

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

**Address of Premises**

19 Gordon Road  
Strood  
Rochester  
Kent  
ME2 3HG

**The Committee members were**

Mr P B Langford MA LLB  
  
Mr D J Myers FRICS  
  
Ms J Dalal

**1. Background**

On 24<sup>th</sup> May 2004 the landlords agent applied to the rent officer for registration of a fair rent of £875.00 per calendar month for the above property.

The rent payable at the time of the application was £67.50 per week.

The rent was previously registered on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002 with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> July 2002 at £67.50 per week following a determination by the rent officer.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2004 the rent officer registered a fair rent of £74 per week with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

By a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004 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 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and found it to be in good condition as described more particularly in the Rent Officers survey sheet which had been copied to the parties. It was noted that access to the bathroom was via one of the bedrooms. The house did not have central heating and the gas fires in the living rooms had been provided by the tenant. She had also replaced the kitchen sink unit. The kitchen and bathroom were in need of updating.

### **3. Evidence**

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

### **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 emphasized

- (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 Committees own general knowledge of market rent levels in the area of Strood, Rochester. 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 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 attribute to the tenant or the any predecessor in title). The Committee considered that this required a deduction of £45 per week.

This leaves a net market rent for the subject property of £70 per week.

## **6. Decision**

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

This section 70 fair rent initially 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 £70 per week will be registered as the fair rent with effect from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 being the date of the Committees decision.**

Chairman      Mr P Langford

Dated            16<sup>th</sup> September 2004

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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.