



TOWN CENTRE NORTH DEVELOPMENT BRIEF:

Individual Site Briefs

September 2023



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1. What is the site brief paper?

This paper sets out specific briefs for sites and buildings which have been identified for redevelopment or regeneration in the Town Centre North area. Applicants who are interested in bringing forward one of the sites for development should consider the requirements and principles set out in the individual site brief. This should be read together with other principles set out in the Harlow Town Centre Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document (HTCMF SPD) which includes public realm and accessibility improvements for the area.

Not every building in the Town Centre North area has a site brief as some will be retained as they are with the existing use, height and location maintained. This is not to say however that the Council will not consider applications that come forward for these buildings. Some of them already have an existing planning consent that is supported by the Council. The buildings and spaces which do not have a site brief, and the reasons for this, are set out below.

Building/Space	Reasons for exclusion
Adams House	The building has an existing planning consent, which if implemented, will improve the outlook of the building at Post Office Walk. An application was recently submitted (2023) for an additional storey on the original part of Adams House fronting Stone Cross Square, providing 8 units. If found acceptable, especially considering any adverse impact on the existing clock and tiles, both of these proposals would provide additional residential development and improve the overall appearance of the building. Apart from improvements to the public realm around the building, the potential exterior improvement to shop fronts and opportunities for more outdoor dining and seating, the Council has not identified this building for major redevelopment.
Mitre Buildings	Most of the Mitre Buildings have prior approval from office to residential use, of which most conversion has already taken place. The buildings themselves are quite modern in appearance and apart from some further potential landscaping in and around the buildings, the Council has not identified these buildings for major redevelopment.
Kitson Way Car Park	Kitson Way Car Park has an existing planning consent for a 7-9 storey building providing 49 flats. The Council supports the implementation of this development which will improve the appearance of the edge of the development brief area. However if there is opportunity for this site to be redeveloped and incorporated into a wider comprehensive scheme, this will also be supported by the Council (subject to Local Plan policies).
West Gate House	This building is relatively modern and has been improved. It is occupied by retailers, residential and commercial offices and

	has not been identified for any further improvement or redevelopment.
Former Little Walk/Gate House (Strawberry Star Scheme)	This area has a planning consent for a mixed use residential/commercial scheme and therefore does not require a site brief.

The following sites have been identified for regeneration or redevelopment and therefore a site brief has been prepared setting out what is considered appropriate as well as more detailed design and layout considerations.

Sites identified for regeneration or redevelopment

1. Market House
2. Royal Mail Delivery Office
3. Development Site A (east of Post Office Road)
4. Development Site B (north-east of Post Office Road)
5. Development Site C (east of Fourth Avenue underpass)
6. The Rows
7. Kitson Way Petrol Station
8. Kitson Way Multi-Storey Car Park
9. Joseph Rank House
10. Rothwell House, the Old Cinema and building rear of Cinema/east of Kitson Way
11. Aylmer House
12. Former Citizens Advice Centre

The site briefs on the following pages include information in respect of:

- An indicative site boundary of the site or boundary and photo. In some circumstances sites have been brought together as a comprehensive scheme as this is considered the right approach for the area. The site boundaries are indicative only and dependent on the availability of land and the best layout approach for a scheme.
- Issues and constraints identified for the site/building that will need addressing.
- Land uses the Council considers appropriate. These uses do not prevent other uses coming forward that comply with the HLDP or NPPF including comparison and convenience retail uses.
- Appropriate building heights considering the potential for new land uses and surrounding uses including any existing planning consents and the HTC MF SPD.
- Specific layout and design principles for each site including, for example, any specific cycle/pedestrian connections, public realm improvements or specific positioning of buildings or the retention of particular architectural details.

MARKET HOUSE



Map



Existing Buildings and Land Uses

Market House is located centrally within the Town Centre North area and its upper floors now remain vacant. There are also several retail units on the ground floor, some of which are also vacant. It is 4 to 5 storeys in height and is serviced from the rear along Post Office Road. The buildings to the rear did formerly house the shop mobility building. A pedestrian route underneath Market House exists, connecting Post Office Road to Stone Cross Square. There are also several units along Bird Cage Walk to the west which are single storey in height. It is one of the original buildings in the town centre and identified as a building of unique character in the HTCMF SPD. There have been several enquiries and applications submitted for the site including conversion to residential from office under prior approval and the addition of a 5th storey on Market House for 8 flats. The largest proposal, which has consent subject to a Section 106 agreement, has been for the erection of an 8-storey block to the rear of Market House on the garage site for 33 flats and a communal garden at 1st floor connecting to Market House.

Issues and Constraints

- **Poorly maintained building** – Market House is particularly poor in its appearance and has failed to be properly maintained. This is a particular issue given its prominent position in the middle of the area fronting Stone Cross Square.
- **Views and legibility** - The building acts as a barrier between Post Office Road and Stone Cross Square and the only undercroft link is narrow and unattractive. This affects legibility for pedestrians to the north.
- **Unattractive servicing area** – Much of the façade to the rear is unsightly and is used for servicing. This is an important gateway entrance to Stone Cross Square and therefore requires improvement.
- **Multiple landowners** – bringing forward a comprehensive scheme, including all units within the indicative red line boundary, will require agreement from multiple landowners and existing retail units.
- **Maintaining original New Town features** - Market House has unique architectural qualities dating back to the original New Town principles but needs improvement. Bringing forward a scheme that respects this but delivers innovation will need to be considered.

Building Heights	Between 4 and 6 storeys in height.	Appropriate Uses	Residential with a mix of commercial and flexible active uses on ground floor at Market House with a focus on outdoor dining/retailing.
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Design and Layout Principles

- Market House is a unique building identified for its design and history in the HTCMF SPD as well as its important location at the end of Broad Walk. Therefore, unless there are known structural issues with the building it will be retained and redeveloped/improved as is. If there are structural issues, then a complete new build may be required. If a new build is required then it must improve the overall public realm and legibility and incorporate original New Town design principles within the scheme through finishes, materials, colour palettes, shape and orientation of buildings, balcony and window positions.
- Careful thought needs to be given to the existing consent (subject to Section 106) to the rear of the building as this has a connecting communal garden with Market House. It would be advantageous to bring forward a comprehensive scheme for the entire site that would not prevent the successful redevelopment of Market House itself. This may require changes to the existing planning consent to the rear.
- The pedestrian gateway connecting Stone Cross Square with Post Office Road must be retained and improved. It should be legible and attractive with landscaping and public artwork. It must also be considered safe with good lighting and active surveillance at ground floor.
- A building height of 4-6 storeys at Market House would be appropriate with active uses on the ground floor such as retail but with a focus on leisure, cafes/restaurants opening out onto Stone Cross Square. Other community facilities may also be supported including healthcare services. Residential and workspace from first floor upwards would be appropriate. Active uses fronting Stone Cross Square will be strongly encouraged and delivery of a café culture in this area will be supported. Additional storeys may be considered appropriate if the design

complements the existing building and it does not impact upon the existing planning consent to the rear of the building (in regard to residential amenity).

- The layout of the servicing area should be improved and be as visually appealing as possible. It should not impact upon pedestrian movement.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Post Office Road via the Fourth Avenue entrance when a new two-way system is introduced. The Velizy Avenue/bus station entrance will be used until the two-way system is in place, but the proposal is for this to be used solely for a future STC bus link.
- Development must consider the operations of the neighbouring Royal Mail Delivery Office and mitigation measures put in place to ensure there is no impact from their operations on future residents. This is in the event that the Delivery Office is unable to relocate.

ROYAL MAIL DELIVERY OFFICE



Map



Existing Buildings and Land Uses

The Royal Mail Delivery Office is located east of Market House and includes an office building and drop off/car parking along Post Office Road and a 3/4 storey block building. The relocation of the delivery office would be required to bring forward a redevelopment scheme. The site is owned by Royal Mail but Post Office Limited have a lease. It is also used for vehicle maintenance and the delivery vehicles also have use of Post Office Road car park.

Issues and Constraints

- **Blank frontages** – Much of the façade to the rear and east of the building is blank or unsightly and creates an unsafe and unattractive environment particularly along Post Office Road and Post Office Walk.
- **Poor legibility** – the building does not assist with movement of pedestrians from the Post Office Road car park, acting as a barrier between parking areas and Stone Cross Square
- **Relocation of existing use** – a successful delivery of the site will require the relocation of the existing use to an appropriate location, but a suitable alternative site will need to be found which does not impact upon the operational viability of the delivery office
- **Better use of space** – the building and parking area operates on a large site on the edge of the town centre that could be better utilised for range of uses that would support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Building Heights

Between 4 and 6 storeys in height.

Appropriate Uses

Predominantly residential scheme with flexible active uses and some workspace. Community facilities such as a healthcare hub may also be appropriate (if required).

Design and Layout Principle

- In order to deliver a comprehensive scheme that brings forward wider objectives, a complete demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site is the most appropriate option. Retaining the existing layout and orientation of the buildings and redeveloping them as they are would not improve the legibility and appearance of the area, make effective use of space or deliver appropriate town centre uses.
- It is important that any development scheme incorporates original New Town design principles through finishes, materials, colour palettes, shape and orientation of buildings, balcony and window positions. Design cues from existing buildings and proposed developments should be considered and public art and sculpture should be incorporated. More information can be found in the HTCMF SPD on design aspects.
- The pedestrian gateway must be retained in-between Market House and the Royal Mail Delivery Office as set out in the Market House site brief. This should be improved and widened where possible with active fronting uses, better landscaping, lighting and materials.
- The relocation of the existing Royal Mail Delivery Office will be required. An alternative site would need to be identified with suitable space for buildings and company vehicles and in a suitable location within Harlow to ensure the operation remains viable.
- A building height of 4-6 storeys would be appropriate with active ground floor uses, ideally eating and leisure uses supporting a café culture, fronting Stone Cross Square and Post Office Walk. Other community facilities may also be supported including healthcare services. Residential and workspace from first floor upwards would be appropriate.
- Development must avoid blank frontages and the layout of servicing areas should aim to be as visually appealing as possible and located where it would have little impact on pedestrian accessibility.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Post Office Road via the Fourth Avenue entrance when a new two-way system is introduced. The Velizy Avenue/bus station entrance will be used until the two-way system is in place, but the proposal is for this to be used solely for a future STC bus link.

DEVELOPMENT SITE A



Map



Existing Buildings and Land Uses

The site is currently situated at the underpass from The Hides as it enters onto Post Office Road. This is used by both pedestrians and cyclists. There is a large tree and informal landscaping around the edge and some hardstanding in the middle of the site. The site fronts onto Velizy Avenue, the Terminus Street multi-storey car park (MSCP) and Post Office Road.

Issues and Constraints

- **Accessing the town centre** –the underpass would need to be removed to enable the site to come forward, but this would necessitate the need for another at-grade crossing at Velizy Avenue.
- **Removal of trees**- development should aim to avoid removing as many trees as possible from this part of the site.
- **Comprehensive scheme** – the map above identifies this site along with Development Site B, a separate site to the north with its own site brief. There is an opportunity to deliver both sites comprehensively.

Building Heights

Between 5 and 6 storeys

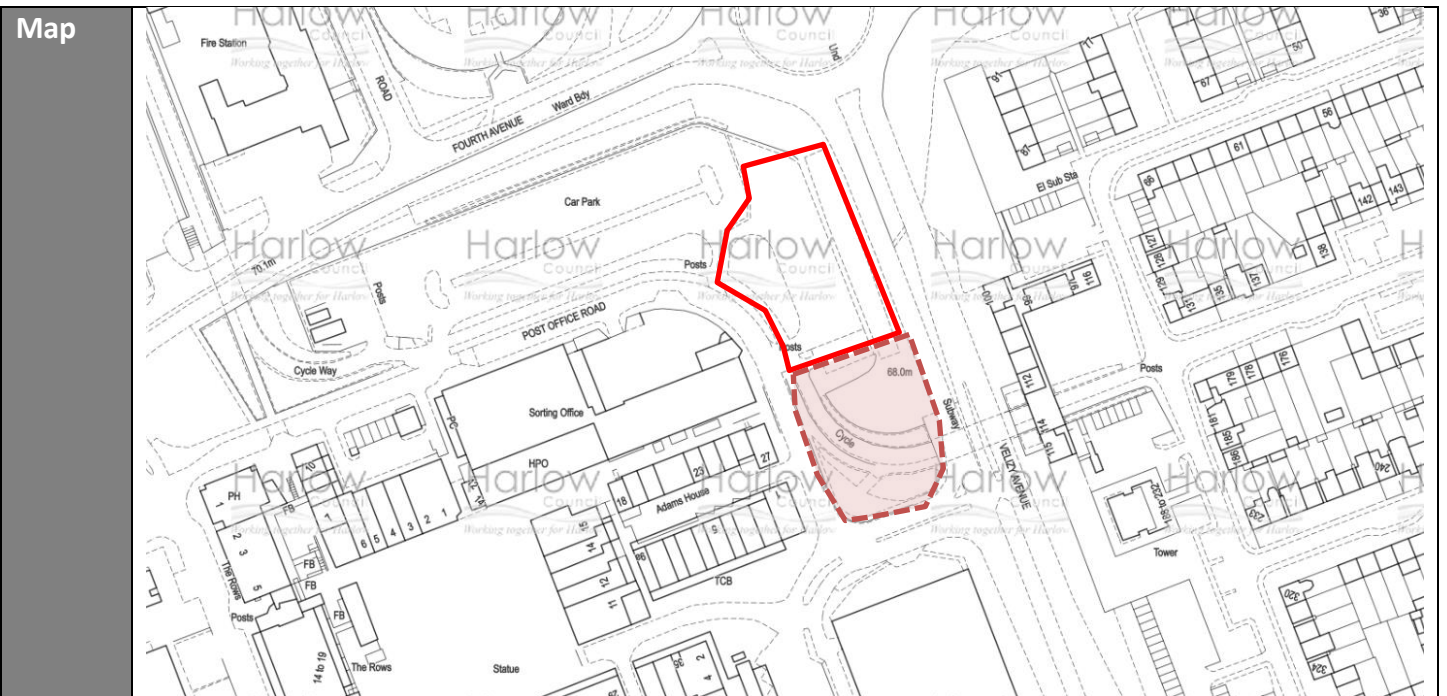
Appropriate Uses

Residential uses with workspace on ground and possibly first/second floor as well

Design and Layout Principles

- Subject to a suitable alternative crossing point being provided, this site could be developed for a mixed use 5-6 storey block. If delivered independently, a slab block is considered appropriate in this location.
- If appropriate, a comprehensive scheme with Development Site B to the north, as shown on the map above, could come forward together. The design and layout of this site could therefore consider sharing amenity spaces, access and servicing arrangements and cycle parking areas (as well as other facilities) with Development Site B. The two buildings could be connected with a single point block at Development Site B alongside shoulder blocks further south on Development Site A. This may change the potential building height arrangement for Site A.
- Retail uses and/or workspace will be supported on the ground floor and above with residential on higher floors. This will help stimulate the area's office and employment market whilst a mix of uses will support a day and night-time economy.
- The design must be high quality and blank frontages must be avoided on all aspects.
- Development proposals should look to improve the frontage along Velizy Avenue, helping to create an urban boulevard. This may include fronting the building onto the road and improving the landscaping and overall frontage with active space. It should also consider rationalizing space to enable dedicated cycle paths along Velizy Avenue and transforming the route from a road into a street (see HTC MF SPD for more details).
- A suitable pedestrian crossing point across Post Office Road must be provided. The public realm around the building and connections to Post Office Walk must be improved.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Post Office Road via the Fourth Avenue entrance when a new two-way system is introduced. The Velizy Avenue/bus station entrance will be used until the two-way system is in place, but the proposal is for this to be used solely for a future STC bus link.
- Development must incorporate or be mindful of the provision of two bus stands for the STC Rapid Transit buses which may be sited at Post Office Road.
- Development must consider the operations of the neighbouring Royal Mail Delivery Office and mitigation measures put in place to ensure there is no impact from their operations on future residents. This is in the event that the Delivery Office is unable to relocate.

DEVELOPMENT SITE B



Existing Buildings and Land Uses

This site currently contains parking spaces, for mostly commercial vehicles, and car washing facilities. There are some trees, a green verge and a small fence to the west of the site and some hedges and trees to the east fronting Velizy Avenue. Further north are hedges which front onto the Velizy/Fourth Avenue roundabout and to the west is the main Post Office Road car park. It is currently accessed by foot and vehicle via Post Office Road.

Issues and Constraints

- **Prominent position** – as you travel southwards from the Burnt Mill Roundabout, the gradient steadily rises towards the town centre and taller buildings become more prominent including Terminus House. This site is situated close to the roundabout where Fourth Avenue, Velizy Avenue and First Avenue meet. Therefore, the design and height of any building on this site will be clearly visible from all roads. This presents a positive opportunity but also needs careful consideration.
- **Existing trees** – there are many trees within the Post Office Road car park which are mature, pleasant and provide environmental benefits such as helping to mitigate against climate change and flooding, providing biodiversity habitats and natural shade. They are mostly situated around the periphery of this site fronting Post Office Road and Velizy Avenue and should not be lost.
- **Loss of car parking** – the development of this site will result in the loss of some parking at the Post Office Road Car Park.
- **Frontages along Velizy Avenue and Fourth Avenue** – the site is currently screened by trees, hedges and verges and although this provides natural screening it prevents visitors from recognising their arrival. The lack of at-grade crossings has resulted in pedestrians crossing the road dangerously and this, along with overall frontage appearance, should be improved.
- **Comprehensive scheme** – the map above identifies this site along with Development Site A, a separate site to the south which has its own site brief. There is an opportunity to deliver both sites comprehensively.

Building Heights

A higher block in this location would be appropriate of around 13 storeys with lower 3/4 storey shoulder blocks

Appropriate Uses

Residential uses with active ground floor uses. Potential workspace on ground and possibly first/second floor will also be supported

Design and Layout Principles

- There is an opportunity, given the site's location, for a taller building to be provided. Both the brief and HTCMP SPD suggest that a taller building of around 13 storeys could be appropriate with a mix of retail, workspace and residential uses. The HTCMP SPD outlined the concept of a taller point block with lower shoulder block as being in-keeping with the New Town styles and suitable for the town centre location, if this site were to come forward independently.
- Given the sites position and potential height, the development would have to be exemplary and provide an exceptional landmark building. This will be determined against the criteria set out in the HTCMP SPD as a whole in relation to the proposal itself and cumulatively across the whole of Town Centre North and wider area. The proposal will need to demonstrate how it contributes to the overall regeneration of the area and place making benefits.
- Key views from the Town Park will be particularly important and will need careful consideration in relation to a development's layout, form, materials, and orientation.
- If appropriate, a comprehensive scheme with Development Site A to the south could come forward together, as shown on the map above. The design and layout could therefore consider sharing amenity spaces, access and servicing arrangements and cycle parking areas (as well as other facilities) with Development Site A. Development on this site must ensure it does not impact upon the amenity of

occupiers at Development Site A. The two buildings could be connected with a single point block at Development Site B alongside shoulder blocks further south.

- Development proposals must improve and open up frontages onto Velizy Avenue and Fourth Avenue through landscaping, public realm and improved pedestrian/cycle movement and provide pedestrian/cycle linkages through towards Stone Cross Square. It should also consider rationalizing space to enable dedicated cycle paths along Velizy Avenue and Fourth Avenue and transforming the routes from roads into streets (see HTCMTF SPD for more details). An at-grade crossing may also be considered necessary across Fourth Avenue.
- Development must look to enhance proposals for an urban park on the Post Office Road car park through its own public realm and amenity provision and landscaping e.g. use of water features, biodiversity net-gain and public art.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Post Office Road via the Fourth Avenue entrance when a new two-way system is introduced. The Velizy Avenue/bus station entrance will be used until the two-way system is in place, but the proposal is for this to be used solely for a future STC bus link.
- Development must incorporate or be mindful of the provision of two bus stands for the STC Rapid Transit buses which may be sited at Post Office Road.
- Potential for this site to form part of an architectural competition
- Development must consider the operations of the neighbouring Royal Mail Delivery Office and mitigation measures put in place to ensure there is no impact from their operations on future residents. This is in the event that the Delivery Office is unable to relocate.

DEVELOPMENT SITE C



Map



Existing Buildings and Land Uses

This site is located to the west of the Post Office Road Car Park close to the underpass. It includes a separated area of land behind bollards with its own access as well as some car parking spaces close to the Post Office Road Car Park exit. The site has low level bushes and shrubs along the underpass and some larger hedges and a tree along Fourth Avenue. The indicative red lined boundary assumes that some of the cycle path could be included and either maintained or re-routed.

Issues and Constraints

- **Loss of parking** – The boundary of the site includes car parking spaces that would, as a result of development, be lost. These are mostly disabled spaces at present and may need to be relocated close by in order to easily access the town centre.
- **Cycle path** – The site boundary includes the existing cycle path which leads from the underpass, and this may either need to be incorporated within a scheme or its route altered.
- **Frontage onto Fourth Avenue** – The site is not currently viewable from Fourth Avenue. The hedges provide a natural screening but prevents visitors recognising their arrival to this part of the town centre.

Building Heights

Between 4 and 6 storeys.

Appropriate Uses

Flexible active ground floor uses with residential above, or some workspace units at lower levels.

Design and Layout Principles

- The development site is suitable for flexible active ground floor uses and potential workspace along with residential above. This building may also be suitable for some form of healthcare hub which was highlighted as a potential need in the HTCMF SPD consultation process.
- The HTCMF SPD states that a building of up to six-storeys in height would be suitable, but this needs to be considered alongside other tall buildings and existing buildings in the area as well as proposals for Post Office Road Urban Park.
- Development of this site would result in some loss of parking, particularly disabled parking spaces which are located within the site boundary. Development may therefore need to provide disabled parking spaces for the wider town centre if these aren't found elsewhere.
- Any development would need to ensure that the cycle route from the underpass is still retained in some way even if an altered path is considered appropriate. Vehicle access to the site will need to consider this carefully.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Post Office Road via the Fourth Avenue entrance when a new two-way system is introduced. The Velizy Avenue/bus station entrance will be used until the two-way system is in place but the proposal is for this to be used solely for a future STC bus link.
- The site should help enable a pedestrian connection from Fourth Avenue through to Market House and onto Stone Cross Square.
- Development proposals should look to improve the frontage along Fourth Avenue, helping to create an urban boulevard in accordance with the principles in the HTCMF SPD. This may include fronting the building onto the road and improving the landscaping and overall frontage with active space. It should also consider rationalizing space to enable dedicated cycle paths along Fourth Avenue and transforming the route from a road into a street (see HTCMF SPD for more details).
- The amenity space and landscaping around the entire site should be improved including along the western edge of the underpass. Where there is opportunity to do so, this site could also help support the improvement of the adjacent green space fronting Fourth Avenue with formal planting, seating and public art.

THE ROWS



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

The Rows is located along the western edge of Stone Cross Square at Bird Cage Walk. It contains multiple retail uses including a restaurant, cafes, a mini supermarket, hairdressers, a bank as well as several vacant units on both ground and first floor. It is a mostly three/four storey building apart from a single standalone building fronting directly onto Stone Cross Square which is two storeys in height (No. 21). The building is inter-connected by a series of staircases and bridges.

Issues and Constraints

- **Visual appearance** – Given the age of the building and a lack of maintenance, some of The Rows has become ‘tired’ and outdated. There is little consistency in colour and material and it now incorporates some dark brick, cladding and various paint colours, although this does provide some variety. The orientation of units has resulted in some blank and poor frontages on both sides of the building. It can also be difficult to locate some of the smaller units to the rear along North Gate. The servicing area also has a poor appearance.
- **Maintaining original New Town features** – The Rows is one of the earlier phases of the town centre and it has a unique style, particularly the interconnecting bridges and staircases. The staircases utilise a lot of public realm space and first-floor units are difficult to access for disabled people. The bridges are an important architectural quality of the building.
- **Poor public realm** – The public realm around the building is difficult to navigate due to the style and orientation of the building. For example the walkways in between buildings can be confusing and the staircases, columns, railings can act as barriers for movement.
- **Vacant units** – There are several vacant units, the largest of which is No.21 which faces onto Stone Cross Square as well as a large nightclub unit on the first floor.

Building Heights

3 – 6 storeys
(additional storeys added to existing building)

Appropriate Uses

Potential to add another floor of residential use and relocate other uses from the area into vacant units. Review staircases to see if they can be relocated/required at all. Demolish No.21 facing Stone Cross Square or re-use building. Retain residential use on higher levels and active ground floor uses on ground.

Design and Layout Principles

- The Rows will be retained as it is an important building in the town centre with interesting architectural qualities reflecting the original New Town features. A review may be required however to assess whether the existing staircases can be relocated or are required in some areas to improve the public realm or whether there are other opportunities to improve accessibility to units.
- The Council may support the creation of additional floors for residential use to help improve the appearance of the building and encourage investment in the remaining parts. The design of any development scheme should prevent blank frontages and improve the servicing area façade. Opportunities to remove staircases will be considered, given that Bird Cage Walk has been identified as a potential cycle route between the underpass and East Gate in the HTC MF SPD. Improvements to the public realm, shop fronts and creation of more café culture will be supported.
- No. 21 The Rows could either be demolished and the space repurposed as part of the Stone Cross public realm area or re-built/re-used as some form of café or community facility and cycle hub. This should remain two storeys in height.
- Any new development should look to incorporate original New Town qualities/features that reflect the design of The Rows and buildings in the wider area through materials, the use of interconnecting bridges and safe, covered walkways.
- The vehicle route, for waste, emergency and servicing would continue to be via North Gate which leads from Fourth Avenue.

KITSON WAY PETROL STATION



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

The site currently contains a petrol station and car washing facilities. It can be accessed by vehicle from both Kitson Way and Fourth Avenue. There are also pedestrian paths along both roads and some hedgerows along Fourth Avenue. The neighbouring car park to the east of the site has planning consent for a 7-9 storey building for 49 flats.

Issues and Constraints

- **Petrol Station requirement** – there are currently 10 petrol stations in Harlow (as of 2023) including the one at Kitson Way. Discussions will be required with the landowner and the existing facility to ascertain whether the petrol station is still required and whether the car washing facilities could relocate. Conversely there are only a handful of electric charging points across Harlow, mostly within private businesses or supermarkets.
- **Contamination** – given the existing use on the site, there may be contamination constraints and this needs to be considered carefully and mitigated before any development can commence.
- **Opportunity to re-use space** – The site is situated within the town centre boundary and there is an opportunity to re-use the space for other town centre uses such as retail, workspace, leisure and residential. If town centre developments are delivered car-free and if the use of sustainable modes of transport to the town centre increases, there may be less need for this particular petrol station.
- **Frontage** – there is an opportunity to improve the public realm and frontage along Fourth Avenue and Kitson Way through redevelopment of this site including the provision of better pedestrian connections through to the town centre and a better and more direct pedestrian connection across Fourth Avenue to Wych Elm.
- **Comprehensive scheme** – the map above shows a hatched area which includes a privately owned multi-storey car park and Joseph Rank House to the southwest as well as Kitson Way car park to the east which has planning consent. The multi-storey car park and Joseph Rank House both have their own site briefs within this document. They have been identified, along with this site, as a potential larger comprehensive scheme that wraps around the Fourth Avenue/Haydens Road area.

Building Heights	4-5 storeys	Appropriate Uses	Residential block
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Design and Layout Principles

- If developed independently from any comprehensive scheme, this site would be suitable for a residential block of 4-5 storeys with balconies/windows facing both Kitson Way and Fourth Avenue to encourage natural surveillance and improve the street scene. This is in accordance with the HTCMF SPD which recommends a purely residential block for this site. In addition to this, the Council will also consider the potential for the site to accommodate electric charging facilities for the town centre, subject to HLDP policies, as well as a potential cycle hub.
- The site is located close to the Kitson Way car park planning consent (49 flats as part of a 7-9 storey development). It is also close to the privately owned multi-storey car park and Joseph Rank House. If the existing planning consent does not come forward (or even if it does), there is a significant opportunity to deliver a more comprehensive scheme, sharing amenity space and servicing arrangements, delivering public realm enhancements and accessibility improvements and delivering a better layout and orientation of buildings and spaces. This may need to be done in phases given the size of the sites and the complexities of occupiers in Joseph Rank House, users of the car park and the potential remediation works at the petrol station. A comprehensive scheme would still need to consider the design and layout principles identified in the individual site briefs e.g. accessibility improvements, access.
- A scheme should look to enable a dedicated and ideally segregated cycle and pedestrian path along both Kitson Way and Fourth Avenue, improving legibility for both modes. Improvements to the crossings for

pedestrians/cyclists towards Wych Elm, helping to connect these two areas, should also be made ensuring they are safe and direct.

- The footpath which currently connects Fourth Avenue and Kitson Way, located to the west of the site, should be improved or potentially relocated elsewhere if this provides a direct access towards The Mitre buildings and West Gate. This route should have a segregated cycle and pedestrian link with lighting and landscaping and seating areas where appropriate. The site should also look to include public art.
- Any contamination on the site must be fully mitigated before it is developed.
- Vehicle access to the site should be from Kitson Way only.

KITSON WAY MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

The multi-storey car park is a private car park and is currently used mostly for the NHS who operate at the hospital. There may also be some spaces used for the residents of Joseph Rank House and NHS staff at Aylmer House. It is 5 storeys in height and is accessed via Kitson Way.

Issues and Constraints

- **Multi-Storey Car Park requirement** – the multi-storey car parked is used mostly by Princess Alexandra Hospital staff and possibly for residents of Joseph Rank House. The relocation of the hospital may therefore result in a lot less of the car park being required for staff although there will still be a requirement for parking until this time and if there is a retained healthcare presence in the town centre. If there are any structural issues with the car park then PAH may need to vacate the car park and consider short term parking options on their current site in order to facilitate demolition. The development of this site is likely to be medium term and the Council will need to consider any displaced car parking across the town and around the town centre as a result. This will have a knock-on effect on residential roads and other commercial car parks.
- **Comprehensive scheme** – the map above shows a hatched area which includes Joseph Rank House, the petrol station and an existing car park with planning consent along Kitson Way. The petrol station and Joseph Rank House both have their own site briefs within this document. They have been identified, along with this site, as a potential larger comprehensive scheme that wraps around the Fourth Avenue/Haydens Road area.
- **Frontage** – the site is located on the corner of the north-western part of the town centre and there is an opportunity to enhance the appearance and frontage of this ‘gateway’ into Haydens Road.

Building Heights	Around 10-12 storeys with lower 3/4 storey shoulder blocks	Appropriate Uses	Mostly residential block with some potential for workspace/flexible ground floor uses. Alternatively, some provision of car parking, possibly decked, may be required
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Design and Layout Principles

- If developed independently, and subject to the potential requirement for a car park, the building could be demolished and a taller corner with smaller shoulder blocks provided. This adheres to the principles set out in the HTCMTF SPD. A taller block may be considered appropriate subject to the impact on local and key views and in combination with other tall buildings being planned in the area.
- Given the sites position and potential height, the development would have to be exemplary and provide an exceptional landmark building. This will be determined against the criteria set out in the HTCMTF SPD as a whole in relation to the proposal itself and cumulatively across the whole of Town Centre North and wider area. The proposal will need to demonstrate how it contributes to the overall regeneration of the area and place making benefits.
- The site is located close to the petrol station and Joseph Rank House, plus there is an existing planning consent at the Kitson Way car park (49 flats as part of a 7-9 storey development). There is an opportunity for a much larger comprehensive scheme to come forward across all or most of these sites. The layout and orientation of buildings could then be properly shaped as part of a larger proposal and there are benefits in sharing amenity spaces and servicing arrangements. The public realm could be properly laid out between the buildings and the best accessibility improvements for cyclists and pedestrians could be delivered. This may need to be done in phases given the size of the sites and the complexities of occupiers in Joseph Rank House, users of the car park and the potential remediation works at the petrol station. A comprehensive scheme would still need to consider the design and layout principles identified in the individual site briefs e.g. accessibility improvements, access.

- If a degree of car parking is required in this location to support local businesses, then there may be opportunities to improve the appearance of the existing car park e.g. colours, materials, planting and incorporate uses above. Incorporating car parking within a larger comprehensive scheme may also be acceptable.
- Development proposals must look to improve the frontage along Kitson Way, Fourth Avenue and Haydens Road and enable the provision of pedestrian and cycle, ideally segregated, paths around the edge of the site as well as access through to Kitson Way.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Haydens Road into West Gate and Kitson Way.

Existing buildings and Land Uses

Joseph Rank House is a 12-storey building located south of the privately owned multi-storey car park. It was a former office building, now mostly converted to residential units. The building is mostly occupied; however, it has issues which now require the building to be completely demolished and rebuilt. There is therefore an opportunity for redevelopment on this site. It currently has a pedestrian entrance at West Gate.

Issues and Constraints

- **Existing occupiers of Joseph Rank House** – a large majority of the building is occupied, and those occupants will require re-housing/ relocated temporarily/permanently when any work is taking place. This will take time and resource. A complete demolition may also take time given the height of the building and proximity to the road.
- **Bringing forward a comprehensive scheme** – the map above shows a hatched area which includes the multi-storey car park, the petrol station and an existing car park with planning consent along Kitson Way. The petrol station and multi-storey car park both have their own site briefs within this document. They have been identified, along with this site, as a potential larger comprehensive scheme that wraps around the Fourth Avenue/Haydens Road area.
- **Frontage, access and public realm** – the site is located along Haydens Road and there is an opportunity to enhance the appearance and frontage of this area, provide more public realm space and landscaping and improve the accessibility of pedestrians and cyclists through to the town centre from Haydens Road.

Building Heights	Up to 12 storeys with potential shoulder block	Appropriate Uses	Mostly residential with some potential for workspace or ground floor and flexible active uses
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Design and Layout Principles

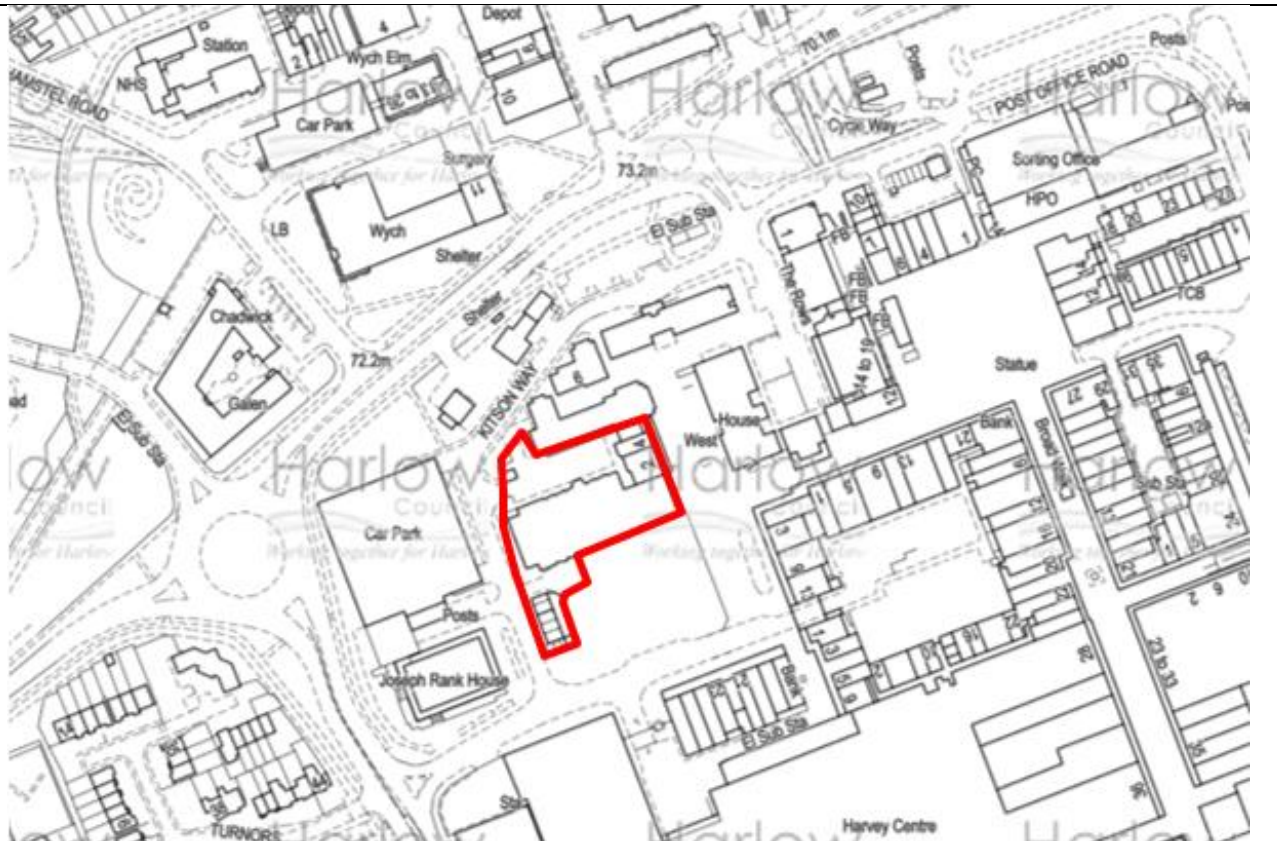
- This building was not identified in the HTC MF SPD for development. However, there are issues with the fabric of the building that will require it to be demolished and re-built. This would bring forward a new building/s that could be designed, laid out and orientated to bring forward significant improvement to the overall appearance, public realm and accessibility in this area. It could also deliver a mixed-use scheme with residential accommodation in line with Local Plan standards. However, this would require the relocation/re-housing temporarily or permanently of the existing occupiers of Joseph Rank House plus the demolition of the building which will take time and resource.
- A new development of mostly residential use with ground floor flexible active uses and potential workspace uses on lower floors will be appropriate. The HTC MF SPD supports taller blocks with potential shoulder blocks in the town centre, but the overall layout and design may depend on whether the site can come forward comprehensively (set out below).
- Given the sites position and potential height, a tall building would have to be exemplary and provide an exceptional landmark building. This will be determined against the criteria set out in the HTC MF SPD as a whole in relation to the proposal itself and cumulatively across the whole of Town Centre North and wider area. The proposal will need to demonstrate how it contributes to the overall regeneration of the area and place making benefits as well as consider key views from the surrounding area.
- There is a major opportunity for a wider comprehensive scheme to come forward with the petrol station, multi-storey car park along with an existing consent at Kitson Way. This would deliver significant changes to this corner of the town centre and frontage along Fourth Avenue and Haydens Road. It could deliver major public realm enhancements and ‘open up’ the sites to aid movement and legibility for cyclists and pedestrians. This may need to be done in phases given the size of the sites and the complexities of occupiers in Joseph Rank House, users of the car park and the potential remediation works at the petrol station. A comprehensive scheme would still need to consider the design and layout principles identified in the individual site briefs e.g. accessibility improvements, access.

- Development proposals must look to improve the frontage along Haydens Road and help to enable pedestrian and cycle, ideally segregated, paths around the edge of the site and access through to Kitson Way and then further west towards West Gate Square.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Haydens Road into West Gate and Kitson Way.
- Potential for this site to form part of an architectural competition

ROTHWELL HOUSE, THE OLD CINEMA, AND BUILDING REAR OF CINEMA



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

This site comprises three separate buildings; 1) the old, and now vacant, Odeon Cinema which consists of three storey buildings connected by a lower building. These buildings all have blank facades on all sides with the main frontage facing the West Gate Square public realm area. The rear of the cinema is accessed via a small vehicle entrance along Kitson Way; 2) to the south of this small vehicle entrance is another two-storey building (currently used as a gym) which fronts Kitson Way. This is currently occupied and includes some windows on the bottom and ground floor; and 3) attached to the Cinema building, fronting West Square, is Rothwell House. This is a three-storey building with an occupied unit at ground floor and currently vacant space on the two floors above. There is also a large rear car park, however some of this may be used for The Mitre Buildings located north of Rothwell House. The three sites have been grouped together as a comprehensive scheme is supported. The Odeon Cinema and gym building is within close proximity of 'Block A', a residential block which forms part of the Strawberry Star planning consent.

Issues and Constraints

- **Vacant buildings** – the Odeon Cinema has been vacant for a considerable amount of time and the first and second floor of Rothwell House is also currently vacant. There is an opportunity to deliver a scheme that will improve the appearance of the area and fill vacant units with uses that support the town centre.
- **Poor natural surveillance and facades** – given the vacant Odeon Cinema building and vacancies at Rothwell House, these buildings do not support natural surveillance for people walking around West Gate Square especially those that live and work in the area at West Gate House and The Mitre Buildings. The facades to the front and rear of the buildings are also unattractive.
- **Lack of connections/legibility** – there is poor legibility for those travelling from Haydens Road and from the path which connects Fourth Avenue to Kitson Way at the petrol station. Navigating The Mitre buildings can be confusing and a lot of the area around Kitson Way is unattractive and illegible for pedestrians.
- **Improvements to public realm** – the development of this site could help to improve the wider public realm at West Gate Square.
- **Landownership and comprehensive scheme** – the sites are in separate landownership and therefore bringing them forward comprehensively may be challenging. The Odeon Cinema building, Rothwell House and one of The Mitre Buildings to the north are all connected to each other and this will need to be carefully considered.
- **Block A, Strawberry Star** – the Odeon Cinema site and existing gym are located within very close proximity to Block A which forms part of the Strawberry Star planning consent. This will need to be considered (more details set out below).

Building Heights	3-8 storeys	Appropriate Uses	Mostly residential with some potential for workspace and/or ground floor flexible active uses
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Design and Layout Principles

- The HTC MF SPD suggests the retention of Rothwell House and the development of the Odeon Cinema for two 3 storey residential blocks overlooking a green gateway route from West Square to Kitson Way. However, this site brief recommends the inclusion of Rothwell House as well and the potential for taller buildings given the height of Block A in the Strawberry Star planning consent is 8-16 storeys, West Gate House which is 8 storeys and other buildings coming forward in the area (e.g. remaining Strawberry Star blocks, Kitson Way Car Park).
- The single dwelling used as a gym which currently faces Kitson Way has been identified in the HTC MF SPD as a 3-storey standalone block with workspace on the ground floor and residential above.
- To avoid blank frontages, the development should orientate buildings to provide as much overlooking and visual interest at Kitson Way and West Gate Square. The Odeon and gym building in particular are situated within close proximity of Block A which is a 16-storey building with an 8-storey shoulder block. The design of

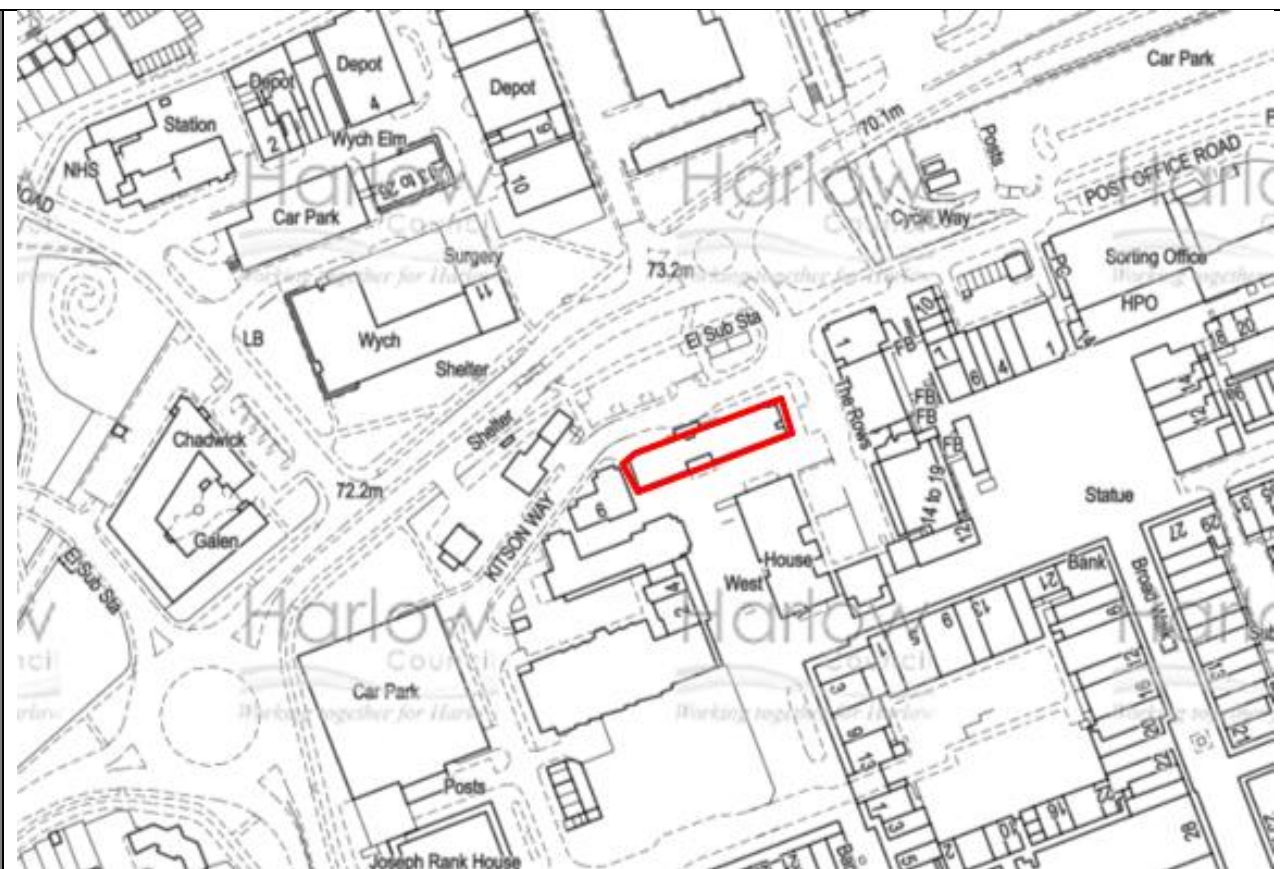
Block A will include only secondary windows facing north/west towards the former Odeon site. Furthermore, the cinema area has a main West Square Street frontage, where primary outlook onto the street and westwards would allow for satisfactory residential design. The southern flank elevation of any development at the Odeon Cinema site could be designed set back from the flanks with no, or just secondary, outlook.

- An additional pedestrian connection, in addition to West Gate, should be provided linking Kitson Way with West Gate Square and leading to East Gate. Therefore, appropriate overlooking and lighting, public realm/landscaping and public art, seating areas and space for pedestrians to move around should be provided. Development should not impact upon the public realm proposals for West Square identified in the HTCMEF SPD.
- Access to this site for disabled vehicles and servicing/ emergency services will be from Haydens Road into West Gate and Kitson Way.

AYLMER HOUSE



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

Aylmer House is located along Kitson Way and is a 4-storey building with lower floors for the public house and the upper floors for NHS services (separate from the Princess Alexandra Hospital). The public house entrance fronts West Gate Square to the south and a separate entrance for staff and visitors for the NHS floors is located to the north fronting Kitson Way. Pre-application discussions have been held for additional storeys to the building.

Issues and Constraints

- **Appearance of the building**– the building has a relative unique style with structured glazed windows and natural colours. It does however look poorly maintained and the Kitson Way frontage at ground floor provides no façade at all. The area fronting West Gate Square is better with active ground floor uses, however the entire building façade could be improved.
- **Legibility** – Aylmer House is a fairly large building located on the edge of the area and it is difficult to see beyond the building to the public realm of West Gate Square.
- **Existing uses** – the building is occupied with the public house on the ground floor providing active frontages and outdoor dining provision. The upper floors are also occupied with important NHS services. This will need to be considered within any development scheme.

Building Heights

Additional 1 – 2 storeys

Appropriate Uses

Potential for some residential or additional workspaces.

Design and Layout Principles

- The HTC MF SPD suggests the retention of Aylmer House as it is. It is well occupied with important local services and retail provision which supports an outdoor café culture in this area. There are opportunities to increase the height of the building, subject to the impact on the amenity of the application approved at the Kitson Way car park. Adding further storeys to the building may then enable the general appearance of the building to be improved and encourage further active frontages at Kitson Way e.g. additional glazing, secondary entrance or seating areas/landscaping.
- There are opportunities for the existing ground floor public house or any future use to utilise more space in the public realm area to encourage outdoor dining or activity. The development should help deliver public realm improvements across the West Gate area including the pedestrian route which connects to North Gate. These improvements should try to assist in improving legibility and movement for pedestrians accessing West Square.

FORMER CITIZENS ADVICE CENTRE



Map



Existing buildings and Land Uses

The former Citizens Advice Centre is located along East Gate and is owned by the Council. It is leased out and is currently occupied. The building frontage is along East Gate with an iconic design to the entrance with pillars holding up a first-floor square concrete block with rectangular shapes and circular windows. Behind and above this entrance is a 3-storey building with a pedestrian route under part of it. This is attached to The Rows and West Gate House and is visible from both East Gate and North Gate.

Issues and Constraints

- **Appearance of the building**– the front part of the building is important in both location and design and reflects some of the aspirational design techniques of New Town buildings. However, the rest of the building which connects The Rows and West Gate House is poor in appearance with brown materials, darker glazed windows and little architectural quality. Any redevelopment would need to consider how the front part of the building is protected and consider the buildings attached to The Rows/West Gate House.
- **Gateway connection** – There is a pedestrian route under the building which connects East Gate with North Gate service area which should be retained to ensure pedestrians can move through. Improvements to the pedestrian route through North Gate will be encouraged.
- **Existing uses** – the building is occupied. This would need to be considered as part of any redevelopment.

Building Heights	3 storeys	Appropriate Uses	Workspaces and offices and the potential for healthcare hub
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Design and Layout Principles

- The HTC MF SPD masterplan images for this area have not identified this building for redevelopment. However, there may be an opportunity to demolish or redevelop part of the site so that the pedestrian route through to North Gate can be opened up more. This route could enable both pedestrians and cycle movement, connecting with a potential cycle route along East Gate.
- It is important that the front part of the building which juts out onto East Gate is retained and only the building to the rear is demolished. If this is not feasible and given the fact it also connects onto West Gate House and The Rows, then the building will remain and ideally the façade improved. Whichever option is suitable and achievable, the height of any development should be 3-storeys.
- The building could provide workspace/office provision and a potential healthcare hub. Representations from the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System (H&WE ICS) have suggested that following the potential relocation of the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) a suitable health care presence is likely to be retained within central Harlow, possibly in the form of a local hub within the town centre.
- There is then potential for the North Gate service area to be improved through shared spaces, segregated pedestrian and cycle paths and landscaping. This is still a major service area for many of the units and therefore the turning of large vehicles will need to be considered.