Above: Occupying a corner position at the junction of Edgware Road and Oxgate Lane, the frontage of the Admiralty Charts Establishment has an imposing presence with its bleak brick façade offset by an imposing Portland Stone portal to the entrance front.

Oxgate

The Admiralty Citadel is concealed beneath a late-1930s office building at the Naval Charts Factory, which had been established on land between Humber Road and Oxgate Lane, Cricklewood, in 1923. The site was identified as potentially suitable in 1937, construction commenced in the following year and the bunker was available for occupation in December 1939. The surface building was completed in 1940. As at Paddock, which was less than a mile away, senior staff were housed in requisitioned flats in Nevilles Court while it was planned that more junior staff and clerks would be accommodated in nearby schools which, it was assumed, would be rendered redundant by evacuation at the start of the war.

The bunker was a two-storey construction built as a large rectangular box with the intermediate floor and the upper storey roof supported by twenty-five evenly-spaced concrete pillars. Within the rectangular box, individual rooms were separated by lightweight partition walls. The lower floor contained all the service plant including air-conditioning and ventilation equipment, and an emergency generator.

By 1943, with the threat of German bombing having receded to insignificance, the importance of the Oxgate bunker declined and much of its function was transferred to Admiralty Blockhouse on Horse Guards Parade. The facility was closed down completely at the end of 1944. In more recent years Oxgate Lane was occupied by the Health & Safety Executive, but the building is currently in private hands and used as a carpet warehouse.