



VICTORIA BLANCHARD

Partner
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BIOGRAPHY

Victoria Blanchard is a partner in the firm's Real Estate Disputes Group which is ranked in Band 1 by *Chambers UK* and in Tier 1 by *Legal 500*. With over 15 years' experience of contentious property matters, mitigation of development constraint risks and injunction litigation, she routinely advises high profile developers such as Crosstree, Edge Technologies, Grosvenor, Landsec, Canary Wharf and Aviva on a range of issues arising from development, particularly in relation to rights of light, mines and minerals and other easements and restrictive covenant issues. Victoria leads the firm's rights of light centre of excellence and has particular expertise in advising on and negotiating the terms of rights of light indemnity policies.

Victoria also works closely with BCLP's transactional lawyers, providing strategic, commercial advice in the context of property investment, joint ventures, lettings, development financing and forward fundings.

Victoria is well known for her contributions to both the real estate sector and the overall legal field. She has a strong interest in legal innovation and technology and has led various projects involving both internal and external specialists. She has been instrumental in developing AI technology that enables the registration of thousands of preventative Light Obstruction Notices to safeguard the development potential of earmarked development stock. Victoria has also pioneered the use of collaboration platforms and document automation tools to assist with large scale rights of light due diligence exercises and subsequent project management and documentation of large numbers of rights of light settlement agreements. One of these projects was awarded “Best Use of Technology” at the British Legal Awards for the pioneering use of artificial intelligence (AI). Her work was also featured in a BBC series about the use of AI across different industries.

CIVIC INVOLVEMENT & HONORS

- British Legal Awards, “Best Use of Technology,” 2015

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Member, Property Litigation Association

ADMISSIONS

- England and Wales

RELATED PRACTICE AREAS

- Real Estate Disputes
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Build to Rent/Multifamily
- Real Estate

EXPERIENCE

- Acting for our client in relation to its plans to build Europe's largest state of the art commercial life science hub. Our work has included extensive legal research into the existence of any rights of light that the neighbours may enjoy over the development site and, based on the results, advising on and implementing the risk mitigation strategy. That strategy includes the registration of light obstruction notices against neighbouring buildings to prevent the acquisition of rights of light over the development site. We are able to do this quickly and cost-effectively by utilising our bespoke artificial intelligence software which we have developed specifically to automate the light obstruction notice registration process (which involves the creation and service of many hundreds of letters at one time). This strategy has been implemented well in advance of works starting on site to ensure our client can deliver on its ambitious plans.
- Working closely with our client's rights of light surveyors, advising on an appropriate strategy to defend a substantial injunction claim that has been threatened by a neighbour in response to our client's plans to develop a one acre site in central London which includes a 20 storey tower.
- Advising on potential rights of light issues arising from a significant redevelopment in Chelsea and advising on a suitable risk mitigation strategy. The existing buildings on the site comprise a mix of commercial, residential and retail properties, some of which (including a large residential tower block) remained in situ as part of the redevelopment plans and potential loss of light was a contentious issue for the residential neighbours. The development was successfully completed with no significant issues arising.
- Issuing proceedings on behalf of our client who is the owner of a very prestigious, historic building in the City of London and wishes to prevent a proposed neighbouring development from severely impacting the light currently enjoyed by their building.
- Advising on several large regeneration projects in Greater London. Our role encompasses quantifying the risk through legal title investigations and analysis and stress testing the technical data, and then formulating and implementing bespoke risk mitigation strategies, including the potential use of s203 and CPO powers. The constantly evolving nature of these multi-phase developments requires an agile approach and regular communication and collaboration between all of the BCLP specialist lawyers and external advisors engaged on these projects.
- Advising a high-profile developer in relation to their acquisition and multi-million pound plans to develop a skyscraper in the City of London. Rights of light and the costs of implementing an appropriate risk mitigation strategy are a key development cost and we were brought in at an early stage to assist with establishing the correct budget for this element of the development appraisal. This involved carrying out complex legal due diligence in relation to over 150 neighbouring interests within a very tight timeframe to establish exactly which neighbouring

owners might be able to bring a rights of light injunction claim to prevent the development proceeding. We were able to complete this work by utilising various artificial intelligence and document automation software that we have developed internally to assist with these high volume, high stake exercises. Following the successful acquisition we have continued to working closely with the client, their development managers and rights of light surveyors to implement the risk mitigation strategy which includes completing substantial settlement negotiations with a large number of neighbouring owners.

RELATED INSIGHTS

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Apr 14, 2022

BCLP boosts Real Estate Disputes team with new partner

BCLP has announced the appointment of Victoria Blanchard as a partner in the Real Estate Disputes practice in the UK. She joins from Lawyers on Demand where as a consultant she has been working closely with BCLP and its real estate clients for a number of years.