

**Archaeological building recording at
Tubbeswick, Mill Road, Mile End,
Colchester, Essex
May 2011**



**report prepared by
Chris Lister**

**on behalf of
Mersea Homes**

CAT project ref: 11/05f
Colchester and Ipswich Museums accession code: COLIM 2011.36
NGR: TL 9914 2770 (c)



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CAT Report 595
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1 Summary

Tubbeswick is a Grade II listed building dating to c 1752 which replaced an earlier structure that may have dated to the early medieval period. It is situated on a 0.35-hectare plot of land on the south side of Mill Road (NGR TL599145 227700). The building was listed for its special architectural and historic interest on 14 December 2001. The property and attached land have had connections to several significant historical figures, important both nationally and to Colchester in particular. The author Daniel Defoe leased the property in 1722 and it was subsequently rebuilt and occupied by his daughter. A fire during renovations in 2009 caused substantial structural damage, severe enough that the local planning authority gave consent for its demolition. As a condition attached to this consent a building recording survey was requested by Colchester Borough Council. This report fulfils that condition.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the archive report on building recording carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust at the property known as Tubbeswick, Mill Road, Mile End, Colchester, Essex in May 2011.
- 2.2 It is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for the demolition of said structure submitted to Colchester Borough Council (CBC application no 100646). This recommendation followed Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (notably policies HE 8 and 9).
- 2.3 The written report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record of digital images (Appendix 2).
- 2.4 All work was carried out in according to standards and practices contained in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2008), *Management of research projects in the historic environment* (MoRPHE), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Historical background

Tubbeswick is mentioned as a farm as far back as 1296. It took its name from Richard Tubbe, bailiff of Colchester 1296-7, who had crops and stock worth £6, 16s. 8d. (*Victoria County History*). In February 1348, Joseph Elianore bestowed a messuage in Mile End called Tubbeswick, along with 18 acres of arable land and two of woodland, on the Church of St Mary-at-the-Walls to provide for a chantry in the Chapel of St Thomas the Martyr. This was a small part of a large endowment to support two chaplains to pray daily for his good estate whilst he was alive, and for his soul after his decease (Morant 1748, *Book II*, 47). Upon the chantry's dissolution in 1548 Tubbeswick was passed to the corporation. The house (included as part of the Kingswood Heath, or Severalls, estate along with Brinkley Farm) was leased by the corporation to the author Daniel Defoe (c 1660-1731) on 6 August 1722 for £120 *per annum* for a period of 99 years (Morant 1748, *Book II*, 26). It was subsequently rebuilt for his daughter Molly Defoe in the early 1750s, probably 1752 based upon an inscribed brick found in the south elevation.

4 Cartographic survey (Illustrations 1-4)

Although not annotated Tubbeswick appears on the Chapman and André *County of Essex* map of 1777 as one of the very few properties in the north of Mile End (Illustration 1). It is depicted as being on the southern edge of Mile End Heath, close to the westernmost of the two windmills that gave the current Mill Road its name. Two buildings are shown at this location, with the one to the north-east undoubtedly being Tubbeswick itself, whilst that to the south-west must represent farm buildings.

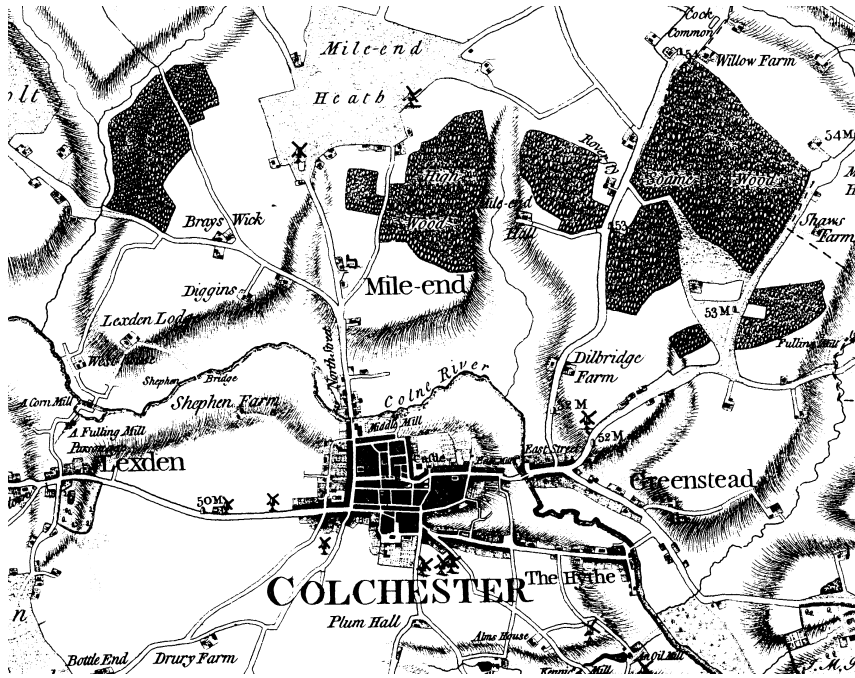


Illustration 1: extract from the Chapman and André *County of Essex* map (1777).

A version of the tithe map for Mile End (c 1846; Illustration 2) shows a much clearer picture of Tubbeswick. The outbuildings of the farm are clearly visible (compare with Plate 2), although it appears that the label has obscured the actual house itself.

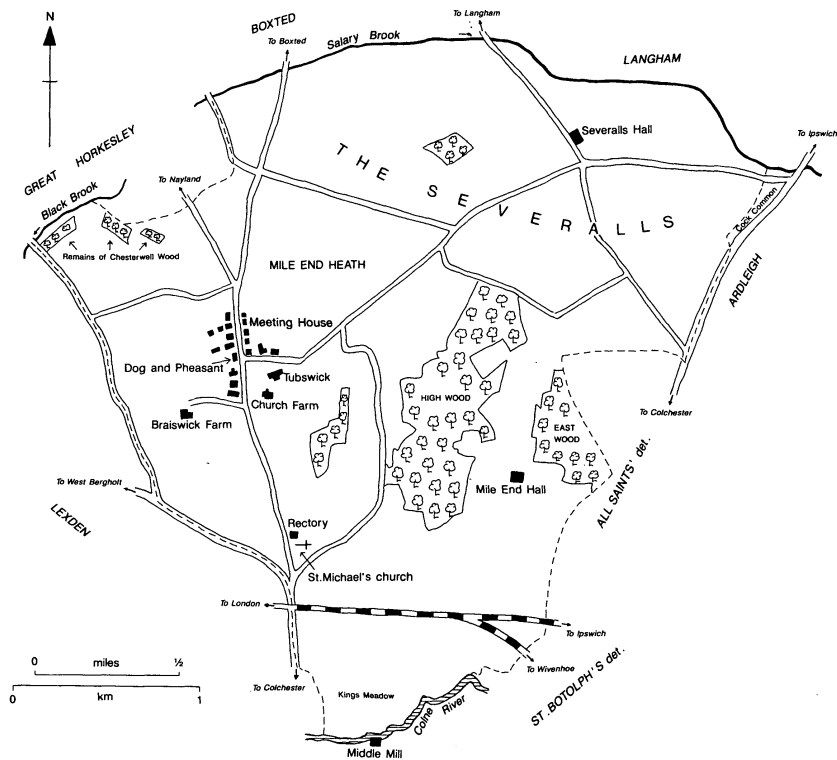


Illustration 2: Tithe map for Mile End, c 1846.

By the time of the 1875 Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, Tubbeswick appears unchanged in form from its appearance at the time of the building survey (Illustration 3). Although the name (having lost an e) shows signs of etymological evolution the map clearly shows the full double range plan form along with the lean-to extension to the east. The formal garden layout to the south of the house can also be made out as can lines of trees (presumably an orchard of some type) to the north of the property. Outbuildings to the west of the farmhouse can be observed, including a long ranged building that could be interpreted as stables. These outbuildings and garden features can be observed on an aerial photograph dated to the early 1970s (Plate 2).

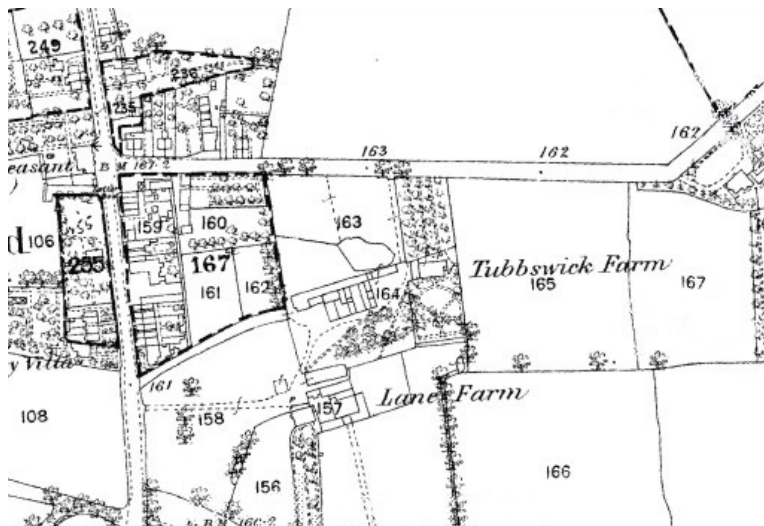


Illustration 3: extract from OS 1st edition map (1875).

Although the land to the north-west has been developed, this photograph (Plate 2) clearly shows a length of continuity at Tubbeswick stretching from at least the mid 19th century through to the latter half of the 20th. That continuity had come to an end by 1986 (Illustration 4) after the disposal of the outbuildings to the west for redevelopment purposes. At this point, the surrounding grounds at Tubbeswick were reduced in size to the approximate 0.35 hectare rectangle of land which contained the structure as surveyed.

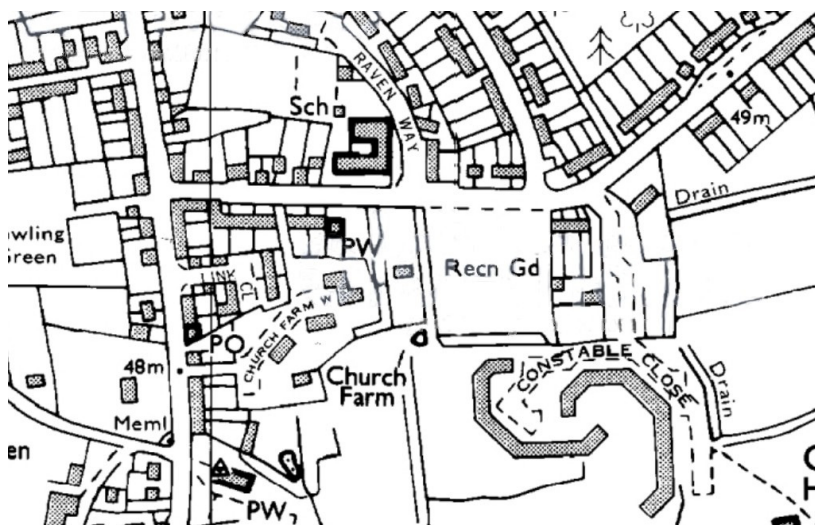


Illustration 4: extract from OS street map (1986).

5 Descriptive record (Figs 2-7)

At the time of the survey, significant damage had been caused by the 2009 and subsequent fires and consequently much of this record has been inferred from photographs and the English Heritage list description. Due to the unstable and unsafe nature of the structure, all observations and measurements were taken from outside a safety fence.

The building was Grade II listed and stood in a large (approximately 0.35 hectare) rectangular plot to the south side of Mill Road.

The house comprised several distinct components: a two-storey Main House to the south, rectangular in plan (14m long by 5.5m wide) with a peg-tiled roof, and a north range consisting of three structures. To the west side of this was a two-storey structure with the upper floor being a 20th-century addition or rebuild whilst the ground floor was probably contemporary to the 1750s' rebuilding of the Main House. To the east of this was a single-storey structure with a steeply pitched slate roof. Attached to the east of this was a smaller single-storey lean-to with a slate roof. An out-house (door facing north) was located approximately 2m to the east of this.

The south elevation (Plates 1, 3) was two storeys of red brick laid in Flemish bond with a five-window range to the upper floor and a centrally-aligned door in the ground floor. The elevation was symmetrical through this doorway and the brick chimney stack along the ridge line of the peg-tile roof. The central door had six panels, the upper two being glazed, set within a timber doorcase with a flat protruding hood. One bricked-in window under a segmental arch and with a brick sill was to either side of this with one eight-over-eight unhorned sash with stone sill to each of the outer window bays. The first floor alternated between three six-over-six unhorned sashes with stone sills and two bricked-in windows with brick sills. One brick (left of the first floor west window) bore an inscription 'HDF/1752' (Hannah Defoe). Below the eaves was a concave plaster cornice (Plate 7).

The west elevation of the Main House was of two storeys of red brick laid in Flemish bond with a high gable containing attic space (Plate 4). There was one six-over-six unhorned sash window with segmental arches and stone sills to each floor, with a segmental-headed casement with glazing bars to the attic above. The north range was recessed from the Main House with the ground floor being of red brick laid in Flemish bond and having a non-centrally located six-over-six unhorned sash window with wooden sill. Three courses above this window a second storey had been built or rebuilt. This was laid in stretcher bond (suggesting cavity walling) and had a hipped roof of machine-made tile. A six-over-six unhorned sash window with segmental arch and stone sill was centrally located within this upper floor (Plate 8).

The north elevation comprised three structures (Plate 5). The west structure was recessed from the rest of the range and was two storeys in height. The ground floor was of red brick laid in Flemish bond with an eight-over-eight unhorned sash window with wooden sill and segmented arch to the west and a plank door to the east. Immediately to the east of this door was a bricked-in window with eight glass bottles in a rough X set into the brickwork (Plate 9). The upper floor was a second storey that had been built or rebuilt. This upper floor was laid in stretcher bond and had a hipped roof of machine-made tile. A six-over-six unhorned sash window with segmental arch and stone sill was located just to the east of the centre of the wall. A chimneystack rose from the main wall plane behind this second storey. The central structure of the north range was a single storey with a high gable (rising higher than the eaves of the Main House) of red brick laid in Flemish bond roofed in slate. The high gable incorporated attic space with a centrally located casement of twelve lights with glazing bars. To the west was a two-over-two horizontally sliding sash with a wood sill and segmental arch. This was mirrored to the east by a bricked-in window that had been truncated by a replacement two-over-two unhorned sash window with wooden sill and segmented arch. Attached to the east side of the central structure was a single storey lean-to of red brick laid in Flemish bond. This had a shallower pitched slate roof and projected east from the north range. A plank wood door was to the west and a casement with glazing bars to the east. The concave plaster cornice below the eaves of the Main House could be observed to the east and west of the gable.

The east elevation comprised the Main House to the south and elements of all three of the structures forming the north range (Plate 6). The elevation of the Main

House was of red brick laid in Flemish bond. The central area where windows were present in the east elevation was taken up by brick infill from ground level up to the eaves. Either side of this infill the brickwork had been painted black. Centrally located within the high gable was a segmental-headed casement with glazing bars that admitted light to the attic. At the north end of the east elevation a plain red brick wall projected. This formed the external wall of the lean-to. Above this could be seen the slate covered roofs of the north range. Obscured by the high gable of the central structure, the east face of the second storey to the west contained a long, shallow casement with glazing bars.

The interior of Tubbeswick is harder to describe due to the inaccessibility of the structure. The ground floor of the Main House had a lobby entrance with two large rooms to east and west separated by a large centrally located chimney stack. The fireplaces within this had been reduced in size. Two large oak chamfered bridging beams with tongue stops spanned either room. To the west side of the chimney was a curved brick soffit which rose up to the closest beam and provided support for the hearth in the floor above. The east room had a bricked-in window (possibly a doorway) in the north wall (Plate 10). A doorway in the north wall of the west room lead into the north-west room. To the north of the chimney was a winder staircase leading to the upper floor. The upper floor of the Main House likely followed the same layout as the ground floor. The north-west room had a tall fire opening for a range in the south wall and is interpreted as a kitchen. East of this room (accessed through a door in the north-south dividing wall) was a room of equivalent size, possibly a pantry. This had a fireplace situated at the east end, the chimney of which rose through the slate roof (Plate 11). Above this room was an attic space contained within the steeply pitched gable (indicated by floor joist pockets within the brickwork). The roof appeared to be of common rafters supported on purlins, rising from the eaves to the ridge. The lean-to attached to the east wall of the pantry contained a large brick oven with a metal door with a coke bunker to the east (Plate 12). This has been variously interpreted as either a boiler room or bake house. It is not possible to comment on the stud walls within the house apart from to say that those that could be observed were of timber with brick noggin. The floors were of timber comprising main beams and joists. It is not possible to interpret the attic space of the Main House but the roof had common rafters rising from the eaves to the ridge with occasional tie beams at eaves level. No evidence of purlins supporting the common rafters was observed.

6 Discussion

It is likely that, over the centuries, several different forms of structure have been associated with Tubbeswick. These may well have included a timber-framed hall as part of the medieval *messuage* and possibly a subsequent structure prior to Defoe taking up the lease. The brick-built Georgian farmhouse erected by the Defoe family evolved into the structure that survived into the 21st century. These changes reflect prevalent architectural styles of the time and the attitudes of the different occupants. The most famous occupant was of course the author Daniel Defoe who took up the lease in 1722. A myth connected to the house is that Defoe wrote *Moll Flanders* whilst living there, but the fact that the publication date for that novel is January 1722 and the lease was not signed until August of that year disproves this theory. It should also be questioned whether Defoe ever actually lived in the premises. At the time that he took over the leasehold Defoe was enjoying a successful career as one of the earliest proponents of the novel after a lifetime of political pamphleteering. At the same time, he was a man who had numerous careers (including general mercantile, perfumery, tax collector, brick and tile manufacturer, Monmouth rebel, and government spy). He was well connected but dogged by debt and indeed imprisoned for it. It is possible that Defoe leased the farm as a business concern rather than as an abode, yet it is equally possible that a man of such widespread experience and diverse talents turned his hand to farming (although in a gentlemanly manner). What can certainly be said is that the years between his taking up of the lease and his death in 1731 saw the bulk of his novels published. It would be nice to think that, in

his early 60s, Defoe was looking to retire somewhere quieter than his native London in order to concentrate on the new form of literature that he was pioneering. In Tubbeswick he may have found what he was seeking. Of course, if the date of 1752 (from the dated and initialled brick on the south elevation) is taken as an indicator of when Tubbeswick was rebuilt then it becomes clear that Defoe could not have lived in the Georgian house surveyed here.

The evolution of the building appears to be quite straightforward, although the inability to safely approach the structure does make the following theoretical. The rebuilding of Tubbeswick replaced all trace of any earlier medieval structure and comprised the south range of the Main House, with two large rooms around a central chimney on the ground floor, either with the same plan above or with the first floor being subdivided. The kitchen to the north-west corner of the Main House was constructed from identical-looking bricks bonded in the same way and must either be contemporary with the Main House or be a very swift addition. Whether or not this extension originally had an upper storey is hard to say. Comments from the owners place the 20th-century first floor above the kitchen as being constructed in the early 1920s but do not confirm the presence of a previously-existing storey. However, if there were a contemporary first floor above the kitchen then there would be a compelling argument to say these were servants' quarters.

The rest of the north range was clearly constructed after the Main House. With the fire damage exposing the interior, it could be seen that the central structure with its high gable and slate roof was built up against the north wall of the Main House, cutting through the plaster cornice (Plate 6). The slate rather than peg-tile roof covering and the fact that purlins were used in the construction, when they were not in the roof of the Main House, indicates that the two were not contemporary. It is likely that the central structure was added in the 19th century. The large fireplace at the east end hints that the structure may have been added to increase the domestic capacity of the kitchen to the west, possibly as a pantry or scullery. This probably reflects the changing attitudes to dining from the Georgian to Victorian periods or (perhaps more likely, considering the Victorian-looking outbuildings of the rest of the farm), the expansion in the number of people working on the farm and being fed from the farmhouse. The attic space above this pantry may either have been additional servants' quarters or storage. This is represented as Phase 2 on Figure 7.

The brick lean-to at the east end of the pantry is a later addition (Phase 3 on Figure 7). This could clearly be seen in the change in the pitch of the roofline and in the discrepancy in the height of the brick course with that of the pantry. The large brick furnace in this lean-to suggests that this was a boiler room providing hot water to the house. The map evidence (Illustration 3) dates this structure to the 19th century. The out-house to the east of the lean-to is probably of 20th-century construction.

Many of the elements that made up the façade of the Main House look, at first glance, to be original but a closer inspection reveals that the Georgian building underwent several changes over time. The plaster coving on the south and north elevations was original, as was the roof (although there is always the possibility that the peg-tiles were re-laid), but the windows of the south elevation were all subtly altered. The blocked windows were just that – blocked off by brick in-fill and not dummy windows. A close analysis of the areas around the brick sills showed where the original stone sills had been removed and replaced. The other windows showed evidence that the sills had been lowered and, in the case of the ground-floor outer windows, widened. The windows in the east and west elevations were probably also enlarged at this time. This may have been a response to the repeal of the Window Tax in 1851. These alterations may have caused structural instability and explain why both gables required rebuilding (the west in 1987 and the east at an unspecified time, possibly the 19th century) and that the windows of the east elevation themselves were bricked-in during the 20th century.

The north range also displayed some signs of alteration, most noticeably in the lower window range of the pantry. Here, the easternmost window was bricked-in and a replacement, taller window inserted. The reason for this remains unclear. The lack of a segmented arch above the window in the kitchen's west elevation suggests that this was a later insertion, and the window in the north elevation was probably

enlarged and dropped at the same time as those in the south elevation. The small bricked-in window to the east of the kitchen door was probably a late alteration. The bottle bases interspersed through the infill appear to be wine or beer bottles of early 20th-century design, although this cannot be confirmed.

Tubbeswick provided a fine example of a dwelling with provable connections to both different periods of history and characters of historical note. Although the property underwent many alterations and additions over the course of its existence this, by illustrating the architectural evolution of a building, enhances rather than detracts from the importance of the building.

7 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Mersea Homes for commissioning and funding the work. The survey work was carried out by Chris Lister.

8 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at <http://cat.essex.ac.uk>

IfA	2008	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures</i>
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
Morant, Philip	1748	<i>The History and Antiquities of the most Ancient Town and Borough of Colchester</i>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of research projects in the historic environment</i> (English Heritage)
Morton Partnership Ltd		<i>Structural assessment of Tubbeswick, Mill Road, Mile End, Colchester, Essex</i>
<i>Victoria County History</i>	1994	<i>A History of the County of Essex, 9: the Borough of Colchester</i> , ed by J Cooper

9 Abbreviations and glossary

CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record
messuage	a dwelling house and adjacent buildings, including the land used by the household
purlin	longitudinal roof timber giving support to common rafters
NGR	National Grid Reference

10 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums (accession code COLIM 2011.36).

Distribution list

Brad Davies (Mersea Homes)

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Adams x c:/reports 11/Tubbeswick/report595.doc

Appendix 1

Selected printed photographs (Plates 1-12)

Plates 3-12 and images 1-38 were all taken in 2011.



Plate 1: Tubbeswick Farm south elevation prior to the 2009 fire.



Plate 2: aerial photograph of Tubbeswick Farm showing farm buildings to the west.



Plate 3: south elevation.



Plate 4: west elevation.



Plate 5: north elevation.



Plate 6: the east elevation (oblique angle).



Plate 7: detail of the plaster cornice and eaves.



Plate 8: west elevation upper-storey sash window.



Plate 9: north elevation, detail of bricked-in window and bottle bases.



Plate 10: south elevation, east ground-floor room, showing oak bridging beam and blocked-in window.



Plate 11: north elevation, showing pantry fireplace.



Plate 12: north elevation - boiler room, showing furnace.

Appendix 2

Full list of photographic record (images on accompanying CD)

- 001.JPG General site shot - view south-east.
- 002.JPG General site shot - view south.
- 003.JPG General site shot - view south-west.
- 004.JPG General site shot - view north-west.
- 005.JPG General site shot - view north-east.
- 006.JPG South elevation - view north.
- 007.JPG West elevation - view east.
- 008.JPG West elevation - view east.
- 009.JPG North elevation (west end) - view south.
- 010.JPG North elevation (centre west) - view south.
- 011.JPG North elevation (centre east) - view south.
- 012.JPG North elevation (east end) - view south.
- 013.JPG East elevation (north end) - view south-west.
- 014.JPG East elevation (north end) - view east.
- 015.JPG East elevation (south end) - view east.
- 016.JPG South elevation (west end) - view north.
- 017.JPG South elevation (centre) - view north.
- 018.JPG South elevation (east end) - view north.
- 019.JPG South elevation (outhouse) - view north.
- 020.JPG Out-house - view south-east.
- 021.JPG Out-house, north elevation - view south.
- 022.JPG Out-house, east elevation - view south-east.
- 023.JPG Out-house, south elevation - view north.
- 024.JPG Garage - view south-west.
- 025.JPG West elevation, detail of surviving sash window - view east.
- 026.JPG West elevation, detail of brick splay at eaves level - view east.
- 027.JPG North elevation, blocked window with bottle base decoration.
- 028.JPG North elevation upper storey, detail of surviving sash window - view south.
- 029.JPG North elevation, fireplace in kitchen - view south-east.
- 030.JPG North elevation, kitchen fireplace - view south-east.
- 031.JPG North elevation, furnace room - view south.
- 032.JPG North elevation, furnace room - view south-east.
- 033.JPG South elevation, south-east room fireplace - view north-west.
- 034.JPG South elevation, south-east room: detail of timber tie-beam and blocked doorway.
- 035.JPG East elevation, south pediment brick splay - view north-east.
- 036.JPG South elevation, detail of surviving fascia and concave moulding - view north.
- 037.JPG West end original upper room: detail of fireplace - view north.
- 038.JPG North-west room fireplace - view south.



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Fig 1 Site location.

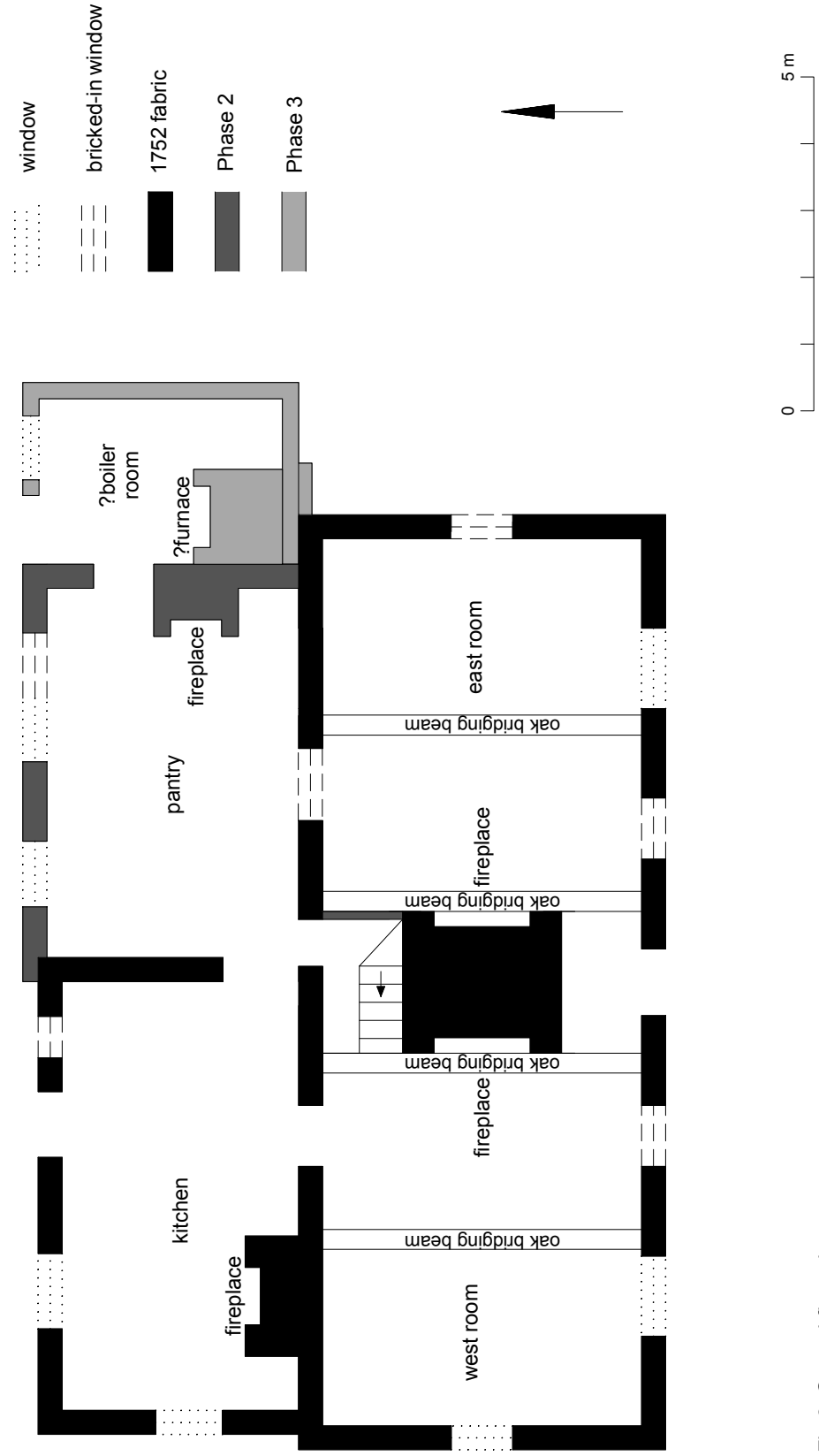


Fig 2 Ground-floor plan.

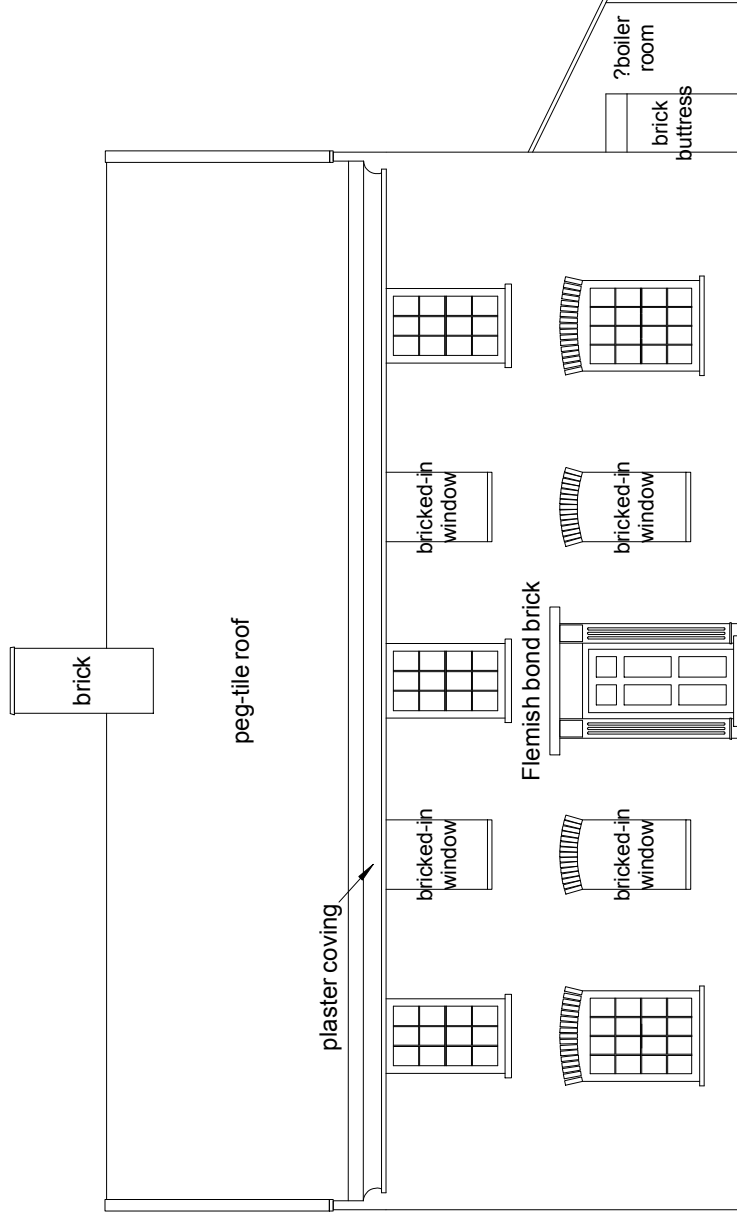


Fig 3 South elevation.

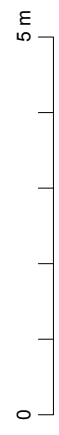
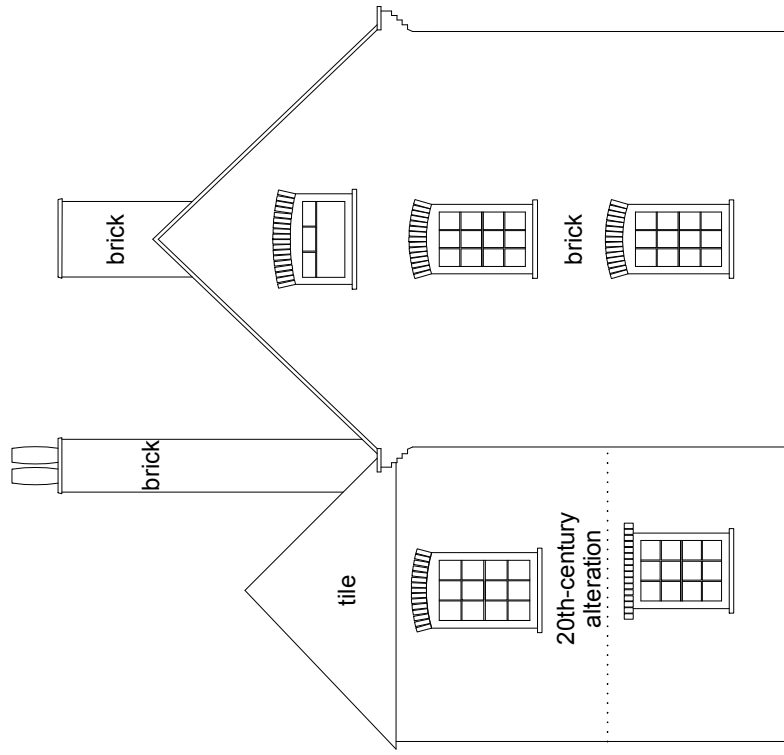


Fig 4 West elevation.

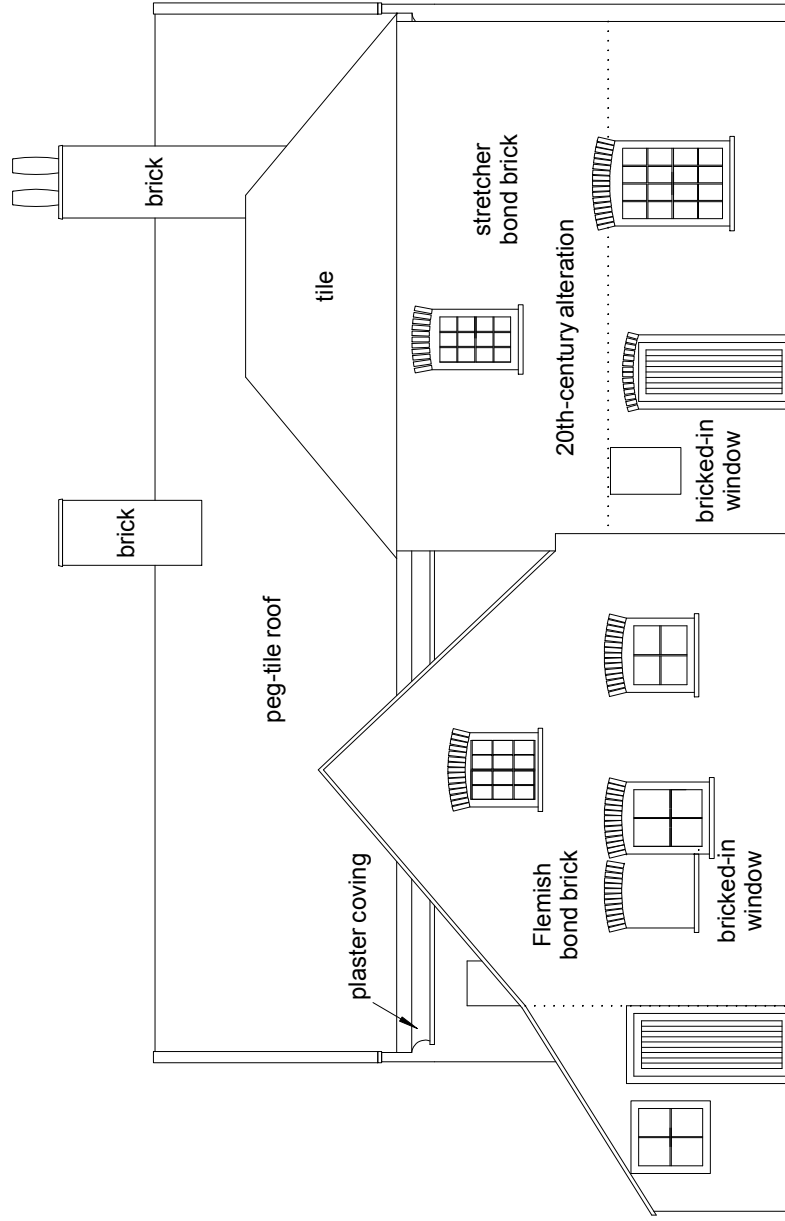


Fig 5 North elevation.

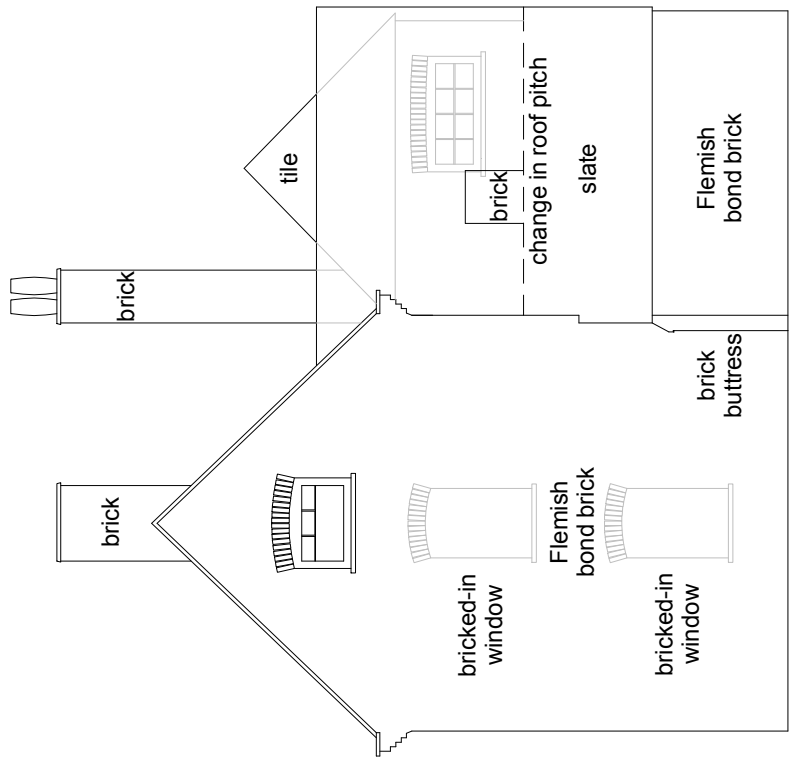


Fig 6 East elevation.

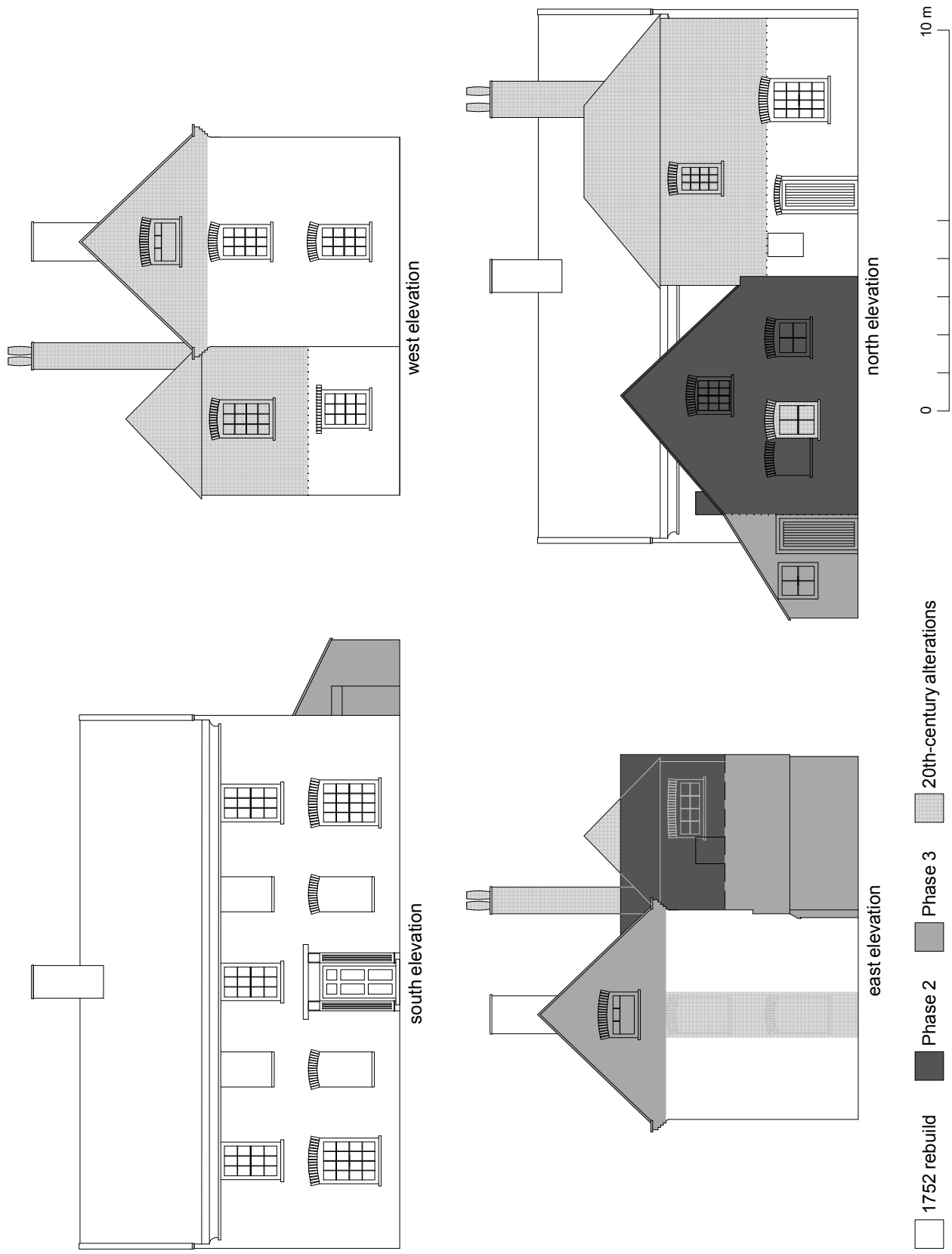


Fig 7 Phased interpretation.

Essex Heritage Conservation Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

Summary sheet

Site address: Tubbeswick, Mill Road, Mile End, Colchester, Essex	
Parish: Mile End	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9914 2770 (c)	Site codes: CAT - 11/05f Museum accession - COLIM 2011.36
Type of work: Building recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: May 2011	Size of area investigated:
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHER nos:
Final report: CAT Report 595 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: 18th- to 20th-century domestic structure	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Tubbeswick is a Grade II listed building dating to c 1752 which replaced an earlier structure that may have dated to the early medieval period. It is situated on a 0.35-hectare plot of land on the south side of Mill Road (centred at NGR TL 599145 227700). The building was listed for its special architectural and historic interest on 14th December 2001. The property and attached land have had connections with several significant historical figures, important both nationally and to Colchester in particular. The author Daniel Defoe leased the property in 1722 and it was subsequently rebuilt and occupied by his daughter. A fire during renovations in 2009 caused substantial structural damage, severe enough that the local planning authority gave consent for its demolition. As a condition attached to this consent, a building recording survey was requested by Colchester Borough Council.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Chris Lister	Date of summary: 13th June 2011