


CONSULTANT, REAL ESTATE LITIGATION

Lesley Webber OBE


A consultant in Fieldfisher's property litigation group, I've specialised in preventing and resolving property and valuation disputes for nearly 40 years.


PLANNING

REAL ESTATE

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LOCATIONS

[United Kingdom](#)



I am preeminent in the rent review field where I am in high demand for headquarters's rent reviews, frequently being approached to act for parties from both sides (and sometimes by the arbitrator). Additionally, I have a distinguished track record in planning, including innovative agreements for The Shard to mitigate its impact on adjoining buildings.

Consistently recognised as a leading individual in the real estate disputes sector by Legal 500 and Chambers throughout my career, I was one of Legal Business Magazine's very first "Experts' Expert".

I was an independent member of the Property Advisory Group (PAG) from 1997-2003 which helped successive governments formulate, plan and reform its real estate policies. As a member of the Government's Sounding Board on the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, I drafted reforms and persuaded government to abolish the tenant's counter-notice procedure and substitute warning notices for Court exclusion orders. I was also the litigation specialist craftsman on the joint RICS/Law Society initiative for resolving lease renewal disputes.

In 2002, I was awarded the OBE for services to the property industry and to PAG.

I've acted on the rent reviews of many of the most iconic buildings in London

including:

- > The Lloyd's Building (for Lloyds of London)
- > Somerset House (for the landlord Trust)
- > 50 Stratton /Berkeley Street (for Lazards)
- > 25 Berkeley Square (For Cadbury's)
- > 78 St James's (for Deutsche Bank)
- > Waterside (for D2 Private)
- > 9 Millbank (for OFGEM)
- > Queensberry House (for Louis Dreyfus)
- > The Adelphi (for arbitrator and separately for a tenant)
- > Harnsworth Quay (for Southwark Council)

Those where I have undertaken multiple reviews include:

- > Niketown (for Nike)
- > BEIS HQ at 1 Victoria Street (for BEIS)
- > Great Minster House (for DFT)

My out of London rent review work has ranged from a successful leading case for the landlord on Brunel Buildings/ the National Archive to a major Birmingham car park and from the Hemel Hempstead oil terminal to the M&S store at Witney.

My expertise extends to other types of property problems which are potentially sensitive or otherwise require careful management in order to achieve the best outcomes, for example rights of light and rating. I have a track record of succeeding where different legal principles or analysis can be used to achieve results in what have been thought to be lost causes. Some notable successes include:

- > converting lease renewals and multi-million pound dilapidations claims on headquarters buildings into substantial settlements (Charlotte Street studios; Grosvenor Street)
- > establishing the legal principles for service charge recovery in residential leases in PHIT v Holding and Management and then in commercial leases in Fluor Daniels v Shortlands Investments
- > securing possession of a valuable private equity City Centre redevelopment at minimal cost via Insurance covenants.

Up to 2016, in conjunction with my worked for Fieldfisher, I obtained a decade's experience for a family office private equity portfolio, resolving disputes over time of the essence clauses, dilapidations and rights of light matters on its flagship Bond Street redevelopment, facilitating a multi-million pound sale, and leading to instructions to act for the tenant on its rent review.

I've established and maintained over many years and an exceptionally strong relationship and rapport with the surveying profession. I was the first solicitor to be awarded an honorary membership of Arbrix (the surveyor arbitrator body). I continue to devote time to support and provide continuing professional development (CPD) for surveyors at all levels, one notable example being Surrey Arbrix branch which I have attended for over 25 year. This experience enables me to encourage the very best from expert witnesses and many of my referrals came from surveyor recommendations.

I've also spoken widely for RICS, Law Society and Arbrix, as well as at various professional conferences and am part of the RICS training team for new arbitrators. I delivered the Blundell Memorial lecture with Lord Neuberger in 1999.

What others say...

“ Lesley Webber is lauded as a "strong, distinguished and forthright" litigator by commentators. She excels in rent review cases, as well as disputes with a planning law element ”

Chambers and Partners

“ Praised for possessing leading property litigation capability. ”

Legal 500