

**Rent Assessment Committee: Summary reasons for decision.  
Rent Act 1977****Address of Premises**

86 UNITY STREET,  
SITTINGBOURNE,  
KENT,  
ME10 1HX

**The Committee members were**

Mr. R. Norman (Chairman)  
Mr. R. Athow, FRICS MIRPM  
Miss J. Dalal

**1. Background**

On 24th October 2003 the landlord applied to the rent officer for registration of a fair rent of £100 per week for the above property.

The rent payable at the time of the application was £79 per week.

The rent was previously registered on 22nd October 2001 with effect from 27th November 2001 at £79 per week following a determination by the rent officer.

On 23rd September 2003 the rent officer registered a fair rent of £79 per week with effect from 27th November 2003.

By a letter dated 20th October 2003 the landlord 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 15th December 2003 and found it to be in poor condition as described more particularly in the Rent Officer's survey sheet which had been copied to the parties. We also noted in particular that there was no central heating and that heaters and fires and the carpets, curtains and white goods had been provided by the tenant.

The following tenant's improvements had been made to the property. The tenant had provided a covered area at the rear of the property to facilitate access to the w.c.

### **3. Evidence**

No written representations were received from either party.

A hearing was held on 15th December 2003 at the subject property at which oral representations were made on behalf of the landlord and tenant.

### **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 the North Kent coastal towns. Having done so it concluded that such a likely market rent would be £115 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 £115 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 £28 per week.

Furthermore, to allow for the tenant's improvements (listed above) it was necessary to make a further deduction of £1 per week.

The Committee did not consider that there was any substantial scarcity element and accordingly no further deduction was made for scarcity.

This leaves a net market rent for the subject property of £86 per week.

## 6. Decision

The fair rent initially determined by the Committee, for the purposes of section 70, was accordingly £86 per week.

The section 70 fair rent determined by the Committee is below 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.

**Accordingly the sum of £86 per week will be registered as the fair rent with effect from 15th December 2003 being the date of the Committee's decision.**

Chairman 

Dated 15.12.03

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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.