Green open spaces, long vistas, waterside walks and public art have given Bristol back a once derelict part of its historic city centre.

Our masterplan for Bristol Harbourside has transformed a brownfield site of former docks and industrial activity into elegant and enjoyable places to live, work and relax.

The masterplan provides generous public spaces with impressive views, opens up the waterside, and includes carefully designed buildings. Together they create a strong city centre character.

We have designed five residential buildings within the masterplan. The redevelopment includes almost 600 new homes – a mixture of apartments and houses, both affordable and for sale on the open market. The four residential buildings completed so far have an EcoHomes ‘very good’ rating.
Context
The masterplan for Bristol Harbourside centres on Canon's Marsh which lies at the heart of Bristol beside a bend in the historic Floating Harbour and is overlooked by the Cathedral and the heights of Clifton. The 16.3 acre site, contaminated by gas works and former industrial activity, had lain derelict for some 30 years.

The spatial framework created by the masterplan locks Canon's Marsh back into the rest of Bristol. We took a bold approach that aimed to create a clear, legible part of the city with public spaces that link into the grain of its surroundings, bounded by appropriately scaled buildings.

Central to connecting Bristol Harbourside to the rest of the city was extending the ‘Brunel Mile’ – a public walkway running from Bristol Temple Meads station – to the SS Great Britain through the Canon’s Marsh site. Completion of Building 4 – ‘Invicta’ – and the new Millennium Promenade has opened up the final stretch of this route.

The design of ‘Invicta’ and the four other residential buildings is used to define the strong framework of public open space and strategic views that inspires the masterplan. The buildings rise up in height to the split cylindrical form of Building 10 – ‘Waverley and Balmoral’ – that frames a view of the Cathedral along a new public open space, Cathedral Walk.

The sweeping crescent of Building 9 – named, appropriately, ‘The Crescent’ – defines the three main pedestrian routes that link Canon's Marsh with the rest of Bristol. Facing the Floating Harbour, it opens up the previously inaccessible riverside walk.
Community

Community is at the heart of the strategy for the development of Bristol Harbourside. The masterplan aimed to create a busy, bustling place where people live, work and relax – and which draws in tourists. The sequence of well designed, well connected public spaces encourages walking, jogging or simply sitting outside enjoying fine vistas of the city.

The Millennium Promenade – planted with wild flowers – is an accessible green space enjoyed by Harbourside residents as well as the public. It leads down to Harbour Square around a new inlet to the harbour. Harbour Square is designed to accommodate a diverse range of activities, including art performances, markets, the Harbourside Festival and alfresco dining.

Intrinsic to the design of the public realm was an extensive public art programme, greatly adding to the attraction of Bristol Harbourside for residents and visitors alike.

The Promenade, for example, ties together elements of architecture, art and landscape. Designed with urban artists Sans Façon and landscape architects Grant Associates, an intriguing scheme celebrates the passage of rainwater from the roofs of the buildings to the harbour, visible through a series of collection dishes, channels and rills. The water is used within a sustainable urban drainage system to irrigate the landscape.

A light installation by local artist Richard Box draws the two halves of Building 10 together, animating the pedestrian square. Artist Julie Verhoeven was appointed to integrate artwork within the design of Building 9, particularly in the main entrance.

Collaboration

The Bristol Harbourside masterplan was designed with extensive public consultation. Stakeholders were many and varied: local people, businesses, politicians, the Cathedral and cultural groups across the city all had an interest. A series of workshops was held, and people’s views and opinions set criteria for the emerging masterplan.

In order to ensure that the masterplan fully reflected the wishes of the people of Bristol, the public consultation was monitored and assessed by the Canon’s Marsh Consultative Group.