

UNLOCKING HIGHGATE CEMETERY

HERITAGE

NATURE

COMMUNITY



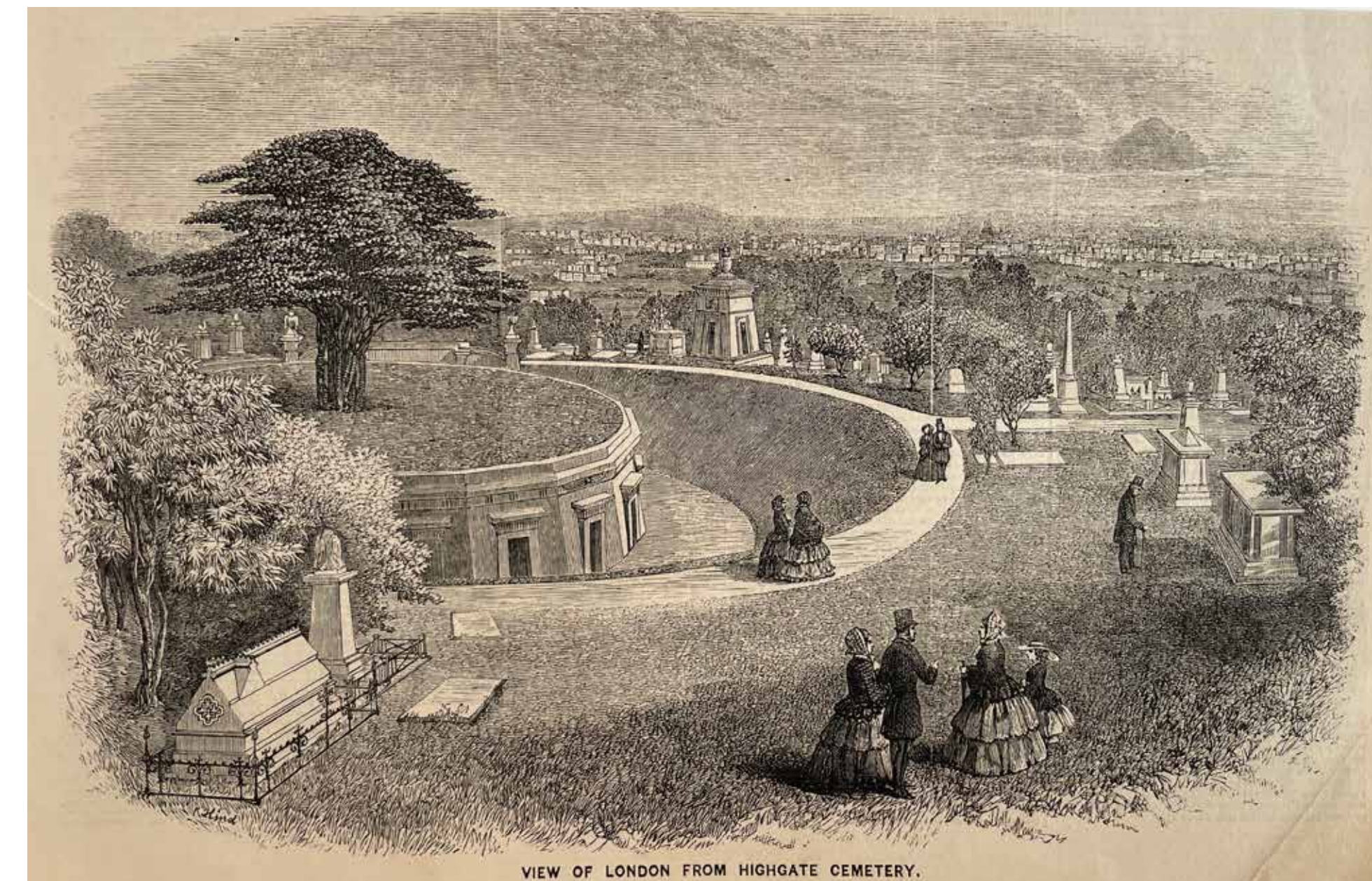
WELCOME

A FUTURE SHARED

For almost two centuries, people have enjoyed the dramatic architecture and sinuous paths of this extraordinary place. High above the busy metropolis, it is a much-needed sanctuary from the world below.

Today, time and climate change have exposed the fragility of the historic structures, while invasive species threaten the rich biodiversity. *Unlocking Highgate Cemetery* brings our community together to address these urgent issues, safeguarding the future of the site and sharing it with a wider range of people. We will approach the project by focusing on three interrelated themes: 'Heritage', 'Nature' and 'Community'.

Find out more about our future plans and tell us what you think. Your feedback will help us shape the project.



Heritage

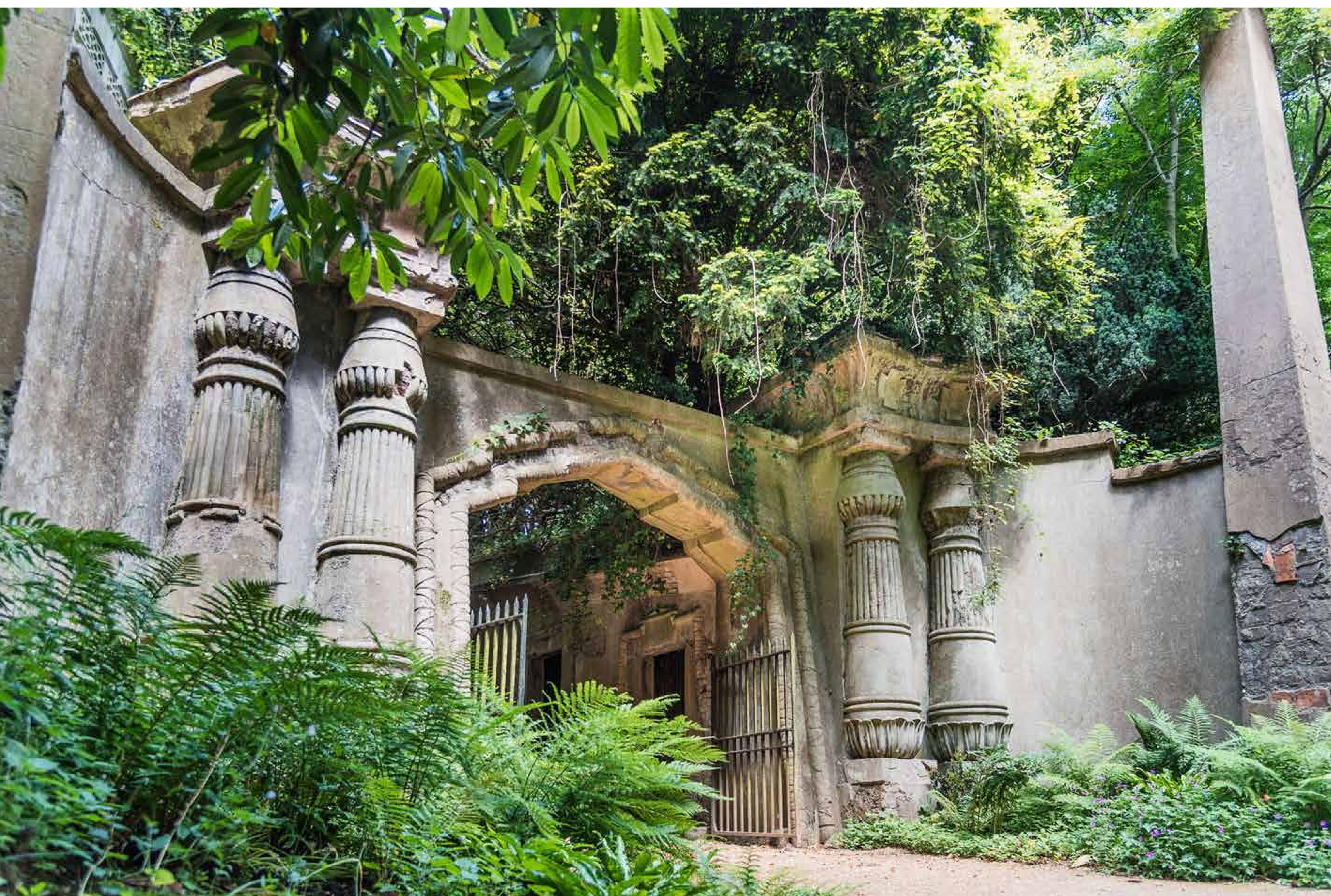
Many structures are unstable and access to some areas is difficult or closed. The most urgent needs include conservation of the Grade I-listed Egyptian Avenue and Circle of Lebanon; restoring expansive views from the Grade II*-listed Terrace Catacombs; re-opening the grand West Carriage Drive and opening the Dissenters' Chapel for public use.

Nature

Over time, the effects of climate change and an increasing monoculture of self-seeded Ash trees and a blight of Ash dieback have degraded the habitat. We will remove dangerous and diseased trees, restoring biodiversity with climate-resilient planting and improved water management.

Community

We will partner with local organisations to develop a wide range of programmes, including oracy skills for school groups, vocational training in landscape management, as well as learning resources on universal themes such as grief, memory or celebrity. A new interpretation plan will expand our heritage stories and welcome more diverse visitors.



PROGRESS

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

We have been working on *Unlocking Highgate Cemetery* since 2019 when we published our Conservation plan. Then we launched an international competition to find the right team to develop proposals. With their direction we carried out extensive survey work and research to understand the site and to inform proposals. Last year we consulted with the public, Camden Council and Historic England to test our ideas. Now we will develop these.

The Heritage Fund

In January 2024, the Heritage Fund awarded *Unlocking Highgate Cemetery* a development phase grant of £105,000. This is the first step towards securing the investment needed to implement the project.

The Trust will submit a second stage bid for £6.7 million towards the delivery phase in 2025 once planning and listed building consent have been granted.

The Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust have committed reserves to the project but we still need to raise an additional £1.2m to realise our ambitious plans.



Step by step

Informed by our 2019 Conservation Plan, *Unlocking Highgate Cemetery* is a 25 year Masterplan project which will be delivered in phases. We will submit a full planning application and listed building consent application to Camden Council later this year for the full Masterplan.

The first phase of the project, supported by the Heritage Fund, will focus on the landscape and conservation where the need is most urgent along with developing our public programming and activities to reach more of the community. Other Masterplan projects will follow in later phases.

Design team



HOPKINS ARCHITECTS

Architecture



Gustafson Porter + Bowman

Planning and Heritage

Landscape

Alan Baxter

usefulprojects
part of the Useful Simple Trust

Conservation

Sustainability

BARKER LANGHAM

Steve McAdam

Interpretation planning

Community engagement

OUR GOALS

2019

Conservation Plan

2022

Highgate Cemetery Act allows grave renewal

2023

Heritage Fund development phase grant

2024

Masterplan, Listed Building Consent and full Planning Application finalised

2025

Heritage Fund delivery phase application

2026

Subject to funding, begin implementation period of Phase 1

BEYOND 2030

Delivery of future phases



HERITAGE

RETAINING THE MAGIC

Conservation rather than restoration is our objective. We want to preserve rather than to renew, allowing some of the character of the buildings that has come about through the passage of time and a degree of decay to be kept.

Wonder and delight

From its earliest days, the architecture of Highgate Cemetery has been a source of wonder and delight. Over time, the garden design gave way to woodland, ivy embraced the monuments and a special romance settled over the 36-acre site.

Today, many of the structures are unstable and access to some areas is difficult or closed. The most urgent needs include conservation of the Grade I-listed

Egyptian Avenue and Circle of Lebanon; restoring access to expansive views from the Grade II*-listed Terrace Catacombs; and re-opening the grand West Carriage Drive.

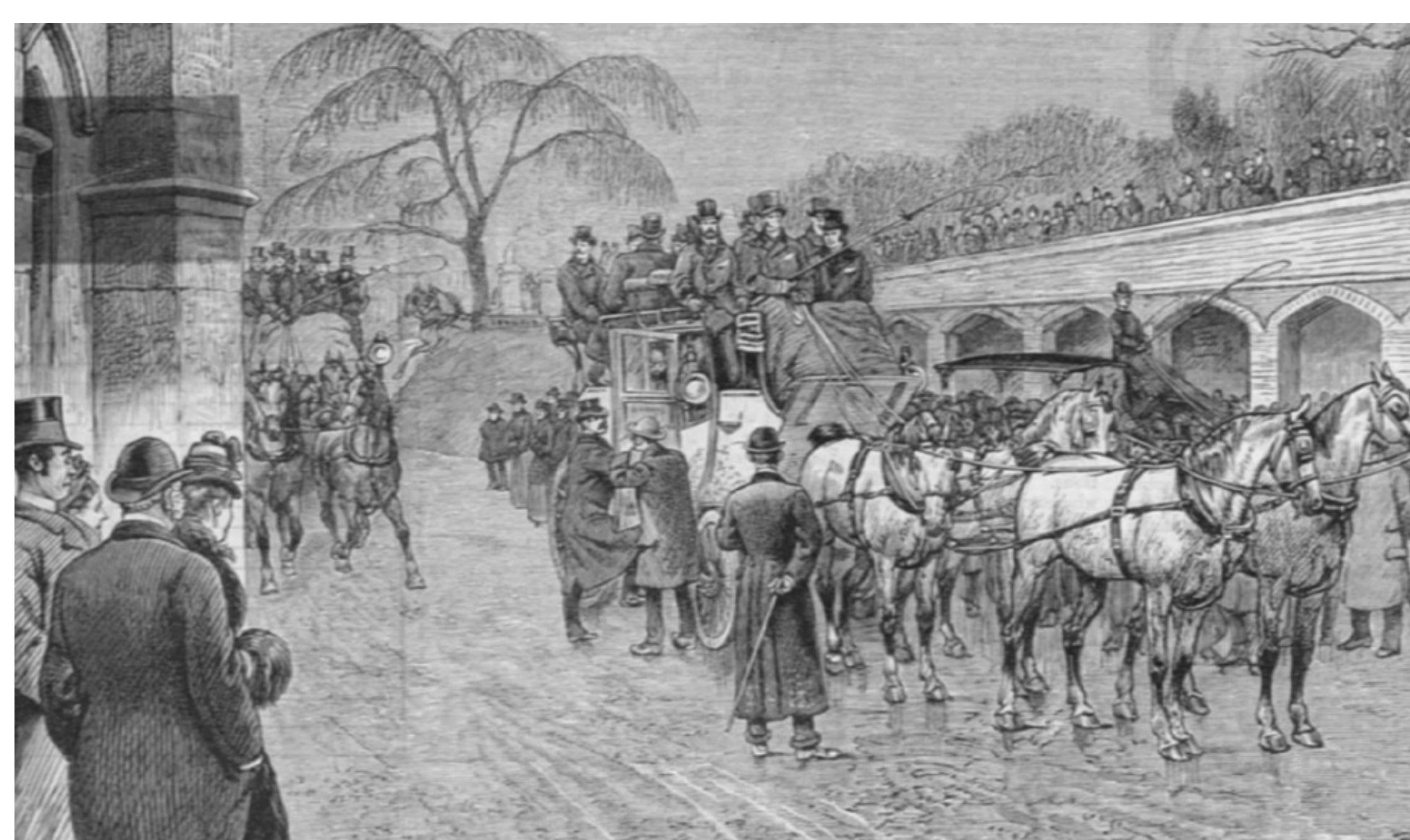
Among other improvements, we will open up the Dissenters' Chapel as a public space to explore 200 years of human stories.

Conservation, interpretation and story-telling

Unlocking Highgate Cemetery will conserve exceptional historic buildings and monuments and tackle the full array of issues which contribute to the decay of the cemetery's built fabric. But in addition, our work will respect the 'theatrical' and story-telling aspects of the our monuments and buildings, and will ensure that the design is sympathetic to the intentions of the original landscape design.



View of the Circle of Lebanon and the Terrace Catacombs with St Michael's Church in the background, published in 'The Mirror of amusement', 1838



View towards the courtyard and the Colonnade, engraving, 1888



Sketch of the Chapel with pinnacles and cupola restored

We will

- Conserve key buildings and structures
- Reinstate the Chapel's lost cupola and pinnacles
- Restore the original levels of the Courtyard
- Undertake regular condition surveys
- Prioritise repairs to monuments by significance and condition



HERITAGE

LANDSCAPE OF MEMORIES

Gustafson Porter and Bowman, our landscape architects, have carried out extensive research to understand the special magic of Highgate Cemetery. They have studied countless historical images and documents to rediscover its original layout and likely planting scheme. They have seen how trees and shrubs were used to frame views both of the architectural elements within the Cemetery, and outwards to the metropolis. They have thought about how visitors moved through the Cemetery and where they might have rested.

They have considered how the character of the landscape has changed, appreciating the present less manicured state which many people value today. This cannot be a historic restoration, but the landscape plans will be informed by a strong understanding of history and character.

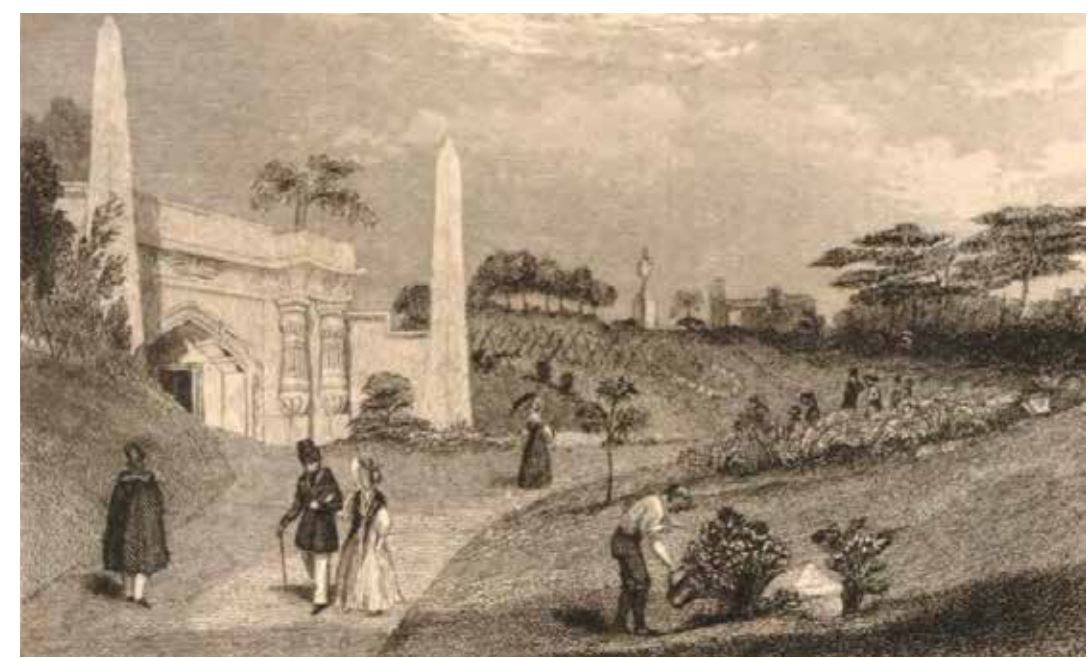
Historical views compared with today



Highgate Cemetery, 1841



Highgate Cemetery, 2023



Entrance to Egyptian Avenue, 1839



Entrance to Egyptian Avenue, 2023



Highgate Cemetery, 1830-1850



Highgate Cemetery, 2023



Main path looking up to St Michael's Church, circa 1857



Main path looking up to St Michael's Church, 2023



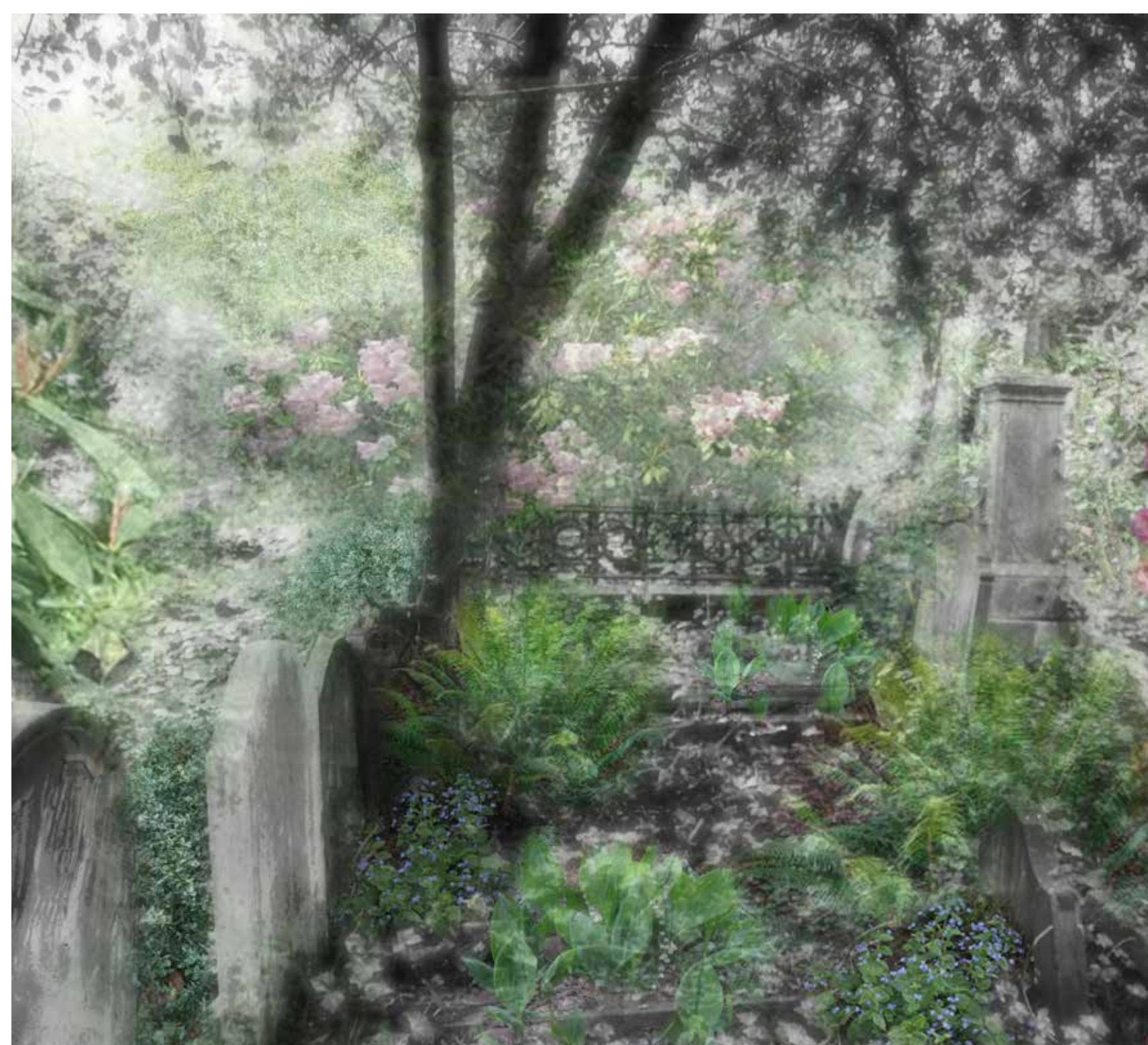
View looking west towards the chapel, circa 1845 (Thomas Dolby 'Memorials of the Highgate Cemetery')



View looking west towards the chapel, 2023



Entrance to the Egyptian Avenue, engraving, Charles Knight 1839



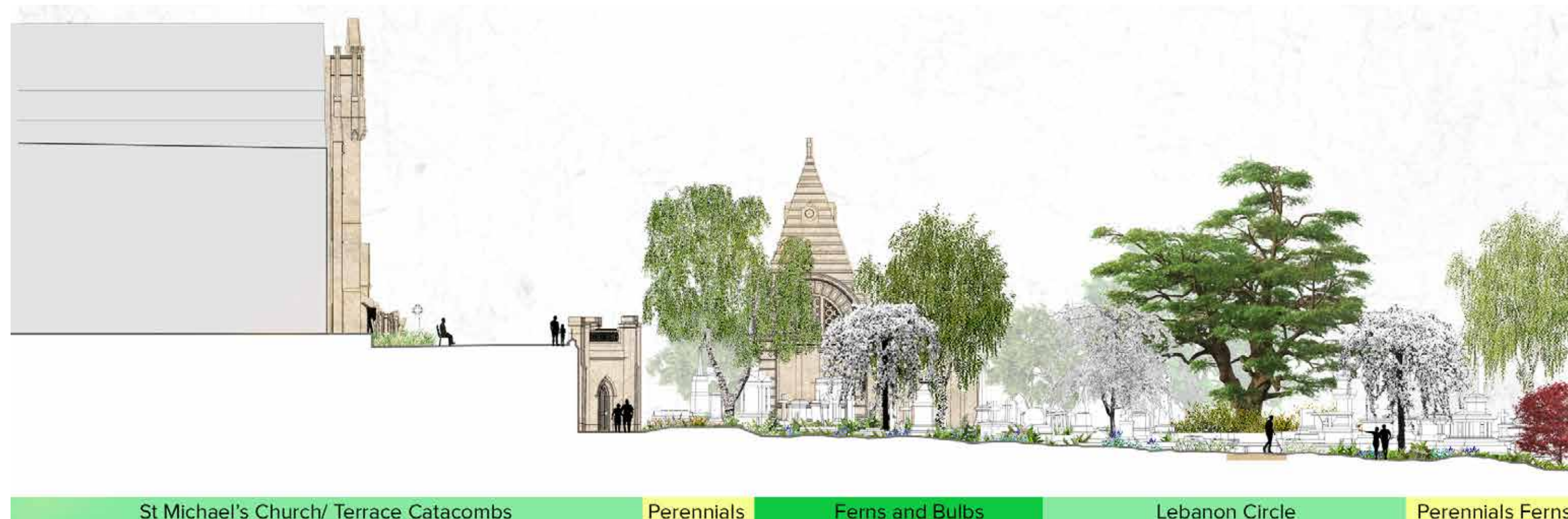
An initial visualisation of the landscape - west side

Analysis of key views



The landscape sections below are illustrative - tree and planting specifications are being further developed.

Reopened upper terrace and Circle of Lebanon planting study - West



Study of tree and shrub planting - East



We will

- Maintain the distinct characters of the East and West sides
- Keep or reinstate historic structural planting
- Maintain or reopen key views
- Extend the lifespan of historic trees
- Resurface roads and paths in appropriate materials
- Enhance the forecourt and courtyard, improving accessibility

HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE

New buildings will respect their context. Scale, massing and materials will be sympathetic to those around them, but in a language of their own time.

1 Dissenters' chapel

Refitted for interpretation and displays, it will also be used as a breakout space for the Anglican chapel enabling, for example, catered gatherings after funerals. Offices move out; archives remain in the room over the entrance.



Architectural model study. For clarity, vegetation not shown.

The Chapels will be refurbished and the pinnacles reinstated

We will

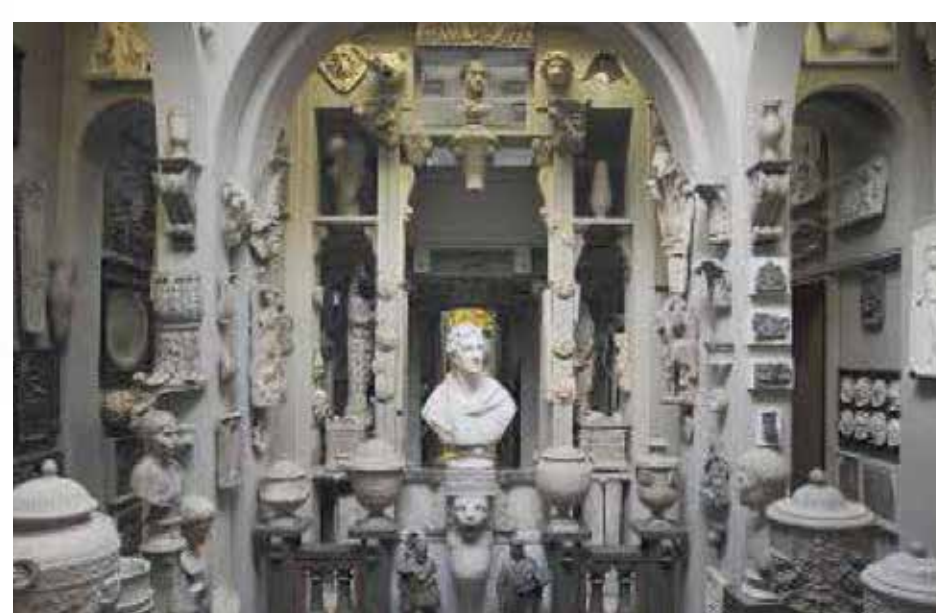
- Provide better facilities for visitors, including a cafe and toilets
- Replace gardeners' store and messroom
- Expand volunteer facilities
- Provide adequate office space
- Ensure new structures are of high quality in design and materials, and enhance the site

2 Visitor and Operations building

New building south of the Colonnade. Ticket office and café at the front, with disabled WC; offices for staff and volunteers behind. Carefully designed to be secondary to the historic architecture.

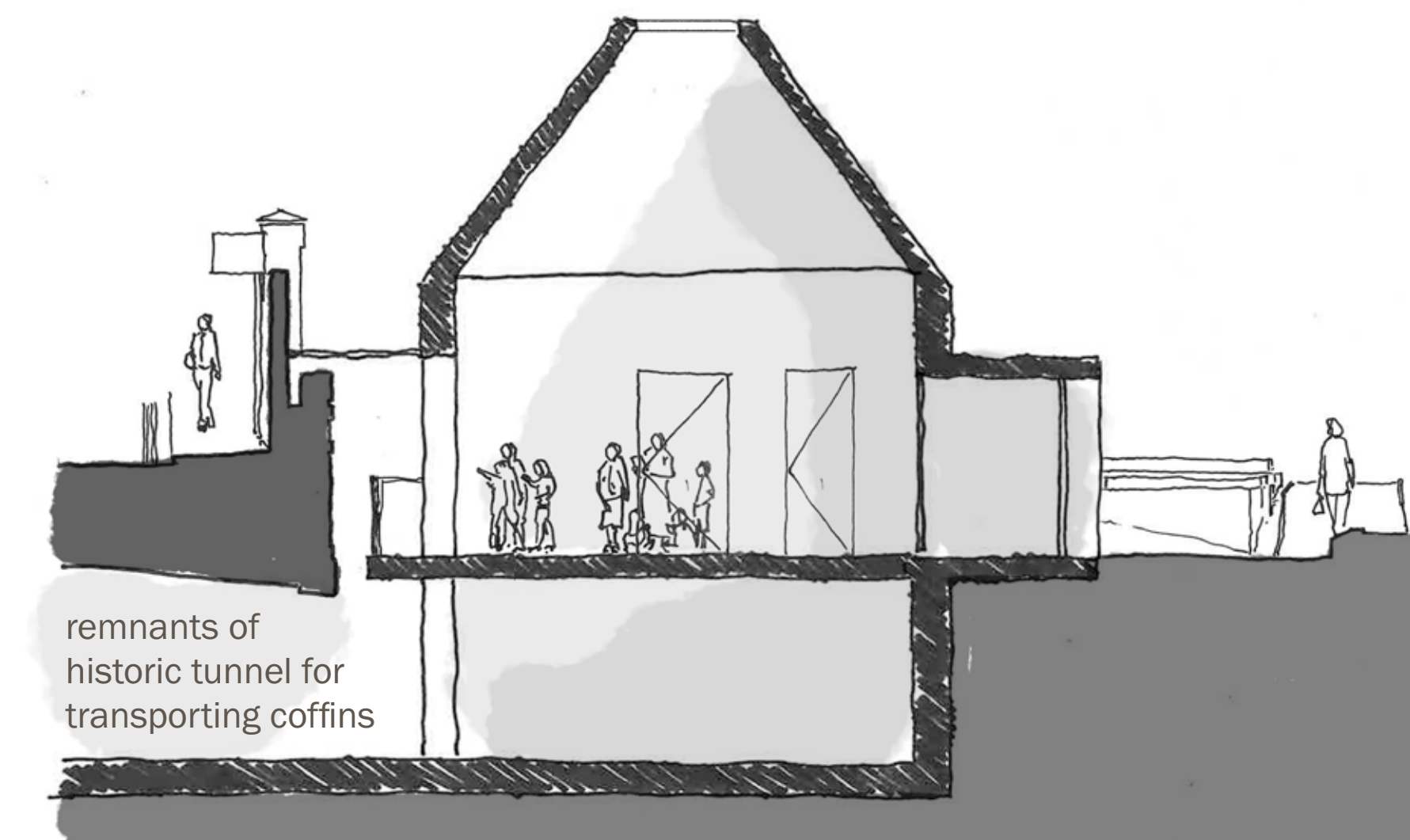
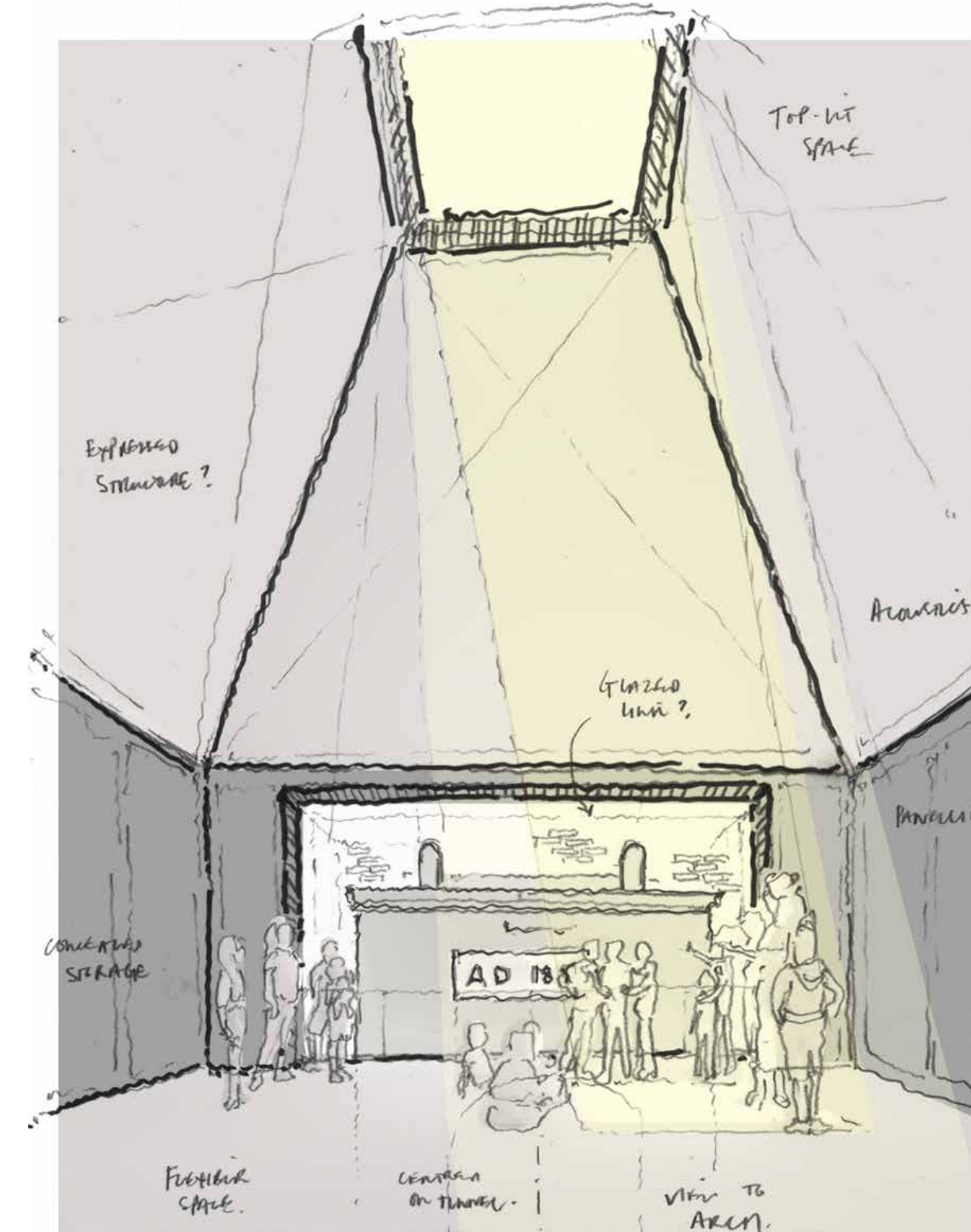


Precedents and studies for the staff, volunteer and visitors' building showing the café (See building 2 on the plan)

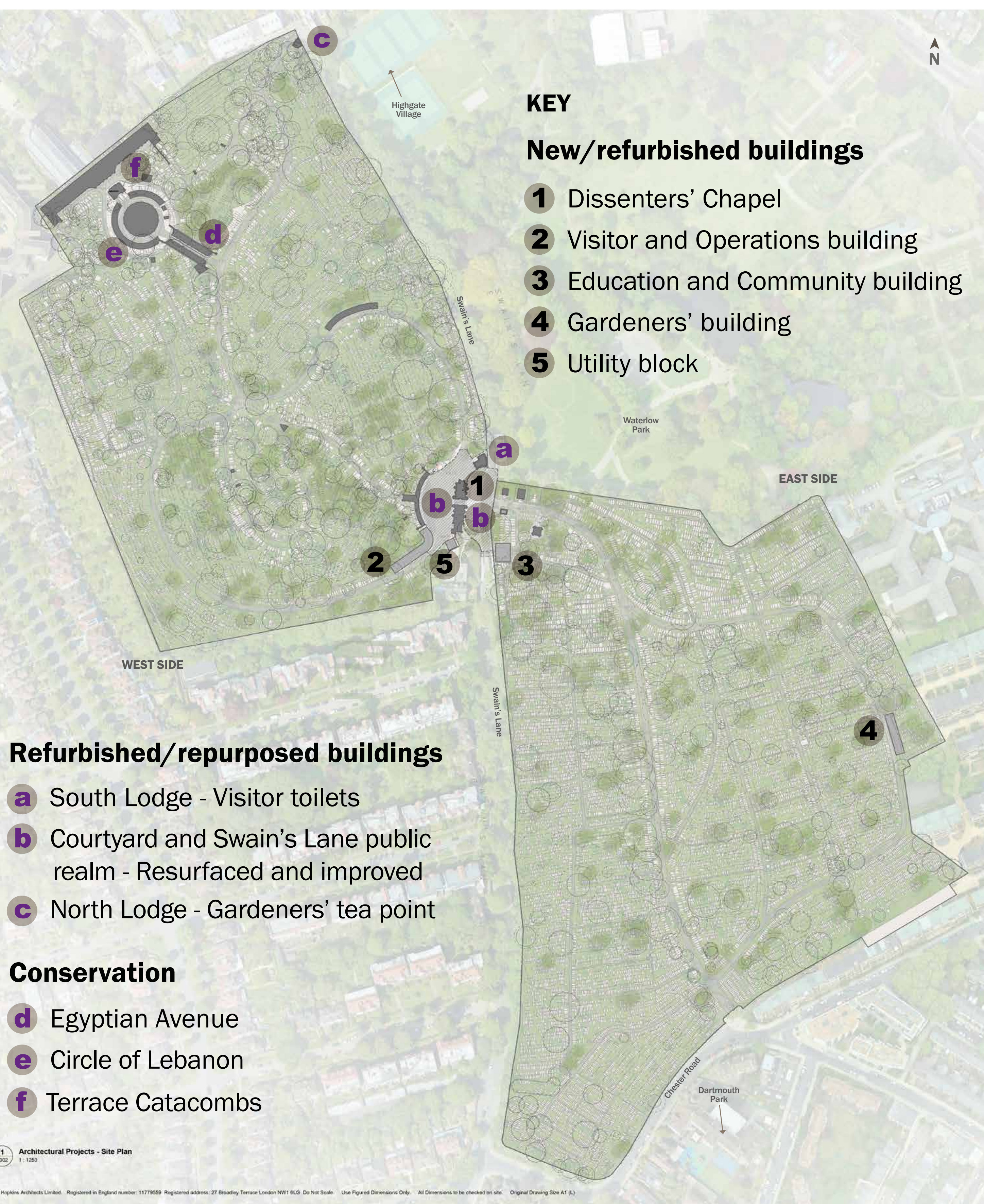


3 Education and Community building

New building replacing the gardeners' mess in the East side. Space for our developing public programmes, including educational visits and community activities. Will reveal the historic tunnel entrance. Can be accessed directly from Swain's Lane.



Precedents and studies for the Education and Community building (See building 3 on the plan)



KEY

New/refurbished buildings

- 1 Dissenters' Chapel
- 2 Visitor and Operations building
- 3 Education and Community building
- 4 Gardeners' building
- 5 Utility block

Refurbished/repurposed buildings

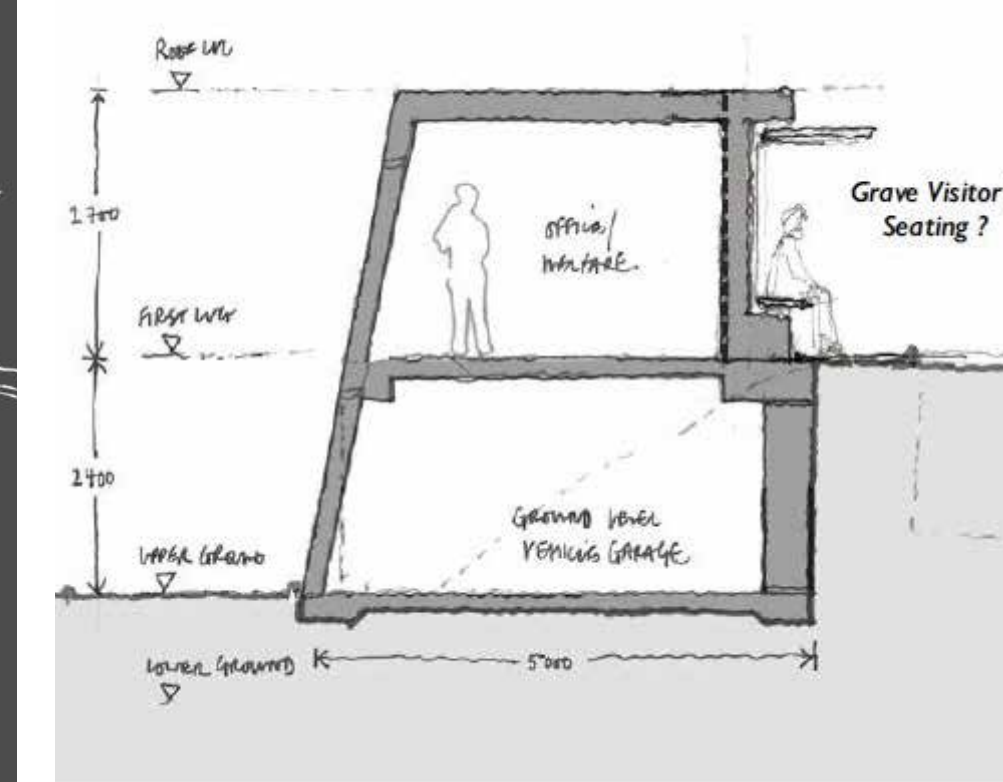
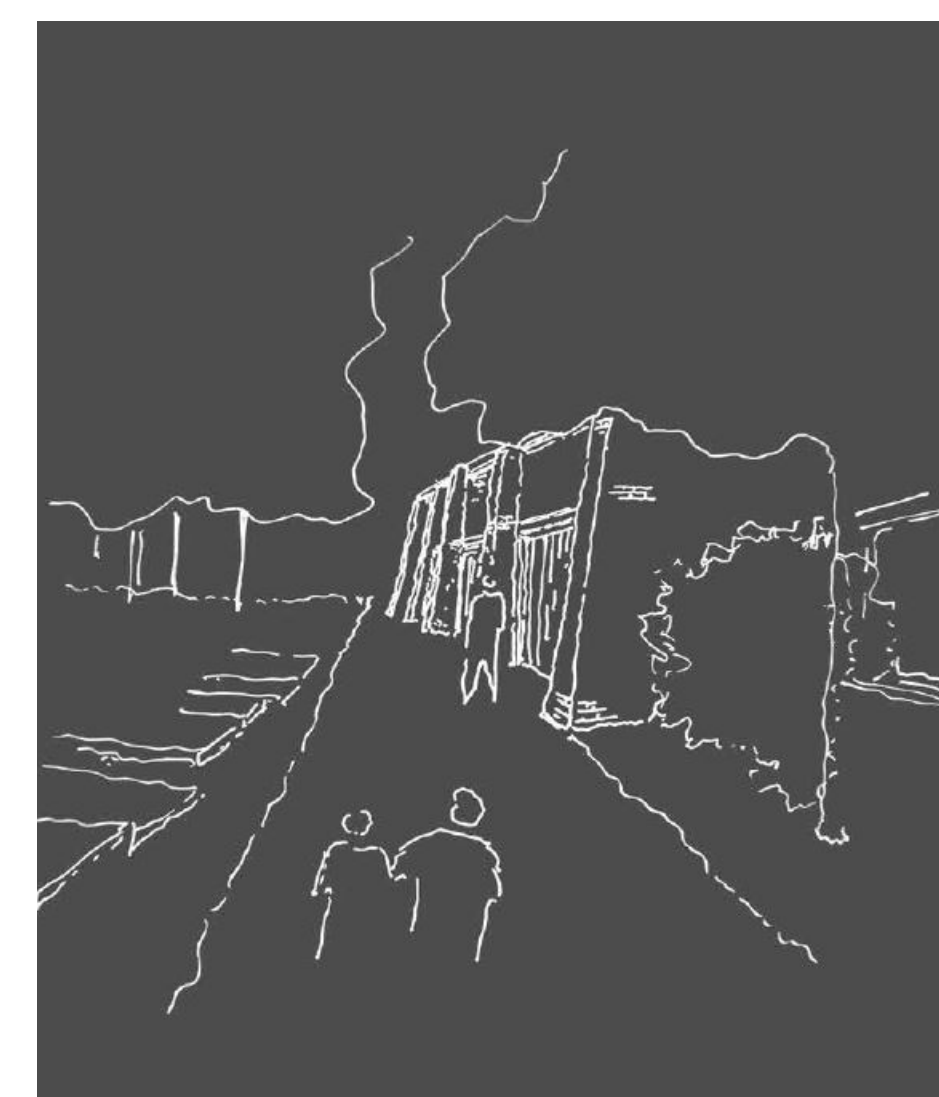
- a South Lodge - Visitor toilets
- b Courtyard and Swain's Lane public realm - Resurfaced and improved
- c North Lodge - Gardeners' tea point

Conservation

- d Egyptian Avenue
- e Circle of Lebanon
- f Terrace Catacombs

4 Gardeners' building

New building constructed as a retaining structure for the Mound, East side. Gardeners' messroom, vehicle and tool store will all be in the same place for the first time. Their present rusting shipping containers will disappear. Will incorporate memorialisation for common graves that may be encountered.



Precedents and studies for the Gardeners' building (See building 4 on the plan)

5 Utility block

- a South Lodge: Refitted to provide visitor toilets.
- b Courtyard and Swain's Lane public realm: Resurfaced and improved.
- c North Lodge: Restored as gardeners' tea point, especially for volunteers.

NATURE

GROWTH AND DECAY

The Cemetery is a haven for life, from trees and plants to a variety of insects, birds and mammals, including a rare cave spider.

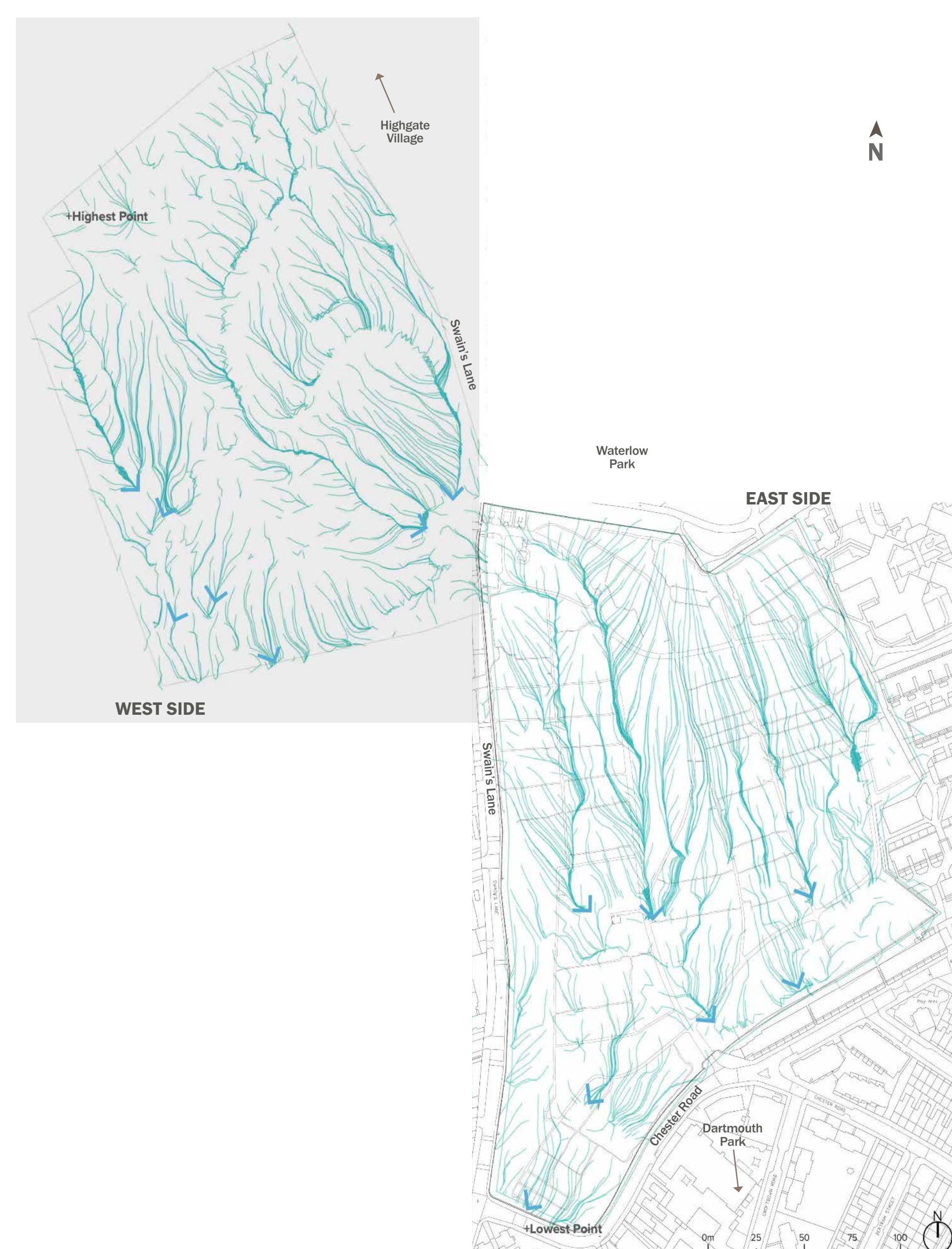
Over time, the effects of climate change and an increasing monoculture of self-seeded Ash trees and a blight of Ash dieback have degraded this rich habitat.

We will remove dangerous and diseased trees, restoring biodiversity with climate-resilient planting and improved water management.

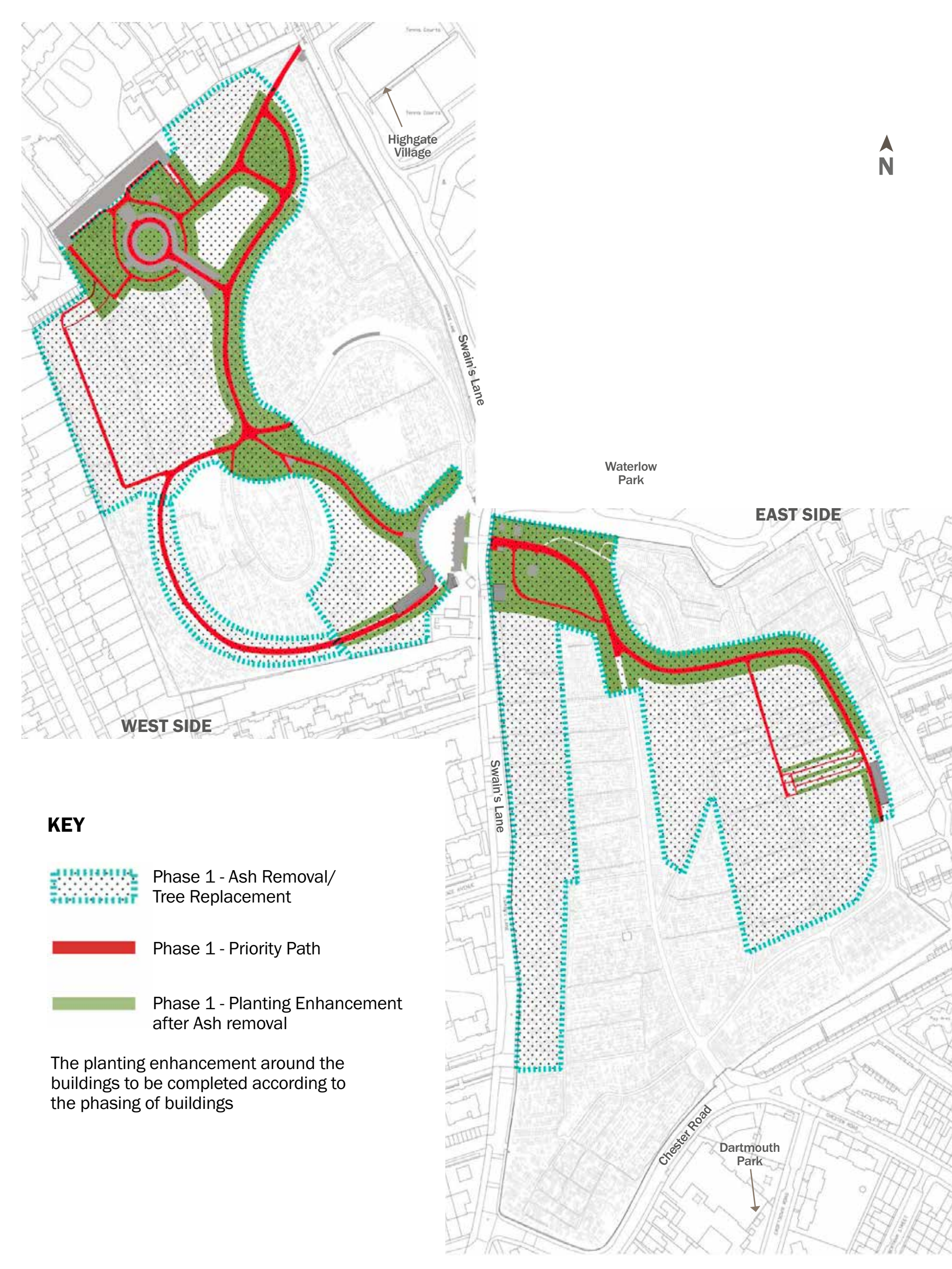
Above all, we will protect the special character of Highgate Cemetery.

Our design teams and consultants are helping us to identify ways in which we can effectively tackle these problems through careful design, landscape management and planting, architectural detailing and effective drainage. These are being built into our design and management responses. With the support of the Heritage Fund we will equip the cemetery to face the challenges of climate change.

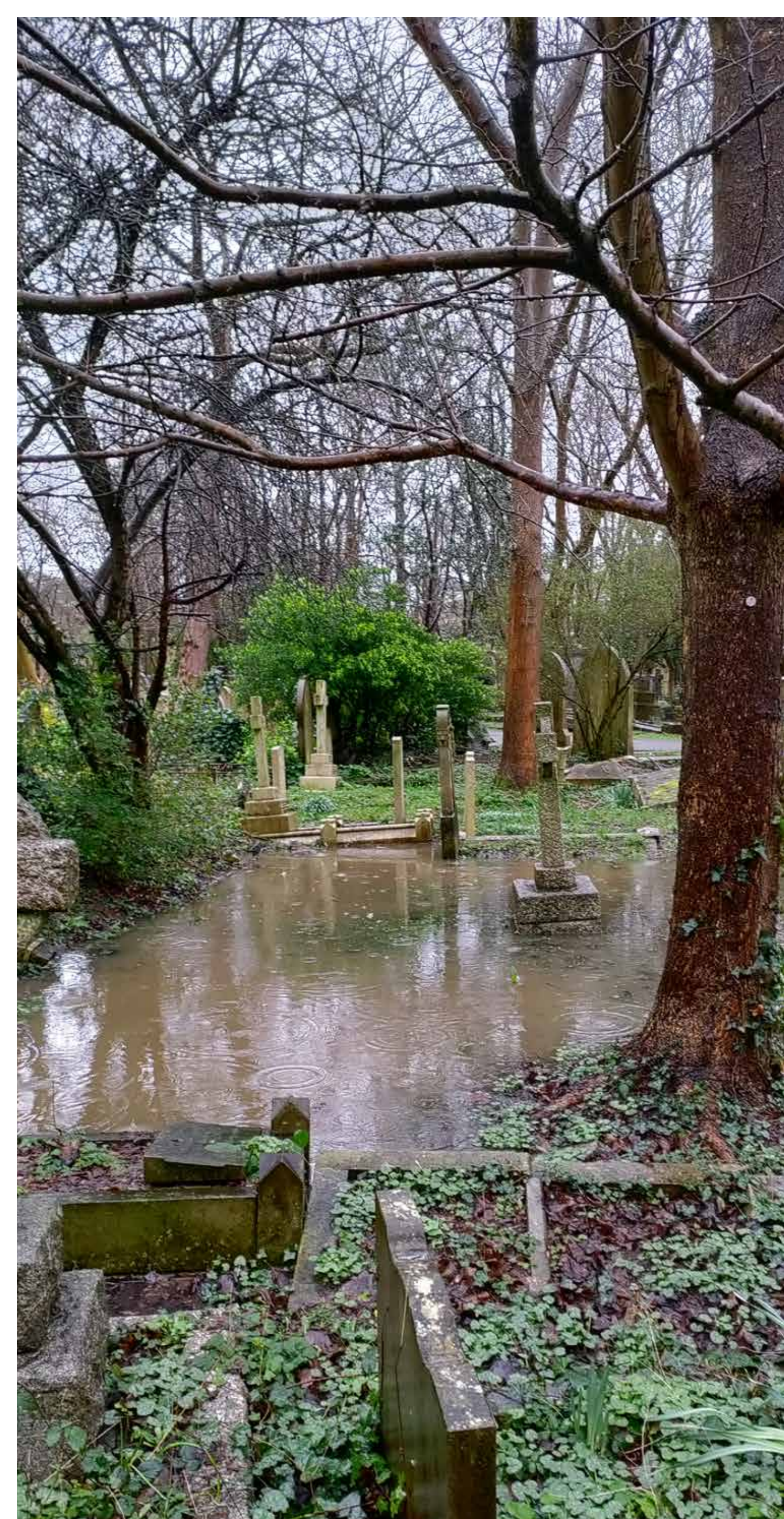
Water flow and drainage studies - flood management planning to inform landscape design



Key routes and tree planting - planning for Ash removal and tree replacements



Intensities of diseased trees (Ash Dieback) in Highgate Cemetery



NATURE

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

New openings in the tree cover will admit sunlight, reveal views and monuments and increase plant and habitat diversity.

Water

Free-draining soils and gravel around pathways will reduce runoff and allow for the sustainable infiltration and retention of rainwater in the ground.

Resilience

We will encourage regular cycles of regeneration through active management. Trees will be regularly monitored for symptoms of ill-health and remedial action taken. Growing conditions will be improved so that trees are less prone to pests, disease and climate change.

Planting

Planting will reflect the historic massing, individual tree positions and blend of coniferous and deciduous trees.

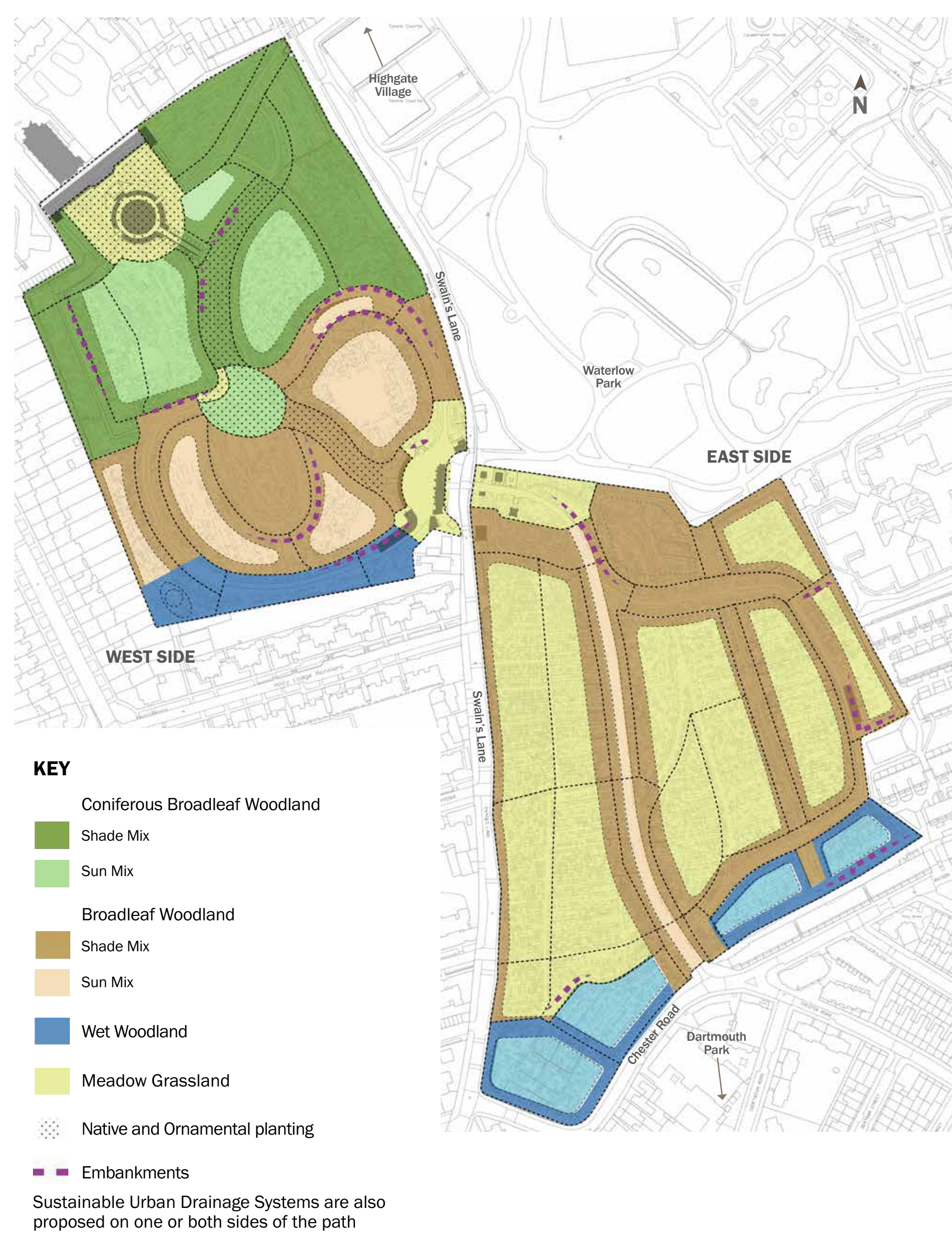
Paths

New surfaces on major paths using historically appropriate materials will help deal with a greater volume of water from increasingly frequent storms.

We will

- Encourage a diversity of flora and create a diverse range of habitats
- Select species more resilient to climate change, but be guided by precedent as to the form, scale and placing of specimen trees
- Actively manage woodland ground cover plants
- Improve drainage to reduce water-logging
- Minimise the use of chemicals in landscape maintenance

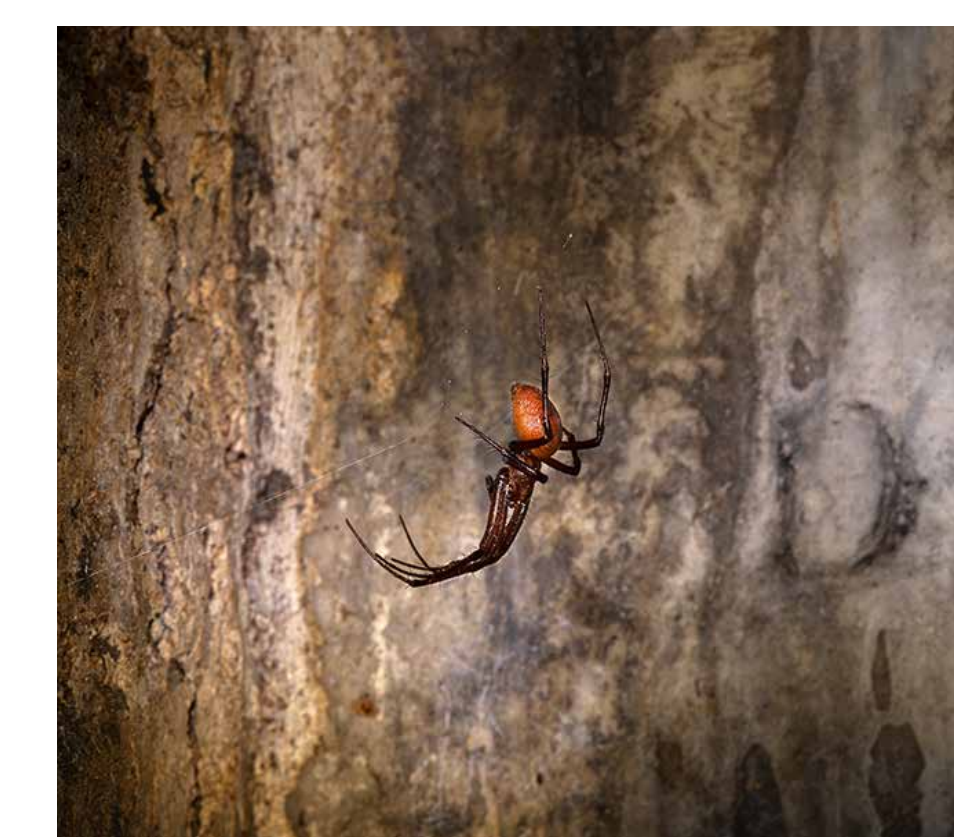
Plan showing general plant habitats that will emerge after forming openings in the tree canopy through removal of the young diseased ash trees



Plan showing the different planting and maintenance regimes that will be introduced as the character of the planted landscape is developed after removal of the Ash Trees.



Supporting biodiversity and local wildlife habitats for threatened species



Meta Bourneti cave dwelling spiders



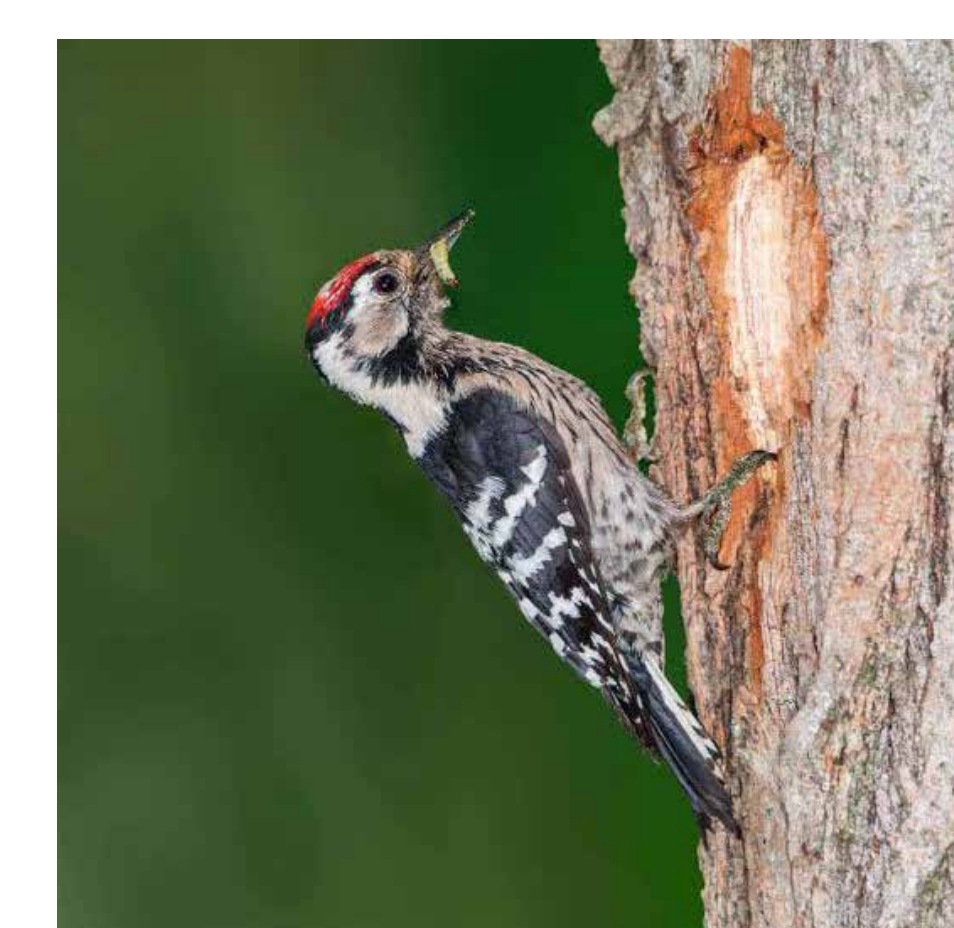
Moths (Atethmia centrago)



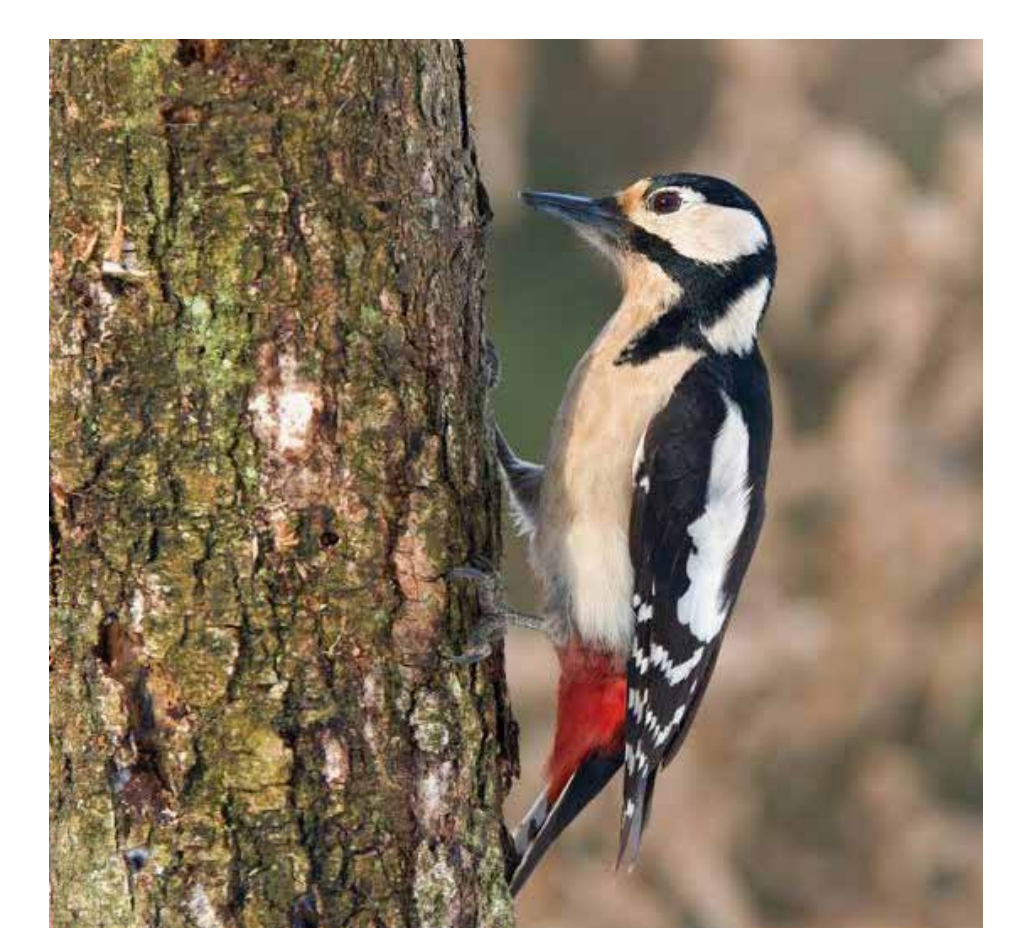
Pipistrelle Bats (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)



Bumblebees



Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers



Greater Spotted Woodpeckers

Precedent images of maintained but not manicured ground cover with a wide variety of plant species



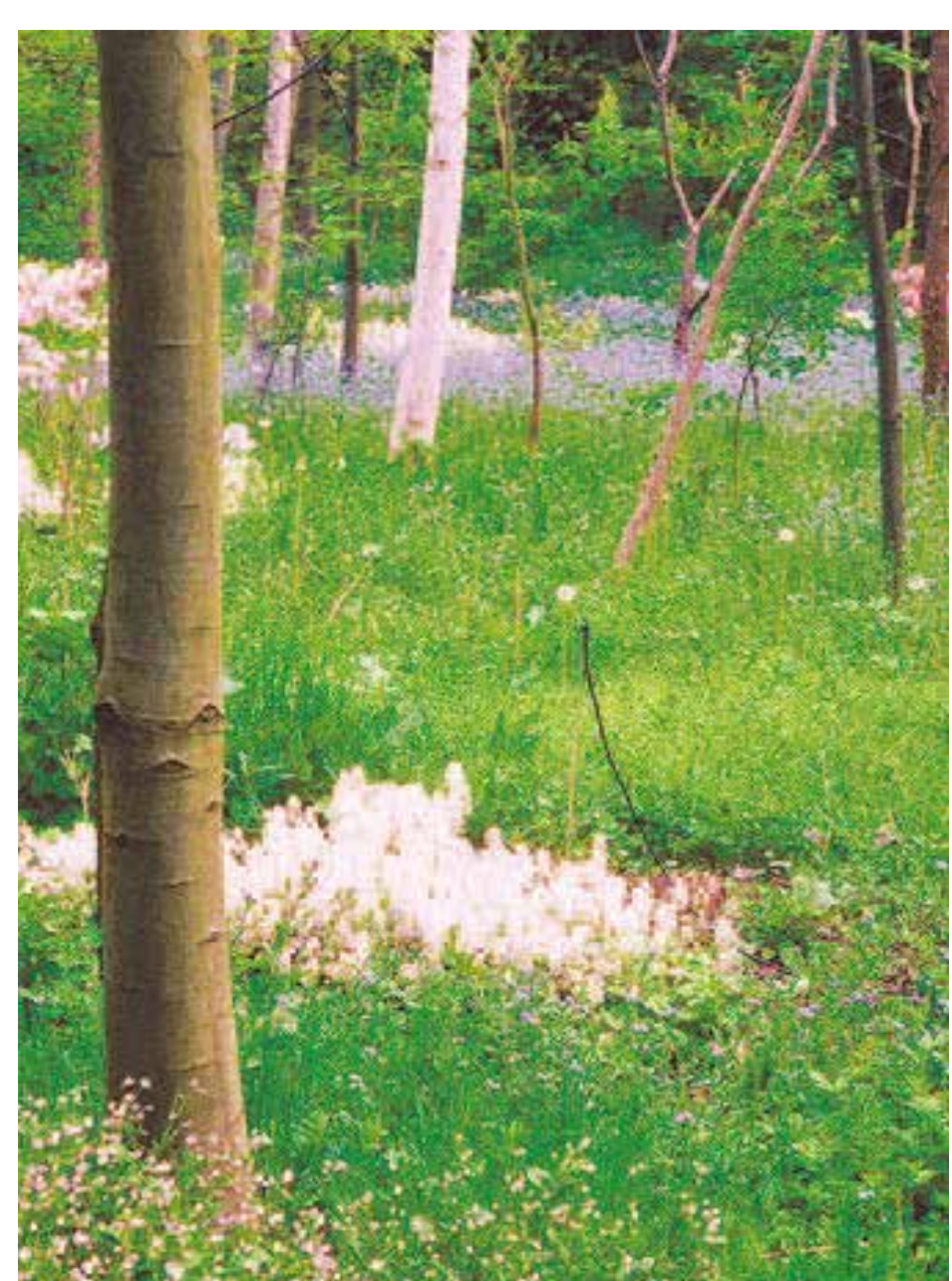
Trentham Gardens, UK



Trentham Gardens, UK



Heemparks, Netherlands



Landscape Laboratories, Sweden & Denmark

The selection of trees and planting which is still being developed will include both native species as well as species that will increase the diversity of planting and resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Some tree species being considered across the site include Field Maple, Apple, Hawthorne, Hornbeam, Cornelian cherry, Strawberry tree, Small-leaved Lime, Austrian Pine, and Turkey Oak, among others, with ground planting and seeding strategies dependent on soil and sunlight conditions that may include species such as primrose, primula, geranium, cyclamen, native bluebells, wood anemone, segdes, marsh marigold, meadowsweet, yellow rattle, burdock, and many others.



Foxes

COMMUNITY

OUR HEART AND SOUL

Community is at the heart of Highgate Cemetery, from grave owners, visitors and members to the volunteers who have battled to save the site for the last fifty years.

As part of *Unlocking Highgate Cemetery*, we will partner with local organisations to develop a wide range of programmes, including oracy skills for school groups, vocational training in landscape management, as well as learning resources on universal themes such as grief, memory or celebrity.

Our new interpretation plan will expand the stories we tell, reflecting the huge range of heritage and welcoming a greater diversity of people.

An active cemetery

Highgate Cemetery continues to be a working cemetery as well as a visitor attraction. Part of its special character comes from being a spiritual landscape, very different from parks and other open spaces. It is a place of sanctuary and remembrance, animated by the love of the bereaved. Other old cemeteries have closed to new burials and begun gradually to lose the important connections to people living around them.

Highgate Cemetery has a different future. The Highgate Cemetery Act 2022 gives the Trust the power to take back long-unused graves to provide burial space for the needs of the present generation – subject to many safeguards, of course – and thereby assure the future of the Cemetery.

Volunteering

The Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust was formed in 1975 by local people who were concerned for the future of the Cemetery. Almost fifty years later, that volunteer ethos is still fundamental. So much of the work is done by volunteers.

Tour guides make its history come alive for visitors, visitor assistants welcome tourists of all kinds, sell tickets and answer questions, and gardening volunteers ensure that Highgate Cemetery continues to look its best, come rain or shine.

Throughout the conservation project, workshops will be run to ensure the wealth of volunteer knowledge is captured and feeds directly into the design of new facilities and landscapes. If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch using the contact details on board 11.

Community Action

A community liaison group has been established to bring in voices from the local community. It is a space for exchange where participants are both informed about and contribute to ideas for the cemetery conservation process. If you represent or can speak for a local group or organisation and would like to join, please get in touch with us using the contact details on board 11.



Volunteer gardeners at work



Neighbour Day consultation, 2023



Community Liaison Group session



Landscape architect Neil Porter conducting a cemetery tour

COMMUNITY

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

We are building relationships with local community partners such as Harington Scheme, Brookfield Primary School, Wood That Works and Lauderdale House.

A new Head of Public Programmes and Learning Officer, funded by the Heritage Fund, will develop these pilot activities into a permanent programme.

We are working hard to open dialogue with a full cross section of our community members, building on our earlier engagement efforts. To do this we will:

- Ensure that our wonderful Volunteers are kept fully apprised of all project development and that their views are sought;
- Continue to work with and expand our Community Liaison Group;
- Pilot free access for specific community groups, schools and post code groups with the use of smart technology and pass cards to test and develop the most effective measures;

- Appoint new staff to further build and maintain relationships with communities and to design tailored programmes;
- Improve accessibility through developing resting points and benches in appropriate locations to compensate for the steepness of the site;
- Work with our community to help shape and inform our interpretation plans whereby the history and stories of the cemetery are shared;
- Work with key stakeholders to co-create and deliver an ambitious Activity Plan and public programme. See below.

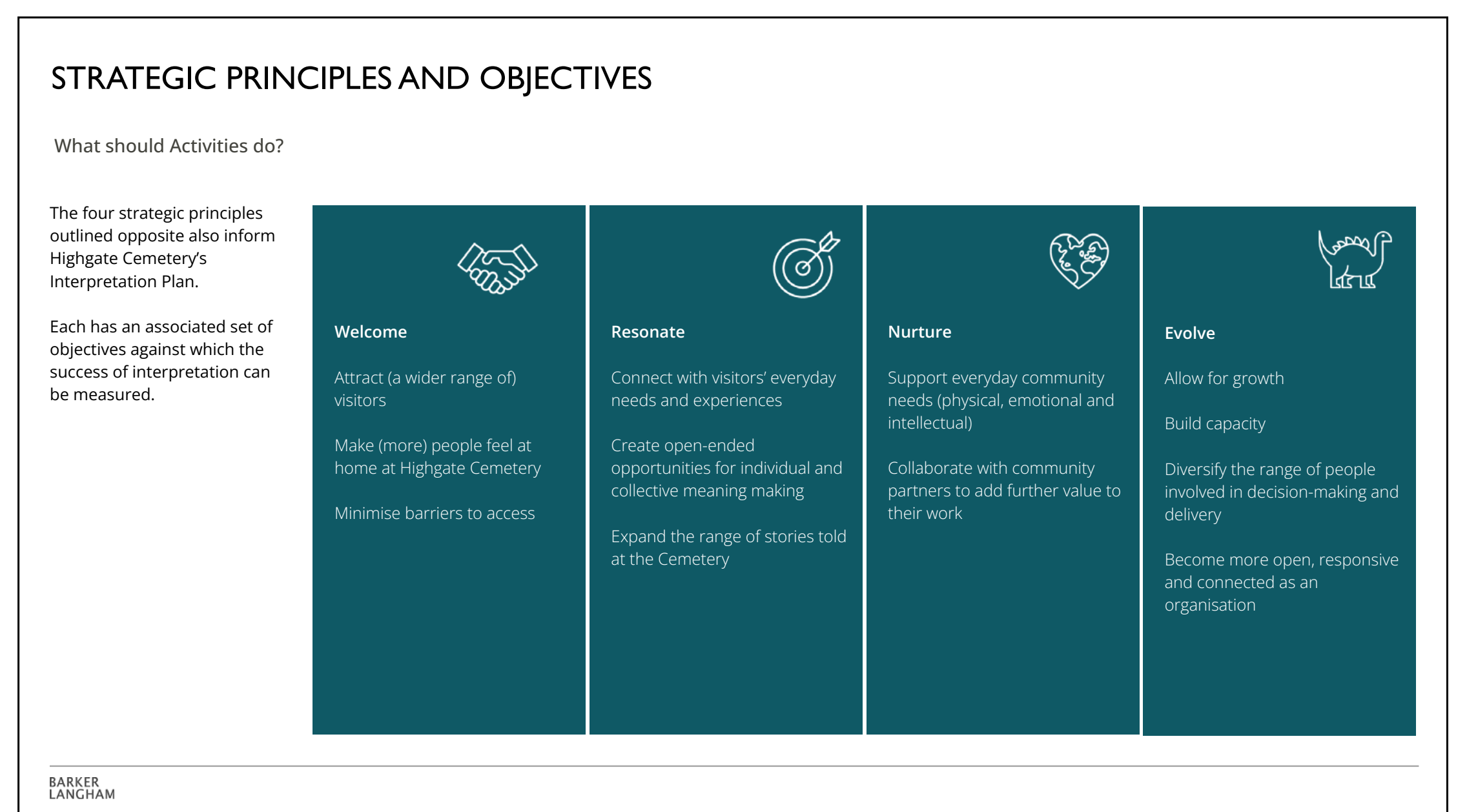
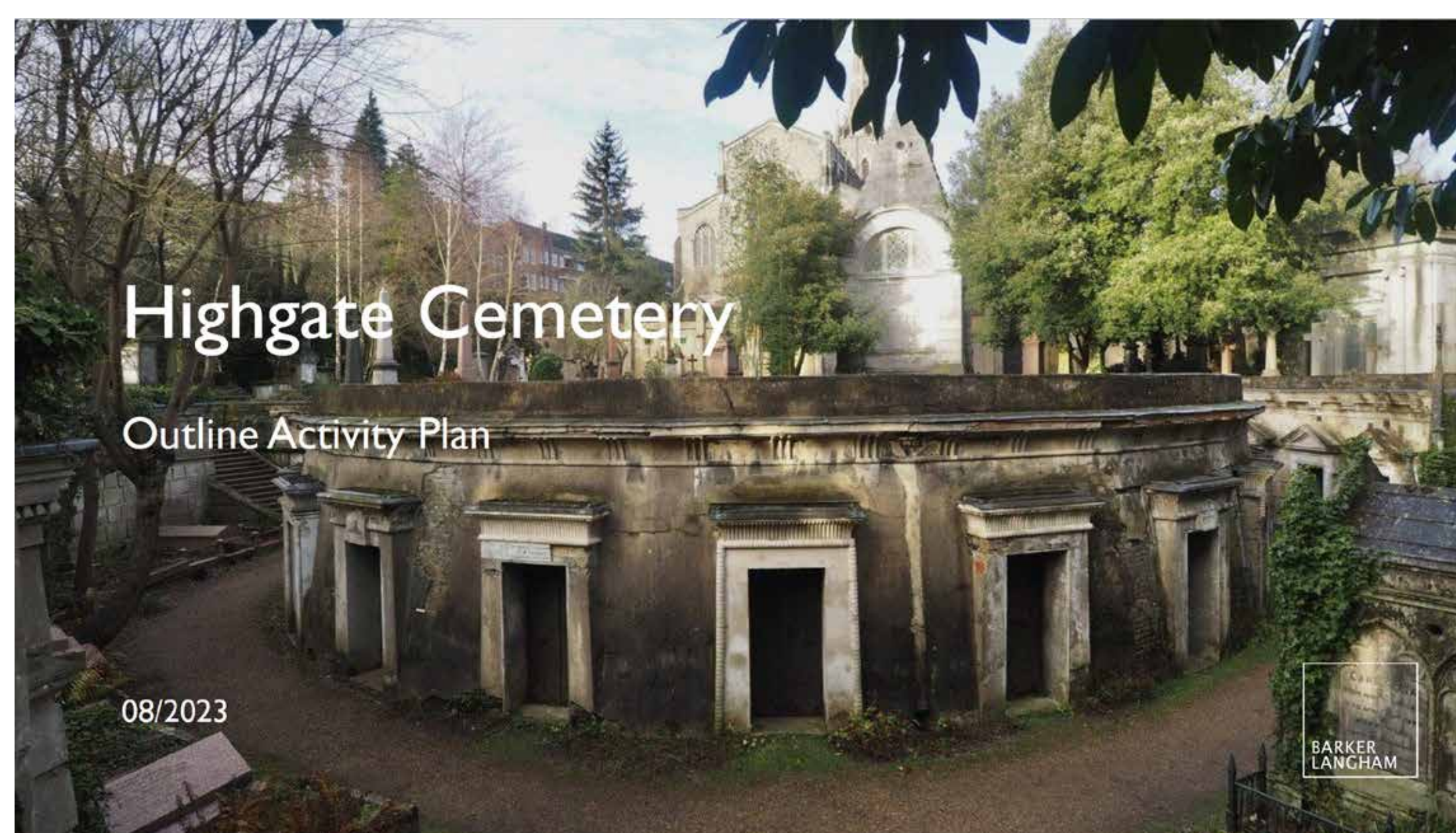
We will

- Continue to champion our volunteers
- Ensure our plans respond to community needs and views
- Co-produce an Activity Plan with key local stakeholders
- Appoint a Head of Public Programmes and a Learning Officer
- Keep our community informed about our proposals
- Rely on our Community Liaison Group as a sounding board

Activity Plan

Unlocking Highgate Cemetery has an outline Activity Plan, composed of four sections that structure the co-production of programmes and activities alongside high level recommendations which can be progressed through the Development and Delivery Phases of Highgate Cemetery's Heritage Funded project.

Further stakeholder consultation and partner network development during the Development Phase will progress the emerging plan and bring depth and specificity to the activities proposed.



Brookfield Primary School children on play equipment made from waste wood from Highgate Cemetery (photo: Matthew Maran, 2024)

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Our ambitious plans are still evolving. You can help shape them.

Feedback

Please give us your feedback

Please complete a feedback form and return it to the check-in desk. Your responses enrich our project and help the design team formulate their plans.

We will also include a summary of responses in our planning application so that the planners can

understand the active role of local people in shaping this project.

You can also share your views online:

<https://highgatecemetery.org/feedback>

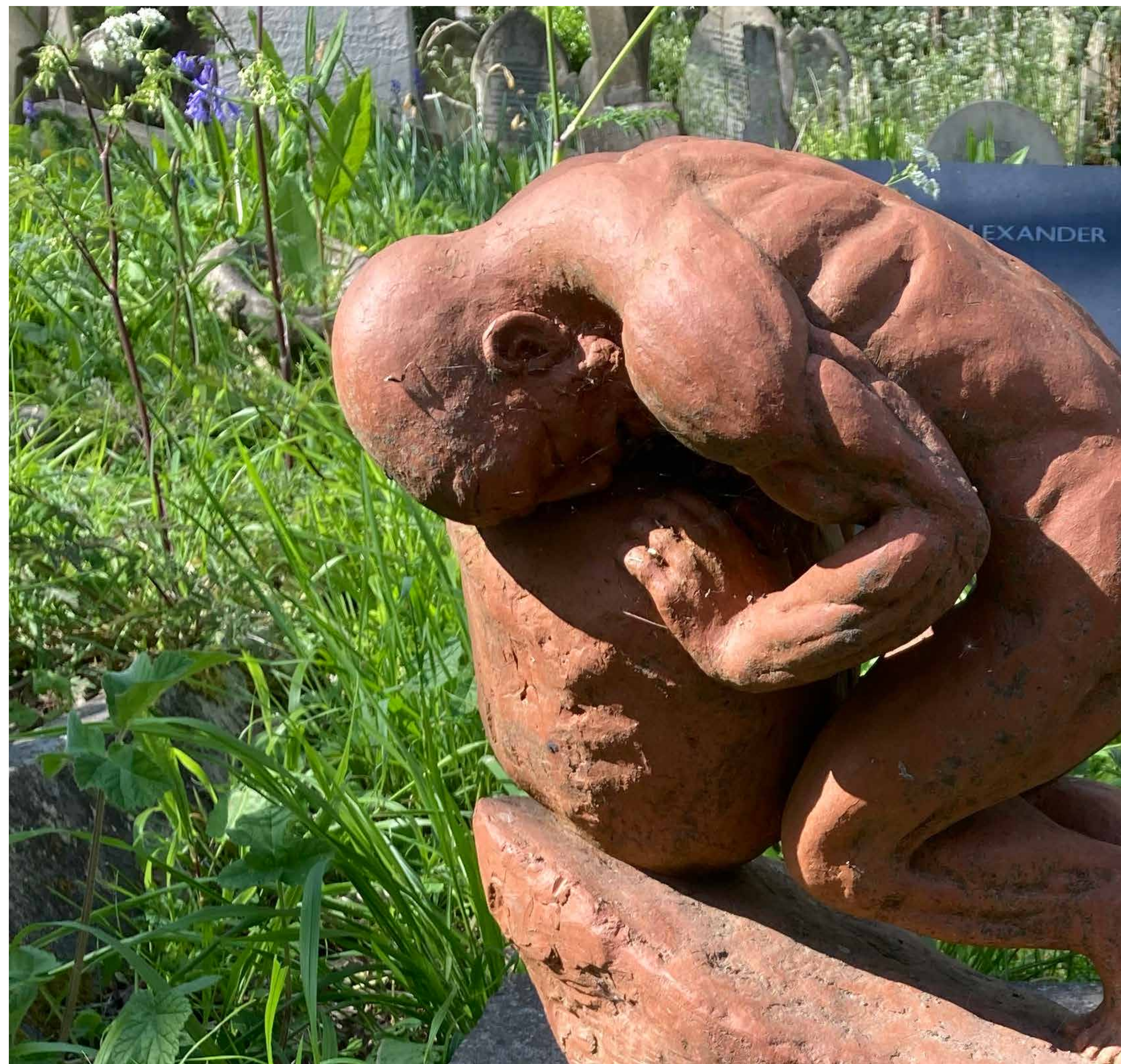


Donate

Please donate

Unlocking Highgate Cemetery is a seven-year, £18m project. Thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and our own reserves, we can begin this vital work to unlock our future.

However, we must still raise £1.2 million. You can help by donating or joining as a Patron or Member. To find out more about how to support the plans financially, please visit our website and follow the links to the 'donations' section.



Volunteer

Please volunteer

The Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust was formed in 1975 by local people who were concerned for the future of the Cemetery. Almost fifty years later, that volunteer ethos is still fundamental. So much of the work is done by volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch with us using the contact details below.

Highgate Cemetery, Swain's Lane, London N6 6PJ
info@highgatecemetery.org | 020 8340 1834



THANK YOU

**HIGHGATE
CEMETERY.**