



Alexander Booth KC

Call: 2000 QC: 2016 [Public Access](#)

Practice areas:

Planning, Major Infrastructure Projects, Compulsory Purchase and Compensation, Public Law, Rating, Environment, Local Government



Practice Profile

Alexander Booth KC has a practice which encompasses all aspects of planning, infrastructure and compulsory purchase law. He regularly appears on behalf of private and public bodies in Examinations, Public Inquiries, the High Court and the Lands Tribunal; he has also appeared in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. Overseas he advises clients in Commonwealth jurisdictions where his experience includes having successfully brought judicial review proceedings in the Turks and Caicos Islands and acting for the Government of Bermuda in both compensation and constitutional litigation.

In 2024 he was appointed as a Recorder, and now sits in the Crown Court on the South Eastern Circuit.

He is regularly instructed in connection with nationally significant infrastructure development. In which context he promoted the Thames Tideway Tunnel on behalf of Thames Water as junior counsel, and since taking silk he has promoted a number of Development Consent Order applications, including the Northampton Gateway and West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges, the Riverside Energy Park, and Esso's Southampton to London aviation fuel pipeline.

He is also instructed in respect of a broad spectrum of development promoted pursuant to the TCPA 1990, including residential, commercial and energy related schemes. In this regard he regularly appears in Section 78 and Local Plan proceedings, on behalf of a range of developer and planning authority clients. Areas of particular focus include housing, heritage and minerals & waste operations. Recent instructions have included promotion of major residential development in Manchester, restoration and hotel-based regeneration of the Grade II* Listed Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London, and securing approval for mineral extraction and waste deposition operations in Surrey.

As regards compulsory purchase, he has extensive experience and has successfully sought CPO powers in various different contexts; these include infrastructure (pipe lines and highways) and regeneration (both commercial and residential). In addition, he regularly appears for landowners (both corporate and individuals) resisting compulsory purchase orders. Current instructions include the promotion of a series of compulsory purchase orders for regeneration of housing estates in London Borough of Merton and a road improvement scheme on the A40 in Oxfordshire.

He also specialises in valuation/compensation proceedings arising out of compulsory purchase. In this regard he acted for the GLA in a series of references to the Tribunal concerning the compulsory acquisition of land for the London 2012 Olympics, and for claimants in a number of references relating to the acquisition of land for both Crossrail and Thameslink. He is currently advising a range of claimants in respect of proceedings related to HS2, and a number of acquiring authorities including National Highways and Transport for London.

Parliamentary work includes acting for parties petitioning against HS2, both in the Commons and in the Lords, and bringing proceedings pursuant to Special Parliamentary Procedure in respect of a contested Development Consent Order.

He is a member of the Planning & Environmental Bar, Compulsory Purchase, and National Infrastructure Planning Associations. He is an author of the National Infrastructure Planning Service.

Planning

Town and Country Planning

Planning represents a significant element of his practice. He has appeared at numerous planning inquiries on behalf of both developers and local planning authorities, and has wide experience in the fields of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional/community development.

Significant projects in differing fields include:

- Promoting 332 flat development adjacent to Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester;
- Promoting retail development in the form of a B&Q Superstore at Castleford;
- Promoting a landscaping scheme in the grounds of Grade I Listed Chevening House;
- Securing revised conditions in a ROMP appeal relating to a quarry in the Surrey green belt; and
- Promoting the construction of a book depository to serve the Bodleian Library for Oxford University.

Recent Inquiry appearances for local planning authorities include acting for:

- London Borough of Hounslow, where he acted at a Call-In Inquiry to support proposals for 2,150 dwelling scheme in the vicinity of Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and Registered Park & Gardens;
- Central Bedfordshire Council in a series of Section 78 Appeals in which he successfully sought disapplication of the 'Standard Method' in national guidance;
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets in a Call-In Inquiry relating to hotel development adjacent to the Grade II* Whitechapel Bell Foundry; and
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council in a Section 78 Inquiry regarding a 350 dwelling greenfield development.

Appearances in development control relate to various contexts; Recent cases include the following

- ***R (Hardcastle) v Buckinghamshire Council*** [2022] EWHC 2905 appearing successfully on behalf of the Defendant council in upholding a grant of residential planning permission.
- ***Primavera Ltd v Hertsmere Borough Council*** [2022] 2685 (Ch) appearing successfully for the Defendant authority in resisting a claim for £1.7m in damages, on the basis of alleged negligent conduct in determining a series of planning applications for residential development
- ***R (Whitley Parish Council) v North Yorkshire County Council*** and **EP UK Investments Ltd** [2022]

EWHC 238, appearing successfully for the developer in judicial review proceedings contesting the grant of planning permission to extract pulverised fuel ash from the Yorkshire Green Belt.

His court appearances also include acting in three of the leading cases on planning enforcement, namely *Sumner v. Secretary of State and Wycombe District Council* (2010) EWHC 372 in the High Court, *Jackson v Secretary of State* [2015] EWCA Civ 1246 in the Court of Appeal, and *Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council v Secretary of State and Beesley* (2011) UKSC 15 in the Supreme Court.

He also advises authorities on the subject of local development frameworks, and has promoted various development plans in both England and Wales. In 2018 he promoted both the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the Harborough Local Plans at Examination. He is currently acting on behalf of Cheshire East Council to promote an Area Action Plan for the regeneration of Crewe Town Centre.

Listed Building and Conservation

He has acted on behalf of developers and planning authorities at public inquiries concerned with development in extremely sensitive contexts; heritage is particular area of focus in his practice. In this regard he recently acted for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets at a Call-In Inquiry regarding restoration of the Grade II* Listed Whitechapel Bell Foundry. In addition, he is currently acting for:

- the London Borough of Hounslow at a Call-In Inquiry regarding delivery of Tall Building residential development in west London, where Historic England are alleging adverse impacts on the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew (World Heritage Site), Grade I Listed Syon House and Grade I Listed Osterley House; and
- the Chevening Estate in its appeal seeking consent for landscaping works to the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden in the grounds of the Grade I Listed Chevening House.
- Other projects on which he has worked include the re-development of a contaminated site adjacent to a Grade I Listed Cathedral in Norwich, and the erection of residential development in the Hampstead Conservation Area, adjacent to a Grade I Listed Georgian Terraces.

In addition, he also appears in criminal matters relating to listed buildings, appearing on behalf of both prosecuting authorities and defendants. Notable appearances include the successful prosecution of an individual for unauthorised demolition of a Grade II listed 'International Modern' building, on behalf of English Heritage.

He has lectured on the law relating to listed buildings at Oxford Brookes University and Christies, London.

Major Infrastructure Projects

He has experience in connection with a wide range of infrastructure development and nationally significant infrastructure projects, and is now recognized as one of the leading practitioners in this field.

As regards applications under the Planning Act 2008, instructions in recent years include successfully promoting the following projects through to development consent:

- Two separate Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges, Northampton Gateway and West Midlands Interchange.
- The Riverside Energy Park on behalf of Corey Environmental Holdings Ltd

- The Southampton to London aviation fuel pipeline on behalf of Esso
- The Medworth Energy from Waste Facility on behalf of MVV UK Ltd

He was also instructed as part of the counsel team leading promotion of the Third Runway at Heathrow, and advised O.C.O. Technology in its promotion of a facility to manufacture carbon negative aggregates using air pollution control residues. Most recently he acted for the promoters of the Hynet Carbon Dioxide Pipeline, where the Secretary of State's decision is awaited.

Current instructions include acting for , National Grid regarding the Humber Trent Green NETS project, and for Harbour Energy in promoting the Viking CCS Pipeline.

Other projects of note include acting for Thames Water to promote the Thames Tideway Tunnel. In this regard he also acted for Thames Water in resisting four sets of judicial review proceedings brought in respect of the DCO, including *R (Blue Green Economy) v Secretary of State [2015] EWCA Civ 876* and *R (London Borough of Southwark) v Secretary of State [2015] EWHC 495*. Further, he also promoted the Resource Recovery Facility at Rookery South on behalf of Covanta and acted for Associated British Ports to oppose the grant of consent for a Marine Energy Park adjacent to the Port of Immingham on the Humber Estuary.

As regards infrastructure consented under other legislation, he is currently promoting a Transport and Works Act Order for Network Rail under the 1992 Act, to deliver infrastructure improvements relating to the Great Western Mainline at Old Oak Common, in connection with delivery of HS2. In addition, he has acted on behalf of National Grid to deliver LNG Pipelines in South Wales, and advising the same company regarding the construction of tunnels beneath North London to accommodate high voltage electricity cables required in connection with Crossrail. Work in the wind energy sector includes appearing on behalf of the local planning authority at planning inquiries to oppose wind farms in North Norfolk.

He is an author of the National Infrastructure Planning Service.

Compulsory Purchase and Compensation

He has a wide experience of compensation litigation, and is now recognised as one of the leading advocates in this specialist type of proceedings.

He regularly appears in the Lands Tribunal on behalf of both Claimants and Acquiring Authorities. He acted as junior counsel in the landmark valuation case of *Optical Express Ltd v Birmingham City Council (ACQ/109/2002)*. Subsequently, he appeared in the significant decisions of *Urban Edge Ltd. v. London Underground Ltd [2009] UKUT* and *TNL Ltd v. Lancaster City Council [2010] UKUT*, (both of which were concerned with planning assumptions as relevant to valuation) and *Kaufman v Gateshead Borough Council [2012] UKUT 8 (LC)* (which was concerned with ransom payable in respect of urban regeneration). He has particular expertise in handling complex cases involving extinguishment of businesses and business loss generally. In this context he recently acted for the successful claimant in *Welcocks Ltd v Network Rail [2019] UKUT 0162*.

He acted on behalf of the GLA in a series of proceedings relating to the compulsory acquisition of land in connection with the London 2012 Olympics, These included the first such reference to come before the Tribunal, *Clearun Ltd v GLA [2014] UKUT 0116*, as well as substantial business disturbance claims in *Kendon Packaging v GLA [2015] UKUT 6354* and *Bluefoot Foods Ltd v GLA [2015] UKUT 0208*.

He also acted for a number of dispossessed claimants in connection with the compulsory acquisition of land for Crossrail, including Grosvenor Properties and William Hill. He then appeared for the successful claimant in *SME (Hammersmith) Ltd v TfL [2017] UKUT 0091*, in which case he achieved a record multiplier for a business disturbance claim.

In addition, he acted for the acquiring authority in *Dreamland Leisure Cinema Ltd v Thanet District Council [2020] UKUT 0305*, in its proceedings relating to the Dreamland Amusement Park, and again for the acquiring authority in *Castlefield Ltd v National Highways Ltd [2023] UKUT 217*.

He is currently advising both claimants and acquiring authorities in variety of proceedings throughout the UK.

As regards court work in this area, he appeared in the Supreme Court on behalf of the Compensating Authority in *Bloor v HCA [2017] UKSC 12*, in a landmark decision concerning the correct approach to assessment of development value.

As regards Commonwealth jurisdictions, he recently advised a hotel consortium in the Cayman Islands regarding the acquisition of its land for a new highway scheme. He was also instructed by the Government of Bermuda in respect of a \$90 million claim for compensation arising from the cancellation of a development agreement in respect of the Hamilton Waterfront.

He also acts in mineral compensation matters. In this regard he appeared on behalf of Dorset County Council in compensation litigation relating to the modification of Minerals Permissions owing to environmental designation of quarries, and appeared both in *Bond v Dorset County Council [2010] UKUT 364* and *Stone Firms Ltd v Dorset County Council [2014] UKUT 0527*.

Public Law

He is regularly involved in High Court litigation. Cases of note include having acted for the Mayor of London to defend a legal challenge to the introduction of the congestion charge in Central London (*R (Westminster C.C.) v Mayor of London* (2003) BLGR 611) and acting on behalf of the London Development Agency to resist review of the mechanism to assemble the site for the 2012 London Olympics *Sole v Secretary of State and London Development Agency* [2007] EWHC 1527.

Other experience includes bringing a challenge against the Welsh Assembly's grant of planning permission for large scale opencast coal mining in Merthyr Tydfil, (*Condron v National Assembly for Wales* (2007) BLGR 87, now a leading authority on 'apparent bias'), and challenging the decision of the Minister of Planning in the Turks and Caicos Islands to grant planning permission for the creation of an artificial island within a marine nature reserve (*R v Physical Planning Board Challenge ex parte Young & Hesse* [2008] CL 02/08).

He appeared on behalf of the Government of Bermuda to resist a constitutional challenge in respect of legislation enabling the Government to void property rights in *Allied Trust & Allied Development Partners Ltd v The Attorney General of Bermuda and the Minister for Home Affairs* [2015] Civ. No. 127.

Most recently he appeared successfully for the developer in *R (Whitley Parish Council) v North Yorkshire County Council and EP UK Investments Ltd* [2022] EWHC 238, in judicial review proceedings contesting the grant of planning permission to extract pulverised fuel ash from the Yorkshire Green Belt.

Rating

He regularly advises and appears in connection with disputes relating to payment of non-domestic rates. In this regard, in 2015 he was instructed by Harrods to contest their assessment in the 2005 list before the Lands Tribunal, and most recently appeared in the Valuation Tribunal for Wales on behalf of the Appellant in *V.O. v Clynderwen & Cardiganshire Farmers Ltd (2023)*.

Environment

Local Government

Parliamentary

He acts in Parliamentary Proceedings, with notable recent experience petitioning in respect of HS2 on behalf of both private landowners/companies and public authorities. In 2018 and 2019 he appeared before the Parliamentary Select Committee on various occasions in connection with proposals to tunnel part of the phase2A route beneath Ancient Woodland in Staffordshire, and also in connection with the implications of HS2 for regeneration of Crewe and the wider area of Cheshire.

Other Parliamentary work includes acting in Special Parliamentary Procedure proceedings, regarding the Development Consent Order for Able Marine Energy Park.

Cases of Note

- Land Compensation proceedings in the Supreme Court [*Bloor v HCA*]
- Statutory Review regarding planning enforcement in the Supreme Court [*Welwyn Hatfield v SoS & Beesley*]
- Promotion of Southampton – London aviation fuel pipeline Development Consent Order application
- Promotion of Northampton Gateway Strategic Railfreight Interchange Development Consent Order application
- Promotion of Thames Tideway Tunnel Development Consent Order application
- Resisting constitutional challenge on behalf of the Government, in Supreme Court of Bermuda [*Allied Trust v Minister of Home Affairs*]
- London Olympics Judicial Review on behalf of the London Development Agency [*R (Sole v SoS and LDA)*]
- Achieving record multiplier for business disturbance in Crossrail compulsory purchase

compensation claim [*SME (Hammersmith) Ltd v Tfl*]

- Promotion of compulsory purchase orders on behalf of National Grid Gas in South Wales
 - Statutory Review of Open Cast Coal Mining Scheme in the Court of Appeal
 - Judicial Review of London Congestion Charging Scheme Challenging Rating Liability Assessments for Harrods
-

Qualifications & Appointments

- BA (Hons) History – Christ Church, Oxford
 - Diploma in Law (CPE) – City University
 - Scholarships – Middle Temple, Queen Mother's Scholar, Astbury Scholar, Lord Justice Sachs Exhibitioner
 - Recorder (South Eastern Circuit), November 2024
-

Quotes

"Alex is one of the best inquiry advocates at the planning Bar. He is tenacious on his feet and forensic in his preparation – a deadly combination if you are against him. He is a team player who works closely and collaboratively with instructing solicitors and the witness team. He is also creative in finding the point in even the most hopeless of cases when needs must."

Legal 500, 2024

"Alexander is super smart, on top of all the detail, and never loses sight of the big picture. He has a persuasive and incisive advocacy style, but is also down to earth. Alexander is a true team player and is easy to work with."

Legal 500, 2023

"Alex really cares about his clients, and his passion and drive mean that he consistently achieves great results. He is a highly effective advocate." "He is extremely personable, very bright and commercial."

Chambers and Partners, 2022

"He is really reliable, technically robust and helpful in reaching a decision with clients. He is impressive in his advocacy"

Chambers and Partners

"He is very good on his feet. The way he deals with the issues as they arise in cross-examination is impressive"

Chambers and Partners

"Very much a rising star", who is "very good across the board"

Chambers and Partners

"He is very methodical and dedicated, and really cares about the matters he is instructed upon."

Chambers and Partners

"Someone who is "not only excellent on the details but can also look at the big picture" and who "leads a team by example."

Chambers and Partners

"His strength is his ability to cut through huge amounts of detail to the real issues."

Legal 500