# Banksy mural’s removal leaves Enfield landlords facing £250,000 costs and community loss



In a striking example of the complex interplay between public art, private property, and financial burden, Gert and Gerry Coutts, landlords from Enfield, London, have faced an arduous journey since a Banksy mural appeared unexpectedly on their Lowestoft property in August 2021. Initially believing that scaffolding had been erected for repair work, the couple was astonished to discover the 14-foot mural of a seagull created by the renowned artist Banksy. This piece, part of the artist’s 'Great British Spraycation' series, quickly transformed their rental property into a cultural hotspot, drawing crowds eager to photograph the artwork. However, the influx of visitors turned their lives upside down, leading to significant security issues and financial strain.

“I'm completely depressed and sick about it,” Mr Coutts lamented to The Sun, expressing the couple's dismay over the unintended consequences of the mural’s fame. With the artwork attracting large queues and unprecedented levels of attention, the couple faced a barrage of challenges including theft attempts—one incident saw part of the mural stolen and attempted to be sold online. A need for heightened security led them to employ a night watchman and reinforced their concerns about ongoing vandalism. Local authorities even reported that vandals had been caught with paint cans, planning to deface the cherished piece.

As the reality of maintaining the property became overwhelming, the Coutts decided to remove the mural, which necessitated a costly operation of nearly £250,000. This process involved removing two sections of the mural using a crane, ultimately carried away on a low-loader lorry. The total price tag of securing and removing the artwork has left the couple grappling with a monthly storage fee of £3,000 while searching for a buyer. In a recent assessment, art dealer John Brandler estimated the mural's resale value to be between £1 million and £3 million, a figure that underscores the piece's significance within the contemporary art market.

Despite its artistic value, the coastal community reacted with disheartenment to the removal of a mural that had become a beloved landmark. Local residents had embraced the seagull as an emblem of their town, and its loss has stirred dismay within the community. The local council, while recognising the landowners’ right to remove the mural, voiced disappointment over the decision. “It was a shame to see it leave, as it had become part of Lowestoft’s cultural identity,” commented a council representative, reflecting broader sentiments echoed across the town.

The poignant saga of the Coutts family and their Banksy mural highlights the broader implications of street art, not just as a form of creative expression but also as a catalyst for economic and social dynamics within communities. While Banksy’s works famously challenge norms and provoke thought, this situation exemplifies how they can also ensnare unsuspecting property owners in complicated and often costly circumstances, revealing the dual-edged nature of public art in the urban landscape. The removal of the mural serves as a reminder of the profound impact that art can have on both individual lives and the cultural fabric of a community.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4
3. Paragraph 3
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraph 3
6. Paragraph 3
7. Paragraph 3

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25173113.banksy-artwork-lowestoft-leaves-landlords-hefty-bill/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/british-homeowners-spend-250000-remove-banksy-mural-2309530> - In May 2023, Garry and Gokean Coutts, landlords from Enfield, London, spent nearly £250,000 to remove a Banksy mural of a seagull from their property in Lowestoft. The artwork, part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series, attracted large crowds, leading to vandalism and theft. The couple faced significant maintenance costs and security concerns, prompting the decision to remove the mural and store it while seeking a buyer. Art dealer John Brandler estimated the mural's value between £1 million and £3 million.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-65186563> - In April 2023, the final section of a Banksy mural depicting a seagull was removed from a house in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The artwork, painted in August 2021 as part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series, had been covered with scaffolding and protective screens during renovation works. The removal sparked concerns about the mural's fate, with fears it might have been sold. The council acknowledged the owner's right to remove the artwork but expressed disappointment over its loss.
4. <https://metro.co.uk/2023/05/25/lowestoft-last-section-of-banksy-seagull-mural-torn-down-18846910/> - In May 2023, the final section of a Banksy seagull mural was removed from a building in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The mural, part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series, had become a beloved landmark. The removal, conducted at night, was met with disappointment from residents who valued the artwork's contribution to the town's cultural identity. The council stated that while they were disappointed, it was ultimately the owner's decision to remove the mural.
5. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/lowestoft/final-piece-of-banksy-mural-in-lowestoft-removed-to-horror-9314390/> - In May 2023, the final piece of a Banksy mural in Lowestoft, Suffolk, was removed from the side of a building, causing dismay among residents. The mural, depicting a seagull, was part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series from August 2021. The removal sparked anger as the artwork had become a much-loved landmark. Art dealer John Brandler had previously valued the mural between £1 million and £3 million and expressed disappointment over the decision to tear it down.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-suffolk-65684667> - In May 2023, the last section of a Banksy seagull mural was removed from a house in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The artwork, painted in August 2021 as part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series, had been covered with scaffolding and protective screens during renovation works. The removal raised concerns about the mural's fate, with fears it might have been sold. The council acknowledged the owner's right to remove the artwork but expressed disappointment over its loss.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd1zrvedvv1o> - In January 2023, a skip that was part of a Banksy artwork in Lowestoft, Suffolk, was removed by the property owner due to concerns over fly-tipping. The mural, painted in August 2021 as part of Banksy's 'Great British Spraycation' series, depicted a seagull and was originally painted next to a skip containing strips of insulation to represent chips. The council stated that the skip had been used as a place to dump rubbish, leading to its removal.