



James Burton

Year of call: 2001

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"He is very impressive, very good on his feet, easy to work with and very personable; he has got everything." Chambers and Partners

James specialises in environmental law, planning law and linked compulsory purchase order (CPO)/compensation work (including Part I Land Compensation Act 1973), related areas (including energy, aviation, traffic regulation and highways/public rights of way (PRoW)) and also civil liability. His work often involves the overlap between his practice areas (e.g. environmental law, common law nuisance and Part I claims; planning protection for heritage assets and occupiers' liability).

James' work is primarily domestic, but internationally he has specific expertise in large scale toxic torts.

James appears regularly at public inquiry and in the High Court and Court of Appeal. He is equally comfortable working alone or as part of a team.

In addition to major planning, CPO/Part I and high-value catastrophic civil claims, James has substantial experience of very heavy group litigation (the Abidjan Group Litigation and, more recently, the Jalla Litigation (both toxic tort dumping/spillage claims), the Accident Group Litigation (insurance) and the criminal proceedings into the Hatfield rail disaster).

James' administrative law experience includes considerable work petitioning parliament (HS2) and also appointments as an investigating officer into allegations of misconduct in public office.

James was named Environmental and Planning Junior of the Year at the Chambers UK Bar Awards 2015.

Areas of expertise

Planning

- Aviation
- Compulsory Purchase and Compensation
- Examination in Public
- High Court Planning Challenges
- Highways, Footpaths and Rights of Way

-- Planning Appeals, Hearings & Inquiries; Planning Enforcement & Planning Application
Environment
Personal Injury and Civil Liability

-- Planning Appeals, Hearings & Inquiries; Planning Enforcement & Planning Application

James regularly appears as sole or lead advocate in heavy planning inquiries, for both appellant and LPA. These frequently involve highly technical disputes over issues such as viability or low carbon technology. Consideration of heritage assets is a speciality. James also has specific experience involving equestrian development, in particular high goal polo proposals.

Recent planning inquiries of note include:

- mixed-use proposals for the iconic Tolworth Tower Complex site in Kingston-upon-Thames (a c.500-unit residential led scheme in the town centre, with a range of heavily contested issues, some novel, including viability and climate change matters) (2021)
- the proposed conversion of listed Heythrop College, Kensington, into an extra care facility (2020) (with a focus on heritage and loss of a community facility)
- the proposed residential conversion of the historic London Electricity Board headquarters on Bethnal Green Gardens (2020) (with a focus on heritage)
- the (called in) public inquiry into the proposed Waterbeach (Levitt's Field) Energy From Waste facility in Cambridgeshire (2019, decision 2020) (concerning low carbon technology/climate change with a focus on heritage impacts)
- proposed residential redevelopment of the prominent corner site on Mile End Road/Burdett Road involving the celebrated Backstreet Club (with a focus on agent of change and noise, plus heritage) (2019)
- the Surrey House, Kingston inquiry (2019) (with a focus on heritage and viability), and
- major high goal polo facility in Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at Barfold Farm (40 loose boxes, six tack rooms, yard, menage and change of use agricultural to equestrian, permission successfully secured – 2015).

James' planning inquiry experience includes niche environmental work, such as the "Wightlink" ferries inquiry concerning the Lymington saltmarshes, where James appeared (successfully) for Natural England at an inquiry that marked a watershed for the concept of adaptive management as part of lawful mitigation within Art.6(3) appropriate assessment – 2011). It also encompasses energy development (in addition to Waterbeach energy from waste (EfW) noted above, James has considerable experience of inquiries into wind energy developments, e.g. Truthan Barton and North Dover).

James also deals with the full range of planning enforcement work.

Recommendations

James was named Environmental and Planning Junior of the Year at the Chambers and Partners Bar Awards 2015.

He is ranked in Chambers and Partners as a leading junior in Planning Law and Environment and in The Legal 500 as a leading junior in Planning Law, Environment and Personal Injury.

- *"He is very precise and thorough, extremely user-friendly and always enthusiastic." "He has a keen eye for detail."* Chambers and Partners 2022
- *"A very senior junior who always steps up to the mark and has the ability to understand, interpret and*

explain massively complicated statutes. "The Legal 500 2022

- *"Very approachable and technically accurate."* The Legal 500 2022

[QUOTES FROM 2021 TO 2017?]

- *"I am impressed by his breadth of knowledge, efficiency and thoroughness. He is extremely committed and hard-working, as well as personable, always approachable and patient in explaining complex matters to clients."* Chambers and Partners 2017
- *"An excellent planning barrister, with strength in associated areas, who is a good all-rounder."* Chambers and Partners 2017
- *"He is very personable and puts a lot of time and effort into cases."* Chambers and Partners 2017
- *"Very thorough and intellectually bright," "he demonstrates meticulous preparation and has a keen eye for detail."* Chambers and Partners 2017
- *"Produces work of impeccable quality."* The Legal 500 2016
- *"Highly motivated, and has an excellent sense of strategy and tactics."* The Legal 500 2015
- *"He is very impressive, very good on his feet, easy to work with and very personable; he has got everything."* Chambers and Partners 2014
- *"He is a brilliant planning junior and one to watch."* Chambers and Partners 2014
- *"He is always very clear and decisive."* Chambers and Partners 2014

Memberships

- UK Environmental Law Association (Council Member 2012-2020, now member of EDI Forum)
- Planning and Environment Bar Association
- Personal Injury Bar Association

Education, qualifications and scholarships

- BVC Sunley scholarship Lincoln's Inn
- BVC: Very Competent: 2001 (Inns of Court School of Law)
- CPE scholarship Lincoln's Inn
- CPE: Commendation: 2000 (City University)
- Double-first, BA Joint Honours Ancient and Modern History, University of Oxford (New College) 1998
- Scholar of New College, Oxford
- Secondary Education: St. Ignatius, Enfield

Publications

- Encyclopedia of Environmental Law (co-editor) Sweet & Maxwell
- Environmental Impact Assessment; Tromans – 2nd ed. (Contributor)
- Shackleton on the Law and Practice of Meetings (currently at 13th Edition) (Sweet & Maxwell)
- Accidents Abroad Sweet & Maxwell (Co-author) 24 October 2009

Languages

James has conversational level Spanish.

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