

Battle of Britain Bunker, RAF Uxbridge, Hillingdon

Site type: Industrial, Infrastructure & Military

Fieldwork: MOLA (2023-24)

GLHER records: [Battle of Britain Bunker: Aerial & Ground Survey Report](#)
[Watching Brief at the Battle of Britain Bunker](#)

Proposed scheme

The grade I listed RAF Fighter Command 11 Group underground operations room was of fundamental importance in organising the air defence of the United Kingdom in the Battle of Britain and other key actions of World War Two. It is now managed by Hillingdon Council as a visitor attraction and heritage education centre.

Water ingress and drainage problems placed the interior at risk requiring repairs to leaking ventilation shafts necessitating deep excavation through the protective earth and concrete layers above the bunker itself.

Archaeological response

Because this was a top-secret military command centre no wartime photographs are known of it above-ground. Measured surface survey and historic aerial photograph interpretation revealed earthworks, structures and artefacts designed to protect this key installation. The bunker appears to have been camouflaged from the air to look like part of the designed landscape of nearby Hillingdon House. A brick pillbox, earthwork gun pits and barbed wire entanglements protected against the new unconventional warfare of airborne raids, parachutists and saboteurs. A CND symbol provides graffiti evidence for later peaceful protest.

GLAAS advised that the desk-based assessment and field survey needed specialist input to be focussed on understanding WW2 archaeology and how it can contribute new perspectives to a well-known historical story.

Outcome

The survey enabled the historic structures and earthworks to be recognised and protected during essential engineering works, and hopefully interpreted for future visitors. The watching brief revealed the layers of earth and concrete designed to protect from aerial bombing.

A reconstruction drawing was produced showing how the command centre was designed, hidden, and guarded. A press release obtained national coverage for the museum.

