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Your ref: 3/2025/0489  
Our ref: 3\_2025\_0489-LCC  
Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## FAO K Hughes

Dear Ms Hopkins,

**Application 3/2025/0489: Proposed extension to manufacturing facility with associated HV Substation, external plant compound and new/displaced car park.**

**BAE Systems, Samlesbury Aerodrome, Myerscough Smithy Road, Balderstone BB2 7LF**

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. We would have no objection to or comment to make on the majority of the elements of the application but note that the works on the proposed car park site (element B of the proposal) have revealed the presence of a concrete former WWII defence structure. Some brief details on this have been supplied in a report from Wilson Mason (document 7295 Rev 01, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025). As a result, the red line boundary of the development has been redrawn to exclude that structure from the development site (report section 1.4).

The Wilson Mason report provides some images of the structure, both part-way through the recent uncovering and historic photographs sourced from the client heritage team. The report also suggests that this structure is an adapted "... *Type 24 pillbox* ..." (section 1.3). In fact the structure, whilst it could be categorised as a pillbox, bears little correspondence with a Type 24, which should be quickly obvious when comparing the photographs supplied with the known Type 24 pillbox that stands on the edge of the sports pitches some 175 to the northwest at SD 62239 31648. The structure is noted in the Council for British Archaeology's "Defence of Britain" database ([https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/ai\\_full\\_r.cfm?refno=6838](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/ai_full_r.cfm?refno=6838)), although it is only given a six-figure NGR. There it is described as a 'variant' type, i.e. not one of the standard pillbox types, and is a:

*"Lozenge-shaped pillbox, with corner buttresses at angles and portico flanked by stepped embrasures, with machine gun embrasures in the other five faces."*

Some further research, particularly on the Pillbox Study Group's website, would also suggest that many airfield defence structures were designed to suit their particular needs, rather than conforming to one of the 'standard' types. Examination of the photographs in the report and details in the LCC aerial photographic survey of 1963 would suggest that the description could be revised to state that the structure appears

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to be an octagonal concrete core (a Type 24 is an irregular hexagon) with extended wings on alternate faces. On its northwest and southeast faces the wings appear narrower, that to the northwest having a low personnel doorway facing southwest into the airfield. The southeast side is also extended out as a broader wing, but in this case to form a full-width firing or observation slit protected by a concrete apron and overhanging roof. Whilst LCC 1963 aerial photography (Run 10, frames 9653 and 9654) would suggest a second such feature on the opposing northwest face, this is not illustrated in the report. The intermediate south and east faces of the octagon between the wings have small rectangular embrasures, possibly stepped as suggested above or with frames, but their presence on the north and east faces is as yet unconfirmed.

The size and shape of this structure, and its location further back from the perimeter within the airfield proper (the 1940s/1963 aerial photography shows it to have been adjacent to a perimeter road/taxiway and aircraft parking) might suggest more of a 'command and control' role within the wider airfield defences, of which we have little information but which may be set out within the BAE archives. It is probable that further field investigation will 'flesh out' the above description and allow more considered conclusions to be reached regarding the role of this structure and what weapons it was intended to house.

We would strongly support the alteration of the proposed development scheme to exclude the structure and would recommend that it is fully uncovered, recorded, and presented to staff and visitors to the airfield. We would stress that great care needs to be taken when cleaning the structure out so that surviving WWII fixtures and fittings, graffiti, wall art, etc. are not unnecessarily damaged or removed. The record of the structure, inside and out, should be to Level 3 as set out in '*Understanding Historic Buildings*' (Historic England 2016) and should be carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional contractor with knowledge of relevant WWII structures and weapons, to the standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. We would also suggest, given the location of the structure adjacent to a car park, that this is an ideal opportunity to erect an information board describing it and the other WWII defence structures present or formerly extant on the airfield.

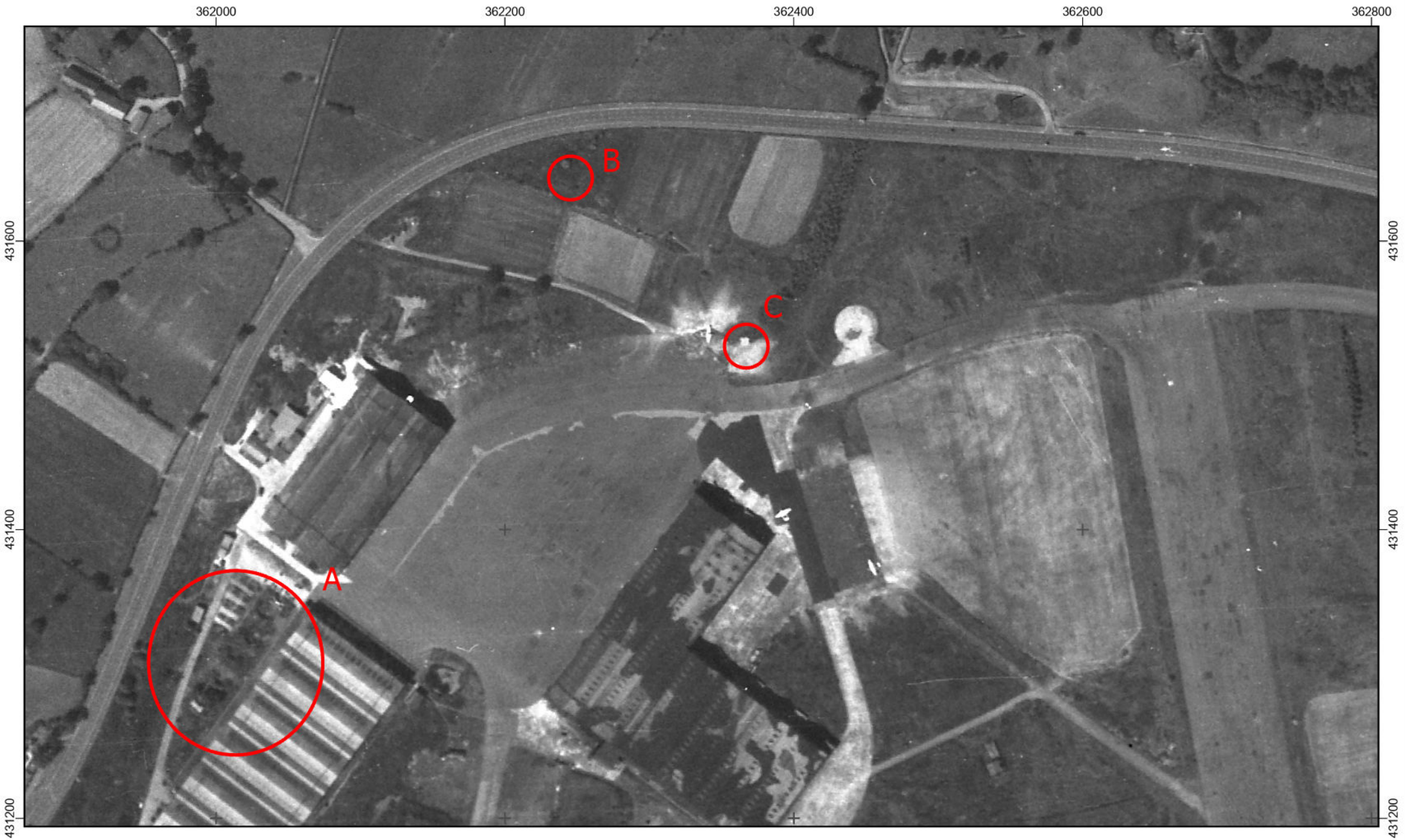
As the structure has been taken out of the 'development red line' it may not be appropriate to add conditions requiring the above works to be carried out to any consent granted to the current application, but we would hope that the project managers and site owners would seriously consider the recommendations made above. We would be happy to discuss these matters further with them and/or draft a brief for the recording and presentation work if this would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

*Peter Iles*

Peter Iles  
Planning Officer (Archaeology),  
Historic Environment Team





## Lancashire Historic Environment Record

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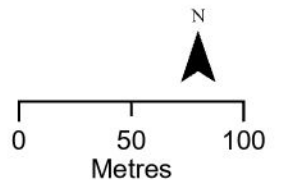
Samlesbury Airfield, Extract from RAF 1940s aerial photography, showing:

A - Probable Air Raid Shelters

B - Type 24 Pillbox

C - Variant Pillbox unearthed Sep 2025

Also note the 3 parked de Havilland 'Vampire' jets, probably built at English Electric, Preston.





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Samlesbury Airfield, Extract from the LCC 1963 aerial survey, showing:

A - Probable Air Raid Shelters

B - Type 24 Pillbox

C - Variant Pillbox unearthed Sep 2025

