

“omnia mutant, nihil interit”

Ovidius

**EAGLAIS NA H-AOIDHE
ST COLUMBA'S UI CHURCH
AIGNISH, ISLE OF LEWIS**

A BLUEPRINT FOR CONSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION



FEASIBILITY REPORT

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EAGLAIS NA H-AOIDHE



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I. INTRODUCTION

In June 2011 Addison Conservation + Design (AC+D) was commissioned by Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe (the Ui Church Trust) to undertake the role of Conservation Project Manager for Phase 1 of its project leading to the conservation of the ruinous medieval Eaglais na h-Aoidhe (St Columba's Ui Church, Aignish, Isle of Lewis). The building is recognised by its category A listing and Scheduled Ancient Monument status as being one of the most important archaeological sites on the Isle of Lewis.

The conservation of the church ruin started on site soon after and was completed in March 2013. During this phase, it became more and more obvious that further conservation and interpretation of this ancient site is required and several such "follow-up" projects were identified in outline. Due to funding limitations, some areas were left "protected" on an interim basis.

In 2015 sheet piling was installed to protect the church from erosion by the sea.

To conclude this brief introduction to a very important appraisal, the Ui Church Trust can say with confidence that it has now reached an important milestone. With Addison Conservation + Design in collaboration, it has achieved significant progress within its interim aims over a relatively short 5 year period, expedited by funding from Historic Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, LEADER and private donations. In practical terms, with our assistance, it has turned this ancient, sacred, but somewhat forlorn ruin into a safer, drier and meaningful place for community and visitors.

This Report has been commissioned by the Ui Church Trust for the purpose of mapping the way forward from here in the medium term i.e. within next 5 –10 years. We have reviewed all of its progress in terms of the conservation work and have now proposed projects for transforming all the interim measures into secure permanence; and by integrating interpretation with design, it will evolve its association with the place into a comprehensively coordinated physical site presence for all to appreciate and learn from.

II. SUMMARY

A history of the role and development of the Trust can be seen in the Community Engagement Plan, and Addison Conservation + Design concluded that it is the only body able to follow through the project with thoughtful, focused and meaningful objectives. From its origins in 2000 it has progressed into historical research and development of ideas with an understanding of how such a project can be made to work once started. This, together with the progress of all the building conservation work on site from 2011 - 2013, leads logically to conclusions as to what must happen next and how this can be achieved.

The current position physically on site is one of a stabilised conserved masonry ruin comprising a West Chapel with a temporary wooden roof, joined linearly to a roofless main church both of which display graveslabs and other important historic artefacts.

The building is surrounded on three sides by a graveyard. The fourth, north side, is defined by the walls of the graveyard and the church.

Four future projects which require funding are discussed herein. They are derived from necessity and the Conservation Plan (2011). When completed, even in phases, they will draw outstanding matters to a logical conclusion. This will be done in an integrated holistic way which will make the new structures and ancient ones read together in terms of interpreting the history of the church and through a further step in evolution by means of design.

The four projects are as follows, defined here on a “subject” basis:-

- 1) The West Chapel
- 2) The Main Church
- 3) The Graveyard and Archaeology
- 4) The Gateway to be built as a new structure in the landscape to accommodate interpretation of the area

Although they are to be designed and treated individually for funding purposes, intellectually they have been created from one thought process; when completed they will read as one united version of events from prehistory and in future years will provide a [guide as to](#) how new discoveries should be treated.

III. LOCATION

The ruin of the Ui church is located within an ancient graveyard adjacent to the coastline on the Isle of Lewis (Outer Hebrides) some three miles east of Stornoway, off the A866 road.



IV. SIGNIFICANCES, DISCOVERIES AND EVENTS WHICH ARE DRIVING THE NEED TO FURTHER THE PROJECT

Although the creation of the Trust in 2000 and its work since then are significantly important in themselves, they must be developed further in order to enhance the tourist potential and sustainably manage its growing historic assets. The interim site based works which must be taken to a final conclusion are:-

- Permanent protected location for the iconic medieval graveslabs to Roderick Macleod and Margaret Mackinnon which are currently under a temporary roof improvised from a canopy over the West Chapel.
- Protection of the other highly significant graveslabs and archaeology in and around the graveyard.
- More in-depth interpretation facilities for the projected increasing number of visitors to the site coupled with the protection and display of important grave slabs such as the Mackenzie stone and the Sword Stone.

The first of these priorities are the two medieval graveslabs have been considered by experts for over hundred years to be among the most important in Scotland from that period. They are fragile and in urgent need of permanent protection in a managed environment.

The conclusions from the Conservator's assessment of the slabs were highly unexpected and became very challenging. Preserving the slabs became a matter of utmost urgency. The stones have been placed under a temporary canopy in the West Chapel adapted to accommodate them using very limited resources. The current circumstances are far from ideal and cannot be considered a long term solution. Therefore, it is of great importance to progress with all works necessary to make a permanent display of the stones in a secure environment.

Also, as the work on the conservation of the ruin progressed, the Trust and the community interest grew wider, beyond the church itself and into the archaeology of the historic graveyard and the Braighe area, which had been known to exist, but had never become a separate project. The development of the conservation of the Ui Church could therefore become a catalyst for the study and interpretation of all the historical aspects in the immediate vicinity of the church, the graveyard and the surrounding Braighe area. The Trust itself has become a very strong dynamic and dedicated unit with very positive community involvement, working hard to ensure firstly the maintenance of what has been achieved in Phase 1 and then taking the project forward in its numerous aspects. Once again, the place, although still a roofless ruin by the edge of the sea, has become central to a vibrant community and its tourist potential is gradually being realised.

The proposed project will demonstrate how this community has changed over the centuries, from the Bronze Age to the present. There are numerous areas of archaeological importance from the Bronze Age along the southern edge of Broad Bay and recent archaeological research requires funding to date the artefacts and to allow the findings to be written up. The church and the graveyard itself are strongly associated with the history of prominent families such as the Macleods and the Mackenzies, as well as many lesser known names whose stories are now recorded thanks to

the Trust's efforts. Visiting the church, one has to pass one of the island's Land Raiders' Monuments. In the graveyard, there is the grave of a victim of the tragic WWI Iolaire disaster and, in the west mausoleum, a memorial dedicated to Colonel Colin Mackenzie who was 'Surveyor General of All India', as well as a passionate scholar of the art, literature and antiquities of that country.

These, and many other areas of historical interest are all worthy of detailed attention and an important aim of this document is to attract support for the project from funders to contribute to the preservation and interpretation of this important historic place.

In January 2015, an emergency situation arose on site when during several storms the sea became a severely imminent threat to the church. Despite the Trust having no ownership or direct responsibility over the land along the coastline, an immediate rescue project was created and completed in March 2015 to remove direct risk to the church. This was funded by Historic Scotland and Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe.

In parallel with the project described here, another, bigger, project is being developed by the community of Point the ambition of which is to create a Community Centre on an Old School site in Knock.

The proposals which are described here are focused only on the church, the graveyard and the immediate vicinity. Therefore there is no conflict or competition between the two projects and they are to be considered as complementary to one another, with each signposting visitors to the other. Some Trustees are on both bodies to ensure cooperation between the two groups and that they are working together for the good of the whole community.



MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO COLONEL COLIN MACKENZIE WHO WAS 'SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ALL INDIA'



VIEW ON THE CHURCH FROM NORTH EAST AND ROW OF PROTECTING SHEET PILES IN THE BACKGROUND, ON TOP OF THE HILL VISIBLE MONUMENT TO ISLAND'S LAND RAIDERS



GRAVE OF A VICTIM OF THE TRAGIC WWI IOLAIRE DISASTER

V. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SITE AND OVERVIEW ON CONDITION

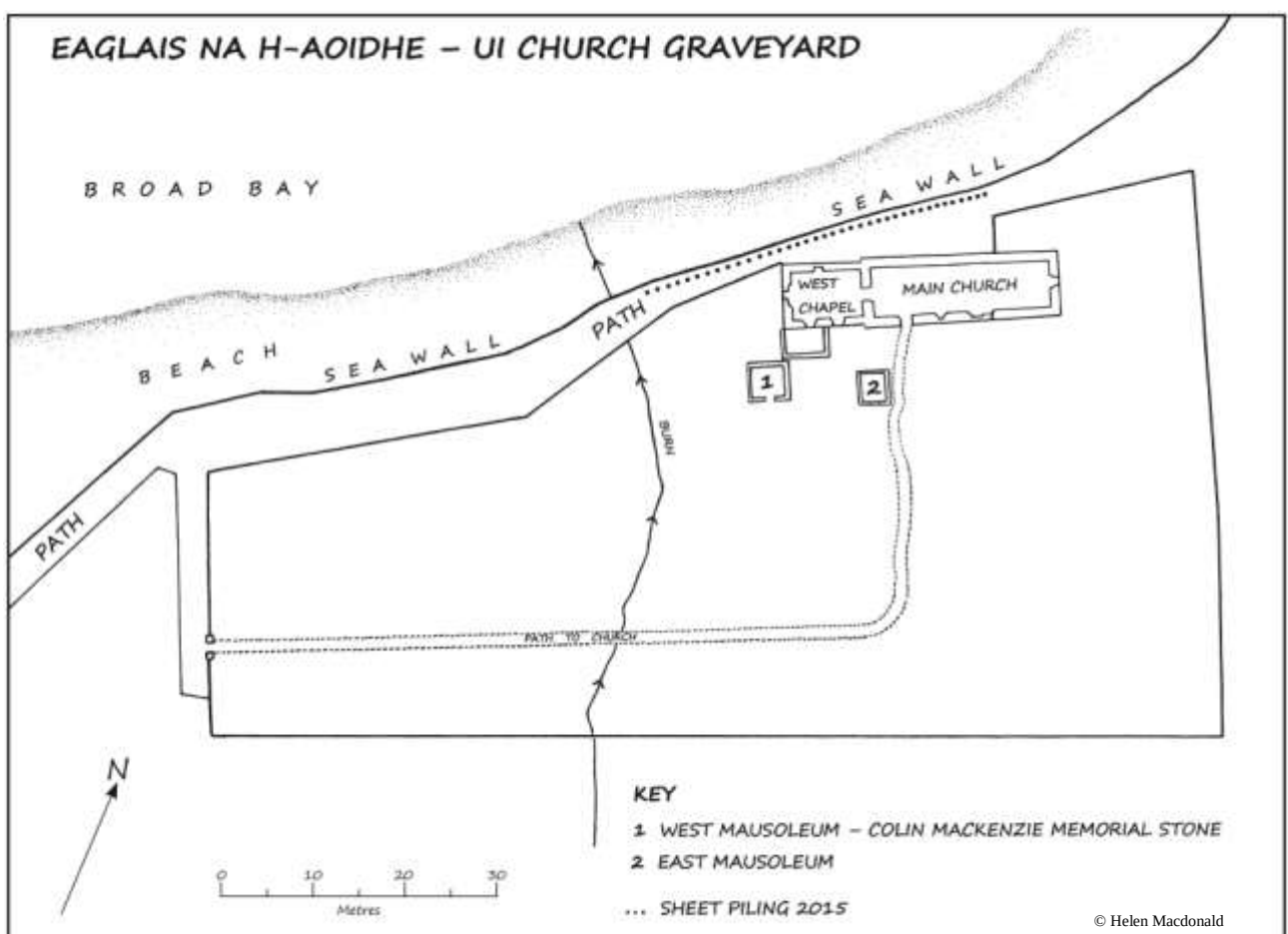
V-A BRIEF HISTORY

Eaglais na h-Aoidhe, or the Ui Church, dedicated to St Columba, was once Lewis's primary place of worship, dating as far back as the 13th century, and used continuously until the 19th century. The present ruin appears to have been built on top of previous religious sites, possibly dating back even further.

According to W.C. Mackenzie, writing in 1919,

“the church was built on the site of a cell occupied by St Catan, who is believed to have lived in the sixth or seventh century.”

Catan was a contemporary of St Columba, one of the greatest Celtic saints, and a Bishop of Bute.



The church was expanded several times after the original structure was built in the 13th century at a time when clan disputes were common in the Western Isles. Much of the church is believed to have been built while Lewis was held by the Norse Nicolson family, from whom the Macleod clan later acquired the island. The Macleods then added further features to the church.

The church was in use until 1828, and sporadically thereafter until as late as 1845. Some years later the roof was removed and the ruin used as a burial place.

Over centuries, the sea was encroaching more and more into the surrounding land and the original graveyard.



THREE MAIN PHASES OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT



COASTLINE EROSION SHOWING EXTEND OF LAND LOST TO SEA

The Macleods remain the clan most associated with the church which was their burial place. Many of this family and other notable families of the Western Isles were buried there, including the last of the Macleod chiefs, Roderick Macleod and his daughter, Margaret Mackinnon. Intricate stone graveslabs for these two figures have been displayed in the main church for many years, but their importance was known only to experts. The recent involvement of Stone Conservators focussed the project on the need for their special treatment.

Since the Macleods laid claim to the island, the church has seen many changes, from new lairds to the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century.

In more modern time, the Mackenzies became more and more associated with the church.

Other graveslabs of interest are the Mackenzie stone, the Sword Stone, possibly one of a bishop and one showing symbols of mortality.

INTRICATE DECORATION OF MARGARET MACKINNON AND
RODERICK MACLEOD SLABS



THE SWORD STONE



Thomas Muir (1861) provided the first architectural analysis of the ruins;

*“Just beyond the isthmus, and in the open and frightfully-conditioned burial-ground overlooking Broad Bay, we find the not greatly dilapidated church of St. Columba, erewhile the Eaglais mhor of eastern Lewis. It is a narrow oblong, divided unequally into two by a gabled wall of great thickness with an arched way through it, the western division shorter and straiter than the eastern one, and in part seemingly of Norman date. The building, though generally plain, has some noticeable features; and lying about it are some carved slabs, good in character, and curious **from being the only specimens apparently existing in all Lewis.**”*
(Emphasis by the author).

It is clear, then, that the church has significant value, not just in its aesthetic qualities as described by Muir above, but also as a site of cultural and social importance. The church played a large role in the history of many important families living on the island for centuries.



EVIDENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY UNEARTHED FROM THE SHORE NEAR THE CHURCH

V-B RECENT HISTORY (1994-2015)

- In 1994, during a severe storm, the sea washed out part of the ground under the foundation of the north west corner of the church, threatening this part of the ruin with collapse. Immediate action was taken by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to underpin the weakened corner. Metal elements were inserted to support some arches of the West Chapel.
- Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe commissioned a professional team led by Simpson & Brown Architects to write a conservation plan for the church with a view to restoring it for community use. This conservation plan, completed in June 2004, identified the sea action still as the main threat to the ruin.
- In 2004, some urgent works were carried out to prevent further erosion of the ground under the already partially underpinned church wall. Due to various circumstances, this work was only partially completed, although most of its aim was achieved. John Addison (AC+D) was involved at that stage but in a limited capacity.
- In 2010, Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe obtained funding for a consolidation of the ruin, treating this as Phase 1 of an overall programme of conservation of the church and the graveyard. As a first step, Simpson & Brown's conservation plan was updated to focus on this particular aspect of the place. At that stage it was not clear to whom the ground on which the buildings and graveyard stood belonged. The Urras was able, after some time, to establish just who held the title and once ownership was transferred to the Urras, the whole project could proceed.



BLOW HOLE UNDER THE FOUNDATION OF WEST CHAPEL



CONCRETE UNDERPINNING WORK IN 1994 UNDER NORTH WEST CORNER OF WEST CHAPEL



VIEW OF THE WEST GABLE OF WEST CHAPEL PRIOR TO PHASE 1 CONSERVATION – METAL SUPPORTING SYSTEM INSTALLED AROUND THE TIME OF UNDERPINNING WAS LATER REMOVED



VIEW OF THE ARCHED DOORWAY BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND WEST CHAPEL AND ITS SUPPORTING SYSTEM

- In 2011, Addison Conservation + Design was appointed to implement Phase 1 of the project; being consolidation and stabilisation of the church ruin. As part of these works, a conservation study of the most important grave slabs was commissioned. Also, access to the church and interpretation of the site was improved.

The main elements of Phase 1 were as follows:-

- (1). Consolidation of the masonry using traditional techniques was carried out on all the exposed walls of the church
 - (2). Further stabilisation of the West Chapel through a system of ties/struts installed at ground level. This allowed the temporary shoring to be removed from the archways
 - (3). Specialist stone conservation was carried out on seven graveslabs identified as of particular age and importance. Four of these slabs were placed under the temporary canopy over the West Chapel as recommended by the Stone Conservator and the remaining stones were left in situ on the specially prepared gravel base
 - (4). Access to the church has been improved as has the internal surface of the main church.
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- In January 2015 several severe storms put the church at risk again. In March 2015 further piling was installed along the sea elevation from beyond the east end to the burn on the west side, which protected the church from the sea and therefore resolved this issue.



GRAVESLABS UNDER CONSERVATION



CONSERVATION OF WEST GABLE



INSTALLATION OF TIE/STRUTS SYSTEM AT WEST CHAPEL



INSTALLATION OF SHEET PILES ALONG THE MOST VULNERABLE PART OF THE CHURCH

V-C OVERVIEW ON CURRENT CONDITION

Reference must be made to our previous reports for a full account of the original state of the ruin and the conservation work carried out on it. The long oblong structure houses the roofless main church and the temporarily roofed West Chapel.

Following the works in Phase 1 and the piling work carried out on the seawall in 2015, the masonry is now in a more protected and well preserved condition. The masonry works were completed in 2013 and are standing up well to the exposed conditions. Visual monitoring has been in place since the masonry work was completed.

The temporary roof canopy over the West Chapel, which protects the important graveslabs and provides shelter for visitors, has received some minor work to improve its wind and watertightness. It has survived several storms.

The graveslabs inside the building are also being monitored visually.

The sheet piling prevents erosion of soft soil from under the church and reduces wave impact.



VIEW OF THE CONSERVED CHURCH WITH PROTECTIVE
TEMPORARY ROOF OVER WEST CHAPEL
TWO MAUSOLEUMS VISIBLE AT THE FRONT



SOUTH ELEVATION WITH MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE
CHURCH



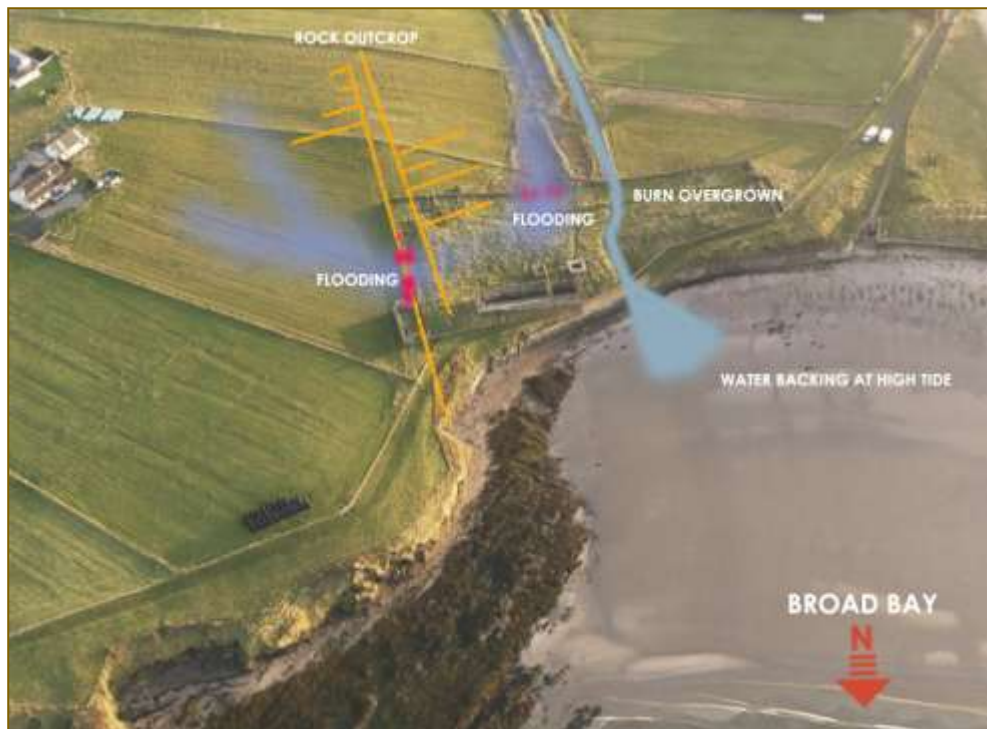
WEST CHAPEL WITH ITS TEMPORARY ROOF PROTECTING
SLABS OF RODERICK MACLEOD (TOP LEFT) AND
MARGARET MACKINNON (TOP RIGHT)



COMPLETED WORKS AT THE CHURCH VIEW
TOWARDS WEST



VIEW FROM THE WEST - NOTE ROW OF SHEET PILES
ALONG THE SEA LINE



ED OF



clearing up. Some improvements and perhaps a water gate (flap valve) to the outlet under the graveyard wall is required to prevent backing up at high tide.

The rest of the graveyard is reasonably secure being respected by visitors and grass cutters. However numerous monuments require permanent stabilisation or repairs.



BLOCKED BURN



FLOODING OF THE GRAVEYARD

ANALYSIS OF FLOODING OF GRAVEYARD

VI. UPDATE ON CONSERVATION PLAN RECOMMENDATION

The Conservation Plan dates from 2000 with an Addendum dated 2011. It describes the need for ongoing recording, conservation, protection, understanding, interpretation and consolidation of all the information being gathered in surveys and research. The aim is to produce guiding principles along which future plans can be considered.

The Conservation Plan demands that nothing is deliberately left in a vulnerable situation where harm can arise.

Care has to be taken to ensure that principles of reversibility are employed so that interim works can move to permanent works without damage to the historic asset. This applies to the temporary canopy and the interim protection of the important graveslabs.

The principle of minimalism is being adhered to together with the use of sympathetic materials at all times.

The Conservation Plan justifies the four projects on the basis of the need to conserve, protect and create the devices for interpretation. Interpretation is a dynamic process and further knowledge or research could result in the need for even more conservation work. The Conservation Plan and the four proposed projects will greatly enhance and safeguard the site, but they do not preclude further works should funding become available in the future.

VII. PROPOSED MEDIUM TERM PHASES OF WORK

Following several discussions with the Trust where all aspects of its aims and aspirations were considered (and led fundamentally by the need to comply with the Conservation Plan), four projects have been identified as described below.

The nature and purpose of each one has been defined, however, they are all part of a wider aim to conserve and interpret all the significances of the site.

Each project has also been technically and philosophically justified as the only way to proceed. An options appraisal process was implemented following soundings taken during a “brain storming” session and consultation.

The projects could be tackled together or separately depending on funding availability.

This Feasibility Report does not preclude further phases of work in the long term, subject to funding.

VII-A **WEST CHAPEL** – will be given a permanent roof to ensure the full protection of the two most important medieval graveslabs and provide a shelter for community use as well as a functional interpretation space dedicated to the church and the graveyard. Keeping these stones at this location is key to their survival and to maintaining the context of their interpretation. This follows the Conservation Plan not to remove any items from their natural location. Both graveslabs belong in the church.

VII-B The open space in the **MAIN CHURCH** will have a practical use complementary to the West Chapel. It will be used for gatherings, meetings and interpretation. The presentation and preservation of graveslabs and artefacts will be improved from their current interim situations.

VII-C **GRAVEYARD AND MAUSOLEUMS** - The graveyard will have its troublesome surface drainage rectified and the burn which traverses it better managed to minimise flooding. The paths will be improved with stone and fallen grave stones will be raised, tidied up or stabilised. The mausoleums will be conserved.

VII-D **THE GATEWAY** will be built as a new small structure in the landscape for the purpose of an informing gateway, shelter and exhibition space.

This will be sited and aligned in such a way so as not to overwhelm the church. It will be founded in a way that will have no impact on buried archaeology or the graves. In this regard, piles similar to the ones driven into the beach will be used as foundations and walls combined. They will cope with wind and storms providing a place that will be quiet and serene.

COMMENT

Although each element of each phase will be carefully designed and treated individually for funding purposes, intellectually they have been created from one thought process; when completed they will also read as one united version of events from prehistory to the present day, and in future years they will assist as a guide to how new discoveries should be treated.

VIII. EXPANDED DESCRIPTION OF WORK IN EACH PHASE

VIII-A WEST CHAPEL

Following recommendations by the Stone Conservator to protect the two medieval graveslabs of Roderick Macleod and Margaret Mackinnon, the West Chapel has become the most obvious place for this purpose. Both slabs belong inside the church where, most likely, the burials places are. As an interim measure, a temporary canopy was erected and has proven to be an effective space not only for the display of the stones but also as a sheltered interpretation area and meeting space. The project is to make a permanent roof of timber, clad in wood shingles.

The roof as a permanent structure will make the West Chapel wind and water tight, and improve the environment to provide a permanent and safe resting place for the medieval stones' display and for the presentation of the history of the church from its most ancient origins.

The proposed new roof will not aim to recreate any historical form, either medieval or 19th century. Its shape will follow the height of the current temporary one which has proved to be visually acceptable, and will respect the current ruinous gables with their vegetation growth. Although its geometry will be modern, its fully wooden character with shingles and wooden gutters will be reminiscent of the times when the church was thatched. We considered that the introduction of modern slates would not be practical in such an exposed location as maintenance would be an issue. Also, it would create an argument of "reconstruction" which we feel is inappropriate for this. Reinstating thatch would require high maintenance and also might represent a fire and vermin risk.

Its roof trusses will be anchored down to the ties which were previously installed under the current floor to provide a very robust structure able to withstand the severity of gales recorded on this site.

The underside of the roof will have painted panels describing important events from the church's history - a pictorial timeline. The idea of communication through images follows the ancient way when the church walls were painted with religious representations. This part, together with the artwork in The Gateway, will be carried out by someone who can understand and interpret the church and graveyard.

Both windows will have glazing reintroduced in areas decorated with etchings. The windows will be permanent, framed in protected metal. The etched glass door will be lockable.

Underfloor heating will provide a stable environment for the graveslabs and the masonry walls to prevent condensation and dampness.

The graveslabs will be placed vertically on the walls similar to the way in which they were placed in the church in the 19th century and carefully lit.

A glass etched panel with a reconstruction of the west gable will be placed against it to show its elegant renaissance design and to interpret original features visible behind. The interpretation will include a small lighting point symbolising the eternal candle light of the burial chapel.

Further information and interpretation panels will be designed and installed, which will be complementary to the interpretation in The Gateway.

Some seating will be provided round the sides, ideally pews recovered from other churches to reinforce the association of the space with its original purpose

Until The Gateway building is ready, the Mackenzie graveslab and the one showing the symbols of mortality will be displayed here; however this does substantially reduce the space available for community use.

To ensure security of the place, a camera will be installed and the entrance door lock will operate on a timer.



PROPOSED INTERIOR OF WEST CHAPEL



SOUTH ELEVATION OF WEST CHAPEL WITH SHINGLE ROOF AND GLAZING



EXAMPLE OF SHINGLE ROOF WITH WOODEN GUTTERS

VIII-B MAIN CHURCH

The aim is to upgrade the site to maximise its use. We do not want to lose the highly spiritual atmosphere it has at present. However some remedial work in keeping with the history of the place is required to make it a more usable space. Such a requirement became obvious when a wedding was recently held in the church.

Currently, the grass surface has proven to be high maintenance and regular dampness makes access to this part of the church very difficult.

It has been therefore proposed that the surface is changed to stone slabs or specially designed precast concrete slabs with imprinted vegetation motives, the table graves lowered to ground level and placed on gravel beds to prevent vegetation growth; to improve access some standing monuments will be placed against the walls. These works could remain in place should the church be roofed in the future.

**EXAMPLES OF CONCRETE PATH WITH SEA
WEED AND SHELL IMPRINT AS POSSIBLE
ALTERNATIVE TO STONE SURFACE**



The church will have a lockable metal gate.

As part of the scheme, the Trust will purchase removable stage deck platforms (eg Steeldeck) with accessories and ramps which can be erected for events. Further, segmental tents will be purchased.

Provisionally eight anchoring points are allowed for, in order for bigger tents to be anchored, if required.

Two fonts, which were removed from the church door at the beginning of the Phase 1 project, will be returned to their locations and placed in a secure manner.



TYPICAL STEELDECK ELEMENTS
TOP IMAGE SHOWS STORAGE ARRANGEMENT



**MAIN CHURCH AS PROPOSED – WITH NEW STONE SURFACING AND TABLE
GRAVESLABS LOWERED TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY USE**

VIII-C GRAVEYARD AND MAUSOLEUMS

The proposed scope of work is as described below.

A general assessment, maintenance and making gravestones and monuments safe will be carried out to ensure their safety and stability. This will include a careful investigation under archaeological supervision into those slabs which are currently covered with turf and into the 'stone tumble' along the boundary walls of the graveyard (east and south mainly). There are indications that some important grave stones might have been relocated there.

A new drain along the south boundary wall to the burn to control flooding will be introduced. The exact location of this drain will have to be designed under archaeological supervision to ensure that excavations are not encroaching on sensitive areas.

A cleaning, dredging and general maintenance of the burn and possibly reinstating of its "flood gates" at the north boundary wall to block the tide will be carried out with repairs to the culvert under the path also planned.

All of the above will be carried out after geophysical survey of the graveyard and the church and under archaeological supervision. An allowance for this, together with the dating and interpretation of artefacts, is made.

The footpath will receive stone slabs or concrete slabs similar to those in the church. A duct will be placed underneath for any services. Some slabs could be engraved with interpretation elements or artwork.

An assessment of the boundary walls will be carried out and the leaning sections will be anchored back using specialist anchoring systems.

The current community led project of recording of the graves will continue, leading to a detailed interpretation.

At the mausoleums, conservation works will involve reinstatement of the facing stones, pointing and general vegetation control. An allowance for a Stone Conservator's assessment of the Colonel Mackenzie memorial is made.



PROPOSED CONSERVATION OF EAST MAUSOLEUM WITH STONES REINSTATED (SOUTH ELEVATION ABOVE AND EAST ELEVATION BELOW)

GENERALLY GRAVESLABS TO BE MADE SAFE; MAIN PATH TO BE OF STONE SLABS





PROPOSED CONSERVATION OF WEST MAUSOLEUM WITH REINSTATED STONES AND COLONEL MACKENZIE'S MEMORIAL SLAB ASSESSED AND SECURED BY STONE CONSERVATOR



PROPOSED DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

VIII-D THE GATEWAY

The purpose of this small building is to provide an introduction to the history of the area and to link the church and the graveyard with the surrounding area, its archaeology and the community as well as safeguarding other important grave slabs on site. It is meant as a sheltered gateway to accommodate a level of information which cannot be provided on external information panels because of the extreme weather conditions of the site. As previously explained, this area is complementary to the development proposed at the Old Knock School. The Gateway's facilities will therefore focus on the archaeology and history of the immediate area of the church, the graveyard and the Braighe, complementing the interpretation in the West Chapel.

The Gateway is designed to blend with the landscape. The roof will be of domed lime concrete externally covered with turf.

As the whole area is very sensitive archaeologically, its walls and foundations will be integrated to make use of sheet piles – blades of steel, sensitively pushed into the ground. No excavations are envisaged beyond the top soil unless in the area already disturbed by current paths.

This type of construction will also be very robust against extremes of weather and sea.

The building elements are designed to be a one “art” unit with the interpretation as a continuation of the theme from the West Chapel. Its domed lime concrete roof will have a timeline engraved in it and co-ordinated with the layout of windows pointing to the church and the Land Raiders' Monument.

The Gateway will also provide shelter to vulnerable important slabs, two of which are currently on display in the West Chapel.

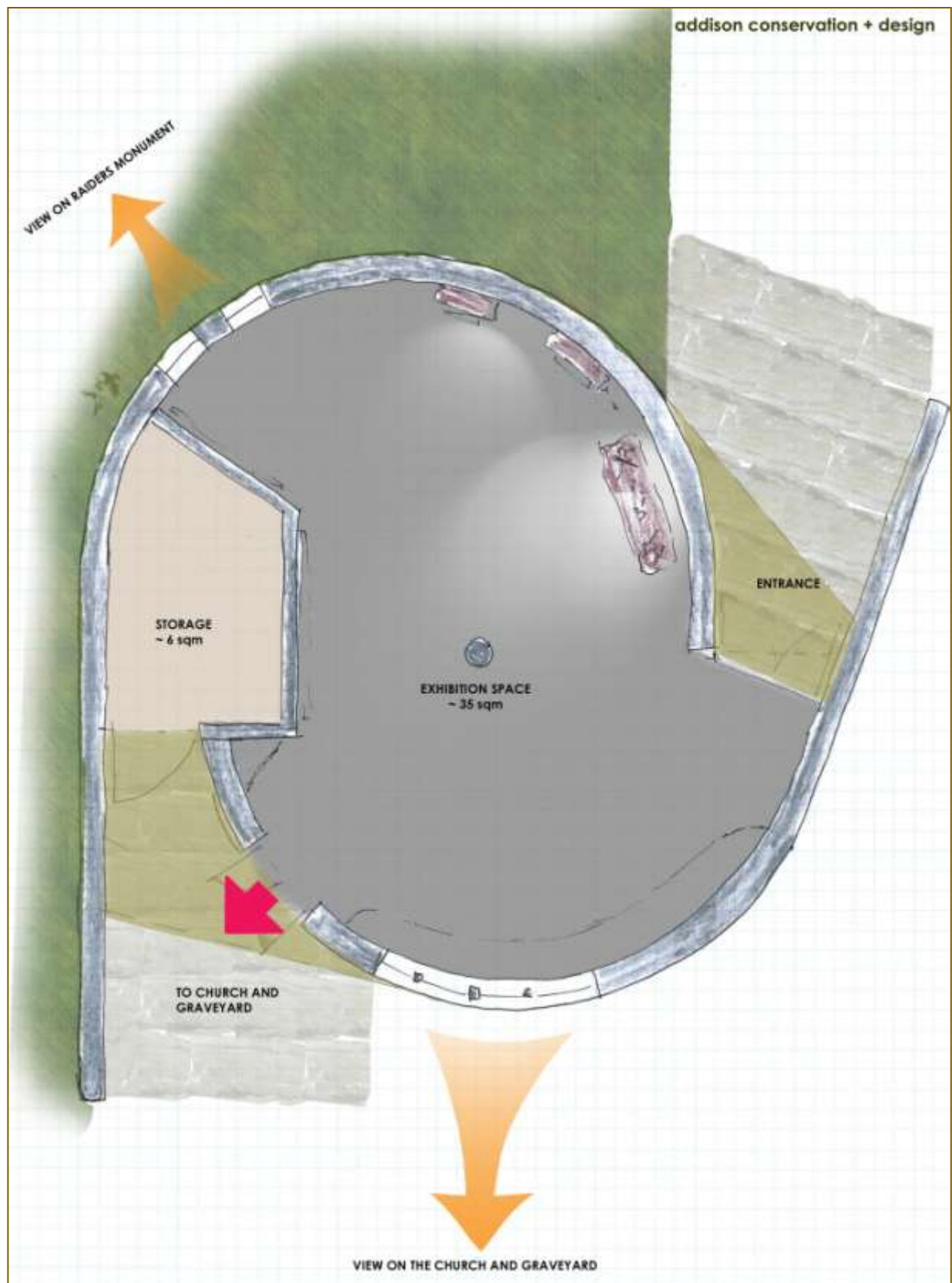
The Gateway will have a concrete floor with underfloor heating to maintain a stable temperature and humidity, controlled by external sensors. Lighting will be also sensor controlled.

Some security cameras will be installed in and around The Gateway.

An external water supply will be provided for maintenance, but no internal toilet or washing facilities, as there are public toilets near the site. A secure storage space will be made for the Trust's use.

It is also assumed that the present car park and the lay-by will provide adequate parking space, although disabled vehicle access with a parking space will be provided beside The Gateway.





PROPOSED PLAN OF GATEWAY

IX. ESTIMATED COSTS OF PHASE 2 PROJECT

The projected total cost of the project at the time of writing is £289,500, excluding a fee allowance, a contingency allowance and VAT.

X. MANAGED BY THE TRUST

From its initial vision of a restored chapel, the Trust has been clear minded and dedicated in its approach to this first phase of the conservation of the chapel. It has demonstrated a commitment and an involvement in the project at a level we rarely experience. This augurs well for the future.

It has succeeded in "making a difference" by taking the solutions to all the challenges to a new level and other aspiring building conservationists on the Isles should take note of how it was done.

Its organised efficiency and hard work throughout the conservation work has made the Trust an informed and a highly effective body most capable of seeing this work to a conclusion and carrying on into the future to manage and safeguard the place with all that is in it.

All the significances that have been constructed by them will be preserved and new ones discovered.