

# T2 Hangar:

A vision for the future



***ESSEX***



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# Introduction

Who are the Essex HMVA ?

## 01

### Introduction

The Essex Historic Military Vehicle Association (Essex HMVA) is a registered, volunteer led Charity (number 1155705) that is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Britain's military and industrial past with a membership exceeding 300 members predominately located in Essex but increasingly now with members that hail from throughout the UK and Europe.

The charity is now in its eleventh year since its formation with aims to preserve, educate and inform people about our rich military heritage in the UK.

We do this especially through the restoration of historic vehicles and structures.



Our members include historians, engineers, veterans, and enthusiasts united by a shared commitment to safeguarding Essex's wartime legacy.

Many of our volunteers bring professional expertise in infrastructure, operations, and site management, enabling us to approach preservation with both technical rigour and community spirit, visiting schools and attending events.

We are fortunate to have as our Patrons:

**Mr Stephen Nunn,**  
Consultant Historical & Antiquarian Researcher, Honorary Freeman of the Town of Maldon and former town mayor of Maldon.

As well as:

**Rt Hon Sir John Whitingdale, OBE,**  
Member of parliament for Maldon, former Minister of State for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries.

# 02

## Executive Summary

The T2 Hangar and Romney hut are the last vestiges of the WW2 Boreham Airfield and they deserve to be saved and enjoyed by future generations. But what to do with them? We think we have the solution - a heritage site, that encompasses both the existing buildings and incorporates some additional assets.

The Essex HMVA would like to turn the T2 into a heritage area and museum. This would allow vehicles to be displayed and other associated equipment, a storage and conservation area, and a display telling the history of Ford at the site and importantly an education area.

It has been suggested to re-locate the 1949 memorial to site, as well as relocating the Bailey Bridge, in a landscaped setting, this would bring at risk heritage into one area for preservation and conservation.



(Picture Above): Our Chairman, Colin Tebb, and both our Patrons: Stephen Nunn and Sir John Whitingdale

### A Vision for the future of the T2 Hangar and Romney Hut

#### **We foresee this project being divided into nine stages**

This will enable the site to act as a focus for at risk heritage items, helping visitors to understand the pivotal roles these artefacts played in our lives to date.

**These stages give Chelmsford important new options -** acting as an enabler for education, job creation, preservation as well as conservation of important periods of history

#### **Additional points**

- This project offers a home to at risk artefacts, saving them for future generations.
- Private Funding would be available for at least the initial elements.
- This project would add favourably to the educational facilities in a new area.
- It exposes the rich heritage of the area and allows people to understand the historical context not only from a military avenue, but from the Ford Motor Company.

This is our last chance to save Boreham's historic T2 hangar and Romney hut, a rare surviving link to wartime ingenuity and postwar resilience. If we act now, we can transform these structures from forgotten relics into a living heritage centre that anchors community memory, inspires future generations, and celebrates the spirit of restoration. Once gone, their stories go with them. Let's make them part of our shared future.

# About the Boreham Airfield and Hangars

03

Boreham Airfield and Hangar History

A potted history behind the vision.

In the spring of 1943, construction began on Boreham Airfield, one of ten similar sites across Essex and designed to support Allied operations during World War II. By early 1944, the airfield was operational, hosting the 394th Bombardment Group of the USAAF. These Martin B-26 Marauder crews flew 96 missions from Boreham, earning the nickname "Bridge Busters" for their precision strikes on infrastructure across occupied Europe.

To support these operations, the airfield was equipped with temporary but robust structures. Among them was the Type T2 hangar—a prefabricated steel-framed building clad in corrugated iron, designed for rapid assembly and wartime utility. Nearby stood a Romney hut, a semicircular steel structure used for workshops, storage, or accommodation. Both were built in 1944 and positioned on the southwest edge of the flying field.

After the war, Boreham briefly hosted motor racing events before being re-purposed by the Ford Motor Company. From around 1955, the T2 hangar was adapted into a storehouse for Ford's rally and test vehicles. Its doors were modified, and the cladding updated, but the core structure remained intact with some additional strengthening and repairs done to the frame.

From the 1960s onward, Boreham became a proving ground for Ford's most ambitious performance vehicles. The site played a pivotal role in the development of the RS (Rallye Sport) line, including icons like the Escort RS1600, RS2000, and later the RS Cosworth. Engineers and test drivers used the airfield's long runways and perimeter roads to push prototypes to their limits,

refining suspension set-ups, power-trains, and handling characteristics that would dominate rally stages and road circuits alike. The Romney hut, though less well documented, likely served similar support functions during Ford's tenure, contributing to the site's evolution from military base to industrial proving ground. Together, these buildings bridged two eras: one of global conflict, the other of British automotive innovation.

Today, the T2 hangar stands as the last of its kind at Boreham, a tangible link to the airfield's wartime role and its postwar transformation. It embodies the layered history of a site that once launched paratroopers into Operation Varsity and later tested vehicles on its runways. There are less than 12 remaining from the 906 supplied during WW2 and we believe not only should this be saved, but it should be put to use as a heritage and education centre, Preserving the past, inspiring the future.

Preserving these structures offers more than architectural interest; it invites reflection on how places adapt, endure, and continue to serve across generations. Demolition would erase a tangible link to Essex's wartime and industrial past. Preservation offers a chance to create a centre that's not just about looking back, but about inspiring forward.

# Ford at Boreham

03

Boreham Airfield and Hangar History

A potted history behind the vision



(Picture Above): Rally car assembly inside the T2 Hangar.

# Bailey Bridge

03

## Boreham Airfield and Hangar History



A potted history behind the vision.

In 1994 a bridge crossing the Caen Canal in Calvados, France had come to the end of its life, due to public campaigning, the bridge was not scrapped but instead relocated to a nearby museum.

This approach, proven in France would be ideally suited to the relocation of the Chelmsford Bailey Bridge to a position adjacent to the T2 Hangar to form a single heritage location.

The bridge is now landscaped into its new location and visitors are able to walk over it.



# The Airfield Memorial

03

## Boreham Airfield and Hangar History

A potted history behind the vision

Established in 1949 to remember the sacrifice of those US Airmen who served at Boreham Airfield, The present location of this memorial is no longer relevant, due to the gradual loss of the Airfield.

Relocating the memorial nearer to the T2 Hangar would show a tangible link to the airfields past and ensure that those named are brought to the visitors attention.





On the plan shown above, Item 16 shows the T2 Hangar remaining in place

# The Proposal

## Boreham Airfield Hangar

# 04

The proposal below outlines our suggestions concerning safeguarding these buildings for future generations as well as developing a hub to give the general public access to education and engagement surrounding the importance in the development of Military technology in the Essex area and specifically Chelmsford.

### The Project

We see this project being divided into nine stages:

- Stage 1** The cancellation of the building Demolition, Council support Secured and a media campaign launched to save the buildings.
- Stage 2** Negotiations with Countryside to acquire the long-term use of the buildings and land immediately surrounding them. This could either be by full acquisition or a long-term peppercorn lease.
- Stage 3** Installation of a new roadway to provide access. This is necessary to undertake essential work to take place.
- Stage 4** Vegetation Clearance, drainage checked, both buildings secured from unauthorised entrance and installation of appropriate facility security.
- Stage 5** The Romney Hut brought to a usable standard to act as a base of operations and visitor centre.

- Stage 6** Work to make the T2 hangar roof watertight, removal of pigeons, cleaning and inspection of the structure by our own engineering consultant.
- Stage 7** Start to use the T2 Hangar for vehicle storage, adding a revenue stream and enabling weekend public access.
- Stage 8** Transform the site to a larger heritage centre, move the airfield memorial to the site and re-dedicate it, Incorporate the ex-Chelmsford Bailey bridge into a landscaped setting, the possibility of adding a Nissen hut alongside the other buildings, which was in place at another local airfield. Build A wartime allotment area exhibition.
- Stage 9** Expansion of the displays within the T2 Hangar to include a history of the Boreham Airfield, highlighting the hangars use by Ford with the loan of appropriate cars and the possibility of inclusion of aircraft within the hangar.

# Finances

05

## Our suggested financial approach

The staged approach of our proposal would enable the financial costs to be spread over a time frame to be determined once more detailed plans for the stages are agreed.

The most immediate costs would be the security of the site, access road and weatherproofing of both buildings, to limit any further damage from happening.

We have a commitment for some funding from a community fund, set up by a large company in Essex, which we believe would be sufficient to make a start, with the possibility of crowd funding specific targets and involvement of local businesses.

Moving forward, we would then apply to the Heritage Lottery grant and other heritage groups for specialised funding.



An aerial image from 1944 showing how large the airfield was in context with the T2 Hangar

# Planning

## Context for Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Chelmsford

06

Although the T2 hangar and Romney hut are not formally listed, they are considered **non-designated heritage assets (NDHA's)** under Chelmsford City Council's planning framework. This status acknowledges their historical and cultural significance to the local area and triggers specific considerations during planning and development.

Chelmsford's Local Plan, supported by the 2024 Heritage Assessment for Urban Sites, aligns with national guidance from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**. It requires that any proposals affecting NDHAs demonstrate a proportionate understanding of their significance and the impact of proposed changes.

This includes:

- **Heritage Impact Assessment:** Development proposals must assess the asset's architectural, historical, and communal value. For the hangar and hut, this includes their wartime role, post-war adaptation, and enduring presence in Boreham's landscape.
- **Setting and Context:** The assets' contribution to local character and memory must be preserved or enhanced. Proposals should consider visual prominence, spatial relationships, and community associations.
- **Mitigation and Enhancement:** Where change is proposed, planners expect strategies that mitigate harm and enhance public understanding—such as interpretive signage, sympathetic design, and adaptive reuse.

Chelmsford also maintains a **Register of Buildings of Local Value**, which, while not conferring statutory protection, signals local importance and informs planning decisions. Inclusion of the T2 hangar and Romney hut on this register would strengthen their case for preservation and adaptive reuse.

In line with these policies, our proposal to transform the site into a living heritage centre—with educational programming, restoration workshops, and community events—offers a clear public benefit. It aligns with Chelmsford's emphasis on **community memory, sustainable reuse, and heritage-led regeneration**, and provides a compelling mitigation strategy for any necessary alterations.

In accordance with **Chelmsford Local Plan Policy DM13**, our proposal seeks to conserve and enhance the significance of Boreham's T2 hangar and Romney hut as non-designated heritage assets. The proposed adaptive reuse strategy offers clear public benefits and includes mitigation measures such as interpretive signage, educational programming, and restoration-led engagement.

# Final Words

## Concluding statement from our Chairman

This project would result in the preservation of historic artefacts from demolition and / or disposal as well as providing a hub to preserve military history in Chelmsford and a location to act as a focus for preservation and educational activities about Military history in Essex.

As a historical preservation charity we can call on a considerable amount of historical evidence in relation to the Military context regarding how it fits in to both the WW2 and local Chelmsford context.

Saving the Romney hut and T2 hangar for future generations allows us to honour the legacy of Military and Civilian personnel who have contributed so successfully to this countries history in the Essex and specifically the Chelmsford area.

By saving these buildings, and bringing them back to use for the community, it would also offer us a location to relocate the Bailey bridge Chelmsford currently has in store and allow us to provide a unique backdrop for media activities such as photographing historic vehicles, and period projects.

We have in one of our members collections, a 1/10 scale engineers training model of a Bailey Bridge which the owner has agreed we can have on long term loan to be part of any supporting display.

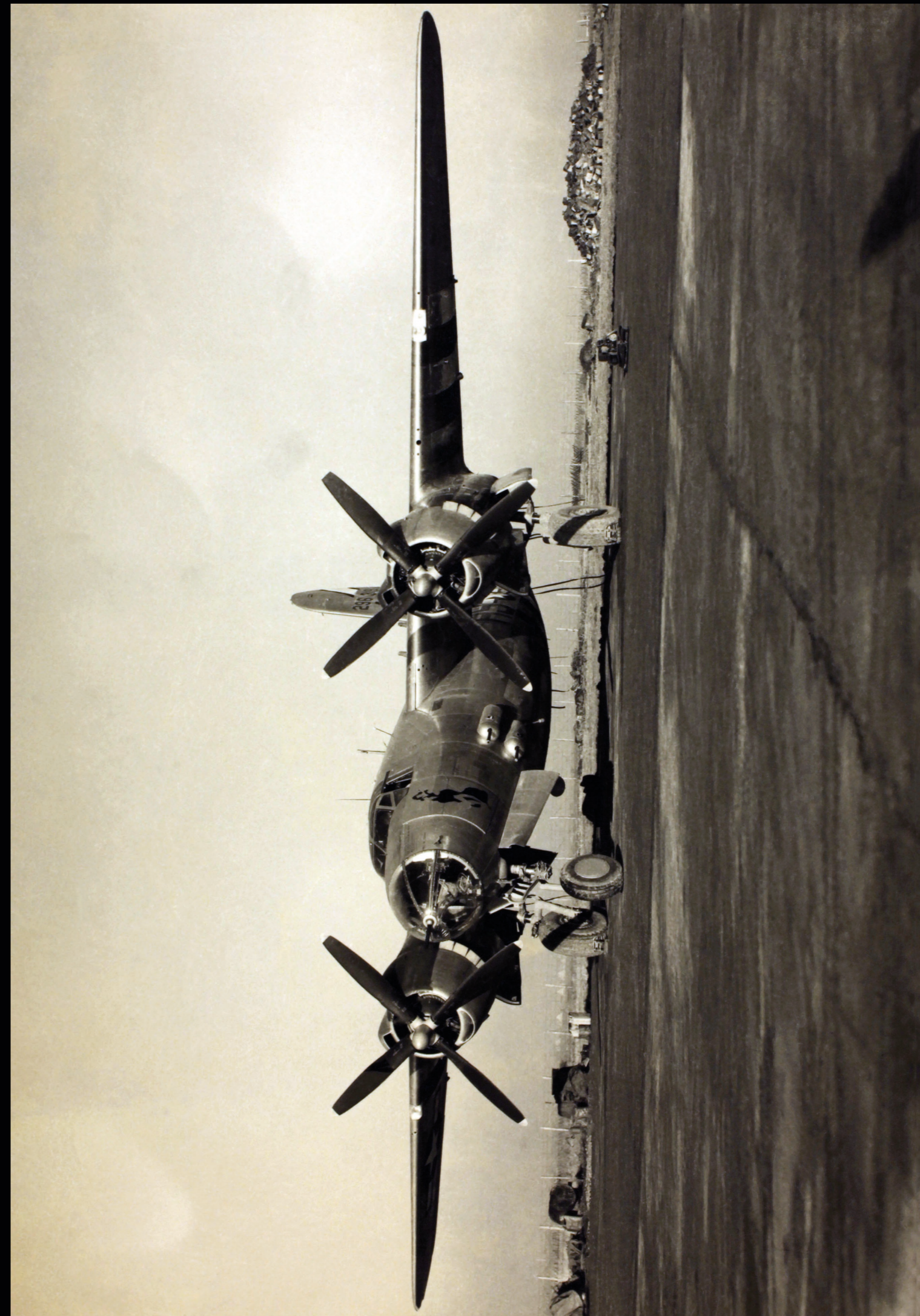
This is a unique opportunity to help cement the public understanding regarding the pivotal role the military has and continues to play in the Chelmsford area



*"The bridge itself would provide a unique backdrop for media activities"*

*Colin Tebb*

Colin Tebb  
Chairman, Essex HMVA





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