



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY)**

Case Reference	:	CAM/33UG/MNR/2023/0085
Property	:	5 Hazel Covert, Thetford, Norfolk, IP242UH
Applicant	:	Ketan Panchal and Jacqueline Moloney
Respondent	:	Mark and Elizabeth Howell
Type of Application	:	Challenging rent increase
Tribunal Members	:	Judge Shepherd Gerard F. Smith MRICS FAAV
Date of Determination	:	31 st August 2023

Determination

1. The Applicants referred a rent increase to the Tribunal on 3rd July 2023. They are the Assured tenants of premises at 5 Hazel Covert, Thetford, Norfolk, IP242UH ("The premises"). The landlords are Mark and Elizabeth Howell. They are represented by Lettings Supermarket.

2. The Applicants tenancy at the premises began on 17th February 2021 when the rent was £1175 per month. The premises consist of a four - bedroom house, with living room, kitchen and bathroom /WC.

3. The landlords served notice pursuant to s.13(2) Housing Act 1988 to increase the rent to £1225 per month. This was an increase over the previous rent of £25 per month. The notice is valid and sought to increase the rent with effect from 17th July 2023.

Description of the premises

4. The property is a modern, semi-detached house constructed in or around 2004/2005 situated on the Cloverfields development, a large residential development with amenities including a Tesco superstore situated on the Eastern side of Thetford.

5. The house is of modern construction with brick elevations and double- glazed windows. The accommodation is arranged over three floors: 4 bedrooms, with en-suite to the master bedroom, family bathroom. Ground floor: cloakroom, lounge/diner, kitchen.

6. The property has a single garage and there is additional parking; to the rear is an enclosed garden.

7. The EPC rating for the property is C(75) with a measured (EPC) floor area of 119m².

Evidence

8. Both parties provided evidence to the Tribunal:

9. The landlords represented by Lettings Supermarket relied upon a best price guide from Rightmove.co.uk which provides a list for values within Thetford. It was noted that a number of the comparables included were detached and properties that were substantially larger though the two properties at Crecy Mews, both 4 bedroom terraced houses, are of a comparable size being 111m², with a mid-terrace advertised at £1,300 pcm and the end terrace £1,550 pcm.

10. The Applicants made representations, including time-lined communication with the Landlords and their Agents. They challenged, in some detail, the comparables provided by the Landlord's Agent. Some of the observations were valid in particular where the comparable was detached, where was an extra reception room, a utility room and double garage or bedroom. The Applicants also stated that some of the comparables were of superior quality and better maintained. The Tribunal were unable to verify this.

11. The Applicants provided a list of comparable properties of which some were within a 40 mile radius (Sutton Bridge), others were in Dereham and Watton, Soham, Cotteshall, Harleston, Foulsham and Diss. The expectation is that comparables are within the close vicinity of the subject property. Given the size of the Cloverfields development and other developments within a short distance within Thetford the expectation is that over a 6 - month period there would be such evidence available.

12. The Tribunal, being an expert panel with experience of lettings within the Thetford marketplace and wider areas, is aware of properties that have let within the Cloverfields and wider development within the last 6 months. Four - bedroom properties which are semi-detached or end of terrace, as opposed to detached or garage linked, and of a size between 100m² and 110m² have let within the £1,250 pcm to £1,400 pcm range. Whilst the properties may have different accommodation arrangements and room sizes overall, they offer a similar floor area. Within the wider (1 mile radius) Thetford area, 4 bedroom semi-detached houses at the upper end are let at around £1,500 pcm.

13. We consider that the premises could be let for £1300 however in all likelihood some deduction would be made for the condition of the premises and £75 per month is a reasonable deduction. Accordingly, we consider that the proposed rent of £1225 per month is reasonable. The rent increase is effective from 17th September 2023.

Judge Shepherd

31st August 2023

1. A written application for permission must be made to the First-tier Tribunal at the Regional tribunal office which has been dealing with the case.
2. The application for permission to appeal must arrive at the Regional tribunal office within 28 days after the date this decision is sent to the parties.
3. If the application is not made within the 28-day time limit, such application must include a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28-day time limit; the Tribunal will then look at such reason(s) and decide whether to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed despite not being within the time limit.
4. The application for permission to appeal must state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking. All applications for permission to appeal will be considered on the papers
5. Any application to stay the effect of the decision must be made at the same time as the application for permission to appeal.

Notice of the Tribunal Decision and Register of Rents under Assured Periodic Tenancies (Section 14 Determination)

Housing Act 1988 Section 14

Address of Premises

5 Hazel Covert Thetford, Norfolk, IP242UH

The Tribunal members were

Judge Shepherd
Gerard F. Smith MRICS FAAV

Landlord

Mark Howell and Margaret Howell

Address

5 Hazel Covert, Thetford, Norfolk, IP242UH

Tenant

Ketan Panchal and Jacqueline Moloney

1. The rent is:£

1225

Per

month

(excluding water rates and council tax but including any amounts in paras 3)

2. The date the decision takes effect is:

17th September 2023

*3. The amount included for services is not applicable

Per

*4. Service charges are variable and are not included

5. Date assured tenancy commenced

17th February 2021

6. Length of the term or rental period

Monthly periodic

7. Allocation of liability for repairs

Per s11 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

8. Furniture provided by landlord or superior landlord

9. Description of premises

4 bedroom house with lounge, kitchen, bathroom/WC

Chairman

Judge Shepherd

Date of Decision

**31st August
2023**