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REEF PROJECT, ISLE OF LEWIS

Celebration and Commemoration

The challenge of the Reef project is to reflect events which started in the late 19th century, through to the present day, and are ongoing into this century and beyond.

The idea of the structure was first considered from the geography of the specific site identified by the community, the top of a rocky outcrop above the village of Reef. The small plateau has a natural stone path leading to two flat outcrops of rock and vegetation. The easterly area has a view towards the village of Reef and the westerly view is to the island of Pabay Mor. It was important to link these two identified areas within the plateau, both in terms of the landscape and as a symbolic pathway between the past and the future.

The land around Valtos is defined by stone walls skilfully built and of a distinctive design. Walls played an important part in the history of the early land raids and the tradition of wall construction have been continued to the present day. The walls of the proposed structure will follow the contours of the land and define two circles connected by a walled walkway or passage.

The east circle (Raiders Circle) will have as its centre a round of grey granite 2.4 metres. in diameter with the names of the fourteen raiders inscribed on it. The walkway leading to the west circle will pass through a stone arch or doorway creating a link from the past to the future. The Inuit used similar symbolic doorways.

The larger western circle will have at its centre a natural boulder with an iron fire basket reflecting the shape of the beacon near Arnish Point and symbolic of a beacon of hope for the future. The beacon basket will be designed to hold a gas torch, which can be lit at times of celebration and commemoration. There will be integrated seating both inside and outside the walls allowing for shelter and appreciation of the surrounding environment. An opening in the wall to the west is symbolic of the gaps made in the walls by the raiders and allows access to the view and the outside world.