	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER** **(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**CAM/00MX/MRA/2026/0068**
Property	**37 Platt Cottages, Chenies, Rickmansworth WD3 6EP**
Tenant	**Ben Spencer and Alice Spencer**
Tenant's Representative	**N/A**
Landlord	**Charles Macleod Matthews**
Landlord's Address	**Chenies Manor House, Chenies, Rickmansworth WD3 6ER**
Landlord's Representative	**N/A**
Date of Application	**7 August 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of a Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**Judge A. Arul** **Patrick McGreal MRICS**
Date of Decision	**11 November 2026**
Rent Determined	**£1,600 per calendar month**
Date of Valuation	**1 September 2026**

© CROWN COPYRIGHT

Date the new rent takes effect	**1 December 2026**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 26 June 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988, which proposed a new rent of £1,600 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £1,150 pcm, to take effect from 1 September 2026.

2. On 7 August 2026, under Section 13(4)(a) of the Housing Act 1988, the Tenant referred the Landlord's notice proposing a new rent to the Tribunal for determination of a market rent.

3. The assured tenancy commenced on 2 December 2018. The rental period is monthly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

4. As per section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Services Charges or furniture provided by Landlord (other than carpets and curtain and white goods specified below) and the costs relating to the same.

5. None.

Liability for Council Tax

6. The Tenant is responsible for the payment of Council Tax in respect of the Property. The rent determined is exclusive of Council Tax.

Any other terms of the tenancy taken into consideration in determining the rent.

7. None.

Inspection/Hearing

8. Neither party requested an inspection or an oral hearing. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

9. The Property is a Grade II listed end of terrace house said to be built in 1864 and offers the following accommodation:

   Two bedrooms, lounge, kitchen/diner and bathroom. The floor area is 1,062 square feet. The Property has single glazing and is heated by a log burner on the ground floor and night storage heaters to the first floor.

   Outside: Garden, two off street parking spaces and shed.

   The Property forms part of the historic Chenies Estate, which includes residential and commercial buildings. The Estate is dominated by Chenies Manor House that dates from Tudor times and is a Grade I listed building that is open for public viewings and hire for events including media viewings and weddings. Platt Cottages is a terrace of three, including the Property, and are situated just off Latimer Road. They are approximately 1.7 miles from Chalfont and Latimer Station that is served by Transport for London's Metropolitan Line and the mainline Chiltern service.

Evidence

10. The parties completed the relevant MR1 (Tenant) and MR2 (Landlord) forms and the Tenant submitted an MR3 (Tenant's reply) form. The Landlord submitted further evidence in reply which was accepted by a legal officer under directions given on 21 September 2026.

The Tenant.

11. The Tenant considered the proposed rent of £1,600 pcm to be high and contended that the market rent was £1,200 pcm. The rent has been £1,150 pcm from 2 December 2023 on an unfurnished basis. The Tenant also pays the Landlord for water and sewerage services which are recharged at £42.50 pcm.

12. In relation to condition, the Tenant argued that the Property has suffered from prolonged maintenance failures, defective heating, unresolved damp and mould, poor energy efficiency/absence of EPC, uncertain utility charges and significant environmental and management disadvantages. They contend that these matters make the proposed rent of £1,600 pcm excessive and support a valuation of £1,200 pcm.

13. In relation to rental evidence, the Tenant provided comparables as follows:

a) 38 Platts Cottages, the adjacent house let at £913.50 pcm. No further information was provided.

b) 39 Platts Cottages and The Squirrels. No information provided concerning these properties or their rents.

c) Church Street, Chesham. This property is five miles away from the subject Property and was being advertised at £1,500 pcm, It is not stated when it was being marketed. It appears to be a two-bedroom semi-detached property in better condition than the subject Property and has full central heating and double glazing. It is situated in a village and not open countryside.

d) Bois Lane, Amersham. This property is almost four miles away from the subject Property and is situated in an urban location. It comprises a two-bedroom maisonette. It was being advertised at £1,425 pcm.

e) Bovingdon High Street. This property is about 4.5 miles away from the subject Property. It appears to be a small, modernised cottage in an urban location. It was being advertised at £1,450 pcm.

f) Berkhampstead Road, Chesham. This property is a three-bedroom house and was being advertised at £1,600 pcm.

The Landlord.

14. The Landlord maintained that the proposed rent of £1,600 pcm reflected market rates.

15. In relation to condition, the Landlord argued that most of the historical maintenance issues have been resolved, that some problems arose from the Tenants' own actions or failure to ventilate the Property, and that the property's listed status explains certain limitations. They maintained that the estate's location, garden, parking and local amenities support a rent of £1,600 pcm. The Landlord mentioned that there has been a significant investment in new insulated roof in 2025 across the 3 cottages for about £125,000 and that there have also been improvements to the kitchen area and a new log burner in the lounge. The Landlord also provided photographs showing the garden amenities, including an extended enclosed private garden and further communal gardens. The Landlord says that the Grade II listed status means that an EPC is not required. The Landlord says that the alleged nonfunctioning of storage heaters was not reported to them and that the Property last had an electrical inspection this year. The Landlord denies the allegations about mould in the Property and attributes this to Tenant lifestyle. The Landlord also comments that the Property is in a semi-rural location and the Tenants' complaints about location and having to pay water and age are unfounded.

16. The Landlord stated that the Tenant had not provided comparables in the area. There were only two comparable properties within a five mile radius for rent at £1,200 pcm. The first was in Church Street, Chesham which was 4 miles away and was a two-bedroom maisonette with no allocated parking or garden space. The second was in Lord Street, Watford, which was 9.2 miles and was a two-bedroom flat with no parking spaces but with a communal garden.

17. In relation to the Tenant's comparables, the Landlord said none were directly comparable. Bois Lane in Amersham is a split level first floor maisonette accessed by an external staircase and is 3.9 miles away and with no mention of any car parking spaces. The property in Chalfont St Giles was let sometime in June 2026 and is described as a "student property". It is 4.8 miles away. Bovingdon High Street is a mid terrace and is about 4.7 miles away on a High Street and has what is described as a 'small private rear garden' with no mention of any car parking spaces at all. It is 2.7 miles to the nearest train station. The Landlord distinguishes number 38, 39 and the Squirrels as number 38 is let under a secure tenancy with fair rent and special arrangements apply to the other two as the tenants of number 39 have considerably improved that property at their own expense and those at the Squirrels work for the Landlord.

18. In relation to rental evidence, the Landlord provided the following comparables.

    a) Little Chalfont. The address was not provided. All that was provided is a photograph of an agent's letting particulars that is endorsed let. This property appears to be one-bedroom maisonette above commercial premises in a village about 1.3 miles away. The advertised rent is £1,400 pcm.

    b) A two-bedroom detached house. There was no address provided but this property appears to be in Watford about 8.6 miles away. The rent is said to be £1,650 pcm.

    c) Ryman Court, Stag Lane, Rickmansworth. A two-bedroom flat advertised at £1,600 pcm.

    d) There is mention of a two-bedroom ground floor flat in Chorleywood for £1,600 pcm. This has a communal garden, but a parking space is available at an additional cost.

    e) There is mention of a two-bedroom barn conversion in Chesham for £1,800 pcm with small garden and parking. There are particulars for a two-bedroom detached house in Jasons Hill for £1,800 pcm but it was not clear if this was the same property.

Determination and Valuation

19. The Tribunal took account of the submissions and evidence of both parties including as to the local area, condition of the Property and comparable properties.

20. Under section 14(1) of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended), the Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the Property might reasonably be expected to let in the open market by a willing Landlord at the beginning of the new period specified in the Landlord's notice. Relevant Tenant improvements or failure of the Tenant to comply with the terms of the tenancy are to be disregarded. Historic issues relating to the tenancy or the personal circumstances of the Landlord are not taken into account. The personal circumstances of the Tenant are only considered if an application for hardship has been made.

21. The Tenant made some allegations of disrepair however it is apparent that some of these are historical and have been resolved. The majority of issues raised might also be regarded as consequences of the remote country location. It is evident from the photographic evidence that the Property is prone to mould arising from condensation. The Tribunal is not surprised by this having regard to the heating provision in the dwelling and its single glazing with no central heating. The Property appears to be of solid brickwork construction, with three external facing walls so it is likely to be more difficult to manage and regulate the heat.

22. In relation to the EPC, the Tribunal is not able to resolve the question of whether this is required or not for the subject Property however the assessment of market rent assumes that the Property is lawfully advertised and let.

23. In relation to remoteness, some tenants value the convenience of an urban location with transport, social and retail facilities being close at hand but with that comes noise, density of population and other disadvantages. On the other hand, some tenants prefer to live in a rural location and are prepared to sacrifice urban convenience for the advantages of being in a more open environment and being away from the urban density. The respective rental levels of urban living versus rural living reflect the market's view of the difference. The subject Property is less than the two miles from a station that provides access to central London in under half an hour and where retail facilities are available. In many ways it enjoys the best of both worlds and is not considered unduly remote.

24. The Tenant referred to several rental comparators but has not provided full particulars for all of them so the information available to the Tribunal is difficult to verify. 38 Platts Cottages, the adjacent house, is let at £913.50 pcm but this is a fair rent and therefore not a market rent, so it has not been taken into account. 39 Platts Cottages and The Squirrels did not have further information available so were not of assistance. Church Street, Chesham is five miles away and was being advertised at £1,500 pcm but it is not stated when it was being marketed.

It appears to be in better condition than the subject Property and has full central heating and double glazing. It is situated in a village and not open countryside. Overall, the Tribunal did not consider it a direct comparison due to the location. Bois Lane, Amersham is almost four miles away, in an urban location. It comprises a maisonette, hence a different type of property and not a helpful comparable. Bovingdon High Street is 4.5 miles away. This appears to be a very small, modernised house in an urban setting and is not considered directly comparable. Berkhampstead Road, Chesham also in a built-up area so not directly comparable, although the Tribunal noted that the property was a three-bedroom being marketed for the same rent as contended for by the Landlord for a two-bedroom.

25. The Landlord's comparables also offered only limited assistance. The property in Little Chalfont is a one-bedroom maisonette in a village and the property at Ryman Court, Rickmansworth is a two-bedroom flat. There was another flat in Chorleywood and barn conversion in Chesham. Limited particulars of the size of these properties were provided. These are all of a wholly different style to the subject Property and some were in urban localities so a direct comparison in rental values was not appropriate.

26. The Property is in a rare location and it is not surprising that neither the Landlord nor Tenant have been able to provide any comparable evidence to assist the Tribunal. The Property is in a desirable rural location yet less than two miles from a train line that connects to central London in around thirty minutes. It has a large garden with ready access to the countryside. The Tribunal appreciates internally that it has issues that many occupiers would be put off by i.e. single glazing and limited heating resulting in a low insulation value and condensation causing black mould. The kitchen and bathroom fittings are also dated. The Tribunal does however consider these problems would not deter some tenants if the rent adequately reflects their existence.

27. In the absence of any useful directly comparative evidence the Tribunal must fall back on its own knowledge and experience. It is of the view that the Landlord's proposed rent of £1,600 pcm fairly reflects the condition of the Property and if it were renovated to a modern standard it would let for rather more, potentially close to those more modern properties in the urban localities at £1,800 pcm, albeit that price was for different styles of property. Drawing on the comparables which are further out in, for example, Watford, £1,600 pcm and above is the market rent for a two-bedroom and above, with a premium for urban areas and modernised condition.

28. Having regard to the size and location of the Property and relying on its own expert, general knowledge of rental values in the area, and the comparables provided by both parties, the Tribunal considers that the market rent of the

subject Property would be in the region of £1,600 pcm. This is the rent we would expect the Property to be let for in the open market.

Market rent **£1,600 pcm**

Undue hardship

29. The new rent takes effect from the date which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination unless that would cause undue hardship to the Tenant. In cases of undue hardship, the Tribunal has a discretion to fix a later starting date up to two months after it makes its determination.

30. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case. They assert hardship but provided no details or evidence in support. The threshold for demonstrating undue hardship is high. The Tenant did not provide any information about affordability nor evidence in support. There was no evidence that Universal Credit entitlements had been fully explored. The Tribunal did not therefore consider that the claim of undue hardship was made out.

31. On the basis of the evidence provided, the Tribunal considers that for the increase to take effect from the date the Tribunal makes its determination would not cause undue hardship and does not fix a later starting date.

32. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £1,600 per calendar month with effect from 1 December 2026 which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination.

Decision

33. Therefore, the Tribunal determines the market rent at £1,600 per calendar month with effect from 1 December 2026.

APPEAL PROVISIONS

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 statement of reasons (regulation 52 (2) of The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013) stating the grounds upon which it is intended to rely in the appeal.