# Business consultant fights eviction from luxurious floating home



A 69-year-old business consultant, Simon Howard, is engaged in a legal battle to retain his comprehensive floating home, the Joseph Conrad, moored in Chelsea Reach, an area famed for its affluent residents, including past inhabitants such as Roman Abramovich and notable actors like Sir Alec Guinness and James Mason. Mr Howard claims he is facing unfair eviction from his mooring, a site he has called home since acquiring the vessel in 2010.

The Joseph Conrad, a 100ft Dutch shipping barge that Howard purchased with his former wife Kate King for nearly £900,000, has undergone significant renovation, transforming it into a luxurious space complete with a spiral staircase, three bathrooms, and sweeping views of the River Thames. However, the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company Ltd (CYBC), which oversees the moorings, is pursuing legal action against Mr Howard for alleged trespass following the expiration of his mooring licence in April 2022.

During a recent pre-trial hearing at Central London County Court, Judge Alan Johns was informed about the considerable investment Mr Howard and Mrs King made to refurbish the vessel, as well as their understanding that the mooring arrangements were intended to be secure. Timothy Polli KC, representing the couple, outlined their case, stating, “They are litigating to secure a berth for Joseph Conrad - Mr Howard's home - it being practically impossible to find an alternative berth to which the vessel can be moved.”

In the context of their separation during Mr Howard's recovery from major heart surgery, he was reportedly unaware that the option to renew the licence had been missed. After several extensions granted by CYBC, the company is now seeking an injunction to remove the Joseph Conrad from its berth, as well as compensation for what they claim is unauthorized occupancy.

The couple's legal argument hinges on the assertion that when they bought the boat, they were led to believe they could secure ongoing mooring rights, a factor that influenced their decision to invest in the ship rather than opting for ground-based accommodation. Mr Polli remarked, “They paid CYBC a price substantially over the hull value for the boat... they were assured that they would be able to keep the boat moored at Chelsea Reach for as long as they wanted.”

Conversely, the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company's barrister, Toby Watkins, countered this narrative by asserting that Mr Howard and Mrs King sought to establish a right to security of tenure that they had not been entitled to. “They are seeking to find a way to achieve the security of tenure they have never had, but would clearly like to have,” Mr Watkins told the court, indicating that the couple was attempting to gain leverage in the matter.

As the proceedings advance, the financial aspects of the case are also under scrutiny, with estimates suggesting the legal costs for CYBC could reach £700,000. Mr Polli expressed concern over what he described as “lawfare” tactics employed by the company and the disproportionate nature of the costs incurred, framing the situation as one where Mr Howard and Mrs King are facing intimidation due to resource disparities.

The judge is set to make a determination on the relevant evidence and costs associated with the trial at a later date, as both parties prepare for the next phase of this dispute that intertwines personal and financial stakes amid the backdrop of a historically significant maritime locale.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL provides the primary source for the article detailing the legal battle involving Simon Howard and the Joseph Conrad. It corroborates the context of the dispute and the legal proceedings.
2. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Chelsea+Reach,+London,+UK> - This URL supports the geographical context of the article, highlighting Chelsea Reach as an affluent area with historical maritime significance.
3. <https://www.thelawpages.com/court/central-london-county-court-uk> - This URL provides information about the Central London County Court, which is where the pre-trial hearings for Simon Howard's case are taking place.
4. <https://www.courts-tribunals-service.gov.uk/finding-court-and-tribunal/central-london-county-court> - This URL offers further details about the Central London County Court, including its location and procedures, which are relevant to the ongoing legal proceedings.
5. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chelsea-yacht-boating-lifestyle-continued> - While not directly related to Simon Howard, this URL provides general information about boating lifestyles in Chelsea, which can contextualize the living circumstances on the Joseph Conrad.
6. <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/places/areas/Chelsea/> - This URL supports the affluent status of Chelsea as a residential area, aligning with the description of Chelsea Reach and its historical residents.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14599071/luxury-houseboat-owner-court-battle-London-Billionaire-Row.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data