

Harlow Retail Frontages Study

2026 Update



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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 To inform the preparation of planning policies and guidance, and reflecting the Council's duty to review the socio-economic and environmental conditions of the district, the Council annually assesses the retail frontage in Harlow. This provides analysis of changes that have occurred.
- 1.1.2 Retail frontage is generally designated along the fronts or sides of retail units, usually on the ground floor; exceptions to this is the retail frontage found on the first floor of the Harvey Centre and the first floor of The Rows.
- 1.1.3 Whilst most units with designated retail frontage are occupied by shops, many are occupied by other uses such as banks, launderettes, travel agents, estate agents and salons.
- 1.1.4 The monitoring of retail frontage provides a barometer on the vitality, viability and success of Harlow's retail areas. It also identifies trends and measures the success of local planning policies related to managing retail frontage.

2 Retail Frontage Areas and Types

2.1 Town Centre Primary and Secondary

- 2.1.1 Two types of retail frontage are found in the Town Centre – Primary and Secondary.
- 2.1.2 **Primary** retail frontage is designated on units in areas of the town centre which are regarded as being the core of retail activity. These are generally the areas that have the highest pedestrian footfall, rents, commercial rates, presence of national retailers and number of shops.
- 2.1.3 **Secondary** retail frontage, however, is designated in areas that are often characterised by having a greater variety of uses and a notable presence of independent and convenience retailers.
- 2.1.4 The Primary and Secondary retail frontages are designated in the [Use Class Order Interpretation and Town Centre Frontages Map Guidance Note](#), published in April 2021, which supports the Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP) and is a material consideration in the determining of planning applications.

2.2 Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches

- 2.2.1 Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches are small, planned retail areas found in Harlow, located near residential areas to primarily serve local residents. Hatches generally consist of between two and 10 units, with Neighbourhood Centres containing more.

- 2.2.2 They are characterised by the presence of independent and convenience retailers, with a wide variety of uses such as hairdressers and launderettes, in addition to shops and community services such as dentists, GP surgeries and pharmacies.
- 2.2.3 The HLDP designates Neighbourhood Centre frontage, but does not designate Hatch frontage because it is not required for the purposes of the related policy.
- 2.2.4 The previous Local Plan designated frontage for Hatches of five or more units. This Study audits Hatches using these historic frontage designations. While the designations have no weight in policy terms, they provide a useful basis to monitor the vitality of Hatches, assisting with effective retail monitoring.

2.3 Other Areas

- 2.3.1 The Retail Frontages Study is not an extensive survey of all retail areas in Harlow. There are other retail areas which do not have designated frontage and are not included in this Study – the main one being the district’s retail parks, for which the council publishes the annual Harlow [Retail Parks Study](#).

3 Policies, Legislation and Guidance

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.1.1 Paragraph 90 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024) states that local planning policies should promote the long-term vitality and viability of retail areas, by “allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries”, while allowing “a suitable mix of uses (including housing)”.
- 3.1.2 It also states that local planning policies should “define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations”.
- 3.1.3 Paragraph 001 of the [‘Town centres and retail’ section of the Planning Practice Guidance](#) states that “a wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality” of retail areas, including “residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development”, and that “the same is true of temporary activities such as ‘pop ups’”. It also emphasises how “evening and night time activities have the potential to increase economic activity”.
- 3.1.4 Regarding retail frontage, it states that where appropriate, councils may wish to “define primary and secondary retail frontages where their use can be justified in supporting the vitality and viability” of particular retail areas.

3.2 Use Classes Order

3.2.1 Uses of land and buildings are categorised into various categories known as 'use classes' which are defined by [The Town and Country Planning \(Use Classes\) Order](#) 1987 (as amended) (UCO).

3.2.2 The uses most commonly found in areas designated as retail frontage are listed below.

Class E – Commercial, Business and Service

- E(a): display or retail sale of goods, exc. hot food [formerly A1]
 - examples include shops, hairdressers, pet shops, opticians and sandwich bars;
- E(b): sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises [formerly A3]
 - examples include restaurants and cafes;
- E(c): provision of financial services and professional services (exc. health/medical services) [formerly A2]
 - examples include banks, building societies, estate agents and employment agencies;
- Sui Generis – certain uses which do not fall within a use class and effectively form a class of their own
 - examples include betting shops, bowling arcades, cinemas, dog groomers, hot food takeaways [formerly A5], launderettes, massage parlours, nail bars, nightclubs, pubs and bars [formerly A4], spas and tanning salons.

3.2.3 For more information on the Use Classes Order, including uses that are less commonly found and changes that were implemented in September 2020, see Appendix 3.

3.2.4 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that a change of use does not require planning permission if the new use and former use are in the same use class. If they are not in the same use class then the change may require planning permission.

3.2.5 Under Permitted Development Rights enacted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), changes of use between certain classes do not require planning permission. Changing uses between those classified as Sui Generis, however, would require planning permission.

3.3 Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP)

3.3.1 The [HLDP](#) was adopted in December 2020 and contains two main policies relating to retail frontage – PR6 and PR8:

PR6 Primary and Secondary Frontages in the Town Centre

1. Primary Frontages

Development in the Town Centre primary frontages will be supported where:

- (a) the development is for Use Class A1;
- (b) the development is for Use Classes A2 or A3 and meets all the following criteria:
 - (i) 60% or more of the overall primary frontage length is retained for Use Class A1; and
 - (ii) the site has been vacant and actively marketed for Use Class A1 to the satisfaction of the Council for at least twelve months.

2. Secondary Frontages

With the exception of offices at ground floor, Main Town Centre Uses, evening and night-time uses will be permitted in the Town Centre secondary frontages.

Justification

15.31 Primary and secondary retail frontages protect and enhance the existing retail offer by preventing a proliferation of uses which are not conducive to maintaining the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. Defining frontage lengths and classifying appropriate uses in frontages provide opportunities to regenerate and improve certain parts of the Town Centre and protect retail provision in others.

15.32 This policy supports Main Town Centre Uses, including commercial, leisure, evening and night-time uses in secondary frontages.

Implementation

15.33 Where marketing of the unit is required to justify a non-A1 use in the primary frontage, it should be undertaken by a suitably competent person for at least twelve months. A planning statement must be submitted setting out how this marketing exercise has been undertaken.

15.34 Within secondary frontages, Main Town Centre Uses will be considered acceptable except for office development which is considered appropriate only on first floor levels and above. This is to prevent blank ground floor frontages in the Town Centre that could harm the vitality of the area. For proposals relating to evening and night time uses, Policy PR11 should also be taken into consideration.

PR8 Frontages in Neighbourhood Centres

Development in Neighbourhood Centre frontages, which falls in Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2, Sui Generis and C3, will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) the development would not result in the loss of key facilities that act as anchors or catalysts which assist in retaining existing or attracting new

- operators in the Neighbourhood Centre such as supermarkets or public houses;
- (b) 60% or more of the overall frontage length would be retained in Use Class A1;
- (c) for Use Class C3, the development is on the first floor or above.

Justification

15.39 This policy seeks to support a wider range of services and facilities within Neighbourhood Centres for local residents. These Centres provide services, such as healthcare, places to eat and drink and financial services. It is important that Neighbourhood Centres continue to have a variety of uses to avoid underused frontages and spaces.

Implementation

15.40 The frontages are mapped in the Appendices. The definition of frontage length and the method by which frontage length will be calculated will be set out in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

- 3.3.2 The Glossary of the HLDP defines Main Town Centre Uses, as referred to in Policy PR6,, which includes retail development as well as a number of other uses. Such examples include cinemas, theatres, restaurants, bars, pubs, bingo halls, hotels and offices.
- 3.3.3 The Town Centre (TC) Primary and Secondary retail frontages are designated in the Use Class Order Interpretation and Town Centre Frontages Map [Guidance Note](#), published in April 2021, which supports the HLDP and is a material consideration in the determining of planning applications. This note was also prepared to interpret Use Class Order category changes made by central government after the HLDP was adopted.

3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 3.4.1 The Harlow [Town Centre Masterplan Framework SPD](#) provides guidance to inform the future planning and design of the town centre, illustrated through indicative plans and diagrams to communicate the principles.
- 3.4.2 The Harlow [Shopfront Design SPD](#) provides guidance on the design and alteration of shopfronts across Harlow, including the Town Centre, Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches. It ensures that shopfronts contribute positively by having appropriate proportions, signage, materials, lighting, security measures and accessibility.
- 3.4.3 The SPDs support policies in the HLDP and are material considerations in the determining of planning applications, particularly for retail frontages and for retaining a healthy mix of uses in the town centre.

4 Auditing

4.1 Recording and Types

- 4.1.1 Audits of the retail frontages are carried out annually in April, following which this Study is updated and published, usually in the summer. Carrying out the audits in April accords with the Local Plan monitoring period, which runs from 1 April to 31 March. The audit that informs this version of the Study took place in April 2026.
- 4.1.2 Within each type of frontage (i.e. Town Centre Primary, Town Centre Secondary, Neighbourhood Centre and Hatch), the use class of each unit with designated frontage is recorded. The lengths of the unit frontages are then used to calculate the percentage of each use class in each frontage type.
- 4.1.3 The same is also done for frontage that is classified as Vacant, 'Other Uses', Undergoing Redevelopment and Awaiting Redevelopment (see below). All this information is displayed in tabular and graphic formats.
- 4.1.4 As Use Class categories have changed during the monitoring years, Appendix 3 provides definitions of the use classes referred to in this Study including the previous Use Class category where relevant.

4.2 'Vacant' Frontage

- 4.2.1 Where a unit is unoccupied, but is not undergoing redevelopment or awaiting redevelopment, its frontage is recorded as 'Vacant'. The tables in the analysis split the Vacant frontage into 'last known use' to provide more detail about the unit.

4.3 'Other Uses' Frontage

- 4.3.1 There are small lengths of frontage that are in other use classes such as libraries, residential use, leisure or sporting uses. These are combined and shown as 'Other Uses' frontage in the analysis. The tables in the analysis split the Other Uses to provide more detail.
- 4.3.2 In some cases, fire entrances, stairwells and entrances to alleyways are part of designated frontage. These are recorded as 'Egress/Access Points' under 'Other Uses'.

4.4 'Redevelopment' and 'Awaiting Redevelopment' Frontage

- 4.4.1 Frontage of units which are not in use because they are being redeveloped or refurbished is classified as 'Redevelopment' frontage. This is to distinguish it from frontage which is only vacant due to being unoccupied.
- 4.4.2 Frontage of units which are not in use but are awaiting redevelopment, for example following granting of planning permission, are classed as 'Awaiting

Redevelopment' frontage. This more accurately reflects the status of the frontage.

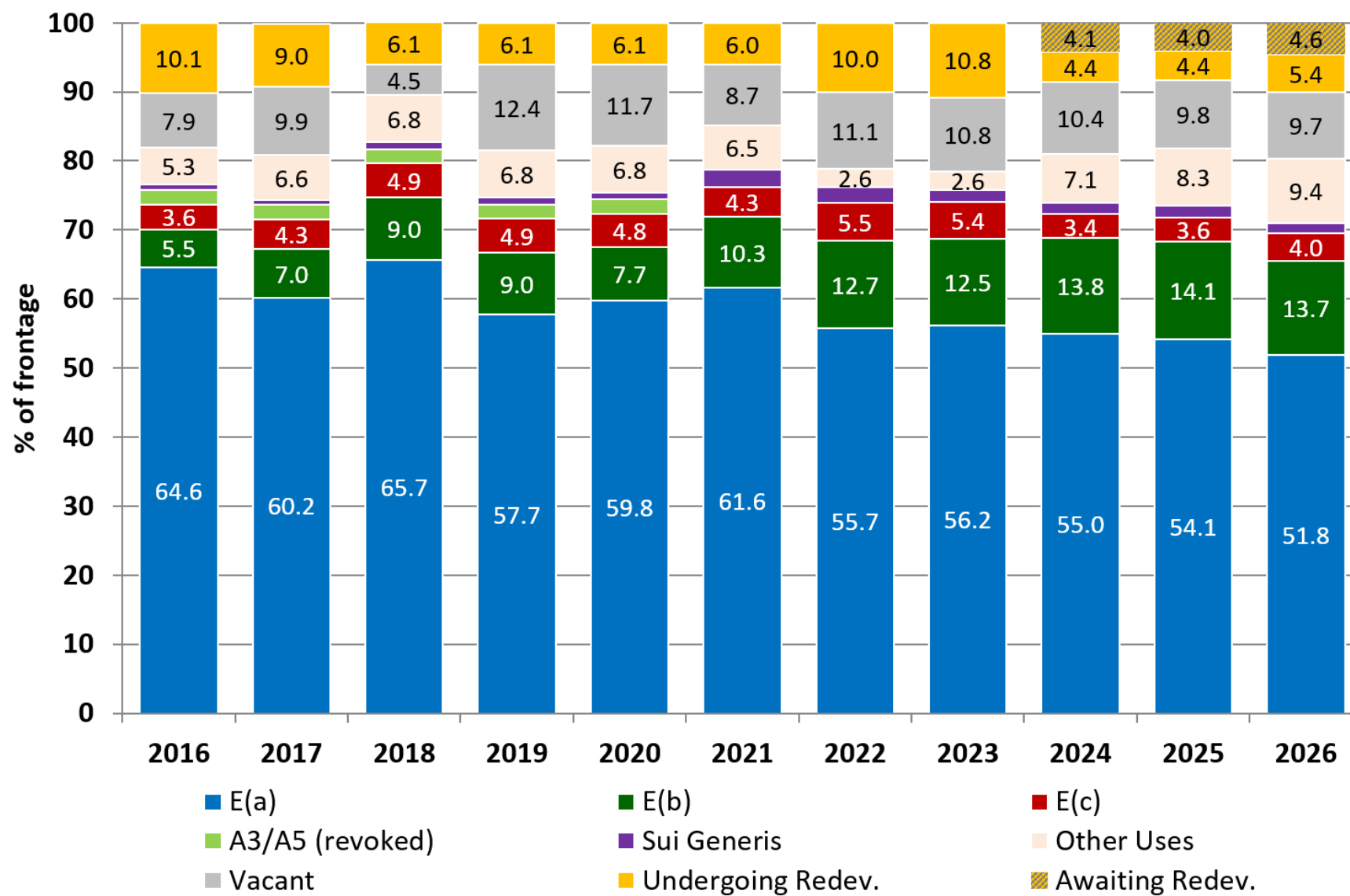
- 4.4.3 Where redevelopment has taken place, the frontage lengths of individual units will likely change due to the arrangement of units being reconfigured. In such cases, the relevant frontage will be reviewed and it may be necessary to extend or reduce the designated frontage and possibly change its type (e.g. from secondary to primary). Such changes could be set out in an update to the guidance note supporting the HLDP on this issue, then adopted in the next Local Plan.

5 Findings: Town Centre Primary Frontage

Fig. 5.a: Table of Town Centre Primary Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026

Use Class	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a)	64.6	60.2	65.7	57.7	59.8	61.6	55.7	56.2	55.0	54.1	51.8
E(b)	5.5	7.0	9.0	9.0	7.7	10.3	12.7	12.5	13.8	14.1	13.7
E(c)	3.6	4.3	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.3	5.5	5.4	3.4	3.6	4.0
A3/A5 (revoked)	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1						
Sui Generis	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.4
Other Uses Total	5.3	6.6	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.5	2.6	2.6	7.1	8.3	9.4
<i>Split by use</i>											
E(d/e)/F1/F2	4.1	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	4.5	0.6	0.6	5.6	6.8	7.5
E(g)	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.0
Egress/Access Points	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Vacant Total	7.9	9.9	4.5	12.4	11.7	8.7	11.1	10.8	10.4	9.8	9.7
<i>Split by last known use</i>											
V-E(a)	7.1	8.8	2.9	11.1	9.1	6.1	8.6	7.4	5.7	7.0	8.1
V-E(b)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.9	1.7	1.9	2.2	1.0	0.0
V-E(c)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.5	1.1	0.2	0.0
V-Sui Generis	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.2
V-Oth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.6
V-N/A	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	1.1	0.7	0.7
Awaiting Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	4.0	4.6
Undergoing Redev.	10.1	9.0	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.0	10.0	10.8	4.4	4.4	5.4

Fig. 5.b: Graph of Town Centre Primary Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026



5.1 Area

5.1.1 The Town Centre Primary frontage comprises the frontage of the units in:

- Broad Walk
- Broad Walk Approach
- Harvey Centre (both floors)
- Little Walk (undergoing redevelopment)
- Water Gardens
- West Walk (Nos. 5, 7 and 9 only)

5.1.2 The maps in Appendix 1 show the uses of the frontage from 2016 to 2026. The frontage, as designated in the [Guidance Note](#) accompanying the HLDP, is also marked on the maps.

5.2 2025 vs 2026

5.2.1 The largest change between 2025 and 2026 was the closure of several units in the Harvey Centre, causing a drop in E(a) frontage. A number of formerly vacant units were reoccupied, albeit in F2 use and mostly in the Harvey Centre, meaning the net change in Vacant frontage was minimal. At 9.7% the Vacant frontage is at its lowest since 2021.

5.2.2 The proportion of primary frontage in E(a) use, at 51.8%, is the lowest that has been recorded in the last decade. This is partly due to the proportion of 'Awaiting Redevelopment' and 'Undergoing Redevelopment' frontage (a combined total of 10%) at the former Little Walk area and adjacent parts of Broad Walk and West Walk.

5.3 General Commentary on the Latest 10-Year Rolling Period

5.3.1 E(a) is the predominant use in the Primary frontage, though it has experienced a decline in the last decade. This reduction has largely been offset by the increase in E(b) frontage as more restaurants and cafes have opened.

5.3.2 The proportion of Vacant frontage has remained relatively stable in the last decade, despite national challenges including changing retail habits, high energy prices and high inflation.

5.3.3 The closure of stores such as BHS, Wilkinson and Argos, which occupied large units, accounts for a notable proportion of the Vacant frontage. Such closures and resulting vacancies, however, have been experienced nationally and are not unique to Harlow.

5.3.4 In recent years there has been an increase in regeneration projects in the town centre, particularly at the former Little Walk area and adjacent parts of

Broad Walk and West Walk. This redevelopment signalled the start of further investment and regeneration in the Town Centre, and has advanced significantly since the inception of the [Building Harlow's Future plan](#).

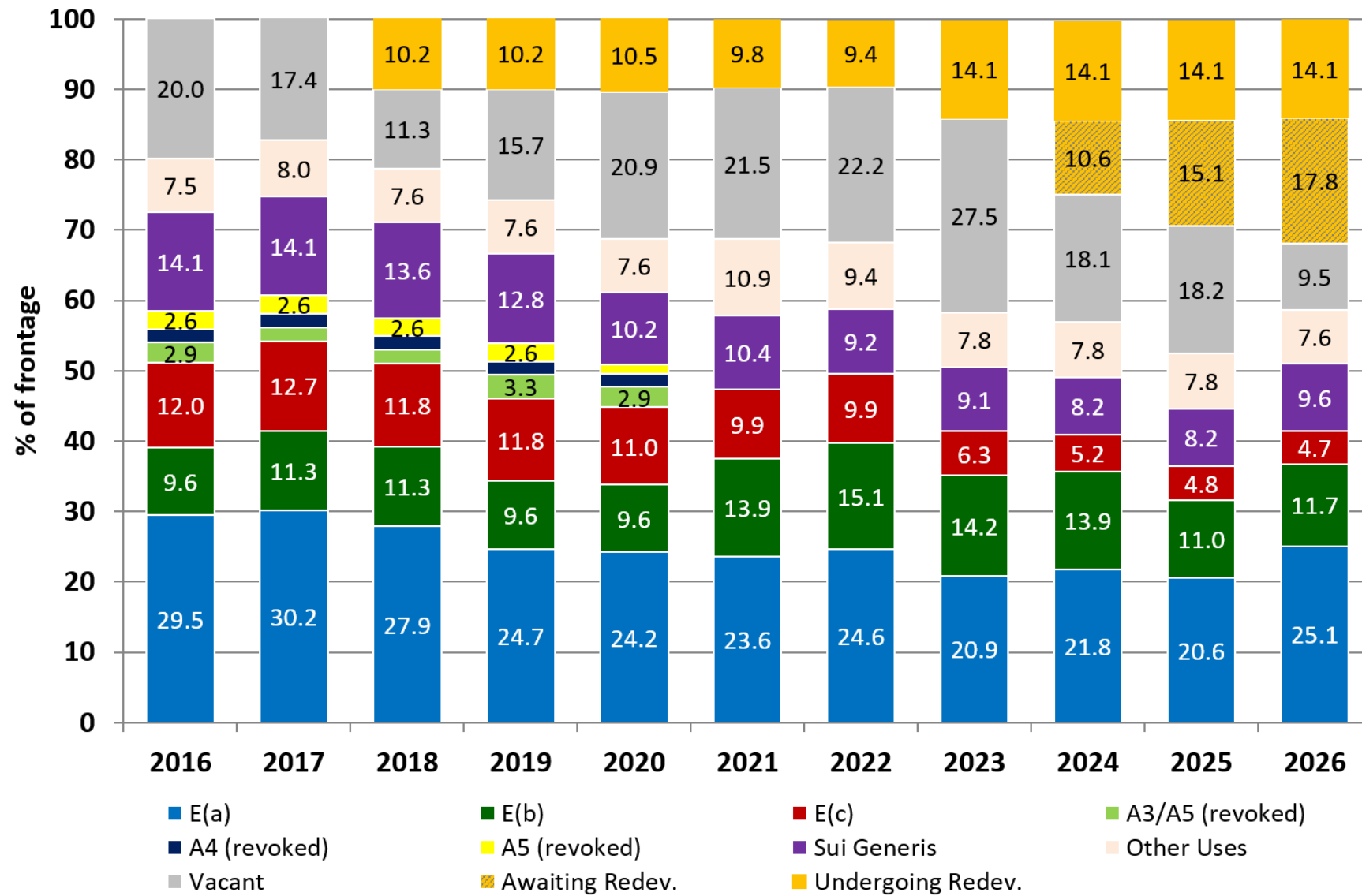
- 5.3.5 The notable increase in E(b) frontage between 2020 and 2021 was mostly due to changes to the Use Classes Order, which meant certain frontage was classified differently from 2021.
- 5.3.6 This also applies to Sui Generis frontage, though that increase was partly due to the publication of the council's related [Guidance Note](#), which included the redesignation of certain frontage that was in Sui Generis use at the time.
- 5.3.7 At the time of the most recent audit, the total designated Primary frontage length was 2,509m. This includes the frontage of vacant units and units undergoing or awaiting redevelopment.

6 Findings: Town Centre Secondary Frontage

Fig. 6.a: Table of Town Centre Secondary Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026

Use Class	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a)	29.5	30.2	27.9	24.7	24.2	23.6	24.6	20.9	21.8	20.6	25.1
E(b)	9.6	11.3	11.3	9.6	9.6	13.9	15.1	14.2	13.9	11.0	11.7
E(c)	12.0	12.7	11.8	11.8	11.0	9.9	9.9	6.3	5.2	4.8	4.7
A3/A5 (revoked)	2.9	2.0	2.0	3.3	2.9						
A4 (revoked)	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9						
A5 (revoked)	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1.3						
Sui Generis	14.1	14.1	13.6	12.8	10.2	10.4	9.2	9.1	8.2	8.2	9.6
Other Uses Total	7.5	8.0	7.6	7.6	7.6	10.9	9.4	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.6
<i>Split by use</i>											
B8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	0.0
C3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	3.5
E(d/e)/F1/F2	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.7	3.5
E(g)	3.3	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1
Egress/Access Points	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Vacant Total	20.0	17.4	11.3	15.7	20.9	21.5	22.2	27.5	18.1	18.2	9.5
<i>Split by last known use</i>											
V-E(a)	4.6	3.5	5.0	10.4	10.5	11.2	12.4	14.6	9.6	9.6	4.1
V-E(b)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.8	1.1	1.6	3.3	2.9	0.4
V-E(c)	12.2	12.2	4.7	2.5	3.3	1.3	0.9	4.2	1.6	2.0	0.6
V-A3/A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4						
V-A5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.7						
V-Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.9	6.5	6.1	4.1	1.9	1.9	2.4
V-Oth	2.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.7	3.0	1.7	1.7	2.1
Awaiting Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.6	15.1	17.8
Undergoing Redev.	0.0	0.0	10.2	10.2	10.5	9.8	9.4	14.1	14.1	14.1	14.1

Fig. 6.b: Graph of Town Centre Secondary Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026



6.1 Area

6.1.1 The Town Centre Secondary frontage comprises the frontage of the units in:

- Adams House
- Aylmer House
- Broad Walk (Nos. 2 and 37 only [Redstone House])
- East Gate
- East Walk
- Market House
- Terminus Street
- The Rows
- West Gate
- West Square
- West Walk

6.1.2 The maps in Appendix 1 show the uses of the frontage from 2016 to 2026. The frontage, as designated in the [Guidance Note](#) accompanying the HLDP, is also marked on the maps.

6.2 2025 vs 2026

6.2.1 Between 2025 and 2026, the main changes were the proportion of E(a) frontage which increased by 4.5 percentage points (pp), along with a 2.7pp increase in 'Awaiting Redevelopment' frontage and 1.4pp increase in Sui Generis frontage.

6.2.2 The changes in E(a) and Sui Generis frontage were mostly fuelled by a notable drop in Vacant frontage from 18.2% to 9.5%, due to a number of vacant units being reoccupied in East Walk, Terminus Street and West Square. This proportion of Vacant frontage is the lowest since 2018.

6.3 General Commentary on the Latest 10-Year Rolling Period

6.3.1 The predominant use in the Secondary frontage is E(a), though this has varied over the last decade. There is also a notable amount of Sui Generis frontage, predominantly at Adams House and Market House, mostly comprising take-aways and bookmakers. This greater diversity of uses is expected in the Secondary frontage where a more diverse mix of uses is found, though this has fallen in recent years.

6.3.2 The amount of E(c) frontage has also dropped to a larger extent. This is mostly due to the closure of uses such as banks which fall under this Use Class; this has affected retail areas nationally because of, for example, banks closing branches due to greater online banking.

- 6.3.3 The proportion of Vacant frontage has improved in recent years, despite national challenges including changing retail habits, high energy prices and high inflation.
- 6.3.4 There is, however, a significant proportion of 'Redevelopment' and 'Awaiting Redevelopment' frontage, together comprising almost a third of the frontage. This is a result of an increase in regeneration projects in the town centre, which signalled the start of further investment and regeneration in the town centre, and has advanced significantly since the inception of the [Building Harlow's Future plan](#).
- 6.3.5 The 'Redevelopment' and 'Awaiting Redevelopment' frontage is located at Adams House, East Gate, West Gate and West Walk.
- 6.3.6 A number of changes between 2020 and 2021, such as the decrease in E(c) frontage and increase in E(b) frontage, was mostly due to changes to the Use Classes Order, which meant certain frontage was classified differently from 2021.
- 6.3.7 Other changes between 2020 and 2021 were partly due to the publication of the council's related [Guidance Note](#), which included the redesignation of certain frontage.
- 6.3.8 At the time of the most recent audit, the total designated Secondary frontage length was 1,571m. This includes the frontage of vacant units and units undergoing or awaiting redevelopment.

7 Findings: Neighbourhood Centre Frontage

Fig. 7.a: Table of Neighbourhood Centre Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026

Use Class	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a)	60.9	62.6	61.5	61.5	58.8	58.8	59.3	57.3	54.7	57.4	53.4
E(b)	11.1	10.5	10.3	10.9	12.0	14.9	15.7	14.9	14.5	15.3	15.8
E(c)	5.2	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	4.9	4.3	4.3
A3/A5 (revoked)	1.7	2.9	3.0	2.4	1.8						
A5 (revoked)	3.4	2.2	3.3	3.4	3.9						
Sui Generis	5.8	5.8	6.5	6.5	6.5	10.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.3	9.7
Other Uses Total	9.0	9.0	10.1	10.1	11.2	11.2	11.1	11.1	11.5	11.9	11.9
<i>Split by use</i>											
C3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	5.0	5.0
E(d/e)/F1/F2	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.9	3.9	4.3	2.0	2.0
E(g)	0.3	0.3	1.4	1.4	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	4.8	4.8
Egress/Access Points	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	9.3	9.7
Vacant Total	2.8	2.4	1.0	1.0	2.2	1.1	0.9	3.6	4.2	1.9	4.9
<i>Split by last known use</i>											
V-E(a)	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.2	1.1	0.9	2.9	2.5	1.4	4.9
V-E(b)	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.2	0.0	0.0
V-E(c)	1.7	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
V-A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0						
V-Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	4.9
V-N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Undergoing Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0

Fig. 7.b: Graph of Neighbourhood Centre Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026

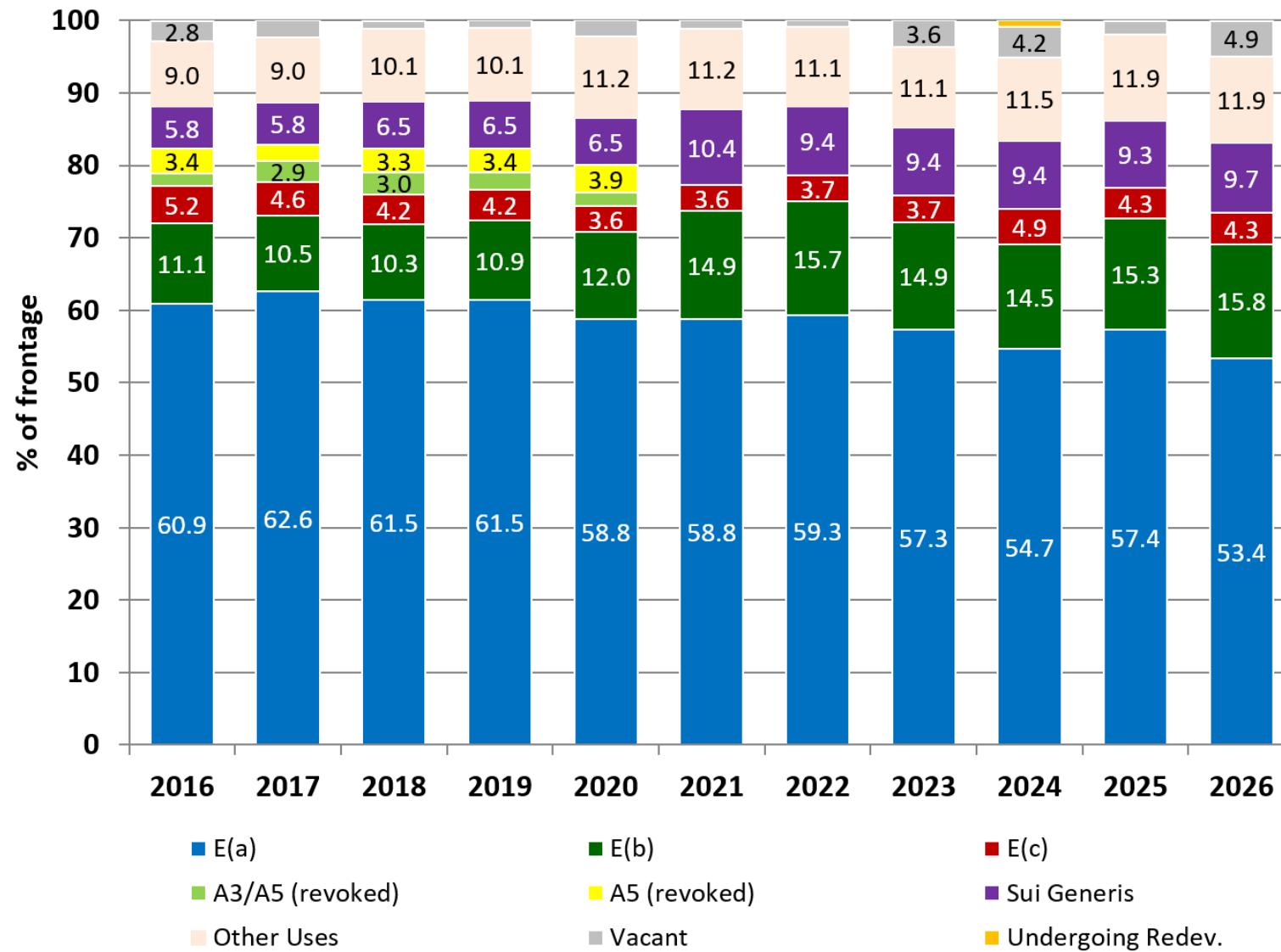


Fig. 7.d: Table of Neighbourhood Centre Frontage Uses, Split by Neighbourhood Centre, 2026

	Bush Fair	Church Langley	Old Harlow	Staple Tye	The Stow
	%	%	%	%	%
E(a)	58.2	81.4	33.2	55.4	48.4
E(b)	15.6	0.0	25.3	29.8	8.6
E(c)	1.9	5.4	10.5	0.0	3.5
Sui Generis	10.2	0.0	11.1	14.8	10.4
Other Uses	10.2	13.1	19.9	0.0	13.8
Vacant	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.3

7.1 Area

7.1.1 The Neighbourhood Centre frontage comprises the frontage of the units in:

- Bush Fair Neighbourhood Centre (main area, excluding Sherwood House)
- Church Langley Neighbourhood Centre (Tesco and adjoining units, including health-related units)
- Old Harlow Neighbourhood Centre (High Street)
- Staple Tye Neighbourhood Centre (main area, including McDonald's; excluding the Shopping Mews to the rear)
- The Stow Neighbourhood Centre (main area, excluding the Service Industry Bays and nearby units)

7.1.2 In Neighbourhood Centres, units such as pubs and community centres are not part of the designated frontage.

7.1.3 The maps in Appendix 2 show the uses of the frontage in 2026. The frontage, as designated in the [HLDP](#), is also marked on the maps.

7.2 2025 vs 2026

7.2.1 The most notable change between 2025 and 2026 was a reduction in the proportion of E(a) frontage by four percentage points, along with a resulting increase in Vacant frontage from 1.9% to 4.9%. This was mostly due to three units becoming vacant at The Stow, one of which is a unit with a long corner frontage.

7.2.2 The proportion of Vacant frontage is the highest recorded in the last decade but still remains at a low level.

7.3 General Commentary on the Latest 10-Year Rolling Period

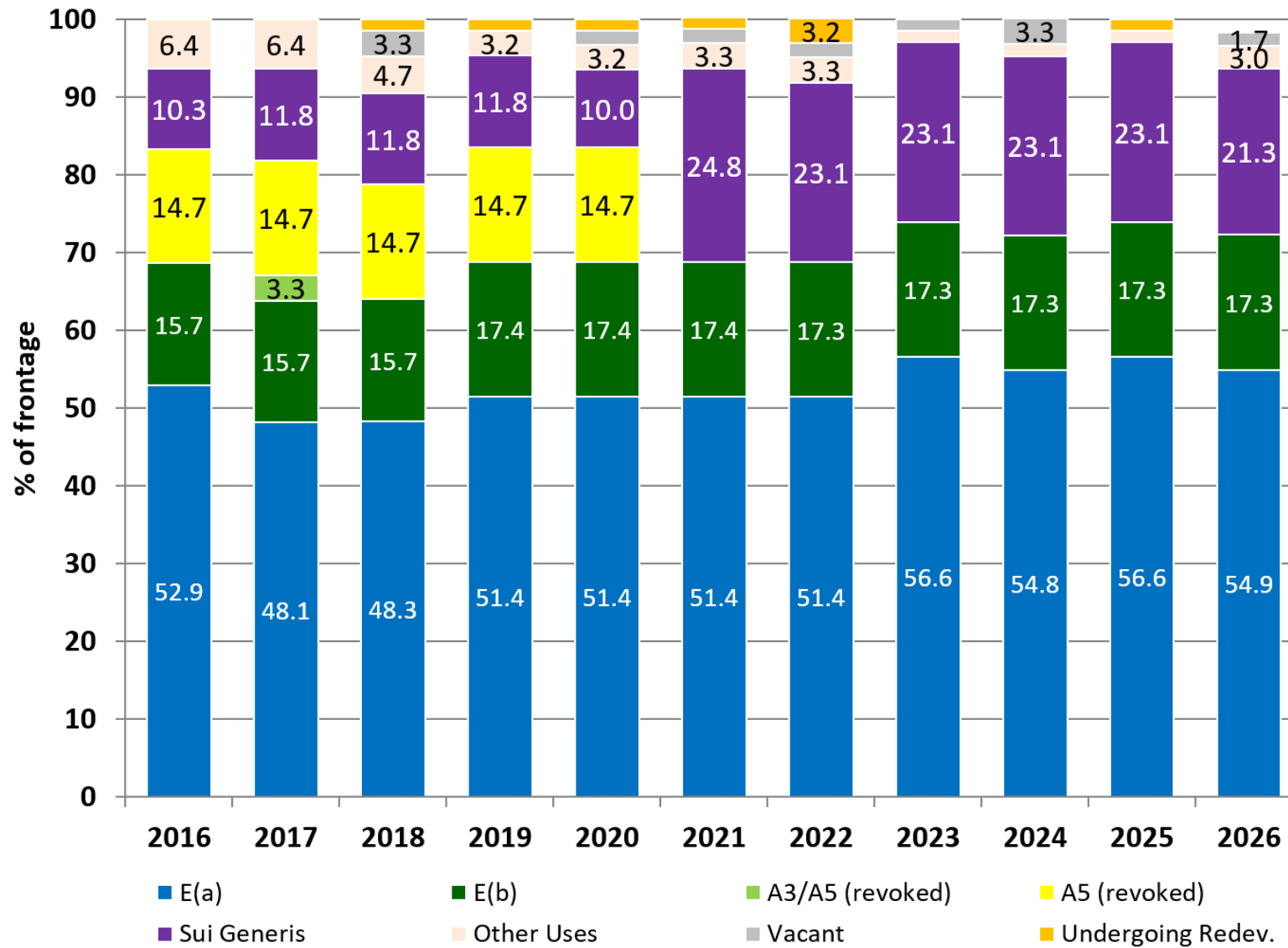
- 7.3.1 The original design of the town by Sir Frederick Gibberd, the New Town's masterplanner, ensured that Neighbourhood Centres were easy to access for most residents and often within walking distance.
- 7.3.2 The overall proportions of uses have remained fairly constant in the last decade, with just over half being in E(a) use, a notable amount of E(b) frontage and smaller amounts of other uses.
- 7.3.3 The Neighbourhood Centres have consistently performed well, maintaining a very low proportion of Vacant frontage, reflecting the ongoing strength of the Neighbourhood Centres in providing local shops and other services.
- 7.3.4 A number of changes between 2020 and 2021, such as the increase in E(b) and Sui Generis frontage, was mostly due to changes to the Use Classes Order, which meant certain frontage was classified differently from 2021.
- 7.3.5 At the time of the most recent audit, the total designated Neighbourhood Centre frontage length was 1,225m. This includes the frontage of vacant units and units undergoing or awaiting redevelopment.

8 Findings: Hatch Frontage

Fig. 8.a: Table of Hatch Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026

Use Class	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a)	52.9	48.1	48.3	51.4	51.4	51.4	51.4	56.6	54.8	56.6	54.9
E(b)	15.7	15.7	15.7	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3
A3/A5 (revoked)	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0						
A5 (revoked)	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7						
Sui Generis	10.3	11.8	11.8	11.8	10.0	24.8	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.1	21.3
Other Uses Total	6.4	6.4	4.7	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.0
<i>Split by use</i>											
E(d/e)/F1/F2	3.2	3.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5
E(g)	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Egress/Access Points	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Vacant Total	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	3.3	0.0	1.7
<i>Split by last known use</i>											
V-E(a)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.7
V-A3/A5	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0						
V-Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
V-Oth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Undergoing Redev.	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0

Fig. 8.b: Graph of Hatch Frontage Uses, 2016 to 2026



8.1 Area

8.1.1 As explained previously, the Hatch frontage is based on the frontage designations in the former Local Plan (2006). While the current Local Plan (2020) does not designate Hatch frontage, this Study continues to monitor the Hatches using the historic designations, for monitoring purposes.

8.1.2 The historic Hatch frontage has a total length of 295m, and comprises the frontage of Hatches with five or more units, as follows:

- Burgoyne Hatch
- Cawley Hatch
- Colt Hatch
- Fishers Hatch
- Mill Hatch
- Prentice Place Hatch
- Slacksbury Hatch

8.1.3 In Hatches, units such as pubs and community centres were not part of the historic designation.

8.1.4 The maps in Appendix 2 show the uses of the frontage in 2026.

8.2 2025 vs 2026

8.2.1 The only changes recorded were a minor drop in E(a) and Sui Generis frontage, and a minor increase in 'Other Uses' frontage. There was also a minor increase in Vacant frontage, by 1.7 percentage points from 0%.

8.2.2 The increase in Vacant frontage was caused by the closure of units in E(a) and Sui Generis use (?); one at Colt Hatch and one at Slacksbury Hatch. One unit at Prentice Place Hatch, which had been undergoing redevelopment, returned to use (E(e)).

8.3 General Commentary on the Latest 10-Year Rolling Period

8.3.1 The Hatches have consistently performed well, maintaining a very low proportion of Vacant frontage, despite national changes in retail habits, higher energy costs and recent high inflation.

8.3.2 Their robustness throughout this period reflects their importance to local residents. The original design of the town by Sir Frederick Gibberd, who was the New Town's masterplanner, ensured that Hatches were easy to access for most residents and often within walking distance.

8.3.3 The proportions of frontage uses have remained fairly constant; around half being in E(a) use, with notable amounts of E(c), E(b) and Sui Generis uses.

8.3.4 The notable increase in Sui Generis frontage between 2020 and 2021 was due to changes to the Use Classes Order, which meant certain frontage was classified differently from 2021.

Appendix 1:

Maps - Uses of Town Centre Primary & Secondary Frontage

TOWN CENTRE

2026

The Rows 1st floor

14
17

Harvey Centre 1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

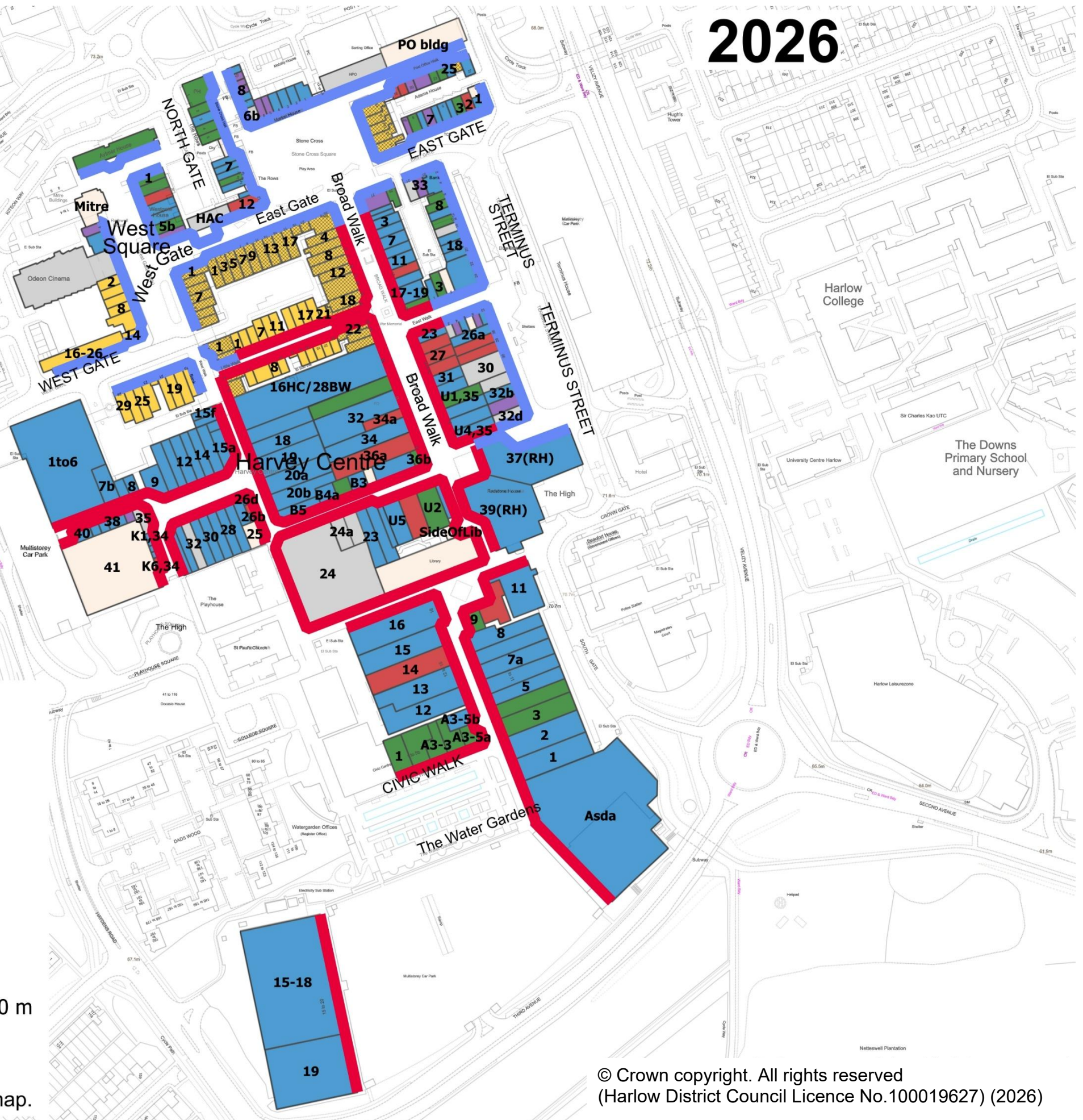
- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



0 50 100 m

For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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TOWN CENTRE

2025

The Rows
1st floor



Harvey Centre
1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

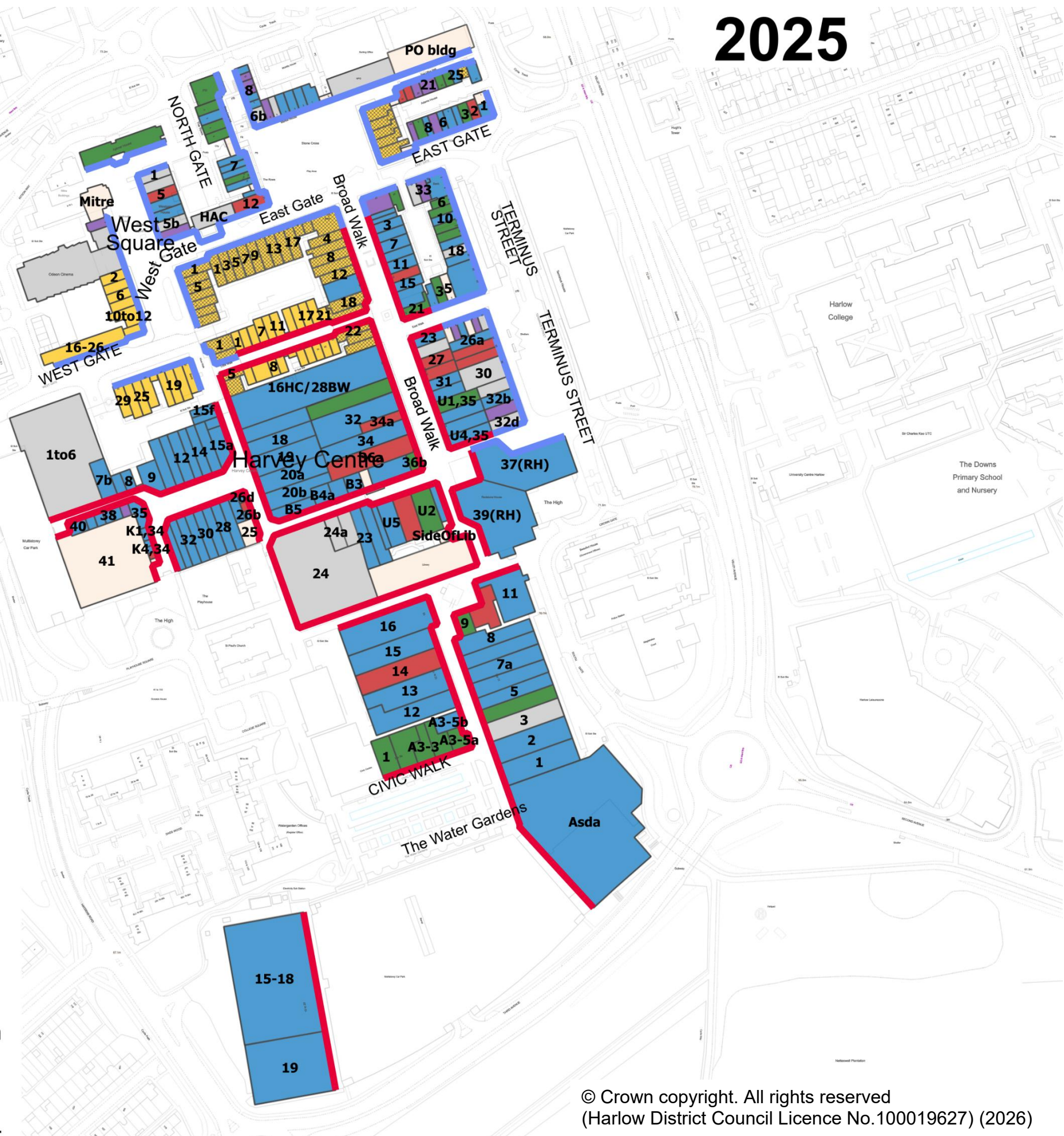
- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



0 50 100 m

For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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TOWN CENTRE

2024

The Rows
1st floor



Harvey Centre
1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

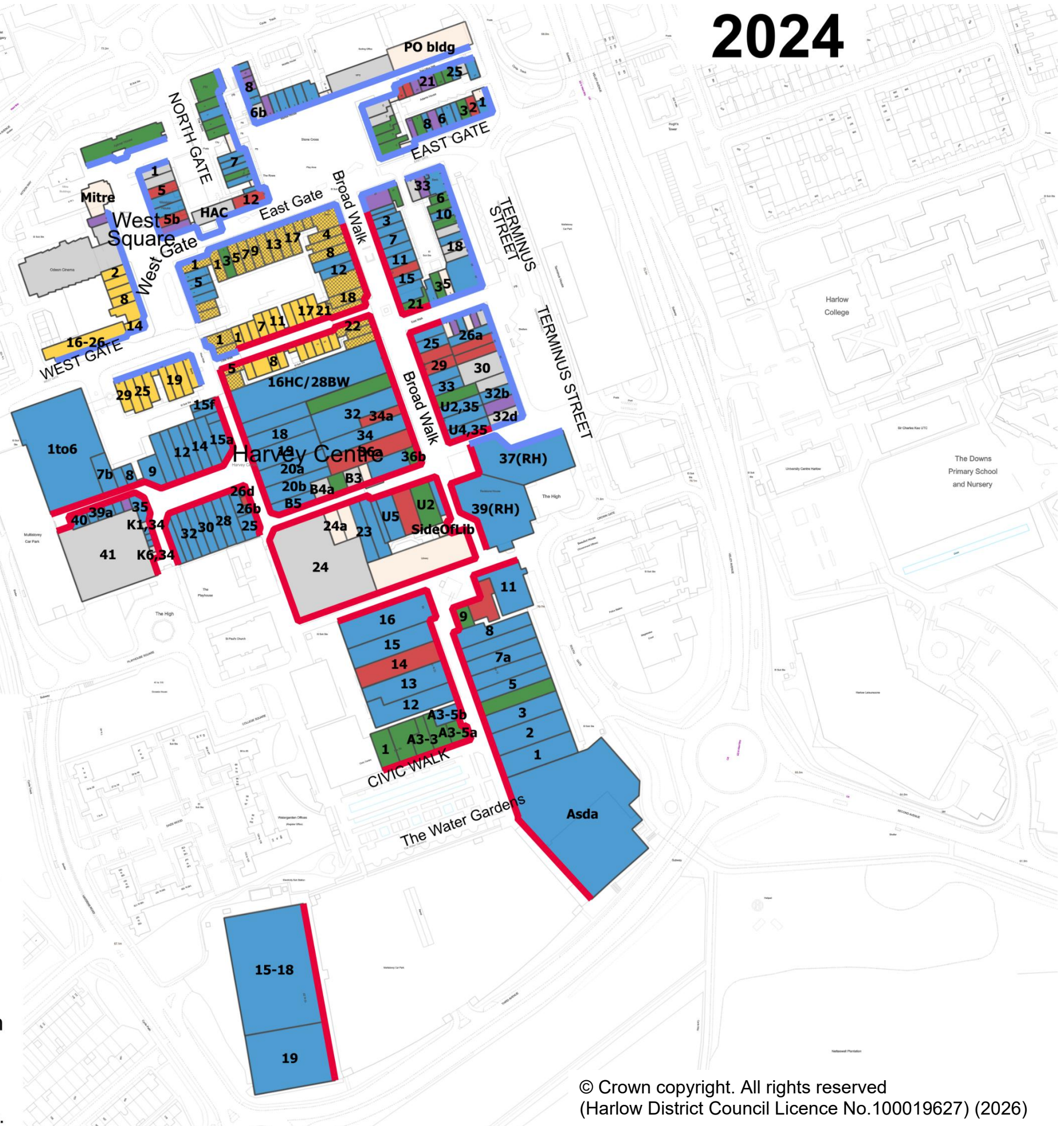
- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



0 50 100 m

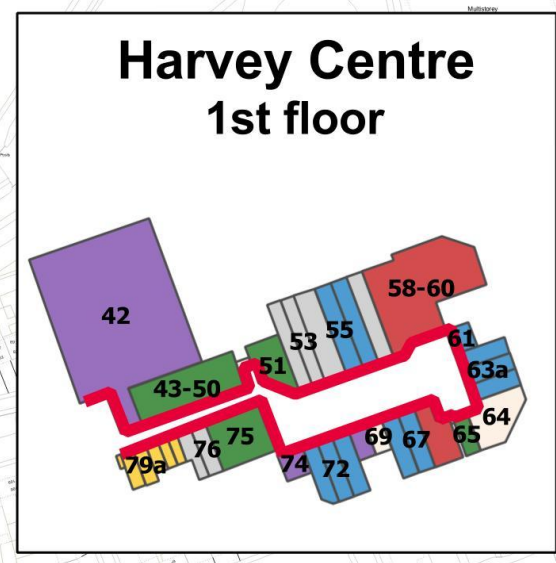
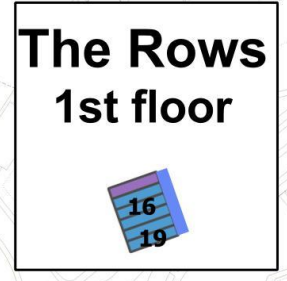
For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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TOWN CENTRE

2023



Legend

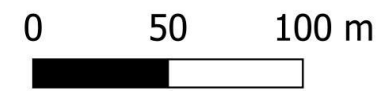
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

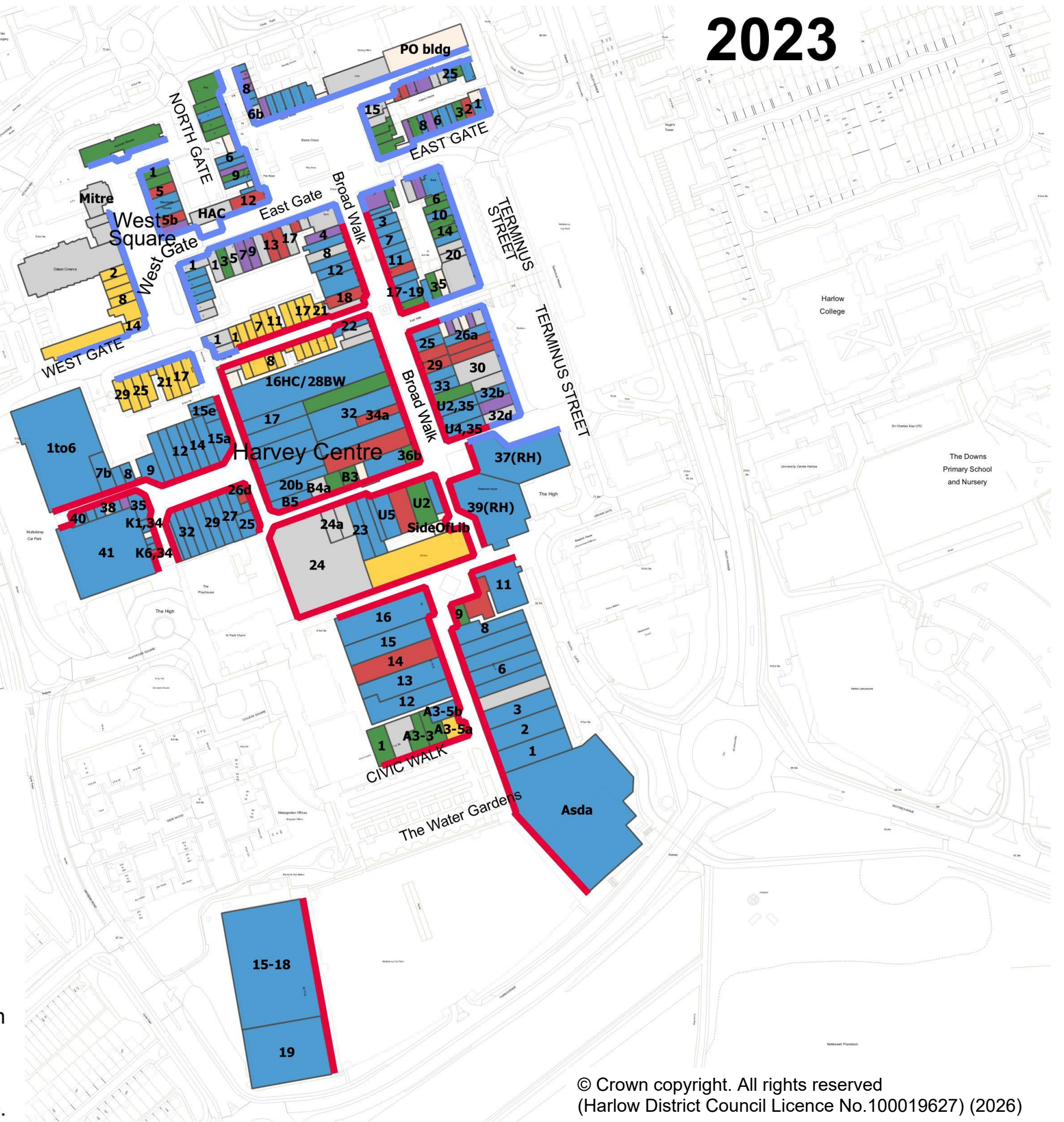
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2022

**The Rows
1st floor**

**Harvey Centre
1st floor**

Legend

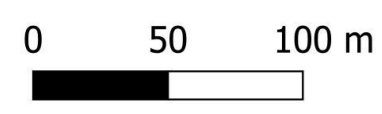
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

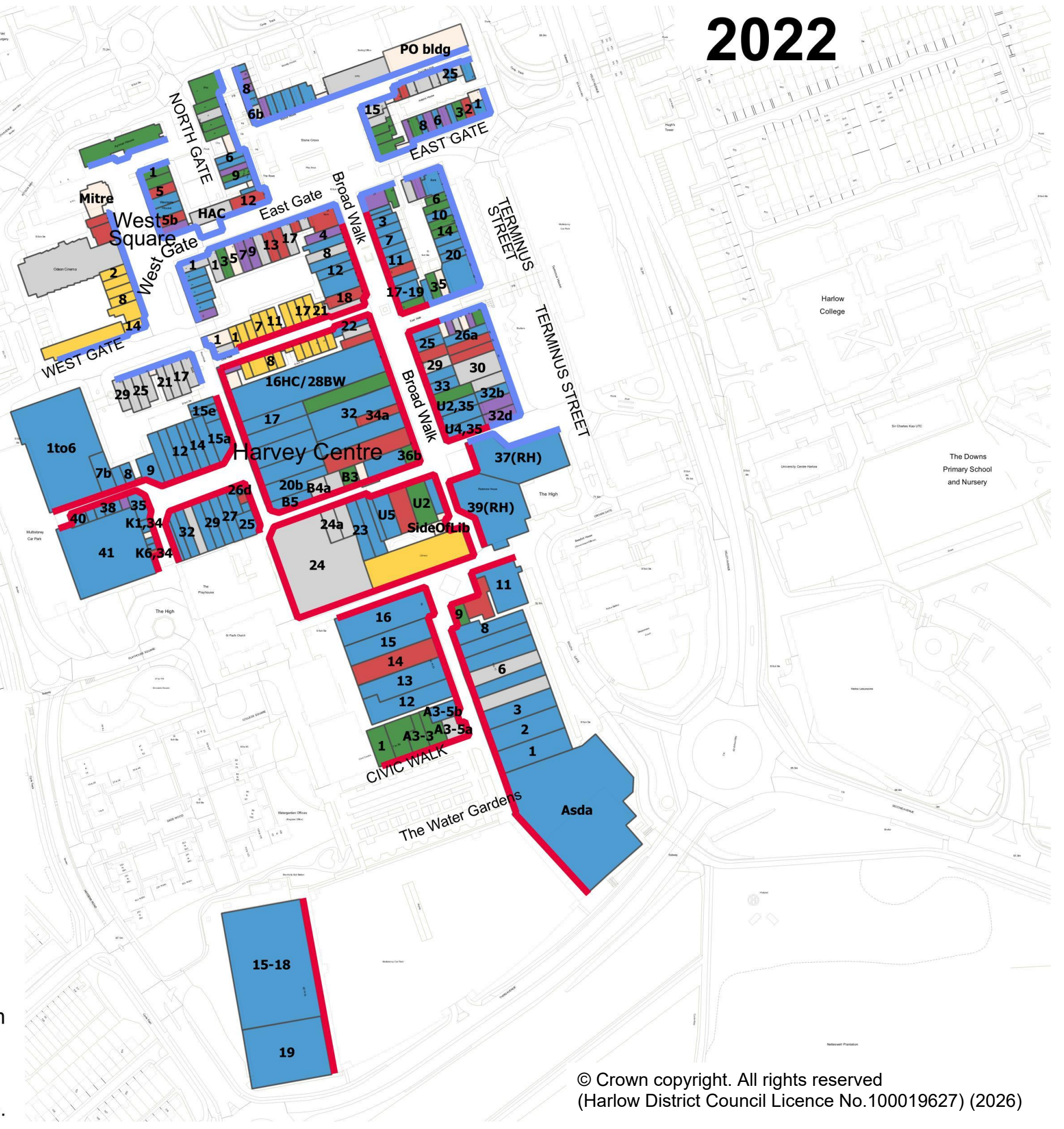
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2021

**The Rows
1st floor**

**Harvey Centre
1st floor**

Legend

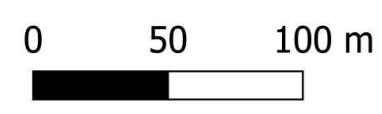
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

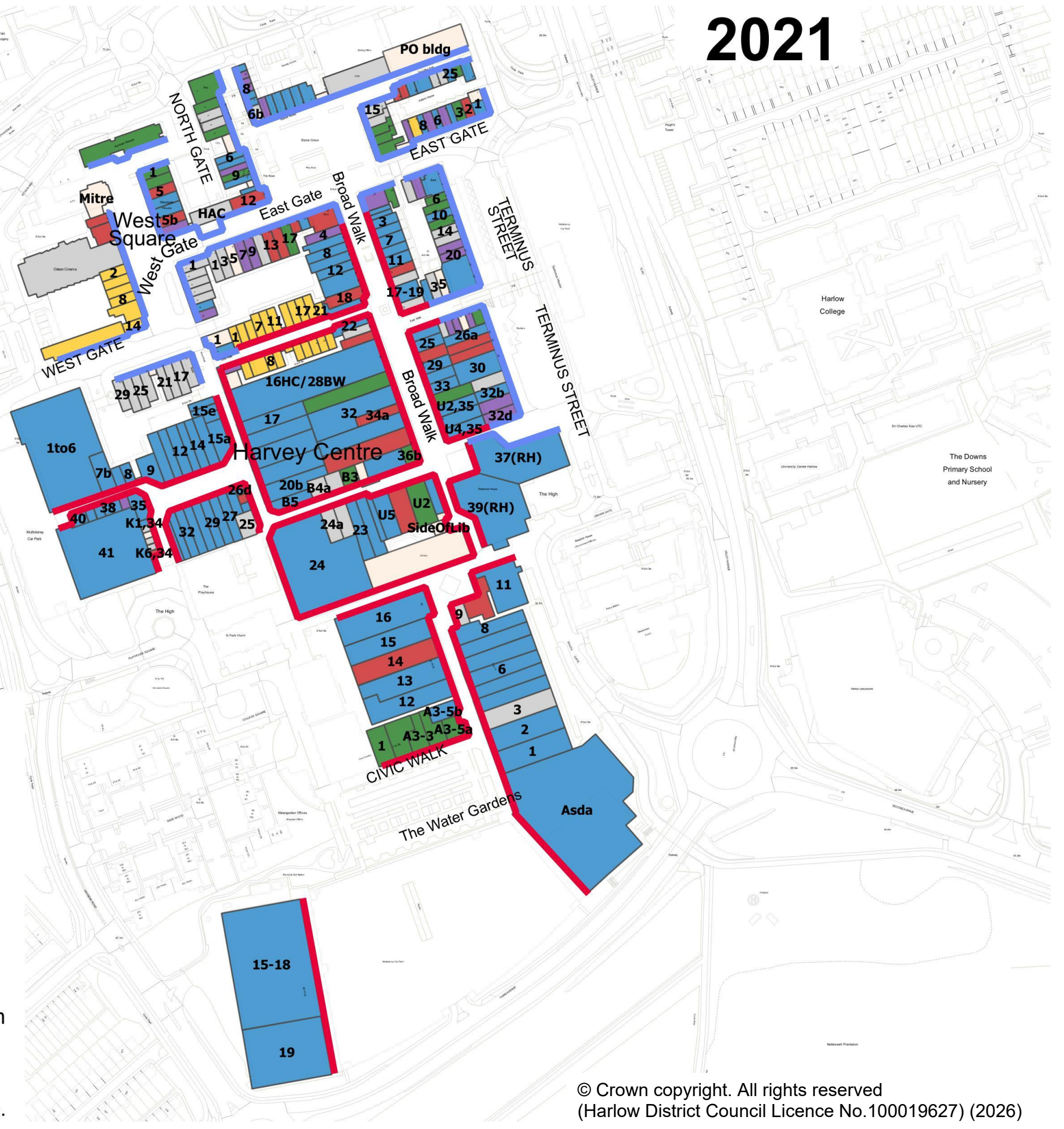
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.

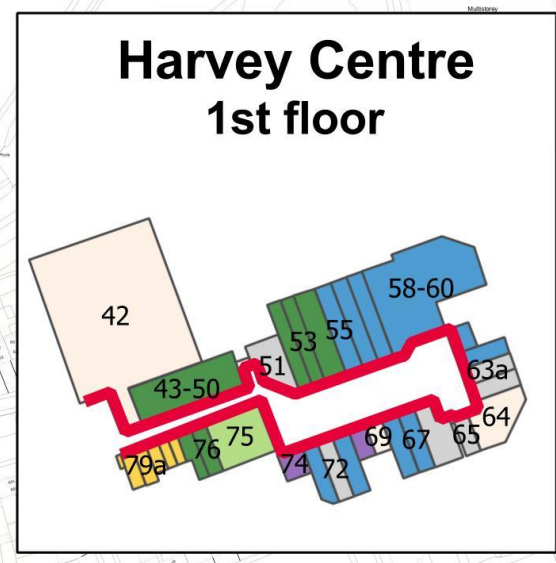
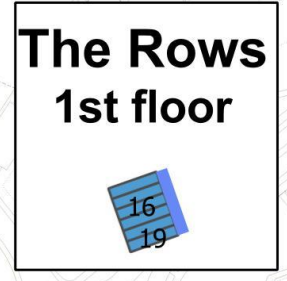


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2020



Legend

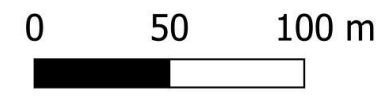
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

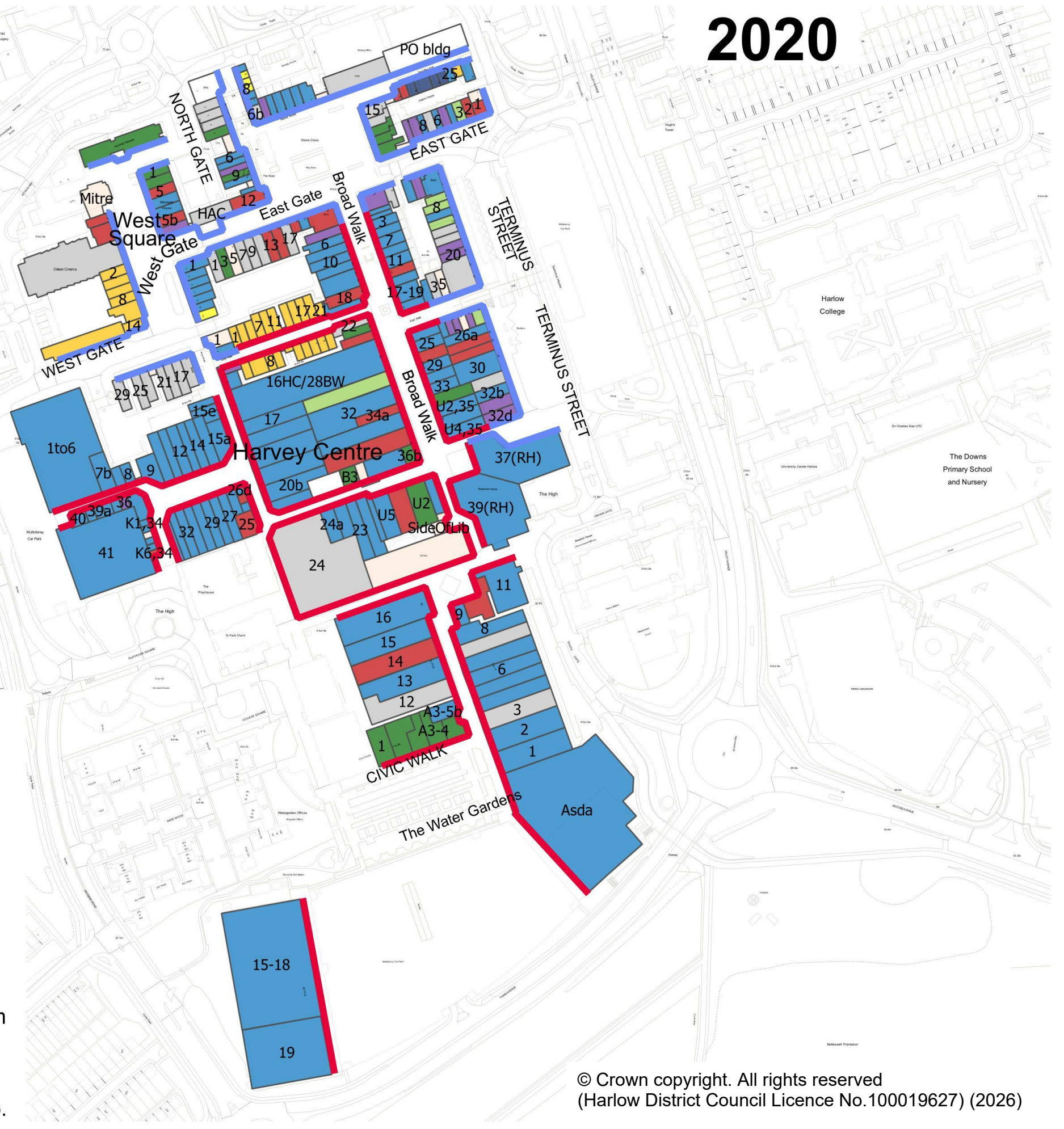
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.

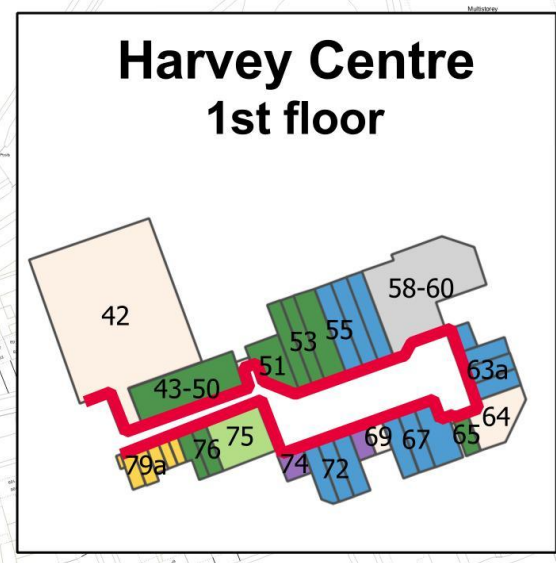
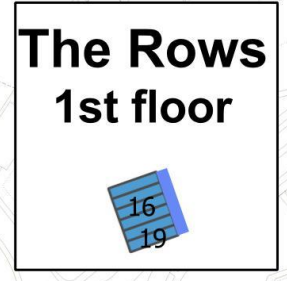


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2019



Legend

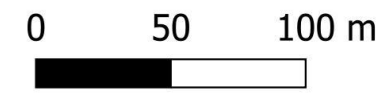
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

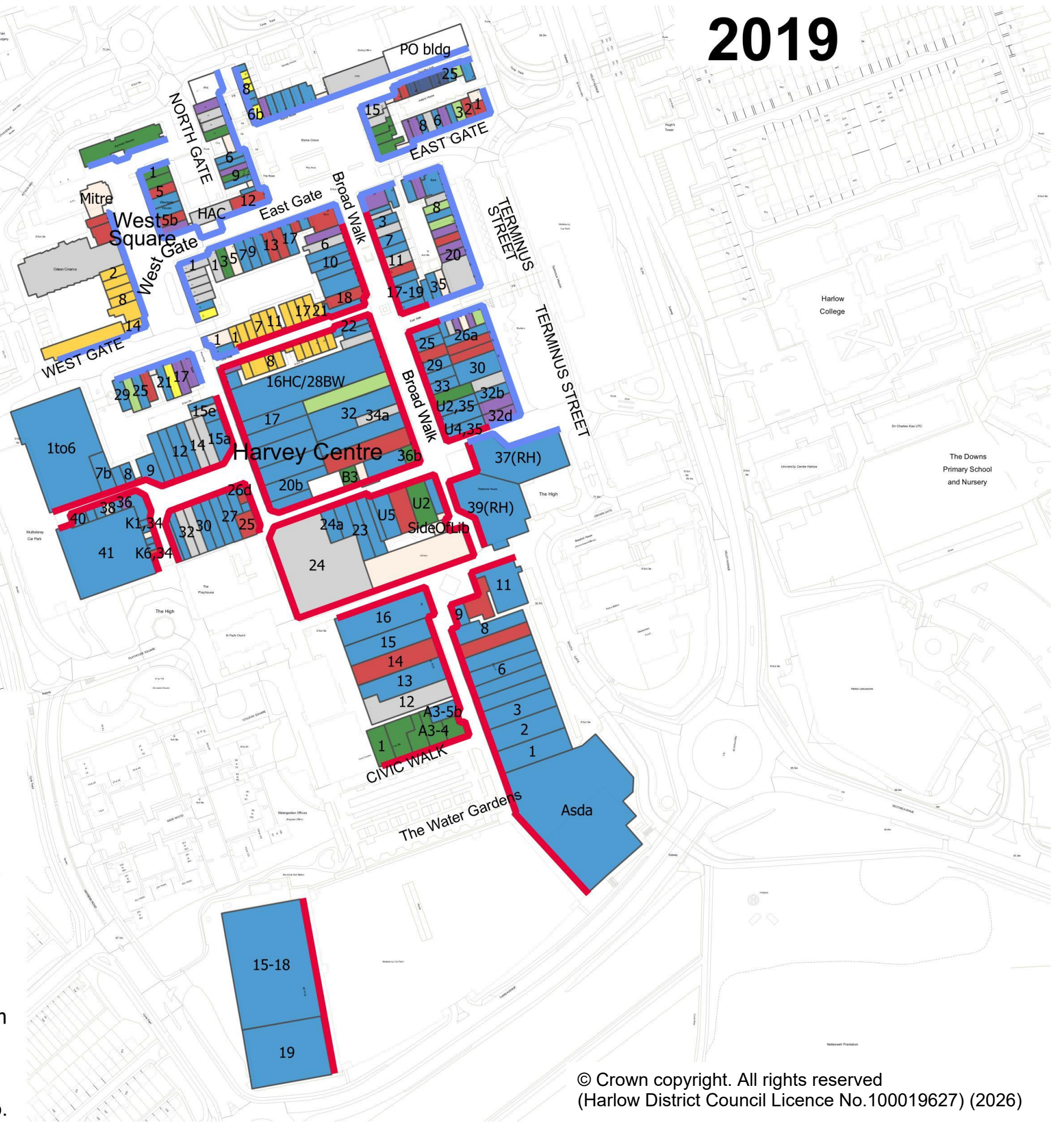
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



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TOWN CENTRE

2018

The Rows
1st floor



Harvey Centre
1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

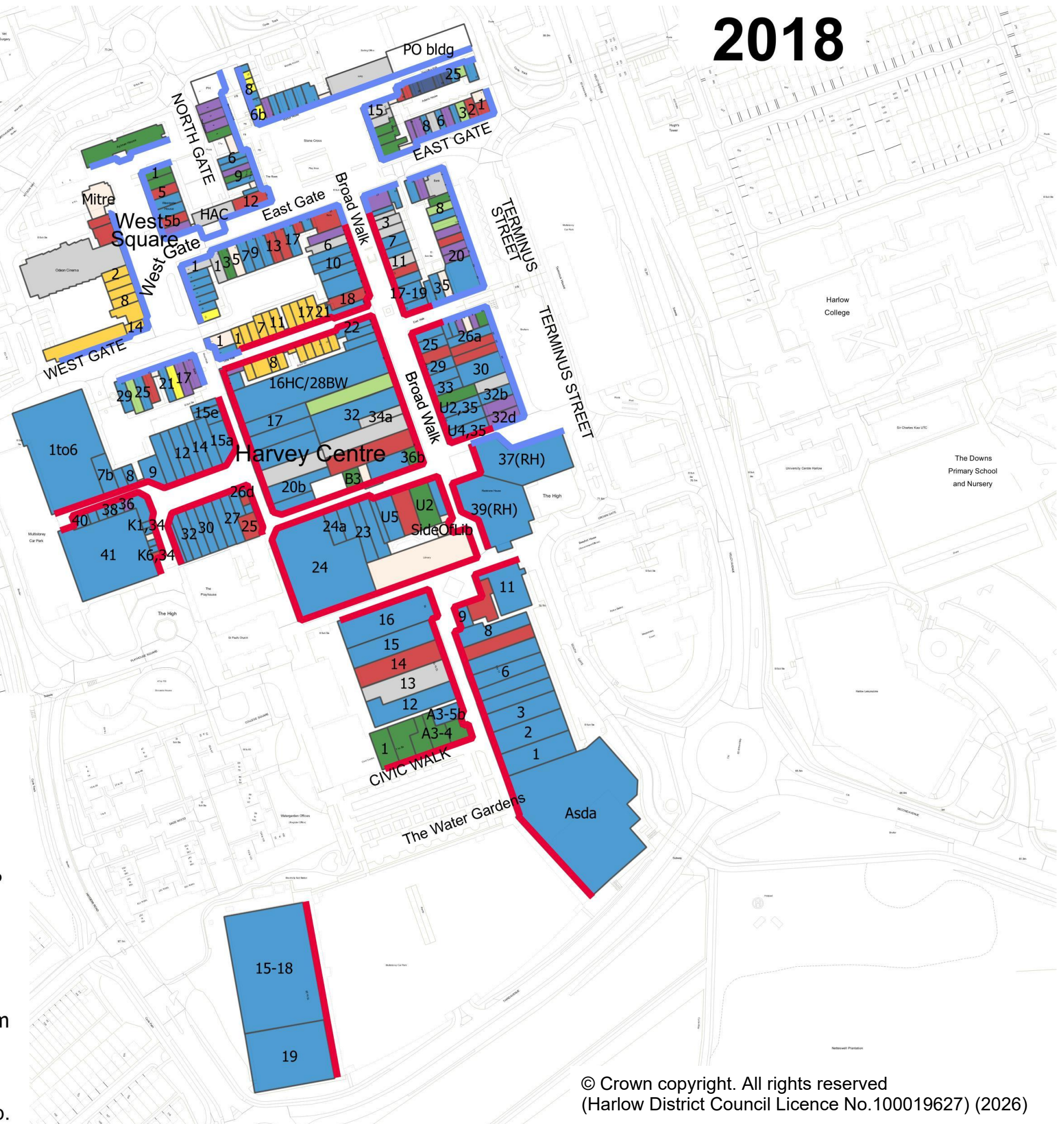
- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



0 50 100 m

For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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TOWN CENTRE

2017

**The Rows
1st floor**

**Harvey Centre
1st floor**

Legend

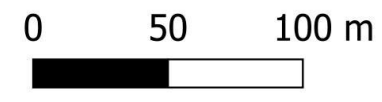
Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

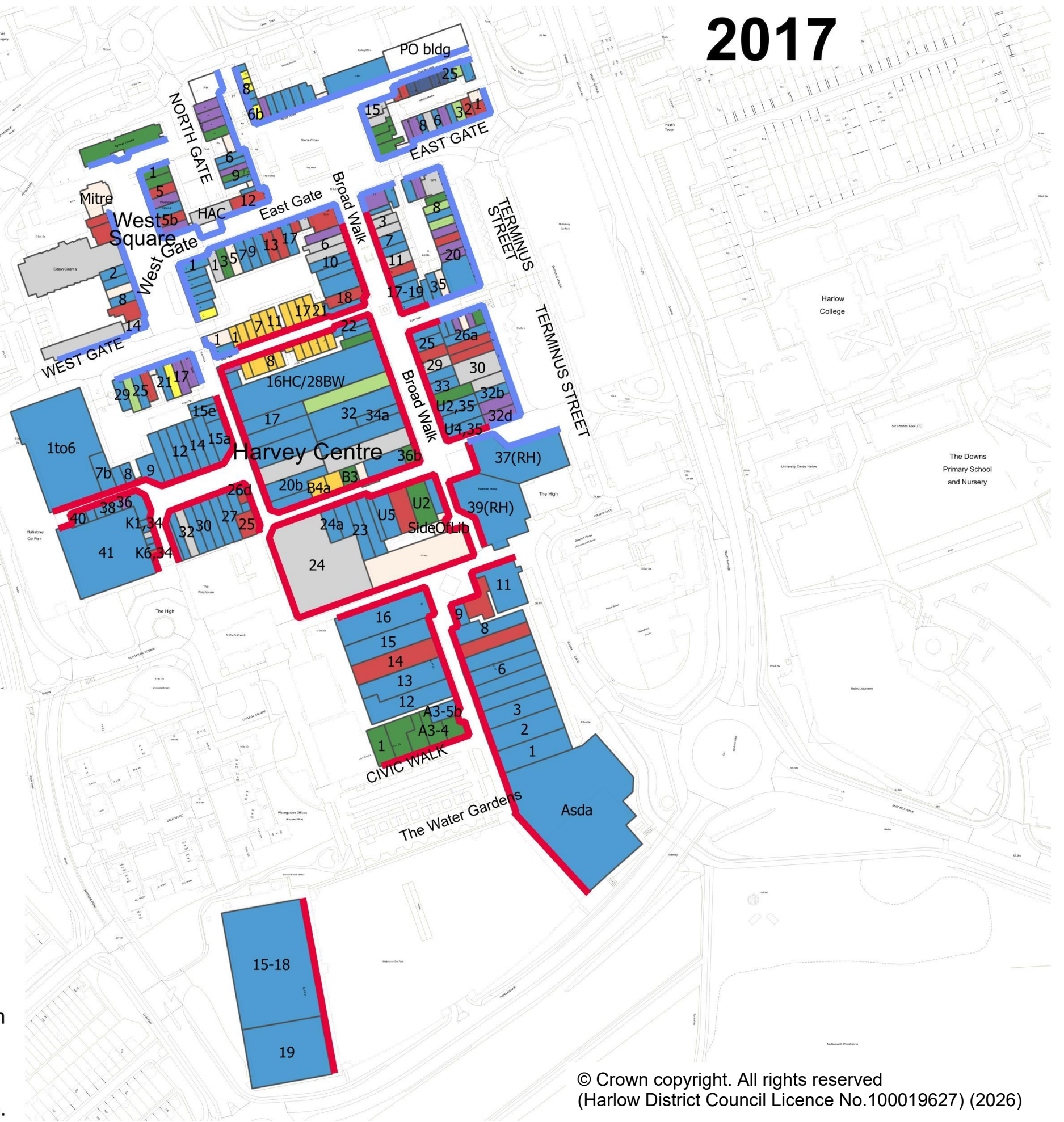
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2016

The Rows
1st floor



Harvey Centre
1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

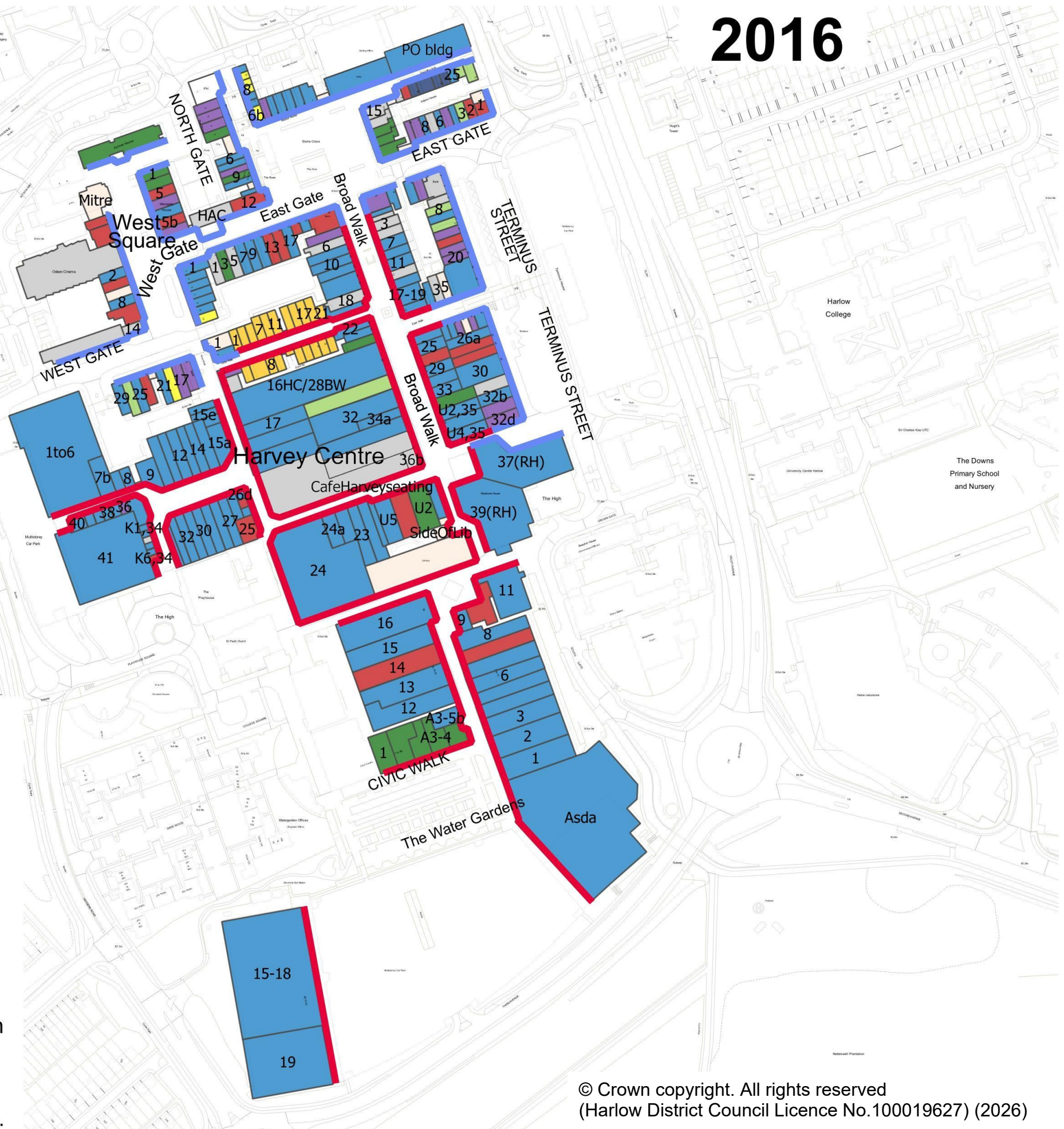
- Primary
- Secondary

Frontage designations shown are from the HLDP (2020) & supporting materials.



0 50 100 m

For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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Appendix 2: Maps - Uses of Neighbourhood Centre & Hatch Frontage

BUSH FAIR NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

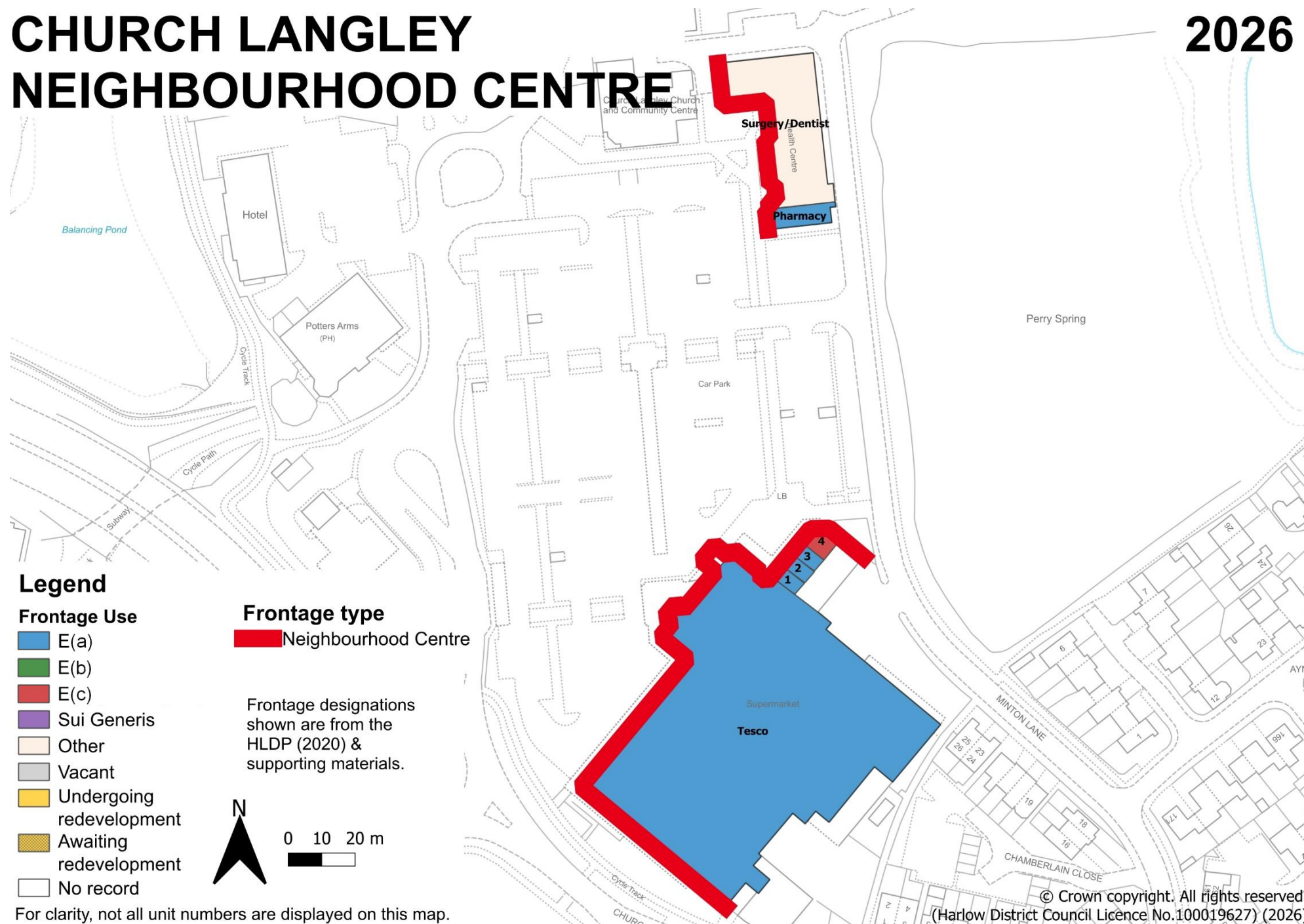
2026



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CHURCH LANGLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2026



OLD HARLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE 2026



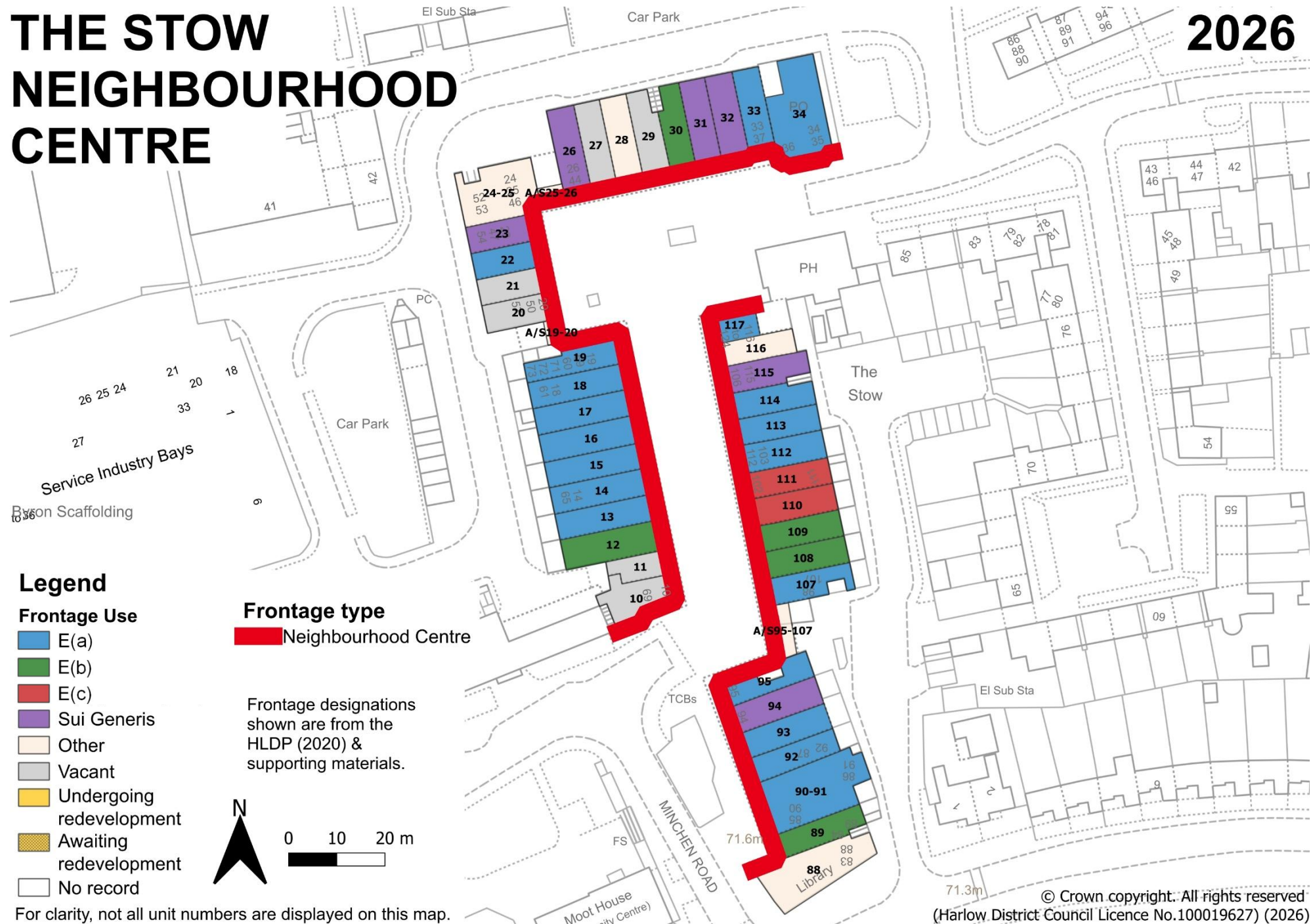
STAPLE TYE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2026



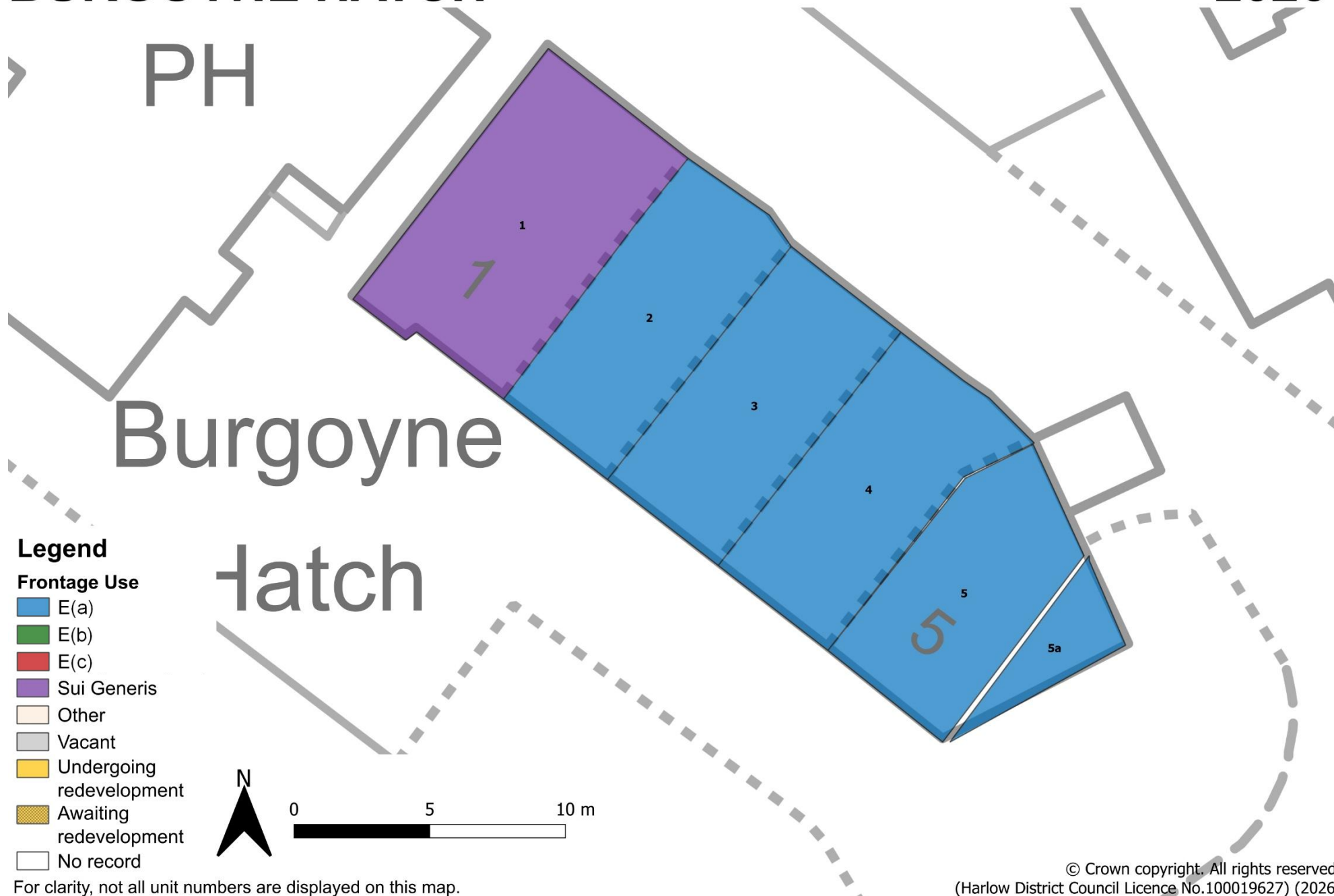
THE STOW NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2026



BURGOYNE HATCH

2026



COLT HATCH

2026



FISHERS HATCH

2026

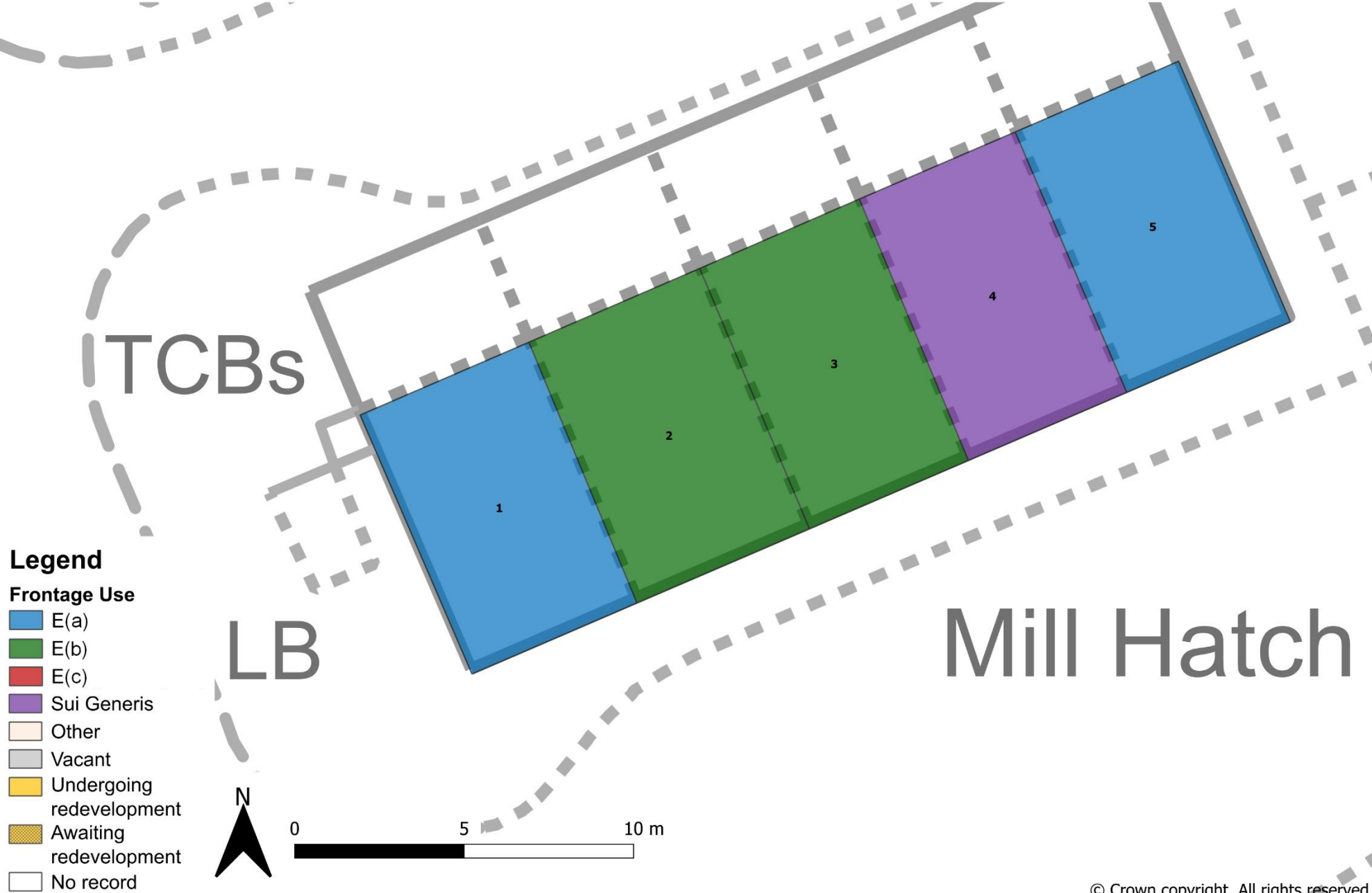


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.

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MILL HATCH

2026



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a)
- E(b)
- E(c)
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

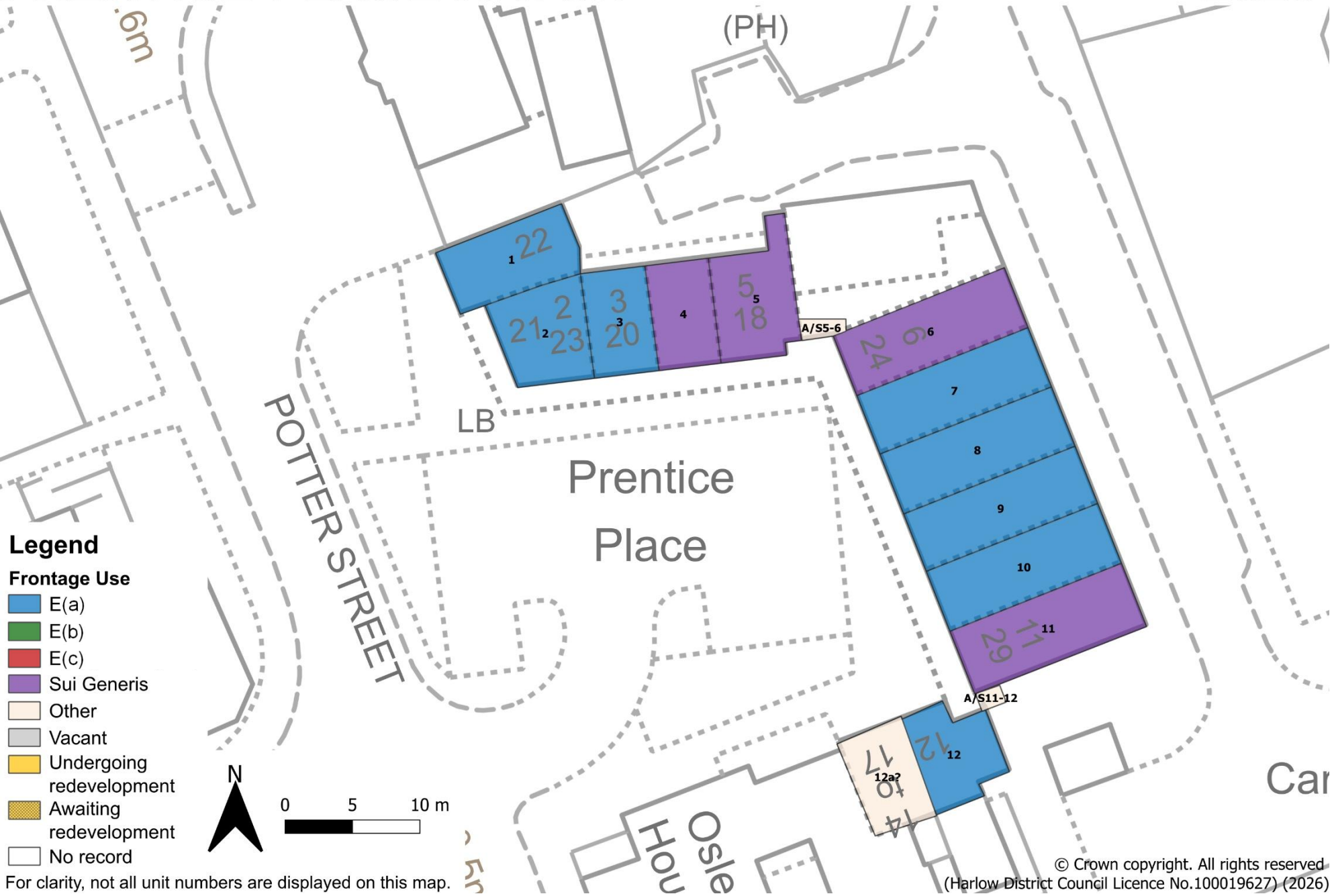
For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.

Mill Hatch

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PRENTICE PLACE HATCH

2026



SLACKSBURY HATCH

2026



Appendix 3: Use Classes Order and 2020 Changes

The table below shows a list of the use classes referred to in this Study, along with details of their former and current use class.

Former Use Class	Interpretation	Current Use Class (since Sep 2020)
A1	Selling goods (other than hot food), e.g. shops, hairdressers, pet shops, opticians and sandwich bars	E(a)
A2	Providing financial and professional services (exc. health/medical services), e.g. banks, building societies, estate agents and employment agencies	E(c)
A3	Selling food and drink for consumption on the premises, e.g. restaurants and cafes	E(b)
A3/A5	Selling food and drink for consumption on the premises but with a notable takeaway use, e.g. McDonald's	
A4	Units which are drinking establishments where food is not the primary offering, e.g. pubs and bars; now effectively its own class under Sui Generis	Sui Generis
A5	Units selling hot food for consumption off the premises, e.g. takeaways; now effectively its own class under Sui Generis	
B1	Offices, research & development and light industrial	E(g)
B8	Storage/distribution	B8 (no change)
C3	Residential	C3 (no change)
D1	Providing medical/health services, e.g. GP surgery	E(e)
	Providing a creche, day nursery or day centre	E(f)
	Providing learning and religious services, e.g. art gallery, museum, library, public/exhibition hall, church, cathedral	F1(a-f)
D2**	Providing indoor sport, recreation or fitness facilities, e.g. gym	E(d)
	Providing area or place for outdoor sport or recreation, e.g. golf course or football pitch	F2(c)
	Indoor/outdoor swimming pool/skating rink	F2(d)
	Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	Sui Generis
Sui Generis	A use that does not fall into any other use class, and effectively forms its own class under Sui Generis, e.g. amusement arcade/centre, betting office/shop, casino, funfair, fuel station, launderette, hiring/selling/displaying motor vehicles, nightclub, pay day local shops, retail warehouse club, taxi business, theatre	Sui Generis (no change)