



serle court

clerks@serlecourt.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7242 6105

Andrew Bruce

Year of Call: 1992

"He's just a brilliant barrister. His written opinion is very clear, he doesn't sit on the fence and will tell you how it is but does so in a very user-friendly manner." "A great cross-examiner and a great advocate. He is very clear." "A sophisticated advocate. He is good on his feet and clients like his manner."

Chambers & Partners

abruce@serlecourt.co.uk
clerks@serlecourt.co.uk



Practice Overview

Andrew has a commercial and chancery practice with a particular focus on property-related work. He is regarded as one of the leading senior juniors in real estate litigation and has been described as “an exceptional talent in the property sphere”. In addition, Andrew has a noted art law practice and is highly-rated for professional negligence work, acting for both claimants and defendants, in matters ranging from high-profile claims in respect of Old Master Paintings to claims against architects in respect of residential developments and claims against solicitors relating to international corporate transactions. Andrew also regularly acts in high-value commercial litigation and is a “skilful advocate” who is “effective in digging under the surface to uncover the real issues”.

Andrew has sat as a (part-time) Deputy District Judge since 2004 and as a (part-time) Judge of the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) since 2008. In 2019 Andrew was appointed to the Pool of Arbitrators for the Court of Arbitration for Art (CAfA) in The Hague.

Areas of Expertise

Property

Andrew is one of the leading senior juniors at the Property Bar. He has been described as “a very driven advocate who is able to absorb a lot of information very quickly” and who “can win the unwinnable”. Andrew is a past committee member of the Property Bar Association and was appointed a (part-time) Judge of the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) in 2008.

Andrew’s cases of note include:

Merlin Real Estate Ltd v. Balaam [2024] 4 WLUK 613. Acted in a significant case (commented upon at EG 2024, 2427) relating to the intensification of use of a right of way.

West One Loan Limited v. Palmer [2024] (unreported). Successfully represented mortgagees on an application to cancel a Mental Health Crisis Moratorium.

Phillips v. Wheeler [2023] (unreported). Successfully represented the Defendants who were alleged to have fraudulently misrepresented that the home they were selling was “not affected by Japanese Knotweed”.

HAE Developments Ltd v. The Croft Ealing Ltd [2022] UKUT 120 (LC). Acted for the Objectors on an application to modify restrictive covenants to permit construction of a block of 8 apartments on the site of a large house in Ealing.

Kelleher v. Castlebourne Homes (Rock) Ltd [2020] (unreported). 5-day (entirely remote) trial as to the nature and extent of a right of way in Trebetherick, Cornwall.

Howard v. Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company Ltd [2018] EWHC 1118 (Ch). Acted for the Port of London Authority in litigation relating to residential moorings at Chelsea Reach.

Humphrey v. Rogers [2017] EWHC 3681 [Slade J]. Represented successful claimants at first instance and on appeal in restrictive covenant case relating to the conversion of a farm building into residential accommodation.

Hennessey v. Kent [2017] UKUT 243 (LC). Represented successful Applicant on application to Upper Tribunal (before Deputy Chamber President & a Member) to modify a restrictive covenant. The modification permitted the Applicant to build 2 additional houses on her land, despite these houses obstructing the views of the objector from his property. The case has received significant attention in the legal press because of how the judgment deals with conduct, compensation and costs.

Schmid v. Fellner (2016) EWHC Ch [Soole J]. Represented Eric Fellner (producer of Bridget Jones' Diary) in the High Court in his defence of a claim for specific performance of a contract relating to the sale of Mr Fellner's home at Pyrton Manor in Oxfordshire for £16m.

Calhaem v. Gentil [2016] EWLandRA 2015 0272. Represented applicant on successful adverse possession claim in respect of part of garden of residential property in Dunstable.

Re.: 3 Aylmer Drive, Stanmore [2014] UKUT 0153 (LC). Represented objectors on an application to modify a restrictive covenant under s.84(1)(aa) Law of Property Act 1925. Objectors were awarded compensation of £75,000 and their costs.

Professional Negligence

Andrew has been described as "a very safe pair of hands" in connection with professional negligence matters and he has considerable experience of professional negligence claims involving solicitors, architects, surveyors, accountants and auctioneers. Examples include:

Instructed by Boodle Hatfield LLP to represent the Claimants in Thwaytes v. Sotheby's [2015] EWHC 36 (Ch) a professional negligence claim against Sotheby's in respect of the attribution of Caravaggio's 'The Cardsharps'.

Acted in 5-day action in High Court in Cardiff in claim brought against architects in respect of the residential development of a site in Gloucestershire (Instructed by Geldards LLP) (2012).

Instructed on the property-related professional negligence claims arising out of the administration of Lexi Holdings plc. The last of the claims (against valuers and solicitors) settled in September 2012 (Instructed by DLA Piper).

Represented F Inc (a US company) in multi-million US\$ professional negligence claim against X LLP (an international law firm). Claim settled in November 2011 (Instructed by Pinsent Masons).

Represented the Claimants in a professional negligence claim against a leading auction house in relation to a painting of 'Salome' which is now attributed to Titian and is now established to have been in the royal collection of Charles II. The claim settled immediately before trial, but was widely reported. (2007-2010).

Art & Cultural Property

Andrew has a particular interest and expertise in matters relating to art. In addition to acting in claims against auction houses in respect of negligent advice or misattribution, he has also advised in connection with claims about the manuscripts of Sir Malcolm Arnold. Many of the cases on which Andrew works, whether they concern art-works by Modigliani, Picasso or Henry Moore, or Collections of wine or priceless frescoes, are sensitive and confidential.

Andrew represents the Claimant in Hulcote Trading Inc v. Bury Art Investment Ltd, ongoing proceedings to recover various Spanish Old Master sculptures and paintings around the world.

Andrew was junior counsel in Thwaytes v. Sotheby's [2015] EWHC 36 (Ch) (probably the most important art case to come to trial in the last decade) in which the Court held that Sotheby's was not professionally negligent in its research and advice in respect of a painting of 'The Cardsharps' in 2006. The painting was subsequently sold as a 17th Century copy, but later exhibited as and attributed to the hand of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (known as Caravaggio).

Andrew represented the Claimants in a claim against a leading auction house for negligence and breach of duty as to

the research carried out and advice provided in relation to a painting now thought to be by Titian. The painting was sold by the Claimants through the Defendant in 1994 for £8,000, but was offered for sale at auction in January 2009 with an estimate of \$4-6 million. The proceedings were issued in 2007, settling the day before trial (four years later), and the dispute attracted extensive media interest on the basis of the Court papers. (Instructed by Boodle Hatfield LLP).

Commercial Litigation

Andrew deals with a wide-range of commercial and contractual disputes. His experience dates back to his appearance in the landmark House of Lords case of Ruxley Electronics v. Forsyth [1996] 1 AC 344 (the case of the swimming pool that was built too shallow).

Recent work includes:

Represented the Applicant in Joint Stock Company Aeroflot v. Leeds & ors (2017) EWHC 2403 Ch where Mann J acceded to the application to adjourn a complex fraud trial on the grounds of the Applicant's ill health. The Applicant, Mr Glushkov, was alleged to have conspired with Boris Berezovsky to defraud the Russian state airline of substantial sums between 1995 & 1999. The trial was listed for 28 days and was fixed to commence, at the time of the application, in 1 month's time. This was the second adjournment which Mr Glushkov, who was intending to represent himself at the trial, had sought.

Represented Bank of Scotland plc in connection with claims relating to a legal charge over a very substantial residential property (2013) (Instructed by SNR Denton UK LLP).

Represented a US corporation in connection with claims arising out of US ex-patriate tax equalisation calculations (2013) (Instructed by Boodle Hatfield LLP).

Company Developments v. Coffee Club & ors [2011] EWCA (Civ) 766. The Court of Appeal upheld the Claimant's construction of a guarantee despite there being obvious mistakes in the drafting undertaken by the Claimant's (then) solicitors. Andrew represented the successful Claimant.

Sinocare Group Ltd v. Biran [2010] EWHC 2433 (Ch) & ongoing. Proceedings concerning a freezing injunction obtained by a Hong Kong company carrying on business in the healthcare sector of the People's Republic of China (Instructed by Peters & Peters).

Andrew was instructed in various proceedings arising out of the administration of Lexi Holdings plc (a company which provided bridging finance) (2008-2012).

Andrew was junior counsel in claims (valued at US\$156m) brought by various investors in connection with an unsuccessful investment venture in Azerbaijan. Led by Dominic Dowley QC (2006-2008).

Banking and Financial Services

Andrew's ability in banking & finance work was recognised by Legal 500 between 2008 and 2016 and he continues to act for (and against) large financial institutions.

Represented mortgagees on claims relating to multi-million pound properties in Central London, Brentwood and Saffron Walden (2024) (Instructed by ULS Solicitors).

Acted for mortgagees on application to cancel a Mental Health Crisis Moratorium (2023-2024) (Instructed by Bevan Britten LLP).

Represented Bank of Scotland plc in connection with claims relating to a legal charge over a very substantial residential property (2013) (Instructed by SNR Denton UK LLP).

Advised investors in relation to drag-along rights in connection with the sale of a London hotel (2012) (Instructed by Dechert LLP).

Company Developments v. Coffee Club & ors [2011] EWCA (Civ) 766. The Court of Appeal upheld the Claimant's construction of a guarantee despite there being obvious mistakes in the drafting undertaken by the Claimant's (then) solicitors. Andrew represented the successful Claimant.

Funding Corp Block Discounting LLP v. Lexi Holdings plc [2008] BCLC 596 & [2011] EWHC 3101. Hearings concerning the construction of a Deed of Release entered into by Barclays Bank plc. Led by Philip Marshall KC (Instructed by DLA Piper).

Civil Fraud

Andrew regularly advises and appears in matters involving civil fraud. Examples include:

Acted for hedge fund manager in obtaining search order against a former employee (2011/2012).

Lexi v. DTZ [2010] EWHC 2290 (Ch). Late amendment of pleadings to allege illegality (Instructed by DLA Piper).

Sinocare Group Ltd v. Biran [2010] EWHC 2433 (Ch) & ongoing. Proceedings concerning a freezing injunction obtained by a Hong Kong company carrying on business in the healthcare sector of the People's Republic of China (Instructed by Peters & Peters).

Renault UK Ltd v. Fleetpro [2008] Bus LR D17. Case involving fraudulent misrepresentations in connection with fleet car sales.

Marlwood Commercial Inc v. Kozeny [2007] EWHC 950 (Comm). Extension of a freezing order to assets over which it was alleged the Defendant had substantive control despite their being held on discretionary trusts.

Marlwood Commercial Inc v. Kozeny [2006] EWHC 872 (Comm). Heavy application in commercial court to strike out US\$156m claim in deceit arising out of unsuccessful investment venture in Azerbaijan.

Chancery

Recommendations

Best Lawyers: Real Estate Litigation (2021-current)

Who's Who Legal UK Bar: Real Estate (2019-current)

Who's Who Legal UK Bar: Real Estate - Most Highly Regarded Junior (2021)

Citywealth Leaders List - Art Advisory (2019-current)

Chambers & Partners: Art & Cultural Property (2017-current)

Chambers & Partners: Real Estate Litigation (2005-current)

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth - Art & Cultural Property (2019-current)

Legal 500: Property Litigation (2006-current)

Legal 500: Banking & Finance (2008-2016)

Legal 500: Professional Negligence (2012-2019)

Legal 500: Art and Cultural Property (2019-current)

Quotes

"I always find Andrew very straightforward and approachable. He is really good on the technical side, really considered, and very commercial." (Chambers & Partners High Net Worth, 2025)

"Andrew Bruce is incredibly good at cutting to the chase and giving a coherent answer. He is very certain and clear." (Chambers & Partners High Net Worth, 2025)

"Andrew has a very methodical, detailed approach. He provides very good written advice and has a very cerebral approach, giving the client the steer as to where to go next." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew is an excellent barrister who is very well versed in all aspects of property law." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew is simply excellent. He is a sophisticated and effective advocate who provides clear advice and always goes the extra mile for the client." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew Bruce is a go-to for property litigation matters. He is an extremely sophisticated advocate and a pleasure to work with." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew is an excellent barrister. He is our go-to counsel for knotty disputes which require a clear understanding of the law and a strategic roadmap. He gives clients clear, practical advice." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew provides excellent advice which is clear and easy to understand, and which importantly tells the client what they actually need to know. He is diligent, capable and a formidable advocate." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Andrew is always a pleasure to work with." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Articulate, stern but not aggressive, and very persuasive in his arguments." (The Legal 500, 2025)

"Andrew's a go-to barrister for knotty legal issues. His great legal mind coupled with his clear and precise analysis is his main strength." (The Legal 500, 2025)

"Andrew is an excellent barrister. He is our go-to counsel for knotty disputes which require a clear understanding of the law and a strategic roadmap. He gives clients clear, practical advice." (Chambers & Partners High Net Worth, 2024)

"Andrew provides excellent advice which is clear and easy to understand, and which importantly tells the client what they actually need to know. He is diligent, capable and a formidable advocate." (Chambers & Partners High Net Worth, 2024)

"Andrew is my go-to counsel for detailed legal analysis in complex art matters. He provides clear and reasoned advice that is easily digestible for a client. He is aware of the commercial nuances of the art market and feeds this seamlessly into his advice." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"He is a real expert in property disputes, and is able to convey difficult concepts with ease to clients." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"Andrew is excellent in conference, on his feet and is proactive in moving the case forward." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"Clients never fail to be impressed by Andrew. A master at absorbing an abundance of information, cutting through the chaff and rooting out the key issues quickly." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"Andrew never disappoints. He is clear, concise, legally brilliant and an engaging advocate." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"Andrew Bruce immediately instils that is he in control, and he knows what he is doing in stressful litigation matters." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023)

"He is extremely responsive." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023)

"Andrew Bruce is very bright, can explain things in simple terms and has bags of common sense." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023)

"He is a very strong advocate." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023)

"He will always call it straight. If you want to know if something is wrong with a case he will tell you, giving you a warts-and-all analysis. Andrew provides you with a blueprint of how to move forward. He's resolute and a really good sounding board." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023)

"Andrew is my go-to counsel for detailed legal analysis in complex art matters. He provides clear and reasoned advice that is easily digestible for a client. He is aware of the commercial nuances of the art market and feeds this seamlessly into his advice." (Chambers & Partners HNW, 2023)

"A tenacious advocate who also prepares carefully considered written opinions." (The Legal 500, 2023)

"Andrew is a first-class barrister and a stand out choice for complex property matters. His advice, both written and in conference, is not only clear but decisive, not sitting on the fence but giving practical and commercial options to resolving disputes in addition to the law." (The Legal 500, 2023)

"Andrew's strengths include incisive cross-examination and great depth of experience in this field." (The Legal 500, 2022)

"A great cross-examiner and a great advocate. He is very clear." "A sophisticated advocate. He is good on his feet and clients like his manner." (Chambers & Partners, 2022)

"A sharp advocate" and "a highly specialised junior who gives clear, reliable and understandable advice." (Who's Who Legal, 2021)

"He is very good on detail and is not afraid to take difficult points." "We use him for definitive answers, if we have a situation where we need to know an answer before going into litigation." (Chambers & Partners HNW, 2021)

"A strong advocate who is not afraid to broach difficult areas of cross-examination. Also offers clear and concise written opinions. Has sharp and technical knowledge of art law." (The Legal 500, 2021)

"His advice is clear, accurate and authoritative. He has a knack of making complex legal matters easily understandable to clients." (The Legal 500, 2021)

"A lawyer who is very knowledgeable on art law, especially when it comes to technical issues like authenticity and title." "He is very intelligent and no-nonsense in his approach. His drafting skills are of good quality and assist him in nailing the case." (Chambers & Partners, 2021)

"He is very responsive, gives clear and succinct advice and is good with clients." "He's just a brilliant barrister. His written opinion is very clear, he doesn't sit on the fence and will tell you how it is but does so in a very user-friendly manner." (Chambers & Partners, 2021)

Publications

[Valuers Beware! A Case Note on Quantum \(Barrowsfield\) Ltd v. Bell & ors. \[2023\] UKUT 2 \(LC\)](#) - #SerleShare 31/01/2023

[A Case Note on Countess of Wemyss and March v. Simon C. Dickinson Ltd \[2022\] EWHC 3091 \(Ch\)](#) - #SerleShare 06/12/2022

[Flat Shares & Tenancy Deposits](#) - #SerleShare 20/07/2021

[Possession in the time of COVID](#) - #SerleShare 03/03/2021

[Stakeholder Claims in the Art World](#) - #SerleShare 18/12/2020

[Secrecy in the Art Market](#) - #SerleShare 25/09/2020

[Adverse Possession: The Common Boundary Exception](#) - Solicitors Journal 15/09/2020

[Modification of covenant impeding reasonable user of land \(Payne v Maldon DC\)](#) - LexisPSL 12/11/2019

[Offices to flats: a rare modification?](#) - *New Law Journal* 2/10/2019

[The law and knotweed - are the floodgates now open for legal action?](#) - *Property Week* 18/12/2018

In the Press

Art Market Insight, Citywealth Magazine, November 2023

[‘Art and Sustainability: evolving trends and established traditions’](#) interview for Citywealth, March 2022

Education & Qualifications

Jesus College, Oxford - MA (Jurisprudence)

Winner of Inns of court Studentship

Harmsworth Exhibitioner and Benefactors' Scholar of Middle Temple

Appointments

Deputy Adjudicator to HM Land Registry (now (part-time) Judge of the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)) - December 2008

Deputy District Judge - December 2004

Arbitrator for the Court of Arbitration for Art - 2019

Memberships

Chancery Bar Association

Property Bar Association (Committee Member 2004-2011)

Art Lawyers Association

Professional Negligence Bar Association
