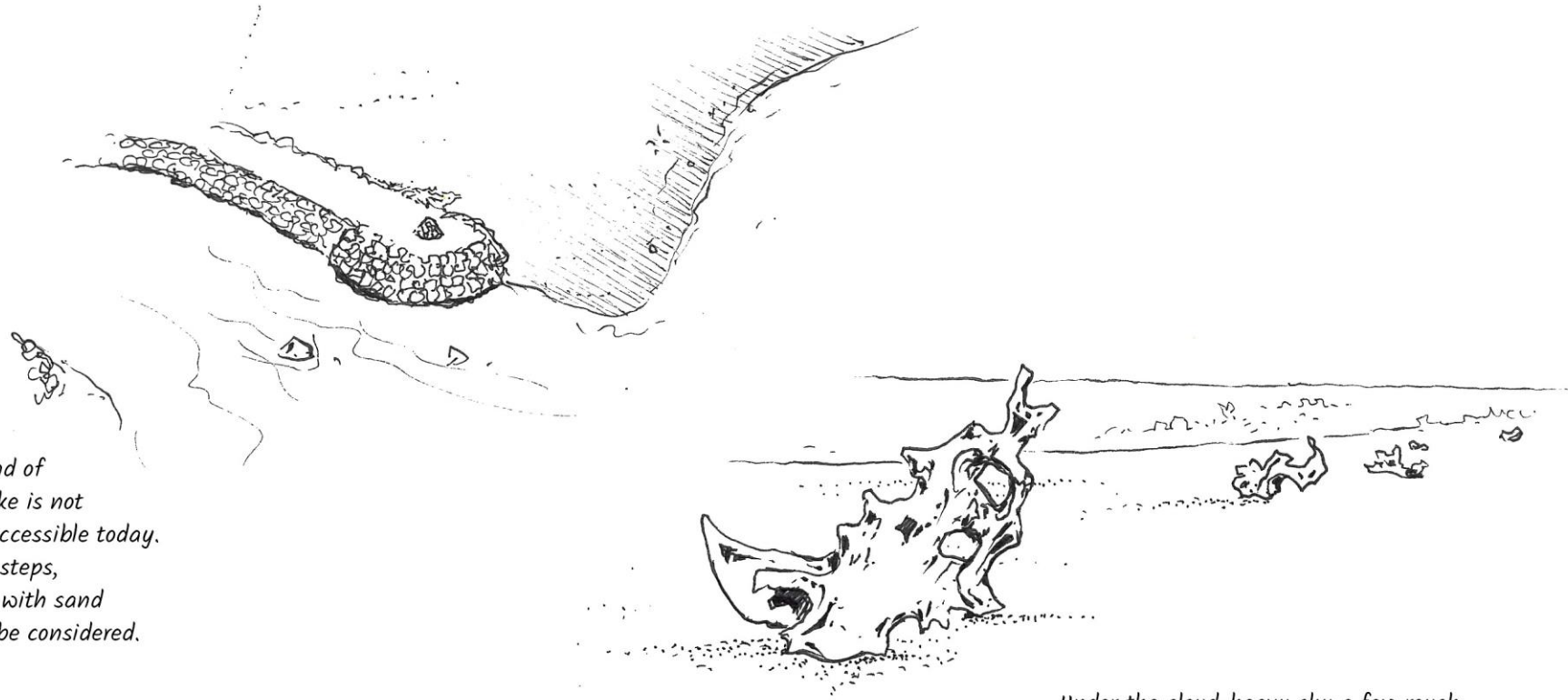
September 7, 2021  
Jökulsárlön



The old abutments can become a place of interpretation expressing the withdrawal of the installations in front of the rising waters.

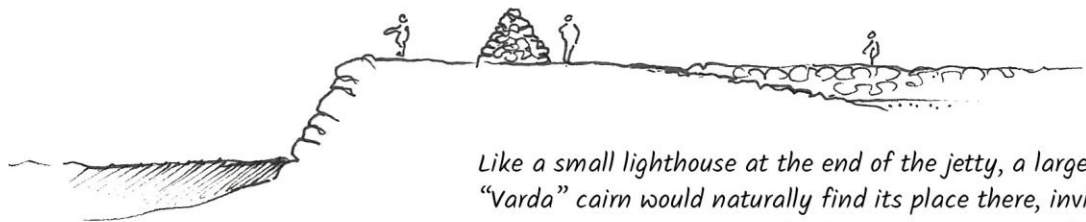


The passage under the bridge has to remain wide and comfortable to reach the beach of the diamonds. The infrastructure is elegant. The future structure should be inspired by these qualities and take into account the aspect of the pedestrian path that will pass underneath.



*The end of  
the dike is not  
very accessible today.  
Stone steps,  
filling with sand  
could be considered.*

*Under the cloud-heavy sky a few rough  
and icy diamonds sparkle.  
Tomorrow will be another landscape.*



*Like a small lighthouse at the end of the jetty, a large  
“Varda” cairn would naturally find its place there, inviting  
visitors to stand out from the diamonds to gaze at the sea  
and the glaciers.*





The fascination for diamonds. All like children.

8 September, 2021  
Jökulsárlön

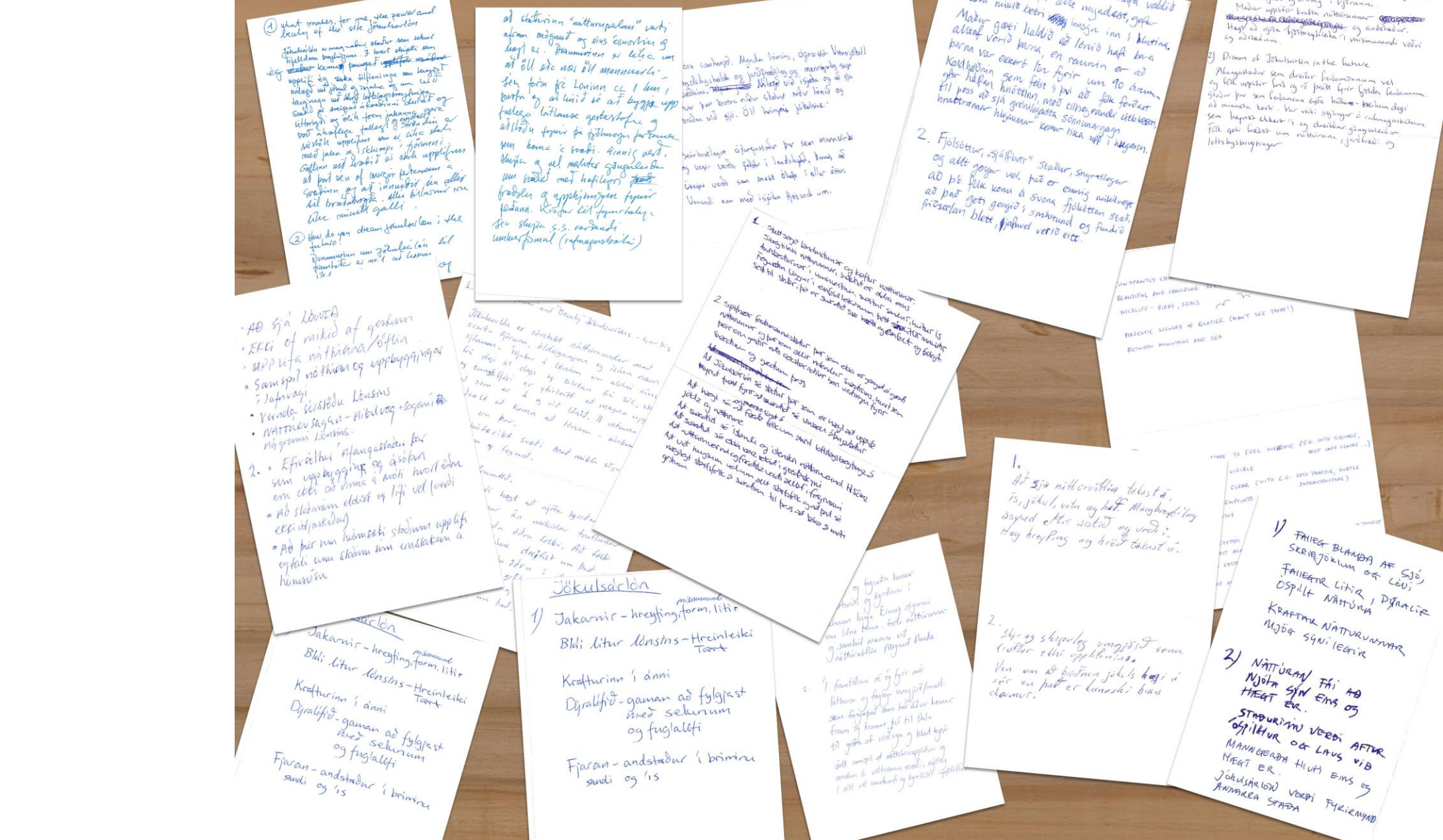


*The beach of diamonds has  
been filled with an ephemeral treasure.  
Each block of ice has its own personality, texture,  
shine, mass and shape. The black background of  
the beach cuts them out in an unreal way.*



Writing workshop. Express in writing your emotions towards the site:  
What, for you, makes the power and beauty of the site of Jokulsarlon?  
How do you dream Jokulsarlon to be in the future?





The surprise of sharing emotions and dreams: they are so similar among the participants!

*Principles for the  
landscape intentions  
scheme of Jökulsárlón*

*1 - Spread out the public without fixation point  
to promote a calm and solitary perception*

*2 - Make the installations (buildings, parking,  
etc.) discrete from the paths, the water, the  
road*

*3 - Respect the traces of the old glacial flows and rely on  
these natural structures for the design of the installations*

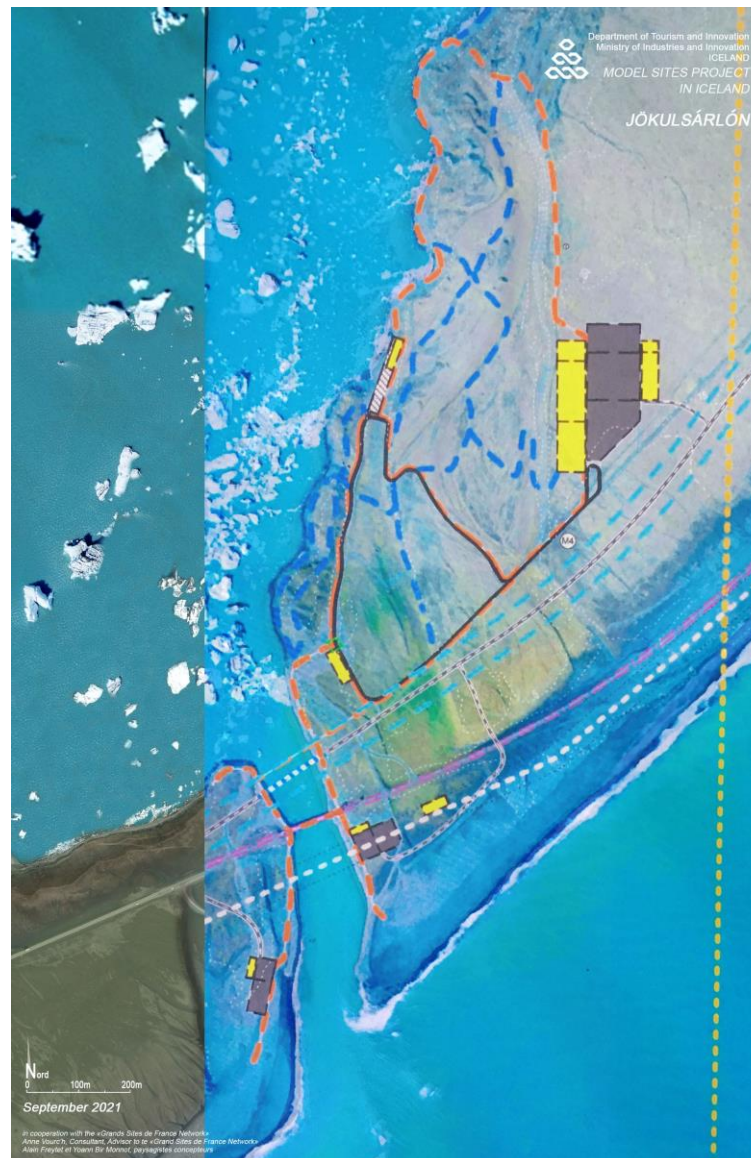
*4 - Promote the discovery on foot and not by bus even  
electric, and offer loops of different lengths*

*5 - Concentrate interpretation and information on the reception  
center and on a few singular places (end of the dike, abutment of  
the bridge, etc.)*

Five key points for the further "Landscape Intention Scheme" in Jokulsarlon, based on the writings of participants in the workshop.





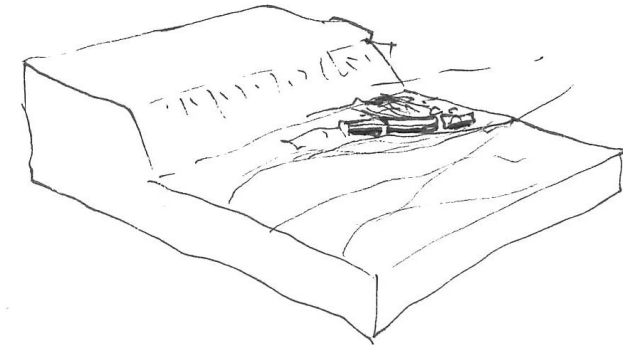
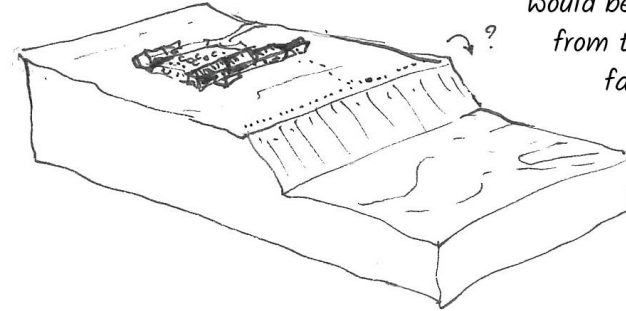


Present Master Plan: the implantation of the parking, visitor center and facilities is planned in the high terrace. They will be very visible. And their distance from the lagoon will make it systematic to travel by a shuttle, and will necessitate the creation of additional facilities (bus stop, shelter, toilets...) at the edge of the lagoon.

*In Iceland traditional buildings are built at the foot of cliffs.*

*An example to ponder for the Jökulsárlón development project*

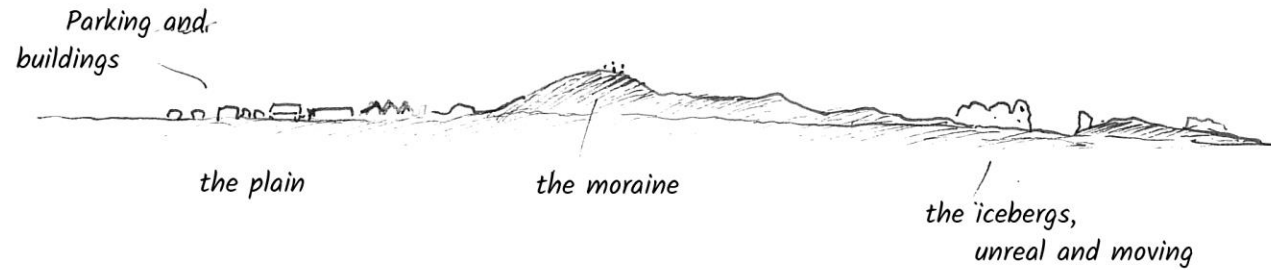
*The establishment on the upper terrace would be very visible from the road, from the lake, little sheltered, too far from the lake, forcing a large part of visitors to take the bus*



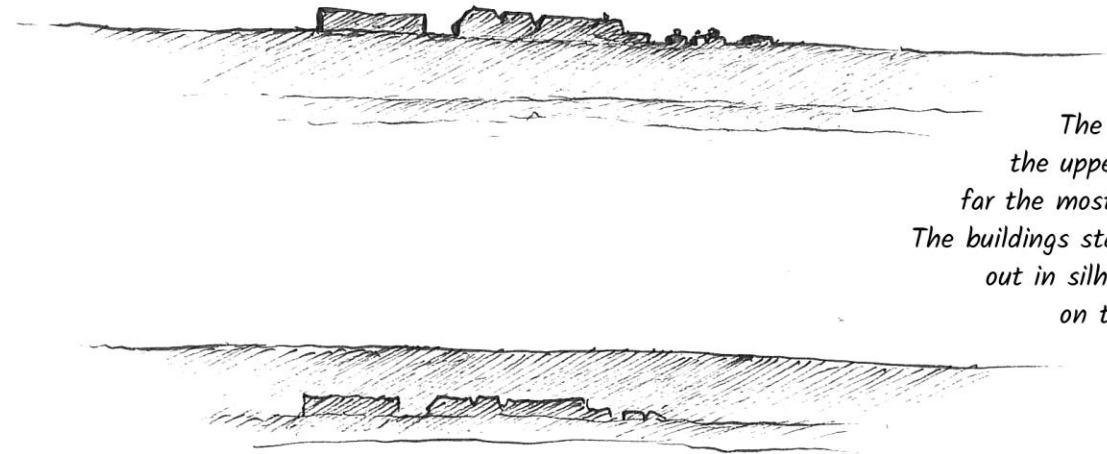
A suggested layout on the middle terrace dated 1894, inspired by Icelandic cliffside houses. With a much lower impact, the landscape insertion is much better.

5 September, 2021  
Jökulsárlön

Today, the perception  
from the terrace.



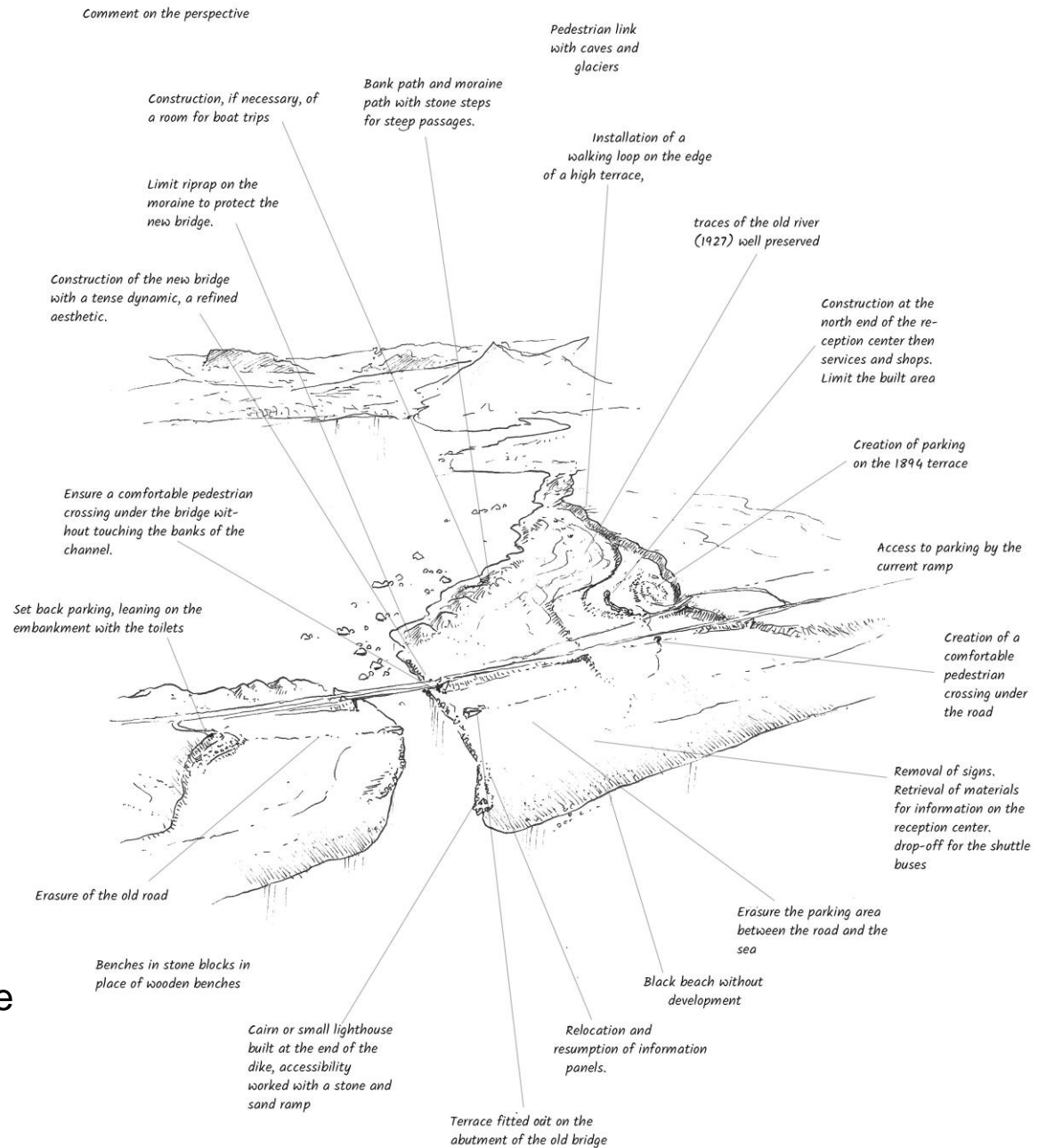
Project state



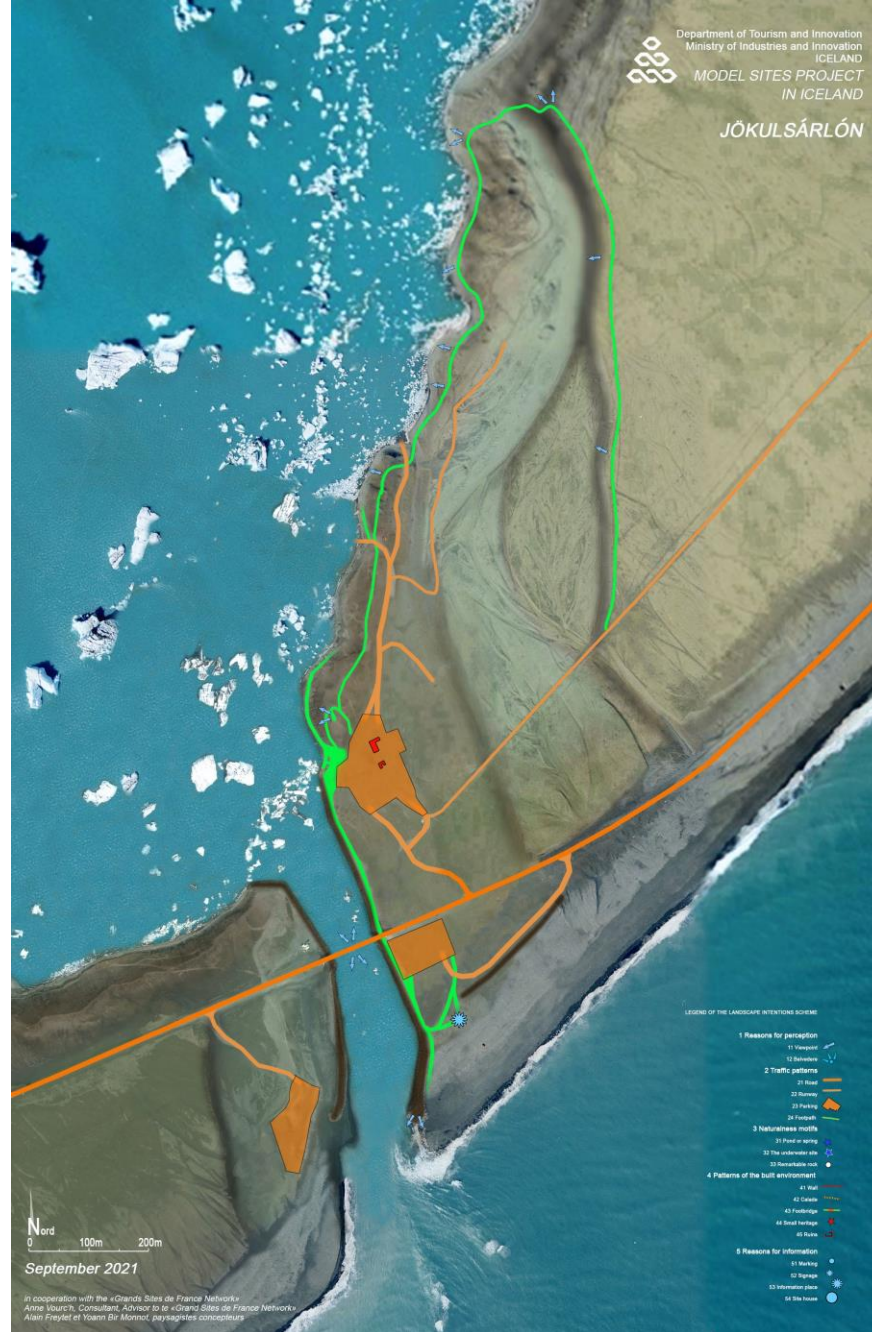
The solution of  
the upper terrace is by  
far the most impactful.  
The buildings stand  
out in silhouette  
on the stretched  
horizon line.

The establishment on the old  
intermediate alluvial terrace is more  
discreet. The buildings and the parking lot  
lean against the embankment and their colors  
blend into the landscape.





The most important intentions for the development of Jokulsarlon, in the same drawing



As today, 2021



The legends of the Landscape Intention Scheme





## New road n°1 and bridge as planned

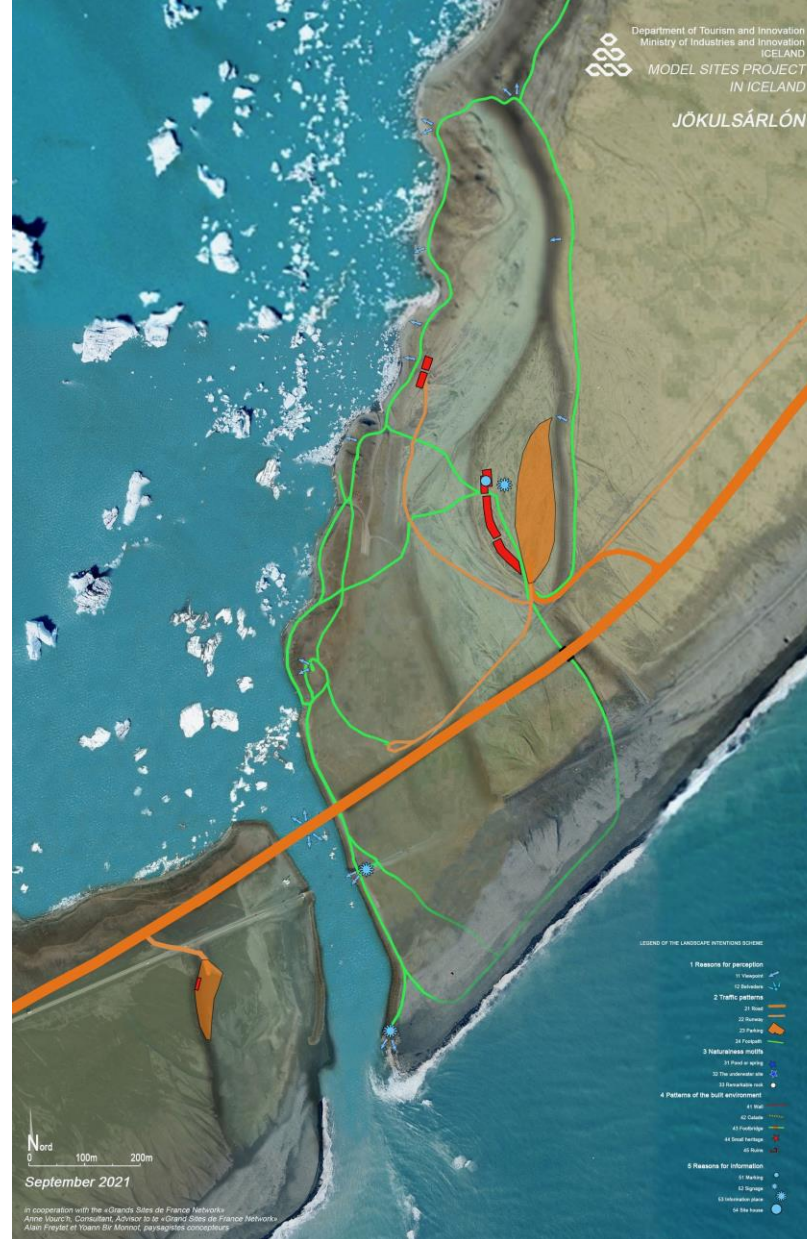


Proposal: implantation of the parking in a lower terrace. Less visible from the lagoon and from road 1, and making it possible to discover the site by walking for the great majority of the visitors.



Proposal: implantation of all facilities in a lower terrace. Less visible from the lagoon and from road 1, and making it possible to discover the site by walking for the great majority of the visitors.





Proposal, with pedestrian trails: a site to be discovered by walking, as the shuttle for disabled people does not cross the site. What a great experience for the visitors!

7 septembre 2021  
Jökulsárlón  
I have a dream

