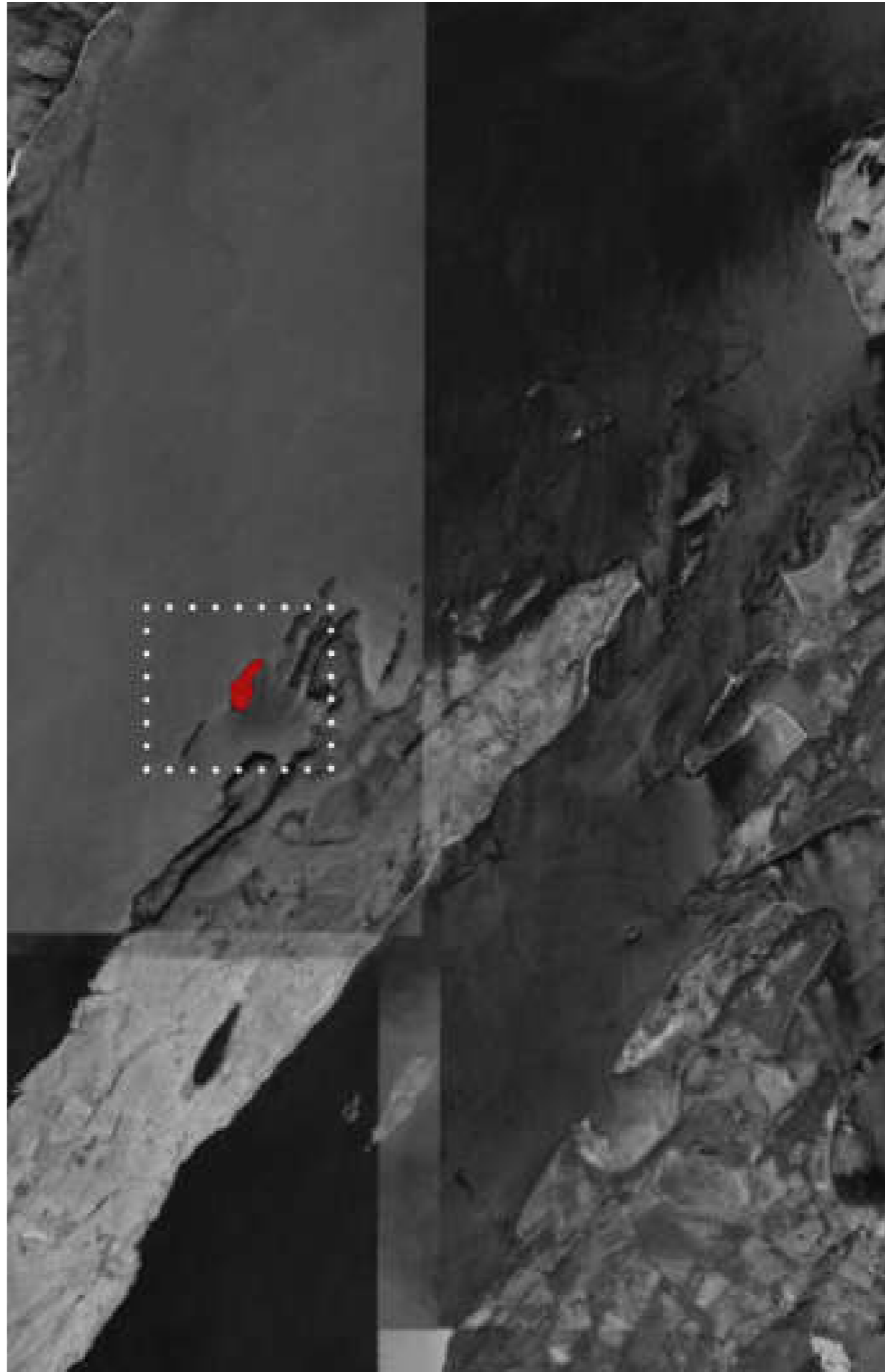


Eilean Loch Oskair
by Lismore

Design Statement

June 2022 (Original at A3)

Moving Still Architecture



Preamble

We are pleased to submit this design statement in support of an application to create a unique and beautiful holiday home on Eilean Loch Oscair; a small island situated at the north-western edge of Lismore, on Loch Linnhe.

Having visited the island, we were struck by the beauty of the site, and by the unique opportunity, and challenges, that the project presents.

We hope that the strategies we've developed - in relation to the site, the architectural scheme, and the technical realisation of those ideas, does justice to the stunning beauty of this amazing place.

We recognise and accept a profound responsibility to approach the site with a determined sense of respect and care - and hope that the proposals described here express that very clearly.

Introduction

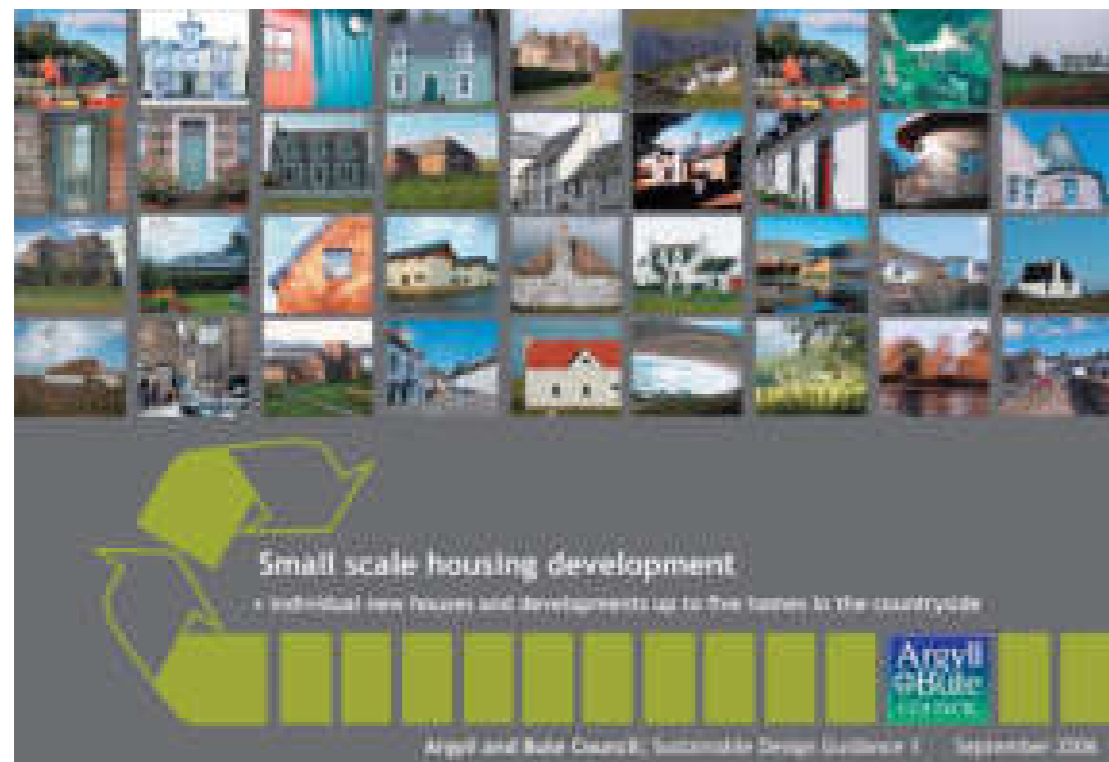
This application relates to the proposed installation of a high quality building to create a three-bedroom holiday accommodation unit, on Eilean Loch Oskair. Our aspiration is to design a building of excellent quality, so as to justify its presence on this very special site, and to make a positive contribution to the visual quality of the island.

Eilean Loch Oskair is a small island, located at the north-western edge of Lismore on Loch Linnhe. We are acutely aware of the landscape character of this place, and have gone through a rigorous process, continually seeking to refine the design, so that the final proposal is a sensitive, sustainable, and beautiful building.

We have visited Eilean Loch Oskair, travelling by small boat down Loch Linnhe. We have walked the island, making sure that we understand the constraints and opportunities that the site presents. We have recorded in sketches, photographs and a model, key observations across the island. That analysis has been absolutely critical in our design process; in fact, the desire to create a scheme which is appropriate to the island has guided our architecture – which has evolved to reach the design which is submitted in this application.

Design Process

Throughout the design process we have continually referred to the Argyll & Bute 'Small Scale Housing Development / Sustainable Design Guidance' publication. We have intertwined that with our own research on small-scale 'off-grid' sustainable architecture, as well as technical research in to pre-fabrication (particularly in relation to marine-based delivery to site of prefabricated components). All of this work has been really important to us – so that we can be confident in the credentials of our proposal in relation to preservation of the existing landscape, long-term / whole-life sustainability, construction logistics, and climate awareness.



Ref: **Argyll & Bute Council**: *Small Scale Housing Development, Sustainable Design Guidance* (2006)

Project Introduction

Furthermore, we have been keen to relish and enjoy the architectural opportunity this project presents. So, while going through that process of research on the technical issues described above we have also focused on human aspects – ideas about how people could enjoy the unique opportunity that visiting this building, and this island, would present. In other words we also want this project to be excellent so that the people who visit it find themselves in a building that is beautiful and joyous, so they can sit and enjoy the views up and down Loch Linnhe, and soak in the stunning nature of the place.

There has been research carried out in relation to flood risk, which has identified the areas on the island where a building could be located, and we have worked within those parameters. As mentioned above, we have discussed our proposals in principle with a leading marine logistics operator, to make sure that the dimensions of the scheme we have proposed could be readily delivered to the site in prefabricated parts, and assembled on the island.

Our initial ideas focused on a contemporary building within a traditional / vernacular form – it was a one-and-a-half storey, pitched roof scheme dressed in contemporary cladding, with large picture windows so that the views around Loch Linnhe could be fully enjoyed. We were pleased with the scheme to a large extent, but in reviewing these proposals we wondered whether it could be possible to create something that responded more directly to the landscape and topography of the island; a building which would sit lower in to the landscape.

Page 20 of the Argyll & Bute 'Small Scale Housing Development / Sustainable Design Guidance' discusses preferred approaches to the siting of buildings, and specifically mentions the traditional way in which rural buildings are often "*grounded within the landscape*" and "*work with the contours for shelter*". These notions basically capture the critical idea which led to the revisions we made to our design. We started looking at options for a single storey, low-lying scheme whose roof would sit much more closely to the horizon of the island. Early moves involved breaking up the mass of the building in to two 'fingers' – so that each block could enjoy the views and benefit from natural light in a way that a building with a deeper plan might not.

The final move was to 'crank' the main element of the plan. This move was based on creating a sense that the building was hugging the landscape as closely as possible. We have proposed a pair of linear elements, linked in the middle, and with a small outbuilding.

We hope that the design moves which have led to this final proposal mean that the building will be a much less prominent – so that the architecture can "*minimise [it's] impact on [the] landscape setting*" (Page 24, Argyll & Bute 'Small Scale Housing Development / Sustainable Design Guidance').

We have proposed no formal / structural landscaping as part of this proposal. Our idea is that the building would sit gently on the landscape, and would not seek to permanently alter it. Therefore we've made are no proposals for fencing, planting, paths etc. We have included a modest pontoon so small boats can land people on the island, but that's all. We would want the building to make a 'light touch' on the ground. We would propose screw piles instead of traditional foundations, and as mentioned above the building would be largely prefabricated off-site. This means that effectively in the future the building could be deconstructed / demounted and

removed in sections, then the screw piles could be removed or capped, so that the building would leave no trace on the island.

Technical Considerations

The design is expected to be 'off-grid' – following much of the advice offered on pages 32-35 of the A&B Sustainable Design Guidance. We have anticipated that grey-water would be reused (this is the main reasons the WCs are grouped together in the plan), that composting toilets would be provided, and that an array of solar pv would be used to generate electricity – with capacity for battery storage of power and a small generator to back-up that supply. We would also anticipate a bore hole would be used to provide water, as is the case at other locations along Loch Linnhe.

The weather was good when we visited the island, but we've spent lots of time on the west coast, and are fully aware that this isn't always the case. The desire to shelter the building was part of our thinking with the low-lying massing we've proposed, but at the same time we want to allow people to really enjoy the sensational views – which is the reason we've proposed large areas of picture-windows. The compromise we've proposed is that all of those large openings would have slatted timber external shutters which could run over the openings during winter – offering protection from the elements, but still allowing for views out and for light to come in.

We have proposed that the building would be clad in high quality, sustainably sourced timber cladding (as described in pages 44-45 of the A&B Sustainable Design Guidance). We feel that this material would create a natural harmony with the landscape, and would look very attractive.

Summary

The following pages will summarise the design process we've followed, and will highlight all of the ideas described in this text which have been critical to our architectural thinking.

We feel privileged to have been able to work on this project, and are keenly aware of the quality of the site we're working on. We hope that our proposal is an appropriate response to that context.

We think the scheme could be an exemplar in low-impact, sensitive, contemporary rural architecture – a sustainable building which is befitting of it's beautiful location.

Project Introduction



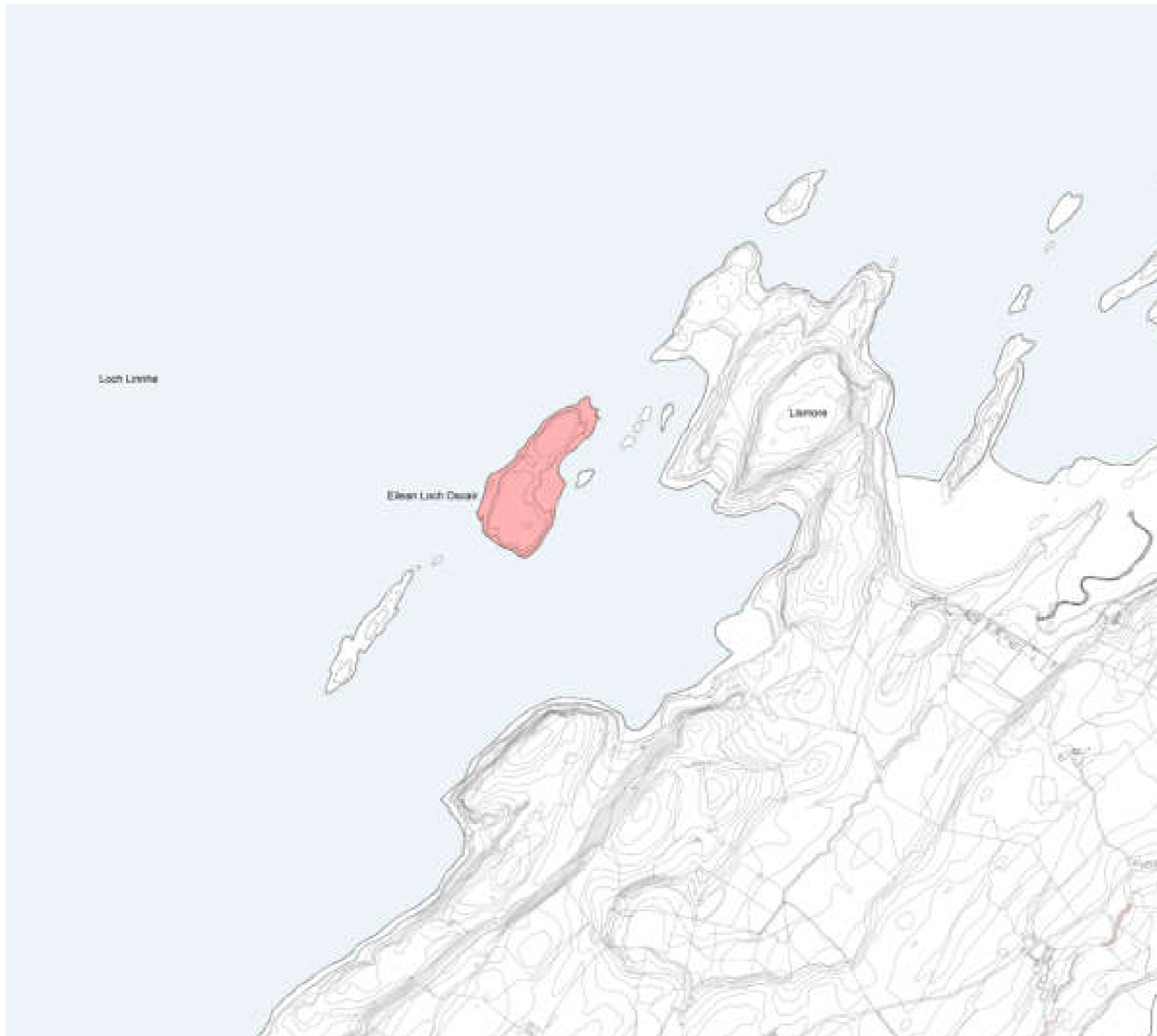
Approaching Eilean Loch Oskair from the north on Loch Linnhe.



Alongside the southern edge of Eilean Loch Oskair.

Location

The site is Eilean Loch Oscair, which is a small island located at the north-western edge of Lismore, on Loch Linnhe.

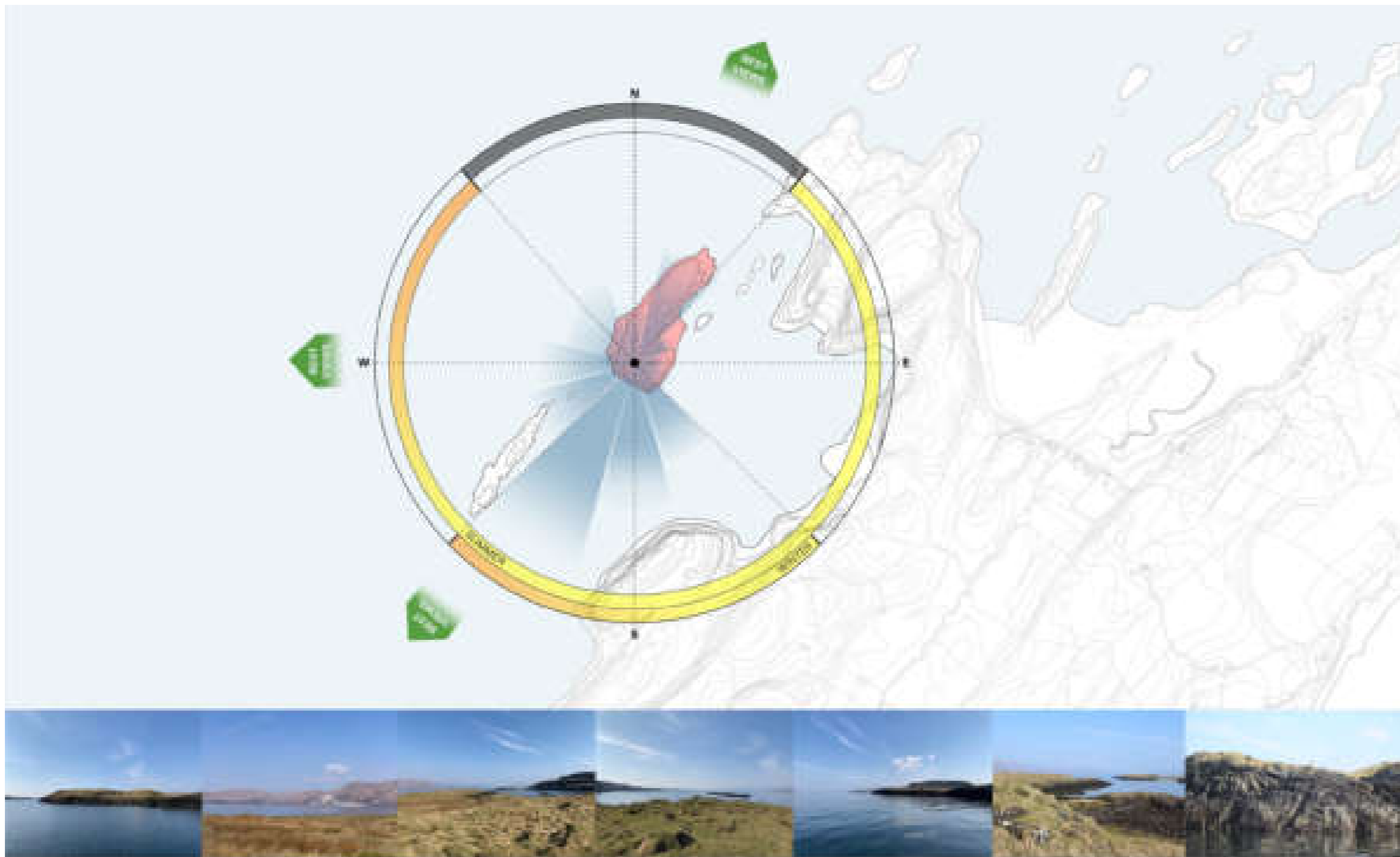


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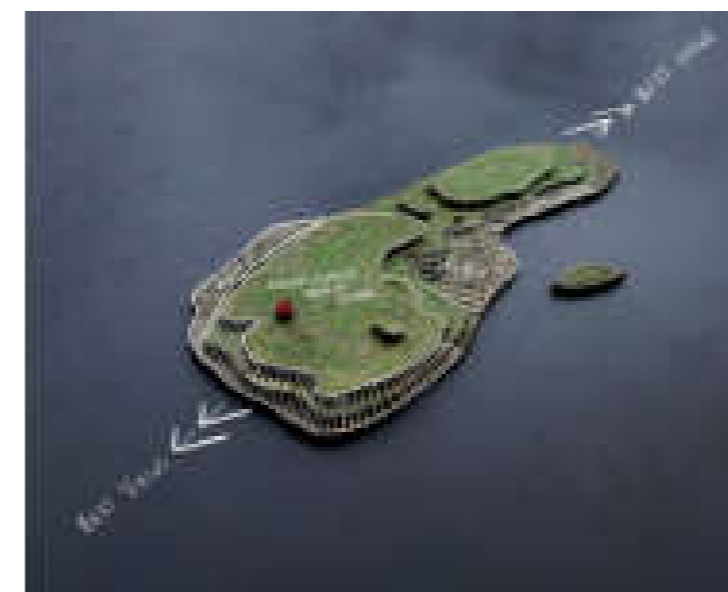
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Site Analysis

Having visited the island we carried out a detailed site analysis exercise. This included items such as climate, sun path, prevailing winds, aspect and outlook and landscape character.



Physical model of Eilean Loch Oisclair (orig scale 1:1,000)



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Site Analysis

This is a selection of the photographs taken around and on Eilean Loch Oisair during our visit. We have continually referred to these images throughout the design process.



On our approach to the island, showing the slight hollowing on the horizon. This is where the proposed building has been located; in an attempt to hug the contours of the land, and respect the integrity of the broader horizon.



Eilean Loch Oisair.



Looking east, back over towards Lismore.



The site is tucked in to the hollow in the centre of the image, with the horizon of Lismore behind.



Looking north from the site.

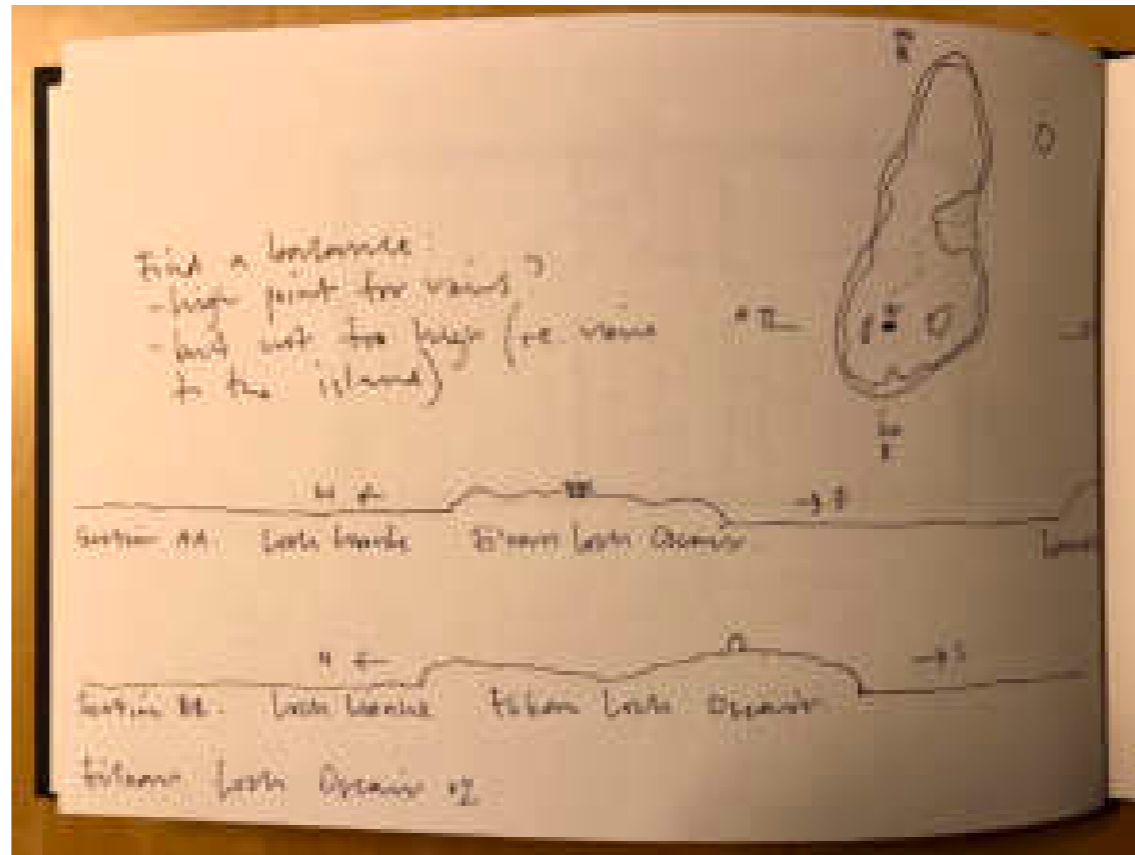
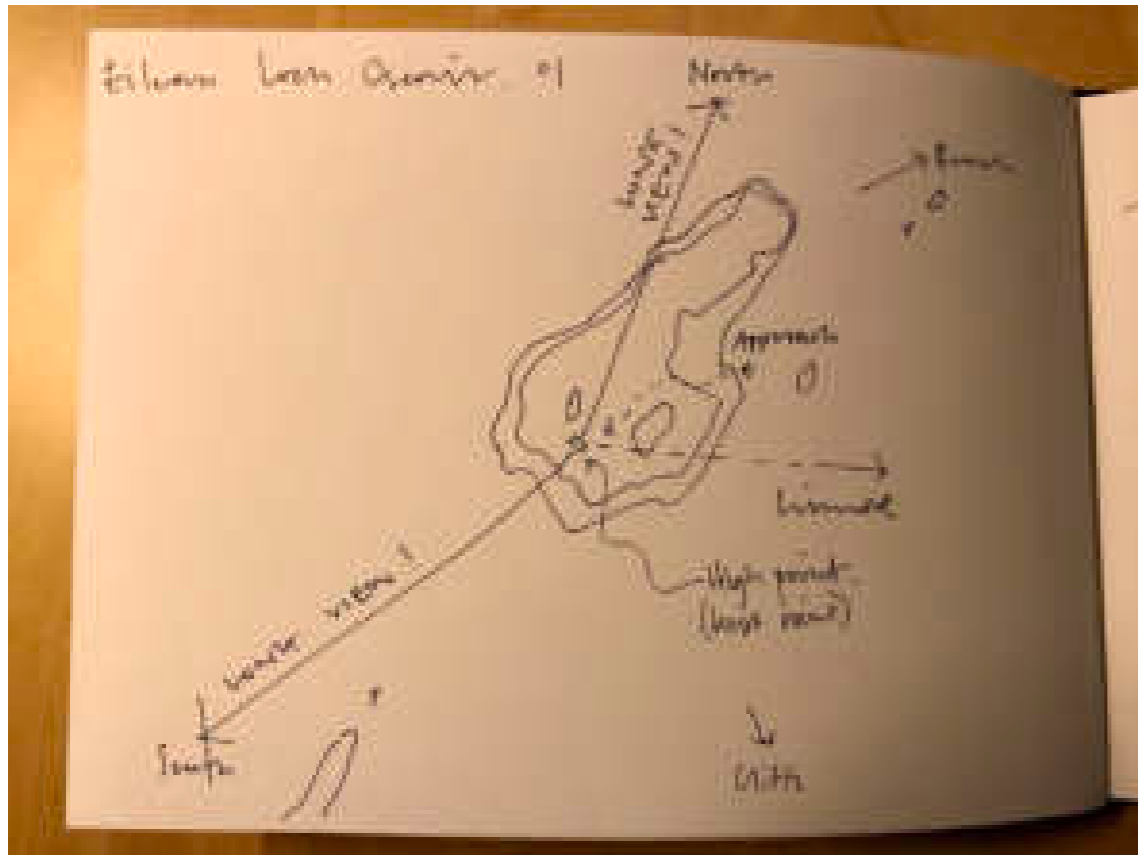


Looking south from the site.



Where the island meets the water.

Preliminary Analysis / Sketch Design



These sketches illustrate some initial thoughts on site design and architectural strategy for our initial options.

