



Hraunið

- Lava hotel in Iceland

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Summary

Hotels come in all shapes and sizes. Some are large while others are small. Some are expensive while others are cheap. Some are nice while others simply are not. When designing a hotel there are many things that have to be taken into consideration. The location, (where is it to be built and why that location), the user group (who will stay there and what are their preferences), the size (how many guests should it house) and many other aspects.

Many hotels in Iceland, are not designed with their immediate surroundings in mind. But designing a hotel that is to fit its surroundings within the delicate nature of Iceland must be done with considerable care and consideration to nature. Placing a large building in the landscape where a building does in a way not belong is a difficult task. Therefore the design has to be done in a way that man can enjoy the location and the stunning and powerful nature of the area without destroying the very thing that is to be the attraction.

The HRAUNID lava hotel is located in Eldhraun lavafield on the south coast of Iceland. The lavafield is one of the most easily accessible lavafields in Iceland and known for its size and natural beauty. This is a perfect location for a theme based hotel concentrating on lava. Since lava is a material or form of rock that many people have never been in close contact with this could and hopefully will be a new way to attract more tourists to Iceland and thereby increase the inflow of foreign currency.

The userprofile for HRAUNID lava hotel consists of people willing to travel in comfort and seeking new ways to experience nature. It will be a hotel of high standard and be priced according to that.

The nature in Eldhraun is unique. The low growing vegetation, with the green moss being the most dominant, and different types of birds and small mammals living in the area, all have to survive the harsh conditions the lavafield has to offer. But the stunning beauty of the lava is ever changing, depending on the weather, daylight and seasons, constantly bringing new expressions and feelings for the hotel guests to experience and enjoy.

Other hotels and guesthouses in the area are targeting a different user-group. They operate at a lower standard with smaller rooms and are most often used as a place to stay one night on the journey through the area. The connection to their location and Iceland are limited.

The south coast of Iceland has many of Iceland's most popular pearls and tourist locations. Therefore this location is perfect for those wanting to explore this part of Iceland while staying in the same place for more than one night.

The building will in a way merge into the lavafield, making it almost invisible and not obstructing the view over the unspoiled nature. Being partly buried in the lava also makes the connection between the guests and this alien material stronger and closer. The lava is brought into the hotel in many places both physically and also by the large reflecting windows on some of the hotel's facades. They reflect the natural surroundings adding to the merging aspect between the two, the manmade and the natural.

Many design proposals come to life during the design phase of a building such as HRAUNID lava hotel. In order to find the best one they all have to be evaluated and tested. And finally the one considered best is taken to be detailed further. The concept idea The Flow acts on two things: Taking the hotel guests on a journey that imitates the journey of the flowing lava from the eruption and into this area and also to bring the guest as close to this alien material, lava, and the nature in the area, as possible.

The building is low and the materials kept very simple. Using mostly untreated concrete the building merges with its environment but also acts as land art. The grey and smooth concrete walls creating a great contrast with the dark, rugged and moss covered lava. The expression on the outside is very subtle but the feeling and expression of the building is experienced on the inside.

Hopefully the HRAUNID lava hotel will be an attraction for tourists from all over the world that want to experience staying in the hotel and supply them with an experience not to be forgotten. But also show the Icelandic tourist industry and authorities that new and rather simple ways can be implemented to attract more tourists and support the Icelandic economy.

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Preface

This project is conducted in the fourth semester of the Masters program in Architecture at the Institute of Architecture and Design, Aalborg University, during the period from 3rd of February to 3rd of June 2009. The theme of the project is lava experience.

The project contains the design of a hotel, located within the fragile nature of the Icelandic landscape. A hotel that offers its guests accommodation on a high standard. In cooperation with the dramatic Icelandic nature, it offers an accommodation with a different experience. This will not be a low budget place to stay overnight on a fast journey through the area but a place to stay for more than one night for the experience. There will be an interaction between the manmade and nature, there will be a harmony between the architecture and its surroundings.

The lava hotel will offer a comfortable accommodation on a high standard with the emphasis on the peaceful experience of the dramatic lava that is present both within and around the hotel.

The location will offer the guests easy access to many of the most sought after pearls of the Icelandic landscape along with small villages and other recreation. Numerous waterfalls, icecaps and glaciers, glacier rivers, glacier lagoons, places to do short or long hikes, climbing, snow scooter rides, golf courses, salmon fishing rivers, endless black beaches, birdcliffs and the roads leading into the highlands close by. All this makes the Eldhraun lava an optimal location for the hotel.

In this report I will describe how I believe this can be done, describe the reasons for the choice of the location and point out the reasons and arguments for building such a hotel in such a location. Many of the arguments I will use come from my own experience working as a guide, taking foreign visitors around Iceland hiking, driving in a bus or superjeeps, on snow scooters, in kayaks, river rafting, rock- and iceclimbing, skiing or in almost any way possible.

During my 15 years of guiding I have heard hundreds of different opinions and viewpoints of the Icelandic nature and what it is that newcomers in Iceland like to do, see or experience. I will use these opinions and comments as arguments in the project. Other arguments can be of a more general and perhaps somewhat political nature. For instance the lack of initiative the Icelandic authorities are showing when it comes to finding new and different ways to make use of the Icelandic nature...in a positive way!

This project could also act as a proposal for a number of themebased hotels located here and there in the variable Icelandic nature. Black sands Hotel, Glacier Hotel, River Hotel, Mountain Hotel, Desert Hotel. All these things are parts of the landscape and all of them offer unused opportunities.

This report is divided into 6 chapters, taking the reader through the procedure, from the beginning (the idea) to the end (the final proposal). This procedure will be described as being linear. During the design phase in chapters 2-4, it is however, an iterative procedure where different ideas and tests are made and conducted in order to find the optimal result.

The technical part of the studies at AAU will be used in the use of natural daylight for lighting and aesthetical purposes in individual parts of the building. This is done in chapter 4. The computer program RELUX Light simulator will be implemented into this part of the project to test the design proposals. The construction and ventilation principles will also be included in separate chapters explaining the overall concepts but no calculations are made in these chapters.

In chapter 5, Presentation, the final design of the building is presented with renderings and sections of the final design proposal.

The final conclusion is presented in chapter 6, Outro.

1 program



Project intro

Wild, harsh and unspoiled nature, clean air, ice and snow, variety and remoteness. These are just a few of the words that foreign visitors use to describe Iceland. Many of the foreigners visiting Iceland each year do so to experience some or all these things in one way or another. It can be very interesting to listen to the different perceptions people have on the things they see, depending on where they come from and their usual surroundings and environment. Many of the things that foreign visitors most often notice and comment on are things that people living in Iceland hardly notice or often do not notice at all. The little things that Icelanders have grown up having all around and have grown accustomed to. Small streams of water running down a green hillside, spongy and soft moss, the crispness of the air when you breathe, the unique sunlight during a mid summer night and standing in a remote place where you feel like you are completely alone in the world.

These little things are often not taken into consideration in the larger scheme of things. The tourist industry in Iceland focuses on the larger and more grand things that Icelanders themselves like and need to do in order to experience nature. They often forget to look at things through the eyes of the visitor. The tourist industry has also been focusing on the same or similar things over and over again for years. Too many companies and individuals are doing too little about trying something new and different. They are thinking inside the box. Iceland is different and should be treated as such. One of the most simple things the Icelandic tourist industry can do in order to implement new ideas is to listen to what its clients, the tourists, have to say. Things do not always have to be huge or extreme to catch the eye or the heart of the newcomer and that creates opportunities that should be used.



left: Midnight sun. (photo B. Hauksson)
above: Kjölur highlands. (photo VHS)
right: Sprengisandur highlands. (photo VHS)



above:
 above right:
 below left

Dimmugljúfur before. (photo VHS)
 A drowned deer. (photo: O. Ragnarsson)
 Dimmugljúfur after. (photo G. Bridde)

In the recent years Iceland has been hit by a wave of industrialization. In order to boost the economy the government has in a way opened a hunting season on the unspoiled Icelandic highlands by allowing damming constructions on a huge scale to take place. A good (or rather a very BAD) example of this is the Karahnjúkar powerplant. These dams/hydrolic powerplants generate electricity that is then used in aluminium plants that are located or being built in many areas on the Icelandic coast. It has been argued by organisations like Saving Iceland that some of these aluminium plants are owned by corrupt foreign companies that have exploited financially unstable nations and their resources in order to increase their own growth, regardless of the consequences. At least one of them is now amongst the largest suppliers of aluminium for the production of ammunition in the USA. (http://www.alcoa.com/global/en/news/whats_new/2007/jltv_program.asp) (<http://savingiceland.puscii.nl/?tag=alcoa&language=is>)

These dams and the reservoirs they create have destroyed hundreds of km² of unspoiled land, destroying the nesting areas for thousands of gees and killing other birds and animals along with the delicate vegetation in the areas. No place is safe, not even protected areas and national parks. For many this way of treating nature is not in any way acceptable. As mentioned before the argument for doing this is the economy. Pumping international currency into the Icelandic economical system for a short term profit.

One of the strongest arguments used against this development is that it should be possible to use this unique and unspoiled nature in a more positive way to lure in a bigger number of tourists to Iceland every year. That would create a larger income for the tourist industry and the economical system in general as well as creating a positive image for Iceland as being truly "green". Numerous people, organisations, political parties ect. have spoken very highly about this as beeing the "right way" to promote Iceland and increase the annual inflow of foreign currency instead of the industrial mega companies that pollute and consume land and energy.

But sadly no one has said how this can be done! There is an incredible lack of new ideas, and again not many people seem to be thinking outside the box! And while authorities see the distruction of nature, in order to sell foreign polluting aluminum production companies unbelievably cheap energy on a monumental scale, as a quick and easy way to boost the Icelandic economy, very limited or no effort or funds are being put into the investigation of the prospects and new possibilities for the tourist industry.



Man and nature can coexist. During the relatively short span of time man has inhabited this planet he has slowly become more and more greedy, creating false needs for unimportant things, always wanting and needing more and more. As the character Mr. Smith in the American science fiction movie *The Matrix* so cleverly put it: "Man is like a plague. Overtaking areas and consuming everything that is there until there is nothing left, then moving to another area to do the same".

But this does not have to be so. By changing our way of thinking, just a little bit, and thinking about what effect our actions have on a long term basis, the interaction between man and nature can become profitable for both.

This project will act as a proposal for a new kind of accommodation in Iceland. It will also act as a proposal for a new way to attract tourists to Iceland. By listening to what visitors have to say, what they want to experience, looking for new ideas to make use of what Iceland has to offer and working with nature instead of destroying it, the profit on a long term basis could be significantly greater than what the short term, destructive way of thinking is now generating. Not only in terms of the economy and not only for Iceland but also in terms of protecting the few unspoiled areas left on this planet. Iceland could make a name for itself as being a nation that puts the best interests of man and nature in the front.

The Icehotel in northern Sweden is an excellent example of this. Tourists travel half way across the globe in planes, trains and automobiles to spend one or two nights in this unique hotel. In addition to what they are paying for staying in the hotel, this brings a large amount of currency to endless other businesses that the tourist uses on his way to the hotel. It should be possible to do a similar thing with other natural phenomena like lava.

This project will not be the solution for all the problems we are facing but a step in the right direction. An eye opener to the fact that it is time to start thinking outside the box and not put all the eggs in the same basket!

Located within Eldhraun lavafield on the south coast of Iceland, the lava hotel will not only supply the guests with a place to stay overnight but help them experience the presence of nature in a different and comfortable way.



The Kárahnjúkar dam and the reservoir it creates is a construction on a monumental scale. Badly placed in the delicate highlands.
(photo Ó. Ragnarsson)



Inspirational projects.

Man and nature can (and must) coexist. People have many different opinions and that can cause problems. What one thinks is right is wrong from another person's point of view. There are always pros and cons. Many think that we (man) should use nature to our advantage no matter what the consequences are. These are the people that often only think about short term income or quick growth and approve large scale constructions like the previously mentioned Kárahnjúkar powerplant. Others think that we should use it but do it in a way that does not destroy delicate areas, in other words; use it but not abuse it. Then there are those who think everything should simply be left untouched.

Following are a few examples of manmade structures and buildings that in one way or another act as an inspiration for this project. They have been built in nature with a minimum impact on the environment. Yet, they serve their purpose of allowing people access to delicate areas and enhance the visitor's experience of the spot.



The Blue Lagoon, Iceland

The Blue Lagoon is built in a lava field. The buildings are hidden from view in the rugged lava. The approach to the building is via a narrow manmade canyon. The lava rock plays a big part in the interior as well as the surroundings. The buildings fit well into the surroundings. The view from the building overlooking the lavafield is very inspiring.



From the Blue Lagoon. (photos VHS)

Icehotel, Sweden

“Ten thousand years ago, glaciers carved a riverbed and the Torne River was born. Since then, the crystal-clear, pure water of the Torne River has flowed freely along its 600-kilometer path through Lapland out to the sea in the southeast.

The entire ICEHOTEL is on loan from the mighty Torne River and is a place where time stands still. When the spring comes and then finally the summer, the entire creation will once again become part of the rushing rapids coursing toward the sea.” <http://www.icehotel.com>

“Borrowing” from the landscape is a poetic way to describe the coexistence between the manmade and nature. In the Icehotel the guest is offered a unique way to experience ice as a natural material. For many ice is an alien material much like lava is for others.

Each year thousands of tourists travel to northern Sweden to visit the Icehotel. These trips take a few days and on their way people stay in other hotels, dine in restaurants, buy petrol and spend money in different ways. Then they stay one night in the hotel.



Icehotel (photos www.icehotel.com)



Detour

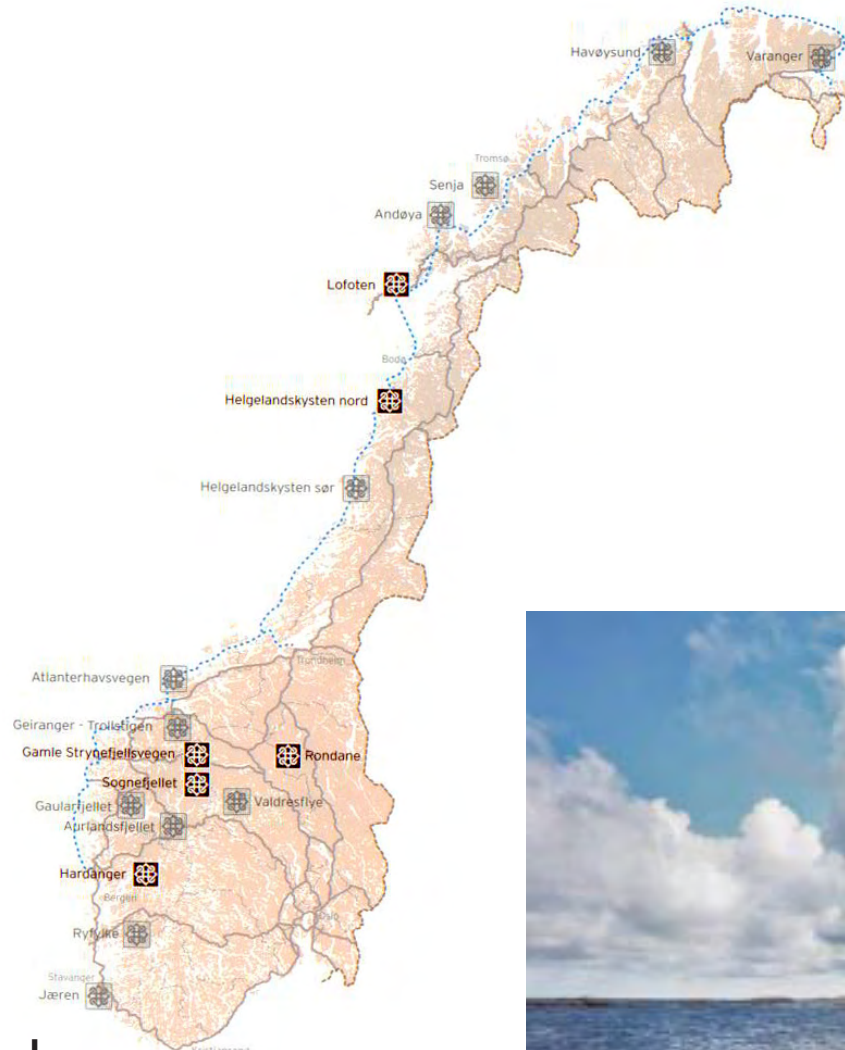
Detour started in 1993 as a collaborative project between the Norwegian Public Roads Administration and the foundation Norsk Form. At the heart of the project lay a wish to integrate contemporary architecture into Norwegian landscapes. With this goal in mind, Norwegian and international architects and designers have over the past decade located 18 suitable tourist routes in Norway, and highlighted them by creating close to 200 innovative and visually appealing viewing platforms, resting points, and picnic areas along the roadsides.

Rather than simply promoting Norway's well known natural attractions, the architects wanted to draw attention to interesting locations along the less trafficked roads, hopefully luring tourists off the beaten path. Like many recent architectural projects in Norway, the dynamic between these constructions and their immediate surroundings was at the forefront of the designers' minds. In an article for Architectural Record, journalist David Sokol describes the project as a "dialogue with nature."

(<http://www.norway.org/culture/architecture/architectural+detour.htm>)



Detour project. (photos Detour catalogue)



Askvågen, Atlanterhavsvegen

Molo, lookout point
Architect: 3 RW - Jakob Rossvik
Landscape architect: Smedsvig
Built in 2005

This small and simple structure is placed on the edge of the huge ocean. A small structure to create a large view. The small vs the large. The rooms in the lava hotel will serve the same purpose as this small platform, overlooking the grand lavafield, creating the feeling of small vs large.



Eggum, Lofoten

Rest area, parking and toilet facilities

Architect: Snohetta AS

Built in 2007

Using the building material available at the building site to create a structure that fits into its surroundings. The local rock in gabion nets creates a dialogue with the old rock structure that is the attraction on the site. Using the local lava rock in the lava hotel's interior and exterior creates a connection between the local and natural vs the alien and manmade.



Detour project. (photos Detour catalogue)

Tungeneset, Senja

Rest area with ocean view

Architect: Code arkitektur - Marte Danbolt

Landscape architect: Aurora Landskap v/Anita Veiseth

Built in 2007

A structure of a random form, creating access to the shore. The structure is clearly visible but the shape and design make it fit its surroundings. Often the fact that the structure does in fact look different from it's surroundings can turn it into land art that enhances the feeling in the location.

Being different does not have to be bad.



Tungeneset, Senja

Detour project. (photos Detour catalogue)



Stegastein, Aurlandsfjellet

Lookout point, toilet facilities

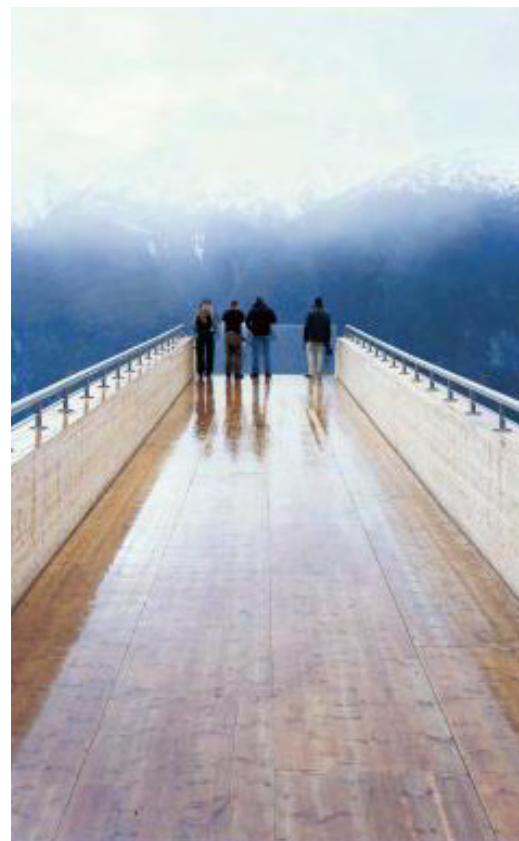
Architect: Todd Saunders / Tommie Wilhelmsen

Built in 2006

When looking at this wooden structure leading to the open void, with a seemingly slippery floor, a sloping edge and only a thin layer of glass separating the observer from infinity, no one is left untouched. The structure enhances the visitors experience of the void he is faced with.



Detour project. (photos Detour catalogue)



Sohlbergplassen, Rondane

Lookout point

Architect: Carl-Viggo Holmebakk

Built in 2005

Here the concrete structure creates a path through the woods leading the visitor from the shaded area between the trees towards the openness and the open view over the lake towards the mountains. From the shaded and enclosed towards the open and wide. The concrete is an alien material but still it serves its purpose and fits its surroundings.



Detour project. (photos Detour catalogue)





Benesse house / The Oval

Benesse House opened in 1992. It was conceived as a coexistence of nature, art and architecture.

The Oval, accomodation, opened in 1995

Architect: Tado Ando

Locartion: Naoshima, Japan

In the Benesse House the view from the building is framed with the concrete elements. The view plays an important role in the design and the experience of the building. Framing the views in the lava hotel can create a play for the observer.

In the Oval an enclosed circular area is created where the only view is directly up, creating a sharp contrast between the manmade structure and the sky.

(<http://www.naoshima-is.co.jp/english/>)



The Oval. (photos from Internet)



Benesse house. (photos <http://www.naoshima-is.co.jp/english/>)

Desert Nomad House (below and right)

Resident

Architect: Rick Joy

Location: Tucson, Arizona, USA

The building consists of three steel boxes, each carefully positioned towards a particular view. Three boxes - Three views. There is an interaction between inside and outside as well as the dialogue between natural and manmade. The windowframes are not visible from the inside of the house, minimising the barrier between the inside and the outside.

Cook House (right below)

Resident

Architect: W.H. Peterson

Location: Tucson, Arizona, USA

The building is partly buried into the sand dune. Its colour and low expression allowing it to blend in with its surroundings.



Desert Nomad House (<http://sublimestimuli.groups.vox.com/>)



Cook house (www.moca-tucson.org)

Marshall House (below)

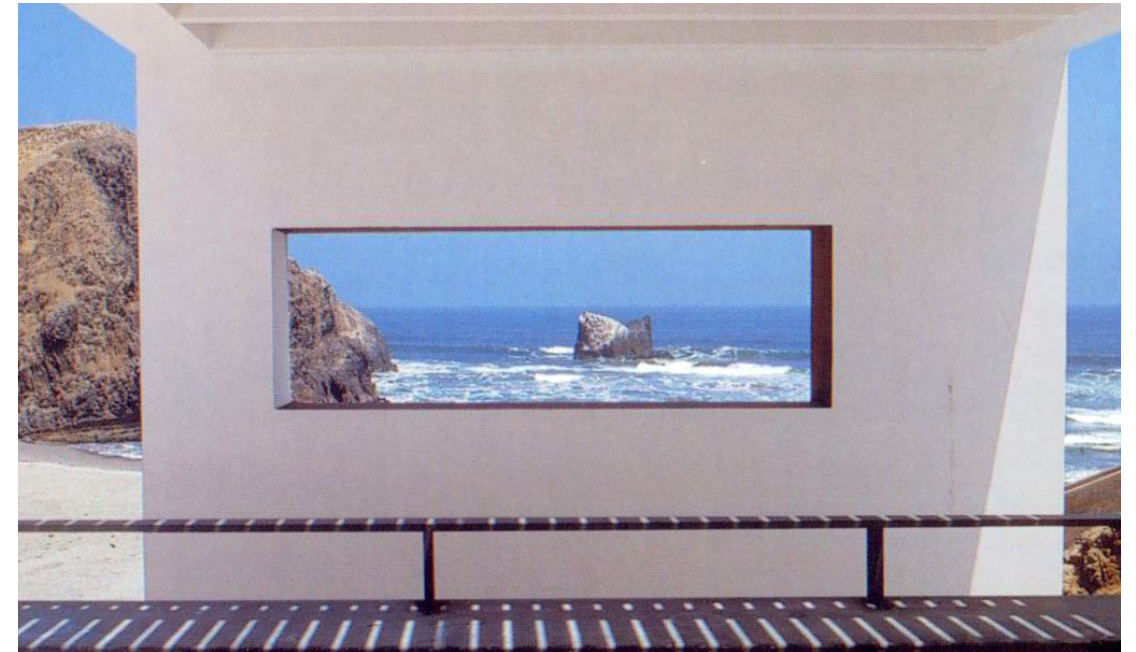
Architect: Denton Corker Marshall

Location: Phillip Island, Australia

The building is buried in the landscape. Only visible from the side facing the sea. The building and three walls create an inverted zone invisible from the outside. The lava hotel is to be mostly hidden from view but still making use of the spectacular views in some directions.



(photos from Internet)



B House (above)

Architect: Barclay & Crousse

Location: Canete, Peru

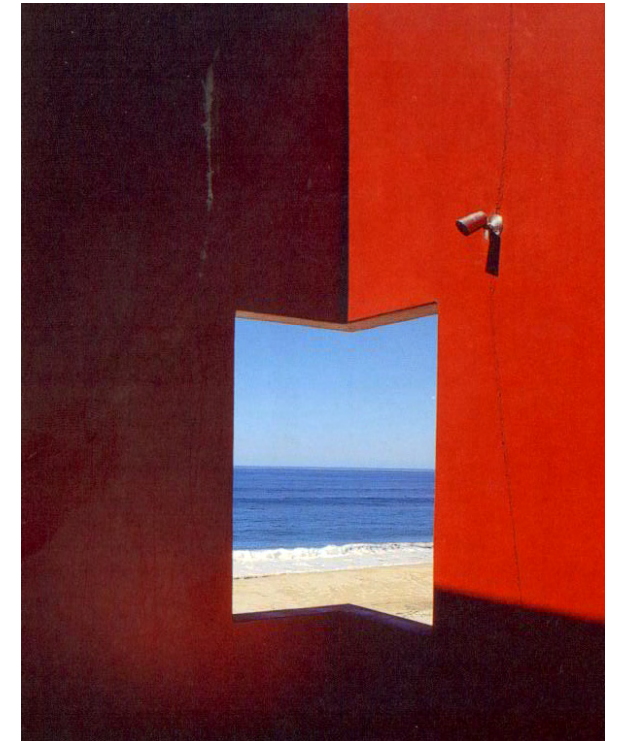
A small fraction of the spectacular view framed with a hole in a wall.

Baja House (Right)

Architect: Leddy Maytum Stacy

Location: Baja California, Mexico

Interesting play with a framed view in a corner.



Conclusion

All these projects deal in one way or another with the interaction between man and nature. In all cases man is building something to help himself to enjoy, admire and experience these different places and the things they have to offer. In some cases these are people's homes where the design calls for an interaction between the indoors and the outdoors. In other cases these are smaller structures built to ease the access to viewpoints where man is made to feel how small he is compared to the scale of nature.

In the lava hotel there will be a mixture of both. They are mixed in the interaction between the inside and the outside when the guest is sitting in his room or other parts of the building overlooking the framed view of the unspoiled lavafield that with scale is difficult to comprehend and could so easily prove fatal to cross.

But this is done in a way that has a limited effect on the surroundings due to the size and shape of the building.

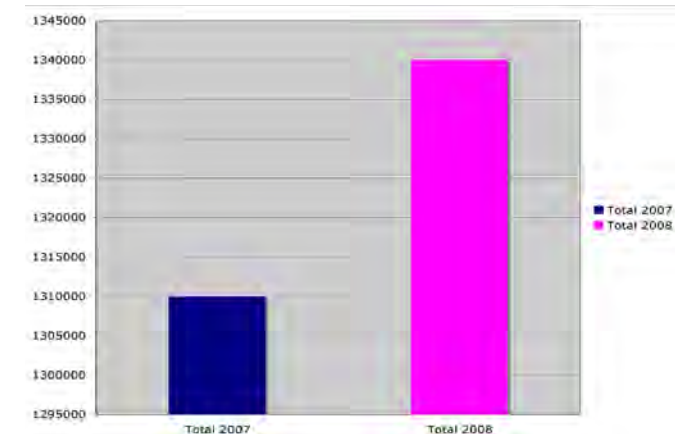
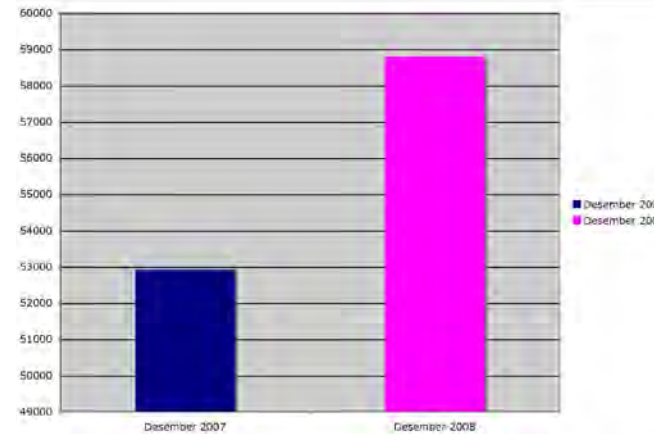
Accommodation in the area

Following is a list of guesthouses and hotels on the SE coast from Vik to Hofn. Many of the guesthouses only stay open during the high season from april to october. Others, usually the larger ones, stay open all year.

- Vik in Myrdal, 60 km vest:	B/B	Beds
Guesthouse Ársalir	16	25
Guesthouse Garðar	4	
Country Hotel Höfðabrekka		124
Hotel Edda	21	
Hotel Lundi	22	20
- Kirkjubæjarklaustur, 40 km east:		
Hotel Klaustur		100
Hotel Laki	62	15
- Öræfi, 100 km east:		
Ferðapjónustan Öræfi	30	
- Höfn í Hornafirðii, 280 km east:		
Guesthouse Ásgarður	68	
Guesthouse Hvammur	50	
Guesthouse Brunnholt	40	
Guesthouse Hafnarnes	10	
Guesthouse Árnes	35	17
Guesthouse Gerði	40	30
Guesthouse Hali	42	
Guesthouse Hrollaugstaðir	60	60
Hotel Edda	31	40

Each year the tourist industry, in cooperation with the Icelandic government, issues the annual numbers for overnight stays in hotels and guesthouses in Iceland. These numbers are the most accurate numbers available and give a clear picture of the use of accommodation in Iceland. The numbers for 2008 were issued in the beginning of february 2009. Despite the temporary economic crisis that most of the countries in the world are facing and started in late summer of 2008, overnight stays in Icelandic hotels and guesthouses increased between the years 2007 and 2008 in most areas. (numbers from the Icelandic Ministry of Transportation)

The first numbers for the summer of 2009 show a large increase in hotel bookings on the south coast of Iceland. This is a strong indication that the number of tourists visiting Iceland will continue to rise in the coming years.



Hotel size

Anyone who travels knows that hotels come in all shapes and sizes. The demand for rooms, number of possible guests and the desired usergroup are the all factors that affect the size. A hotel in Las Vegas is for example likely to be considerably bigger than a hotel in Kuulusuk in Greenland. The hotel with the largest number of rooms in the area close to Eldhraun lava is Country hotel Höfðabrekka in Vík village. It has 124 beds in 60 rooms. Hotel Klaustur in Kirkjubæjarklaustur village, with 45 rooms is the second largest.

Looking at the size of the hotels close to Eldhraun that are open 12 months of the year, the number of rooms is between 40 and 60. The average size of a two person room in these hotels is 15 to 25 m². These hotels are fully booked during the high season but during the winter months they have between 40 and 75% bookings. (interview: Haraldur Einarsson, Guesthouse Hofdabrekka)

In order to create the calm and peaceful atmosphere aimed for in this project the number of rooms would be kept lower than in the previously mentioned hotels. The number of rooms will be 20 with the possibility of housing up to 60 guests. The larger rooms will be large enough to house a family of five. The rooms in the hotel will be 35 to 70 m², either on two floors or with a stepped floor. These rooms will be quite large compared to the 15 to 25 m² rooms in many of the other hotels.



A large scale hotel in Las Vegas
(photo from Internet)



A small scale hotel on the east
coast of Iceland
(photo from Internet)



Aurora borealis / The Northern lights
(photos: B. Rutsson)

Months open

Many of the hotels that are located close to tourist attractions or in the small villages are open all year. The guesthouses, often small ones, that are further away from interesting and appealing things for tourists to see close down during the winter months. However, this has slowly been changing through the years as the high season starts earlier and ends later from one year to another. This is prolonging the season and adding to the opening months for the guesthouses.

A hotel positioned in Eldhraun lava would be open 12 months of the year. The inspiring and breathtaking surroundings of the mysterious, moss covered and rugged lavafield surrounded by mountains and glaciers is a perfect location to create an all year demand for accommodation. It has a special appeal that varies from month to month.

In the winter there is the mixture of the white snow covering the dark lava, snow on the mountains and the long dark nights with starry skies and northern lights. In Reykjavik there has, in the last 10 years, been an increasing demand for hotel rooms during the darkest months of the year by people travelling to Iceland to see the northern lights. These people then have to travel outside of the city lights to see the phenomena, often for long distances. During blizzards the environment at Eldhraun lava becomes harsh and threatening, a strong and powerful feeling. In the spring the snow starts melting, the day becomes longer and the vegetation comes to life. Summer with 24 hrs of daylight, mysterious and dramatic foggy days and fall with the first days of frost, unbelievable colours of the vegetation and the first snow. And all this can be experienced from within and around the Lava Hotel.

No matter which month, there is always something that gives the Eldhraun lava a unique feeling. This would without any doubt be a great attraction and create an extra demand for rooms during the winter months.

Including a good conference room and a large dining hall, the hotel will also be an excellent choice for companies to hold conferences and meetings 12 months of the year.



User profile

The population in Iceland is just a little over 300.000 people. Each year close to 400.000 people from all over the world visit Iceland and this number is increasing each year . For some it is only to stay in Reykjavík, the capital, while others take the time to travel around and see things that Reykjavik, as versatile as it is, does not have to offer. These travelling visitors come in all shapes and sizes and their needs and financial status are as different as their appearance. Their demands and expectations are also very different from one to another. It would be a very difficult task to attempt to design something that fits everyone's needs and expectations. Therefore it is very important in a project such as this to narrow the field and focus on a smaller range of users.

When travelling, regardless of whether it is within one's home country or in a different part of the world, people make choices according to their own demands, individual needs and how much they are willing to pay for the object or service rendered. The higher the price, the smaller the possible number of clients. Therefore the choice of a target- or usergroup must be made carefully.

When looking at the other hotels and guesthouses available for travellers to use in the area close to Eldhraun it is clear that most of the accommodation available is targeting a similar usergroup. Most of the accommodation is on a two or three star level. In a nearby town of Vík, 60 km to the west from Eldhraun and Kirkjubæjarklaustur, 40 km to the east there are hotels that offer a relatively good accommodation for those willing to pay more for the rooms. However, these rarely exceed the three star status. In general the rooms in the other hotels/guesthouses in the area are rather small.

In most cases these accommodations are considered a "place to crash" overnight when travelling from one place to another. These are not considered as being destinations in themselves. They feel like hotels and guesthouses you find all over the world. There is an obvious lack of identity and connection to Iceland.



This guy is probably not looking for the Lava Hotel, but he would be welcome



This guy is probably not looking for the lava hotel either, but he would also be welcome (photo from Internet)

The number of people willing to travel around Iceland in comfort, staying in one place for more than one night to relax and explore the things in the area is growing each year. The number of those willing to pay more for things like hotel rooms has been growing at an incredible rate through the years. This applies both for visitors as well as Icelanders. And even though Iceland is each year visited by many world famous individuals, actors, musicians, politicians and so on these are not nearly the only people with money in their pockets.

The lava hotel will be of a higher standard than most of the other accommodation available in the area. It will fit the needs of those looking for and willing to pay for a quality accommodation that offers something special. Regardless of their age and the size of the group. Whether it is an individual, a couple, a family, a group of elderly people or businessmen looking for a different place to hold a conference, this will be an excellent choice of location.

In order to summarise this into a userprofile:

- They want to experience something new
- They want to enjoy the unique nature Iceland has to offer
- Their financial status is above average
- They are willing to pay more to get more
- They are willing to stay and relax in one place for more than just one night

Chart of functions

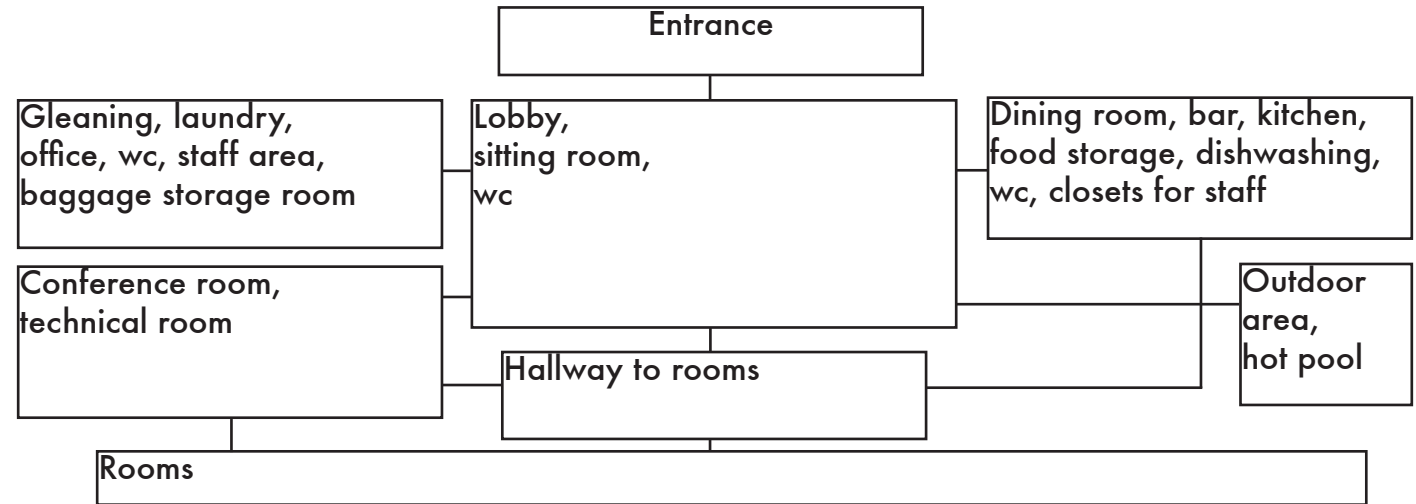
In order to get a better view of how the individual building sections should be put together and the connection between different building parts, a chart of functions is put up. In a hotel such as the lava hotel there is a rather simple hierarchy where the building is most often built so that most of the functions and building parts are connected to a center. This center usually consists of the reception and office and from this point the guest can enter and access most of the functions within the hotel.

It is also very important that this center is clearly recognisable and easy to find. The other functions are then connected to this point.

The orientation of the hotel is very important. In this case the individual building parts should be placed appropriately in relations to the climate conditions. The rooms should be placed so that they make use of the daylight during the day but are not overheated when the guests go to bed. The dining hall, lounge and afternoon functions should then be placed on the northwest side of the building to make use of the evening light.

The prevailing wind directions should also be utilized for the passive ventilation and the intake for the mechanical ventilation.

Outdoor areas should be placed on the sheltered side of the building, in this case the S (south?) side.



Room program

The total size of the building is 2.975 m². Following is a room program where the individual rooms are listed with their special preferences and design demands.

	Entrance	Lobby	Bar / lounge	Office / storage	Conference room	Kitchen / storage	Dining area	Sitting room	Room corridors	Room Large	Room Small
Number of rooms	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	12
Size m ²	21	110	105	34	130	170	235	110	500	65	35
Height m.	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	3	4,5	4	4-6	3,5	3,5
Windows	E	skyl.	NW		skyl.	W	E, NW skyl.	E, SE, S	NE, SW	E, SE,skyl.	E, SE,skyl.
LX required		30-50		300-1000	300-500	500-750			30-50	100-300	100-300
Floor	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	1st	1st	1st	1st