



**B** Bristol  
BID

**DESIGN  
WEST**

**DESIGN COMPETITION 2026**

# Big Green Ideas for Bristol Harbour

**Bristol BID and Design West invite designers, students and emerging talent to reimagine three Harbourside spaces and shape Bristol BID's new Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision.**

# Context

**Design West** and **Bristol BID** are inviting ideas for how green and blue infrastructure could transform three Harbourside sites: Bathurst Basin, Hannover Place and The Grove. We're looking for concepts, not construction-ready plans: imaginative ideas that bring more **nature**, **water**, **biodiversity** and **climate resilience** into the heart of Bristol.



Green and blue infrastructure can make a significant difference. It cools streets during heatwaves, helps manage surface water when rain is heaviest, and supports the wildlife that shares our city with us.



**Bristol BID** are developing a new Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision for Bristol city centre.



Designs put forward will be treated as ideas and concepts, to encourage **action**, provoke **conversation** and to **showcase the design talent** in the city.



**Entrants** are invited to put forward designs for any form of public realm improvements, this could include **greening**, **play**, **art installations** and **seating**. These locations have been identified by the BID via a consultation process but are not currently in line for imminent changes.



**This Design Competition** will form a key part of the Bristol BID's Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision with the three winning designs being included within the document.



This builds on the previous **City Centre BID Green Infrastructure Audit** (2019) and the **Redcliffe & Temple BID Green Infrastructure Plan** (2023). **Bristol Harbour Strategy** (2026-31).



Bristol BID has a greening and public realm budget of **£500k** across five years to invest in improvements to the city centre.



**£500 Love Bristol Gift Cards** will also be awarded to the winners of each category.

# Competition Information

**The brief:** We're asking entrants to design public realm improvements that use green and blue infrastructure (for example, planting, trees, seating, art, play, water and drainage features, or any combination of these) to make one of our three sites greener, more climate-resilient, and more enjoyable to spend time in. Ideas should respond to the character and constraints of the site, but don't need to be technically detailed.

## 1. Eligibility

This competition is open to all emerging talent (this could be professionals, students or members of the public). You don't need formal design qualifications to enter. Entrants must be aged 16 or over. Individuals or teams are welcome to enter, with one submission permitted per entrant or team.

## 2. Submission requirements

Please submit a digital concept board, A1 in size, submitted as a single page. (portrait or landscape) outlining your concept and key visualisations (these can be sketches, diagrams or similar), along with a short written concept statement of no more than 300 words. Boards should be submitted as a single PDF file (max 20MB).

## 3. Key dates

The competition opens on 15 September 2026 and closes at midnight on **1 November 2026**.

**Winners will be announced at BRAZEN conference on Wednesday 11 November.**

## 4. How to enter

Submit entries via this [jot form](#).

## 5. Judging panel

The judging panel will be:

- Mike Cowdy, Founder and Director, MOOWD
- Lucy Empson, Principle Public Realm Designer, Bristol City Council
- Pippa Goldfinger, Head of Design, Design West
- Sarah Jones-Morris, Director, Landsmith Associates Ltd
- Tom Swithinbank, Senior Project Manager, Bristol BID

## 6. Announcing winners

Winning and shortlisted concepts will be showcased as part of the launch of Bristol BID's Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision and featured on the Bristol BID website. The ideas will help inform the vision set out within the Plan and support future conversations about opportunities to improve these spaces. Winners will be announced at [Brazen Festival](#) on 11 November.

## 7. Evaluation criteria

Entries will be assessed against the following criteria:

- response to place
- impact on biodiversity and climate resilience
- clarity and coherence of the design proposal
- innovation.

## 8. Awards

There will be three winning designs, one for each location. The winning designs will be featured in Bristol BID's published Vision.

Each category winner also receives a £500 Love Bristol Gift Card.

One submission is permitted per entrant or team, so choose the location that speaks to you most and put your best ideas forward.



# The Sites

## ① Bathurst Basin



- 📍 Situated on the south side of Bristol's Floating Harbour, between Redcliffe Bridge and Prince Street Bridge.

[Google maps](#)

**What 3 Words:** wink.meals.broad

- 🏠 Owned by Bristol City Council.

- 👤 The basin is currently well used for water sports such as kayaking and paddleboarding and is overlooked by residences and the Louisiana.

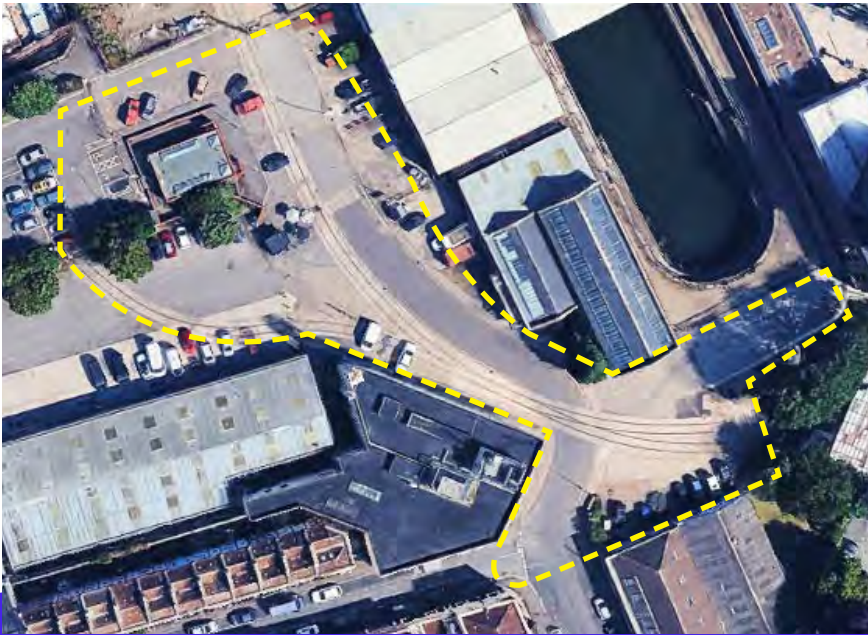
- 💡 Ideas for this location have included, greening, public art, the story of the docks, natural play and opportunities for commercial premises e.g. café or restaurant.

- 🔍 **Constraints to consider:**
  - access to boat deck
  - level change/raised area within site
  - boundary with remaining car parking
  - historic harbour infrastructure
  - view of historic John Sebastian Lightship boat, docked to East of site

The primary focus is the site boundary, but consideration of the wider context is encouraged.

# The Sites

## 2 Hanover Place



📍 Located in Spike Island between Albion Dock and Bristol Marina, this location was chosen due to its key link in the 'Harbour Loop' and the opportunity to improve the connection between Bristol Dockyards (SS Great Britain) and the rest of Spike Islands industrial heritage.

[Google maps](#)

**What 3 Words:** dated.store.stews

🏛️ Owned by Bristol City Council.

👤 Entrants should consider the need to for vehicle access to the Seetru and Marina car parks as well as the other uses in the area. This site is located in a Conservation Area. The existing building within the site (situated North West) is a facility associated with marina operations.

💡 Ideas for this location have included, greening and natural play. Consultees on our exploratory walk commented on the opportunity to provide imaginative wayfinding to encourage people to continue on the Harbour Loop after reaching SS Great Britain.

🔍 **Constraints to consider:**

- Constraint considerations:
- historic railway tracks
- traffic flow through the site/pedestrian safety
- existing coffee hut & external seating
- area provides vehicular access to rowing sheds/water access
- views of Banksy's graffiti

The primary focus is the site boundary, but consideration of the wider context is encouraged.

# The Sites

## 3 The Grove



- 📍 Located next to Prince Street Bridge, this mostly unused car park is a prime site next to the Floating Harbour.

[Google maps](#)

**What 3 Words:** ideas.behind.even

- 🏠 Owned by Bristol City Council.

- 👤 Entrants should consider the need to retain and take advantage of the amazing views across the harbour to St Mary Redcliffe Church and Georgian houses.

- 💡 Ideas for this location have included, seating, play and the story of industrial heritage.

### 🔍 Constraints to consider:

- existing coffee hut/cafe on the NW site boundary
- retaining pedestrian/cycle permeability
- historic crane
- consider boundary with the remaining parking area
- water access/entry point is currently via steps on South boundary

The primary focus is the site boundary, but consideration of the wider context is encouraged.

# FAQs

## What is the purpose of the competition?

The competition is intended to generate creative ideas and stimulate discussion about the future of three city centre public spaces. It is an opportunity to explore possibilities, showcase creativity and help inform a long-term vision for improving Bristol's public realm.

## Is this a design commission?

This is an ideas competition and is not a procurement or commissioning process. Entrants are not being asked to produce detailed technical designs.

## What level of detail is expected?

Entries should be high-level concepts rather than fully developed landscape or architectural designs. We are looking for imaginative ideas that communicate a vision for the space.

## Why these three locations?

The sites have been identified through Bristol BID's engagement with the public and city centre businesses as locations with significant potential for future improvement and greening. These sites are endorsed by Bristol City Council as potential opportunities for change.

## Will any of the ideas be built?

There is currently no funding allocated to deliver projects at these locations, and the competition does not guarantee that any concept will be implemented. The purpose is to inspire future thinking and help build the case for investment over time.

## How will Bristol City Council be involved?

Bristol City Council are supporting this competition and endorse the need for new ideas for the Harbour. The BID's Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision will be shared with Bristol City Council and other relevant stakeholders as part of ongoing discussions about improving the city centre. The competition is intended to contribute ideas to those conversations rather than determine future projects.

## How will Bristol City Council be involved?

Bristol City Council are supporting this competition and endorse the need for new ideas for the Harbour. The BID's Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision will be shared with Bristol City Council and other relevant stakeholders as part of ongoing discussions about improving the city centre. The competition is intended to contribute ideas to those conversations rather than determine future projects. Lucy Empson, Bristol Council's Principle Public Realm Designer is a member of the judging panel.

## Will there be opportunities for further design work?

This competition does not include the appointment of a design team or the commissioning of further work. Should future projects emerge, any professional services would be procured separately through the appropriate process.

## Who can enter?

See Eligibility in the Competition Information section above.

## Who owns the ideas?

Entrants retain the intellectual property rights to their work. By entering the competition, participants grant Bristol BID and Design West permission to display and reference submitted concepts in relation to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision and associated communications. We will endeavour to credit wherever possible.

**For more information, please contact:**  
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# About us



## Bristol BID

Bristol BID is a business-led partnership investing in a safer, greener, cleaner and more vibrant city centre, giving local businesses a powerful collective voice and delivering high-impact projects that make Bristol better for everyone.

Thanks to the £18m investment and involvement from our business community, we're creating a better Bristol for all. Our vision is a future-focused city that attracts business, investment, and people to create a resilient and welcoming city for all.

[www.bristolbid.co.uk](http://www.bristolbid.co.uk)



## Design West

Design West is a centre of excellence for design and placemaking, working to inspire the public, politicians and professionals across the South West of England to create better, healthier places to live, work and relax.

Design West brings together independent design review, community placemaking and public engagement to raise the standard of the built and natural environment across the region.

[www.designwest.org.uk](http://www.designwest.org.uk)