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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Elspeth Palmer
Planning & Development
Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Herts. HP1 1DN

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

7th July 2023 (by email)

Dear Elspeth Palmer,

Application no. 23/00902/FUL

**Land Adjacent Row Beech Cottages, Watling Street, Kensworth, Dunstable
Change of use of land for the display and sale of used cars. Installation of a grasscrete
parking surface, stationing a container for use as a site office, Installation of a boundary
fence and dropped kerb.**

I write with regard to the above application to express our strong objection for the following reasons.

1. The site is located in the London Metropolitan Green Belt as identified in the adopted Dacorum Borough Local Plan Core Strategy where development is inappropriate according to criteria identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The Applicant's Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) makes reference to the Central Beds Local Plan but the site is within the Dacorum Borough Council area in Hertfordshire.
2. The site lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is a statutory designation of land to be protected to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. This application is retrospective as development has already taken place, and the very significant detrimental impact on the Green Belt and AONB can be readily identified.
3. The PDAS suggests that the development does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt and the openness of both the Green Belt and AONB. This is clearly incorrect as the rows of cars, hard-standing and container office comprise a very significant encroachment onto what was previously open countryside, and the suggestion that the area is well screened by hedges is ludicrous.

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President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO
Chairman: Allan McNab

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4. The presence of existing surrounding uses and activities is also irrelevant as this application provides an additional encroachment onto designated open land which Green Belt and AONB legislation is designed to prevent. No very special circumstances have been identified which would override the harm caused by the proposed development, and a further purpose of the relevant legislation is that local planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect designated areas.
5. Allowing this application would lead to further degradation of the Green Belt and AONB in this location and we urge the Council to refuse this application and initiate enforcement action to remove this highly inappropriate use.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager

NOTE: We would request that this letter is published on the Council's website as a document relating to this application and should be grateful if you would notify us of the date of the appropriate meeting if it is to be determined by planning committee.