

THE BASIS FOR THE CLAIM THAT THE AIRFIELD AT OSSINGTON IS AN IMPORTANT HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ASSET THAT SHOULD BE PROTECTED BY DISALLOWING SOLAR PANELS WITHIN THE AIRFIELD SITE.

Elements Green have always measured the significance of the airfield in terms of archaeological remains and not as an interactive cultural and heritage asset that is referenced and appreciated daily, weekly and monthly by walkers, airfield and plane enthusiasts, amateur astrologists, bird watchers, kite flyers and all manner of other activities that such a site allows.

Elements Greens narrow and limiting perspective has been evident throughout the design, consultation and planning process. Their lead consultants are a major archaeological firm. Although Heritage Interpretation and Presentation is included within the scope of their work, the research outside scheduled and designated building and sites is superficial and appears to rely only on desk-based assessments.

Elements Green have been made aware of the importance of the airfield site right from the earliest public consultations in the villages, through many and detailed submitted objections and throughout the planning process. Jason Mordan from Nottinghamshire County Council has researched the site in some depth and recognized the importance of the site from a professional perspective. We have provided evidence of the extent to which the airfield is appreciated and valued by so many people.

Elements Green need to redirect their focus to this reality. Solar panels on the airfield site compromise the integrity of the site to the extent that the heritage and cultural aspect is destroyed and they should be removed from the proposals.

Below are the reasons the airfield is considered a cultural and heritage asset

LOCAL.

- The airfield and its history are an integral part of the cultural heritage of the village of Ossington. Reference the major celebrations on VE, VJ and Remembrance Day where food is served, talks on the airfield's history together with other WW2 and Ossington related stories. The days include trips around the airfield which are always oversubscribed.
- The airfield is widely known in the local area and there is a continuing interest in its history. Reference the regular requests for talks by nationally recognized aviation historians.
- The space is well loved, and gives opportunities for walking, bird watching, night sky watching, meditating, learning to drive, playing the drums (much too loud for anywhere else) and satisfying an interest in WW2, the airfields and particularly the aeroplanes. People also come for a unique view of the new monument "On Freedom's Wings", which is adjacent to the A46, towards Lincoln. Very few visit only to look at the remains of the buildings. People go to look

at the airfield, to walk the runways and perimeter tracks and to enjoy being immersed in the atmosphere and sense of place the site engenders.

The importance of the heritage of the airfield is appreciated and understood by visitors far and wide.

To understand this, it is so important to look through the posts on the Facebook page “Friends of Ossington Airfield, Group”

- There are a significant number of buildings that remain. They are generally outside the site and hidden from view and most people are unaware of their existence. The two that can be seen are the battle headquarters and an adjacent pillbox. The Fire Engine Shed, part of Station Headquarters and very complete above ground blast shelters as well as hangar flooring and an MT Yard remain to add perspective to the airfield topology. Much is overgrown, in sympathy with nature which subsumes its geography whilst acknowledging its past importance. Though neglected and part ruined – they contribute to the nostalgia and the atmosphere of the airfield. It is the airfield which is the manifestation of the history.
- The airfield is used to practise emergency landings procedures by trainee pilots from regional training schools. The criteria for these sites is strict and limiting and Ossington is valuable resource. The whole issue of covering vast areas of emergency landing options for light aircraft in this defined Area of Intense Aerial Activity does not seem to have been identified or addressed by The Inspectorate but is a significant future safety issue. Ossington airfield provides a prime example of a safe emergency landing area, not least because most local pilots (from Netherthorpe, Caunton, Gamston, Headon, etc. and even the RAF) will have practiced emergencies here during training and will be well versed on its headings and lengths. Solar panels not only remove such options but provide electrical as well as obstacle hazards for an aircraft with engine failure.

REGIONAL

- The airfield is part of the larger heritage and cultural area related to the activities of Bomber Command in WW2. The importance of this heritage is evidenced by the popularity and success of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln; an exciting, contemporary museum and remembrance site whose website states “The International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) is a world-class facility to serve as a point for recognition, remembrance and reconciliation for Bomber Command. Providing the most comprehensive record of the Command in the world, the IBCC ensures that generations to come can learn of their vital role in protecting the freedom we enjoy today.” Ossington airfield is an integral part of this heritage.
- The airfield is also linked to other WW2 sites particularly memorials to crashes such as those at Laxton and Maplebeck.

NATIONAL

- People visit from all over the country to visit the airfield as part of their interest in WW2 airfields. The Memorial erected by the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust reflects that interest. Their website has a very good explanation of the importance to our heritage and our cultural life that these airfields provide. (This text has been included in previous documents forwarded to Planning Inspectorate.)
- Two unfortunate crashes, both of which involved the death of Canadian Crew members have notable commemorations each year. One in Oakworth, and the second in Devon. The latter was marked by a “fly Past” of the Red Arrows. The BBC covered the event with the headline “The Red Arrows have flown over Dorset to mark the death of 6 Canadian airmen shot down by accident in WW2.... The aircraft took off from Ossington in Nottinghamshire.”

INTERNATIONAL.

- Bomber Command used the airfield as a training camp and this included many airmen and crew from overseas, particularly Canadians. The link with these Canadians has persisted through the generations. There were marriages with locals and are now visits from Canadians relatives who have links with the airfield - carrying the heritage into the next generations. There was a recent visit from an American whose father worked on the camp during construction. He came to have a look and took away a broken brick which is now inscribed and framed back in the States.

For many people the airfield engenders strong emotions of association. Below is a poem from a letter of appreciation after the 4th Reunion for people connected with RAF Ossington which was held on 23rd July 1995. It was written by Ex WAAF officer E Siven, and we think it grasps the intangible value of the airfield to our cultural heritage.

Where did it go such youth, such joy? which

The years rolled back for maid and boy.

We worked and toiled all day and night

And engines roared with fearsome might.

But golden now, those far off days

When friendship bonds were forged to stay.

Life stands still too well we know

But oh the wonder, oh the glow

On faces worn through joy and woe

When back to Ossington we did go.

Back Home. Recall with thanks and pride

Those we all know, befriended, lost.

Time speeds on, memory dims

But there we found hope, peace, reflection, hymns