

Flat
29 January 2001

Dear Noelle

(A) Know EXACTLY what she meant AS MY TURN CAME ONCE she had left the block.

(B) Because the whole system is geared to helping Landlords not Lessees

Thank you for your note. I got in too late to ask David if he had managed to speak to you, so in case he did not, I hope what follows is of help.

We are a recognised Residents Association and the article you kindly sent sets out the position accurately. However, there is a big gap between what one can do legally, and what it is practical to do. It was summed up well by one of the solicitors I spoke to who asked if the residents had the stomach for a long, ugly fight, and that is clearly not the case. If Ladsky takes on the lease, that is what we will get.

Ladsky is not a man who cares about the law. He knows that it takes a long time to bring proceedings and the outcome is uncertain. The cost is great and one resident alone battling, or a few together does not look too effective. Ladsky does not want to buy this block, redecorate it and be a landlord; he proposes to force residents out by making the financial situation intolerable, intervening to block sales (already done once) and cutting off rental income. He then forces residents to sell to him at a loss and he turns the block into service flats. To fight is one thing, but to be the focus of harassment in your own home by a resident landlord is not something I would wish on anyone. I have had a dose of it from Mr Ladsky already and even I found it oppressive and I am known to be pretty resolute about these things.

Speaking personally, I cannot bear to think of handing over my hard-earned money to this man or having to pay out money in legal fees to fight one battle after another with him, whilst he lives upstairs. If I have to pay out I want to decide what happens to my home and I want to look at the chance to extend the lease and to selling on the head lease again at a profit.

In fact even if we only provisionally sign up to pursue the option we only need to pay out a share of the deposit (around £300 each), but have gained a valuable two months of time in which to either buy ourselves or decide what we do when the trouble starts. Ladsky made it very clear to me that he will strike fast and he does not negotiate.

I know what the theoretical legal position is, but I also know what constant harassment is (I have experienced it elsewhere for some two years and it is truly unbearable); and, in the end, I honestly do not think that this would be a battle we would ultimately win.

Basically, for one sum of money we get ownership of a block that we can sell on, or, for a much higher sum in service and surcharges we get an abusive landlord, a prolonged legal battle and flats that decline in value, so even should we want to sell, it would be unlikely - to anyone except Ladsky.

I am happy in Jefferson House and, like you I think, want to stay. I feel it is worth taking this step to ensure I can and, even if I lose the deposit, I have time to decide on what to do.

I too am working full out at present, and I hope this all makes sense! The parents of the children I represent also put much faith in the law, but the case now coming to a head has taken 2½ utterly bitter years to reach this point. The law does not always deliver what we want of it and that is what worries me most of all about this. The reason why the law gives tenants first refusal on the sale of a head lease is, after all, to save them being in the position we might be in with Ladsky.

I am not around tomorrow (Tuesday) evening, but am on Wednesday. Of course you can always drop in for a chat if it helps (as long as you can cope with my temporary furniture!). We are all upset and shaken by this, but I think we just need to be very brave and go forward together and, at the very least try to gain some all-important time.

With best regards,

So Right!

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(A)

(B)

Yes! That's his game plan

I have seen the light: it shines on Landlords