

PLANNING AND ZONING

OVERVIEW

Planning and zoning issues bridge the divide between public and private, and development and conservation. In an area that blends law, advocacy and politics, touches on sensitive local issues, and impacts generations of stakeholders, ensuring a successful result requires experienced representatives with the highest level of industry knowledge and legal sophistication.

Our Planning and Zoning team has been involved in some of the largest and most innovative development and infrastructure projects across the US, UK and UAE. The team has unparalleled experience handling highly complex projects across all asset classes, including tall buildings, major infrastructure (including the energy, water and waste sectors), transport (including the airports, ports and harbours, road and rail sectors), mixed-use development, retail/leisure/residential driven regeneration, signature schemes and multi-arena sports facilities. With over 35 lawyers, our team provides comprehensive advice with global perspective and local insight; from all facets of planning and highways law, compulsory purchase, procurement, state aid, best value and judicial review across Europe and the UK, to municipal and state approvals related to zoning, environmental review of discretionary land use actions, construction, building codes, historic preservation and related issues, as well as litigation arising out of land use and historic preservation administrative proceedings in the US.

OUR REGIONAL PLANNING AND ZONING TEAMS

UK PLANNING AND ZONING TEAM

Our team's focus is on anticipating risks against a constantly evolving legal and policy background and the navigation of consenting and related processes to meet clients commercial and operational objectives. We also help make connections between developers and planning decision makers to facilitate the successful progression of a project.

Our UK Planning and Zoning team was the first stand-alone Planning practice more than 30 years ago, and has been ranked in the top tier of the leading legal directories for the last 20 years. Our team has advised on some of the largest development and infrastructure schemes in the UK, including:

Sellar Property Group (the Shard, the tallest building in the UK); Unibail-Rodamco Westfield (Shepherd's Bush in West London, Stratford City in East London and its proposals being

promoted with Hammerson in Croydon, South London); Olympic Delivery Authority (Olympic Park for the 2012 London Olympics and post Olympics legacy schemes including UCL's £1bn new campus) and some of the UK's largest residential and BTR schemes. For more information please see our representative experience.

THE PLANNING LIFE INSIGHTS OF BRYAN

The Planning Life Insights of Bryan is a podcast looking into the practical things that you need to know to navigate your business through the UK planning system.

[Listen to the podcast >](#)

US PLANNING AND ZONING TEAM

Our US Planning and Zoning team, consisting of lawyers, urban planners and a registered architect, provides a full range of legal services in all areas of land use law, including advice on development enhancement strategies. The team has deep roots in New York and our experience there is comprehensive, including:

- Advising on compliance with the New York City Zoning Resolution and zoning and subdivision regulations in other municipalities, and appearing before New York City land use agencies and boards in other municipalities in connection with applications for special permits, subdivision approval, variances, zoning text and map amendments and other administrative actions required in the development process. Our planners and architect bring a special perspective and appreciation of urban planning and design to the process. We have also served as zoning and planning counsel to a Westchester County municipality.
- Appearing before the New York City Department of Buildings in obtaining interpretations of the New York City Building Codes, the New York City Zoning Resolution and the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law, including working with City agencies on proposed legislation affecting various aspects of the development process. We have particular experience in the area of New York City and building codes.
- Appearing before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in seeking permission to alter protected properties or to develop in historic districts, including matters involving the application of the federal and state Historic Preservation Acts.
- Transferring of development rights in both complex and routine transactions.
- Litigating disputes arising out of land use and historic preservation administrative proceedings, including under the New York City Zoning Resolution, state and municipal subdivision and site plan regulations, landmark preservation regulations and federal and state environmental impact review statutes. We also handle litigation seeking monetary damages

for constitutional violations arising out of zoning, planning board and related municipal regulatory activities.

UAE PLANNING AND ZONING TEAM

In contrast to all other international firms in the Middle East, BCLP's Middle East team has dedicated resources in the UAE focused on planning and environment. The team is currently advising major governments and quasi government entities on key projects in the region and has drafted planning and environmental regulations for a number of Free Zone entities. Clients include Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council and the Sharjah Urban Planning Council. We have an in-depth understanding of the policy framework against which planning proposals are judged both in the UAE and the wider MENA region. We are able to guide clients through often incoherent planning systems which often lack transparency and are therefore difficult to navigate.

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING

- "BCLP are simply the best in the business for planning and environmental work. Really smart, thorough and thoughtful, but also friendly, commercial and pragmatic. It is a powerful combination, and one that has led me to recommend the firm to countless important clients over many years." - Legal 500 2022
- "Top-notch, highly professional and knowledgeable. Collaborative and down to earth. Always very easy to get hold of and responsive." - Legal 500 2022
- "They are courteous, timely and hard-working, with a massive commitment to quality and good judgement, and the delivery of consistent results to the highest standard." - Chambers 2021
- "They're one of the leading firms in the field of large infrastructure projects, and they may have the strongest overall partnership of all the planning firms." - Chambers 2021

AWARDS

- The Best Lawyers in America™, Germany™, France™, United Kingdom™ - Land Use and Zoning Law/Planning
- Ranked the number one Planning team in the UK's leading legal directories for over 20 years
- Chambers USA - New York Land Use/Zoning
- The Legal 500 US - Land Use/Zoning
- U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers® 'Best Law Firms' - Land Use & Zoning Law

- Won Overall Silver Jubilee Cup and the Best Planning Project of the Year, at the RTP0 Planning Excellence Awards 2015 for our work on Thames Tideway Tunnel

MEET THE TEAM



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EXPERIENCE

\$4.9 Billion Atlantic Yards Project

Location: US, New York

Representation of Empire State Development Corporation in connection with the environmental review and other public approvals for the \$4.9 billion Atlantic Yards Project, which will include an 18,000 seat arena (the future home of the New Jersey Nets basketball team) and 16 other residential and commercial buildings, comprising 7 million sq ft of development on a 22-acre site in Brooklyn, New York.

Advising Panattoni on 15+ Logistics Projects Across Germany

Location: Germany

Advised on more than 15 logistics project developments across Germany, in particular regarding funding structures with respect to forward development management agreements, aspects of planning and zoning, permits, property due diligence and lease agreements. Six-digit overall amount of sq m of lettable areas.

Flushing Commons Project in Queens

Location: US, New York

Representing a joint venture of The Rockefeller Development Corporation and TDC Development and Construction Corporation as developer, in obtaining land use approvals in connection with the Flushing Commons project in Queens. This \$850 million project consists of the redevelopment of a 5.5 acre City-owned municipal parking lot into a 1.6 million sq ft mixed-use development, including residential, commercial and community facility uses, as well as below-grade public parking. We obtained 11 discretionary zoning approvals, including a rezoning, special permits for large-scale development, public parking garage, and waterfront development. Land use work continues as the project is being constructed.

"NYU Core 2031" at Washington Square Campus in Manhattan

Location: US, New York

Representing New York University as developer in connection with its "NYU Core 2031" proposal, to build more than 2 million sq ft of academic space at its Washington Square campus in Manhattan. Our representation encompassed preparation of NYU's land-use application under New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, counselling with respect to the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement required by the State Environmental Quality Review Act, negotiation of project real estate documents and serving as co-counsel to successfully defend the approval from litigation challenges.

Largest Onshore Gas Storage Site in the UK

Location: UK, Lancashire

We have been advising Halite Energy Group since 2010 on the proposed £600 million gas storage facility which is the largest onshore gas storage site in the UK. We have advised on all aspects of the planning process including obtaining the development consent order and a number of related powers and consents.

Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (Now the DMUP)

Location: UAE, Abu Dhabi

Instructed by the UPC to advise on planning matters. Our role in reviewing the UPC's Development Code threw up a number of issues regarding its implementation and enforcement. Although the UPC had included regulatory provisions within the Code, the Code itself had no statutory weight and needed to be supported with planning legislation. BCLP was retained to draft the relevant legislation and work with the UPC in reviewing and reforming its development review process.

Large Parcel in Hudson Yards

Location: US, New York

Representation of Silverstein Properties, Inc., a significant office and residential developer, in all land use and zoning aspects of the development a large parcel in Hudson Yards, which will ultimately contain two buildings with approximately 1.8 million sq ft of residential and commercial uses.

Dubai Government Consultation

Location: UAE, Dubai

Providing input on Dubai Government's consultation on the use of public private partnership arrangements in Dubai, including participation at a series of workshops attended by several Dubai Government bodies including the Legal Affairs Department.

Construction of a Residential Tower for a Residential Developer in New York

Location: US, New York

Representing Toll Brothers City Living, a significant residential developer, on the acquisition of development rights for the construction of a residential tower, and on applications before governmental agencies for various land-use applications, including requests for complex building code variances and for a special permit to exceed maximum parking space limitations.

Planning of Iconic London Skyscrapers

Location: UK, London

Advising on the planning aspects of some of London's most iconic skyscrapers, including the Shard, 20 Fenchurch Street and the acquisition of 122 Leadenhall, "the Cheesegrater."

Landmark Farley Post Office Building

Location: US, New York

Represented a state public benefit corporation in connection with the redevelopment of the landmark Farley Post Office Building, in order to create a new Penn Station in Manhattan, New York. Our work included legal counsel related to land use issues and the project environmental review under federal and state law.

Advising on All of Westfield's London Schemes

Location: UK, White City, Stratford, Croydon

Advising a Westfield/Hammerson joint venture on the proposals to redevelop the Whitgift Centre and surrounding area in Croydon Town Centre in a £1.5 billion mixed use scheme. We have advised on all planning matters since 2012. We have also advised on Westfield's schemes in Stratford and White City.

Lindbergh City Center

Location: US, Georgia

Representation of Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) on the ongoing development of Lindbergh City Center, a 50-acre mixed-use project located in the Buckhead section of Atlanta, Georgia and built around an open-air heavy rail station and very active bus intermodal facilities. The fully developed project will consist of nearly 5 million sq ft of space, including speculative office, corporate user office, retail and restaurant, hotel, rental residential and for-sale residential, and involves multiple ground lease parcels and detailed land use restrictions.

UK's Largest Residential-Led Scheme

Location: UK, Nationwide

The team advise on some of the UK's largest residential-led development schemes, including Oak Park Garden Village (25,500), Barking Riverside (11,000 homes), Northstowe (10,000) and Ebbsfleet Garden City (9,500).

Triple Net Ground Lease At Hudson Yards

Location: US, New York

Represented Little Man Parking LLC, a medium sized owner operated parking garage company, as landlord, in connection with a triple net ground lease at 451 W. 10th Avenue in New York. The tenant, a real estate firm, plans to build a 415,000 sq ft tower as tall as 700 ft at the site, which would include either hotel or office space on the lower floors and residential units above.

Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) On London 2012

Location: UK, London

Advised the ODA on all aspects of the planning, construction and delivery of all the Olympic Park sports venues and disposal of the Olympic Village, for use during the 2012 Olympic Games for housing athletes, and legacy conversion.

Development of an Assisted Living Facility in New York

Location: US, New York

Representing Maplewood Senior Living, LLC as land use counsel in connection with due diligence zoning advice for acquisition of a site on Second Avenue in New York, New York, the purchase of air rights from an adjacent owner, and the municipal approvals for this 200,000 sq ft development.

Sale of Fee Interests in Several Parcels in Queens, New York

Location: US, New York

Representing the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in connection with the sale of fee interests in several parcels as well as several hundred thousand sq ft of excess development rights, appurtenant to MTA-retained land to the owner of adjacent property in Queens, New York. We are handling all aspects of the deal, including environmental, zoning and real estate.

RELATED INSIGHTS

Insights

Apr 29, 2025

How will the newly created NISTA accelerate infrastructure delivery?

Between 2015-2025 the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) carried out an important function in assessing the UK's long-term infrastructure needs, setting the infrastructure agenda and providing independent advice to the Government. However, from 1 April 2025, the NIC ceased operating and was combined with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) to form a new unit within HM Treasury called the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA). In this Insight we explore how this change might accelerate infrastructure delivery.

Insights

Apr 14, 2025

Tall Building Trends in London

Tall buildings have hugely contributed to London's sense of place and rightful place as a world-leading financial centre. They have made a defined impact on the London skyline particularly in the period between 2000-2019 when the number of new tall buildings built increased significantly, largely due to a change in planning policy. For the last 10 years the NLA (New London Architecture) has been surveying trends in tall building development (which it defines as those of 20 storeys or above) across London. In this Insight we examine the NLA's recently published annual survey 2025 and what it means for tall building development in the capital.

News

Mar 31, 2025

BCLP advise GPE on acquisition of West End HQ development opportunity

Insights

Mar 26, 2025

Planning and Infrastructure Bill – NSIP changes

The infrastructure measures in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill introduce amendments, principally to the Planning Act 2008, that aim to make the NSIP regime faster and more flexible to support the Government's major infrastructure ambitions. In the second Insight in our series on the Bill, we discuss what changes to the NSIP regime have and have not been included and the implications for those navigating the system.

Insights

Mar 14, 2025

Planning and Infrastructure Bill – The Next Step on the Road to Planning Reform

The much trailed Planning and Infrastructure Bill introduced to Parliament on 11 March covers wide ranging changes to the conventional planning process, CPO, development corporations and infrastructure planning. It is an ambitious piece of legislation, designed to support delivery of the Government's housing and critical infrastructure targets and drive growth, and introduces some novel measures.

Awards

Feb 07, 2025

Chambers France 2025

Insights

Jan 24, 2025

Government's bold move to reduce legal challenges to NSIPs

The Government has confirmed it will introduce legislation to reduce the number of attempts claimants have to secure permission to legally challenge a DCO.

Insights

Jan 17, 2025

Significant changes to CPO regime under consideration

Two significant consultations opened at the end of last year, the first by the Government and the second by the Law Commission, seeking views on proposed changes to CPO law and process. In the first of this two part series, we consider the Government consultation and what the changes it proposes may mean for acquiring authorities and those whose land or interests may be subject to a CPO.

Reimagining Hong Kong's tourism landscape

As we step into the new year, the Hong Kong Government unveiled its ambitious 132-page Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0. This comprehensive plan aims to overcome the current challenges posed by economic slowdown, heightened competition, geopolitical tensions and recruitment difficulties. With the collaborative efforts of many stakeholders in implementing the Blueprint, the expected value added by the tourism industry is projected to rise by approximately 60% over the next 5 years, from HK\$75.3 billion in 2023 to HK\$120 billion. Employment in the sector is also set to rise significantly, with an estimated 44% increase over the same period, bringing the total to approximately 210,000 jobs (up from 145,600 in 2023). The overarching strategy for Hong Kong's tourism development over the next five years is to solidify its status as a world-class premier tourist destination. The ...