

**Historic building recording of
an air-raid shelter at the former
Brentwood Police Station,
London Road, Brentwood,
Essex, CM14 4QJ**

March 2019



**report prepared by
Mark Baister**

**commissioned by
Helen Warren, CgMs Heritage,
part of the RPS Group Ltd
on behalf of
Weston Homes**

CAT project ref.: 19/01b
NGR: TQ 589 934 (c)
Planning reference: 16/01805/OUT
ECC code: BWBPS19
Chelmsford Museum accession code: CHMER 2019.001
OASIS project id: colchest3-338955



Colchester Archaeological Trust
Roman Circus House,
Roman Circus Walk,
Colchester,
Essex, CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785
email: mb@catuk.org

CAT Report 1400
April 2019

Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Aims	2
4	Methodology	2
5	Historical background	3
6	Building recording descriptive record	4
7	Discussion	7
8	Acknowledgements	8
9	References	8
10	Abbreviations and glossary	9
11	Archive deposition	9
12	Contents of archive	9
	Appendix 1: Full digital photographic record (images on accompanying CD)	11

Figures after p11

OASIS Data Collection Form

List of maps

	pg
Map 1 1951 1:1250 OS map. Air-raid shelter highlighted in red to north of the Police Station and La Plata House.	3
Map 2 1938-39 map of Brentwood showing air-raid precautions. No key. Symbol on Police Station site highlighted in red. ERO C/W 4/11/1.	7

List of photographs reproduced in text

	pg
Photograph 1 North-west and north-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Police Station building visible in background. Photograph taken facing south.	4
Photograph 2 North-west elevation of air-raid shelter, showing differing types of brickwork. Photograph taken facing south-east.	4
Photograph 3 South-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-west.	5
Photograph 4 South-west elevation of air-raid shelter, showing entrance. Photograph taken facing north.	5
Photograph 5 North-east elevation of air-raid shelter, showing opening. Photograph taken facing south-west.	6
Photograph 6 Interior of air-raid shelter showing painted bricks. Photograph taken facing north-east.	6

List of figures

Fig 1 Site location.	
Fig 2 Floor plan of air-raid shelter. Location and direction of photographs reproduced in text shown.	
Fig 3 South-west and north-east elevations of the air-raid shelter.	
Fig 4 South-east elevation of air-raid shelter.	
Fig 5 North-west elevation of air-raid shelter.	

1 Summary

A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust on an air-raid shelter at the former Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood, Essex in March 2019.

The shelter is a simple brick-built structure with a concrete floor and roof, partially built into an earth bank. Being largely above-ground, it would have never survived a direct hit but was intended to shield its occupants from any flying debris or shrapnel resulting from the intensive bombing Brentwood received during World War II.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on a historic building recording of an air-raid shelter at the former Brentwood Police Station in advance of a programme of demolition. The recording work was commissioned by Helen Warren of CgMs Heritage, part of the RPS Group Ltd on behalf of Weston Homes and carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in March 2019. The site is located in the centre of Brentwood on the south side of London Road at NGR TQ 589 934. The air-raid shelter detailed in this report is located to the north of the police station (Fig 1).

A planning application (planning ref. 16/01805/OUT) was submitted to Brentwood Borough Council in December 2016 proposing the demolition of the existing Police Station buildings (including the air-raid shelter), the conversion of La Plata House and the construction of up to 70 new dwellings.

In response to this application, the Place Services Historic Environment Advisor (HEA) recommended to the council that a Historic England Level 2 building survey be made of the air-raid shelter prior to its demolition. Planning permission was granted and included the following condition (part 18):

“Prior to the demolition of each air raid shelter a full level 2 recording as identified in a Guide to Good Recording Practice...of the air raid shelter shall be carried out and submitted to and approved by the LPA.”

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the building recording was prepared by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT 2019) and agreed with the HEA. All work was carried out in accordance with this WSI.

All work was carried out according to standards and practices contained in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2014a), *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014b), *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (Historic England 2015), *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) and *Research and Archaeology Revised: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (EAA 24). In addition, the guidelines contained in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016) were followed.

3 Aims

The aim of the building recording was to provide a detailed record and assessment of the shelter prior to its demolition. The building recording was carried out to Level 2 (Historic England 2016) which is defined as:

“...a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require a more detailed record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.”

In particular the record considered:

- Plan and form of the site.
- Materials and method of construction.
- Date(s) of the structure.
- Original function and layout.
- Original and later fixtures and fittings.
- The significance of the site in its immediate local context.

4 Methodology

The following are included in this report:

- A documentary, cartographic and pictorial survey of the evidence pertaining to the history and evolution of the air-raid shelter.
- A large-scale block plan of the site.
- Annotated floor-plans and elevations of the shelter at a scale of 1:20.
- A description of the shelter. The description addresses features such as materials, dimensions, method of construction and phasing.
- A photographic record, comprising digital photographs of both general shots and individual features. Selected examples of the photographic record are clearly tied into the drawn record and reproduced as fully annotated photographic plates supporting the text. The photographic record is accompanied by a photographic register detailing location and direction of shot (Appendix 1).

5 Historical background (Fig 1)

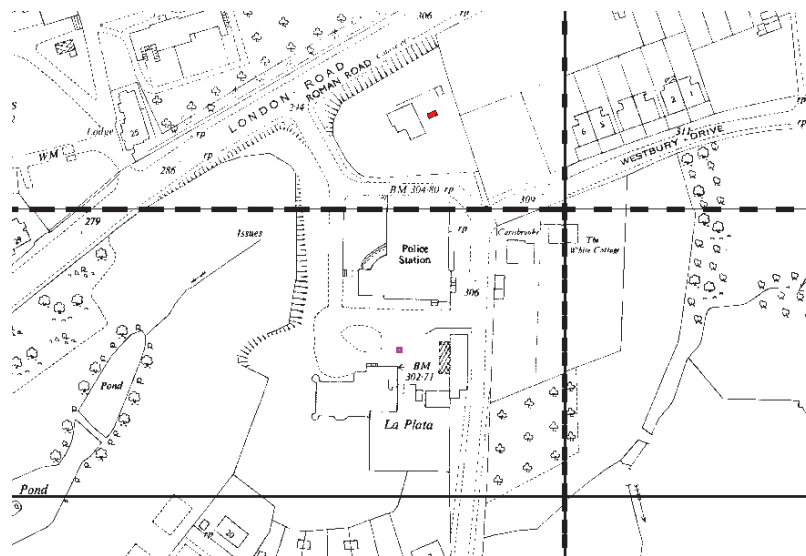
The following historical background draws on cartographic sources, the Essex Records Office (ERO) and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) accessed via Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). The Built Heritage Statement of the site was also consulted (CgMs 2018).

La Plata House, the oldest building standing on the site, was a house constructed in the late 18th - early 19th century (Fig 1). It was the subject of several extensions and alterations over the course of the 19th and early 20th century (CgMs 2018, 13).

The police station was constructed within the gardens of La Plata House in 1937, replacing Brentwood's previous police station in Coptfold Road (some 600m to the east). At this time La Plata House was converted by the police to provide accommodation (*ibid*).

During World War II, two air-raid shelters were constructed on the site. The largest of these is the semi-sunken shelter to the west of La Plata House; this will be detailed in a subsequent CAT report (forthcoming). The other is a small brick-built surface shelter to the north-east of the site; which is detailed in this report.

The brick-built shelter first appears on the 1951 OS map as a small rectangular structure, exactly as it is today (Map 1).



Map 1 1951 1:1250 OS map. Air-raid shelter highlighted in red to north of the Police Station and La Plata House.

6 Building recording descriptive record (Figs 2 - 5)

The air-raid shelter is aligned north-east/south-west. It measures 3.4m x 2m in size and covers around seven square metres.

It is a brick-built building constructed on a concrete slab and with a flat concrete roof. It is built partially into an earth bank that rises to the north-east (Photograph 1).



Photograph 1 North-west and north-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Police Station building visible in background. Photograph taken facing south.

The brickwork of the structure is divided into two distinct types. Most of the building is constructed of yellow London stock bricks laid in English-bond with queen-closers and bonded with mortar, with brick dimensions of 230 x 110 x 60mm. The north-east metre of the building is constructed of red bricks laid in English-bond with queen-closers, bonded with mortar and with brick dimensions of 220 x 110 x 60mm. The join between these two types of brickwork is clear on the exterior of the building (Photographs 2-3). The walls around the building are 350mm thick and consist of three courses of bricks.



Photograph 2 North-west elevation of air-raid shelter, showing differing types of brickwork. Photograph taken facing south-east.



Photograph 3 South-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-west.

The entrance into the shelter is on the south-west elevation and has a concrete lintel (Photograph 4). The north-west and south-east elevations are featureless apart from air-bricks (Photographs 2-3). The north-east elevation of the shelter, although largely obscured by the earth bank, has an opening at the top of the wall (Photograph 5). There is no evidence for any hinges or other fittings that would suggest a door in the entranceway or any sort of shutter in the north-east opening.



Photograph 4 South-west elevation of air-raid shelter, showing entrance. Photograph taken facing north.



Photograph 5 North-east elevation of air-raid shelter, showing opening. Photograph taken facing south-west.

The interior of the shelter is a single room with a concrete floor. The ceiling is plastered. The north-east metre of the building (constructed of red brick) has painted walls on the interior, partially obscuring the brickwork (Photograph 6).



Photograph 6 Interior of air-raid shelter showing painted bricks. Photograph taken facing north-east.

7 Discussion

The north-east air-raid shelter at Brentwood Police Station would clearly have only been suitable for a small number of people to shelter in. Compared to the larger, semi-sunken shelter to the south of the site (detailed in a forthcoming CAT Report), it would have provided relatively limited protection to its occupants. Nevertheless, the substantial walls for a building of this size, three courses of brick thick, leave little doubt that this structure was intended to provide shelter from bombing raids.

Like all but the most substantial air-raid shelters, this shelter could not have withstood a direct hit but was designed to provide as much protection to its occupants from flying debris and shrapnel as possible. Being built partially into an earth bank would have enhanced its resistance to near misses, if only slightly. Surface shelters usually have a blast wall at their entrance, designed to better protect the occupants (Brown et al 1996). This has either been subsequently removed, or was omitted from this shelter because of the proximity of the adjacent building, which would have served a similar purpose as a blast wall (Photograph 1). Details of a shelter in Yeovil of a similar size and shape and with the same thickness walls, asserts that these types of shelters were designed to hold 12 people (www.yeovilhistory.info/air_raid_shelters.htm).

The relatively large opening in the north-east elevation is somewhat contradictory to the buildings use as an air-raid shelter: certainly such an opening would have reduced the protective merits of the building. This is probably explained by the two clear types of brickwork visible in the structure, which suggest that the north-east end of the building has been rebuilt. Presumably this rebuilding occurred at a date when the structure was no longer in use as an air-raid shelter, and so the addition of an opening on the north-east elevation to provide light would have desirable. Given the lack of features and fittings within the structure, determining any later use is difficult, but an outside store seems like a reasonable assumption.

A map in the Essex Record Office detailing air-raid precautions carried out in Brentwood during World War II has the police station highlighted with a symbol (Map 2). Unfortunately this map does not have a surviving key. The symbol may represent the location of a siren, which were often placed on police stations (Brown et al 1996, 75). Regardless, it implies that the shelters on this site were an important aspect of the town's air-raid defences.



Map 2 1938-39 map of Brentwood showing air-raid precautions. No key. Symbol on Police Station site highlighted in red. ERO C/W 4/11/1.

8 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank CgMs Heritage, part of the RPS Group Ltd for commissioning and Weston Homes for funding the historic building recording.

The recording was carried out by Mark Baister.

Figures are by Mark Baister.

The project was monitored by Helen Saunders for Essex County Council.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at

<http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

Brown, I., Burrige, D., Clarke, D., Guy, J., Hellis, J., Lowry, B., Ruckley, N., Thomas, R.	1996	<i>20th Century Defences in Britain: An introductory guide</i>
Brunskill, R.W.	1990	<i>Brick Building In Britain (1st ed)</i>
CAT	2019	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an historic building recording of two-air-raid shelters on land at the former Brentwood Police Station and La Plata House, London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4QJ by Holloway, E.</i>
Cifa	2014a	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Cifa	2014b	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures</i>
CgMs Heritage	2018	<i>Built Heritage Statement: Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood by Warren, H.</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England East Anglian Archaeological occasional papers 14 by Gurney, D.</i>
EAA 24	2011	<i>Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeological occasional papers 24 by Medlycott, M.</i>
Historic England	2015	<i>MoRPHE: Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i>
Historic England	2016	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice</i>
MHCLG	2018	<i>National planning policy framework</i>

Websites visited include:

www.yeovilhistory.info/air_raid_shelters.htm

www.military-history.org/articles/air-raid-shelters.htm

10 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
EHHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC
ERO	Essex Records Office
English-bond	a brickwork bond created from alternate courses of headers and stretchers
HE	Historic Environment
header	a brick laid at right-angles to the face of the wall, i.e widthways
London stock bricks	handmade brick used for majority of building work in London before the early 20th century. Also common in south-east England generally. They have a distinctive yellow colour.
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	O nline A cces S to the I ndex of A rchaeological I nvestigations S , http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
queen closer	a less-than-half brick adjacent to the end header of a brick course. Its purpose is purely decorative, often found around windows, doors, and along edges of buildings
stretcher	a brick laid parallel to the face of the wall, i.e. lengthways

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with Chelmsford Museum under accession number CHMER: 2019.001.

12 Contents of archive

Paper and digital record

One A4 document wallet containing:
The report (CAT Report 1400)
Original site record (plans, elevations and notes)
Site digital photos and log

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2019

Distribution list

CgMs Heritage
Weston Homes
Helen Saunders, ECCHEA
EHER



Colchester Archaeological Trust

Roman Circus House
Circular Road North,
Colchester,
Essex CO2 7GZ

tel.: 01206 501785

email: mb@catuk.org

checked by: Philip Crummy
date: 05/04/2019
revised: 11/04/2019

**Appendix 1:
Full digital photographic record
(images on accompanying CD)**

CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-west.
graph_001.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-west.
graph_002.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	North-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing south-west.
graph_003.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	North-west elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing south-east.
graph_004.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-west elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_005.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-west and south-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north.
graph_006.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-west elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_007.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior of air-raid shelter showing opening. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_008.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior of air-raid shelter showing entrance. Photograph taken facing south-west.
graph_009.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior of air-raid shelter showing opening join between types of brickwork. Photograph taken facing north.
graph_010.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior of air-raid shelter showing opening join between types of brickwork. Photograph taken facing east.
graph_011.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Photo showing proximity of air-raid shelter to adjacent building. Photograph taken facing west.
graph_012.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-east and north-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing west.
graph_013.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Photo showing proximity of air-raid shelter to adjacent building. Photograph taken facing south.
graph_014.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	North-west and north-east elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing south.
graph_015.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-west elevation of air-raid shelter, showing concrete lintel. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_016.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior concrete floor of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_017.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior plastered ceiling of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing south-west.
graph_018.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	Interior of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north-east.
graph_019.JPG	
CHMER2019.001_BWBPS19_Photo	South-west elevation of air-raid shelter. Photograph taken facing north.
graph_020.JPG	

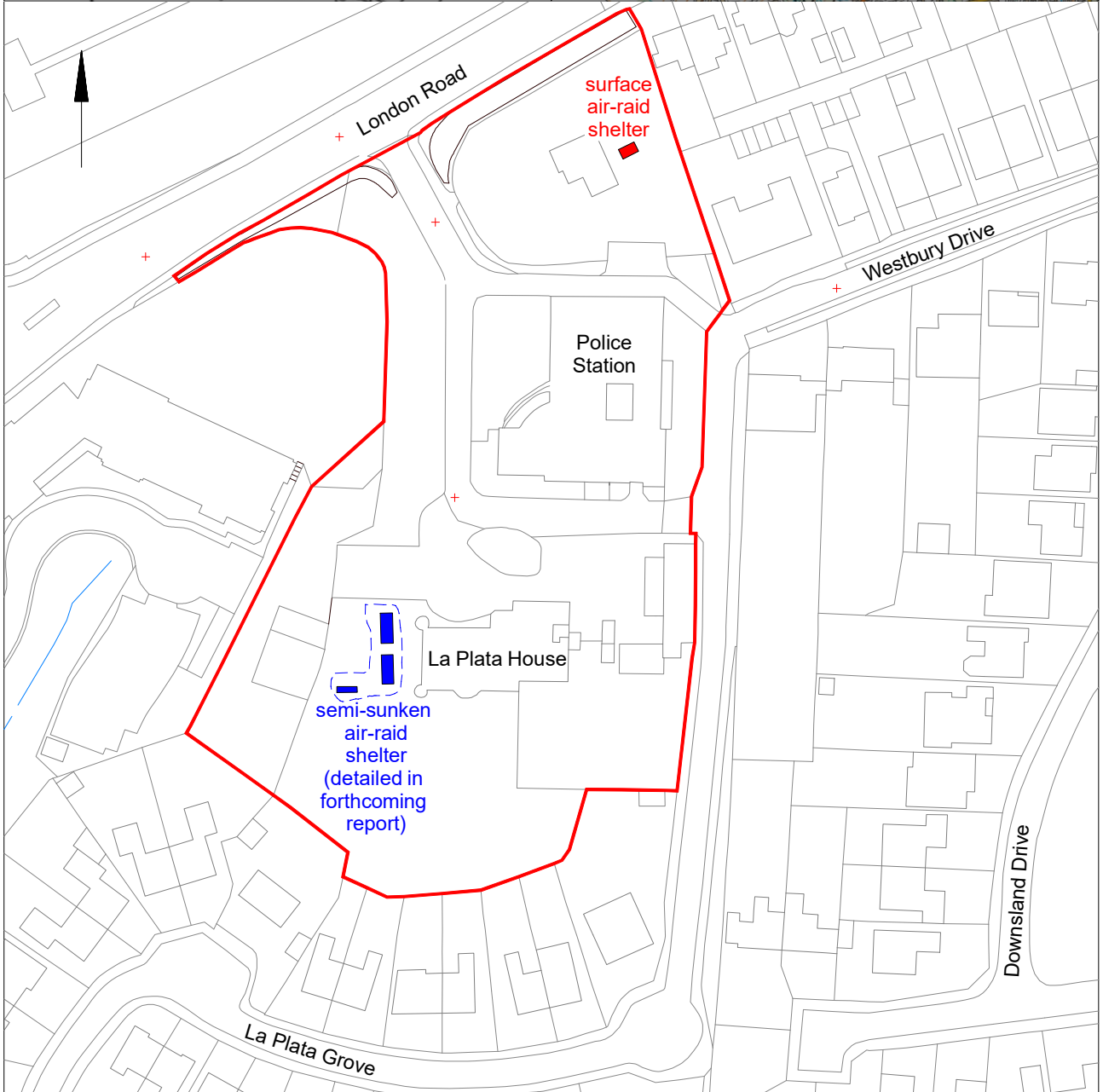
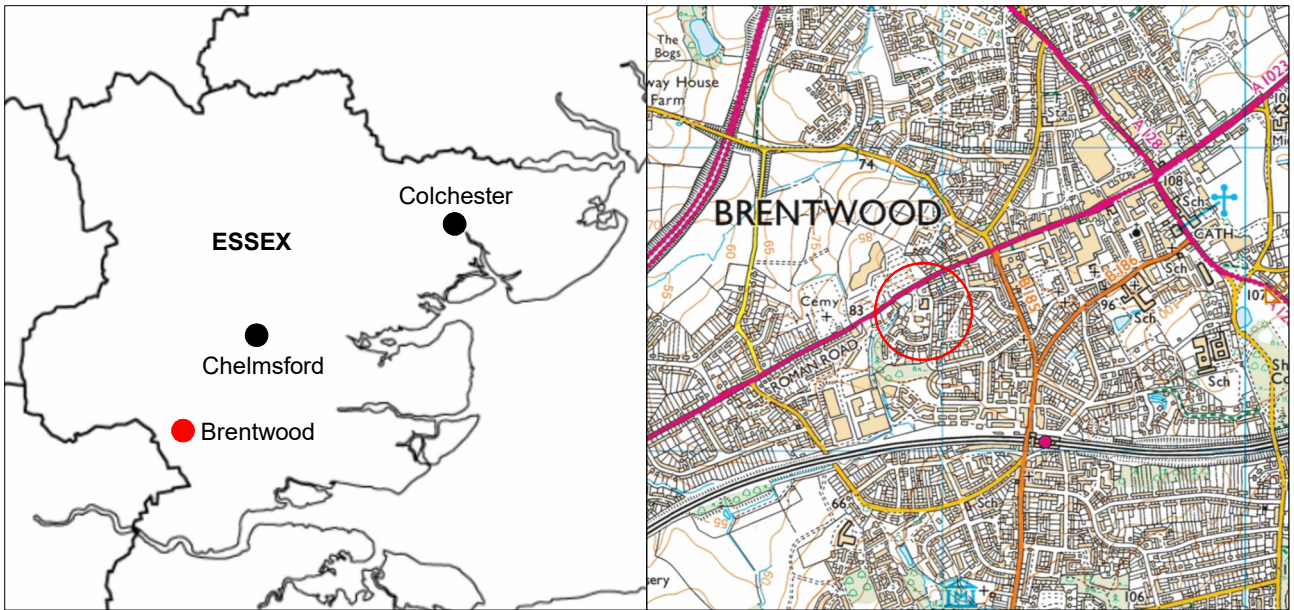


Fig 1 Site location.

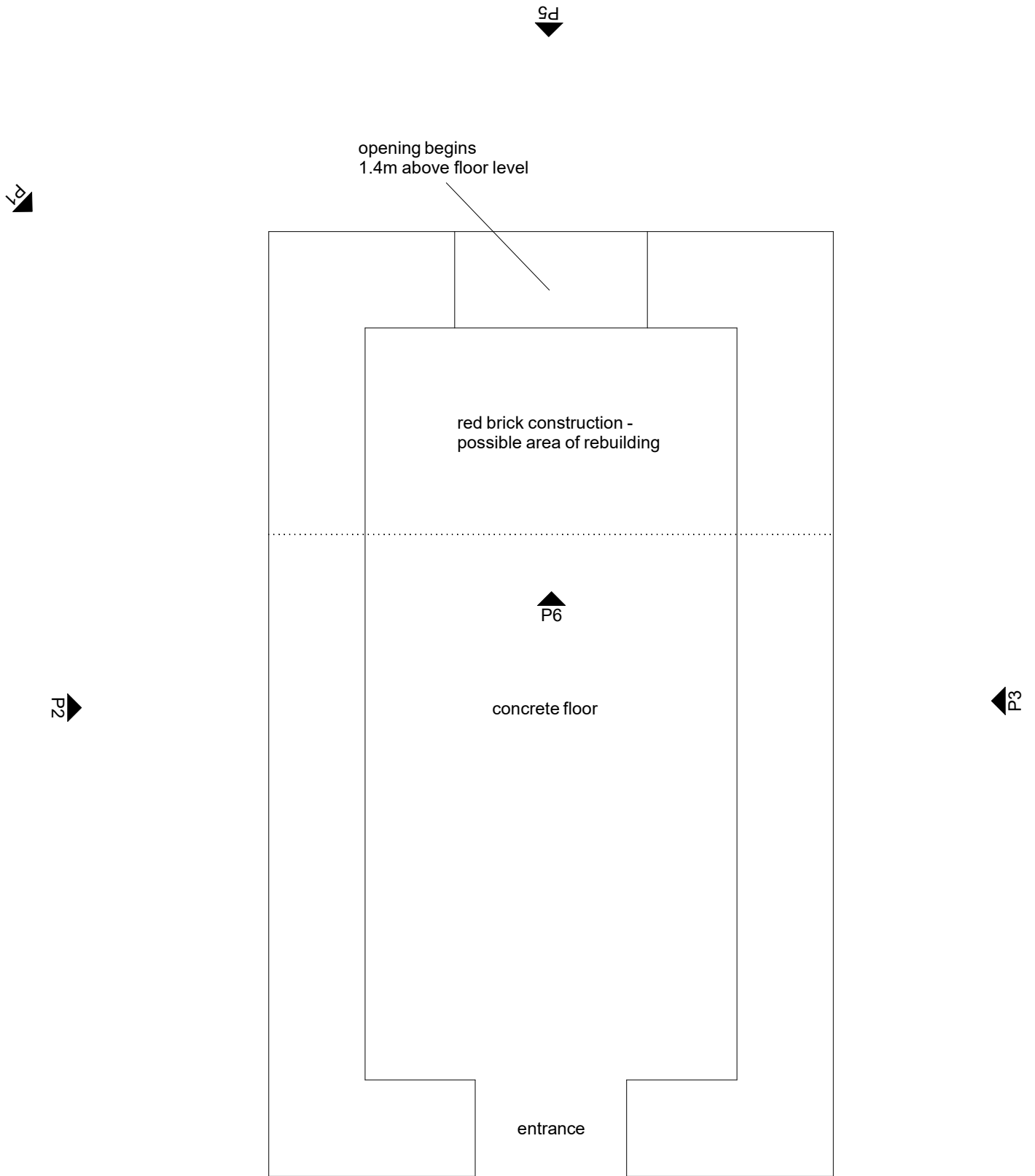
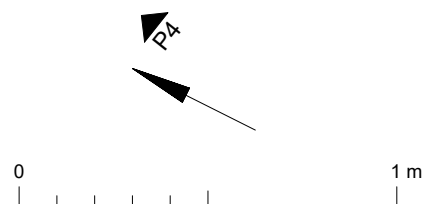
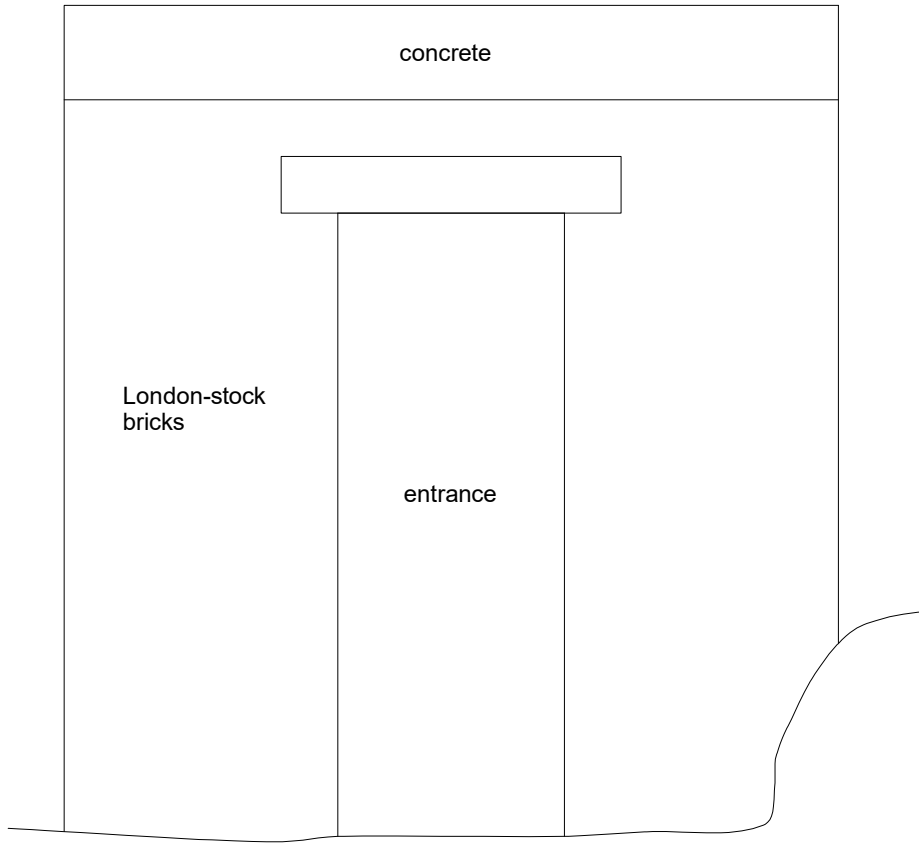


Fig 2 Floor plan of air-raid shelter.
Location and direction of photographs reproduced in text shown.



SW elevation



NE elevation

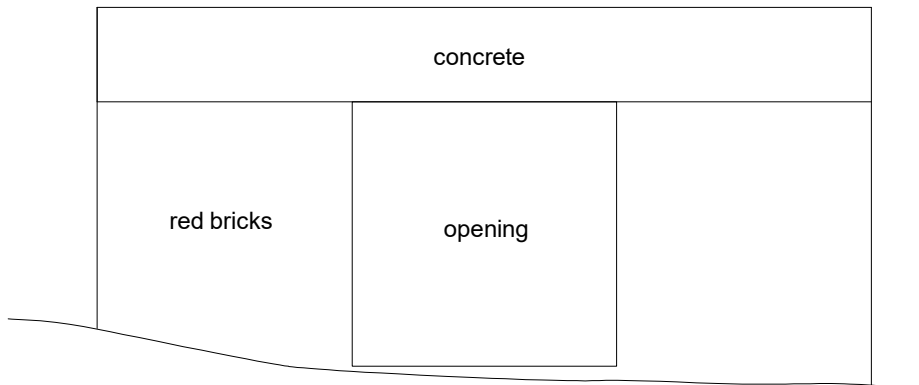


Fig 3 South-west and north-east elevations of the air-raid shelter.



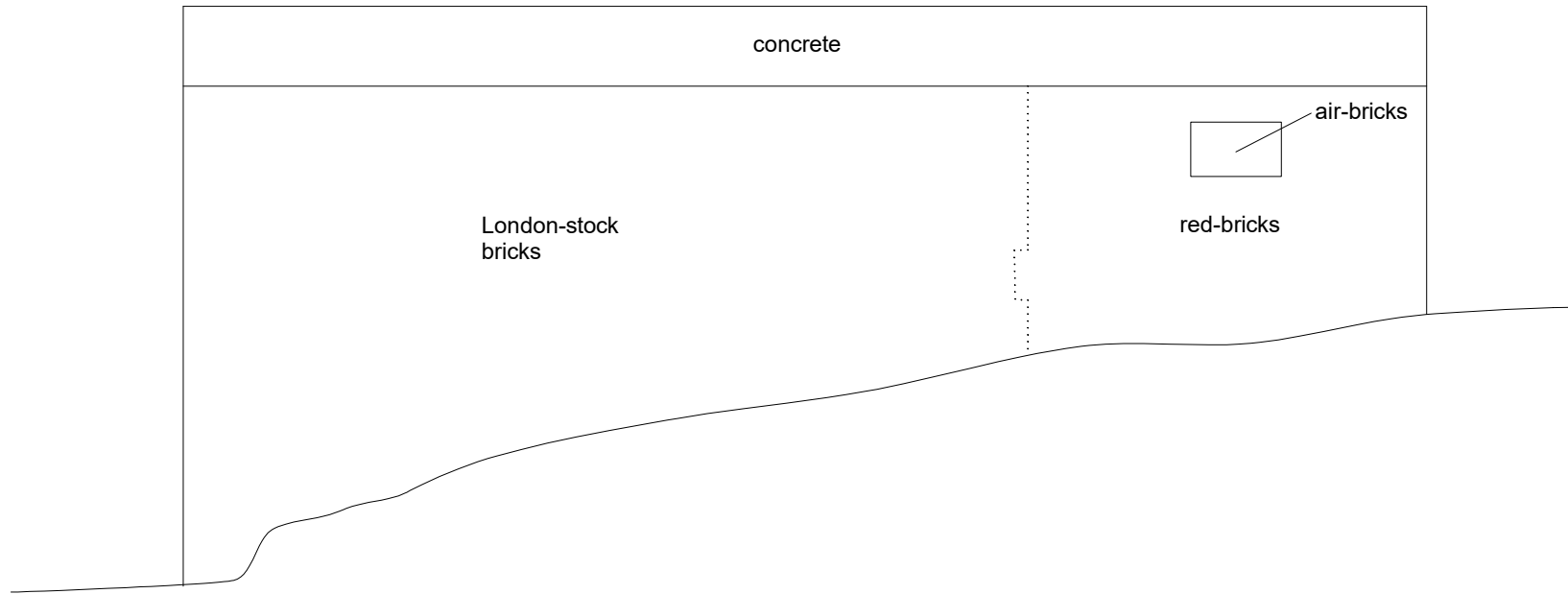


Fig 4 South-east elevation of air-raid shelter.



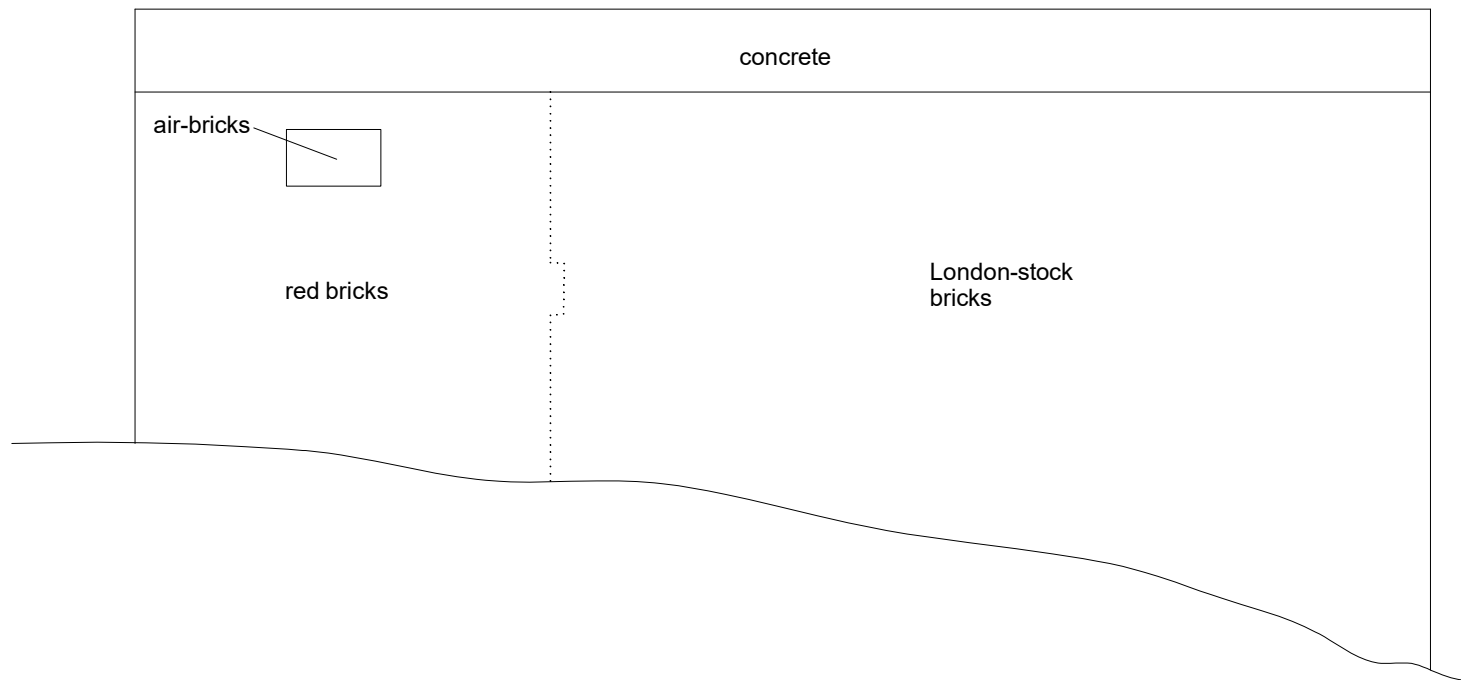


Fig 5 North-west elevation of air-raid shelter.



OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: colchest3-338955

Project details

Project name	Historic building recording at the former Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4QJ
Short description of the project	A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust on an air-raid shelter at the former Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood, Essex in March 2019. The shelter is a simple brick-built structure with a concrete floor and roof, partially built into an earth bank. Being largely above-ground, it would have never survived a direct hit but was intended to shield its occupants from any flying debris or shrapnel resulting from the intensive bombing Brentwood received during World War II.
Project dates	Start: 11-03-2019 End: 05-04-2019
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	16/01805/OUT - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	2019/01b - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CHMER 2019.001 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	AIR RAID SHELTER Modern

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX BRENTWOOD BRENTWOOD former Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood
Postcode	CM14 4QJ
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 589 934 51.616462176318 0.295422515448 51 36 59 N 000 17 43 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Colchester Archaeological Trust
----------------------	---------------------------------

Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Emma Holloway
Project director/manager	Chris Lister
Project supervisor	Mark Baister
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Weston Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Digital Archive ID	2019.001
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Paper Archive ID	2019.001
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Historic building recording of an air-raid shelter at the former Brentwood Police Station, London Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4QJ March 2019
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Baister, M.
Other bibliographic details	CAT Report 1400
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Colchester Archaeological Trust
Place of issue or publication	Colchester
Description	A4 bound report with clear plastic front and opaque card back.
URL	http://cat.essex.ac.uk/summaries/CAT-1400.html
Entered by	Mark Baister (mb@catuk.org)
Entered on	5 April 2019

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham](#), email Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

[Cookies](#) [Privacy Policy](#)