



Harlow Retail Frontages Study 2025 Update



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1. Introduction

- 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 frontages in Harlow. This provides analysis of changes that have occurred.
- 1.2 Retail frontages are generally the front (and sometimes the side) of a retail unit, i.e. the sides of a unit with windows, which allow views into the unit and its activity from the exterior. Retail frontages may also include 'blank' parts of a unit, i.e. with no windows or doors, which could encourage the unit to make these parts more visually interesting, such as installing windows.
- 1.3 Retail frontages are generally found on the ground floor; exceptions to this are the first floor of the Harvey Centre and the first floor of The Rows.
- 1.4 The general definition of "retail" includes the sale of goods or services, so whilst most retail units are occupied by shops, some are occupied by other uses such as banks, launderettes, travel agents, estate agents and salons.

Monitoring of retail frontages

- 1.5 The monitoring of retail frontages is important to provide a barometer on the vitality, viability and success of Harlow's retail areas. Such monitoring also allows the identification of trends and the measurement of success of the local planning policies which seek to manage the proportions of uses within the retail frontages.

Town Centre

- 1.6 Two types of retail frontages are found in the Town Centre (TC) – TC Primary retail frontages and TC Secondary retail frontages.
- 1.7 **TC Primary** retail frontages represent core retail activity, often identifiable by high levels of pedestrian footfall, higher rents and commercial rates, the presence of national retailers, and a high proportion of shops.
- 1.8 **TC Secondary** retail frontages are often characterised by lower rateable values, the presence of independent and convenience retailers, and a greater variety of uses such as offices and restaurants as well as shops.
- 1.9 More information on the frontage designations can be found in Chapter 3.

Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches

- 1.10 Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches are small, planned retail areas found in Harlow, normally located nearby residential areas to serve local residents. They are characterised by lower rateable values, the presence of independent and convenience retailers, and a wide variety of uses such as hairdressers and launderettes as well as shops.
- 1.11 Hatches generally consist of between two and 10 units, with Neighbourhood Centres containing more.

- 1.12 The Harlow Local Development Plan designates Neighbourhood Centre frontages, but does not designate Hatch frontage which is not required for the purpose of the relevant policy. However, to assist with retail monitoring, this Study continues to analyse Hatches. More information can be found in Chapter 4.

Other areas

- 1.13 The Retail Frontages Study is not an extensive survey of all retail areas in Harlow. There are other retail areas which are not included in this Study, such as retail parks, where designation of retail frontages has historically not been required.
- 1.14 The retail parks are detailed in a separate Study which is available on the Council's website.

2. National Legislation

Use Classes Order

- 2.1 Uses of land and buildings are categorised into various uses known as 'use classes' which are defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
- 2.2 In September 2020, the UCO was significantly amended and classes were changed. The uses most commonly found in retail areas are listed below, along with their current Use Class (with former Use Class in square brackets).

Class E – Commercial, Business and Service

- E(a): display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food *[formerly A1]*
 - Examples include shops, hairdressers, pet shops, sandwich bars and retail warehouses
- E(c): provision of financial services and professional services (other than health or medical services) *[formerly A2]*
 - Examples include banks, building societies, estate agents and employment agencies
- E(b): sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises *[formerly A3]*
 - Examples include restaurants and cafes
- E(d): indoor sport, recreation or fitness
 - Examples include gyms *[formerly part of D2]*

Class F – Local Community and Learning

- F1(d): public libraries *[formerly part of D1]*

Sui Generis

Certain uses which do not fall within any use class – includes:

- theatres
- amusement arcades/centres or funfairs
- launderettes
- fuel stations
- hiring, selling and/or displaying motor vehicles
- taxi businesses
- retail warehouse clubs
- nightclubs
- casinos
- betting offices/shops
- pay day loan shops
- hot food takeaways (sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) off the premises) *[formerly A5]*
- public houses, wine bars and drinking establishments *[formerly A4]*
- cinemas *[formerly part of D2]*

- 2.3 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 would require planning permission.

- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Changing uses between those classified as Sui Generis, however, would require planning permission, because each use classified as Sui Generis technically occupies a use class of its own.
- 2.6 More information can be found in a [Guidance Note](#) on the Council's website, which is a material consideration in the determining of planning applications.

3. Local Policies

Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP)

- 3.1 The HLDP was adopted in December 2020 and contains two main policies relating to retail frontages – PR6 and PR8 – which are quoted below:

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.

- 3.2 The Glossary of the HLDP defines Main Town Centre Uses, 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.

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 Policy PR9 relates to Development in Hatches, but does not set requirements relating to frontage lengths of Hatches. As such, no Hatch frontages are designated in the HLDP.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The Town Centre frontages are broadly the same as those designated in the former Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan (ARHLP), which was revoked upon the adoption of the HLDP. The main changes to the frontages, made during the preparation of the HLDP, were as follows:
- extension of TC Secondary frontage to include the frontages of:
 - the former Post Office building and associated building (in Post Office Walk);
 - 1 The Rows;
 - the full length of 37 Broad Walk (Redstone House) (previously only part of the length was included);
 - alteration of 5 to 9 West Walk to become TC Primary frontage instead of TC Secondary frontage.

Planning Guidance for Retail Areas

- 3.6 The [Harlow Town Centre Masterplan Framework SPD](#) (Supplementary Planning Document), adopted in March 2022, provides guidance to inform the future planning and design of the Town Centre in respect of Policies RS2 and PR5 of the HLDP. The guidance is illustrated through indicative plans and diagrams which communicate the principles.
- 3.7 The Town Centre North Development Brief (consisting of an [Introduction and Background](#) and [Individual Site Briefs](#)) was adopted in September 2023. It provides guidance for regeneration and redevelopment of the northern part of the Town Centre, in conjunction with the Town Centre Masterplan Framework SPD.
- 3.8 The [Harlow Design Guide SPD](#) (adopted in October 2011) and its accompanying [Addendum SPD](#) (adopted in December 2021), provide more general design guidance for development in the Town Centre and other retail areas.
- 3.9 These guidance documents are material considerations in the determining of planning applications.

4. General Notes and Changes

Audits

- 4.1 The first audit for the initial version of the Retail Frontages Study was undertaken in 2001. Further audits, with subsequent Study updates, were carried out in 2002, 2003 and 2009.
- 4.2 Since 2013, audits and updates of this Study have been carried out annually. These were initially done in January each year but, since 2021, they have been undertaken in April. This lines up with the standard annual monitoring periods which run from 1 April to 31 March annually. It also avoids recording frontages occupied by temporary Christmas-related 'pop-up' uses.
- 4.3 An extraordinary biannual update for the Town Centre frontages was carried out in July 2017, to assist the commencement of work on Town Centre policies and guidance.
- 4.4 In 2020, an audit was carried out but an updated version of the Study was not updated because the new Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP) was still going through the Examination process. Data from the 2020 audit is, however, included in subsequent versions of this Study.
- 4.5 The 2020 audit took place in January, two months before the first Covid-19 pandemic 'lockdown' started. The national restrictions during the lockdown – which legally required the closure of non-essential shops as well as restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes and other uses – lasted until Summer 2020. Further restrictions were in place from December 2020 to April 2021.
- 4.6 The first audit following the pandemic took place in April 2021, after most restrictions had been lifted. While most hospitality uses remained at least partially closed until later in 2021 at the time of the audit, they were considered to still be 'in use' for the purpose of the audit (unless it was clear that a use had permanently ceased).
- 4.7 The most recent audit took place in April 2025 and the next audit is due in April 2026.
- 4.8 The audit information is stored in an internal spreadsheet which is also available as background information for Council officers, particularly for Development Management purposes.

Frontage Information

- 4.9 The **lengths of frontage**, rather than *number of units*, are analysed. Frontage lengths are a more useful indicator than number of units, as one large unit could occupy a long frontage length, whereas several smaller units could occupy a similar length.
- 4.10 The HLDP does not designate frontages for Hatches because the policy relating to Hatches does not set requirements for frontages. However, the frontages of Hatches with five or more main units, as designated in the revoked Adopted

Replacement Harlow Local Plan (2006), will continue to be monitored as part of this annual Study to assist with effective retail monitoring.

- 4.11 The frontage of Hatches with fewer than five units has never been designated. For completeness the current uses of such units are mapped (see the appendices) but they are not included in the data.
- 4.12 In Neighbourhood Centres, units such as pubs and community centres are not part of the designated retail frontage (which primarily consist of retail units), so are not audited. This also applies to the former designation for Hatches and for Hatches which never had a designation.
- 4.13 There are also some other areas, such as the Staple Tye Shopping Mews, which are not designated as frontage but are included in the annual audit for background information purposes. Such areas are not, therefore, included in the data and are not shown or detailed in this Study.

Inactive Frontage (Vacant, Redevelopment and Awaiting Redevelopment)

- 4.14 In the Study data, frontage of units which is 'inactive' due to being redeveloped or refurbished is classified as "Redevelopment". This is to separate it from frontage which is vacant simply due to the unit being unoccupied (such frontage is classed as "Vacant").
- 4.15 Certain units in the Town Centre are vacant because they are awaiting redevelopment following granting of planning permission, for example. These units are, therefore, vacant for this reason rather than being vacant due to an inability to find occupiers.
- 4.16 As such, a new classification for frontage of such units was introduced in 2024, entitled "Awaiting redevelopment", to be used in cases where frontage is vacant for this reason. This more accurately reflects the status of such frontage.
- 4.17 Once works commence on frontage classified as 'awaiting redevelopment', it will be reclassified as 'redevelopment'. Following completion of the redevelopment, the frontages will be reviewed to ensure they correctly follow the new units, and will then be audited annually as normal.

Uses and Changes to the Use Classes Order

- 4.18 Chapter 2 provides background information on national legislation which relates to retail frontages.
- 4.19 In 2015, various national changes to the Use Classes Order (UCO) came into force which meant bookmakers were reclassified as Sui Generis instead of A2. This change is, therefore, reflected in the Retail Frontages Study data from 2015 onwards.
- 4.20 As mentioned previously, in September 2020 further national changes to the Use Classes Order (UCO) came into force which had an impact on this Study. The changes are detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Changes to the Use Class Order

Former Use Class	Current Use Class (since Sept 2020)
A1	E(a)
A2	E(c)
A3	E(b)
A3/A5*	E(b)
A4	Sui Generis
A5	Sui Generis
D1**	E(e to f); F1
D2**	E(d); F2(c to d); Sui Generis (cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls)

* Frontage of units which have a majority restaurant use but also have a notable takeaway use, such as McDonald's, were referred to as A3/A5. Given that A5 is now part of the wide-ranging Sui Generis class, any A3/A5 uses are referred to in the data findings from 2021 onwards as "E(b)".

** For succinctness, any D1 or D2 uses are referred to in the data findings from 2021 onwards as "E/F", with the exception of cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls which are referred to as "Sui Generis".

- 4.21 The changes made in September 2020 are reflected in frontage audit data from 2021 onwards. Where relevant in the Study, both the current and former Use Classes are displayed.

5. Findings: Town Centre Primary Frontages

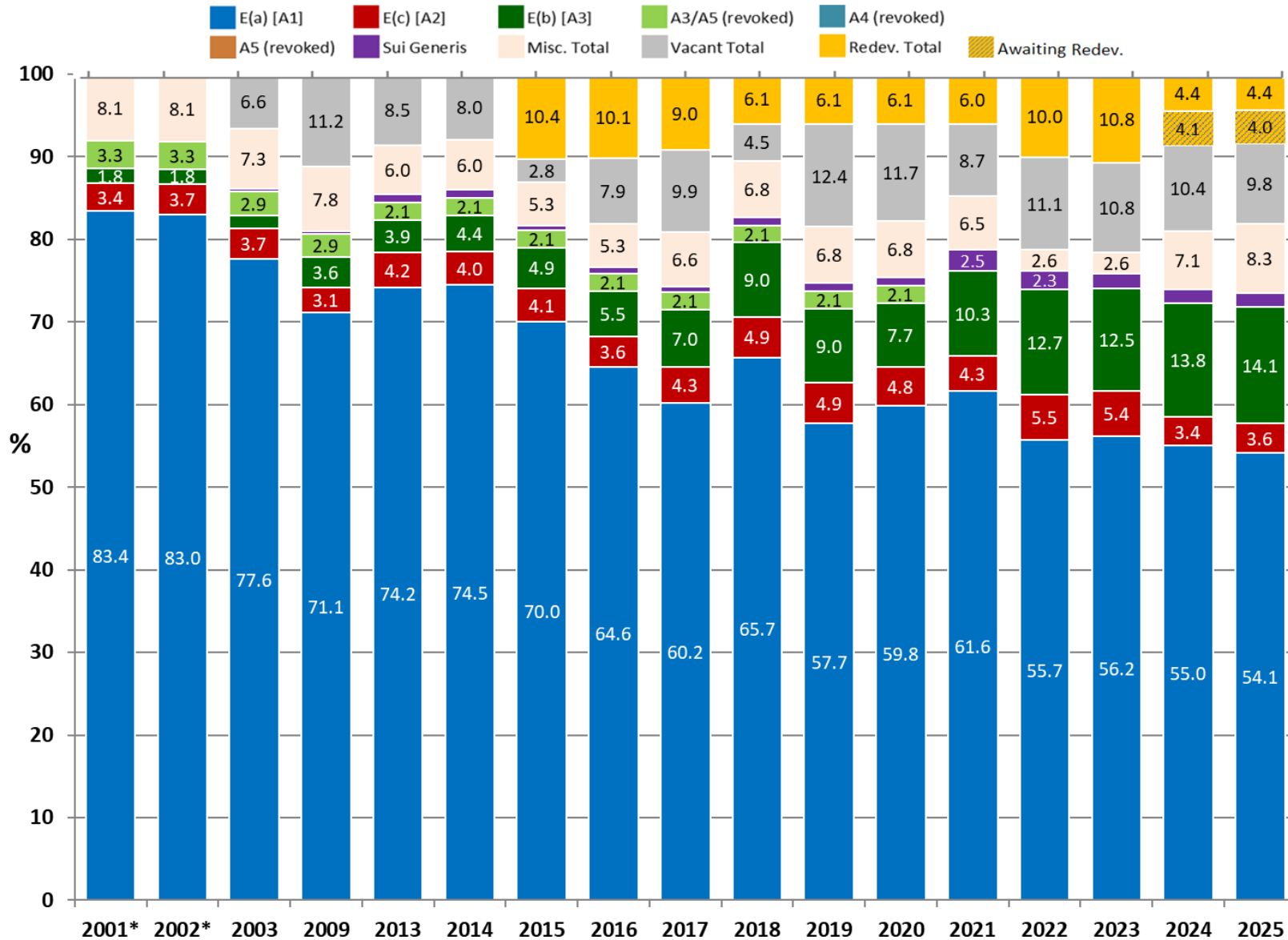
Fig. 5.a: Town Centre Primary frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025

Use Class	2001*	2002*	2003	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
[where relevant, former Class is listed in square brackets]	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a) [A1]	83.4	83.0	77.6	71.1	74.2	74.5	70.0	64.6	60.2	65.7	57.7	59.8	61.6	55.7	56.2	55.0	54.1
E(c) [A2]	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.1	4.2	4.0	4.1	3.6	4.3	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.3	5.5	5.4	3.4	3.6
E(b) [A3]	1.8	1.8	1.6	3.6	3.9	4.4	4.9	5.5	7.0	9.0	9.0	7.7	10.3	12.7	12.5	13.8	14.1
A3/A5 (revoked)	3.3	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1					
A4 (revoked)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					
A5 (revoked)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					
Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.7
Misc. Total	8.1	8.1	7.3	7.8	6.0	6.0	5.3	5.3	6.6	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.5	2.6	2.6	7.1	8.3
Misc. Split by Use																	
E(g) [B1]	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.2
E/F [D1/D2]	6.0	6.0	5.4	5.3	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	4.5	0.6	0.6	5.6	6.8
Other	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Vacant Total	0.0	0.0	6.6	11.2	8.5	8.0	2.8	7.9	9.9	4.5	12.4	11.7	8.7	11.1	10.8	10.4	9.8
Vacant split by last known use																	
V-E(a) [V-A1]	0.0	0.0	2.1	6.4	5.4	5.5	2.3	7.1	8.8	2.9	11.1	9.1	6.1	8.6	7.4	5.7	7.0
V-E(c) [V-A2]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.5	1.1	0.2
V-E(b) [V-A3]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.9	1.7	1.9	2.2	1.0
V-E(g) [V-B1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
V-Unknown	0.0	0.0	4.4	3.9	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0
V-Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
V-Oth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
V-N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.7	0.7
Awaiting Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	4.0
Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4	10.1	9.0	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.0	10.0	10.8	4.4	4.4



*Approx. 20% of the Town Centre Primary frontage was not recorded in 2001 & 2002, so data for these years is of limited use.

Fig. 5.b: Town Centre Primary frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025



* Approx. 20% of the Town Centre Primary frontage was not recorded in 2001 & 2002, so data for these years is of limited use.

Fig. 5.c: Town Centre Primary frontages: Indicators for year-on-year changes in percentage points for Use Class proportions, 2003 to 2025¹

	2003 - 2009	2009 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	
E(a) [A1]	↓	↑	→	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↗	↓	↗	↘	↘	E(a) [A1]
E(c) [A2]	↘	↗	→	→	↘	↗	↗	→	→	↘	↗	→	↓	→	E(c) [A2]
E(b) [A3]	↑	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↑	→	↘	↑	↑	→	↗	↗	E(b) [A3]
[A3/A5]	→	↘	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	Class revoked					[A3/A5]
S. Generis	→	↗	→	↘	↗	→	↗	→	→	↗	→	↘	→	→	S. Generis
Misc.	↗	↘	→	↘	→	↗	→	→	→	↘	↓	→	↑	↗	Misc.
Vacant	↑	↓	↘	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↘	↓	↑	↘	↘	↘	Vacant
iting Redev.	No frontage												⊙↑	→	Awaiting Redev.
Redev.	No frontage			⊙↑	↘	↘	↓	→	→	→	↑	↗	↓	→	Redev't.

Key:

↑ +2 or more percentage points ↗ +0.2 to +1.9 → -0.1 to +0.1 ↘ -0.2 to -1.9 ↓ -2 or less

The Vacant frontage arrow colours are reversed (green being more and red being less) to reflect lower vacancy being better. The Redevelopment frontage arrows have a neutral brown colour.

¹ The changes for 2003–2009 and 2009–2013 are not year-on-year due to lack of data for the interim years. 2001 and 2002 are excluded due to incomplete data for those years.

Most of the E(b) increase between 2020 and 2021 was due to A3/5 being revoked and such frontage reclassified as E(b) following UCO changes. Most of the Sui Generis increase between 2020 and 2021 was due to (i.) Sui Generis secondary frontage being redesignated as Primary frontage, and (ii.) a cinema being reclassified as Sui Generis following the UCO changes.

Area

- 5.1 The Town Centre (TC) Primary frontages comprise the frontage of the units in:
- Broad Walk
 - Harvey Centre (both floors, plus approach in Broad Walk)
 - Little Walk (demolished; area undergoing redevelopment)
 - Water Gardens
 - West Walk (only Nos. 5, 7 and 9)
- 5.2 The appendices of this document provide maps showing the frontages and their uses.

2024 vs 2025

- 5.3 Overall there were only minor changes between 2024 and 2025. The most notable net changes were the small decreases in E(a) and Vacant frontage, and the small increase in E(b) and Misc. frontage. The small decrease in Vacant frontage, now standing at 9.8%, is the lowest level since 2021.
- 5.4 As explained in Chapter 4, some frontage is part of units which are due to be redeveloped, possibly including demolition. The units were, therefore, vacant for this reason rather than vacant due to an inability to find occupiers. Such frontage is classed as “Awaiting redevelopment”, to more accurately reflect the status of the frontage.
- 5.5 The proportion of Vacant frontage, at 9.8%, is the lowest since 2021.

General Commentary

- 5.6 E(a) is the predominant use in the TC Primary frontages. Fig. 5.b clearly demonstrates that the decline in the proportion of E(a) frontage experienced between 2001 and 2017 had started to reverse in 2018, but then dropped slightly and has levelled out. In contrast, the proportion of E(b) frontage has steadily increased since overall since 2001. The proportion of frontage in other uses has remained relatively stable.
- 5.7 The proportion of Vacant frontage has remained relatively stable in recent years, despite challenges arising from the pandemic, changing retail habits, high energy prices and recent high inflation.
- 5.8 The increase in the proportion of Vacant frontage between 2003 and 2009 reflected the nationwide impact of the global recession on the retail industry. Between 2009 and 2013, a slow recovery had begun, with the proportion of Vacant frontage reducing.
- 5.9 The closure of stores such as BHS, Argos and the Post Office in Harlow since the mid-2010s reflects national trends where such businesses have closed all (or some) stores across the UK. In some cases, such as the Post Office and Argos, a number of stores have closed in favour of reopening as part of a larger shop.
- 5.10 Amended permitted development rights introduced in the 2010s have allowed greater flexibility of changes-of-use for retail units. These rights have had a relatively low impact on the TC Primary frontages.

- 5.11 Since 2015, a number of units have closed for redevelopment, such as Little Walk. This redevelopment signalled the start of further investment and regeneration in the Town Centre.
- 5.12 At the start of 2015, the proportion of Vacant frontage fell to 2.8%, the lowest level for over a decade, partly because of the high proportion of previously Vacant frontage which had started to be redeveloped.
- 5.13 The large Marks & Spencer store in Broad Walk closed by the start of 2016, meaning the proportion of Vacant frontage increased to 7.9%. Most of this store was, however, in use again by the start of 2017 following reconfiguration and redevelopment of the unit.
- 5.14 In Summer 2016, the large BHS unit in the Harvey Centre closed. This had an impact on the proportion of Vacant frontage in 2017, but the reopening of other vacant units negated the closure of BHS to an extent.
- 5.15 Since then, there have been a number of temporary uses in the BHS unit. For example, in 2018 the unit was in E(a) [formerly A1] use but was vacant again by 2019. The impact of the vacancy of this large unit is clear – excluding it from the data means the proportion of Vacant frontage recorded in 2019, for example, would be nearer 7% rather than just over 12%.
- 5.16 New units resulting from the redevelopment of the first floor of the Harvey Centre started to be occupied by the end of 2016, which included the opening of a new cinema. This resulted in an increase in the proportion of E(b) [formerly A3] frontage.
- 5.17 Whilst some previously Vacant frontage became in use again between 2018 and 2019, other units became vacant, including certain Harvey Centre units with long frontages which had a more notable impact on the frontages data.
- 5.18 Along with the BHS unit becoming vacant again, the proportion of Vacant frontage at the start of 2019 rose, while the proportion of E(a) frontage dropped to levels not experienced for over 18 years.
- 5.19 Between 2019 and 2020, there was little change experienced aside from a small increase in the proportion of E(a) frontage, along with small decreases in proportions of E(b) and Vacant frontage.
- 5.20 Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national restrictions on retail and hospitality between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, there was not a notable change experienced in the TC Primary frontage between 2020 and 2021.
- 5.21 Most of the changes, such as the proportion of E(b) and Sui Generis frontage increasing, are due to the UCO changes and the way uses are recorded.
- 5.22 There was a small rise in E(a) frontage and reduction in Vacant frontage, but this is mostly explained by the large former BHS unit returning into use (which was a temporary use).

- 5.23 Between 2021 and 2022, the most notable change was the reduction of E(a) frontage. This was, however, largely explained by the former BHS unit becoming vacant again.
- 5.24 Despite this notable loss of E(a) frontage, there was a relatively suppressed rise in Vacant frontage, due to a number of vacant units coming back into use. Some of these became E(b) and E(c) uses, which explains the proportional rise in these uses.
- 5.25 The reduction in 'Misc.' frontage and rise in 'Redevelopment' frontage was due to the Central Library undergoing redevelopment.
- 5.26 Between 2022 and 2023, the most notable changes were the small increases in E(a) and Redevelopment frontage, small decrease in Sui Generis frontage and small decrease in Vacant frontage.
- 5.27 The most notable net changes between 2023 and 2024 were the small decreases in E(a) and Vacant frontage, and the larger decrease in E(c) frontage, while E(b) frontage saw a minor increase and Misc. frontage a larger increase.
- 5.28 Frontage classified as 'awaiting redevelopment' notably increased from zero because it was a new classification. 'Misc.' frontage notably increased due to the opening of an information hub and a community centre, and the reopening of the library following its redevelopment.

Total recorded TC Primary frontage length:

1,634m (2001-2)	} Reason for increases between 2001-9 is not known, but is likely to be due to frontage being recorded which had previously not been recorded.
1,818m (2003)	
1,854m (2009)	

2,520m (2013-2020) – increased in 2013 due to the Water Gardens area being included in the TC Primary frontage for the purposes of this Study (the area was then formally designated in the [Use Class Order Interpretation and Town Centre Frontages Map Guidance Note](#) in 2021 – see Chapter 3 for more information)

2,536m (2021 onwards) – increased in 2021 due to minor additions to the TC Primary frontage (these were designated in the aforementioned Guidance Note)

6. Findings: Town Centre Secondary Frontages

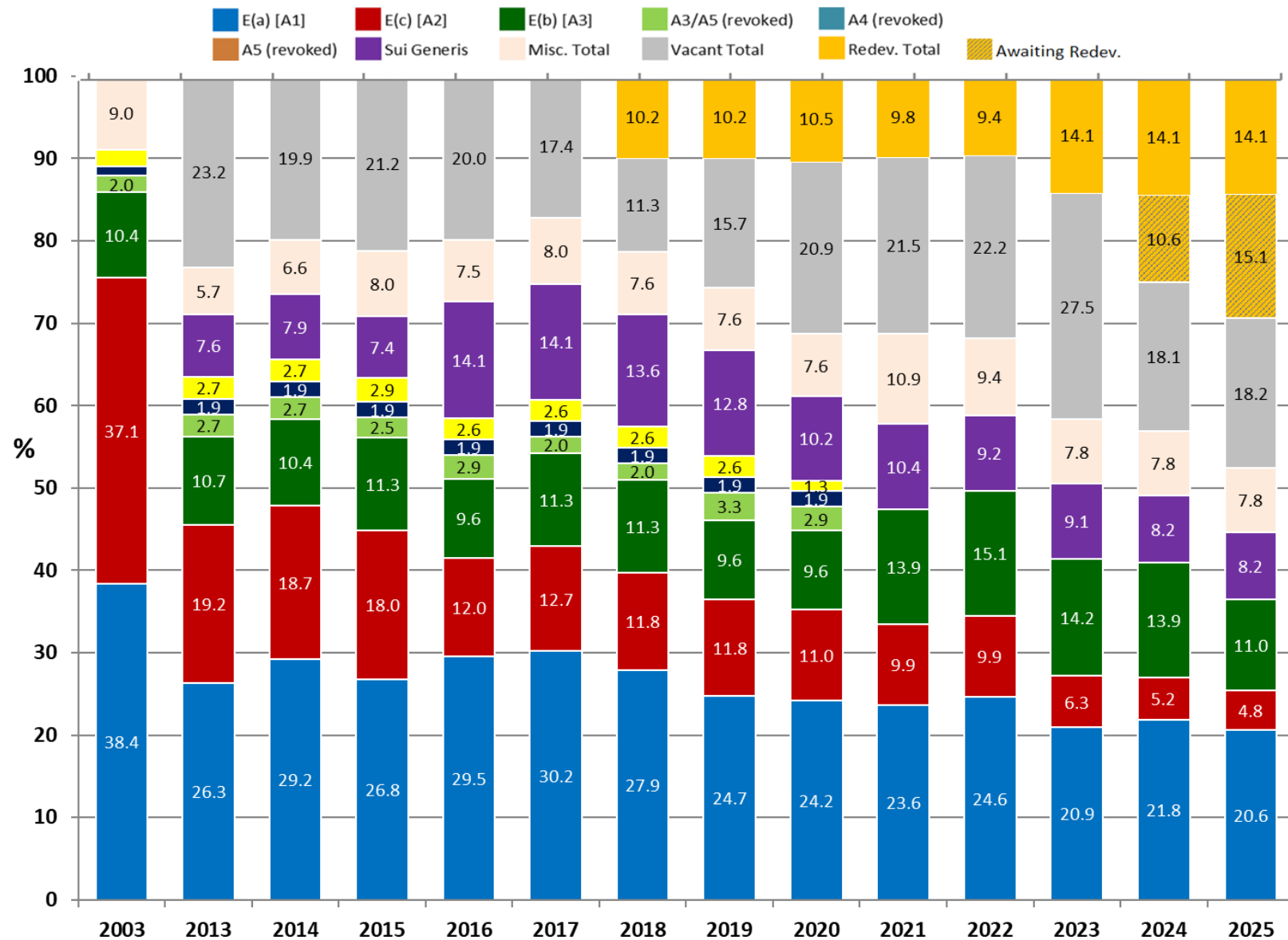
Fig. 6.a: Town Centre Secondary frontages: Use Class proportions, 2003 to 2025

Use Class	2003*	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
[where relevant, former Class is listed in square brackets]	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a) [A1]	38.4	26.3	29.2	26.8	29.5	30.2	27.9	24.7	24.2	23.6	24.6	20.9	21.8	20.6
E(c) [A2]	37.1	19.2	18.7	18.0	12.0	12.7	11.8	11.8	11.0	9.9	9.9	6.3	5.2	4.8
E(b) [A3]	10.4	10.7	10.4	11.3	9.6	11.3	11.3	9.6	9.6	13.9	15.1	14.2	13.9	11.0
A3/A5 (revoked)	2.0	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.9	2.0	2.0	3.3	2.9					
A4 (revoked)	1.1	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9					
A5 (revoked)	2.0	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1.3					
Sui Generis	0.0	7.6	7.9	7.4	14.1	14.1	13.6	12.8	10.2	10.4	9.2	9.1	8.2	8.2
Misc. Total	9.0	5.7	6.6	8.0	7.5	8.0	7.6	7.6	7.6	10.9	9.4	7.8	7.8	7.8
Misc. Split by Use														
E(g) [B1]	1.1	0.5	1.4	3.3	3.3	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
B8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
E/F [D1/D2]	2.3	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.7
C3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Other	5.3	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.5
Vacant Total	0.0	23.2	19.9	21.2	20.0	17.4	11.3	15.7	20.9	21.5	22.2	27.5	18.1	18.2
Vacant split by last known use														
V-E(a) [V-A1]	0.0	3.2	2.8	4.8	4.6	3.5	5.0	10.4	10.5	11.2	12.4	14.6	9.6	9.6
V-E(c) [V-A2]	0.0	14.0	13.0	13.1	12.2	12.2	4.7	2.5	3.3	1.3	0.9	4.2	1.6	2.0
V-E(b) [V-A3]	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.8	1.1	1.6	3.3	2.9
V-A3/A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4					
V-A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.7					
V-E(g) [V-B1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	2.6	1.7	1.7
V-D1/D2 [V-E/F]	0.0	3.7	2.4	2.3	2.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	
V-Sui Generis	0.0	1.4	1.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.9	6.5	6.1	4.1	1.9	1.9
V-Unknown	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
V-Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Awaiting Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.6	15.1
Redev.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.2	10.2	10.5	9.8	9.4	14.1	14.1	14.1



*Approx. 25% of the Town Centre Secondary frontage was not recorded in 2003, so data for this year is of limited use.

Fig. 6.b: Town Centre Secondary frontages: Use Class proportions, 2003 to 2025



*Approx. 25% of the Town Centre Secondary frontage was not recorded in 2003, so data for this year is of limited use.

Fig. 6.c: Town Centre Secondary frontages: Indicators for year-on-year changes in percentage points for Use Class proportions, 2013 to 2025²

	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	
E(a) [A1]	↑	↓	↑	↗	↓	↓	↘	↘	↗	↓	↗	↘	E(a) [A1]
E(c) [A2]	↘	↘	↓	↗	↘	→	↘	↘	→	↓	↘	↘	E(c) [A2]
E(b) [A3]	↘	↗	↘	↗	→	↘	→	↑	↗	↘	↘	↓	E(b) [A3]
[A3/A5]	→	→	↗	↘	→	↗	↘	Classes revoked					[A3/A5]
[A4]	→	→	→	→	→	→	→						[A4]
[A5]	→	→	↘	→	→	→	↘						[A5]
S. Generis	↗	↘	↑	→	↘	↘	↓	→	↘	→	↘	→	S. Generis
Misc.	↗	↗	↘	↗	↘	→	→	↑	↘	↘	→	→	Misc.
Vacant	↓	↗	↘	↓	↓	↑	↑	↗	↗	↑	↓	→	Vacant
Awaiting Redev.	No frontage										⊕↑	↑	Awaiting Redev.
Redev.	No frontage				⊕↑	→	↗	↘	↘	↑	→	→	Redev.

Key:

↑ +2 or more percentage points ↗ +0.2 to +1.9 → -0.1 to +0.1 ↘ -0.2 to -1.9 ↓ -2 or less

The Vacant frontage arrow colours are reversed (green being more and red being less) to reflect lower vacancy being better. The Redevelopment frontage arrows have a neutral brown colour.

² Most of 2020 - 2021 reduction in E(c) was due to the UCO changes.

Most of 2020 - 2021 increase in E(b) was due to A3/5 being reclassified as E(b) following UCO changes, and the addition of secondary frontage (formerly Primary).

The UCO changes resulted in an increase in Sui Generis between 2020 and 2021, but other decreases meant the net result was little/no change.

Most of 2020 - 2021 increase in Misc. was due to the addition of new secondary frontage.

Area

- 6.1 The Town Centre (TC) Secondary frontages comprise the frontage of the units in:
- Adams House
 - Aylmer House
 - Broad Walk (only Nos. 2 and 37 [Redstone House])
 - East Gate
 - East Walk
 - Market House
 - Terminus Street
 - The Rows
 - West Gate
 - West Square
 - West Walk
- 6.2 The appendices of this document provide maps showing the frontages and their uses.

2024 vs 2025

- 6.3 The most notable changes are minor decreases in E(a) and E(c) frontage, a notable decrease in E(b) frontage, and a notable increase in frontage of units awaiting redevelopment.
- 6.4 As explained in Chapter 4, some frontage is part of units which are due to be redeveloped, possibly including demolition. The units were, therefore, vacant for this reason rather than vacant due to an inability to find occupiers. Such frontage is classed as “Awaiting redevelopment”, to more accurately reflect the status of the frontage.
- 6.5 Due mostly to the number of units undergoing redevelopment or awaiting redevelopment, the proportion of Vacant frontage increased only slightly to 18.2%, remaining at levels not seen since 2019. The high proportion of frontage being redeveloped or awaiting redevelopment - 29.3% - signals the ongoing regeneration of the town centre.

General Commentary

- 6.6 The predominant use in the TC Secondary frontage is E(a). While the proportion of Vacant frontage is higher than that in the TC (TC) Primary frontage, it has been relatively stable recently. This is despite challenges including the changing nature of retail habits (accelerated by the pandemic), higher energy prices and overall increased costs due to recent high inflation.
- 6.7 Fig. 6.b clearly shows that, since 2013, the proportion of E(a) frontage has remained relatively stable with a recent small decline. E(b) frontage was stable but has increased (partly due to the UCO changes) and has stabilised, while E(c) has slowly decreased.
- 6.8 New permitted developments were introduced in 2013 which allowed greater flexibility of changes-of-use for retail units. These rights had little impact on the frontages because the proportions of uses have remained relatively stable since, with E(a) [formerly A1] use remaining the most prominent.

- 6.9 Considering that much of the change from E(c) [formerly A2] to Sui Generis between 2013 and 2018 was due to the national reclassifying of bookmakers in 2015, there was little actual change experienced between use classes during this period.
- 6.10 During this period there was a decrease in the proportion of Vacant frontage, due to units coming back into use and also some starting to undergo redevelopment.
- 6.11 There was, however, an increase in the proportion of Vacant frontage between 2018 and 2019, rising by 4.4 percentage points. Some units previously vacant at the start of 2018 came back into use, but this was negated by the closure of the large units previously occupied by a Polish supermarket in West Gate and the BHF charity shop on the corner of Terminus Street. The rise in proportion of Vacant frontage continued, increasing by 5.2 percentage points between 2019 and 2020.
- 6.14 Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national restrictions on retail and hospitality between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, there was not a notable change experienced in the Secondary frontages between 2020 and 2021. Most of the changes which were experienced were due to the UCO changes and the way uses are recorded.
- 6.15 Between 2021 and 2022, there was little recorded change. However, the proportion of Vacant frontage increased by 0.7 percentage points to 22.2%.
- 6.16 Between 2022 and 2023, the most notable changes were the drops in E(a) and E(c) frontage, the small declines in E(b) and Misc. frontage and the increase in Vacant and Redevelopment frontage.
- 6.17 The increase in Vacant frontage was mostly due to the closure of large units in Terminus Street, East Walk and East Gate. This increase meant that in 2023, Vacant frontage stood at its highest level since at least 2013 (data earlier than 2013 is incomplete).
- 6.18 The most notable changes between 2023 and 2024 were minor increases in E(a) frontage and minor decreases in E(c), E(b) and Sui Generis frontage. Frontage classified as 'awaiting redevelopment' notably increased from zero because it was a new classification, while the amount of Vacant frontage fell due to some being reclassified as 'awaiting redevelopment'.
- 6.19 The proportion of Vacant frontage fell in 2024, partly due to the reclassification of the frontage of certain units as 'awaiting redevelopment' to clarify that they were vacant due to impending works.

Total recorded Secondary frontage length:

984m (2003)	}	<i>Reason for increases is due to frontages being recorded for the first time.</i>
1,396m (2013-14)		
1,452m (2015-2020)		

1,572m (2021 onwards) – increased in 2021 due to minor additions to the Secondary frontages (see Chapter 3 for more information)

7. Findings: Neighbourhood Centre Frontages

Fig. 7.a: Neighbourhood Centre frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025

Use Class	2001	2002	2003	2009	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
[where relevant, former Class is listed in square brackets]	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a) [A1]	65.1	61.4	61.4	56.5	58.5	58.4	60.9	62.6	61.5	61.5	58.8	58.8	59.3	57.3	54.7	57.0
E(c) [A2]	11.2	11.2	10.6	12.2	12.7	9.4	5.2	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	4.9	4.9
E(b) [A3]	9.3	13.0	10.2	10.7	10.2	11.6	11.1	10.5	10.3	10.9	12.0	14.9	15.7	14.9	14.5	15.2
A3/A5 (revoked)	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.7	3.5	1.7	1.7	2.9	3.0	2.4	1.8					
A4 (revoked)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					
A5 (revoked)	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.1	2.9	3.4	2.2	3.3	3.4	3.9					
Sui Generis	1.2	1.2	1.7	2.3	2.8	2.8	5.8	5.8	6.5	6.5	6.5	10.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.3
Misc. Total	10.8	10.8	9.8	10.5	8.5	9.5	9.0	9.0	10.1	10.1	11.2	11.2	11.1	11.1	11.5	12.0
<i>Misc. Split by Use</i>																
E(g) [B1]	2.9	2.9	2.3	2.3	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.3	1.4	1.4	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
E/F [D1/D2]	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.8
C3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Other	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Vacant Total	0.0	0.0	4.0	4.5	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.4	1.0	1.0	2.2	1.1	0.9	3.6	4.2	1.1
<i>Vacant split by last known use</i>																
V-E(a) [V-A1]	0.0	0.0	1.6	4.5	1.7	1.7	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.2	1.1	0.9	2.9	2.5	0.5
V-E(c) [V-A2]	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.6	0.6	1.7	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2
V-E(b) [V-A3]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.2	0.0
V-A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					
V-Unknown	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
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	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Redev. Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4

Fig. 7.b: Neighbourhood Centre frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025

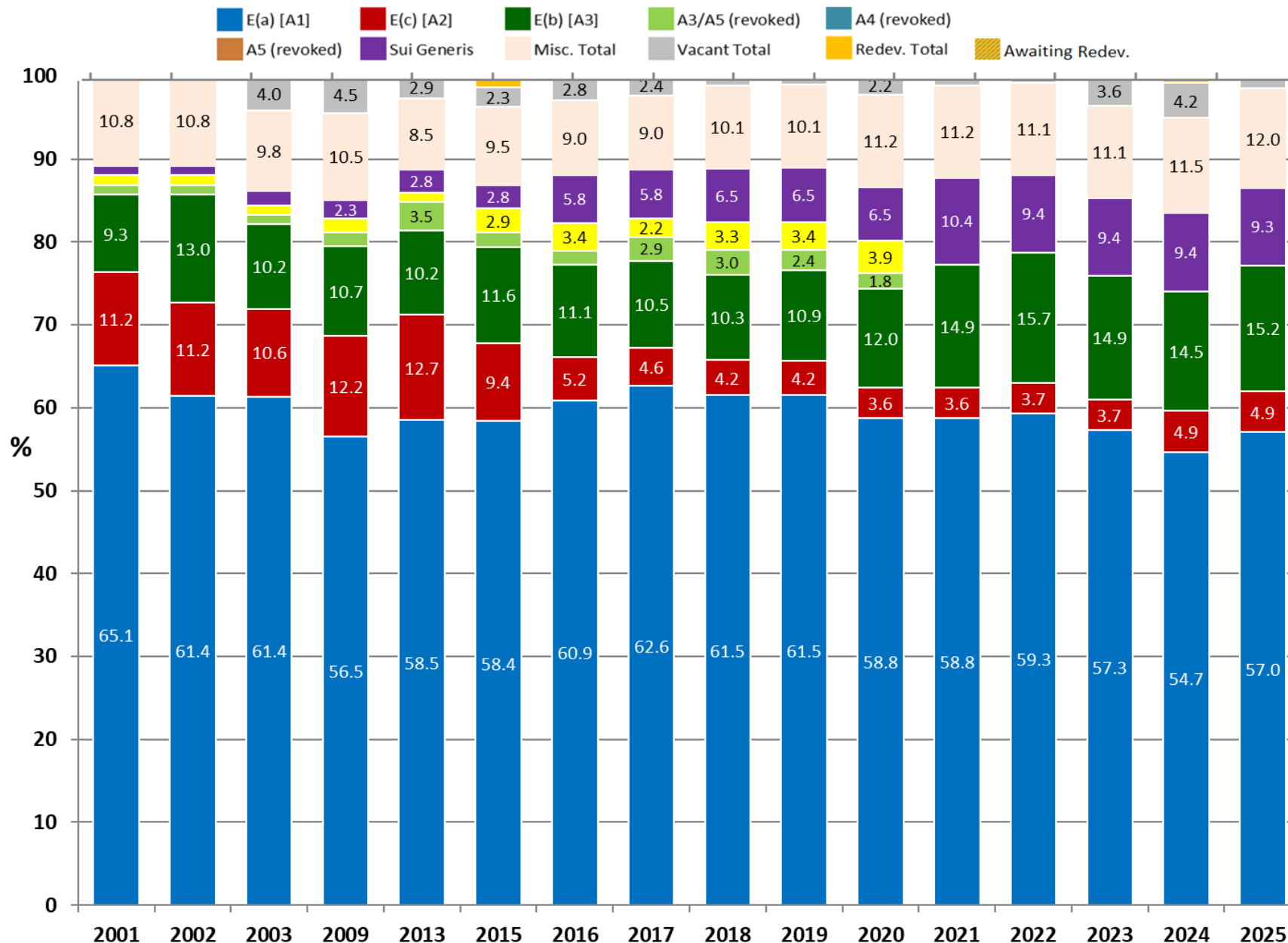


Fig. 7.c: Neighbourhood Centre frontages: Indicators for year-on-year changes in percentage points for Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025³

	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2009 ¹	2009 - 2013 ¹	2013 - 2015 ¹	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	
E(a) [A1]	↓	→	↓	↑	→	↑	↗	↘	→	↓	→	↗	↓	↓	↑	E(a) [A1]
E(c) [A2]	→	↘	↗	↗	↓	↓	↘	↘	→	↘	→	→	→	↗	→	E(c) [A2]
E(b) [A3]	↑	↓	↗	↘	↗	↘	↘	→	↗	↗	↑	↗	↘	↘	↗	E(b) [A3]
[A3/A5]	→	→	↗	↗	↘	→	↗	→	↘	↘	Classes revoked					[A3/A5]
[A5]	→	→	↗	↘	↗	↗	↘	↗	→	↗						[A5]
S. Generis	→	↗	↗	↗	→	↑	→	↗	→	→	↑	↘	→	→	→	S. Generis
Misc.	→	↘	↗	↓	↗	↘	→	↗	→	↗	→	→	→	↗	↗	Misc.
Vacant	No frontage	⊖↑	↗	↘	↘	↗	↘	↘	→	↗	↘	→	↑	↗	↓	Vacant
Redev't.	No frontage				⊖↗	↘⊖	No frontage							⊖↗	↘	Redev't.

Key:

↑ +2 or more percentage points ↗ +0.2 to +1.9 → -0.1 to +0.1 ↘ -0.2 to -1.9 ↓ -2 or less

The Vacant frontage arrow colours are reversed (green being more and red being less) to reflect lower vacancy being better. The Redevelopment frontage arrows have a neutral brown colour.

³ The changes for 2003 - 2009, 2009 - 2013 and 2013 - 2015 are not year-on-year due to lack of data for the interim years. Most of 2020 - 2021 increase in E(b) was due to A3/5 being reclassified as E(b) following UCO changes, and the addition of secondary frontage (formerly Primary). Most of 2020 - 2021 increase in Sui Generis was due to A5 being reclassified as Sui Generis E(b) following UCO changes.

Area

- 7.1 The Neighbourhood Centre frontages comprise the frontage of the units in:
- Bush Fair Neighbourhood Centre (main area, excluding Sherwood House)
 - Church Langley Neighbourhood Centre (Tesco and adjoining units, and 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)
- 7.2 In Neighbourhood Centres, units such as pubs and community centres are not part of the designated retail frontage (which primarily consist of retail units), so are not audited. This also applies to the former designation for Hatches and for Hatches which never had a designation.
- 7.3 The appendices of this document provide maps showing the frontages and their uses.

2024 vs 2025

- 7.4 The most notable changes were small increases in E(b) and Misc. frontage; a more notable increase in E(a) frontage, a small decrease in Redevelopment frontage, and a notable decrease in Vacant frontage. In total, the frontage of just 10 units experienced a change.
- 7.5 Due to some units returning to use, the Vacant frontage percentage fell to just 1.1%.

General Commentary

- 7.6 The Neighbourhood Centres have consistently performed well – even during the period of the global recession in the late 2000s – maintaining a very low proportion of Vacant frontage.
- 7.7 The relative lack of change, and low vacancy rates, show the Neighbourhood Centres continue to perform well and be relatively robust against national changes in retail habits, the aftermath of the pandemic, higher energy costs and recent high inflation.
- 7.8 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 Neighbourhood Centres were easy to access for most residents and often within walking distance.
- 7.9 The proportions of frontage uses have remained fairly constant; around half being in E(a) [formerly A1] use, with notable amounts of E(b) [formerly A3] frontage which has increased in the early 2020s and has since stabilised. There was a decline in the proportion of E(c) [formerly A2] frontage between 2001 and 2017, which has since stabilised. Conversely, the proportion of Sui Generis frontage rose between 2001 and 2021, but has since stabilised.

- 7.10 New permitted developments were introduced in 2013 which allow greater flexibility of changes-of-use for retail units. These permitted development rights appear to have had little impact on the Neighbourhood Centre frontages.
- 7.11 During the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national restrictions on retail between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches would have proved important to many residents who were avoiding travelling far for their routine shopping.
- 7.12 There was not a notable change experienced in the frontages between 2021 and 2022.
- 7.13 In 2022, just 0.9% of the overall frontage was vacant, which was the lowest vacancy level recorded for 20 years.
- 7.14 Between 2022 and 2023, the only changes experienced were two hair salons and a café becoming vacant, which caused an increase in the proportion of Vacant frontage to 3.6%, up from the very low levels experienced in 2022.
- 7.15 The most notable changes between 2023 and 2024 were small increases in E(c), Misc., Redevelopment and Vacant frontage; a small decrease in E(b) frontage; and a more notable decrease in E(a) frontage.

Total recorded Neighbourhood Centre frontage length:

963m (2001-2)	}	<i>Reason for increases is due to frontages being recorded for the first time.</i>
999m (203)		
1,002m (2009-)		

8. Findings: Hatch Frontages

Fig. 8.a: Hatch frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025

Use Class	2001	2002	2003	2009	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
[where relevant, former Class is listed in square brackets]	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
E(a) [A1]	61.2	61.2	61.2	52.9	52.9	52.9	52.9	48.1	48.3	51.4	51.4	51.4	51.4	56.6	54.8	56.4
E(c) [A2]	10.8	10.8	10.8	8.6	8.6	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
E(b) [A3]	10.3	10.3	10.3	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3
A3/A5 (revoked)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0					
A4 (revoked)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					
A5 (revoked)	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.7					
Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	10.3	11.8	11.8	11.8	10.0	24.8	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.1
Misc. Total	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.7	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	4.7	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	1.5	1.5	1.5
Misc. Split by Use																
E(g) [B1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
E/F [D1/D2]	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	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	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	3.3	0.2
Vacant split by last known use																
V-E(a) [V-A1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.2
V-A3/A5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0					
V-E(g) [V-B1]	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0
V-Sui Generis	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	0.0	0.0
Redev. Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.2	0.0	0.0	1.5

Fig. 8.b: Hatch frontages: Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025

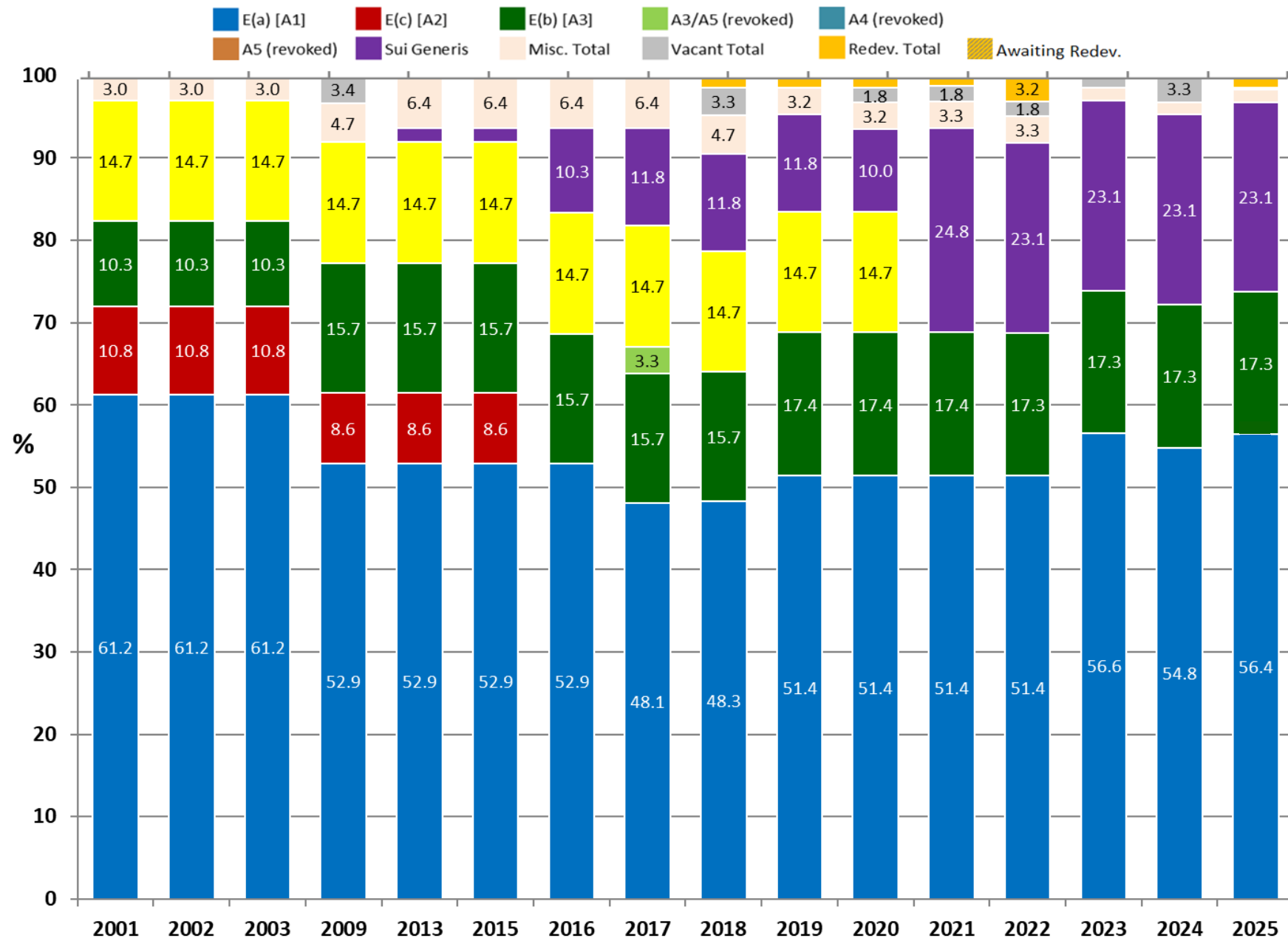


Fig. 8.c: Hatch frontages: Indicators for year-on-year changes in percentage points for Use Class proportions, 2001 to 2025⁴

	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2009	2009 - 2013	2013 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025		
E(a) [A1]	➡	➡	⬇	➡	➡	➡	⬇	➡	⬆	➡	➡	➡	⬆	➡	⬆	E(a) [A1]	
E(c) [A2]	➡	➡	⬇	➡	➡	⬇⓪	No frontage										E(c) [A2]
E(b) [A3]	➡	➡	⬆	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	⬆	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	E(b) [A3]	
[A3/A5]	No frontage						⓪⬆	⬇⓪	No frontage		Classes revoked						[A3/A5]
[A5]	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡								
S. Generis	No frontage			⓪⬆	➡	⬆	⬆	➡	➡	➡	⬆	⬆	➡	➡	➡	S. Generis	
Misc.	➡	➡	⬆	⬆	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	➡	Misc.	
Vacant	No frontage		⓪⬆	⬇⓪	No frontage			⓪⬆	⬇⓪	⬆	➡	➡	⬆	⬆	⬇	Vacant	
Redev't.	No frontage							⓪⬆	➡	➡	➡	⬆	⬇⓪	No frontage	⓪⬆	Redev't.	

Key:

↑ +2 or more percentage points ↗ +0.2 to +1.9 → -0.1 to +0.1 ↘ -0.2 to -1.9 ↓ -2 or less

The Vacant frontage arrow colours are reversed (green being more and red being less) to reflect lower vacancy being better. The Redevelopment frontage arrows have a neutral brown colour.

⁴ The changes for 2003 - 2009, 2009 - 2013 and 2013 - 2015 are not year-on-year due to lack of data for the interim years.

The UCO changes resulted in an increase in E(b) between 2020 and 2021, but some other minor decreases meant the net result was little/no change.

Most of 2020 - 2021 increase in Sui Generis was due to the UCO changes.

Area

- 8.1 As explained previously, the area classed as Hatch frontage is based on the frontage designation in the former Local Plan (2006). While the current Local Plan (2020) does not designate Hatch frontages, this Study continues to monitor the historic designation for monitoring purposes.
- 8.2 The Hatch frontages, based on the former Local Plan (2006) designations, comprise the frontage of the units in:
- Burgoyne Hatch
 - Cawley Hatch
 - Colt Hatch
 - Fishers Hatch
 - Mill Hatch
 - Prentice Place Hatch
 - Slacksbury Hatch
- 8.3 In Hatches which had a designation, units such as pubs and community centres were not part of the designated retail frontage so were not audited. This also applies to Hatches which never had a designation.
- 8.4 The current use of these Hatches is shown on maps in the appendices. They do not, however, show the frontage marked on the maps given it is an old designation.
- 8.5 Hatches with fewer than five units were not designated in the former Local Plan (2006). However, these are still monitored for completeness and maps showing the current use of units in these Hatches are provided in the appendices. They are not, however, included in the data for Hatch frontage.

2024 vs 2025

- 8.6 The only changes recorded were a notable drop in Vacant frontage and resulting minor increase in E(a) and 'Redevelopment' frontages
- 8.7 The proportion of Vacant frontage is 0.2%; the lowest level since 2019.

General Commentary

- 8.8 The Hatches have consistently performed well, with very low rates of Vacant frontage. The lack of changes shows the Hatches continue to perform well and be relatively robust against national changes in retail habits, the aftermath of the pandemic, high energy prices and recent high inflation.
- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 New permitted developments were introduced in 2013 which allow greater flexibility of changes-of-use for retail units. These new permitted development rights appear to have had little impact on the Hatch frontages.
- 8.11 Over the last 20 years the proportion of E(a) [formerly A1] frontage declined but increased again, while E(b) [formerly A3] increased in the 2000s and levelled off. There was also an increase in Sui Generis frontage but this has also levelled off

(the sudden increase in 2021 is due to the UCO changes). E(c) [formerly A2] declined in 2016 to 0% and there has been no E(c) frontage since.

- 8.12 Between 2003 and 2009, there was a notable decrease in the proportion of E(a) frontage, as well as a small decrease in E(c) usage. The only usage proportion which increased was E(b).
- 8.13 Between 2009 and 2013, the frontage which had become vacant between 2003 and 2009 was brought back into use as E(g) [formerly B1] and Sui Generis uses, resulting in no Vacant frontage. In 2016, a notable increase in the proportion of Sui Generis frontage was experienced. This was offset by decreases in the proportions of E(a) and E(c) frontage.
- 8.14 During the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national restrictions on retail between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches would have proved important to many residents who were avoiding travelling far for their routine shopping.
- 8.15 The changes experienced between 2020 and 2021 were mostly due to the UCO changes and the way uses are recorded. There was not a notable change experienced in the frontages between 2021 and 2022, aside from a minor reduction in Sui Generis frontage and a resulting minor increase in frontage undergoing redevelopment.
- 8.16 There were only a small number of minor changes between 2022 and 2023, including a redeveloped unit and a vacant unit coming back into E(a) use, along with an E(g) unit changing to E(a) use. This caused small changes in the proportions of E(a), E(g) and Vacant frontages.
- 8.17 The only notable change between 2023 and 2024 related to one unit which was in E(a) use and became vacant, causing a small decrease in E(a) frontage and small increase in Vacant frontage.

Total recorded Hatch frontage length (based on former Local Plan (2006) designation): 295m

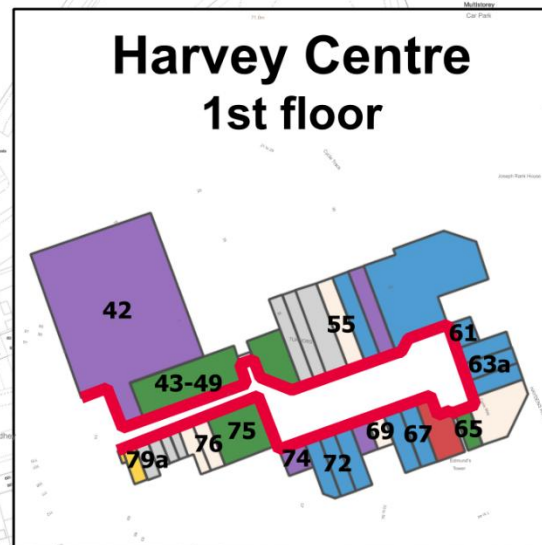
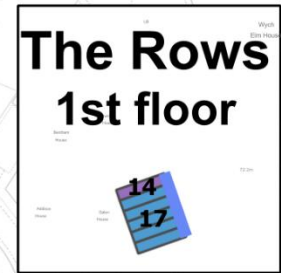
Appendix 1:

Maps of Town Centre

(2025 & earlier)

TOWN CENTRE

2025



Legend

Frontage types

-  E(a) [formerly A1]
 E(c) [formerly A2]
 E(b) [formerly A3]
 Sui Generis
 Other
 Vacant
 Undergoing redevelopment
 Awaiting redevelopment
 No record

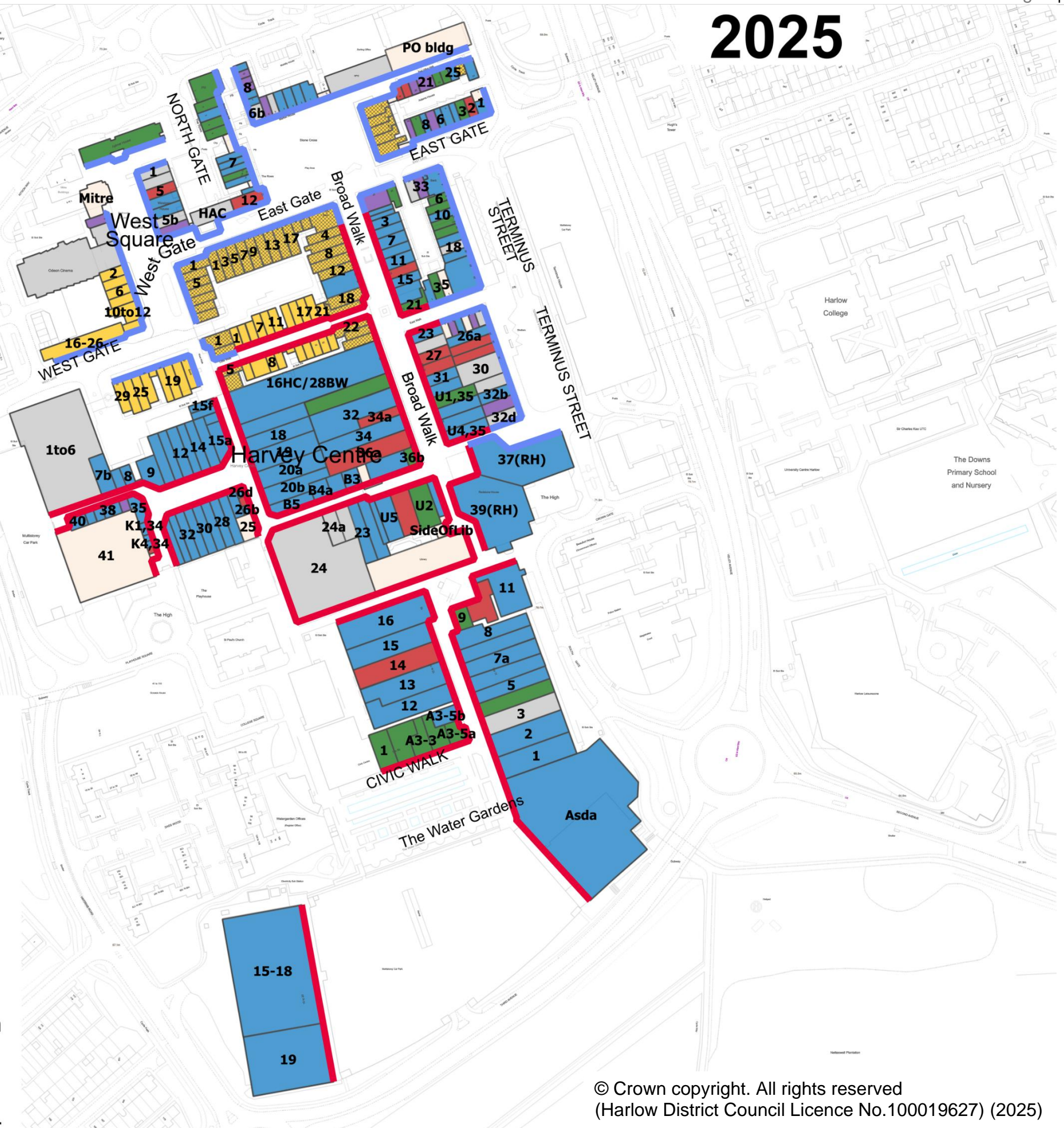
- Primary
— Secondary

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



0 50 100 m

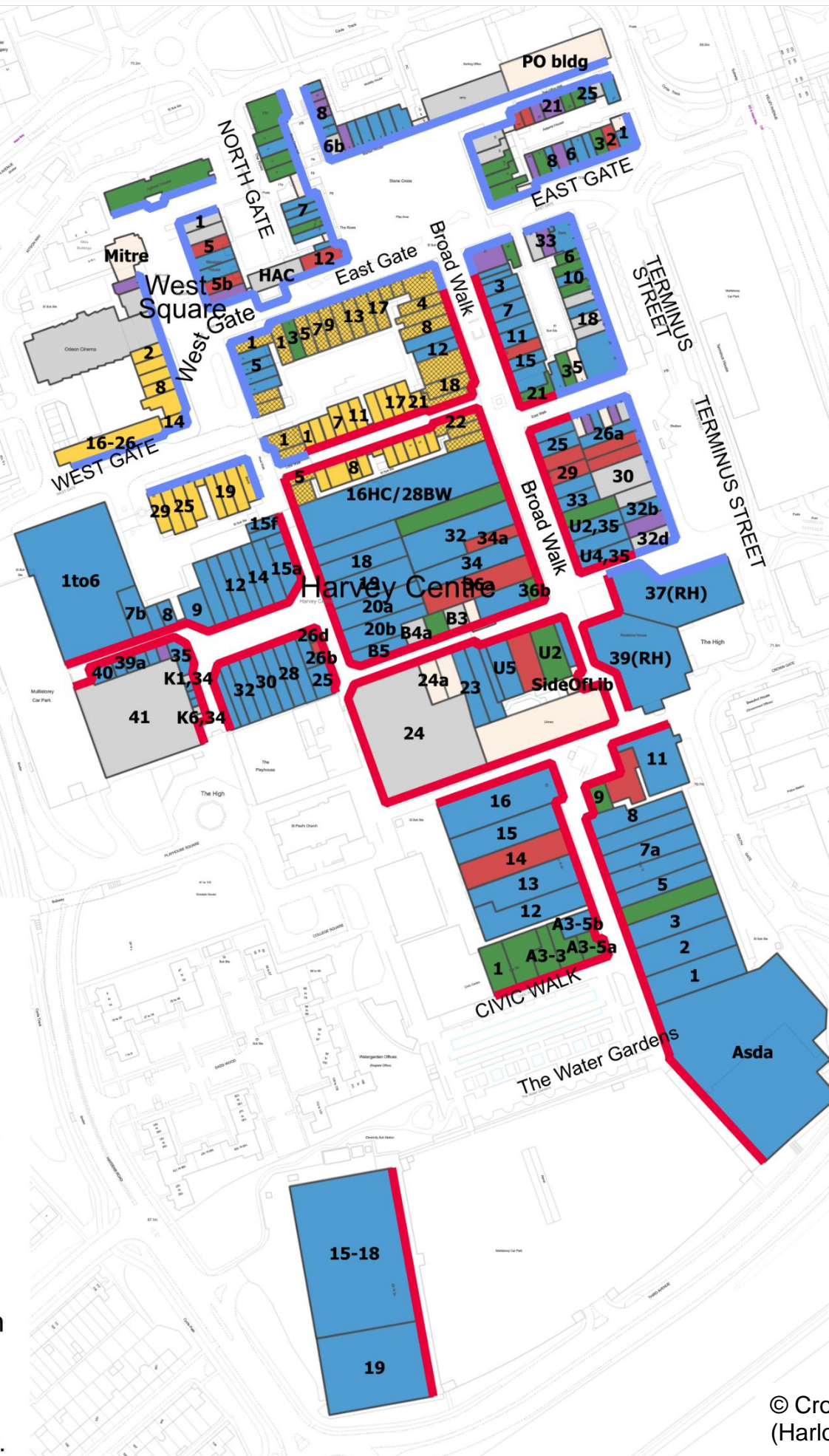
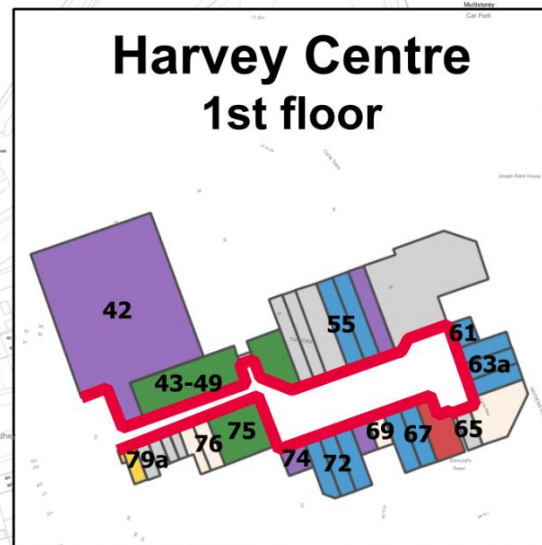
For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



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TOWN CENTRE

2024



Legend

Frontage Use

-  E(a) [formerly A1]
 E(c) [formerly A2]
 E(b) [formerly A3]
 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.

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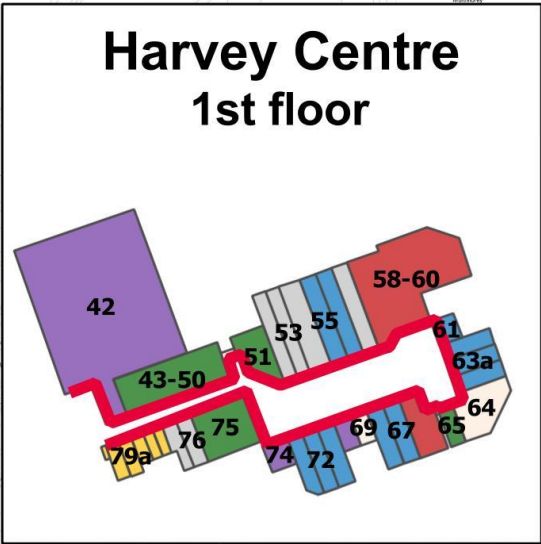
TOWN CENTRE

2023

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

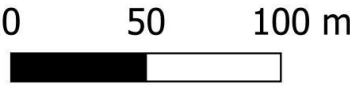
Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

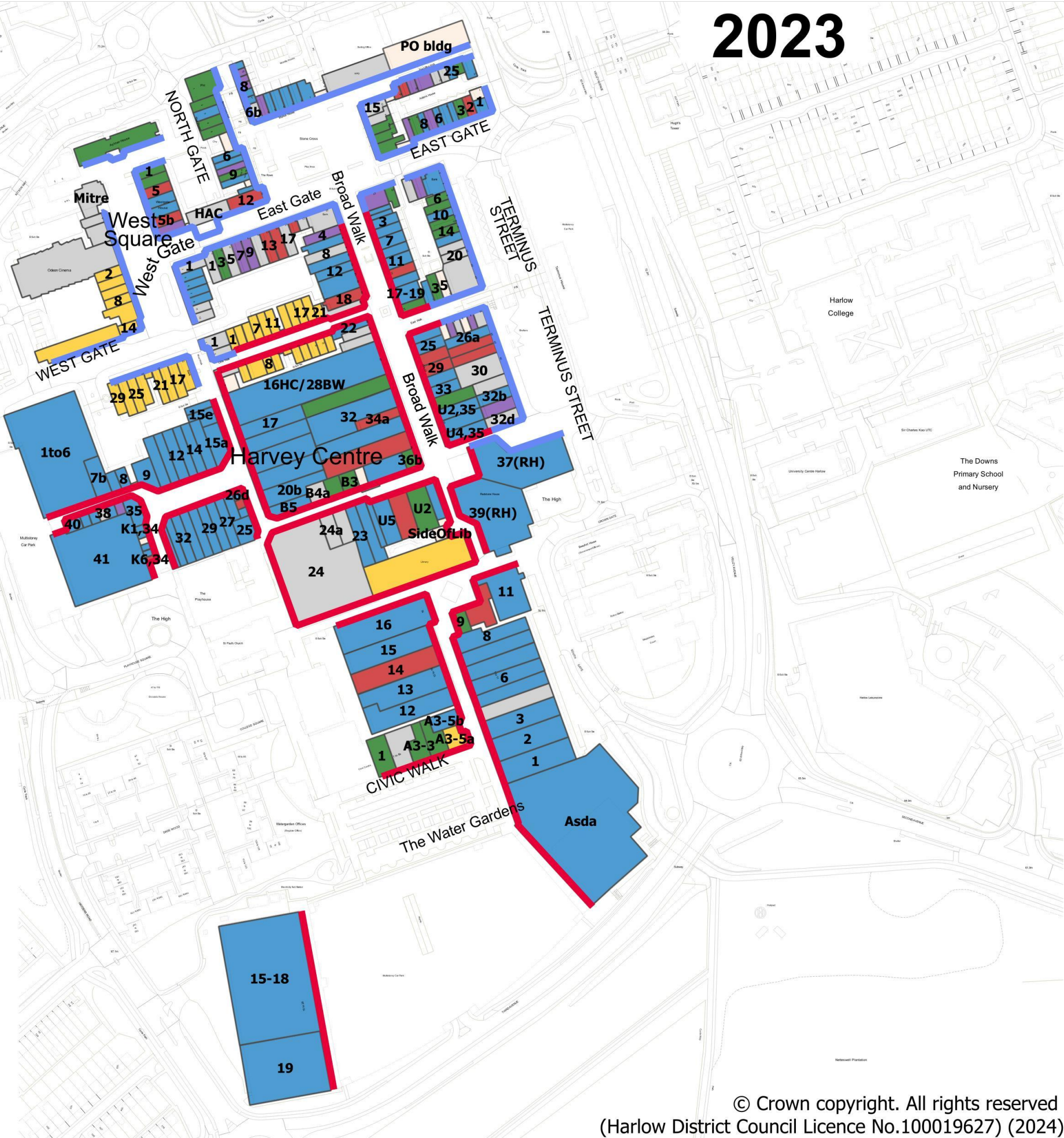
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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

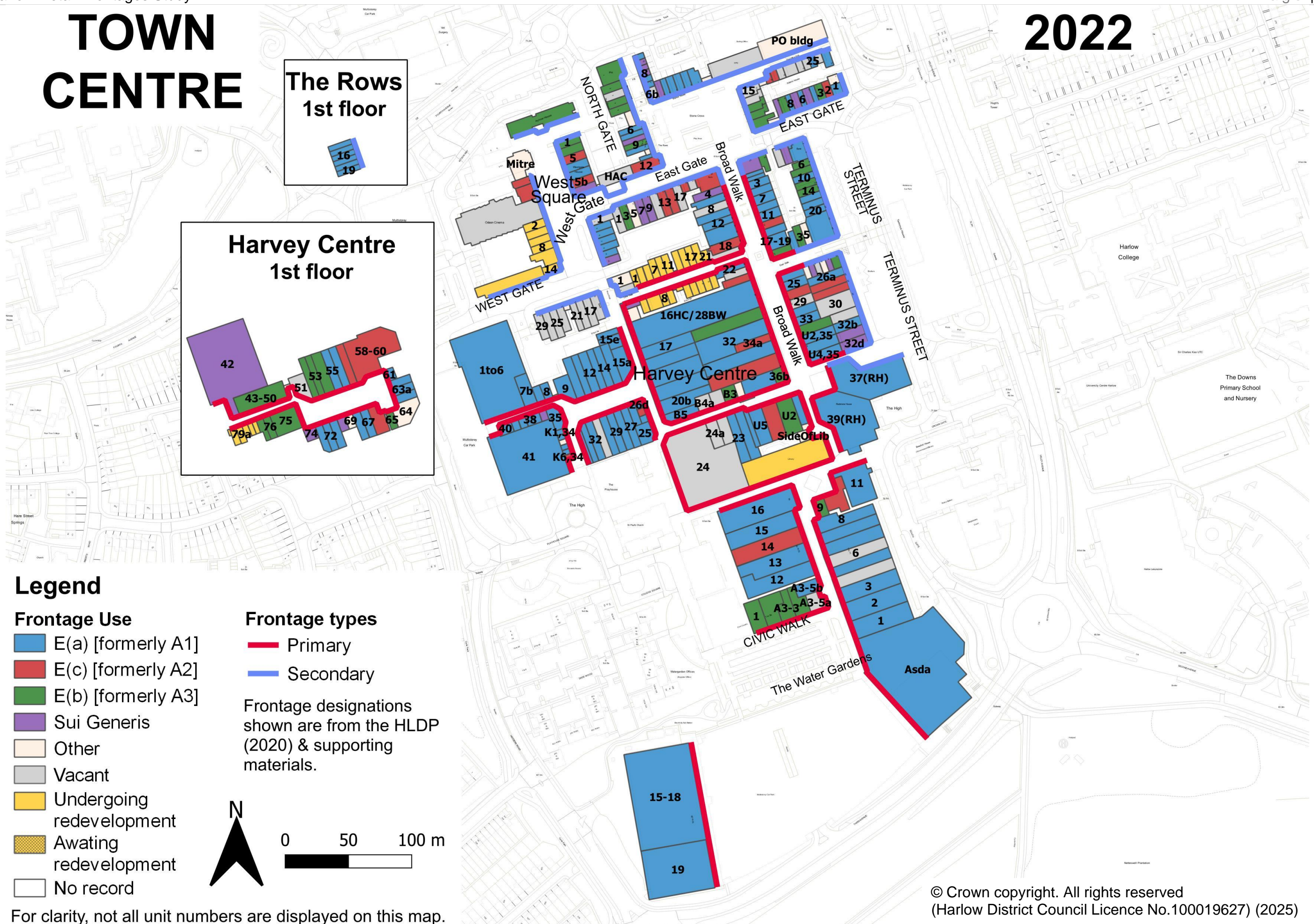


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE


2022




TOWN CENTRE

2021

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



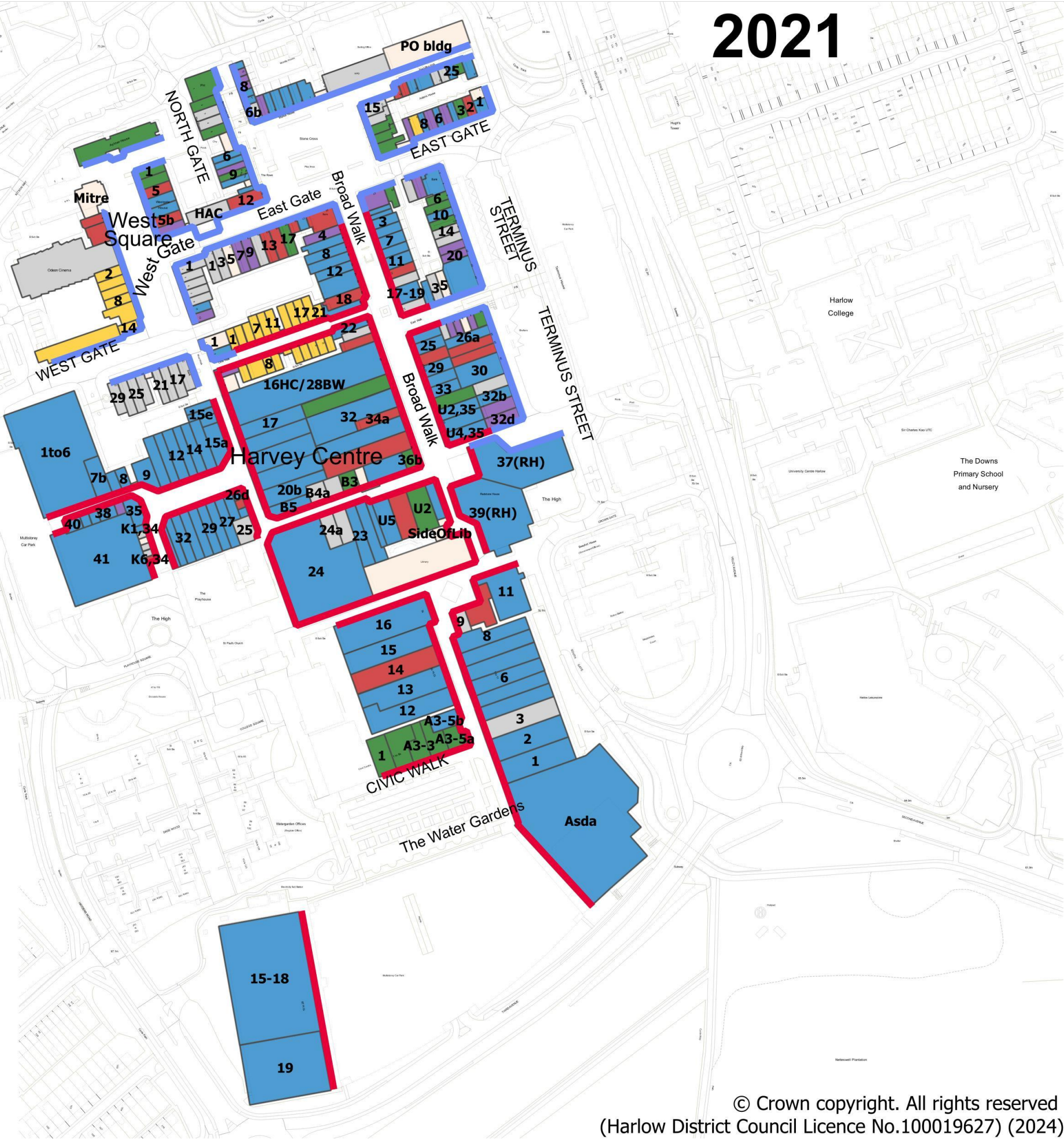
Legend

- Frontage Use**
- E(a) [formerly A1]
 - E(c) [formerly A2]
 - E(b) [formerly A3]
 - 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

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

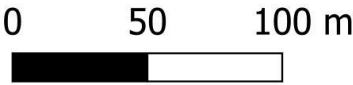
Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

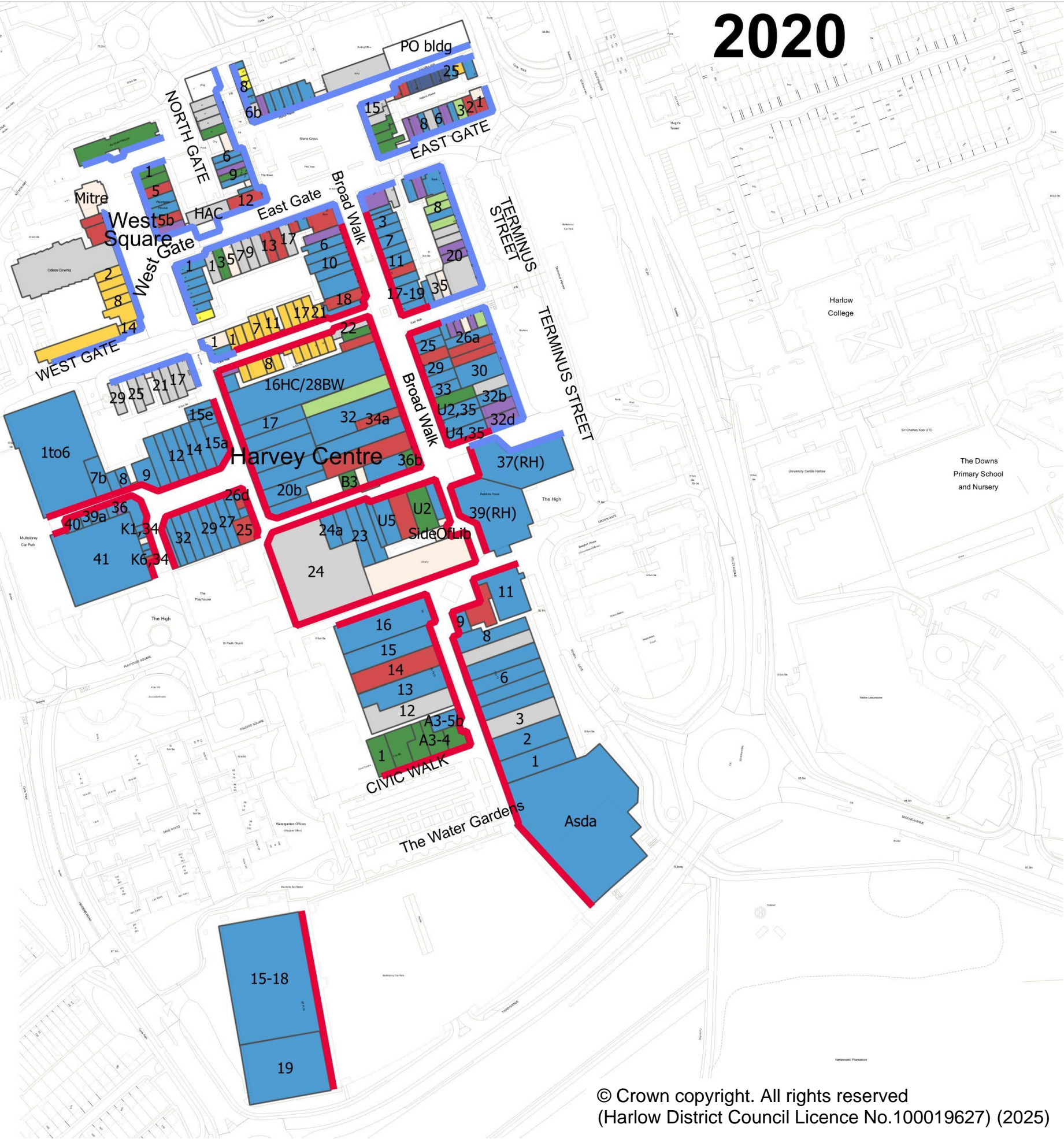
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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

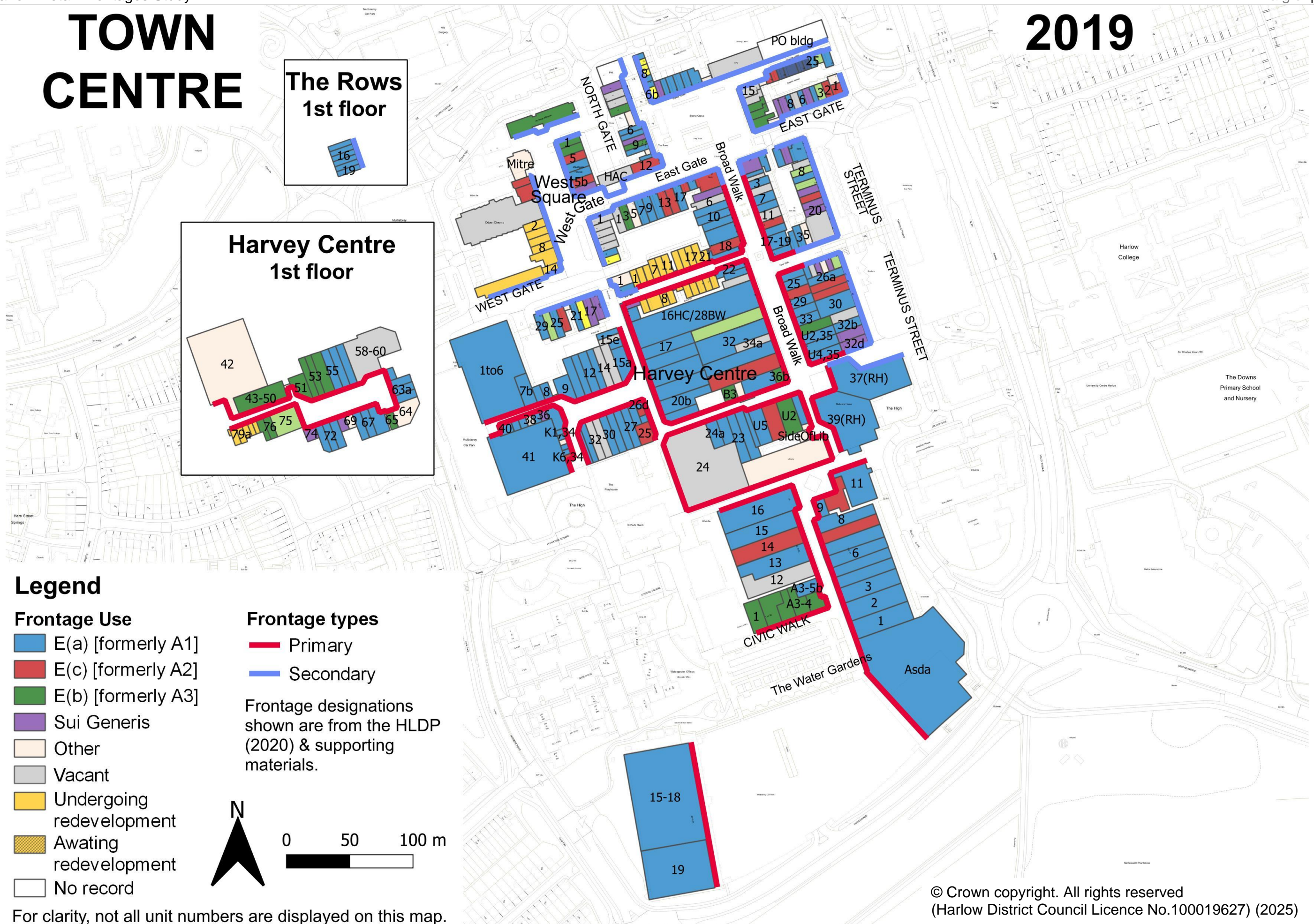


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE


2019




TOWN CENTRE

2018

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

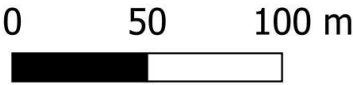
Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

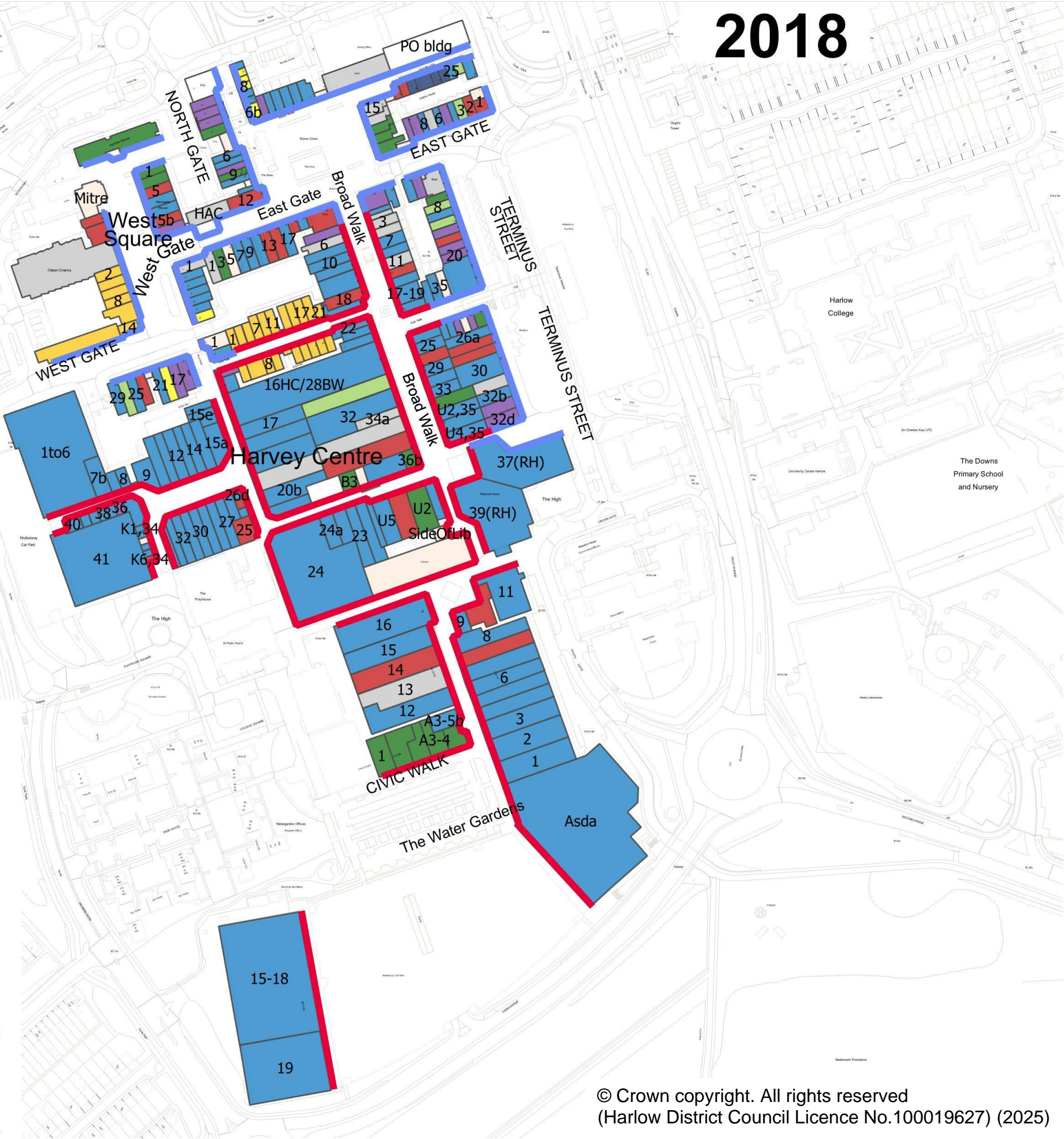
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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



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



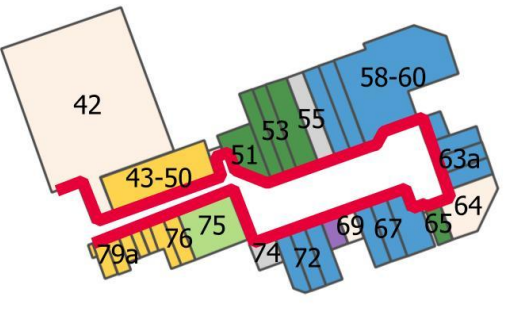
2017 Jul

TOWN CENTRE

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awating redevelopment
- No record

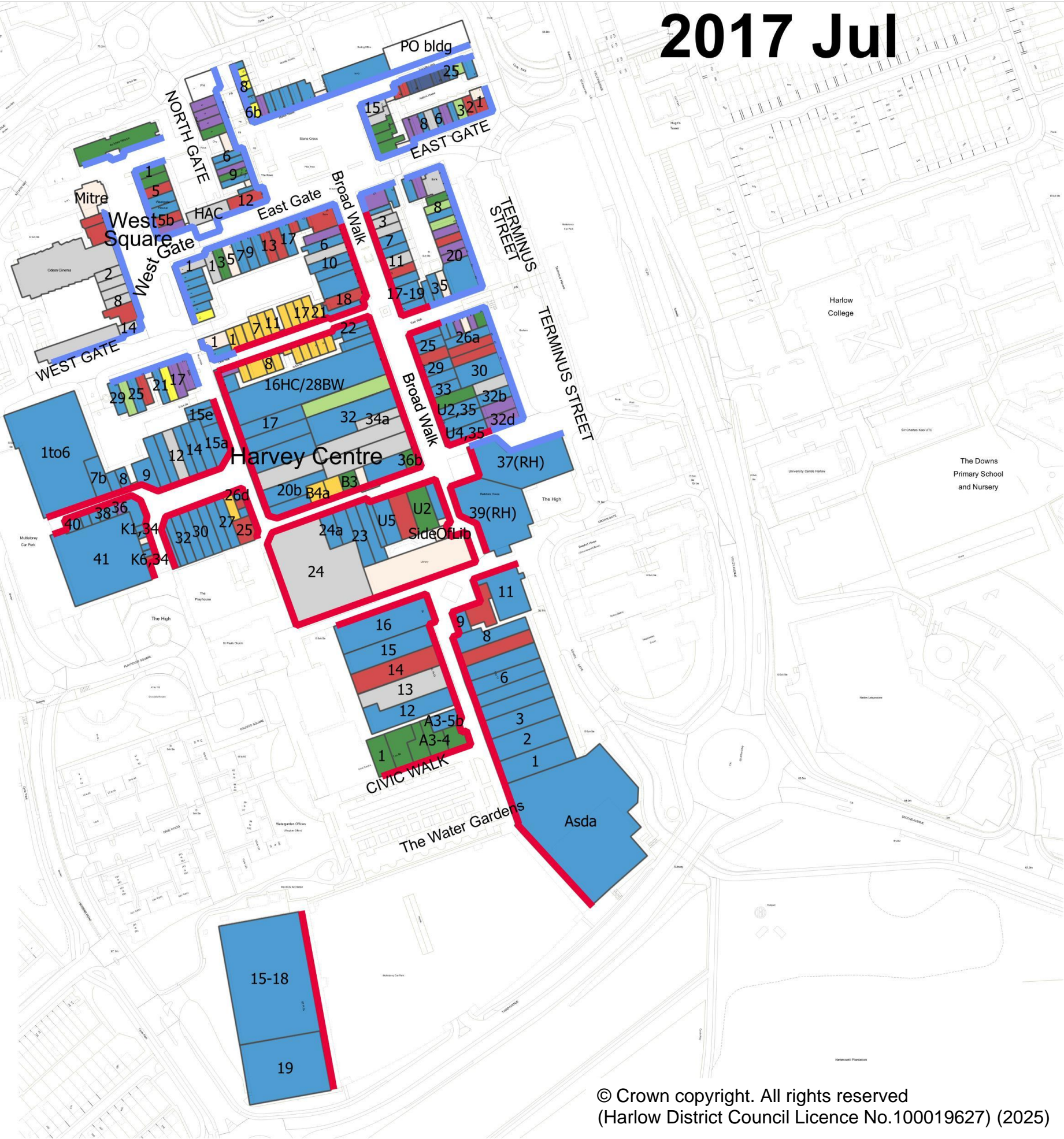
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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



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



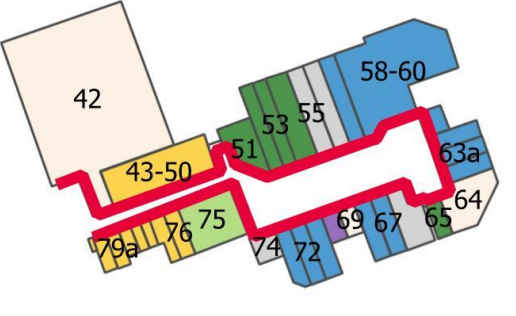
TOWN CENTRE

2017

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**

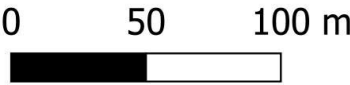


Legend

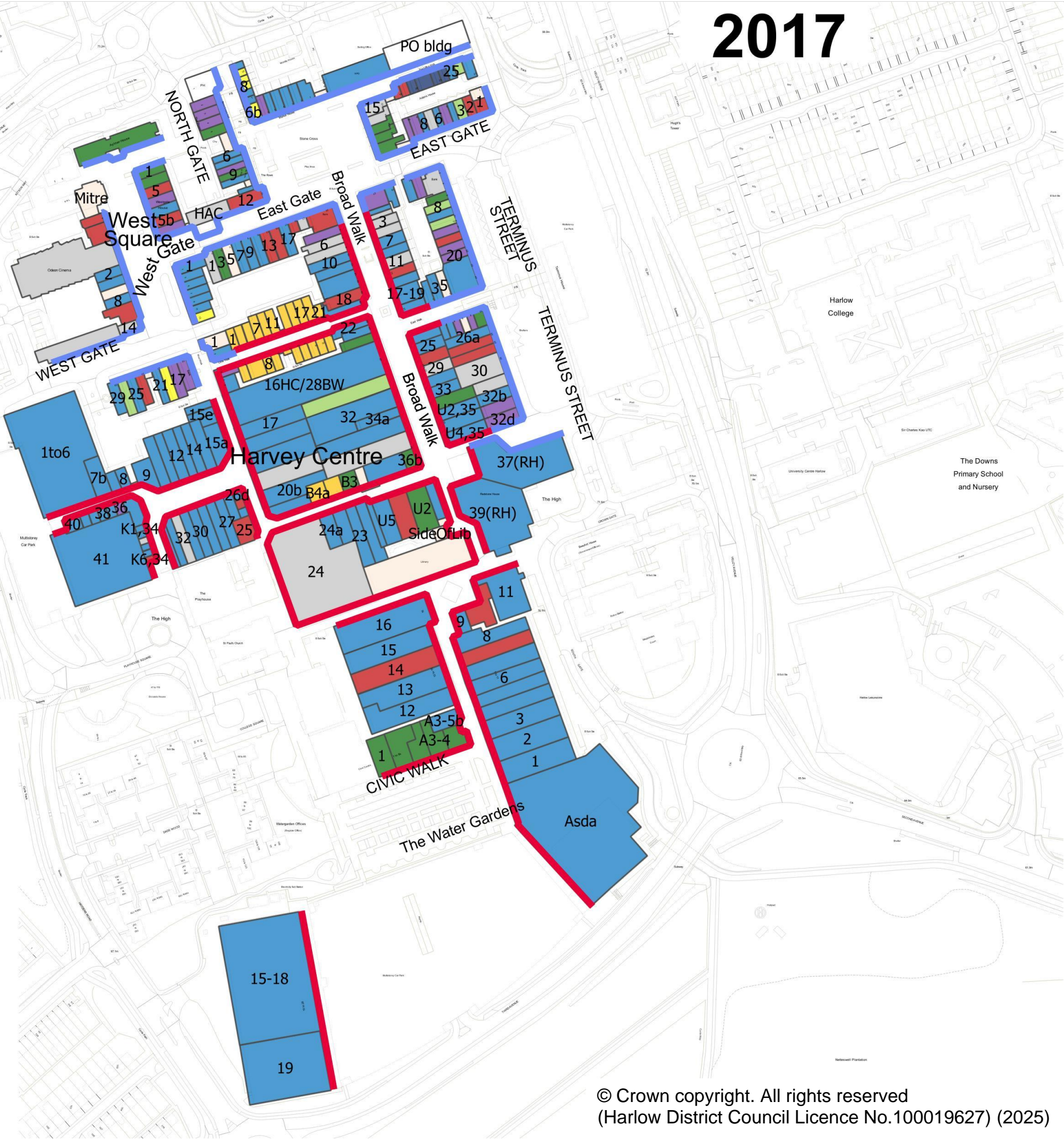
- Frontage Use**
- E(a) [formerly A1]
 - E(c) [formerly A2]
 - E(b) [formerly A3]
 - Sui Generis
 - Other
 - Vacant
 - Undergoing redevelopment
 - Awaiting redevelopment
 - No record

- Frontage types**
- Primary
 - Secondary

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

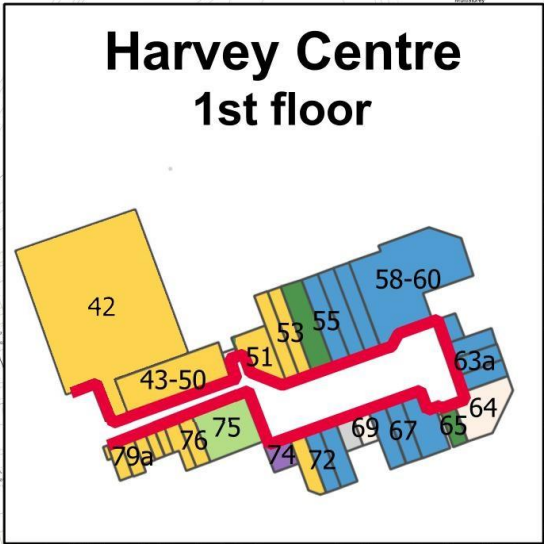
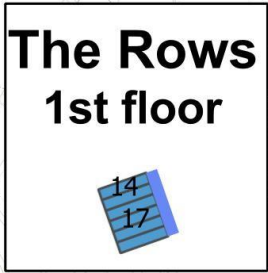


For clarity, not all unit numbers are displayed on this map.



TOWN CENTRE

2016



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

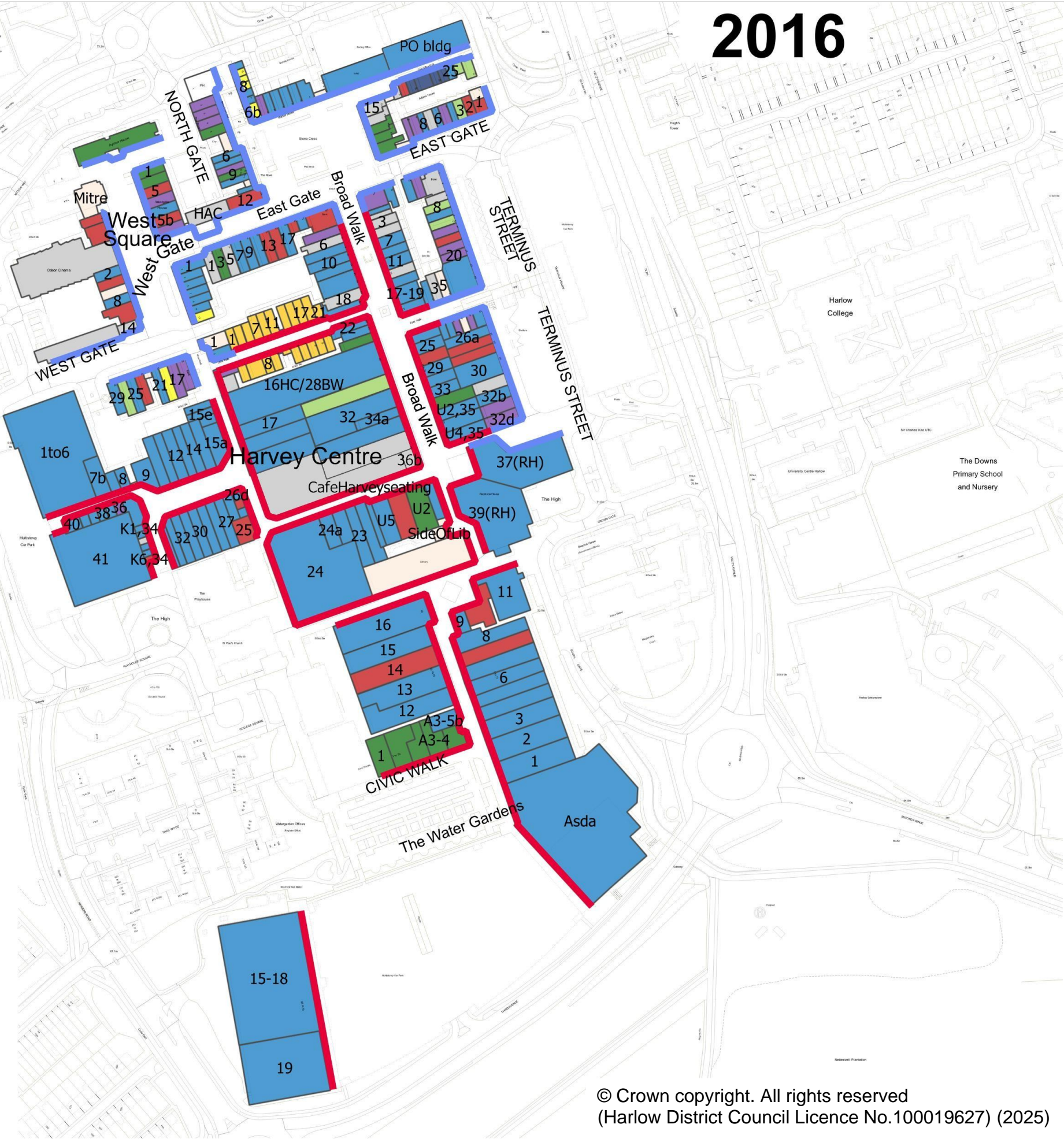
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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




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



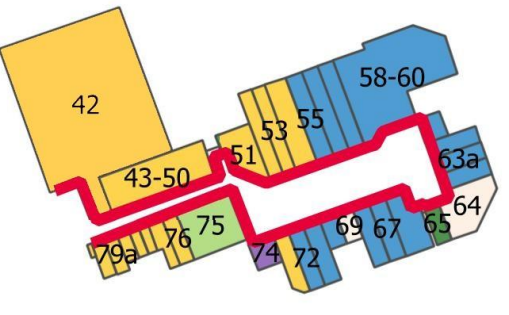
TOWN CENTRE

2015

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

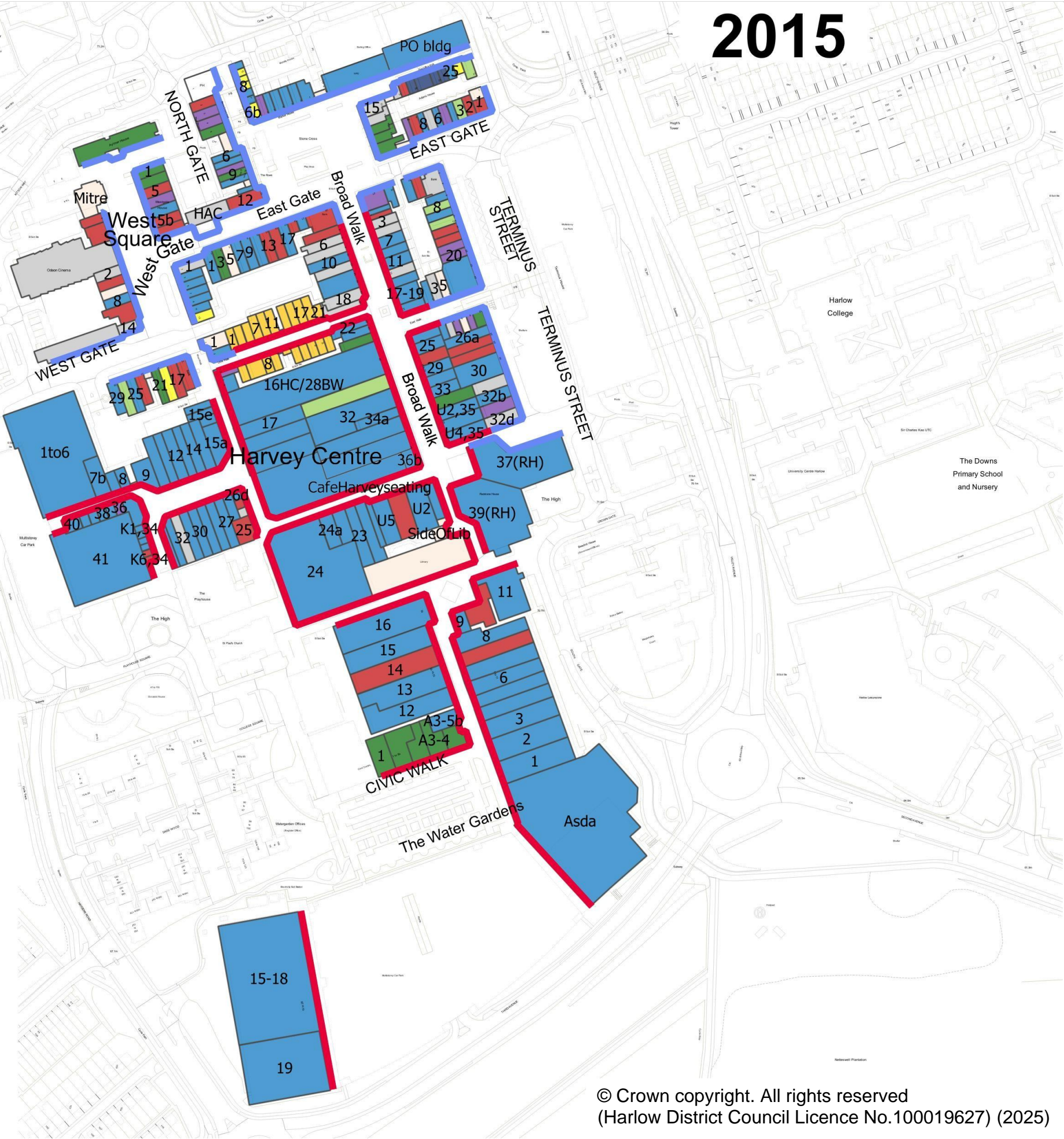
Frontage types

- 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

2014

The Rows 1st floor



Harvey Centre 1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

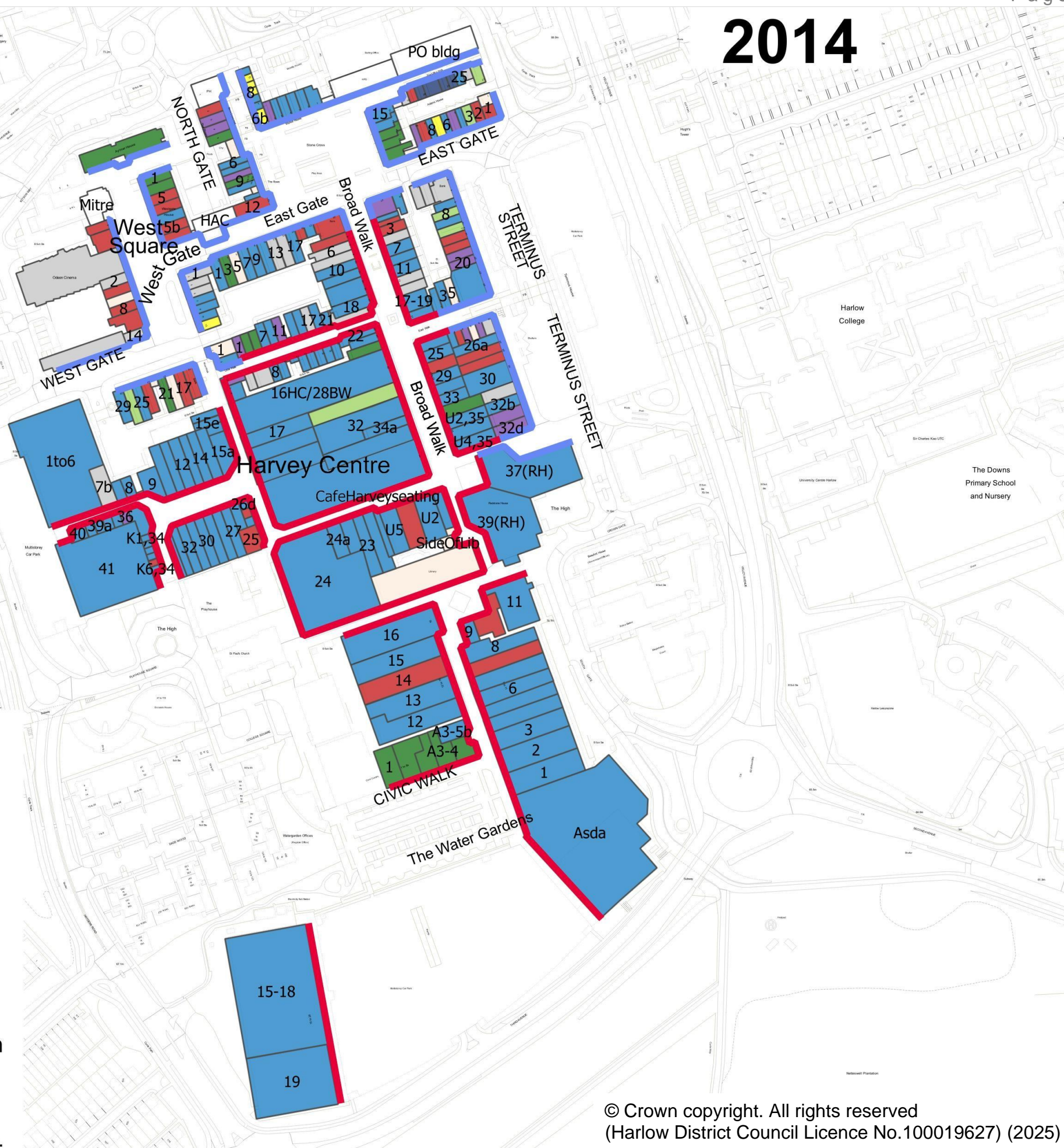
- Primary
- Secondary

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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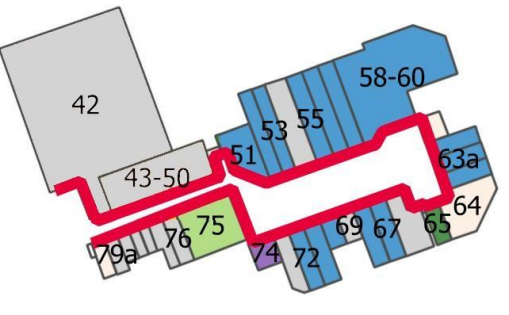
TOWN CENTRE

2013

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

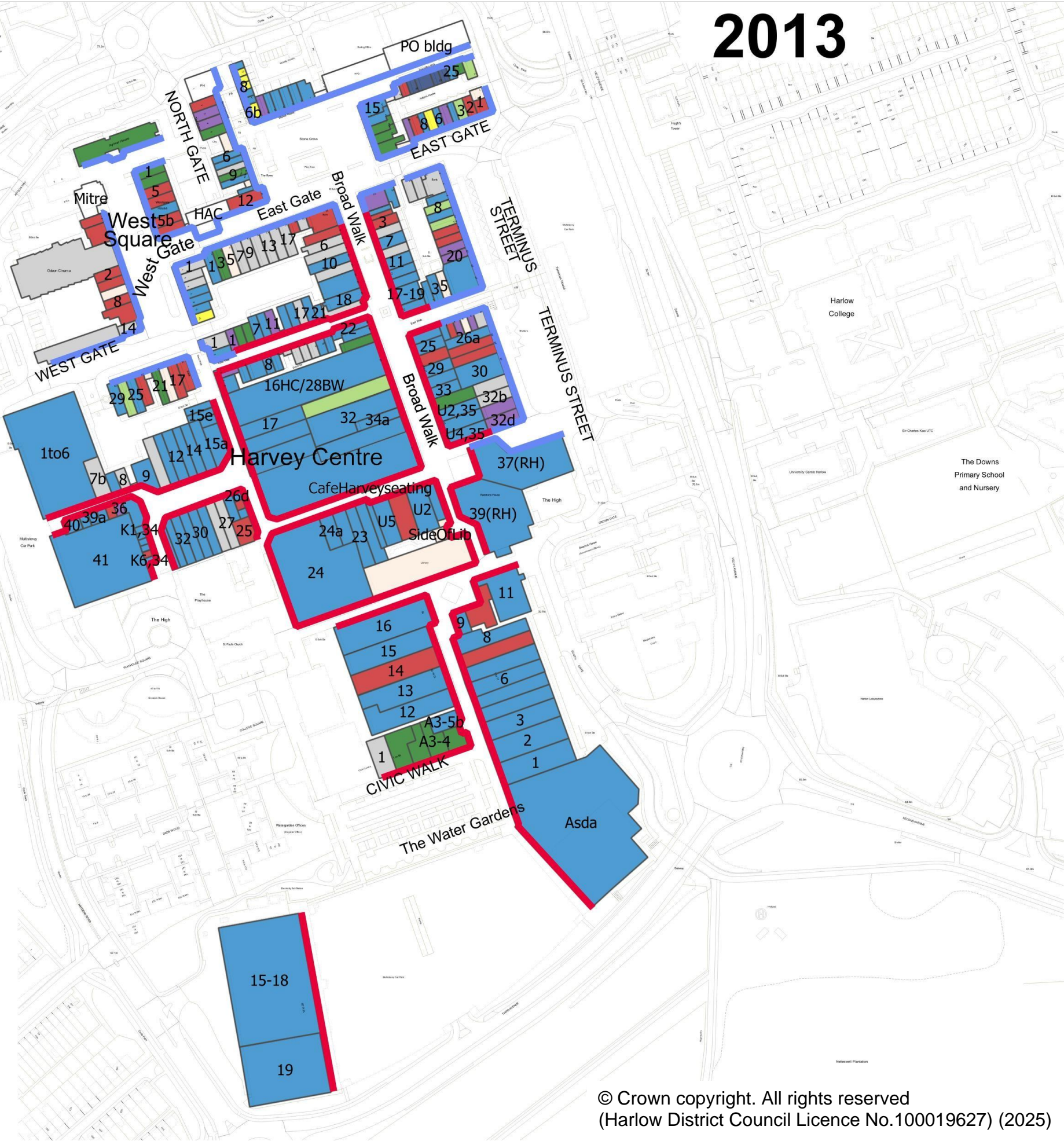
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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




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



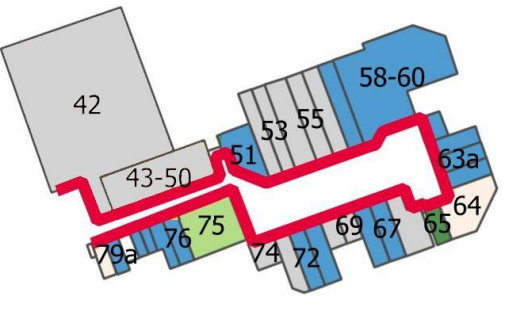
TOWN CENTRE

2009

**The Rows
1st floor**



**Harvey Centre
1st floor**



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

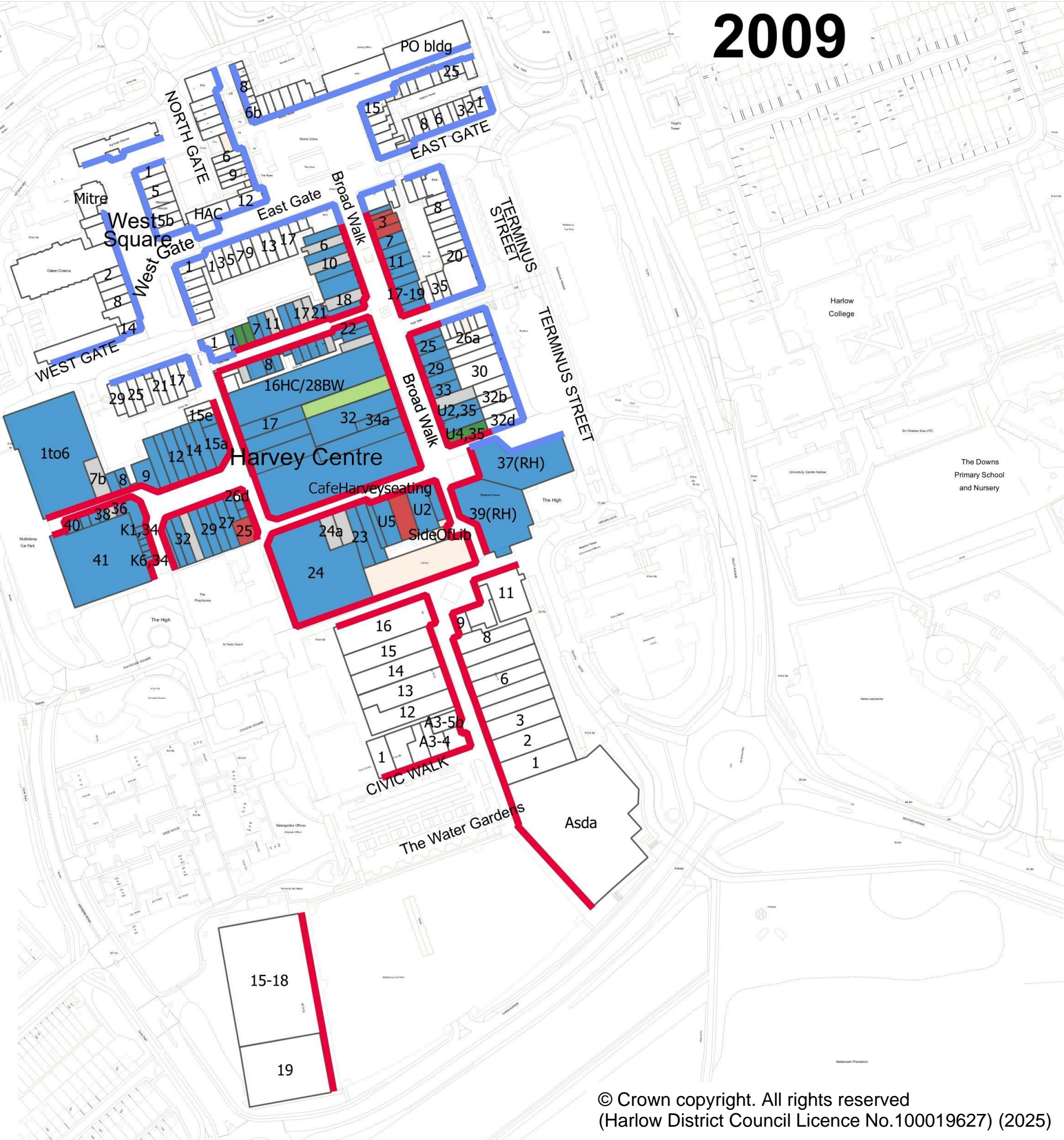
Frontage types

- Primary
- Secondary

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



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



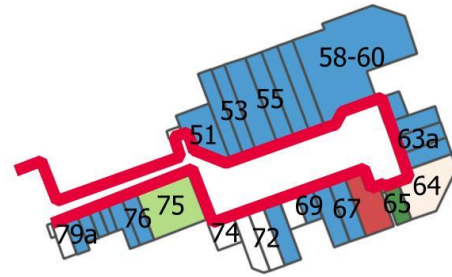
TOWN CENTRE

2003

The Rows 1st floor



Harvey Centre 1st floor



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage types

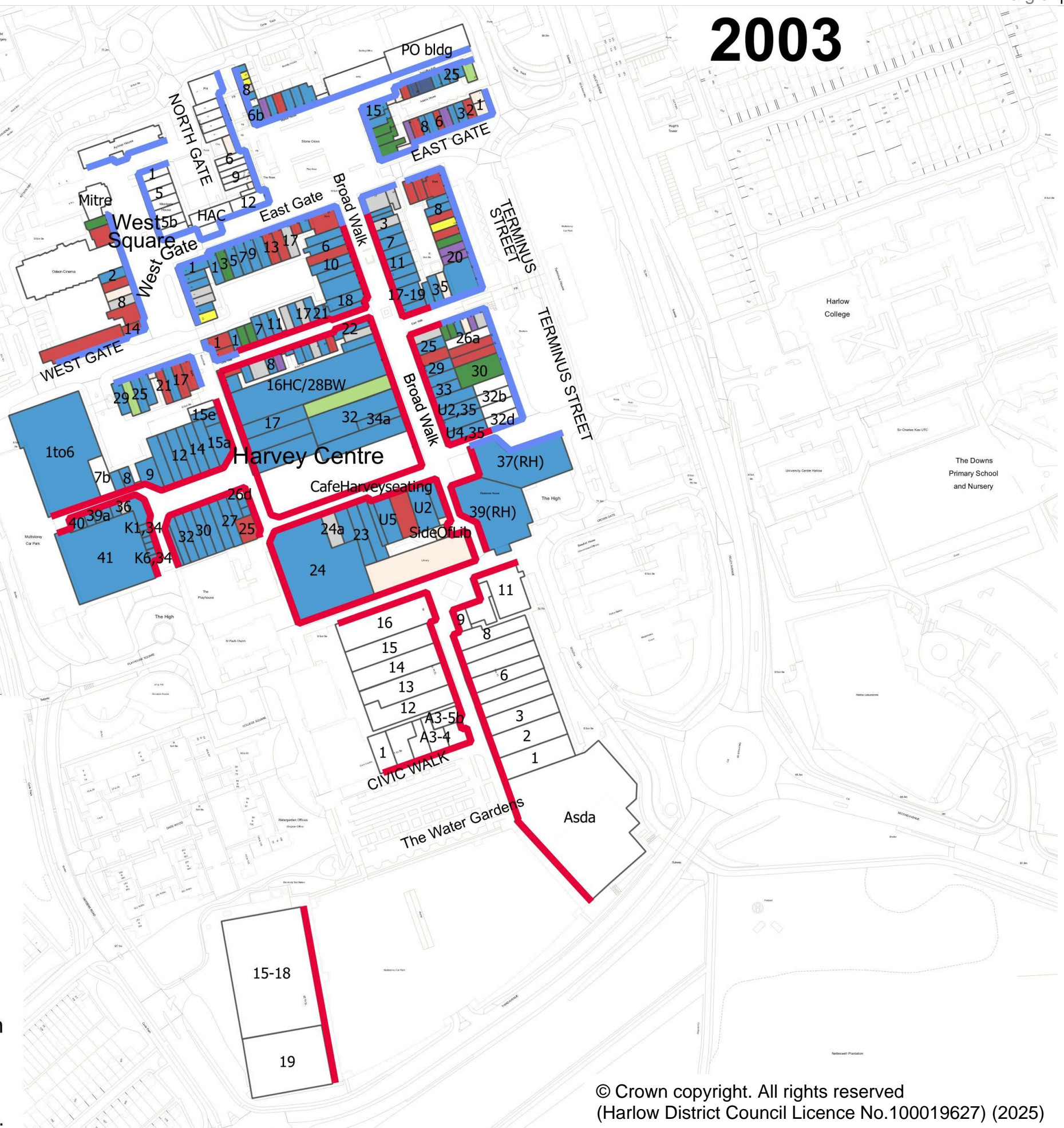
- Primary
- Secondary

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 of Neighbourhood Centres & Hatches (2025)

BUSH FAIR NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2025



CHURCH LANGLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2025

Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage type

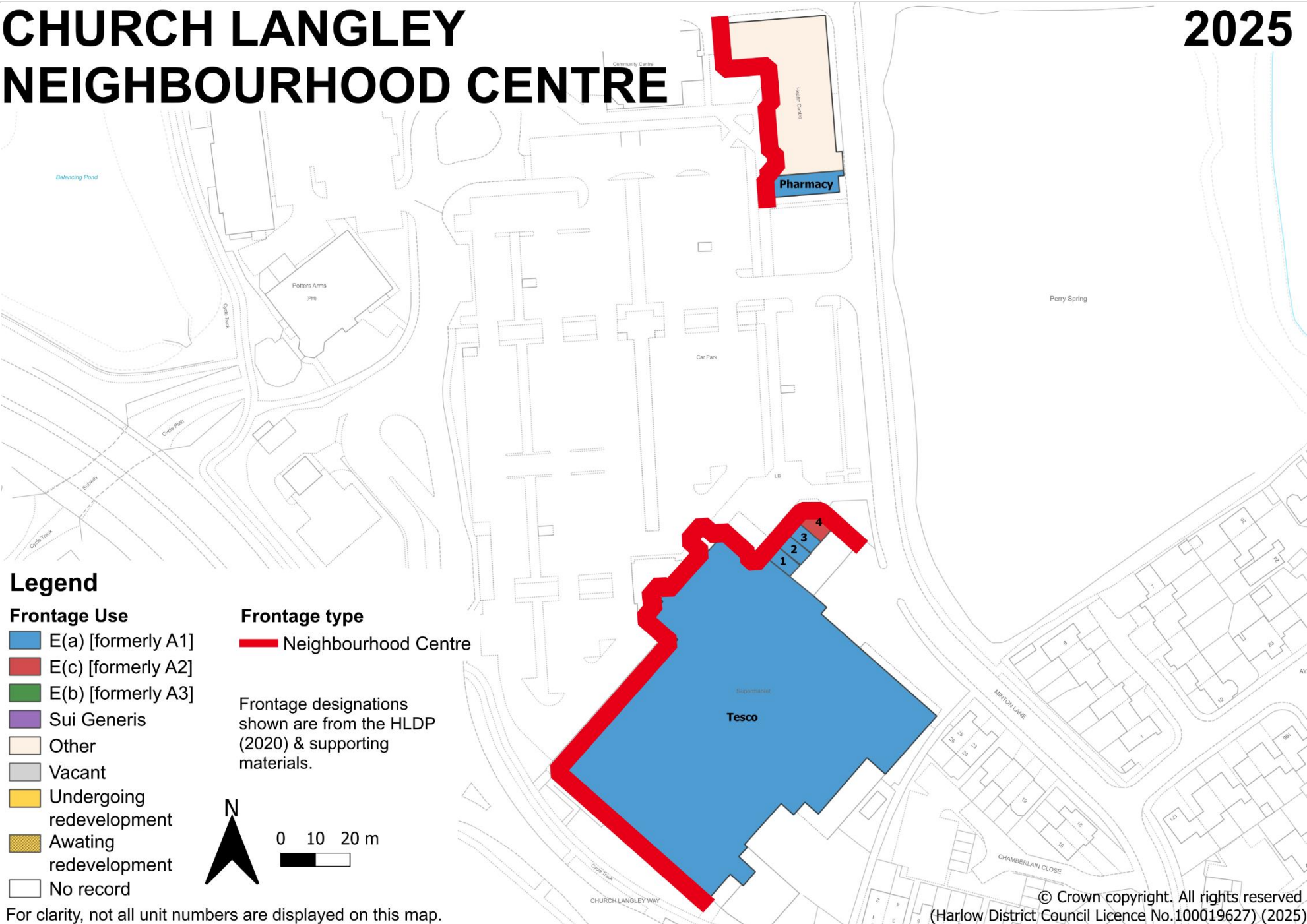
- Neighbourhood Centre

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



0 10 20 m

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



OLD HARLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE 2025



Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Frontage type

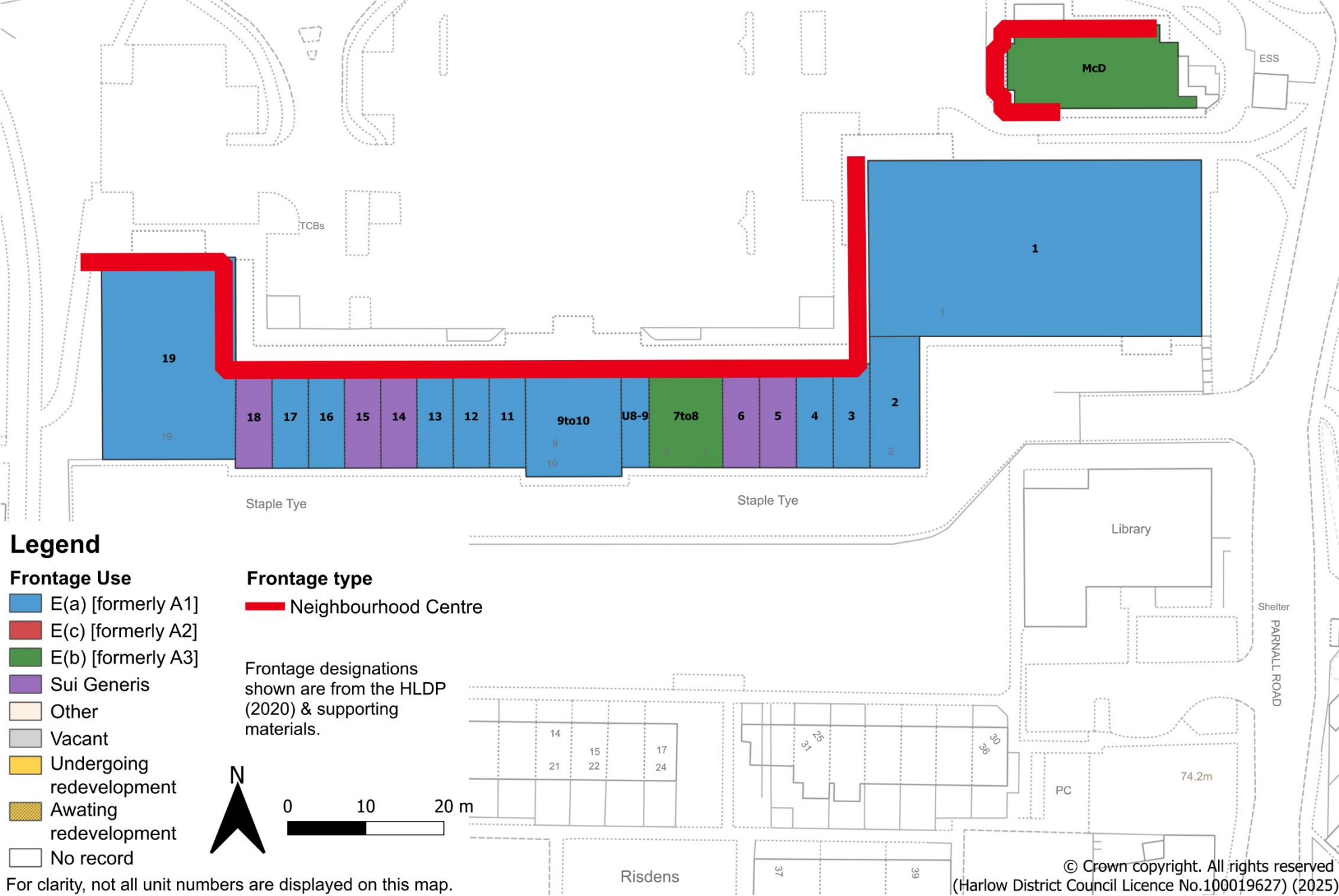
- Neighbourhood Centre

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

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

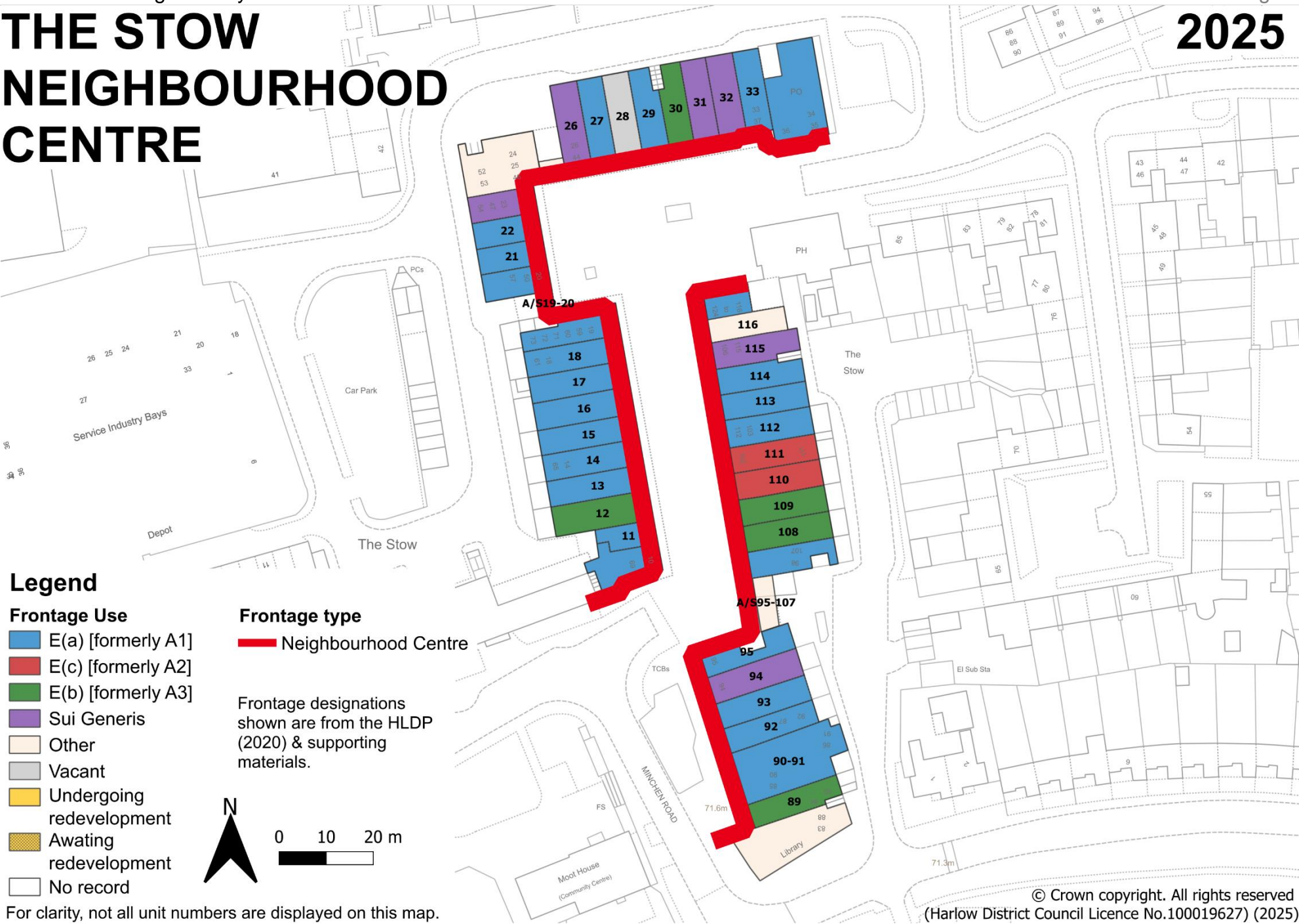
STAPLE TYE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2025



THE STOW NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

2025



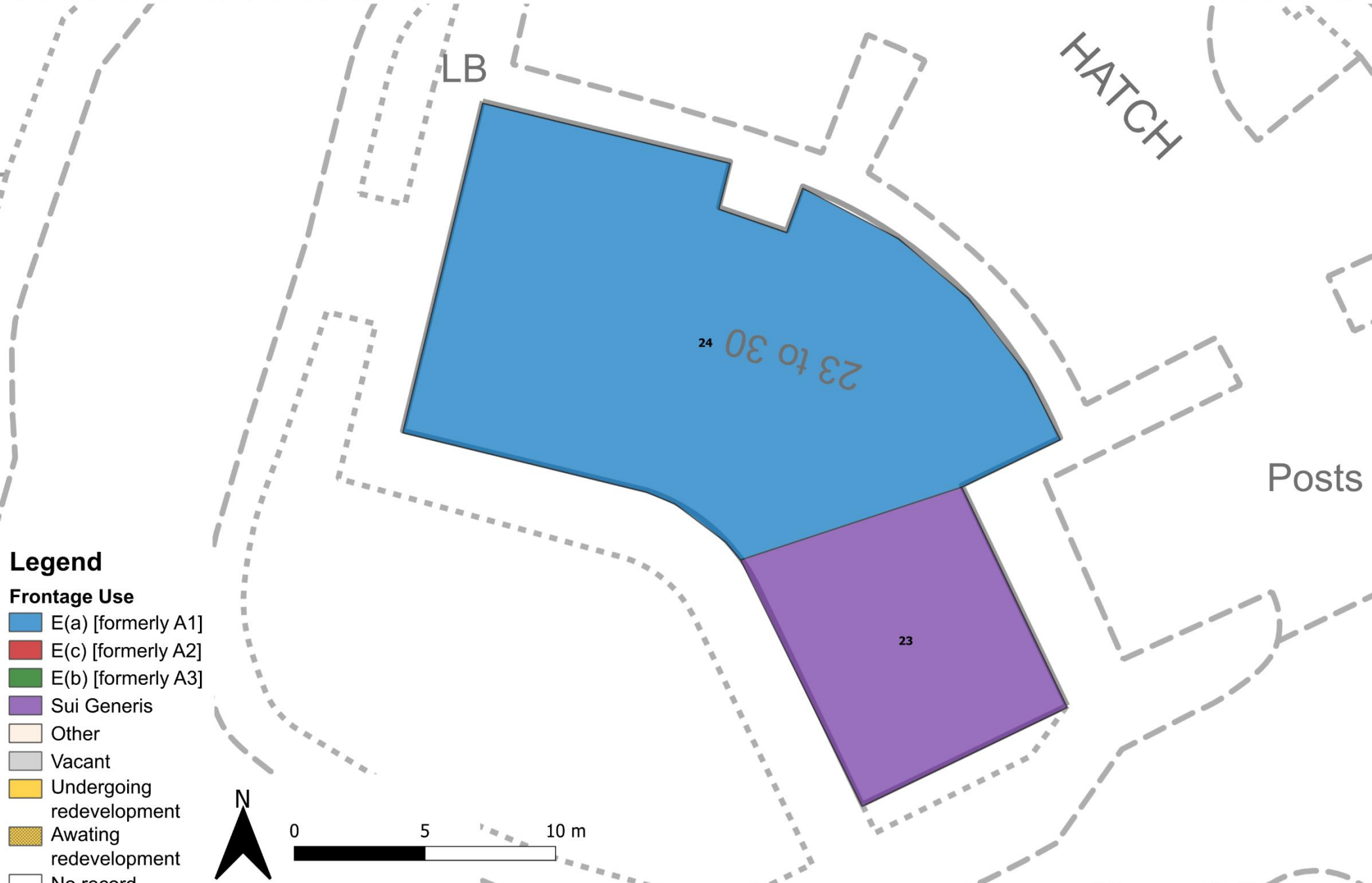
BURGOYNE HATCH

2025



CLIFTON HATCH

2025



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

CAWLEY HATCH

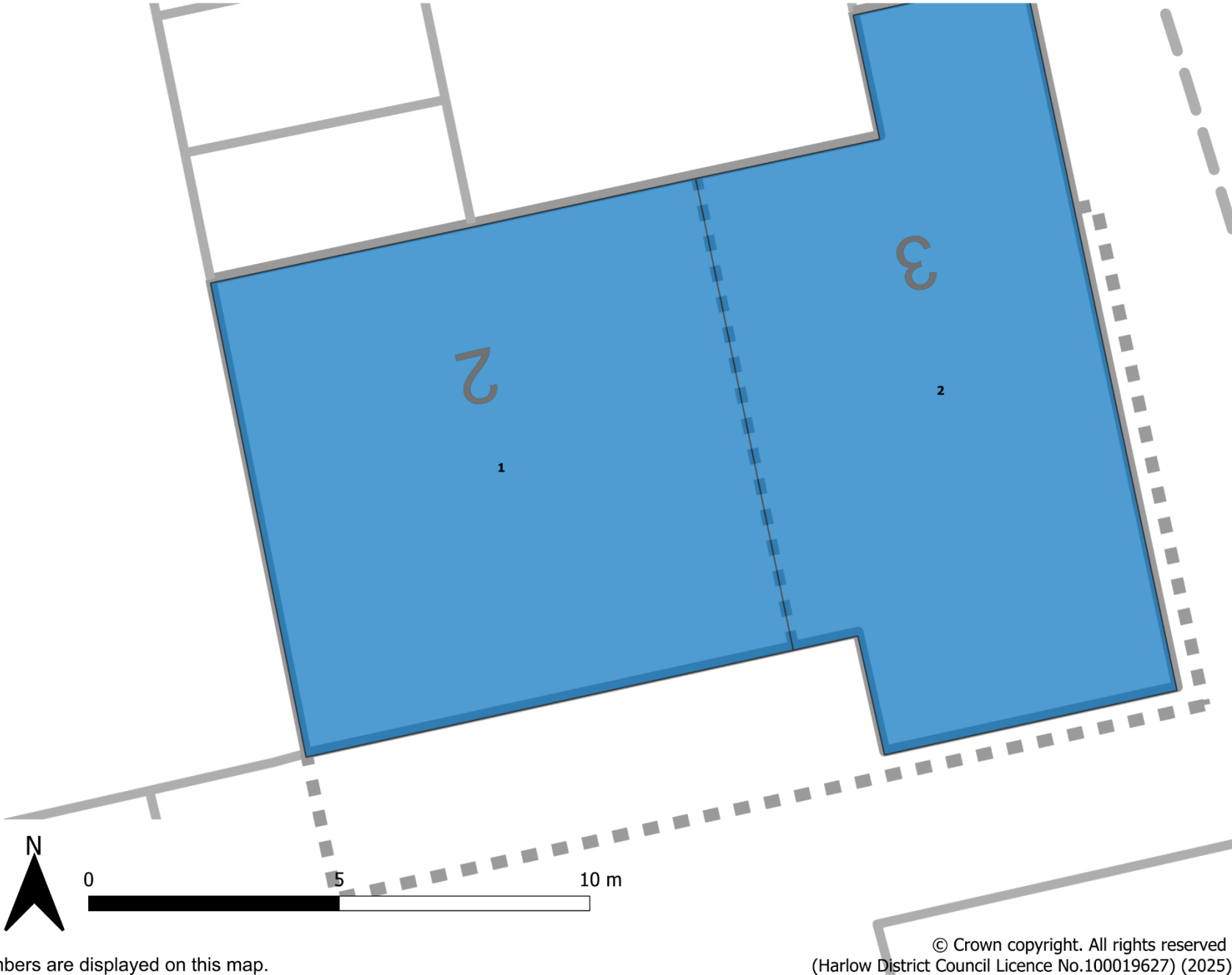
2025

Legend

Frontage Use

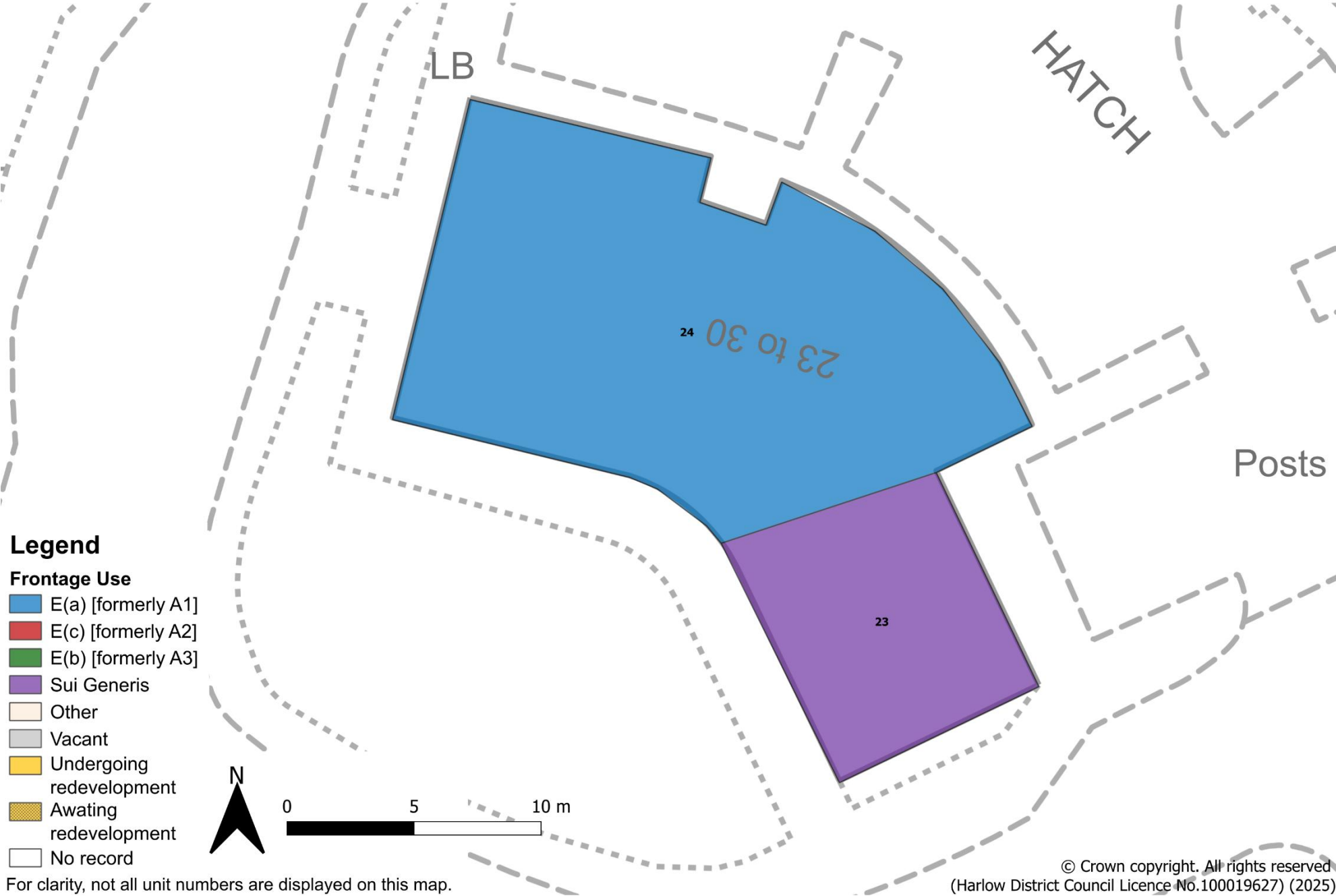
- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

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



CLIFTON HATCH

2025



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

COLT HATCH

2025



COPPICE HATCH

2025



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

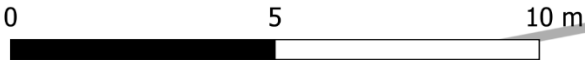
ELM HATCH

2025

Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awating redevelopment
- No record



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



FISHERS HATCH

2025



KATHERINES HATCH

2025

Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record

Katherines Hatch



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

MANOR HATCH

2025

73.2m

Manor Hatch

LB

Legend

Frontage Use

- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record



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

MAUNDS HATCH

2025
TCB

Hatch

Legend

Frontage Use

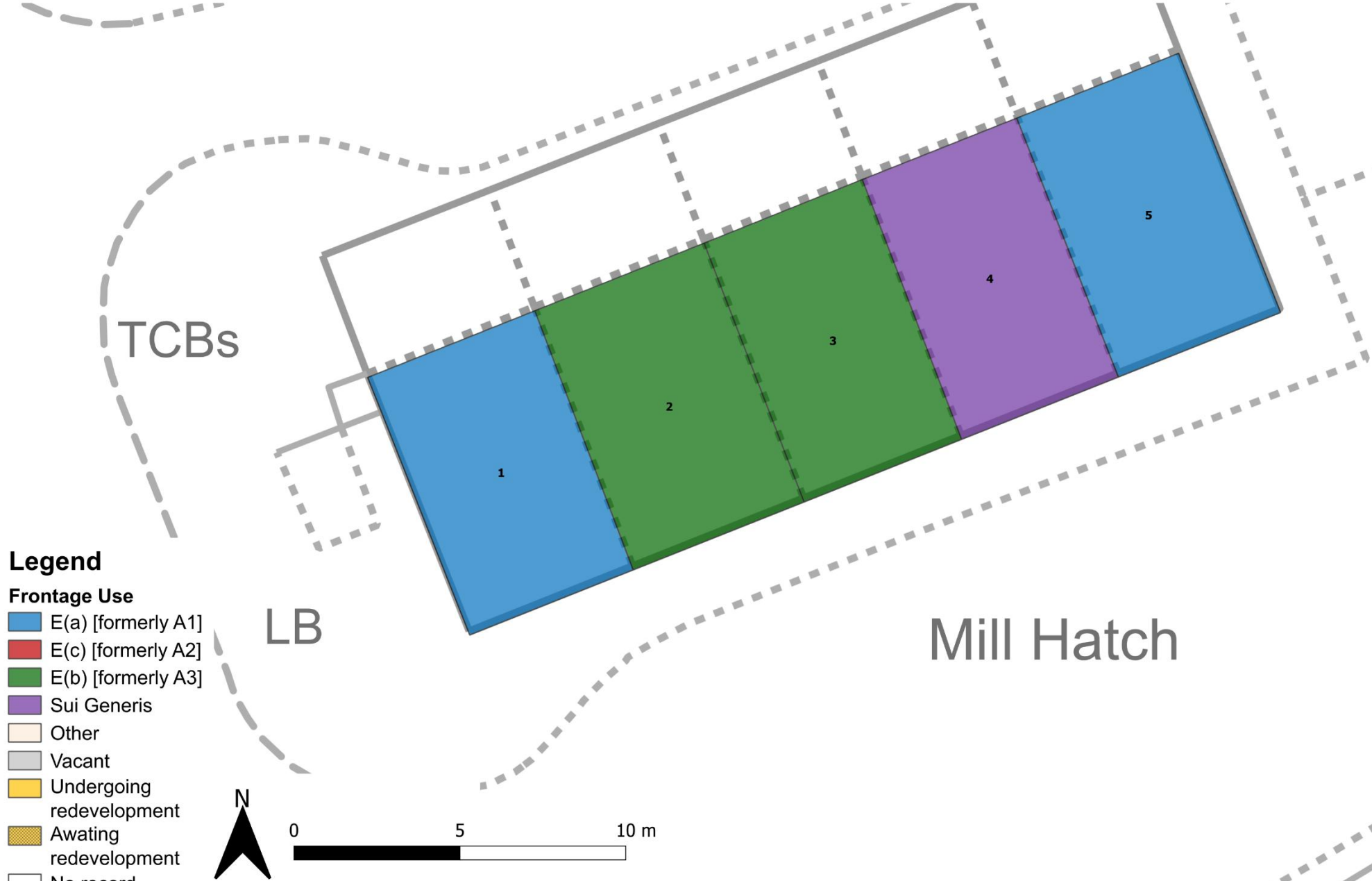
- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record



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

MILL HATCH

2025



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

POLLARD HATCH

2025

Legend

Frontage Use

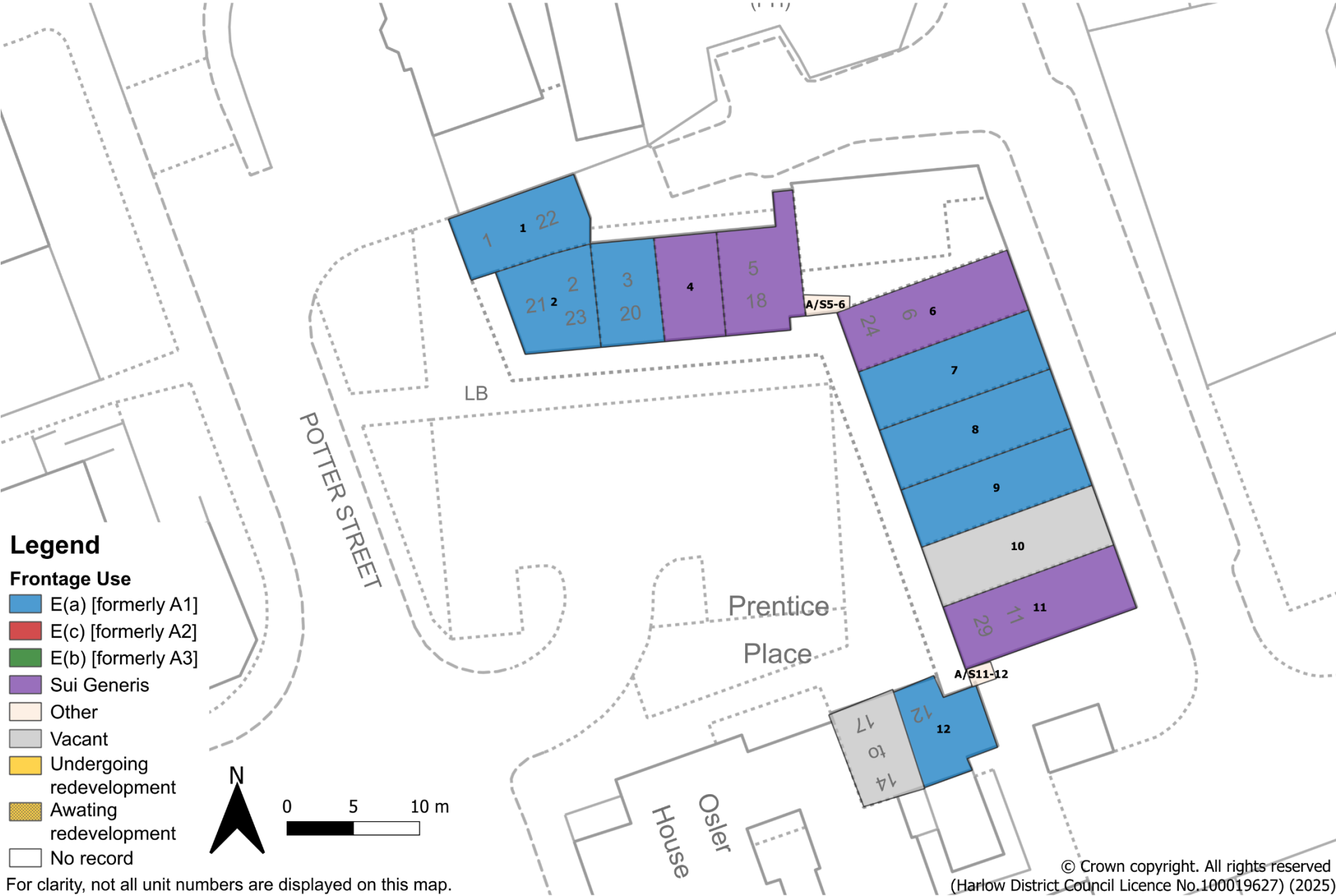
- E(a) [formerly A1]
- E(c) [formerly A2]
- E(b) [formerly A3]
- Sui Generis
- Other
- Vacant
- Undergoing redevelopment
- Awaiting redevelopment
- No record



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

PRENTICE PLACE HATCH

2025



PYPERS HATCH

2025



SHERARDS HATCH

2025



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

SLACKSBURY HATCH

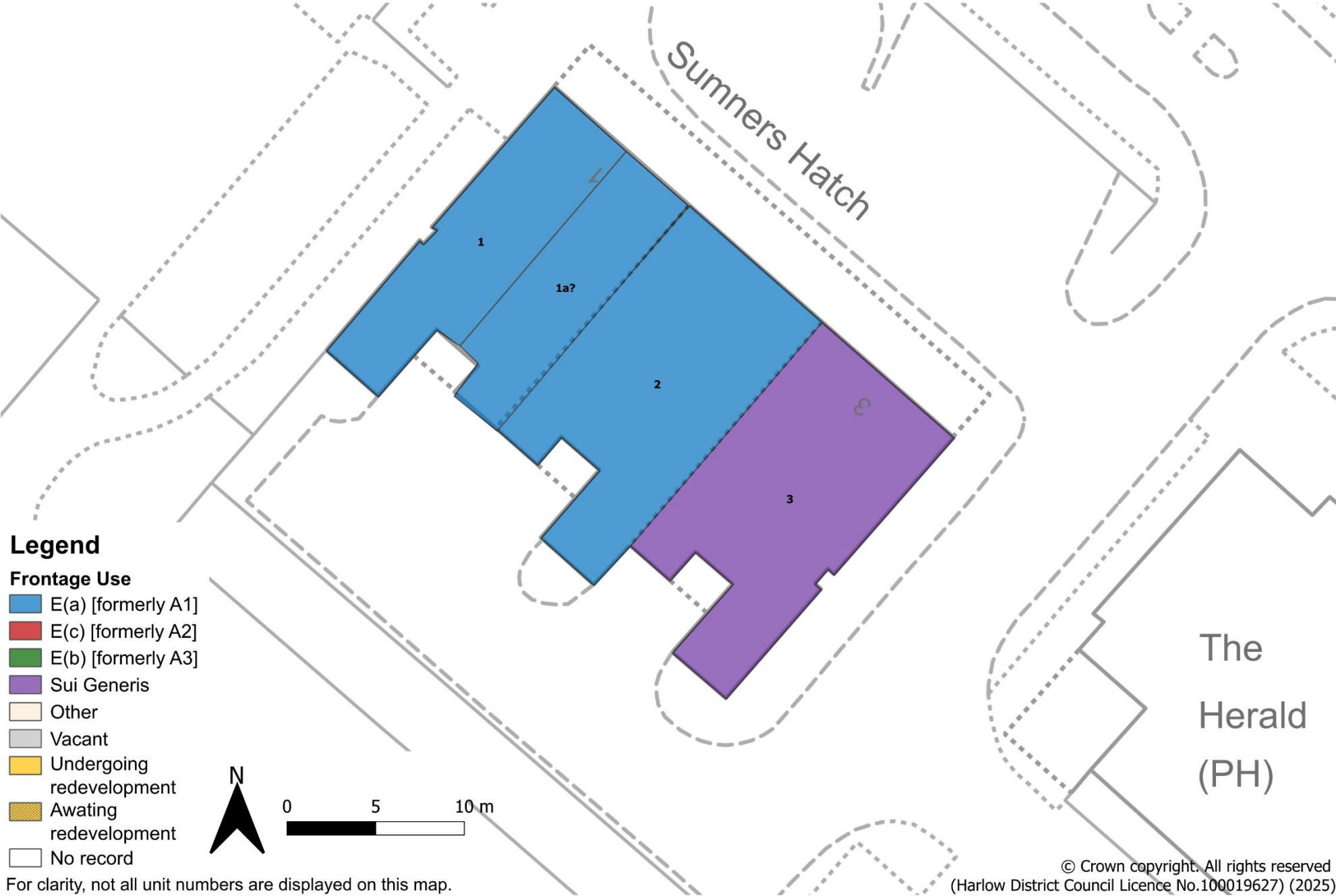
2025



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

SUMNERS HATCH

2025



WARD HATCH

2025



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