
Options Appraisal for Managing and Enhancing the Angel

For Gateshead Council



Foreward

'When I was Invited to consider making a work for Gateshead, Anna Pepperall and Bill McNaught sent me photographs of the site and it was the mound, formed from the demolished pithead baths of the Lower Teem valley colliery that persuaded me the commission was worth pursuing.

To me the mound was a tumulus similar to those left to us by our Iron Age ancestors. Here it was the memorial mound to the lost history of coal mining in the north-east. The mound has a quiet powerful symbolic presence resisting the amnesia forced upon this country by Margaret Thatcher's wilful wiping of all signs of coal mining from our landscape. Without honouring the mound, we cannot pay tribute to the brave and extraordinary 200-year history of coal mining in the north-east.

From the very beginning my ambition was to make a work that was integrated with the mound and expressed its dependency on it. At the time of its erection, as you can see in the accompanying photograph, the mound can be clearly seen.

The Angel works so well because it is visited and animated by its visitors, with the visitors' scale put into dramatic contrast with the silhouette of the Angel. The clear profile of the curve of the mound is the ground on which the movement and size of the visitors relates to the angle of the underside of the wing and the horizontal at the top of the wings. This is the zone of interaction that makes the Angel function.

I was very encouraged in my meeting with Southern Green in January 2019 that they saw enormous positive value in integrating the common land to the east and north of and the mound in a consistent landscape treatment that returned the fell to its authentic original flora.

The Angel was conceived from the beginning as a landmark. It has become a place of visitation and a sign of homecoming for thousands of local people. I was never consulted about the tree planting scheme and right from the beginning and for the last seven years have been campaigning for what has become a national symbol to be the visible landmark it was always intended to be. This necessitates the removal of all trees around and behind the Angel.

The Angel and the mound is the work. Without the mound being clearly visible and its profile clearly in a relationship with the wings the work is compromised.'

Antony Gormley

Introduction

Southern Green and EcoNorth, with support from Landform Surveys, were commissioned by Gateshead Council to prepare this Landscape and Ecological Plan for the Conservation, Enhancement and Maintenance of the Setting of the Angel of the North in response to a tender issued in October 2018. The purpose of the report is to ‘contribute to the ability of the Council to positively protect, manage and enhance The Angel of the North in its role as both land owner and local planning authority’.

The Angel of the North reached its 21st Birthday in February 2019, and Gateshead Council along with Historic England have considered the potential of designating the Angel as a Listing Building in conjunction with this milestone. Throughout the duration of this project this has become a less pressing issue, and the potential Listing of the Angel is no longer a priority.

A preceding piece of work prepared by North of England Civic Trust to produce a study examining the significance of the setting of the Angel raised issues regarding the immediate setting, which are the subject of this report. The key issues to be considered are:

- Tree growth within the immediate setting of the Angel
- Scar at the foot of the Angel
- Informal Memorials at the base of the mound
- Ecology of the site

The brief for this report has also evolved throughout the course of the commission, and following consultation with the Artist (Antony Gormley), Gateshead Ecology team and the Client team (Heritage and Planning/Regeneration) it transpired that Gateshead Council requires a range of design options for the enhancement of the immediate setting of the Angel, to allow them to consult and make decisions on the future layout, use, purpose and biodiversity value of the site. The core themes of the enhancement are:

- Increasing Amenity Value
- Improving the Visual Aesthetic
- Enhancing the space for Biodiversity

A1 Birtley to Coalhouse and Allerdene Railway Bridge

Highways England are currently refining the options for improvement work to the A1 at Birtley to Coalhouse and replacement of Allerdene Railway Bridge, following consultation on the scheme in 2018. Part of the proposed scheme involves the alteration of the carriageway immediately adjacent to the Angel to the south-west, and the subsequent removal of existing woodland vegetation on the road embankments as a result. The proposed works will therefore influence the south-west section of the site, and these areas are noted on each of the design options with suggested proposed plant typologies for each (taking into consideration the current suggested HE mitigation proposals). The relevant drawings of the scheme which relate to this project are within Appendix D. (include Figure 7.6 Sheet 3 and 4 of 5 within Appendix D).

Revision	Description	By	Chk.	Date
Draft	Draft issue for comment	AS/HS	RS	Sept 2019
Rev A	Issue for comment	AS	RS	Oct 2019
Rev B	Revised issue	AS	RS	Feb 2020
Rev C	Minor revisions	AS	RS	Feb 2020

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Section 1 Site Visit and Analysis

Baseline Survey Work

In order to better understand the site and to inform the design options Southern Green, EcoNorth and Landform Surveys prepared initial baseline survey work which consisted of the following:

Landform Surveys

- Full topographical survey of the extents of the site for the purposes of this project. The extent of this area was determined by Gateshead Council and includes the Angel, its base mound, a triangle of land to the south stretching to the junction of the A167 and the A1 (including highway embankments), land to the north and west including the football pitches, highway embankments and bowling green. Hedges and significant individual trees were surveyed, with woodland areas surveyed as groups. The full topographical survey is included in Appendix A.

EcoNorth

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Arboricultural Assessment
- Tree Management Plan
- Management Options Documents

Southern Green

- Visual Analysis of the immediate setting of the Angel: Pages 5 - 8 set out the key amenity currently available at the site. Text articulates the key issues and opportunities of each location.
- Furniture inventory: page 13 shows the location of all existing street furniture, its quality, condition, use and any problems and opportunities associated with it.
- Paths/Routes/Circulation: page 10 shows the existing pattern of circulation at the site and within the immediate setting of the Angel, and documents the value of the routes. Text articulates any problems and explains potential opportunities.
- Experience: drawing on page 12 shows the range of the experiences gained at key points within the immediate setting and articulates potential improvements and keys areas for opportunity.

The resulting suite of baseline survey drawings is included in the following pages, with the full topographical survey included in Appendix D, the full PEA Report in Appendix A, and the full Tree Management Plan in Appendix B. All ecological reports are summarised within Section 5.



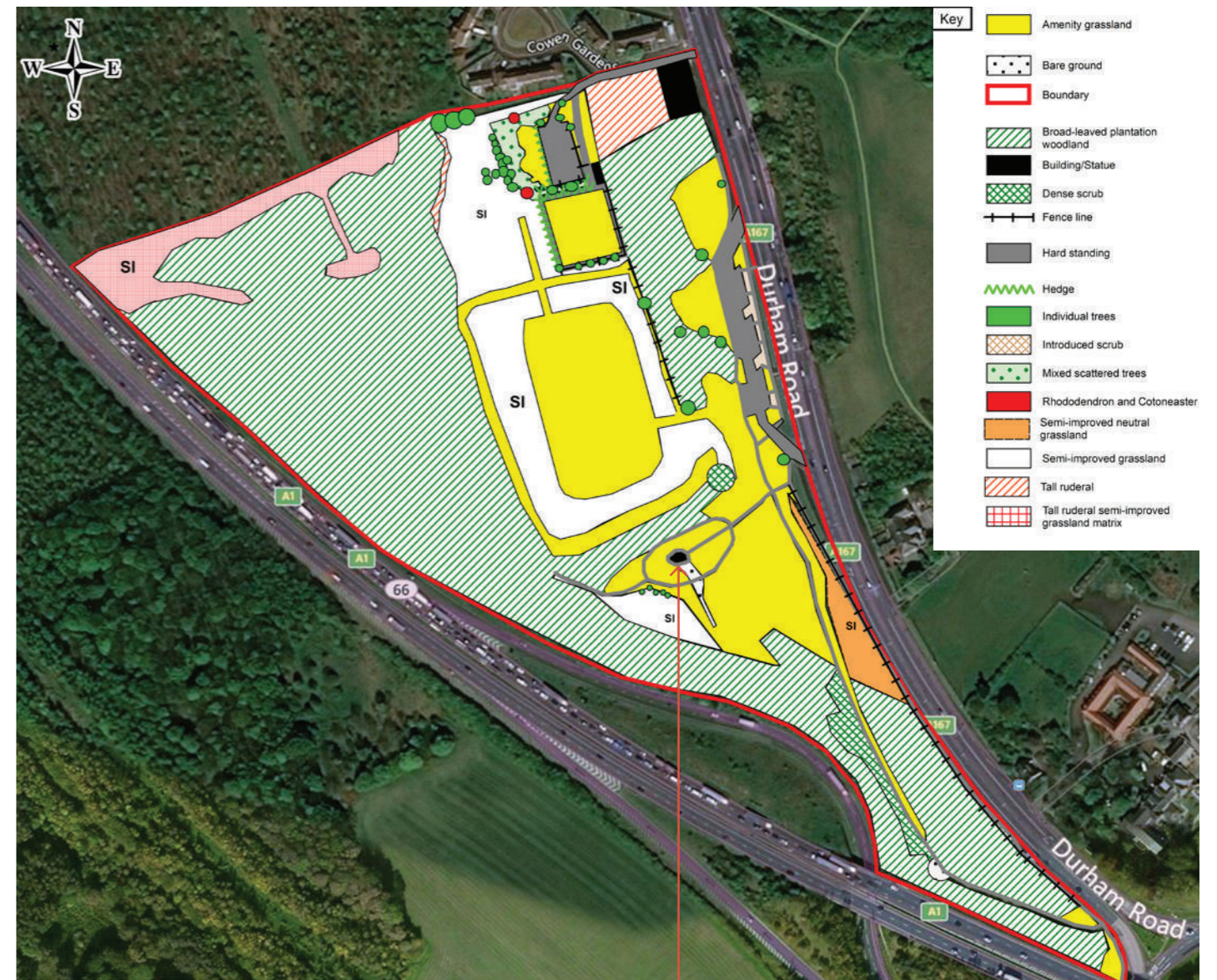
Topographic Survey Plan

Refer to:
Drawings D556-001 and D566-002 Topographic
Survey by Landform Surveys



Current Tree Cover and Species Mix

Refer to:
D566 Angel Gateshead - With Highways England
removals



Phase 1 Habitat Plan

Refer to:
Phase 1 Habitat Map V02 by EcoNorth

Visual Amenity

The following pages capture the existing views and quality of the visual amenity within the immediate setting of the Angel, with the location of each shown on the plan opposite. Each view is labelled with its location and direction, which is followed by text to articulate any issues or opportunities.

Setting aside the obvious visual appeal of the Angel itself, the visual amenity of the site itself is limited, with no cohesion throughout the immediate setting of the Angel. There are a number of distinct spaces within the setting which do not relate to each other visually or physically, and as such, do not allow a quality experience to be gained. Visitors very rarely do more than arrive in the car park, walk up to and around the Angel, take 'the photo' and then leave. These visitors only use the area immediately between the car park and the Angel and the space at the foot of the Angel (for the purposes of this report, named 'Angel Space').

The local community tend to walk, with or without dogs, around the sports pitches and into the woodland areas to the northwest of the Angel, utilising the informal footpaths which have developed. It seems that appreciation of the Angel by the local community is often done at a slight distance from locations such as Team Colliery (LWS) or around the sports pitches, rather than walking right up to or past it as the 'visitors' do.

Opportunities therefore arise in terms of providing a wider offer to the 'visitors', extending their stay at the site, and providing more variety in terms of views of the Angel and experiencing the wider site, its woodland and its ecology. For the local community, opportunities arise in a variety of walking routes, further extending the ecological experience and closer appreciation of the Angel.

A key purpose of this piece of work is also to determine the extent to which wider views should or could be reinstated, to allow mid and longer distance views of the Angel as originally intended. This however, will need to be balanced alongside the ecological value of any vegetation which would need to be removed to open up the views, and the overall character of the site to be determined. The 3 design options in section 3 consider character further, and the marked-up views on pages 17 - 22 articulate how vegetation removal may open up views and the extent of required changes in vegetation.



Angel of the North, 1998
Ref: found at <http://www.antonygormley.com/>





1 The preferred photo opportunity of the Angel (facing north). Scar very prominent in this view. Little or no visual cohesion of this space in which visitors spent a good percentage of their time.



2 Views of "photo opportunity" location adjacent to memorial area (facing west). Incongruous vegetation cuts through this space which limits the use of the immediate 'Angel Space'.



4 Views of informal paths and drainage ditches within the existing woodland (facing mainly north-west). Monotonous vegetation with limited variety or interest, in plantation style little or no understorey, glades, or variety of vegetation. Paths also very limited in their appeal - surfacing.



3 Memorial area (facing west). Located immediately adjacent to 'the photo' location and visitors are confined by vegetation in very close proximity.



5 Views from informal paths along verge through woodland open up during winter period, towards the A1 (facing west). Sudden drop with no clear path at this location. Uncertain if access is allowed onto embankments - gaps in vegetation invite trespass with no clear route into woodland north of the Angel.



6 View from foot of the Angel towards Team Colliery (LWS), facing east. Clear view towards Team Colliery (LWS). Gradual changes to roadside vegetation could improve this view and improve the experience at the entrance to the site for cars, pedestrians and residents close by. Direct pedestrian connections to Team Colliery (LWS) could be considered.



7 Entrance to car park on Durham Road (facing North). Street clutter dominates, with little design to car park edges considered.



8 View from A167, Durham Road. Angel almost completely obscured by roadside vegetation - improvement to this edge could reveal framed views of the Angel along Durham Road and increase anticipation on arrival at entrance.



9 Southern access into the site (facing north), Durham Road to the east. Angel completely obscured from this junction with no sense of arrival possible, and uninviting entrance point. Could easily be improved as part of a wider circulation route.



10 View from the foot of the Angel across the A1 (facing south-west). A1 completely obscured when these trees are in leaf, meaning foot of Angel is not visible from passing traffic as originally intended. Partial removals may open up views but large scale removal would be required to facilitate continuous views from this main arrival route north into Newcastle.



11 View from sports pitches (facing south). Mound and foot of Angel are obscured, meaning connection between 'Angel Space' and adjacent pitches is lost. This could easily be addressed through vegetation management and sensitive restoration to reveal the mound and reconnect these spaces, without an adverse impact on wildlife and ecological connectivity.



12 View from the adjacent Team Colliery Local Wildlife Site (LWS), facing west towards rural Gateshead. Car park visible in foreground. Shrub vegetation obscures mound and immediate Angel environs. View could be better framed, with careful removals of some vegetation and proposed planting to screen car park from this location. Physical connection between Team Colliery (LWS) and Angel could be improved by facilitating access to the roadside path. Highways England funding (£5K) has been secured to facilitate a limited programme of scrub/tree removal at Team Colliery as part of grassland restoration proposals and to improved/ expanded views of Angel. Works to be delivered winter 2019/2020.



13 View from Team Colliery (LWS), facing east. Some variety in view currently but slight changes in management of vegetation could frame views to surrounding landscape and create further interest.

Existing Routes and Circulation

The plan to the right shows the existing paths, routes and circulation throughout the site. There is currently little variation within routes throughout the woodland areas, with only 1 or 2 informal paths which have developed along straight gaps in woodland planting parallel to drainage ditches. Mown paths are provided around the sports pitch. Tarmac paths are present up to and around the Angel, and parallel to Durham Road, to the southern entrance point. There are a good number of informal routes as well as the Team Colliery Waggonway (PROW Bridleway) within and around the Team Colliery (LWS). The problem is that these routes are not linked together and as such do not provide a cohesive circulation offer around the wider site.

Access from The Angel towards the Team Colliery (LWS) is possible but not easy for pedestrians. There is a surface level pedestrian crossing offering east-west crossing of the busy A167 road, however this does not link to a convenient access point to Team Colliery (LWS). The nearest access points are to the north opposite Cowan Gardens, or to the south via the Angel View pub. Pedestrians have made their own, more direct 'desire line' connections by climbing a low wall and crossing a metal railing. There is potential for this to be formalised and improved to ease this route for pedestrians, however the ground levels are very challenging.

The current quality of the paths themselves is mixed, with some paths well maintained in tarmac, others muddy tracks or informal desire lines which perhaps should be formalised in some areas. Routes through the woodland spaces are currently not formalised at all and as a result stray into highway embankments in some locations, which could pose potential safety issues as well.

There is an opportunity to provide a connected hierarchy of paths linking the key spaces – Team Colliery (LWS), Angel Space and the Angel Woodlands – to provide a varied and interesting circulation offer taking in the key spaces around the Angel, whilst providing a local resource for the community. This would allow visitors an opportunity to spend more time visiting the Angel and could provide a wider walking route taking in the woodland and grassland habitats.

Right:
Plan showing existing routes and circulation



LEGEND

-  PROW Bridleway/ Team Colliery Waggonway
-  PROW Footpath
-  Underpass
-  Hard surface path - bitmac
-  Hard surface path - grass overgrown
-  Gravel/ grass/ mud path
-  Main desire line route
-  Secondary desire line route
-  The Scar
-  Mown grass path
-  Circulation hot spot

Experience

The existing range of experiences at the Angel is currently limited, and is focussed very much on either locals dog walkers or visitors arriving to see the Angel and take the 'key photo'. Many of the visitors experience a very small area of the site and do not necessarily linger or take in the wider setting, and as such experience only a very narrow view of the Angel.

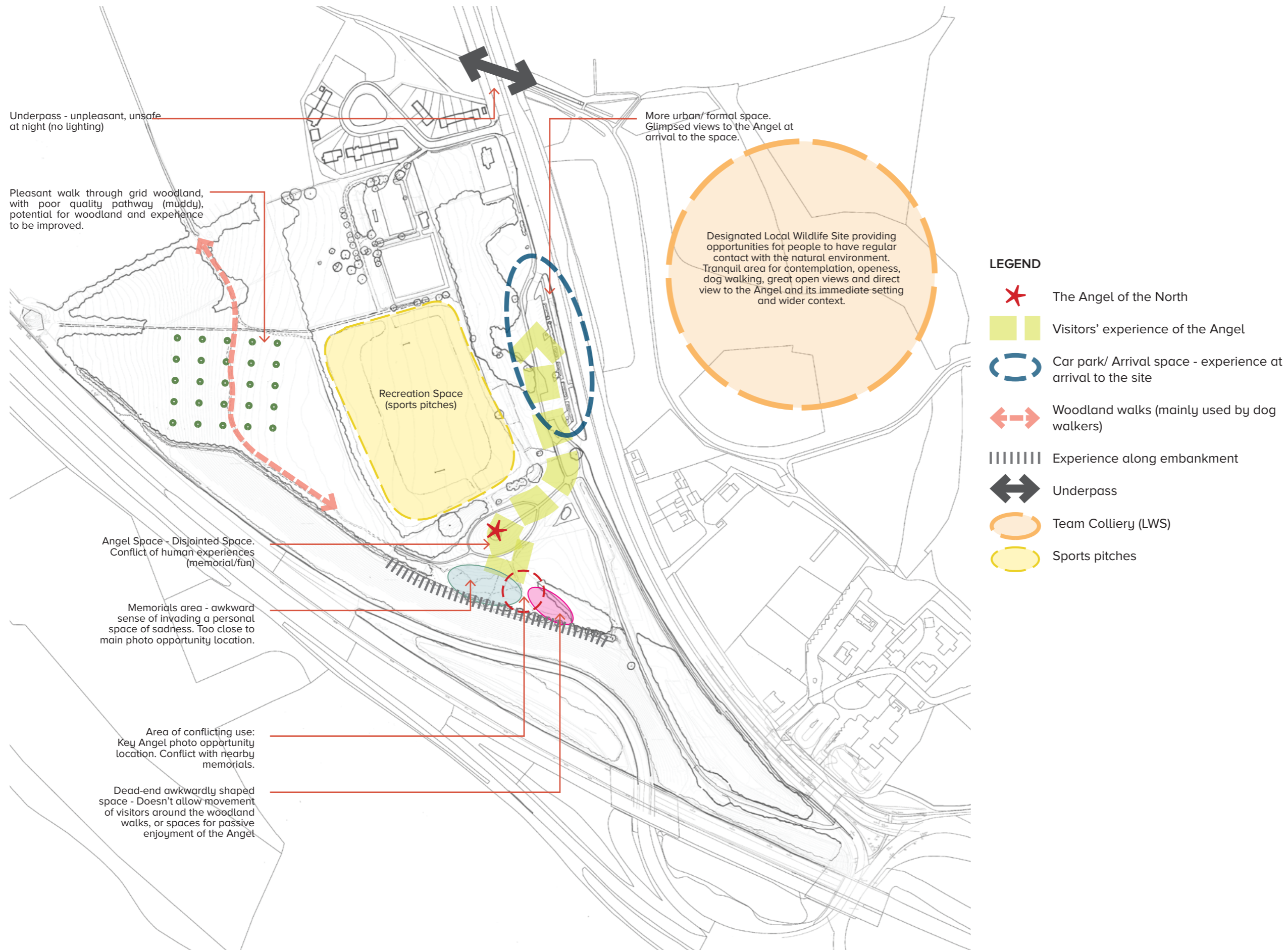
The space immediately around the foot of the Angel is currently disjointed with little or no cohesion and there are some awkward and heavily eroded spaces between patches of vegetation. There is little opportunity to stand at a distance from the Angel and view it face on from further than around 50m away. The memorials which have appeared informally at the foot of the Angel are currently in very close proximity to the key visitors' location and in direct conflict with people taking pictures.

The opportunity arises here to rationalise vegetation and open views of the Angel from outside the immediate proximity setting and to widen the appeal to visitors. There is also an opportunity to tackle the conflict between users who see the space as a place for personal 'memorials' and those who see the space as a place for celebration and provide more breathing space between the spaces. Rationalising the vegetation would also create an opportunity for the space to the north towards the football pitch which is currently disconnected from the Angel by maturing vegetation with no views to the Angel.

The wider setting areas are perhaps better used by the local community, particularly dog walkers who venture into the surrounding woodland plantation areas, often following the informal desire lines which have appeared. The opportunity arises here to provide a range of paths, some informal, some more formalised, to take in a wider area, and to manage and develop vegetation for the benefit of biodiversity as well as variety of experience. Glades, rides and possible natural play elements would certainly provide new and interesting features within the landscape and encourage more active use of the space, appreciation of the landscape and views of wider Gateshead, as well as encourage passing visitors to spend more time at the site.

There are some locations within the wider setting which could be described as uncomfortable, such as the Durham Road underpass, and certain spaces within the woodland plantation which are overgrown and dark, paths are not clear and antisocial behaviour is evident. The homogenous nature of the plantation and the lack of features can also mean that orientating oneself can sometimes be difficult. Management of vegetation to open up views of the Angel from within the woodland areas would help to address these issues.

Right:
Plan showing existing experiences at the site.



Furniture and Interpretation

The following plan and images show the location and quality of street furniture and interpretation around the Angel and highlight the opportunity to consider a wider, more cohesive suite of furniture that would align with and reinforce the enhanced landscape character of the site. This would also offer further opportunities for interaction, appreciation and understanding of the wider site. Proposed furniture to be simple, visually recessive and used judiciously.

Opportunities:

- Opportunities for more sitting spaces with views towards the Angel
- Use of natural materials to fit within the naturalistic setting of the site and create a united design language
- Signage/Interpretation could be improved



Sculpted bollards designed by Antony Gormley



Bike rack - Inadequate, chipped off paint



Bin - vandalized/poor condition



There are only 2 benches at the site, despite large visitor numbers. Benches are located near the car park and are in poor condition



Signage - adequate condition (scratched) but potential for enhancement.



Angel of the north commemorative plaque



Site Analysis Conclusions

Key Opportunities and Characteristics to Maintain or Improve:

- Strong visitor appeal and popular destination due to well-known and popular Angel
- Extend overall visitor offer through improvements to circulation, paths, natural play and variety of landscape features to be experienced.
- Improve biodiversity value of the site through the restoration, enhancement and positive management of existing habitats and features and interpretation/engagement of visitors,
- Open up and reveal views of the Angel from key locations to reinstate the intention of the piece while maintaining a balance in vegetation.
- Provision of a good quality local community resource with safe and attractive walking routes (short, medium, long and connecting to wider path network), connections with local schools and community groups (possible opportunity for 'Friends of' group)
- Consider opportunities for activities or potential revenues from the site, such as woodland management (coppicing, timber, woodcraft, workshops and educational visits) or possible location for a 'coffee hut' or small visitors' centre.













Section 2 Design Concepts

The following pages outline 3 design concepts for the site.

Proposed Path Network

The drawing opposite shows a suggested path network which could be applied to any chosen design option to allow improved circulation around the setting of the Angel and connect to wider spaces such as Team Colliery (LWS) and woodland to the north, while linking up with the Team Colliery Waggonway and existing rights of way network. This might require some level of regrading to facilitate accessibility of new pathways.

LEGEND

-  PROW Bridleway/ Team Colliery Waggonway
-  PROW Footpath
-  Existing Underpass
-  Improved accessible route
-  Main direct route through woodland (connection to PROW)
-  Existing route
-  Circulation route through woodland
-  Proposed Secondary route/ grass paths/ connecting paths
-  Local use route (connection from Harlow Green residential area), route to Team Colliery (LWS)
-  Visitors to the Angel - short stay route
-  Visitors to the Angel - long stay route
-  Retained existing view corridor - to be maintained as grasses/ low vegetation to retain view corridor



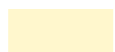
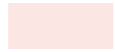


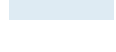


Proposed Views of the Angel

The adjacent diagram shows potential proposals on improving and opening views to the Angel in a radius of 0.5 km from the Angel.

Further views from the A1 at larger radius from the Angel would require careful consideration in relation to Highways England proposals to the A1 highway. Suggestions could be made for future wood clearance/ trimming of wider area to the north, along the A1 highway.

LEGEND




-  Vegetation to be removed (Highways England proposals)
-  Vegetation suggested for management, or removal to open up views to the Angel
-  Views to the Angel when driving north on the A167
-  Views to the Angel when driving north on the A1
-  Views to the Angel when driving south on A167
-  Views to the Angel from sports pitch
-  Glimpsed views from woodland and A1



Proposed Improvement of Views

The following pages show proposals of small-scale changes in vegetation which could easily improve local views of the Angel and reveal it in the immediate surrounding landscape. Suggestions have been made showing removal, management and in some cases proposed areas of vegetation, to reveal, frame and enhance views. Other options exist as well, depending on the design options, followed on pages 23 to 32.

LEGEND

-  Proposed new vegetation
-  Vegetation to be managed
-  Vegetation to be removed

Overgrown trees and shrubs between the Angel setting and car park obstruct views of the mound that the Angel is standing on and the base of the sculpture.

Removal or pruning of this area would open up a key initial viewpoint for the visitors arriving at the Angel. As stressed by Gormley, the setting is just as important as the structure itself and adds to the overall look and feel of the sculpture, so it is important that this can be seen.

The grasses and plants around these shrubs could remain in place and possibly added to with wildflowers as this provides a foreground setting and contributes to biodiversity variety.

Poles and wires could be considered for relocation underground for better long-term maintenance and undisturbed views of the Angel.

VIEWS FROM CAR PARK



VIEW FROM CAR PARK SPACE



Many visitors to the Angel arrive by road and choose to sit in their car to observe it. Design and maintenance improvements to the carpark would create a greatly enhanced visitor experience in the car park.

VIEW FROM BENCHES



The only two provided benches are located in the carpark, and are heavily used indicating under-provision of seating given the high visitor numbers. Overgrown vegetation partially obstructs views from here.

VIEW FROM WOODLAND



Views to and from the A1 and rural Gateshead could be visible from this point in the woodland. The area is overgrown and maturing trees mean that views are being lost, in conflict with Gormley's original intention.

Areas within this woodland are full of litter and appear to be unsafe due to the lack of light and permeability mean that views are being lost. If the area was thinned out and made more accessible, a woodland ride and glades could be created along this gap. There would be opportunities to create trails and walkways within vegetation around the Angel.

VIEW FROM FOOTBALL PITCH



The football pitch at the rear of the Angel is still used frequently. This area originally had clear views of the landscape before the trees separating the park and the pitch matured. This area also leads to woodland to the west. In order to see the lower half of the Angel and its setting, vegetation could be removed or cut back to reinstate the connection. However, the existing vegetation provides valuable shelter to the exposed pitches from prevailing wind which should be considered. Long grasses and wildflower around the perimeter of the pitch would add colour and seasonal interest to the landscape while retaining open views, and could be managed and maintained for biodiversity.

VIEWS FROM DURHAM ROAD

The planting behind the fence provides a good verge and foreground setting on approach to the site entrance, and could be managed to improve biodiversity.

Some weeding, removal, pruning and potentially new planting can augment this aspect of the site boundary and create an attractive setting for the Angel. The permeability of the wildflower and grass creates a visible boundary whilst also still allowing the Angel to be seen through it.

Large over-grown trees and bushes line the site boundary all the way along Durham Road. This means that the Angel is obscured on approach and visitors can sometimes end up missing the turn in to the entrance.

As vehicles drive past, the sculpture suddenly appears in the view, rather than being a part of the journey up to it. By cutting back vegetation and on-going maintenance of woody vegetation as a hedge with occasional hedgerow trees and rotational coppice woodland incorporating retained standard trees, views to the Angel will be improved, whilst allowing vegetation to retain its value and function in supporting biodiversity and ecological connectivity.



'View looking north from A167 Durham Road

This boundary also acts as an introduction to the site for pedestrians. Fence could be removed as it doesn't serve particular purpose. If replaced, could also be replicated at various other points so that the park is coherent in terms of materials, character and style.

Improved road signage is needed to welcome vehicles to the site. At present, there are small signs along the road that have been vandalised and aren't very clear to oncoming traffic.

Trees on either side of this walkway have reached a height where visitors can't see what is to either side. A buffer between this walk and the main road is needed but the entrance could be opened up further with edge and shrub vegetation so that glimpses of the Angel can be seen from the roadside and the route is more appealing.

The trees to the left of the path are a former hedgerow but have grown to a considerable height over time. Pruning this area would make the Angel visible as a glimpse view from the roundabout and on approach from Durham Road.

The bus stop at the centre of the image is the designated public transport drop off for The Angel. It isn't clearly signed for visitors to know where their stop is and once the passenger has stepped off the bus the Angel can't be seen. Improved signage and visibility could be beneficial to visitors at this point.



View looking north from A167 Durham Road

When travelling up Durham Road from the A1/A167 roundabout there is an entrance to the site. On first impression, this looks like more of a barricade than an entrance as the path doesn't seem to lead anywhere.

Visitors who don't know the area wouldn't know that this path leads to the Angel as there is no signage and the sculpture isn't at all visible from this point.

If it is intended as a pedestrian entrance and a route to the Angel, an improved pathway, signage and visibility would create a more welcoming space.

VIEWS FROM THE TEAM COLLIERY (LWS)

The Angel can just be seen through the trees from the Team Colliery (LWS) on the east side of Durham Road. Although the ground level at the top of the meadows is relatively high, the sculpture is still obstructed by planting.

The vegetation shown here blocks both the view of the Angel and the Gateshead countryside beyond to the west. Sensitive management of this vegetation will allow variety of height, species and biodiversity.

Looking westward from the Angel itself, Team Colliery (LWS) is partially blocked from view by this same run of trees. Consideration of reduction or selective removal of some trees could be of benefit in revealing the meadows character.



The Angel of The North appearing through the trees.



The shrubs highlighted on the left are all of the same species. Removal of small areas and management of edge vegetation would allow this key view to be opened up towards The Angel and wider rural views of Gateshead.

Sorbus tree to be retained - tree of local significance

Proposed new vegetation to screen the view of the Car Park from the Team Colliery (LWS).

From further up the hill at Team Colliery (LWS) the trees highlighted here remain a barrier to views out across the Gateshead countryside. Management of this vegetation to reduce its height and allow glimpse views from key locations would be beneficial.

VIEWS FROM FOOT OF ANGEL

This cluster of trees flanks the walkway originating at the roundabout. Together with the shrubs to the right this creates an awkward grassy space opposite the scar that serves little purpose and is confusing for visitors.

The upper parts of the trees and shrubs highlighted below screen views from the A1. The mound that the Angel sits on is a key part of the piece intended by Gormley to be visible from the vehicular approaches. A cautious approach to tree removals should be taken, coordinated with Highways England proposed tree removals.



Edge vegetation including scrub and low level grasses/ plants provides colour and textural contrasts at the base of the mound.

Design Options

The following pages show the key principals as well as the pros and cons of the three design options: 'The Hidden Angel', 'Framing the Angel' and 'Revealing the Angel'.

Key Principles of Option 1 - 'The Hidden Angel'

- Retention of majority of woodland areas, with management and maintenance operations to limit overall woodland height to improve current issues of visibility to the Angel
- Improved biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- Consideration of management and uses of coppice woodland. Coppice woodland is known to be a good absorber of CO2 emissions.
- Potential for woodland management and coppicing training courses to create revenue, as well as provide educational resource for local schools and colleges
- Significant improvements of public amenity for local users and visitors, resulting from positive management of the woodlands.
- Woodcraft opportunities for small scale local businesses to make and sell products from coppiced materials
- Forest School opportunities for local primary and secondary schools, developing skills within the existing local education system and offer a wider range of curriculum opportunities – longer term potential to set up a centre for Forest School, Woodcraft and Woodland Management training.

Pros:

- Retention of woodland in line with Gateshead Council's policies
- Improvement to biodiversity and variety of woodland within the site and introduction of glades
- Improvements to public amenity
- Providing seasonal interest of orange and red-purple autumn colour from certain trees, which relate well to the character of the Angel.
- Retention of sense of detachment and tranquility
- Potential to reduce overall height of vegetation with possible revelation of views and introduction of glades

Cons:

- Opening up of views will be on a limited scale
- Cost of coppice management will potentially be high, but may be off-set by resulting revenue
- Realistically, the current species mix does not suit large scale coppicing so woodland would need to be managed first to allow this to be achieved.



Above:
Plan showing key principles of Woodland Park

Key Principles of Option 2 - 'Framing the Angel'

- Rationalisation of woodland immediately surrounding the Angel to remove awkward and disjointed spaces
- Rationalisation of existing woodland surrounding the site in order to create a mosaic of habitats which allow the height of vegetation to be managed to maximise views of the Angel whilst retaining woodland edge, and shrub and scrub vegetation types (reducing the areas of mature woodland trees)
- Retention of woodland to the north of the immediate Angel setting (within Highways England ownership) and management as coppice to open up wider ranging views to the Angel whilst maintaining woodland cover
- Consideration of management and uses of coppice woodland. Coppice woodland is known to be a good absorber of CO2 emissions.
- Forest School opportunities for local primary and secondary schools, developing skills within the existing local education system and offer a wider range of curriculum opportunities – longer term potential to set up a centre for Forest School, Woodcraft and Woodland Management training.

Pros:

- Retention and management of some areas of woodland in line with Gateshead Council's policies
- Opportunities to reinstate earlier views.
- Good level of improvement to biodiversity of site throughout
- Revelation of views to the Angel from the Durham Road, A1 and around the foot of the Angel
- Variety of landscape features and experiences for both visitors and local users
- Most flexible option as allows both retention of woodland area, improvement of biodiversity and experience, as well as opening up views to the Angel

Cons:

- Cost of improvement to diversity of habitat will potentially be high, but may be facilitated in the main part by Highways England work
- Opening up of views will be at a local scale only
- A cautious approach will be required to the detailed design of woodland removals to ensure the space does not become overly dominated by traffic intrusion and lose tranquility



Above:
Plan showing key principles of Ecological Park

Key Principles of Option 3 - 'Revealing the Angel'

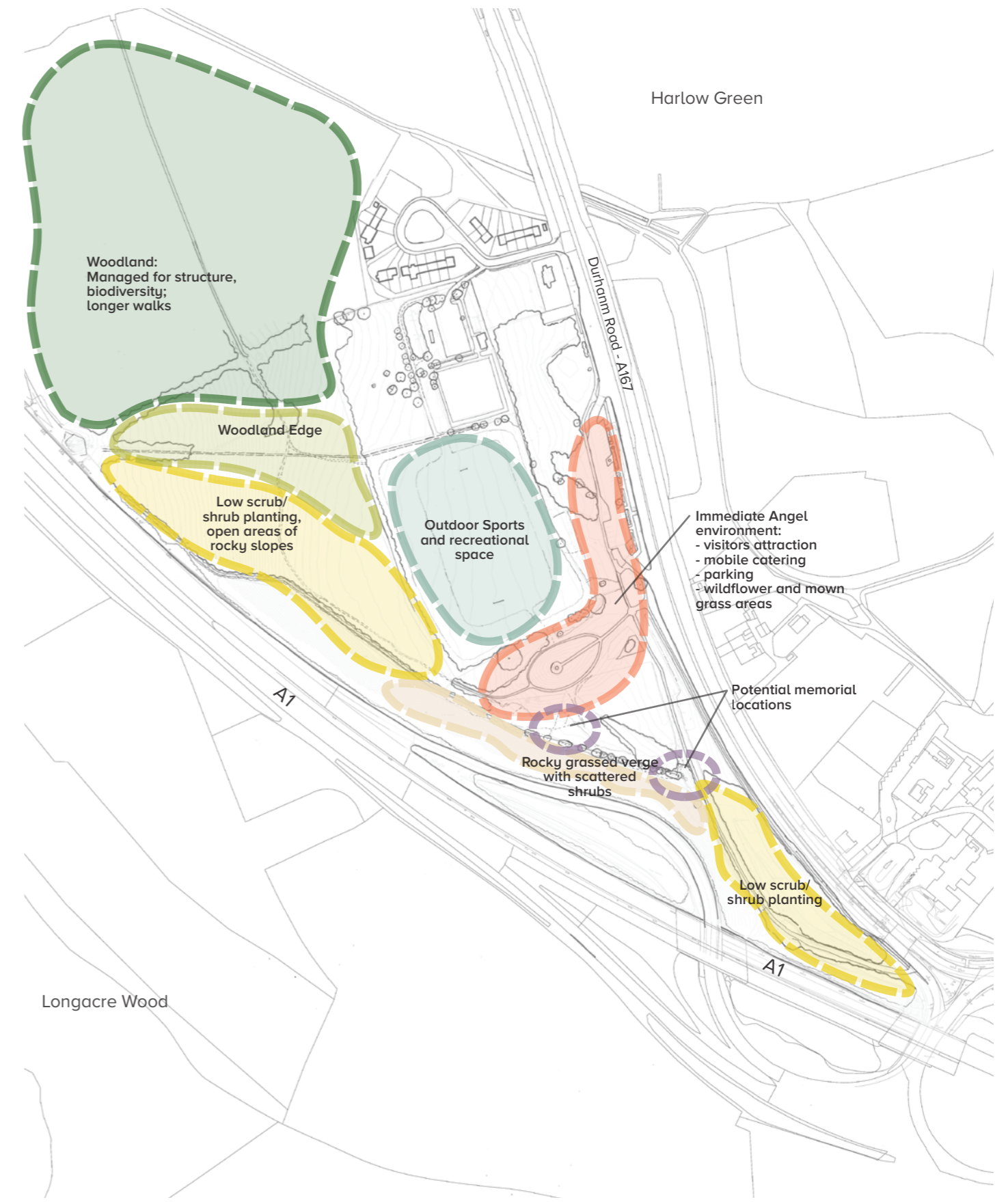
- Removal of majority of existing woodland plantation areas to reveal the Angel in close and wider range views as initially conceived by the artist.
- Proposed low shrub species on the fell on which the Angel stands
- Return the site to its original character as intended when the piece was commissioned
- On-going vegetation management to maintain the character of the site and manage natural succession
- Provision of a new alternative habitat to the site

Pros:

- Artist's intention for the site, mound and piece
- Allows wider open views of the Angel from the A1
- Wood products could be available for use as a buy product

Cons:

- Loss of woodland vegetation throughout the site. (Potential for compensatory planting elsewhere in the borough of Gateshead)
- Significant negative impact on existing biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- The removal of vegetation to open up views would lead to loss of amenity and sense of tranquility at the Angel and the site itself. Opening up the site to the surrounding traffic would significantly change the character of the site leading to less sheltered and tranquil space which would have unpleasant impact to visitors experience.
- Replacement of woodland with alternative habitat will potentially be high in costs.



Above:
Plan showing key principles of Upland Park

Elements which could be included with all options

- Strong network of paths and routes connecting the Angel with the wider areas, with a circular route taking in Team Colliery (LWS), woodland/scrub walks, and connecting to the wider rights of way network.
- Informal natural play elements throughout woodland or woodland edge areas, utilising log seating, timber stepping stones, timber balance beams, woven willow/hazel structures, den building, willow/hazel sculpture
- Possible coffee hut or small visitors centre within space to the north of the car park.
- Possible provision of a toilet to allow community and school groups to use the site for educational purposes.
- Physical connection from the Team Colliery (LWS) to footway on the north side of Durham Road to allow more direct route to follow the desire line and view.
- Carefully selected viewpoint locations with management of vegetation to maintain these key views.
- Rationalisation and improvements to suite of street furniture and fence boundaries throughout the site to provide cohesion and reinforce chosen character.
- Reinstatement of scar area.
- Improvements to car park to align with chosen character of site.

Section 3 Design Options











Design Options

The following pages provide narrative, sketch proposals and precedent images for the 3 proposed design options which have evolved following research, site analysis and design development.

Option 1: 'The Hidden Angel'

Keep existing vegetation and enhance biodiversity

LEGEND

-  Existing woodland to be retained and managed (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Existing Woodland to be managed as coppice (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Proposed woodland edge planting
-  Proposed scattered shrubs and meadow grassland
-  Meadow grassland/ rough grass edge
-  Proposed Wildflower edge
-  Mown grass
-  Proposed Highways England removal and replanting - due to Birtley to Coalhouse scheme
-  Potential location for new cafe building
-  Indicative location for electric car charging point





Woodland Park: create scalloped edge to woodland to enhance opportunities for variety of structure and species diversity. Scattered shrub within meadow/ rough grass to vary habitats and experience.



Coppicing of woodland to manage and maintain for revenue as well as managing the overall height of woodland to manage visibility of the Angel more carefully. NB species suitability for coppice needs to be considered.



Management of woodland to enhance shrub edge planting increased within woodland to improve structure and diversity of woodland.



Informal paths through woodland, with some 'soft' surfaced paths forming rides and passing through glades.





Woodland edge habitat around sports pitches to increase biodiversity and improve quality and character of woodland.

Option 1: 'The Hidden Angel'

This option is the least invasive in terms of vegetation removal and suggests small scale intervention rather than wholesale change of the existing environment. The intention of the design is to manage the existing plantation wood to become a more diverse woodland with more varied edges, woodland edge vegetation, shrub and scrub layers and coppicing of existing woodland where practical. Ground flora and grassland regimes are also likely to be included at the edges of woodland areas. This option does not provide widespread improvement to views of the Angel.

Option 2: 'Framing The Angel'
Compromise option

LEGEND

-  Existing woodland to be retained and managed (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Existing Woodland to be managed as coppice (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Proposed native structure planting with taller woodland species limited/ carefully located
-  Proposed scrub mosaic including groups of taller species carefully located
-  Proposed native shrub planting
-  Proposed scattered trees/ scrub/ mosaic
-  Meadow grassland/ rough grass edge
-  Proposed Wildflower edge
-  Mown grass
-  Proposed Highway's England removal and replanting area.
-  Potential location for new cafe building
-  Indicative location for electric car charging point

Northern areas of existing woodland to be managed as coppice to reduce height and reveal views from further distances.

Glades within the woodland edges to allow open views to, from and around the Angel, which encourage ground flora habitats to improve woodland.

Mosaic of natural habitats with scalloped edges, varied structure, diversity of species. Managed to increase views and reduce overall height of woodland.

Removal of woodland vegetation in close proximity to Angel, to allow more open views, and allow grass mound to be revealed as key part of the piece. Also allows visual connection to the sports pitch to be reinstated.

Pull back woodland planting to Durham Road and replace with wildflower edge to enhance sense of arrival and improve habitat diversity.

Glimpse views to the Angel from locations through removal of key areas of woodland, which then open up to reveal striking views from selected areas.

Potential focal point within car park

Indicative location for electric car charging point

Partial glimpses of the Angel from arrival at the car park to allow the key views to be revealed at 'designed' points.

Open up views to Angel from arrival point on Durham Road with removal of incongruous woodland strip

Celebration and Reflection Space - integrated seating with option for wood and stone engravings.





Wildflower edges to woodland and roadsides to increase biodiversity whilst providing visual impact at key points.



Informal paths through woodland, with some 'soft' surfaced paths forming rides and passing through glades.



Woodland edge planting and management of ground flora to improve biodiversity, structure and variety of woodland habitats.



Coppicing of woodland to manage and maintain for revenue as well as the overall height of woodland to manage visibility of the Angel.



Scattered scrub vegetation within rough grass and meadow areas provides further biodiversity opportunities.



Woodland glades provide ground flora and variety experience for the visitor.



Mown paths through grass and wildflowers provide biodiversity opportunities, whilst improving connectivity and visitors experience.



Woodland Park: create scalloped edge to woodland to enhance opportunities for variety of structure and species diversity. Scattered shrub within meadow. As with the Woodland Park option: rough grass to vary habitats and experience.



This design option utilises the necessary removal of vegetation for the Highways England Birtley to Coalhouse scheme as the starting point and important opportunity to provide an ecologically improved and more cohesive area within the setting of the Angel. The replacement planting can be designed as a native structure mix including limited taller species in specific areas, which will ensure the ultimate height of vegetation is controlled, therefore allowing the most key areas around the Angel to have significantly fewer and better placed large scale trees which obscure views and are at odds with the intended visibility of the piece.










The management of woodland plantation to the north, outside of the boundary for this project, but in the ownership of Highways England, can be directed to allow coppicing. A mosaic of natural habitats can then be allowed to develop within the immediate setting of the Angel which ensure better visibility of the piece but also provide a varied and interesting landscape through which to walk and appreciate biodiversity, but which also allows the understanding of the open and wild landscape, the industrial heritage and the existing character of surrounding Gateshead, so important to the intention of the piece.

This option offers strong walking and circulation potential through a varied and interesting landscape with wide ranging views types (short, medium and long distance), wide biodiversity potential and a strong offer for both visitor and local community alike. This option offers a compromise between the wishes of the artist and achieving important ecological objectives.

In addition to ecological benefits, Option 2 offers a compromise between the very open approach in Option 3 which requires significant felling, and the retained woodland approach as seen in Option 1.

Option 3: 'Revealing The Angel'
Significant felling required

LEGEND

-  Existing woodland to be retained and managed (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Proposed woodland edge planting (in agreement with Highways England)
-  Scattered shrubs and meadow grassland
-  Scrub and boulders (with low shrubs and grasses)
-  Meadow grassland
-  Mown grass
-  Proposed Highway's England removal and replanting area.
-  Potential location for new cafe building
-  Indicative location for electric car charging point



Potential focal point within car park

Indicative location for electric car charging point

Replacement of woodland with scrub planting to produce "upland" landscape character and to be managed to maintain low height of vegetation to allow revelation of views as would have been possible on completion of the piece in 1998.

Removal of all significant woodland around the Angel to allow full revelation of the piece in all close range and some long range views.

Open views on arrival at car park due to removal of majority of mature woodland vegetation.

Celebration and Reflection Space - integrated seating with option for wood and stone engravings.

Pull back woodland planting from Durham Road to allow open views from key route.

Longer distance views returned, following removal of woodland obscuring views from the A1.



Open nature of rocky slopes to allow open views to the Angel.



Scrub and ground cover planting to create open upland character to land surrounding the Angel.



Open views would be possible from Upland Park to west to rural Gateshead



Grass and upland vegetation



Scattered shrub and scrub vegetation.



It has been made very clear by the Artist, Antony Gormley, that the Angel as a piece of art is a response to the industrial heritage of the area, with the mound remaining from the former colliery forming a big part of the understanding of the Angel. He has also indicated that the current maturing woodland was not originally part of the intended setting of the Angel and that in his mind, the loss of views due to woodland trees developing is a problem. The piece was intended to be exposed and widely visible.

Gormley has explained that the gritty character of the Angel and its setting are at their best when the rain is pouring, the wind is howling and local people are still walking their dogs at its feet. His intention was to remember and honour the local industrial heritage and to help reinvigorate the region as a focus for hope and ambition. In the piece he explores the relationship between the fell, the arrival of coal mining, and the resulting mound being a reminder of that.

As such this more radical option responds to the Artist's intentions and in this option which proposes the most dramatic change to the site. The proposed character is that of an upland area with woodland vegetation being concerned only with scrub and shrub species, with no little or no woodland scale trees which could in time interrupt the views to the Angel. This design option responds directly to the Artist's original intention with the piece seen clearly in an open, stark landscape at the urban edge..

Gormley has indicated his preference that any potential introduction of visitor facilities should be done in a very low-key manner, such as a simple toilet facility in a hut or shack structure, rather than a full visitor centre centre which could be at odds with the character of the setting.

The proposed Routes and Circulation suggestions which help to form a cohesive environment around the Angel and offer a wider community use are still relevant to this option. Similarly, there are opportunities for improved biodiversity with management of the proposed vegetation to be of benefit to the local area. There will be significant removal of vegetation, the longer-term management of the area being aimed at a more open and naturalised landscape on the 'fell'. This could conflict with council policies, attract public criticism and the loss of tranquility and views to traffic could also be a negative factor. However, there could be potential for compensatory planting elsewhere in the borough of Gateshead.

Section 4

Focussed Design Issues and Design Interventions

Design Interventions

Quick Wins

- Improvement of localised views through vegetation management
- Reinstate grass to scar and plan for a better long term solution.
- Removal of broken, damaged and failing street furniture and fencing, replaced with new furniture. Additional furniture to be proposed.

Medium Term

- Thinning of plantation woodland and chipping of arisings to create informal paths
- simple toilet facilities (this will enable school visits so parking should be reviewed alongside)
- Provision of walking routes leaflet/ signage/online information to encourage use
- Improved path circulation and new 'Celebration and reflection' area with integrated seating and options for personalised engravings.

Long Term

- Expanded visitor facilities such as coffee hut with toilet facilities to potentially attract school groups and other public groups
- Natural play areas within wider landscape
- Formation of Friends group to encourage ownership within local community

Celebration and Reflection Space

A dedicated Reflection Space could be provided instead of the current 'ad hoc' placing of flowers and memorials.

Consideration could be given to alternative provision for remembering loved ones, for example using digital technology to avoid physical interventions, or offering an integrated space where name carving could be offered in an appropriate and considered way. The space could be located slightly apart from the hustle and bustle of general visitors and could include integrated seating.

Any physical design intervention would need to be understated and appropriate - there is high risk of compromising the setting with poor design and workmanship.

Such an offer would need to accommodate large number of carvings/ plaques which could become unattractive without great care and would require an ongoing management and payment system, and revenue would need to cover costs.

Carvings / plaques would need to be clearly time-limited to allow ongoing renewals and repair. Longevity is a key consideration, for example could be replaced in entirety every 10 years.

Celebration and Reflection space - Location Options

Option 1 - Designed celebration and reflection space.
(Preferred- located south east of the Angel)

Pros:

- Potential of regrading to accommodate an integrated seating (such as amphitheatrical seating) which would respond well to the lack of seating on site and could integrate opportunities for personalised engravings in a controlled and attractive way
- Located further away from main visitors' space and key photo spot for Angel, so resolves conflict of uses
- Quite close to original location - less of a change for memorial visitors

Cons:

- Limited possibility of planting 'memorial' trees as they can possibly have an impact on views to the Angel.

Option 2 - Location within woodland

Pros:

- As part of the woodland management plan, space can be allocated for planting 'memorial' trees
- More quiet area, suitable for contemplation
- Location of memorial trees can be selected to retain views towards Angel

Cons:

- The view to the Angel would be towards the back of it.
- Possible impact on the views to the Angel

Option 3 - Current location preserved.

Pros:

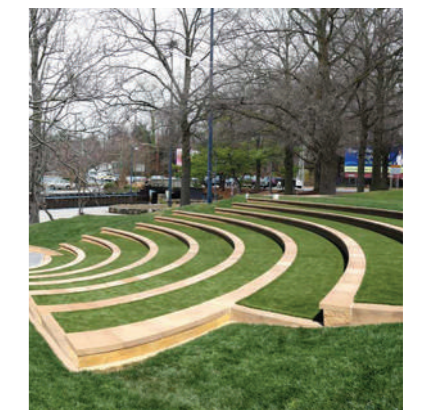
- Direct view to the Angel and photo taking opportunities.
- Potential to re-design the space for better and more suitable arrangement.

Cons:

- Issue of conflicting spaces for memorial users and Angel visitors, due to its location being too close to the Angel



The "need" of a Memorial Space - Site photos showing existing memorial space and its proximity to the Angel



Precedent images - examples of wood and stone text carvings and integrated seating.

The Scar - Design Options

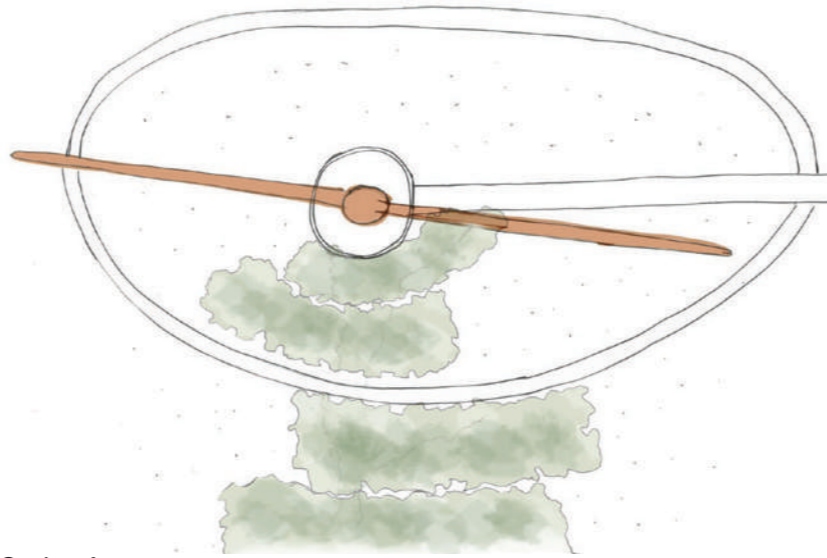
The Scar is an ongoing problem, with the steep area south of the foot of the Angel suffering from erosion, leaving a slippery muddy patch and exposing the foundation.

Several options are loosely explored on this page, the most convincing being Option 2 which suggests using rocks to create a naturalistic appearance. This may also accord with the Artist's reference to 'upland' landscapes when talking about the intention of the piece.

However the Artist has expressed a preference for the Scar to remain as existing, ideally with grass reinstatement annually (this would require temporary fencing for establishment and should be done in spring or autumn). There is an ongoing cost associated with this which needs to be considered.



Site photos of current condition of the scar



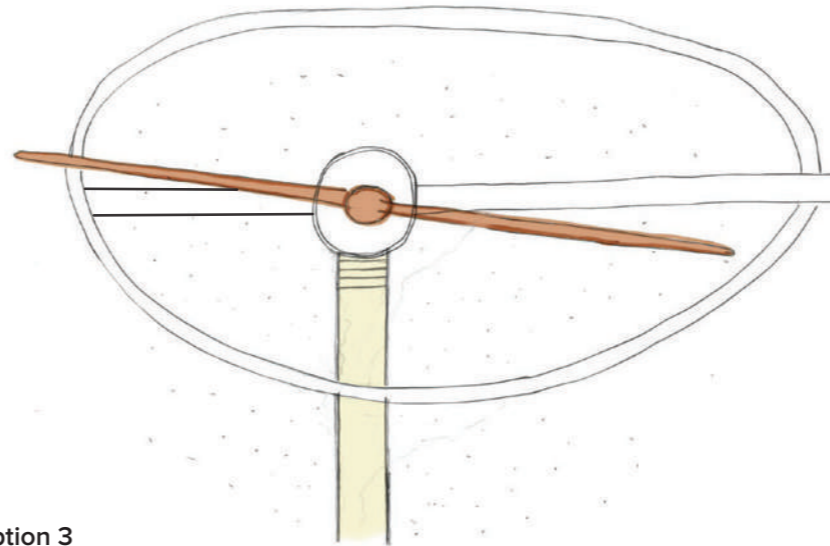
Option 1
Vegetation to prevent erosion along the desire line

Pros:

- Stabilised the soil and prevent surface runoff
- Naturalistic looking, soft engineering option
- Low enough to retain views to the Angel, but dense to prevent people walking through.

Cons:

- This will prevent people using the full extent of the desire line for photo taking.
- Planting unlikely to establish well due to the compacted soil of the scar and the steep gradient. Planting will require fencing for several months.
- Planting will require some level of maintenance,



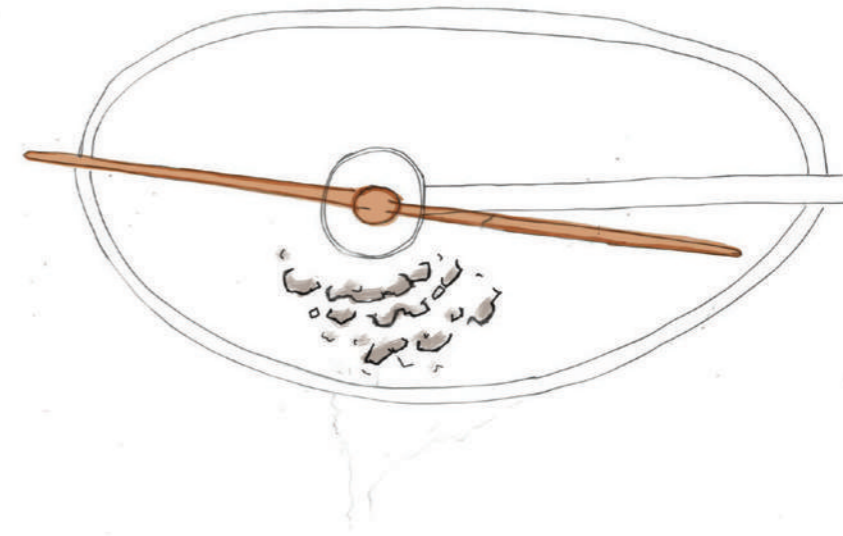
Option 3
Paving and steps with additional access route

Pros:

- Hard paving will replace the scar

Cons:

- Adding a line of paving is not in keeping with the intended natural character
- Area around paving may get eroded
- To pave the steep gradient more significant and impactful building works would have to be undertaken
- This option will require steps and handrail due to the gradient of the slope



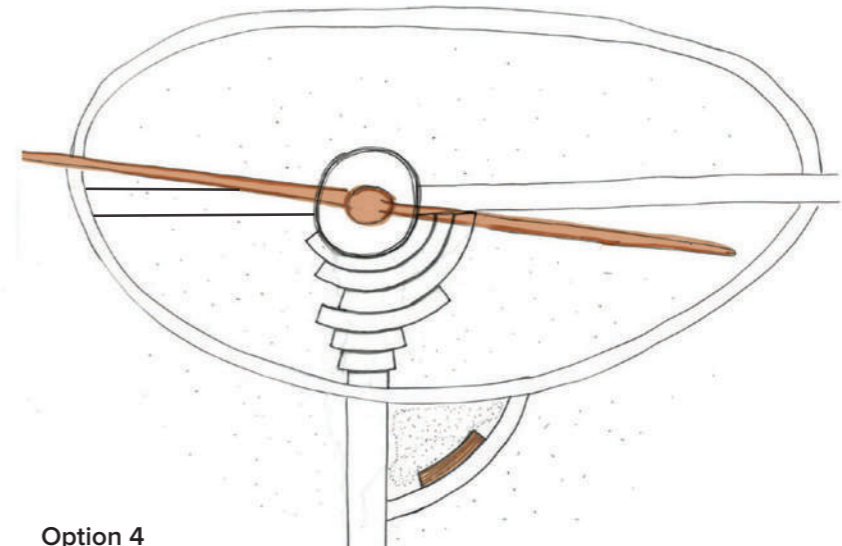
Option 2 (Preferred)
Natural boulders to prevent erosion along the desire line

Pros:

- Appropriate to natural setting of Angel
- Could be used for informal clambering and seating
- Durable and long lasting solution
- Will protect soils from erosion

Cons:

- Requires a minor change in maintenance regime
- Risk of negative effect on setting - requires very careful design and implementation



Option 4
Paving and steps with added seating and additional access route

Pros:

- Multipurpose steps double as some seating.
- Paving along the desire lines would replace the scar

Cons:

- This option would require steps and handrails due to the slope to comply with Equality Act access requirements
- This option would have significant impact on change of the landscape character and the character of the Angel.
- Intrusive building works would be required
- Artist unlikely to support this option.

Car Park - Design Options

The car park areas would benefit from an individual design study. This should be carried out after decisions have been taken on the forward strategy for the Angel.

For example, if toilets are added in the medium term, this would enable schools to visit the Angel and may increase the need for coach parking. If a coffee hut was added, this would also change the dynamic, and if a full visitor centre was added, this would require an expansion to parking along with consideration of highways implications.

In any event, access by public transport, foot and cycle should remain a key consideration, and the street furniture, signage and fencing provision needs to be addressed as discussed earlier in this document. A potential electric car charging point location is also suggested.



Section 5 Management and Maintenance

Please refer to:
Appendix A - ECN18 144 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Arboricultural Assessment by EcoNorth
Appendix B - ECN18 144 Tree Management Plan by EcoNorth
Appendix C - ECN18 144 Habitat Management Options Report by EcoNorth

