

Southern Rent Assessment Panel **File Ref No.** CHI/24UP/MNR/2003/0092

**Rent Assessment Committee: Summary reasons for decision.
Housing Act 1988**

Address of Premises

3 Manor Farm Cottages
Hinton Ampner
Alresford
Hampshire SO24 0LB

The Committee members were

Mr J H S Preston JP FRICS
Mr D Wills

1. Background

On 28 April 2003 Mr J Fairey, the tenant of the above property, referred to the Committee a notice of increase of rent served by the landlord under section 13 of the Housing Act 1988. The landlord is stated to be C H Flindt and The National Trust.

The landlord's notice was served by their agents, FPD Savills. It proposed a rent of £950.00 per month with effect from 1 May 2003 and is dated 27 March 2003.

The tenancy is a periodic tenancy, which commenced in January 2000. The passing rent is stated to be nil.

2. Inspection

The Committee inspected the property on 6 June 2003, in the presence of the tenant.

No. 3 Manor Farm Cottages is a detached house, formed by conversion of a pair of semi-detached cottages. It has the following accommodation: -

Ground Floor: - Entrance lobby; Kitchen / Dining room; Living room; Utility room and store.

First Floor: - One double and three single bedrooms; Bathroom.

The house has mains electricity and water and septic tank drainage.
The landlord installed oil-fired central heating in January 2001.

There is a large garden, mostly lawn and a vegetable plot, a brick outhouse, dilapidated greenhouse and a corrugated iron shed. At the roadside a hard standing bay has been formed providing parking for up to four cars.

The condition of the exterior is fair and the exterior joinery and ironwork will shortly be in need of repainting. Internally there is evidence of some settlement in the form of cracks to walls; these appear to be being monitored. The interior of the house and the garden are well maintained by the tenant.

3. Evidence

The committee received written representations from the tenant. No written representations were received from the landlord.

Neither party requested a hearing at which oral representations could be made.

The tenant's representations are set out in the statement, which accompanied his application and in his letter dated 7 May 2003. The relevant evidence from those representations is summarised below: -

The tenancy excludes carpets and other floor coverings, furniture and white goods.

Tenant's improvements comprise: -

- Extra power points in the kitchen/living room and three bedrooms
- Replacement of electrical fitting in utility room
- Removal of Parkray heater and hearth and installation of new mantle.
- Forming small cupboard with shelves in the kitchen.
- Glazed tiling in the bathroom.
- Construction of parking bay, with materials in part supplied by the landlord.
- Supply and laying of flagstone path.

Tenant's fixtures and fittings comprise: -

- TV aerial with booster
- Curtain rails

The tenant has provided all curtains, also the carpets and other floor coverings. The tenant has redecorated the interior of the house, apart from two bedrooms, to a good standard.

The tenant reported evidence of market rental values: -

- Three bedroom end-of-terrace house in Cheriton: £625 per month
- House in Hinton Ampner £800 per month.
- Three bedroom refurbished house with garage in Privett: £750 per month.
- Three-bedroom house in Swarraton with conservatory, garage, greenhouse and large garden: £750 per month.

He provided a letter from Keats Property Management valuing the subject property at £850 per month in its present condition, but disregarding the tenant's improvements and fixtures.

4. The Law

Section 14 of the Housing Act 1988 sets out the prescription for the Rent Assessment Committee to follow in determining the rent. They are to consider the rent at which the dwelling might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing landlord under an assured tenancy, on similar terms and conditions to those in the agreement for the subject dwelling. They are to disregard: -

- Any effect on the rent attributable to the granting of a tenancy to a sitting tenant
- Any increase in value attributable to a relevant improvement carried out by the tenant

- Any reduction in value attributable to a failure by the tenant to comply with any of the terms of the tenancy

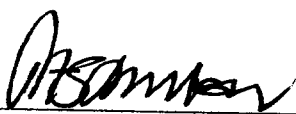
5. The Reasons and Decision

The committee found the property to be in an attractive rural location, with good communications to Winchester and the M3 motorway. The house has central heating a fitted kitchen and a serviceable bathroom. The layout on the ground floor is reasonable with good-sized main rooms. On the first floor the limitations of the conversion have resulted in only one double bedroom and three modest single bedrooms. This is likely to limit both the number of potential applicants for a tenancy and the rental value.

The Committee had regard to the evidence relating to rental values of similar properties currently let on the open market under modern Assured Shorthold tenancies and to the letter from Keats. Taking account also of their own knowledge of market rent levels in the Basingstoke – Winchester – Alton area, they concluded that the rent at which the property might reasonably be expected to be let on the open market would be £900 per month. This was on the assumption that it was in good repair and decorative condition, had a modern fitted kitchen and bathroom, central heating, some white goods such as a cooker, and fitted carpets.

From the tenant's representations, which were not challenged by the landlord, and from their own observations during their inspection the Committee determined that the value of the tenant's improvements, carpets, white goods and other relevant works in rental terms amounted to £95 per month. In addition they assessed the value in rental terms of the tenant's interior decorating liabilities under this tenancy in the sum of £35 per month.

The Committee accordingly concluded that the rent for No. 3 Manor Farm Cottages, under Section 14 of the Housing Act 1988 should be **£770 per month**. This will take effect **from 1 May 2003**, being the date specified by the landlord in his notice.

Signed  J H S Preston JP FRICS (Chairman)

Dated 6 June 2003

This document contains a summary of the reasons for the Rent Assessment Committee's decision. If either party requires extended reasons to be given, they will be provided following a request to the committee clerk, which must be made within 21 days from the date of issue of this document.