

BRISTOL HARBOUR PLACE SHAPING STRATEGY

PLACE PLAN: HOTWELL ROAD

February 2025





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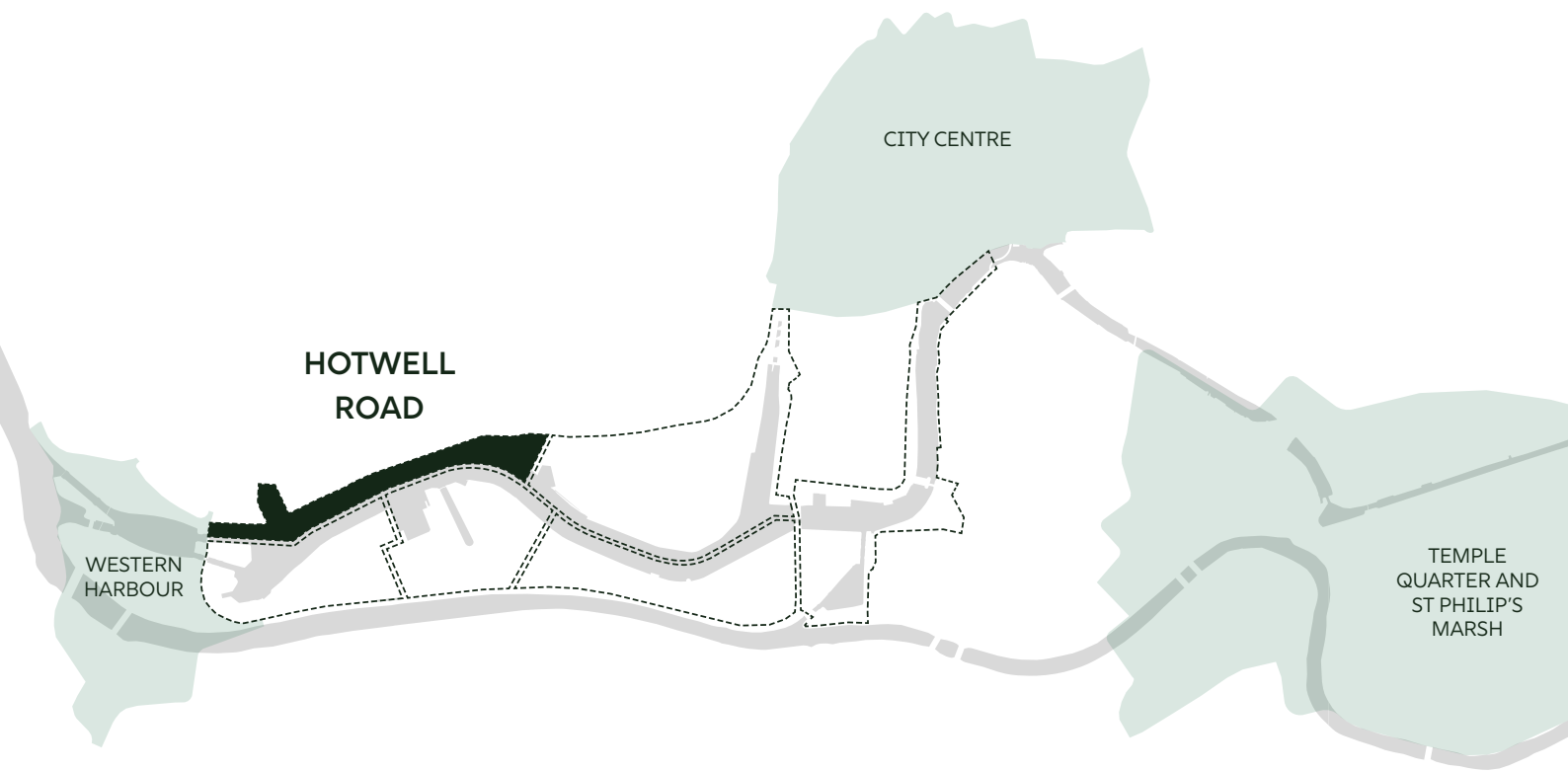
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HOTWELL ROAD TODAY

Hotwell Road is a key artery between Bristol and regional roads to the west of the city, where traffic dominates. Thanks also to the steep topography sloping up toward Clifton Wood, harbour-related uses are spread along quite a thin south-facing water's edge. To the west, at Rownham Mead and Poole's Wharf small neighbourhoods of private housing have taken the place of industrial uses, and the water's edge plays a role in leisure-orientated water uses.



Photographs of Hotwell Road today (Source: DK-CM)



SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

Hotwell Road is recognised as an attractive location for leisurely walks and its view to the SSGB Britain. Being a key connecting route by the water's edge, the Mardyke Wharf car park is also popular with social runners to meet. Key opportunities were repeatedly raised about the public realm and how it interacts with pedestrians and cyclists. The walkway between Merchant's Road and Harbourside loop in particular, is a pinch point and could benefit from a widened cyclist bridge. The Poole's

Wharf landing stage was also highlighted as inaccessible for disabled visitors and unsafe. One suggestion was to separate ferry access from other water access points on the pontoon. People also addressed the opportunity for Mardyke car park to be activated for community activity.

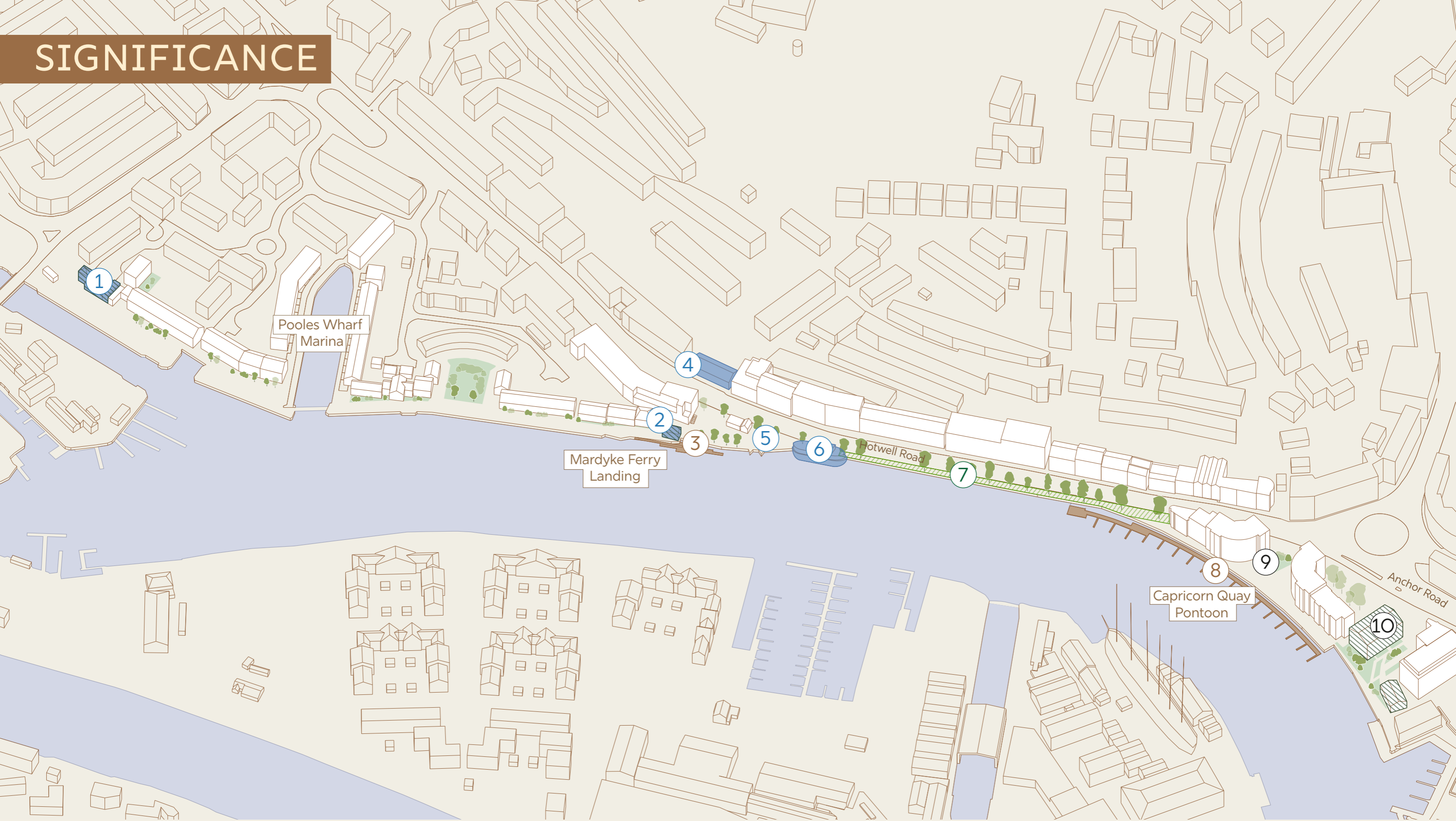
' There's so much history around the harbourside, I wish there was more of it - like those little 'did you know?' signs along the water'

Harbour walkway hard to navigate on bike





LIVE VERY CLOSE TO IT. "IT'S ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES I GO TO BEFORE I GO ANYWHERE"


TERRIBLE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

SIGNIFICANCE

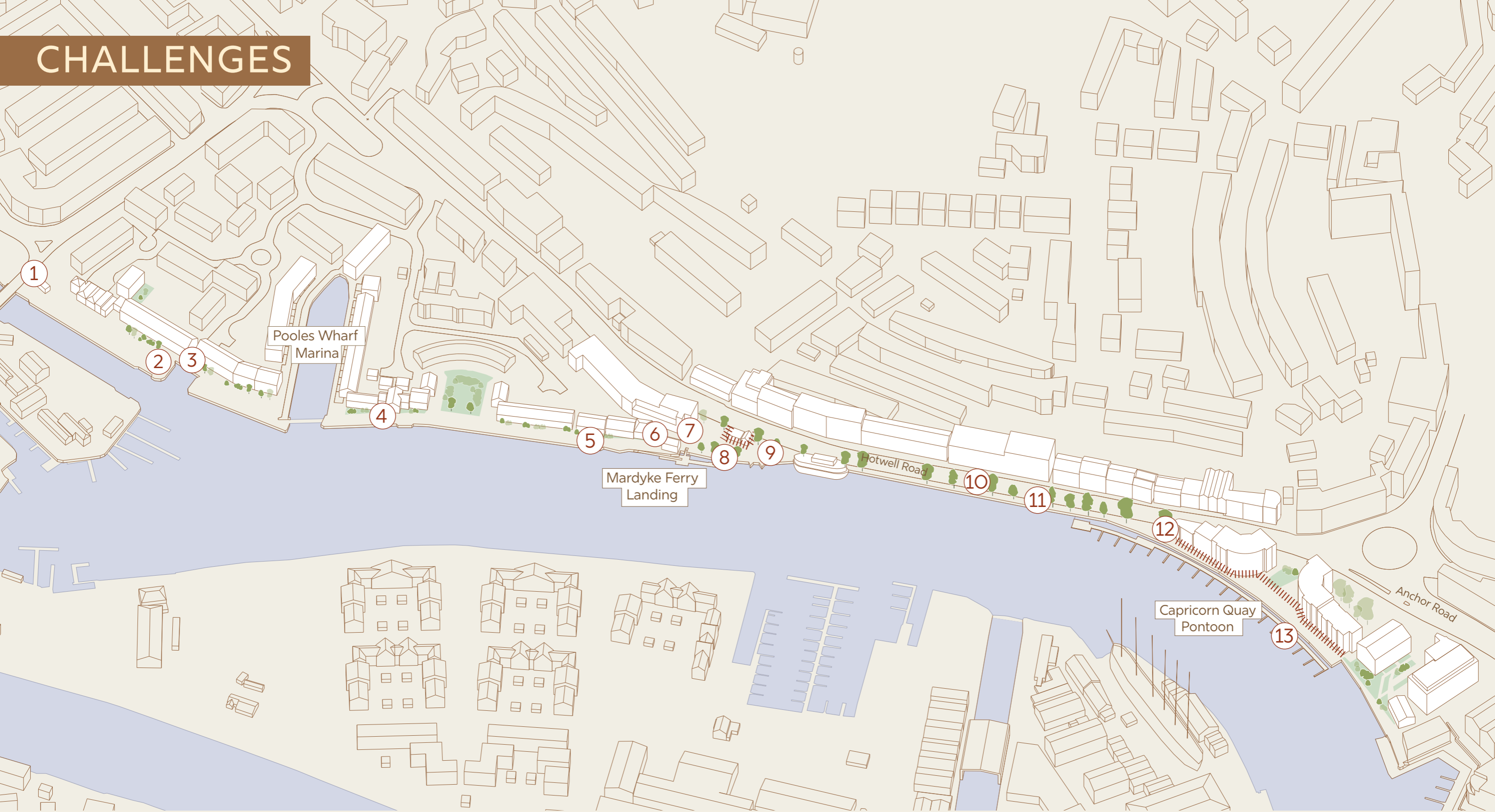


Key

-  Heritage significance
-  Maritime significance
-  Social / cultural significance
-  Ecological significance

- | | |
|--|--|
|  The Pump House |  Mature tree-lined quayside |
|  Young Bristol Pooles Wharf Activity Centre |  Capricorn Place Pontoon |
|  Mardyke Ferry Landing |  Statue of Samuel Plimsoll |
|  The Mardyke |  Oculus House (Purifier House) |
|  Mardyke Wharf Car Park | |
|  Grain Barge | |

CHALLENGES



Key

----- Inactive frontages

- ① Pedestrian and cyclist links to Cumberland Basin interrupted by busy main road and narrow paths.
- ② Underutilised public realm along the harbour edge with constraints due to surrounding residential neighbourhood.
- ③ Pinch point for pedestrians and cyclists next to inlet.
- ④ Competing space for cyclists and pedestrians between water and residential buildings.
- ⑤ Lack of emergency ladders, lifebuoys and safety call boxes decrease water safety at the harbour edge.
- ⑥ Blind corner on Quayside Walkway causes conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.
- ⑦ Historic alleyway from Hotwell Road to pontoons attracts anti-social behaviour.
- ⑧ Public, water organisations and ferries use the same pontoon causing safety concerns.
- ⑨ Spatial inefficiencies from the existing parking layout creates conflict between car park use and continuation of Quayside Walkway.
- ⑩ Noise pollution from adjacent road.
- ⑪ Some in-water uses are limited opposite the mouth of Albion Dock due to operating requirements.
- ⑫ Generous public space along Capricorn Place Estate is underutilised.
- ⑬ Exposed walkway foundations to Capricorn Place pose a risk to water users as they are an open structure.

SIGNIFICANCE

HERITAGE

Hotwells Road locates key heritage buildings including the Pump House, Young Bristol Pooles Wharf activity centre and the Purifier House. The Pump House, now a well-loved pub, was a Victorian pumping house and Purifier House, restored as a block of apartments, was a long standing icon of the harbour's industrial heritage as a gas works building. A statue commemorating Samuel Plimsoll can also be found on the Capricorn Place quayside walkway. Plimsoll was a politician, social reformer and avid campaigner for the protection of women and men at sea.

MARITIME

Hotwell Road has two key sites of maritime significance; Mardyke Ferry Landing and Capricorn Place Pontoon. Mardyke Wharf was constructed 1859 and moored trading vessels of maritime and industrial activity in the heydays of Bristol harbour's maritime. It is now an active stop for local ferry bus services and a landing stage for Young Bristol Pooles Wharf activity centre. Capricorn Place Pontoon is a new development to enrich maritime provision of leisure and residential moorings, introducing floating reed beds and boater facilities.

BIODIVERSITY

Despite pockets of greenery around Pooles Wharf's small neighbourhoods of private housing, the most ecological significant site is the mature tree-lined quayside along Hotwell road.

SOCIAL / CULTURAL

Hotwell Road locates two food and drink venues; Grain Barge, a popular moored boat known for beers, pies, and live music and the Mardyke pub are key social hubs. The area is also home to Young Bristol Pooles Wharf activity centre offering a range of water-based activities including kayaking, paddle boarding and canoeing. Located at the Mardyke Wharf landing, the organisation provides local access to the harbour via an outdoor activities programme and holiday clubs, altogether enriching social value.

CHALLENGES

PUBLIC REALM

The public realm throughout Hotwell Road is imbalanced creating pinch points between pedestrian and cyclist routes. Blind corners in the historic alleyway from Hotwell Road to the pontoons, has also attracted anti-social behaviour. The public realm is underutilised by the harbour edge and along Capricorn Place Estate especially, lacking green space which decreases the dwell time of pedestrians. There are also constraints on development of leisure uses due to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

CAR PARKING

Pedestrians walking around the harbour are currently routed through the Mardyke Car Park, making this a less attractive stretch of the harbour for visitors.

WATER ACCESS

Mardyke Wharf pontoon is used by a number of public, water-organisations and local ferries services. This has caused concerns due to the limited capacity of the landing stage.

HOTWELL ROAD TOMORROW

Vision

The quayside walk will be a more comfortable place to dwell alongside the water and a much better place to 'move through' for pedestrians. To the west, the water edge will be safer and more accessible. Mardyke Wharf will have improved public realm and expanded leisure uses, making an accessible leisure space for all Bristolians. To the east, opportunities will be taken to enrich the existing provision of moorings and ecospace, such as Capricorn Quay.

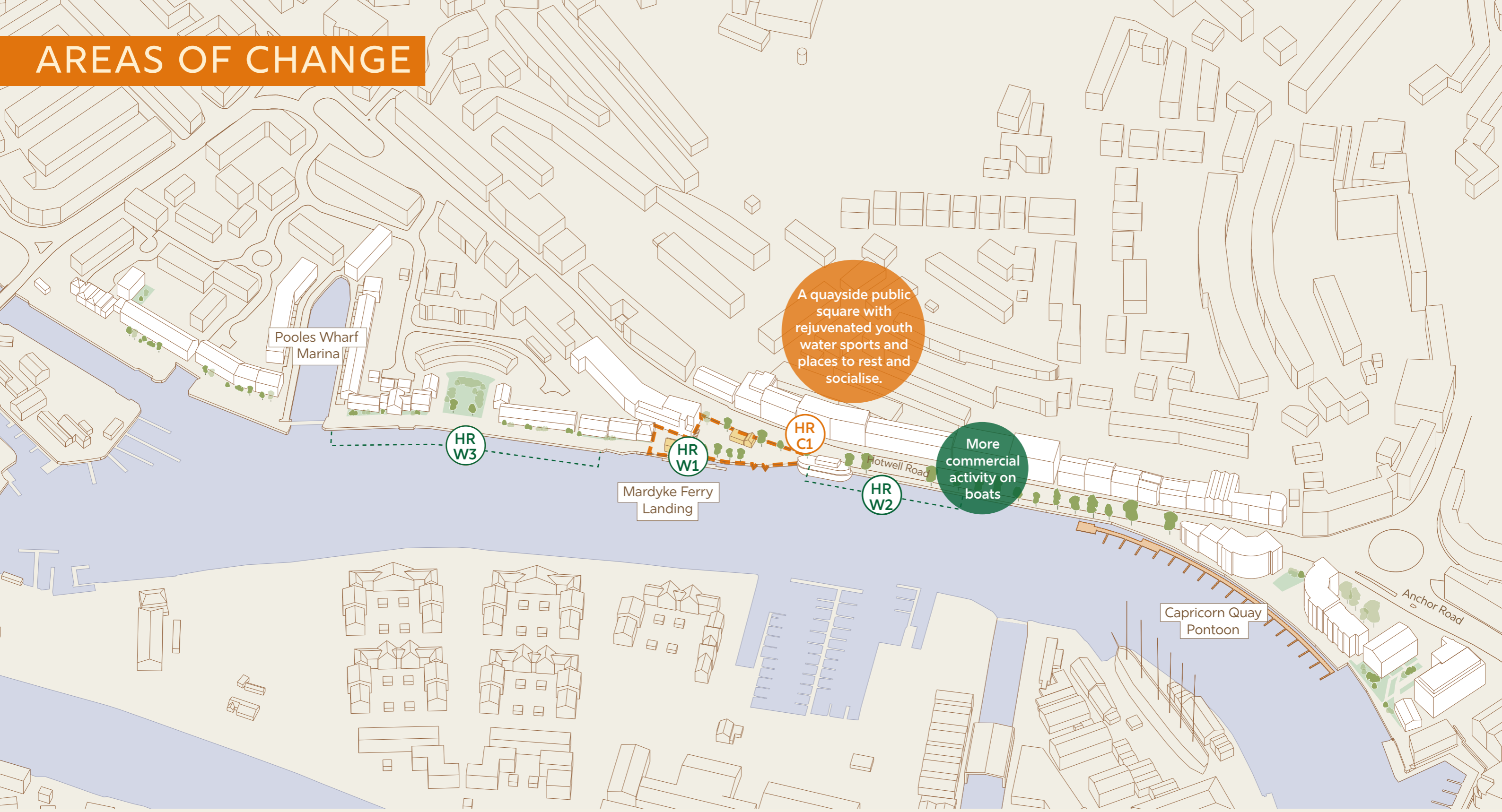


Photograph towards Hotwell Road and of Capricorn Quay (Source: DK-CM)





Key Moves

- Mardyke Wharf consolidated as watersports/leisure hub in a way that balances commercial opportunity and social impact
- Clear approach to pedestrian and cycle movement along this important (and narrow) movement corridor
- Enhanced pedestrian quayside experience along Hotwell Road


AREAS OF CHANGE






Key

-  Building for potential change
-  Area for potential change
-  Site allocated to future development (Bristol Local Plan)
-  Waterspace change (refer to Waterspace Plan)

Place Specific Interventions

-  HRC1: Mardyke Wharf (Bristol Watersports Network)

Waterspace Interventions (refer to Waterspace Plan)

-  HRW1: Mardyke Pontoon Reconfiguration
-  HRW2: Mardyke Commercial Moorings
-  HRW3: Temporary Mooring Infrastructure

Areas of Change Interventions

There is an opportunity to retrofit the Young Bristol storage building for commercial use. An active frontage onto the new public realm would support the buildings as a cafe or watersports shop to provide wider social investment and value.

Below: *What if an intensified public realm within a Mardyke Wharf was created, lined with active leisure and commercial frontages and creating a hub of social and maritime activity?*

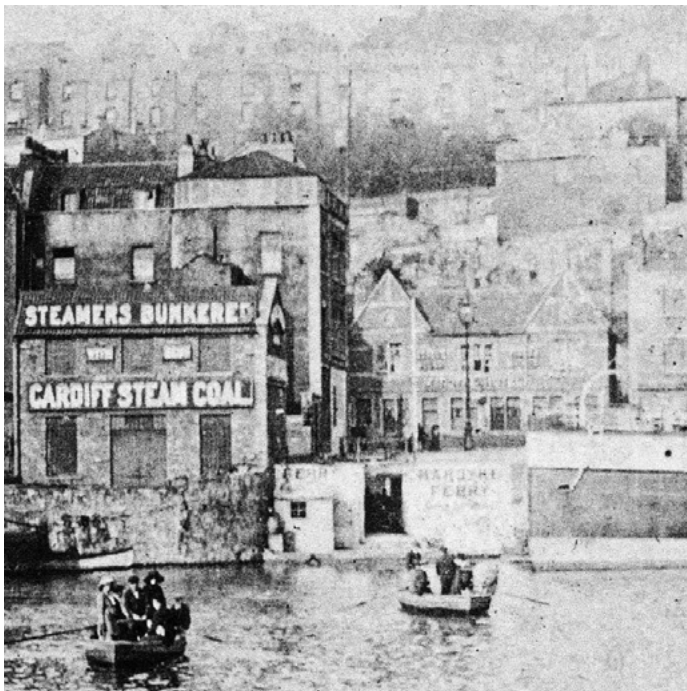


HRC1 Mardyke Wharf (Bristol Urban Watersports Network)

The waterspace between Baltic Wharf and Mardyke Wharf already forms the 'hub' of watersports provision in the harbour. It is proposed that this hub is further strengthened as part of a wider project (Bristol Urban Watersports Network) described more fully in the Waterspace Plan. Opportunities exist to retrofit and reconfigure Young Bristol's existing buildings, to enhance watersport facilities and provide new commercial opportunities e.g. cafe or watersports shop with an active front onto an upgraded public realm. Opportunity to enhance the public realm to provide a better Quayside Walkway, and provide spaces that can be used for outdoor events and dwell/ observe the watersport activity. Mini-bus drop-off and disabled parking retained. Opportunity to integrate storage and other watersport facilities onto the reconfigured Mardyke Wharf pontoon / ferry landing.



HRC1: A new boat-mending facility in an existing structure, in Portsoy, Scotland. (Source: Brown + Brown)



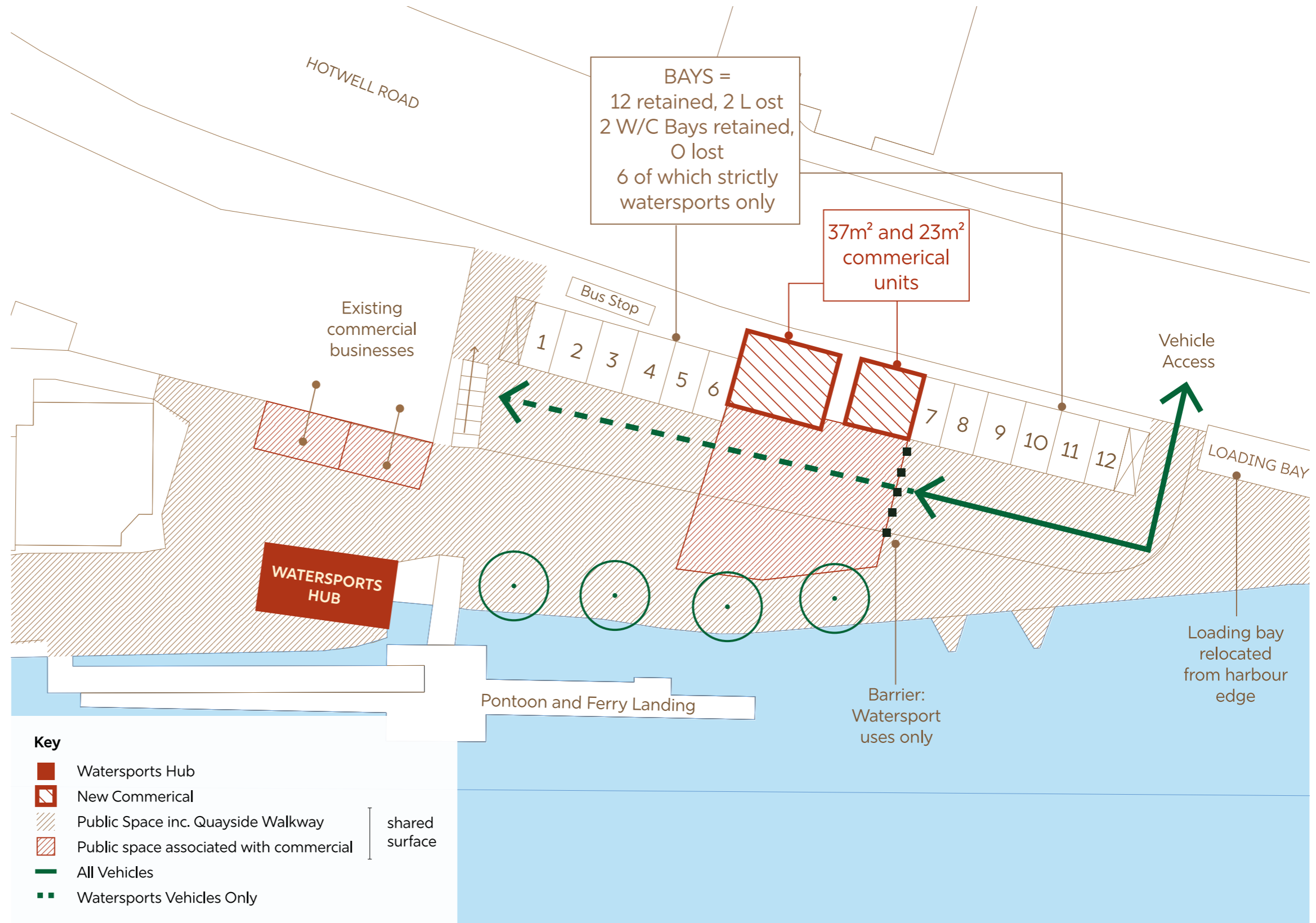
HRC1: Archival imagery of the former Mardyke (row boat) ferry landing with large vessel and Cardiff Steam Coal premises adjacent. (Source: Bristol City Docks)



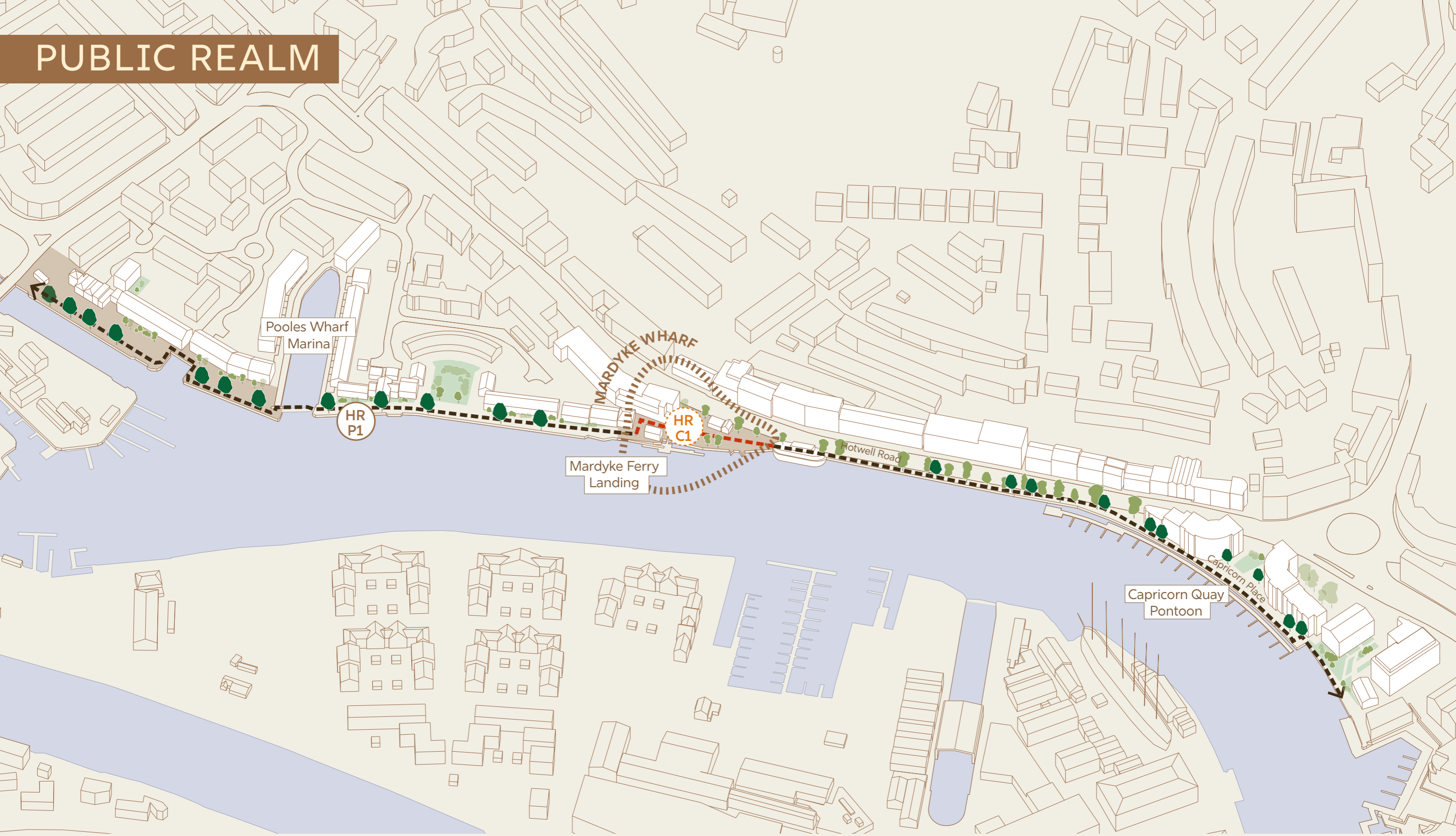
HRC1: The High Cross, in Tottenham, is an example a compact urban building being repurposed for new public uses, in this case a micro pub. (Source: Ewan Munro)

HRC1: Mardyke Wharf (Bristol Watersports Centre) cont.

A reinvigorated youth watersports centre, supported by adjacent commercial businesses and a redesign of existing parking and loading provision to directly support watersports activity, create public space and enhance the quayside walkway, at the cost of two parking spaces.



PUBLIC REALM



Key

- Priority for public realm improvement
- Existing greening
- Enhanced greening
- Existing Quayside Walkway
- Existing Quayside Walkway (priority for improvement)
- Key public paces

Place Specific Interventions

HR P1 HRP1: Hotwells Walkway

Related Areas of Change projects

HR C1 HRC1: Mardyke Wharf (Bristol Watersports Network)

Public Realm Interventions

Public realm will be activated along the Quayside Walkway with increased greening, sociable seating. There is opportunity for a new public realm in the existing Mardyke car park to host various uses, including a programme of temporary events.

HRP1: Hotwell Walkway

Opportunities for new urban greening along Quayside Walkway with regular places of sheltered, sociable and inclusive seating. Historic interpretation and signage along the harbour edge, to showcase different stories and histories of the harbour, and help interpret views across the harbour to the SSGB and Albion Dock.



HRP1: Place Simon-Goulart Geneva, trees and bushes protect the public space from the road and shelter seating of various kinds. (Source: ADR architects)

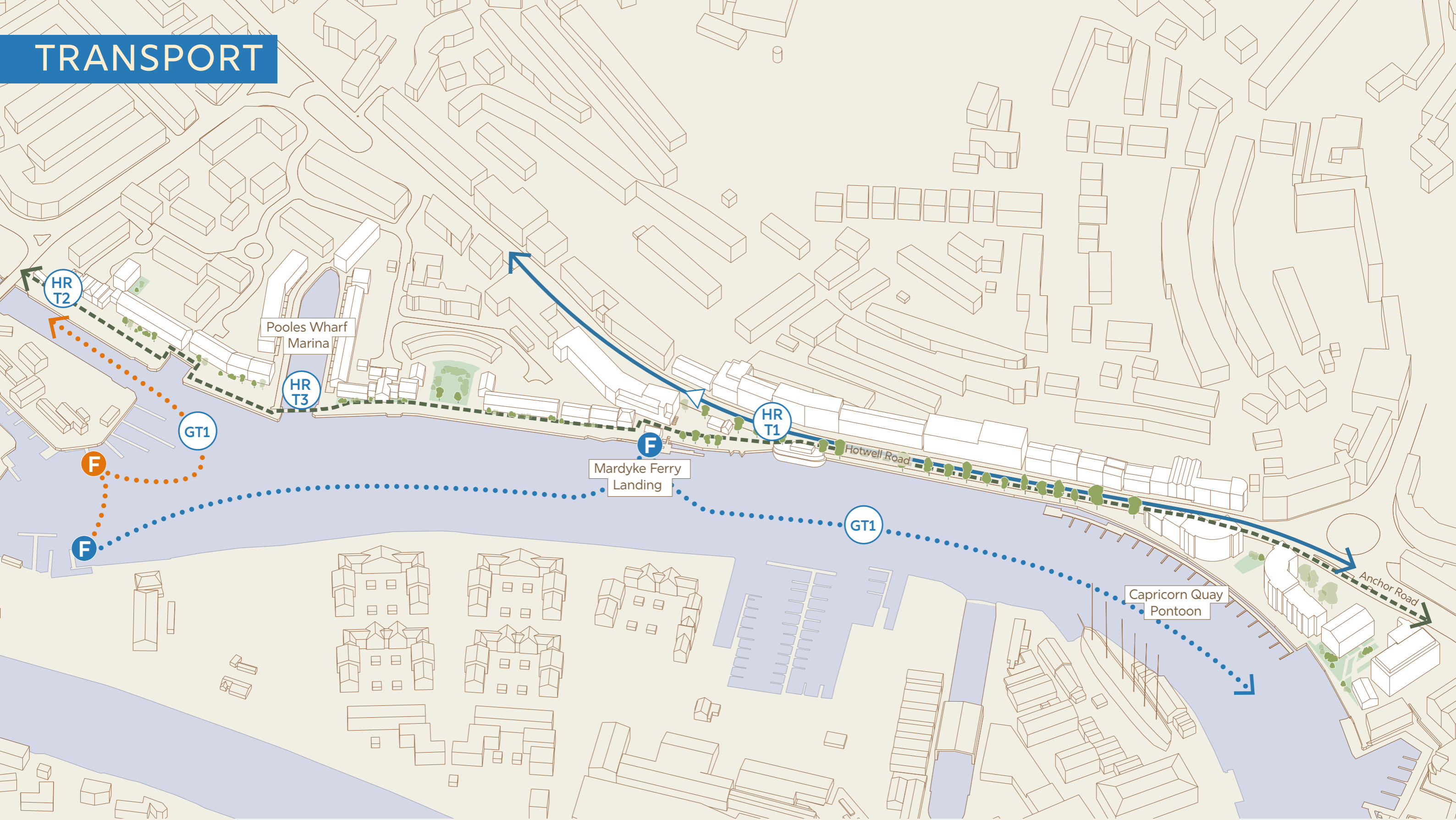


HRP1: Integration of SuDS and seating into walkway and public realm in Bristol. (Source: GA Photo_hyc)





*Hotwell Road walkway
(source: BCC)*






TRANSPORT






Key


-  Existing Bus stop
-  Existing Ferry landing
-  Improved Bus service
-  Improved Ferry service

-  Cycle route
-  New/Reinstated Ferry landing
-  New Ferry service

Place Specific Interventions

-  HRT1: Parking (Mardyke Car Park)
-  HRT2: Merchant's Road Bridge
-  HRT3: Rownham Mead Bridge

Overarching Interventions

-  GT1: Enhanced Ferry Provision



Transport Interventions

The strategic move in Hotwell Road is to rationalise car parking to create an enhanced Quayside Walkway and generous public space to support multiple activities.

PLACE-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

HRT1: Parking (Mardyke Car Park)

Rationalised car parking to create an enhanced Quayside Walkway with generous public space to support the watersports organisations, ancillary commercial activity and enhanced ferry service. Retention of disabled car parking and minibus parking to provide access to youth watersports. Improved connection between bus and ferry services. Connection to a new segregated cycle route along Hotwell Road extending through to Deanery Road cycle scheme.

HRT2: Merchant's Road Bridge (aka Junction Lock Bridge)

Improved signage at The Pump House car park to direct pedestrians on to Underfall Yard/SSGB/M-Shed via Merchants Bridge. Longer term aspiration to improve access onto and across the bridge to support active travel, with this being further explored through the Western Harbour masterplan.

HRT3: Rownham Mead Bridge

Explore feasibility of creating a new bridge over the inlet to reduce pinch point on Quayside Walkway. There will need to be further stakeholder consultation to identify concerns and aspirations and responsibility for the future management and maintenance will need to be agreed between Bristol City Council and the Harbour Authority.

OVERARCHING INTERVENTIONS

GT1: Enhanced Ferry Provision

An enhanced and consolidated leisure ferry service with additional capacity and extended services being provided. Route to zig zag along harbour to better connect north and south. Improvements to ferry landing locations including accessibility, seating, signage and safety. Opportunity to extend ferry services beyond the floating harbour to serve the Western Harbour and the Feeder Canal.

*Image: Hotwell Road walkway
(Source: BCC)*

This document is part of the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS) prepared by DK-CM for Bristol City Council, 2023-24.

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For further information, please email harbourplaceshaping@bristol.gov.uk