

39 Essex Chambers
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Celina Colquhoun

Year of call: 1990

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“Celina is a skilful advocate who is able to build rapport with instructing solicitors and wider client teams. She is an impressive cross-examiner – she is thorough and thinks strategically.”

“Very knowledgeable and commercial with considerable insight into the intricacies of planning enforcement matters and law... a niche specialism even within planning... unwavering under fierce judicial questioning.” Legal 500 2024 - Tier 1

“Celina is responsive and robust in her approach... is extremely knowledgeable and approachable with excellent attention to detail. Chambers and Partners Directory 2024 - Band 4

“Celina is dedicated, very analytical and keen for precision...very much considered to be a leading figure in the legal planning world” Chambers and Partners Directory 2023 - Tier 5

Celina Colquhoun specialises in all aspects of planning and environmental law, including in particular highways, DCO, and CPO matters and has experience in licensing as well. Her practice also involves a considerable degree of wider Administrative and Local Government Law.

Celina is consistently recognised by The Legal 500 and in Chambers Guide for Planning and is rated by Planning Magazine's Legal Survey as amongst the UK's top planning juniors. She was chosen by Planner Magazine as a Women of Influence in March 2022. She was the winner of the Legal 500 Planning and Land Use Junior Award 2024.

She appears extensively as an advocate in public inquiries and hearings as well as in the High Court and Court of Appeal. She also has experience of wider major public inquiry work including the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Celina acts for and advises a very wide range of public bodies and private parties in relation to the to all forms of development, from application stage to appeal as well as planning enforcement matters and the promotion of or objection to development related Orders. She also advises on matters of local government and public law.

She is a trained and accredited mediator in her areas of specialisms.

In July 2020 Celina was appointed as a member of the six person panel constituting the Government's Independent Review of Administrative Law (IRAL) chaired by Lord Faulks. This reported to the Government in early 2021 and led to changes to Judicial Review legislation and procedure.

Celina is an elected member of the Bar Council. She is Co-Chair of the Bar Council's European Committee and Co-Vice Chair of the Bar Council's Law Reform Committee. She is an active member of the Bar Council's Climate Crisis Working Group.

She is a convenor of the Planning and Sustainable Development Working Group of the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association. (UKELA)

Areas of expertise

Planning and Property

- Aviation and Aerospace
- Compulsory Purchase and Compensation
- Development Consent Orders and Infrastructure
- High Court Planning Challenges
- Highways, Footpaths and Rights of Way
- Planning Policymaking
- Planning Enforcement and Lawful Development Certificates

Environment

Energy and Natural Resources

Inquiries

- Aviation and Aerospace

Celina's early Planning Bar career began with major national infrastructure planning projects and in particular she represented the Government's Airports Policy Division as well as the Highways Agency at the 1995-99 Heathrow Terminal 5 inquiry. Since then she has acted for smaller airfield owners and operators as well as the landowners of Manston Airport in respect of the application for a Development Consent Order in 2019.

Cases of Note:

- ***Application by RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited for Manston Airport Development Consent Order – 2019 [granted following redetermination in 2022]*** – acted for and advised the owners of the airport who had been promoting the land for housing and mixed development and who objected to the DCO by a separate company seeking to reopen the airport. The DCO sought compulsory acquisition of all the land required prior to an agreement being reached. The DCO was recommended for refusal; was then granted by the SofS and has been quashed.
- ***Land at Henstridge Airfield The Marsh Camp Road Henstridge Templecombe Somerset (GR: 374640/120380)*** – application ref 15/04069/FUL advised the owner and operator of a general aviation airfield on ensuring the continued use of the airfield.
- ***Heathrow Terminal Five and Associated Public Inquiries*** – acted throughout the 4 year long inquiries for the highways agency promoting Highways Orders and for Department of Transport and Airports Policy Division.

Recommendations

Celina Colquhoun has been recognised as a leading junior by Chambers & Partners since 2008 and The Legal 500 since 2010

- *"Celina really doesn't waver and is really quick to think on her feet."* Chambers and Partners 2022
- *"She has an enormous breadth of knowledge and experience in planning law. She is a very good with the client, listening patiently and carefully and then explaining in a way that makes complicated law clear and understandable for the client. She is a good team member and to be recommended for all types of planning work."* The Legal 500 2022 – Tier 2
- *"She brings enthusiasm and commitment, with a good depth of knowledge in relation to infrastructure projects." "Celina is able to cut through the detail and provide excellent strategic advice to the client."* Chambers and Partners 2021
- *"Highly competent when faced with challenging circumstances."* (Tier 2 London; Tier 1 Midlands) The Legal 500 2020
- *"She is extremely knowledgeable and personable and is our go-to barrister for disputed planning matters." "She has been approachable, friendly, committed and effective. She has provided accessible and clear advice to clients. Her knowledge of the law is exemplary and she displays huge stamina during a case."* Chambers and Partners 2019
- *"Unfazed by a challenging situation."* The Legal 500 2019
- *"She is extremely good, particularly with clients and consultant teams, and deals with substantial volumes of work diligently." "She has an excellent sense of judgement and is excellent at dealing with senior players in the industry."* Chambers and Partners 2018

Memberships

- Planning and Environmental Law Bar Association PEBA
- Compulsory Purchase Association CPA
- National Infrastructure Planning Association NIPA
- Administrative Law Bar Association ALBA
- United Kingdom Environmental Law Association UKELA
- JUSTICE
- Parliamentary Bar Mess PBM - committee member
- BAR COUNCIL elected member – Law Reform Committee (Co-Vice Chair) and European Law Committee (Co-Chair)
- EUROPEAN CIRCUIT of the BAR
- European Law Institute

Qualifications

Education

- 1988 - 89 Inns of Court School of Law (called 1990)
- 1986-1988 University of Buckingham – Law LLB
- 1985- 86 Institut Britannique, Paris

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