



serle court

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## 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."*

*"Andrew is an excellent barrister who is well versed in all aspects of property law." "He is clear, concise, legally brilliant and an engaging advocate." "A sophisticated advocate. He is good on his feet and clients like his manner."*

Chambers & Partners

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## 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 having been described as a “go-to counsel for detailed legal analysis in complex art matters” and having been instructed on many of the most important recent art cases. He also regularly acts in high-value commercial litigation and is a “master at absorbing an abundance of information” who “gives clients clear, practical advice”. He is “always a pleasure to work with”.

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) (Land Registration) since 2008. In 2019, Andrew was appointed to the Pool of Arbitrators for the Court of Arbitration for Art (CAfA) in The Hague.

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## 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 recent cases of note include:

West One Loan Limited v. Rolfe [2025] (unreported). Successfully defended counterclaims against a mortgagee and secured a judgment for £7.9m in a 5-day High Court trial.

Sultan v. Vas [2025] (unreported). Successfully represented the Claimant in a bitter and long-running neighbour dispute relating to an access way which culminated in a 3-day trial.

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 across farmland.

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.

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## 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:

Acted for homeowners in their claim against housebuilders in relation to the design of their new-build house (Instructed by Bevan Britten LLP) - settled in 2024.

Represented an Essex farmer in his negligence claim against his accountants (Instructed by Holmes & Hills LLP) (2023).

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).

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## Art & Cultural Property

Andrew has a particular interest and expertise in matters relating to art. He is described as a “go-to counsel for detailed legal analysis in complex art matters” who “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.”. Many of the cases on which Andrew works, whether they concern art-works by Modigliani, Picasso, Richter or Henry Moore, or religious artefacts 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 acted for the claimed owner of a rare Anatolian Qur'an scroll which had been consigned to Christie's in 2010 and in respect of which there was a title dispute. The claim settled in 2022/2023.

Andrew represented an antiques dealer in respect of a claim arising out of his acquisition of a Kirman 'Vase' Rug Fragment. The claim settled in 2020/2021 following which the rug was sold for over £0.5m.

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).

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## 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 mortgagees in claims relating to dealings with frozen assets (which assets were the subject of Gable Insurance v. Dewsall [2025] EWHC 2280).

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.

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.

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).

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## **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).

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## **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) & subsequent. 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.

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## Chancery

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### 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)

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### Quotes

*"I always find Andrew very straightforward and approachable. He is really good on the technical side, really considered and very commercial."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"Andrew is dynamic and quick-thinking, excellent on his feet and very user-friendly."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"He is brilliant on real property disputes."* (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

*"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 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 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)

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

*"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)

## **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

## **In the Press**

Art Market Insight, Citywealth Magazine, November 2023

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

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## **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

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