



Christiaan Zwart

Year of call: 1997

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"...excellent at getting to the heart of the matter in complex cases." The Legal 500 2025

An *"insightful and steely streetfighter"* with nearly 30 years' experience, The Legal 500 ranks Christiaan as a Leading Junior, in Tier 1 Planning and Land Use, and shortlisted him for Planning Junior of the Year in 2022 and in 2023.

Christiaan is a Development and Infrastructure (including DCO) lawyer whose practice encompasses Planning and Heritage, Compulsory Purchase, Environment, Energy, and Tax law. Christiaan practices in multiple jurisdictions, namely England, Wales and Jersey. Christiaan also advises on these areas within the Transport, Construction, Commercial, Inquiries, Judicial Review, and Investigations, Regulatory and Disciplinary, Administrative and Public, and Information and Media spheres.

Christiaan has represented an impressive range of clients, such as Exxon Mobil, BP, Swift Energy, Hyundai Motor UK, Bouygues UK, Affinity Water, Stanstead Airport, The Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural Resources Wales, HMRC, developers including housebuilders such as Bellway, a number of well-known Retail giants, local authorities such as BANES, Buckinghamshire, The City of Westminster, Swindon, and government agencies.

As an Infrastructure Barrister Christiaan has significant expertise in DCOs, their promotion and regulation, advising the Examining Authority and Secretaries of State, objecting to them, at Hearings and the Courts.

As a Planning, Environment and Energy Barrister Christiaan has considerable experience in all development and regulatory matters.

As a Tax Barrister, Christiaan's expertise encompasses development and environment-related Taxes including CIL, VAT, Landfill Tax, and Aggregate and Climate Change Levies.

Christiaan's practice includes the following areas of expertise:

- Planning and Property
- Environment
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Construction
- Administrative and Public
- Inquiries and investigations
- Commercial
- Regulatory and Disciplinary
- Information and Media

Areas of expertise

- Art and Cultural Property
 - Development Consent Orders and Infrastructure
 - Aviation and Aerospace
 - Compulsory Purchase and Compensation
 - High Court Planning Challenges
 - Highways, Footpaths and Rights of Way
 - Planning Policy Making
 - Planning Applications
 - Planning Appeals, Hearings and Inquiries
 - Planning Enforcement
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Biomass and Energy from Waste
 - Electricity
 - Nuclear Energy
 - Oil and Gas
 - Renewables
 - Water
- Environment

- Residential Development

"Simply brilliant"

"A steely streetfighter"

"Excellent at getting to the heart of a matter in complex cases"

"Fantastic"

"...greatly impressive".

With nearly 30 years' of practice as a barrister, Legal 500 consistently ranks Christiaan in Tier 1 of Planning law, and also as a "Leading Planning Junior" (meaning Christiaan is seen as a future candidate for Silk by both peers and clients) from 2022, most recently in 2024 & 2025.

Christiaan was shortlisted by Legal 500 in 2022 and 2023 as Planning Junior of the Year.

Christiaan has a broad residential development practice and is regularly instructed on complex developments at national and regional level and in London, in often challenging and overlapping political, policy, and legal contexts.

His clients include developers, decision-makers, regulators, and funders: at national level, BP Pension Fund's residential developer, the Co-Op, and Muse; at regional level, Larkfleet (now part of Allison Group) and local authorities including BANES, Buckinghamshire, JCS (Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury), Mid-Sussex, Swindon, and West Berkshire; in London, Bouygues UK and Hyundai Motor UK, London Boroughs of Newham and Greenwich; as well as individual residential developers.

Christiaan acts on a wide range of residential development scales, most recently:

- a greenfield 2,450 unit urban extension at Aylesbury;
- a greenfield 2,500 unit development at New Eastern Villages at Swindon;
- two residential tower blocks of 400 units in Reading;
- a residential tower block of 450 units in Sheffield;
- a residential mixed height 300 unit urban scheme in South London;
- an edge of settlement residential development of 300 units in the Midlands;
- a new town centre scheme with 180 units in East London;

- a residential 40 unit scheme adjacent to a motorway junction;
- a greenfield residential 32 unit scheme in West Berkshire; and
- private dwellings in the Green Belt, National Parks, under NPPF paragraph 84(e), & in Jersey.

Christiaan's formidable reputation in complex residential development is complimented by his significant experience in related areas of legal expertise including local plan making, infrastructure, energy, environment and flood risk (including working with the Environment Agency), highways, CPO, heritage (including working with Historic England), greenbelt and conservation areas, viability, planning enforcement, and related tax law matters (including CIL and appeals, residential VAT, Opting to Tax and Stamp Duty Land Tax). Christiaan also regularly advises all players in the housebuilding arena on asset engineering and *Hillside* modifications of planning permissions, drafting and negotiating planning obligations, and advises on restrictive covenants. Christiaan's comprehensive 'whole of life' experience of residential developments on a range of scales and types affords him a unique perspective on development risk and its reduction and mitigation.

Recent and particular examples of types of his residential development work include:

- advising a developer on *Hillside*-compliant changes to content of its permission for residential/commercial development with 400 C3 units;
- advising a developer on two multi-storey towers for 400 PRS & key worker units in Reading;
- acting for a developer in CIL appeal to secure £0 (vs £1.2m) liability for 40-storey tower of 450 co-living units in Sheffield;
- safeguarding a developer's funding on 300 C3 unit Central London residential development by ensuring lawful delayed payment on appeal and in the High Court of £5.5m CIL;
- safeguarding for funders land and permission asset values from post-*Hillside* reduction to £0;
- safeguarding a developer's 40 C3 unit option by defeating a motorway junction compulsory purchase order of his land at Southampton;
- securing for a developer a 650 unit tower block redevelopment by CPO in East London;
- securing for a developer 180 C3 units as part of a new town centre by CPO in Newham;
- advising developers on Viability PPG interpretation during planning obligation negotiations;
- advising a developer on reduced-rating VAT liability of West London a house redevelopment;
- advising developers on new C3 development in Hampstead Garden Suburb, London;
- safeguarding residences by reliance on restrictive covenants in London & Jersey;
- advising on rights of light restrictions on C3 development in South London;
- securing for developer unprecedented consent under NPPF paragraph 84(e) for the Classically-designed "Wiley House" in Farnham on water saturated clay ground;
- advising developer on brownfield C3 development in the Essex Green Belt;
- securing C3 permission in the Surrey Green Belt against enforcement notice;
- advising on housing land supply, and Joint Core Strategy Authorities on strategic housing policy and its formulation;
- acting for West Buckinghamshire Council at planning inquiry to facilitate safe emergency evacuation of 30 C3 units near Atomic Weapons Establishment Burghfield during an event;
- advising Buckinghamshire Council to facilitate a *Hillside*-compliant 400 C3 unit extension to a 2,450 new urban extension; and
- acting for Swindon Council at planning inquiry relating to Vistry Group at Lotmead, Swindon, facilitating a flood defended and drained new low-lying 2,500 C3 unit settlement.

Christiaan is a member of The Planning and Environment Bar Association, The National Infrastructure Planning Association, the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association, The Compulsory Purchase Association, The Technology and Construction Bar Association, and The Commercial Bar Association, and Planning Futures.

- Development Consent Orders and Infrastructure

Christiaan is *"...always my Infrastructure/DCO Counsel of choice"* (Head of Planning and Environment, Blake Morgan LLP)

Christiaan has acted on more than a dozen DCOs, giving him unparalleled experience in nationally significant infrastructure projects under the Planning Act 2008. Christiaan consistently adds value and brings a unique perspective to all DCO infrastructure and to Transport and Works Act matters, including any integral CPO elements. Christiaan brings a strategic edge to any advisory team because he not only risk audits and inputs into DCO application documents throughout the DCO up to and including court challenges, but he has also represented all participants in the infrastructure consenting process, such as promoters, regulators, objectors, examining authorities, and the Secretary of State. His experience includes Energy, Transport, Healthcare, and Utilities projects, such as:

- **Energy:** Aquind Electricity Interconnector DCO (acting for successful principal landowner objector), Hornsea Three Offshore Windfarm Order (acting for Spirit Energy – owner of gas rigs), Mynydd y Gwynt Wind Farm Development Consent Order (acting for Natural Resources Wales), Swansea Bay Tidal Order (acting for the Examining Authority Panel), South Hook Combined Heat and Power Plant Order (promoting for Exxon Mobil and State of Qatar), Hinkley Point C (Nuclear Generating Station) Order (acting for the Environment Agency), Energy from Waste projects at Rookery South (acting for objector) and Lockstock (acting for Secretary of State).
- **Transport:** Lower Thames Crossing DCO (acting for two principal objectors at two M25 Junctions), A303 Stonehenge Order DCO (acting for Historic England), Silvertown Tunnel Order DCO (acting for the London Borough Newham), M27 Junction 8 expansion (acting for the principal landowner), A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Order DCO (acting for the principal landowner), Manchester Rail Realignment Project (Transport and Works Act Order) (acting for Euro Car Parks), and Hinkley Point C Harbour Empowerment Order (acting for the Environment Agency);
- **Healthcare:** acting for the Minister for Infrastructure Jersey on new hospitals (the "Future Hospital" and "Our Hospital" developments), and acting for Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver a Healthcare Hub.
- **Utilities:** Thames Tideway Tunnel Order DCO (acting for the Secretary of State), Manchester Ship Canal Ltd v Environment Agency [2013] EWCA Civ 452 (defending a JR against the Environment Agency's regulation of flood risk from ship canal infrastructure), and acting for the Environment Agency in its regulatory action against Southern Water resulting in a record £90 million fine.

Recommendations

- "Christiaan consistently delivers KC quality at Junior rates"
- "Really insightful"
- "A streetfighter ... goes through brick walls for clients"
- "Thinks outside of the box to secure the client's objective"
- "Always packs a punch and our clients love him"

Qualifications

- Bar Vocational Course, Inns of Court School of Law, Scholarship Inner Temple
- CPE, City University
- RIBA Part III, & double first in Architecture, Newcastle University

Memberships

- CPA
- SCL
- NIPA
- PEBA
- UKELA
- TECBAR
- COMBAR

Appointments

Appointed to the Attorney General's (Treasury) B panel in March 2010

Appointed to the Attorney General's (Treasury) C panel in March 2004

Prince of Edinburgh Scholar, Inner Temple

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