

Design and Access Statement

Project Partnership

The project was initiated by local charity, People in Mining, a group consisting of various individuals who were involved in the coal mining industry in Barnsley. Working closely with the NUM, the group started a campaign to raise the funds for a memorial sculpture in relation to a significant forthcoming anniversary.

Design concept

The 12th of December 2016 marks the 150th anniversary of The Oaks Mining Disaster. The Oaks Colliery was situated just outside Barnsley town centre, workings now better known as Barnsley Main. With over 360 men, woman, and boys losing their lives, this event remains the largest disaster in English mining history. The proposed memorial sculpture will act as a monument to those Barnsley individuals as well as those across the country who lost their lives in the fight for coal.

The Design consists of a life-size Mother with child in arms walking towards the Oaks after hearing about the explosion. A stainless steel wheel will encompass the upper section of the Mother. This wheel not only represents the colliery and the 'pit top' the wheel also symbolises 'life' and 're-birth', a poignant reference to the loss of life 150 years ago. It also marks the moving forward of the working class and the coal mining community throughout the 20th Century and into the 21st, building a future through strength and determination on the tragic legacies of the past.

The Mother is walking from an industrial landscape to a rural landscape whilst below her will be a life-size miner (her husband / partner) in a seam fighting for coal with a pick. To the rear of the sculpture will be a shallow wall relief depicting the community of Barnsley to represent the 150 years since the disaster.

Selected artist

Local artist Graham Ibbeson was approached by the project group to design the memorial. As a professional sculptor since 1978, he has produced over 30 public sculptures in Towns and Cities across the UK – this includes the Dickie Bird sculpture located on Church Lane. He was born 2 miles away from the former Oaks Colliery and still lives and works within Barnsley. He is also the son and grandson of a Barnsley miner, part of a mining heritage in Barnsley that goes back beyond 1850. One of his ancestors, George Ibbeson, was killed in the Oaks disaster leaving a widow and 6 children. He was also an apprentice electrician with the National Coal Board before embarking on a career in art.

Design specification

The sculpture comprises a life-size female figure carrying a child walking in the direction of the Oaks Colliery. There is coal cascading down her back, and the figure will be mounted on an integral base that will show a stylised landscape and a life-size miner working in a low seam. Both figure and base will be cast in bronze liver colour (mid – dark brown) patina with highlights on specific elements. At an estimated weight of 850kg.

The rear of the integral base has a low relief of 7 generations walking towards the future in 25 year gaps (from 1866 – 2016). There will also be an Oaks inscription on the front/side, and a short text verse on a surface mounted plate on the rear. There will be a stainless steel ring 1.2 metres in diameter that will encircle the female's top section which is expected to have small LED lights within it to create a 'halo of blue' on the inside of the 'Wheel' to reference the colour of mine gas (methane) when it burns. The whole structure will be placed on a plinth of York Stone approximately 60cms high.

The overall height of the sculpture will be 3.9 metres, with all figures (miner, mother and child) life-size. The depth of the sculpture will be 60cms and the width 1.8 metres. See dimensioned sketch designs below.

Groundworks and surface finishes

The plinth will be a concrete core on a concrete foundation, and will be clad with York Stone. The dimensions are 195cm long, 75cms wide, and 60cms high. There will be a small surface mounted plaque with the unveiling date and relevant names.

There is discussion about an information panel, either wall mounted or free standing, and ways in which the names of those who died could be included – either on a panel or etched in the paving – which have not yet been resolved.

Access

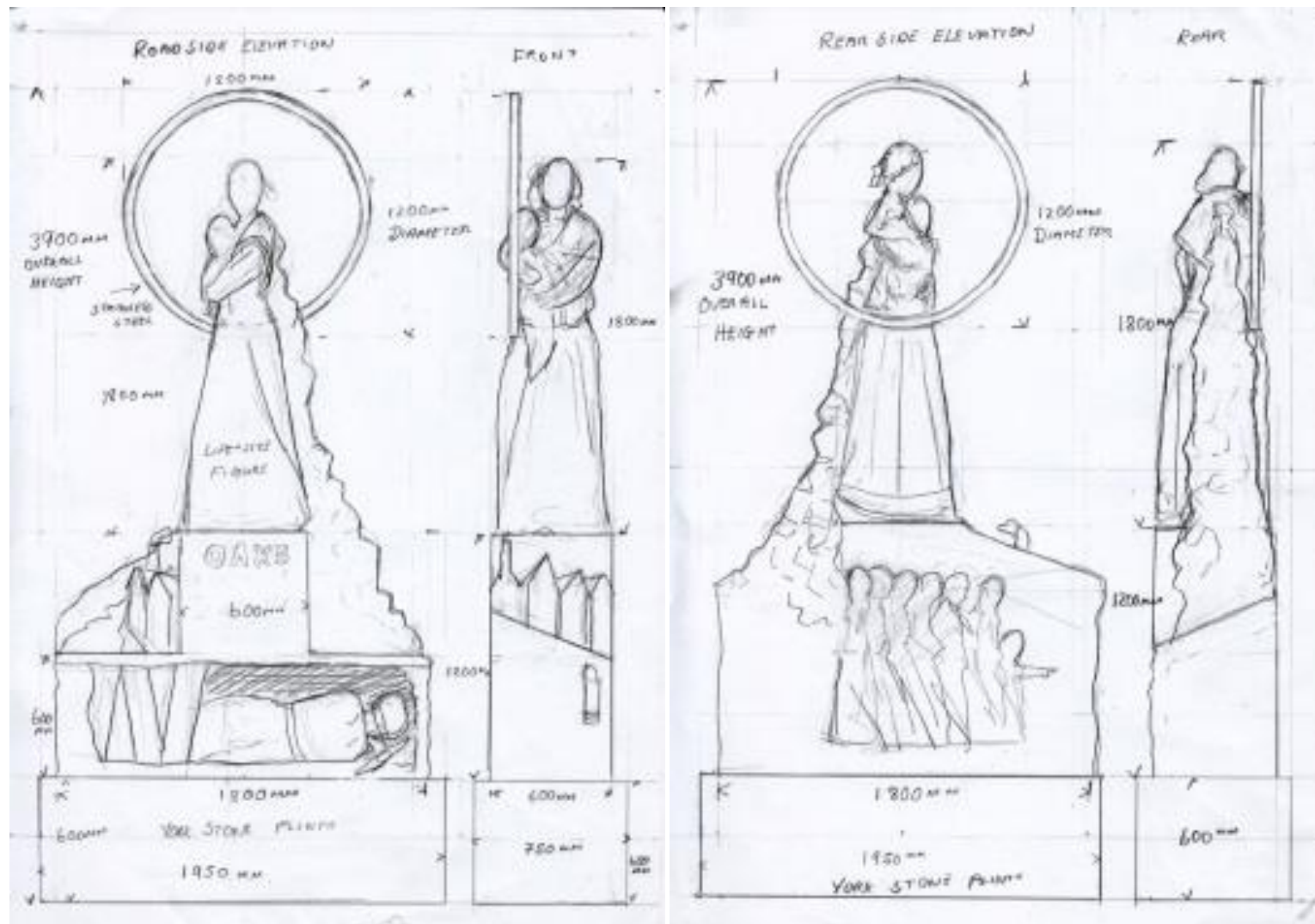
The sculpture is to be located in public space – the grass verge at a junction between Church Street and a roundabout. There is an existing network of pavements and it is visible to passing traffic. There are no steps or inclines and there is full physical and visible access to the sculpture. There is no requirement for parking or vehicle access.

Heritage Considerations

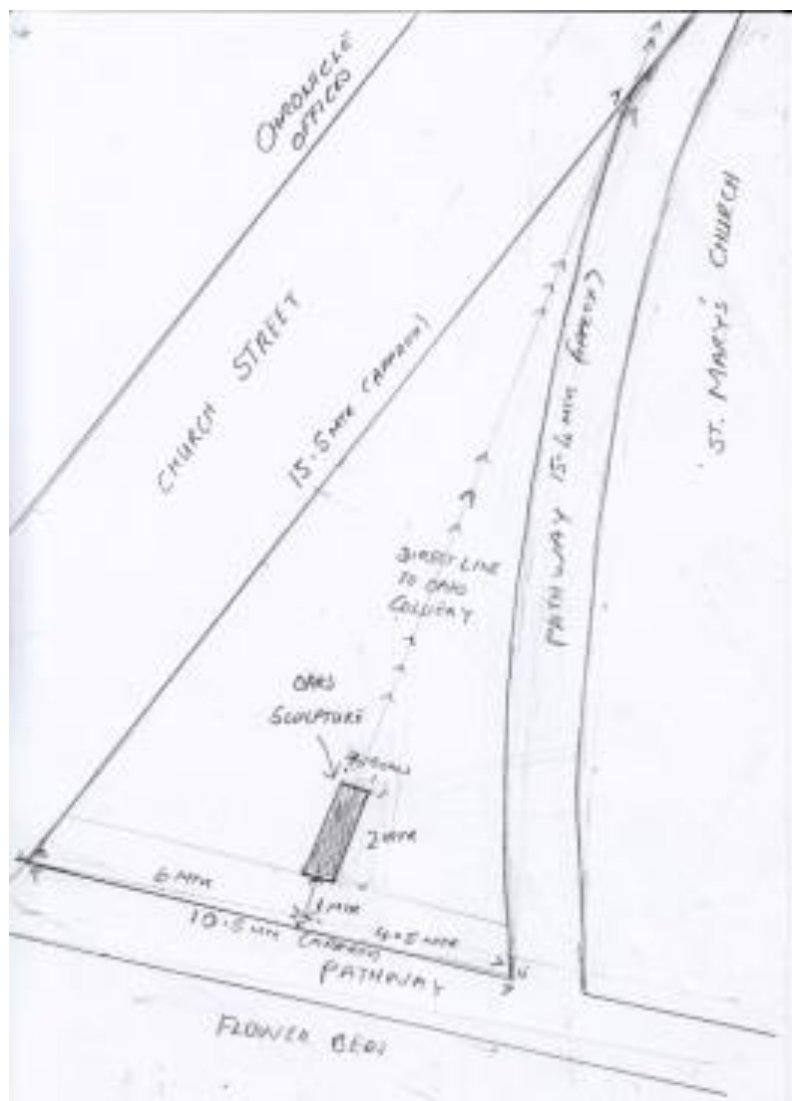
The site is within the Regent Street / Church Street / Market Hill Conservation Area and adjacent to the Victoria Road Conservation Area. This area of the town centre is characterised by 19th Century stone buildings, with notable buildings including Cooper Gallery, Barnsley Chronicle building, NUM Headquarters and St Mary's Church.

The proposed materials of bronze and York stone are sympathetic to this area and are a perfect fit for this streetscape. With regard to public art, there are a number of figurative statues in bronze – Dickie Bird – and monuments – NUM Building – in the vicinity. In particular, the Dickie Bird sculpture provides a model of how plinth and ground finishes add visual interest, an appropriate 'small scale' feel and helps to keep the definition of the adjacent footpaths.

This memorial sculpture is considered both a fitting tribute to the disaster itself and a significant addition to the body of public art in the Borough. It is a high quality artwork that is resonant to the local community that is expected to generate regional and national profile.



Artist design sketches with dimensions (Graham Ibbeson)



Proposed site location plan



View across Church Street



View approaching Church Street



Full size clay models in Graham Ibbeson's workshop prior to being sent for moulding