

Rent Assessment Committee: Summary reasons for decision.
Rent Act 1977

Address of Premises

Salterns Farm
Weare Gifford
Bideford
Devon, EX39 4RA

The Committee members were

Mrs T C Clark (Chair)
Mr M J Wright FRICS FAAV
Mr P Groves

1. Background

On 21 January 2004 the landlord's agent applied to the rent officer for registration of a fair rent of £100.00 per week for the above property.

The rent payable at the time of the application was £50.00 per week.

The rent was previously registered on 19 April 1994 with effect from the same date at £50.00 per week following a determination by a rent assessment committee.

On 19 March 2004 the rent officer registered a fair rent of £67.50 per week with effect from that date.

By a letter dated 30 March 2004 the landlord's agent objected to the rent determined by the Rent Officer and the matter was referred to the Rent Assessment Committee.

2. Inspection

The Committee inspected the property on 12 May 2004 and found it to be in good/~~fair~~ condition/as described more particularly in the Rent Officer's survey sheet which had been copied to the parties. The exterior decorations, roof and rainwater goods were in good condition, [Brief description of state of repair here where no RO survey sheet provided].

With some new UPVC windows. There is some internal damp, but otherwise the property is generally well maintained by both landlord and tenant.

The following tenant's improvements had been made to the property.

loft insulation

Septic tank modification

The Committee was unable to gain access at the appointed time in order to inspect the property internally and therefore made an external inspection only.

- The registered rent includes a sum for the services as listed on the rent register.

3. Evidence

The Committee received written representations from the landlord and tenant and these were copied to both parties.

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

4. The law

When determining a fair rent the Committee, in accordance with the Rent Act 1977, section 70, had regard to all the circumstances including the age, location and state of repair of the property. It also disregarded the effect of (a) any relevant tenant's improvements and (b) the effect of any disrepair or other defect attributable to the tenant or any predecessor in title under the regulated tenancy, on the rental value of the property.

In *Spath Holme Ltd v Chairman of the Greater Manchester etc. Committee* (1995) 28 HLR 107 and *Curtis v London Rent Assessment Committee* [1999] QB 92 the Court of Appeal emphasised

- (a) that ordinarily a fair rent is the market rent for the property discounted for 'scarcity' (i.e. that element, if any, of the market rent, that is attributable to there being a significant shortage of similar properties in the wider locality available for

letting on similar terms - other than as to rent - to that of the regulated tenancy)
and

- (b) that for the purposes of determining the market rent, assured tenancy (market) rents are usually appropriate comparables. (These rents may have to be adjusted where necessary to reflect any relevant differences between those comparables and the subject property).

5. Valuation

Thus in the first instance the Committee determined what rent the landlord could reasonably be expected to obtain for the property in the open market if it were let today in the condition that is considered usual for such an open market letting. It did this by having regard to the evidence supplied by the parties and the Committee's own general knowledge of market rent levels in the area of Bideford and Devon. Having done so it concluded that such a likely market rent would be £.150. per week.

However, the actual property is not in the condition considered usual for a modern letting at a market rent. Therefore it was first necessary to adjust that hypothetical rent of £.150. per week to allow for the differences between the condition considered usual for such a letting and the condition of the actual property as observed by the Committee (disregarding the effect of any disrepair or other defect attributable to the tenant or any predecessor in title). The Committee considered that this required a deduction of £ ..33..... per week.

Furthermore, to allow for the tenant's improvements (listed above) it was necessary to make a further deduction of £..... per week.

The Committee decided that the relevant differences between the subject property and the comparable properties given in evidence were so great as to make it inappropriate to rely on the market rent less scarcity approach in this case. It therefore relied on its knowledge and experience to assess a fair rent of £..... per

The Committee did not consider that there was any substantial scarcity element and accordingly no further deduction was made for scarcity. ~~The Committee found that there was substantial scarcity in the locality and therefore deducted a further sum of £..... from the market rent to reflect this element.~~

This leaves a net market rent for the subject property of £.....117.....per...week.../to which the sum of £.....in respect of services should be added.

6. Decision

The fair rent initially determined by the Committee, for the purposes of section 70, was accordingly £.....117.....per...week...inclusive of £.....per.....in respect of services.

However, by virtue of the Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999 the maximum fair rent that can be registered in the present case is the lower sum of £...68.....per...week.../inclusive of services (Details are provided on the back of the decision form).

~~The section 70 fair rent determined by the Committee is below/at the same level as the maximum fair rent permitted by the Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999 and accordingly that rent limit has no effect. Details are provided on the back of the decision form.~~

~~The fair rent to be registered/confirmed is not limited by the Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999 because there was not an existing registered fair rent at the time of the application.~~

~~The fair rent to be registered/confirmed is not limited by the Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999 because by virtue of landlord's repairs and/or improvements since the previous registration the rent determined/confirmed by the Committee exceeds by at least 15% the previous registered rent.~~

Accordingly the sum of £.....⁶⁸perweek~~/inclusive of services of~~
~~£.....per.....~~ will be registered/~~confirmed~~ as the fair rent with effect
from...12...5...'04..... being the date of the Committee's decision.

*The registered rent is to be entered/confirmed as variable in accordance with the
terms of the tenancy (Rent Act 1977, s.71(4)).*

Note: the new version of this section is an attempt to separate out the fair rent assessed in
accordance with the Act from, where applicable, the maximum fair rent provided for by the 1999
Order.

Thus the section begins with the rent determined in accordance with section 70. It then permits
one of four alternative paragraphs to be chosen according to whether the cap applies or not.

Having selected one the others should be deleted before the paragraph in bold type specifying the
rent to be registered/confirmed is selected in all cases. The final paragraph can be included
where there is a variable service charge.

Chairman

P.C. Clark

Dated

12.5.'04

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 at the Panel Office which must
be made within 21 days from the date of issue of this document.