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The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP,
Minister for Immigration,
UK Government,
By email

22 March 2023

Dear Minister,

I hope that this letter finds you well. I am writing with regards to the email I have received today notifying me that the Home Office has identified Marl Hall, Marl Lane, Llandudno, Conwy, LL31 9JA as a site to be used to accommodate asylum seekers.

Please accept this letter as a formal objection to the accommodating of asylum seekers in Marl Hall and any other location in Aberconwy.

The constituency is at the beating heart of the tourism sector in Wales and the United Kingdom. This is no surprise when considering, for example, that Betws y Coed is the gateway to Snowdonia, Conwy is one of Britain's best-preserved medieval towns, and Llandudno is rightly known as the Queen of Welsh Resorts. In fact, the latter attracted 6.8m visits between June 2021 and May 2022, which makes it one of the most popular seaside towns in the UK! Therefore, it should come as no surprise to you that there is significant demand for tourist accommodation across the constituency, one that you cannot afford to undermine. To do so would put at risk the fact that tourism brings in over £900m to Conwy County annually.

In terms of Marl Hall specifically, it was owned by Warwickshire County Council between 1971 and 2022. It was operated as an outdoor learning centre at that time. Whilst I do not know for certain the specific planning use class allocated to the property, given that it was an outdoor learning centre, I suspect that it may be classified as 'C2 Residential institutions - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres'. Arguably, should the venue be used to accommodate asylum seekers, it would require a planning application for change of use to either 'C2A Secure Residential Institution' or 'hostel'. Therefore, I believe that it is reasonable to suggest that should the Home Office and the owners pursue use of the venue by asylum seekers, there may be a breach of planning.

Alongside my concern about Planning Law, I object to the proposal on the basis that the mansion is a completely inappropriate venue. It is situated in the countryside between the A470 and Marl Hall Woods. I am not aware of a bus service that stops near the entrance of the property, meaning, yet again, the Home Office is planning on placing vulnerable individuals in an isolated corner of Aberconwy.

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Finally, the documentation that has been shared with me includes a paper entitled 'Health protection for migrants and asylum seekers Information for accommodation staff'. This notes that in light of the increasing number of infections in people who have come to the UK to seek asylum, all residents should be shown how they can register with a GP. Our local practices are already overwhelmed, with residents struggling to make appointments. As such, I do not think that it is in the best interest of the community nor asylum seekers to add further pressure to local medical facilities.

As a long standing Welsh Conservative elected representative in Aberconwy, I place on record my serious objections to the placing of asylum seekers in Marl Hall and Aberconwy, and thereby request that the Home Office does not use any venue in the constituency.

Kind regards,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS