FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER
(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)

Case Reference	:	LON/00AG/MRA/2026/0353
Property	:	Flat 4, 36 Lancaster Grove Belsize Park London NW3 4PB
Applicant	:	Sophie Stiekema (Tenant)
Representative	:	None
Respondent	:	Asset Management Ltd. (Landlord)
Representative	:	Knight Frank LLP (Agent)
Date of Application	:	21 August 2026
Type of Application	:	Determination of a Market Rent sections 13 &14 Housing Act 1988
Tribunal Members	:	N. Martindale FRICS A. Onigbode
Date of Decision	:	10 November 2026
Rent Determined	:	£700 per week
Date of new rent start	:	30 November 2026

REASONS FOR DECISION

Background

1 A landlord's notice FORM 4A, dated 16 June 2026, was served under Section 13(2) Housing Act 1988 proposing a new rent of £702 per week replacing a passing rent of £675 per week, with effect from 30 August 2026.

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2 At a date, prior to the effective date, under S.13(4)(a) Housing Act 1988 the tenant referred the landlord's notice proposing a new rent, to the Tribunal for determination.

3 The assured tenancy is now periodic calendar monthly, though the notice is for a weekly rent.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant

4 As per S.11 Landlord and tenant Act 1985.

Landlord's Service Charges and Furniture provided and costs.

5 Furniture included: Double bed, table, lamp, chest of drawers, wardrobe (built in), sofa, TV stand, shelving unit, dining table, and 4No. chairs, wall mirror and prints, 2 metal garden chairs. Landlord's white goods and a variety of other fixed floor finishes assumed.

Liability for Council Tax

6 Tenant.

Other relevant terms of tenancy

7 None

Inspection and Hearing

8 An inspection is not routinely carried out. The Tribunal is content that it has sufficient information on the Property, its condition and on comparables, from a combination of the written and any photographic representations received and from its own knowledge and specialist expertise. There was no oral hearing.

Property

9 There was no inspection. The Property is a flat created from the conversion of a former Fire Station (the Building), 'Arts and Crafts' c.1910, Listed grade II, into twenty flats (of 1, 2 and 4 bedrooms) arranged on one of 4 levels, lower ground floor, ground, first and second (attic). The Property is at lower ground level. The Building is an established residential road of houses and former houses converted to flats dating c.1900 in Belsize Park. The Building is a mix of brick walls, plain tiled, double pitched roofs with hipped tiled second floor dormers over. There appears to a communal gated yard for some off road parking at the Building. On-road parking, is restricted.

10 Accommodation comprises: bedroom, kitchen, living room, bathroom/wc. Communal water and space heating locally controlled in the Property but, no double glazing (Listed status) or secondary glazing. The internal floor area was reportedly 53.5m2.

Evidence

11 The Tribunal received completed Form MR1 of 21 August 2026 from the tenant, with the landlord's notice in Form 4a and a later MR3 largely a challenge to the landlord's response and re-iteration of earlier material. The Tribunal had reply Form MR2 from the landlord. Both documents providing some additional background to the Property and the letting. The Tribunal is grateful for such information as was provided by one or both of the parties.

Tenant

12 The tenant did not contest the form and/or content of the landlord's S.13 Notice but did challenge the new rent. The tenant felt that the rent should remain at £2,925 pcm (£675 pw). The tenants included some photographs, mainly of the Property interior which showed the flat in use. The tenant complained of damp air and condensation in the bathroom from poor ventilation due to its semi-basement nature. Natural lighting to rooms was poor for the same reason. Outlook beyond the basement was difficult. Although the flat had a garden it was said to be used as a dog exercise space by others and therefore of little benefit. The tenant had a small outside basement patio with steps to their garden but, it offered little privacy being near street level.

13 The tenants offered an extensive listing of comparable flats available outside the Building in or near Belsize Park. The tenant also referred in passing to the first floor flat in the Building, that had been on offer to let at £2650 pcm but, without the various disadvantages of the basement position of the Property. Properties located outside the Building but in NW3 are set out below from the tenant's representations:

14 *"Comp 1 Lancaster Grove I same building: A furnished 49 ma first-floor one-bedroom flat in the same building is advertised at £2,650 pcm (£612 PW). It is identical in size to my flat and is described as bright and spacious, with natural light throughout, high ceilings, wood flooring, a large bay window, built-in storage and a modern high-specification kitchen. Its first-floor position and substantial windows (including in the bathroom) give it materially better natural light, outlook and ventilation than my lower-ground flat."*

15 *"Comp 2 - Finchley Road: A two-bedroom, two- bathroom conversion apartment is advertised at £2,492 pcm (£575 PW). It is available furnished and is described as bright and spacious, with a generous reception room, gas central heating, secure bike storage and access to maintained communal gardens. Although it is not a direct one-bedroom comparable, it provides broader market context because a larger two-bedroom/two-bathroom property in NW3 is being marketed below my proposed rent*."

16 *"Comp 3 Finchley Road: A recently refurbished, fully furnished one-bedroom second-floor flat is advertised at f2,500 pcm (£577 PW). It is described as finished to a high standard, with a spacious open-plan living area, modern integrated kitchen, generous double bedroom, contemporary shower room, large windows and quality fixtures and fittings. It also benefits from exclusive use of a private garden, available solely to the tenant."*

17 *"Comp 4 Maresfield Gardens: A fumished, modern ground-floor one-bedroom flat of approximately 42.5 m2 is advertised at £2,200 pcm (£508 PW). It has its own private entrance, a bright reception room, separate entrance, kitchen, storage and garden access. Although slightly smaller than my flat, it is a well-presented ground-floor property in NW3 with space and is marketed substantially below my proposed rent."*

18 *"Comp 5 Adamson Road: A 51 m2 first-floor one-bedroom flat is advertised at £2,145 pcm (£495 PW). It is described as bright and well presented and benefits from a spacious open-plan living area, substantial windows, integrated storage including a walk-in wardrobe and a private balcony overlooking Belsize Park. It is a What are your reasons little bigger than my flat and benefits from a first-floor position, for your proposed significantly better natural light and an open outlook."*

19 *"Comp 6 Denning Road: A garden apartment is advertised at £2,350 pcm (£542 PW). At 55.4 m2, it's slightly bigger than my flat. It is described as presented and benefits from a bright open-plan reception room, contemporary kitchen, spacious bedroom with fitted wardrobes, a separate study area, excellent ceiling heights, wood flooring, ample storage and direct access to a private patio."*

20 *"Comp 7 Hampstead Hill Gardens: A one-bedroom flat in Hampstead is advertised at £2,600 pcm (f600 PW) and is available furnished. It is expressly described as being finished to a high specification, including imported Belgian wood flooring, European designer furniture, Bosch/AEG appliances, underfloor heating and smart lighting. It also benefits from off-street parking, a landscaped communal garden, substantial windows and a bright and airy living space, while the bedroom has a large sash window providing natural light and an open street outlook. Despite this specification and these additional amenities, its asking rent remains below my proposed £2,750 pcm*."

21 The tenant also referred to another flat within the Building: *"All seven comparables are therefore marketed below my proposed rent of £2,750 pcm. Most importantly, the closest comparator — a similarly sized one-bedroom flat in the same building — is marketed at £2,650 pcm despite benefiting from a superior first-floor position, natural light, outlook and ventilation. I have nevertheless proposed a rent above the £2,650 pcm same-building comparator to recognise my flat's direct access to outdoor space. However, my flat is lower-ground*

and has material disadvantages: restricted natural light and outlook; single-glazed bedroom windows; one small bedroom window that has been fixed shut by the landlord and cannot be opened; a larger bedroom window facing directly onto an enclosed below-ground lightwell/wall; an internal bathroom with no external window and no functioning mechanical ventilation; and a living area with no conventional windows, relying on a glazed garden door for daylight and ventilation. The garden also provides less amenity value than a private garden would. Other residents and their dogs also use the space, dog fouling occurs in the garden, and it is directly overlooked from the street, resulting in limited privacy."

Landlord

22 The landlord contested the tenant's rent figure for, and description of, the Property. The landlord describes the location as: *"…situated in a prime NW3 location on Lancaster Grove and Eaton Avenue, close to the independent cafés and amenities of England's Lane and Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage stations".* The landlord contests the tenants statements regarding light ventilation condensation and damp at the Property. The Property benefits from a south facing aspect.

23 The landlord provided details of 2No. lettings of flats from within the same Listed Building. Flat 2 is let at £700 pw (unfurnished) and Flat 3 (lower ground floor, 1 bedroom, patio, 49m2) smaller, is let at £750 pw reflecting same location size building and immediate market as at the Property. The Landlord considers most of the tenant's comparables are from different buildings and locations which provide inferior accommodation and evidence of rents especially of properties on or near the Finchley Road. One was of a 2 bedroom flat, whereas the Property has 1 bedroom only.

24 The landlord considered that the flat located in the same building referred to by the tenant (advertised at £2,650 pcm) to let; does not have the Property's south-facing private garden, nor its own private entrance and has no outside space. It was also offered prior to 1 May 2026 when properties were often let on overbids to the marked up price.

Law

25 In accordance with the terms of S.14 of the Act we are required to determine the rent at which we consider the property might reasonably be expected to let in the open market, by a willing landlord, under an assured tenancy, on the same terms as the actual tenancy; ignoring any increase in value attributable to tenant's improvements and any decrease in value due to the tenant's failure to comply with any terms of the tenancy. Thus the Property falls to be valued as it stands; but assuming that the Property to be in a reasonable internal decorative condition.

Valuation

26 From the Tribunal's own general knowledge of market rent levels in LB Camden having regard for the tenant's several comparables from a wider spread than the landlord's two comparables (from within the same Building), for a Property of this type and location, it determines that the subject Property would let on normal Assured Periodic Tenancy (APT) terms, for £700 pw, fully fitted and in good order. The Tribunal prefers the more direct rental evidence at the same Building, from the landlord. This is the rent we would expect the Property to let for in the open market, if it was in the same condition as comparable properties including landlord's white goods and floor coverings.

27 The Tribunal noted that the Property had experienced minor shortcomings in the view of the tenant, but that these were insufficient to justify any end allowance from this figure. The Tribunal determines the new market rent at £700 per week.

Undue Hardship

28 If undue hardship were shown then at most, the start date for the new rent could be delayed by a Tribunal up to 2 months, effective from the beginning of the next rent period following. Allowance for hardship from the rent increase, was not sought by the tenant in their application and there was no supporting documentation to consider further. No change to the effective date of the new rent is made by the Tribunal.

Decision and effective start date

29 The new rent of £700 pw is to be levied from and including the start date of the next rent period falling due, which is 30 November 2026.

30 Although the landlord is not obliged to charge this rent and may charge a significantly lower rent as a result of their own choice, policy, or governmental regulation; they may not charge more than this figure. Otherwise any further reduction in this figure on what is levied, is a matter between the parties, only.

Chairman N Martindale FRICS Date 10 November 2026

Rights of appeal

By rule 36(2) of the Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013, the tribunal is required to notify the parties about any right of appeal they may have.

If either party is dissatisfied with this decision, they may apply for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) on any point of law arising from this Decision.

Prior to making such an appeal, an application must be made, in writing, to this Tribunal for permission to appeal. Any such application must be made within 28 days of the issue of this decision to the person making the application (regulation 52 (2) of The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rule 2013).

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.

The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the tribunal to which it relates (i.e., give the date, the property, and the case number), state the grounds of appeal and state the result the party making the application is seeking.

If the tribunal refuses to grant permission to appeal, a further application for permission may be made to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).