HAPPISBURGH

Village Interpretation Trail

Interpretation plan & initial design concepts

Stage 2 / Consultation



What are we proposing?

- A trail of up to eight interpretation installations through the village and along the coast.
- A linked trail, with each installation working as a stand-alone experience.
- Coastal change provides a connecting thread without repeating the same message.
- The designs shown today are starting points for consultation, not final proposals.

Locations and route

Ten candidate locations / up to eight installations

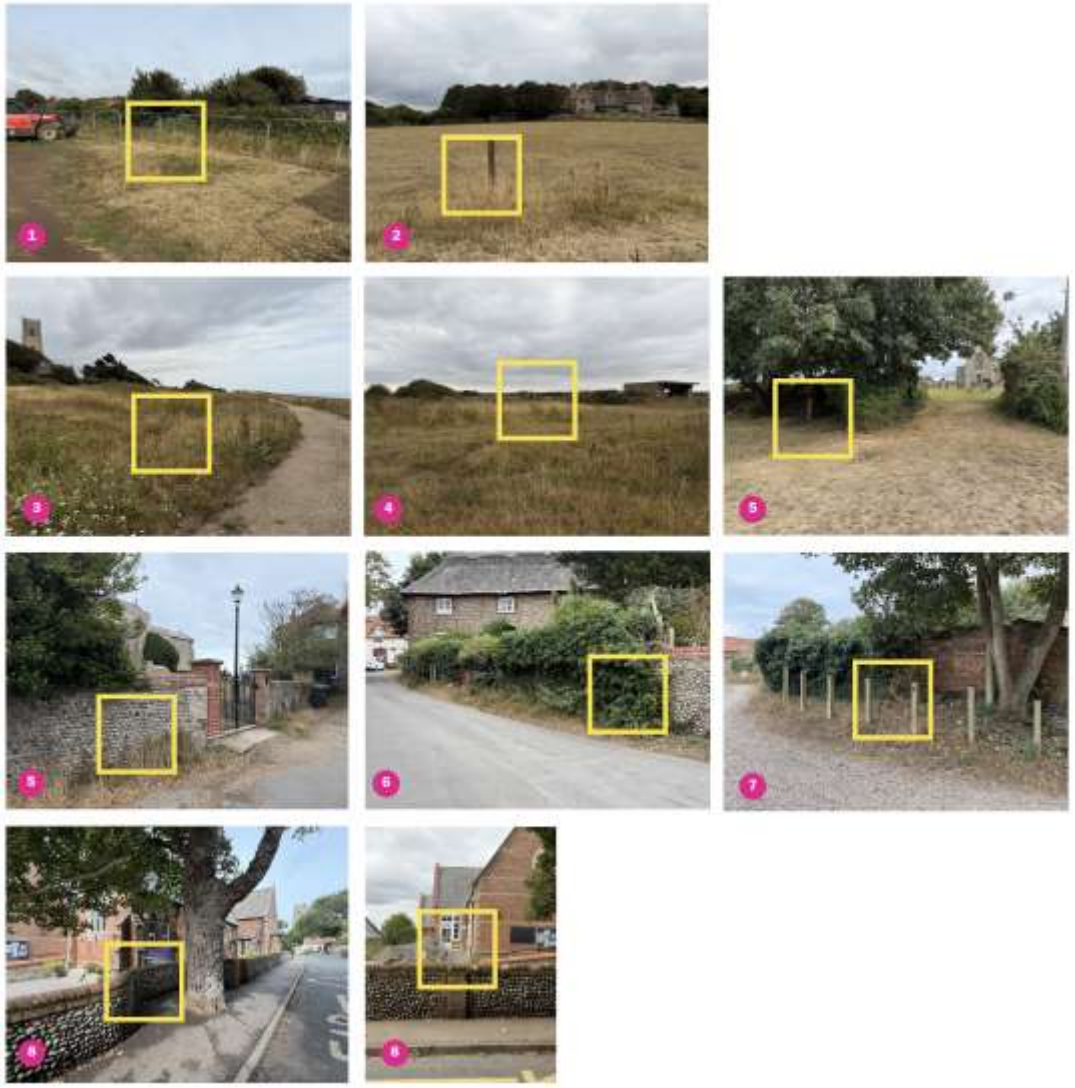
- 1. Car park (old or new)
- 2. Manor
- 3. Old caravan park
- 4. Gun batteries
- 5. Church
- 6. Village sign
- 7. Pub
- 8/9. School / new caravan park
- 10. Lighthouse (tbc)



Locating the installations

Initial placement options to be refined after consultation and site review

- Close to the story being interpreted.
- Respecting access, views and the historic village setting.
- Checking land ownership, path safety and maintenance.
- Several options are still being considered.



A consistent approach to interpretation

- A clear title and main theme.
- Three short sections exploring the local story.
- A fourth section linking to coastal change or adaptation.
- An illustrated “You are here” trail map.
- Images, diagrams or illustrations, tactile or observational activities where relevant.
- Optional QR links to further information.

Proposed length: around 450–500 words per installation across four sections.

The trail stories / 1–4

1. **Dynamic coast** (Car park)

   Why the cliffs change; erosion and flooding; coastal defences.

2. **Happisburgh: a deep history** (Manor)

   Ancient landscapes, early humans, footprints and archaeology.

3. **Biodiversity** (Old caravan park)

   Plants, wildlife and habitats on a changing coast.

4. **Happisburgh and the World Wars** (Gun batteries)

   Gun batteries, radar and a fortified coastline.

The trail stories / 5–8

5 **Capturing heritage at risk** (Church)

St Mary’s Church, its stories and recording historic places.

6 **From farming to coastal life** (Village sign)

The village sign, agriculture, fishing and lost Whimpwell. Lighthouse or as separate location

7 **The almost seaside resort** (Pub)

Holidays, the unrealised railway, artists and visitors.

8 **Happisburgh: living with change** (School / new caravan park)

Changing places, local memories and choices for the future.

Happisburgh - A Deep history / four linked stories

A very different Happisburgh

Reconstruct the ancient landscape.

Footprints in the mud

The 2013 discovery and rapid 3D recording.

The finds that changed the story

Flint tools, fossils and early human activity.

The coast reveals – and removes

Erosion makes discoveries possible, but evidence can vanish quickly.

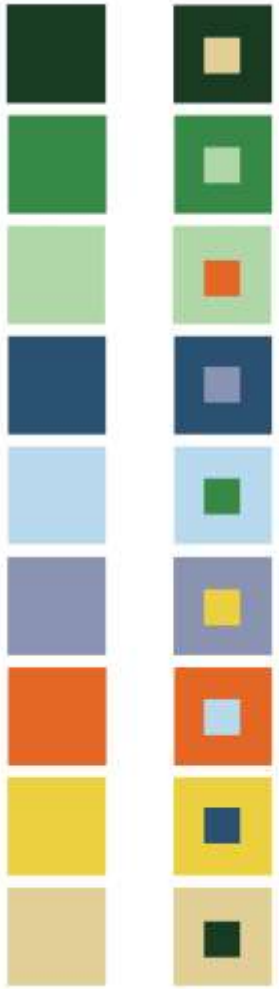
Making the story tangible

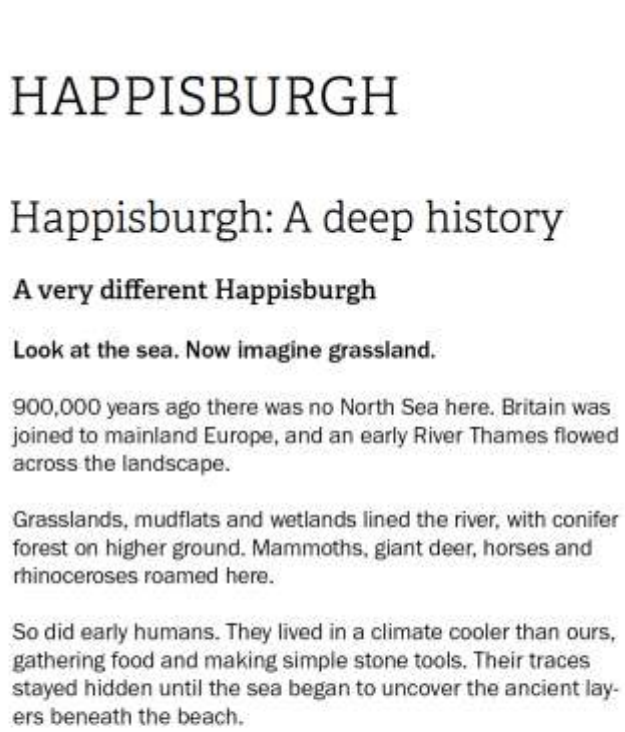
- Illustration to show vanished landscapes, structures and features.
- A life-size hominin footprint cast and handaxe relief could be handled.
- Viewing and observation activities connect visitors with the real landscape.
- QR links could lead to interviews, archives, film and other existing resources.

Digital-content production is outside the current contract scope.

The visual language / rooted in Happisburgh

- A colour palette inspired by the village sign.
- Adelle for headlines; Franklin Gothic for clear, readable body text.
- Recognisable family of installations.
- Treatments can vary to suit each site.





HAPPISBURGH

Happisburgh: A deep history

A very different Happisburgh

Look at the sea. Now imagine grassland.

900,000 years ago there was no North Sea here. Britain was joined to mainland Europe, and an early River Thames flowed across the landscape.

Grasslands, mudflats and wetlands lined the river, with conifer forest on higher ground. Mammoths, giant deer, horses and rhinoceroses roamed here.

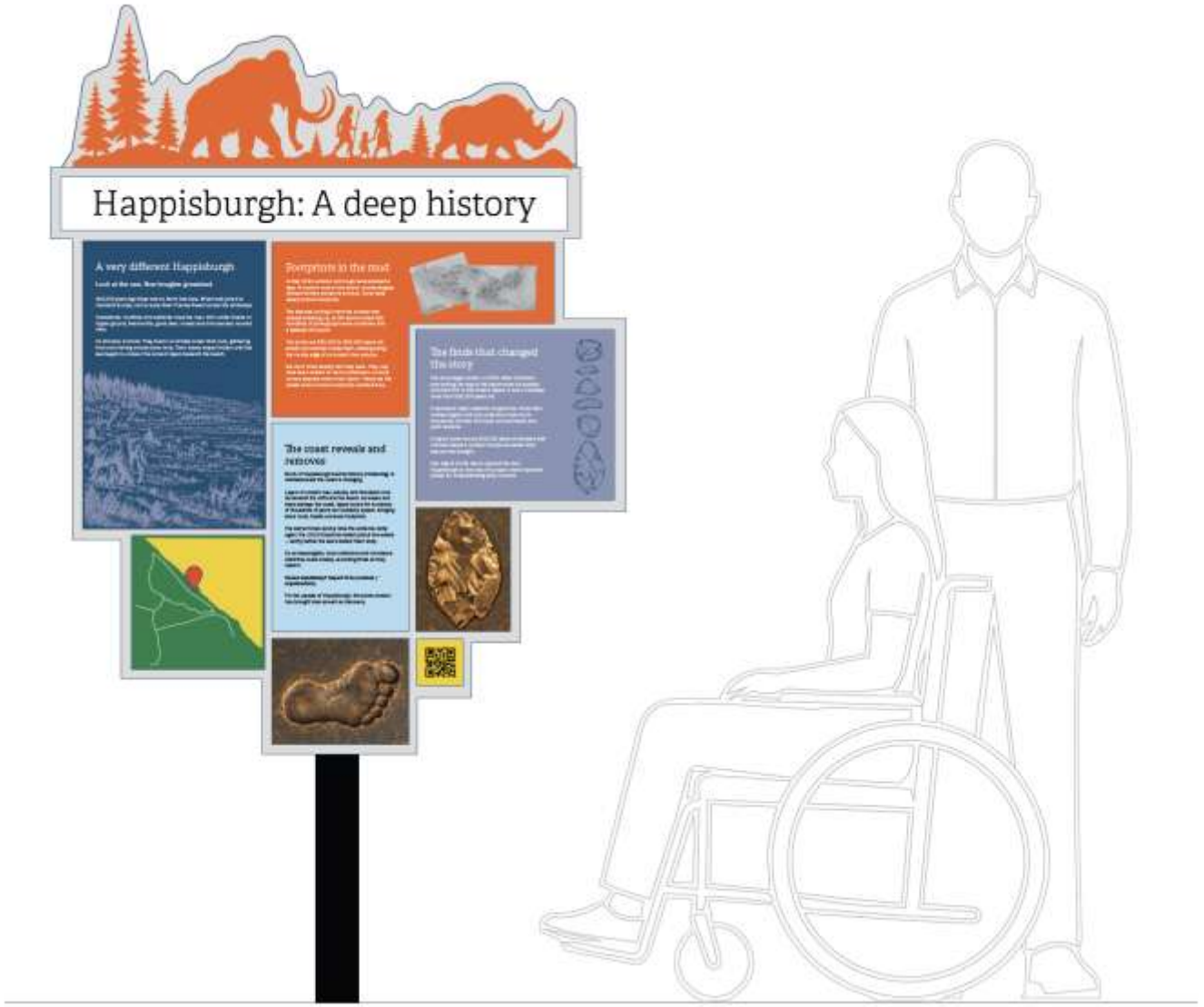
So did early humans. They lived in a climate cooler than ours, gathering food and making simple stone tools. Their traces stayed hidden until the sea began to uncover the ancient layers beneath the beach.

Four possible design approaches

1	**Village sign**	Modular, crafted and distinctive
2	**Brick**	Architectural and sculptural
3	**Illustration-led**	Expressive, colourful and graphic
4	**Signage systems**	Conventional, flexible and practical

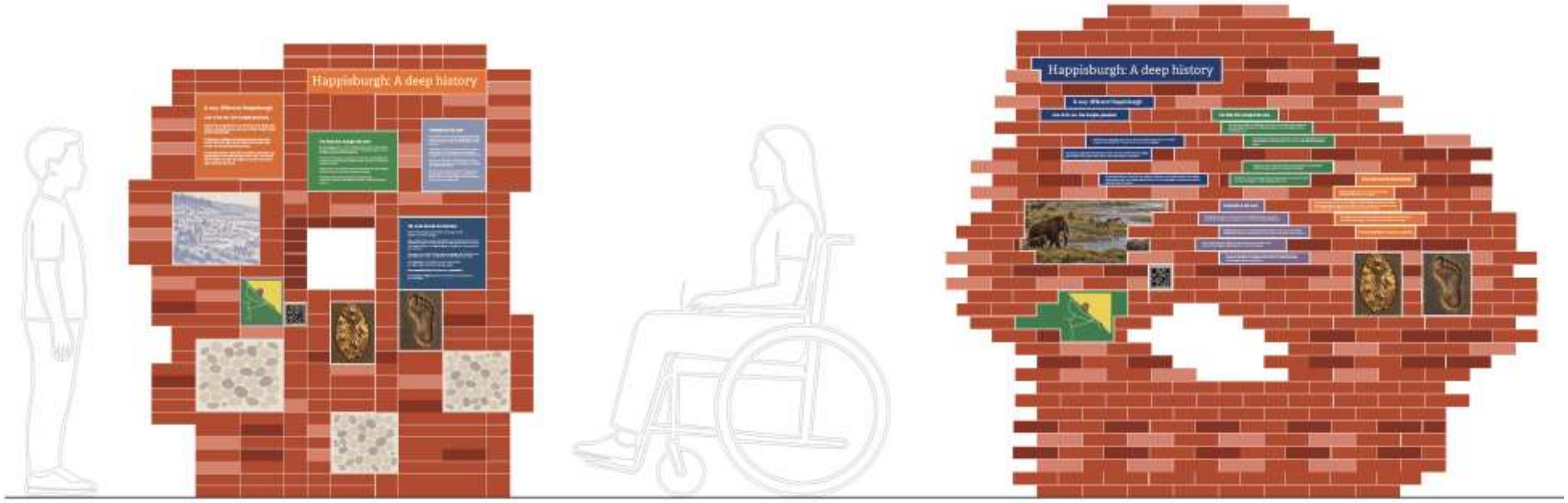
Concept 1 / Village sign

- Reinterprets the traditional village sign as a contemporary structure.
- Modular panels and a location-specific fret-cut silhouette.
- Accommodates illustrations, text, maps and tactile elements.
- Could be freestanding or wall-mounted.



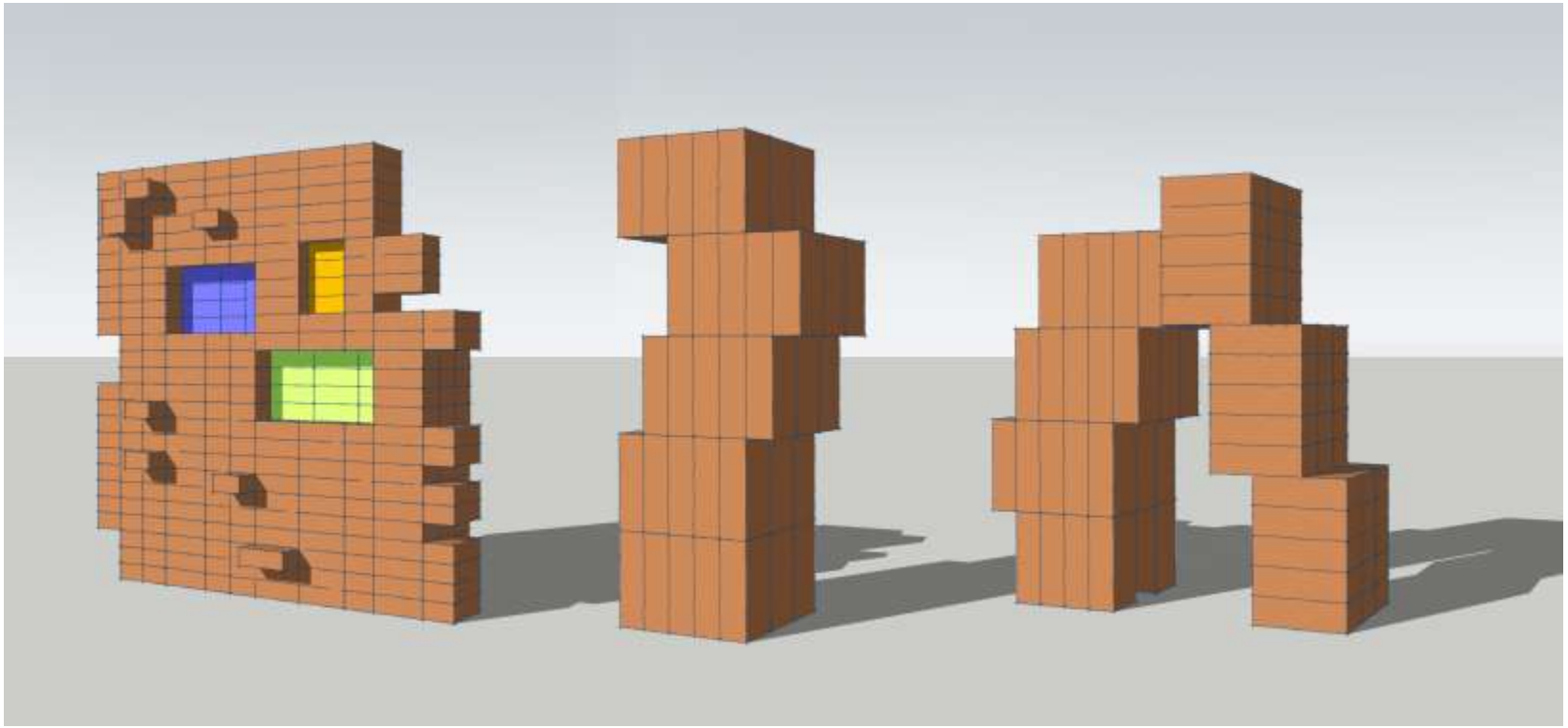
Concept 2 / Brick and cobble

- Responds to brick and cobble seen throughout the village.
- Interpretation incorporated into architectural, wall-like forms.
- Graphics and tactile features built into or applied to masonry.



Concept 2 / Sculptural variations

- The same material language could produce freestanding three-dimensional forms.
- Scale, orientation and arrangement can change from one location to another.



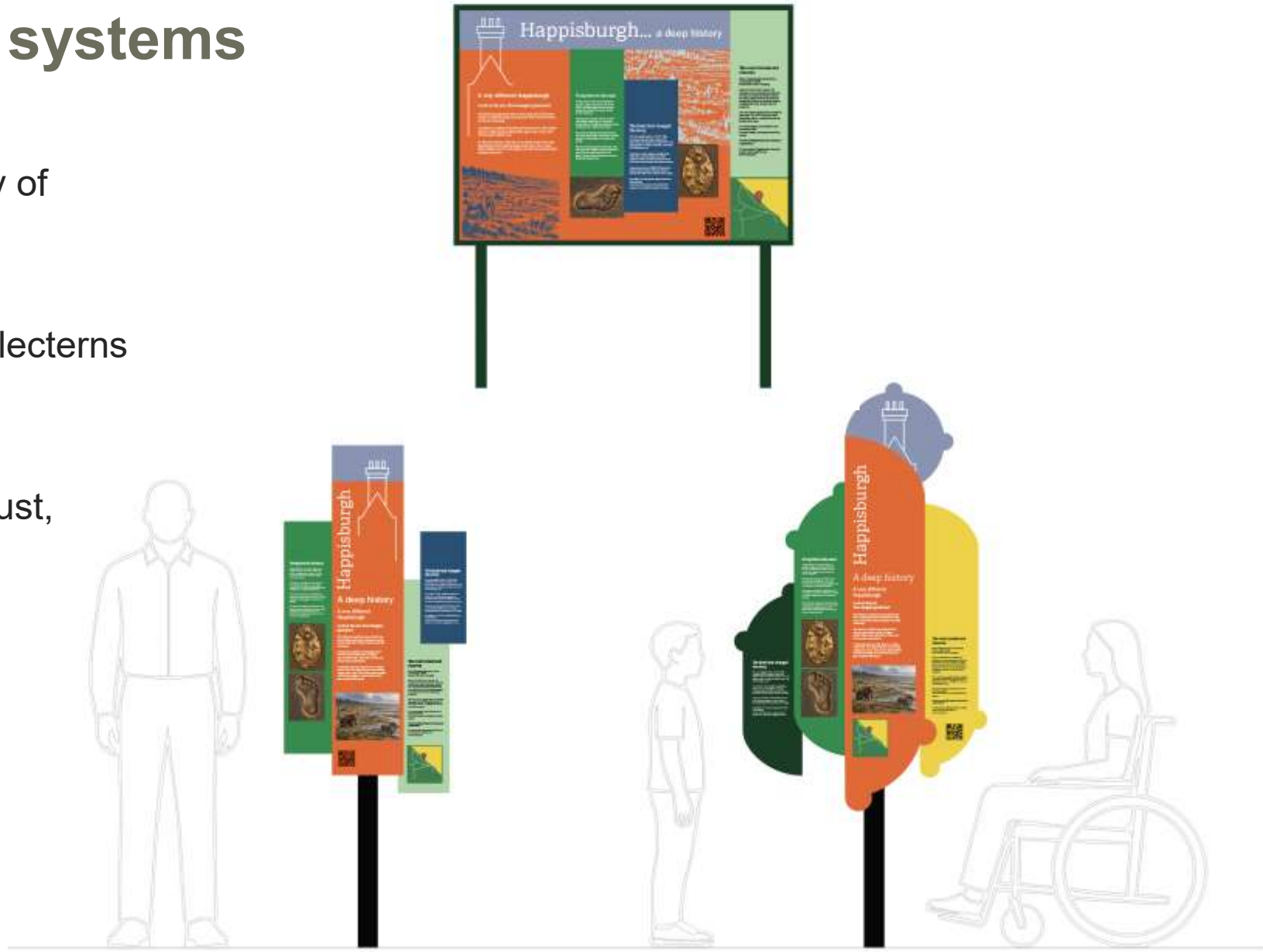
Concept 3 / Illustration-led

- Expressive illustrations layered over shapes inspired by coastal strata.
- Combines atmospheric drawings with technical graphics and photography.
- Well suited to framed panels or printed ceramic tiles.



Concept 4 / Signage systems

- Uses a more conventional family of interpretation signs.
- Standard or bespoke fabricated lecterns and uprights.
- Flexible graphic layouts and robust, accessible installation options.



Installation and listed building consent

- Agee locations
- Minimal finings: Mortar joints / concrete ground fixings
- Graphics: N-Viro panels / Ceramic tiles







Discussion and feedback

- Do the proposed stories feel right for Happisburgh?
- Are these the most appropriate locations?
- Which design approach best reflects the village and coastal setting?
- What local knowledge, images or memories should inform the next stage?

Next steps

- Gather feedback on themes, route and preferred design direction.
- Confirm locations and permissions with relevant stakeholders.
- Develop content, illustrations and interaction details.
- Review designs against accessibility, coastal exposure, maintenance and budget.

Thank you