

Court overturns ban on housing asylum seekers in Essex Hotel



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The Court of Appeal has overturned a High Court ruling that sought to block asylum seekers from being housed at The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex. The decision allows 138 migrants to remain at the site for now, easing pressure on the government's already strained asylum system.

Lord Justice Bean, delivering the judgement with two other appeal judges, described the earlier

ruling as “seriously flawed,” noting that closing one site without alternatives would only intensify relocation challenges. He also warned that protests outside asylum sites should not be treated as grounds for legal action, cautioning this could encourage further disorder.

Epping Forest District Council, which secured the original injunction, insisted “the battle is not over,” with a full High Court hearing expected in mid-October. The council argued the hotel breached planning rules by being converted into asylum accommodation.

The ruling has reignited political debate. Conservative figures, including local MP Neil Hudson and party leader Kemi Badenoch, condemned the decision, while Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said it prioritized “illegal migrants over British people.” Refugee charities, however, welcomed the judgement, stressing that violent protest should not dictate asylum policy.

The Bell Hotel has become a flashpoint since July, drawing large anti-immigration demonstrations, counter-protests, and over two dozen arrests. Home Office officials said losing the hotel’s 152 beds would have been a “serious blow” to a system accommodating more than 100,000 asylum seekers nationwide.