



serle court

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Hugh Rowan

Year of Call: 2021

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Practice Overview

Hugh Rowan is a junior barrister specialising in property law, regularly instructed in property-related disputes arising within a commercial chancery context. Hugh has a particular focus on real property, enfranchisement, and residential and commercial landlord and tenant law, as well as commercial and company disputes. Hugh appears both as part of a team and as sole counsel in the High Court, the County Court, and the First-tier Tribunal.

Hugh is regularly involved in high-profile cases. In 2025 and 2026 alone he appeared on five separate occasions in the Court of Appeal in key cases relating to damages recoverable for disrepair, the extent of Building Safety Act 2022, the construction of a shareholders' agreement, and the court's jurisdiction in bankruptcy proceedings.

A popular and busy junior, clients appreciate his ability to work as a team and handle complex legal and factual issues. Hugh is Direct Access qualified and happy to accept instructions on a Direct Access basis in suitable circumstances.

Hugh is a co-author of five property law specialist books relating to service charges, the right to manage, enfranchisement, and two books on the Building Safety Act 2022, one of which Hugh edits. A regular contributor to the Landlord & Tenant Review, Hugh often writes the Case Digest for these publications as well as topical articles and case commentaries.

Prior to joining Chambers Hugh studied Philosophy & Theology at Oriel College, Oxford before undertaking his law conversion at City University. During his training Hugh volunteered as a caseworker at the Free Representation Unit where he conducted a number of successful employment cases in the First-Tier Tribunal. Hugh was also a volunteer with Blackfriars Settlement Advice Clinic.

Hugh is also a freelance bagpipe player and an amateur beekeeper.

Areas of Expertise

Property

Hugh regularly advises and appears in disputes involving easements, freehold and leasehold restrictive covenants, boundary disputes, adverse possession claims, and land registration matters. Hugh also advises on disputes relating orders for sale under the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996.

Hugh is instructed to appear as sole counsel in both the Land Registration division of the First-tier Tribunal and in the County Court. Hugh has also acted for clients in a number of on-site mediations concerning boundaries, easements, and party walls under the Party Wall Etc. Act 1996.

Marc Glover also led Hugh representing the partly successful Appellants in the High Court appeal *Centaur v Scott* [2023] EWHC 2712 (Ch), a complex case involving proprietary estoppel in a commercial context and countervailing benefits.

Residential Property & Service Charges

Hugh has acted in a wide range of disputes, including possession proceedings, service charge disputes, appointments of a manager, RTM cases, enfranchisement, rent repayment orders, disrepair, breach of covenant, and tenancy deposit claims. He regularly advises how these, and similar matters affect potential land developments.

As part of Hugh's portfolio of pro bono work, he was instructed by Advocate in *Tabassam v Manchester CC* [2026] EWCA Civ 361, in which he acted for the successful Respondent in the appeal of an improvement notice under the Housing Act 2004.

Hugh is a contributor to *Service Charges and Management*, 7th Ed. (Sweet & Maxwell, due in 2026).

Hugh acted for the successful respondents in the Court of Appeal in *Adriatic Land 5 Ltd v Long Leaseholders at Hippersley Point* [2025] EWCA Civ 856; [2025] H.L.R. 43, a key case concerning service charges and the Building Safety Act 2022. The matter is set to be heard by the Supreme Court in 2026. Hugh was also led by Andrew Butler KC in *Wilson v HB (SWA) Ltd* [2025] EWCA Civ 1360; [2025] 4 W.L.R. 114, a key case concerning what damages can be recovered in relation to defects in a residential development.

Hugh acted as sole counsel successfully resisting an appeal before the Upper Tribunal in the case of *Okoye v Gray's Inn Capital Limited* [2025] UKUT 195 (LC) which is the latest appellate word on insurance premiums in residential flats.

Hugh's other work in this area includes a long running First Tier Tribunal appointment of a manager dispute relating to a multi-million-pound development in East London and is currently instructed on a six-figure High Court disrepair claim arising from the illegal conversion of a property into a cannabis farm. Hugh was instructed as junior counsel in the Upper Tribunal Appeal of *English Rose Estates Ltd v Menon & Ors.* [2022] UKUT 347 (LC), and was similarly instructed in a recent Court of Appeal case involving forfeiture which eventually settled.

Hugh regularly appears in both the Residential Property and Land Registration divisions of the First-tier Tribunal. His recent published successful trials – covering areas such as: challenges to the reasonableness and payability of service charges; terms of enfranchisement; determinations of breach of lease; and, the appointment of a manager – include:

- *Leslie Park Court Management Co Ltd v Ilori* (LON/00AH/LSC/2025/0786, 17 October 2025)
- *Evans v Albermarle Ealing No 1 Ltd* (LON/00AJ/LSC/2023/0470, LON/00AJ/LSC/2024/0157 & LON/00AJ/LSL/2024/0502, 12 September 2025)
- *Meredith v Birch* (CHI/45UC/LSC/2024/0018, 14 March 2025)
- *Alcock House RTM Co Ltd v Roger Ashton* (LON/00AM/LSC/2024/0233, 25 February 2025).
- *Baker v Leamington Court Management Company Limited* (BIR/47UC/LIS/2023/0011, 18 November 2024)
- *Baker v Leamington Court Management Company Limited* (BIR/47UC/LAM/2023/0001, 20 August 2024)
- *Okoye v Grays Inn Capital Limited* (LON/00AK/LSC/2023/0480, 19 August 2024)
- *Asim v Raja* (CHI/21UD/LIS/2023/0005 & J00CR098, 18 July 2024)
- *Victoria Road Management (SS17) Limited v Soanes* (CAM/00KG/OCE/2023/0017, 14 June 2024)
- *Horn v Knighten Street Freehold Company Limited* (LON/00BG/LAC/2023/0024, 10 June 2024);
- *Foundry Court (Wokingham) Management Limited v McGovern* (REF/2022/0629, 31 May 2024)
- *Link House – Bow Limited v Var. Leaseholders* (LON/00BG/LSC/20230020, 12 December 2023);
- *Gill v Hounslow LB* (LON/00AT/HNA/2022/0049, 30 October 2023);
- *Bluegates Management Company Limited v Thomas* (CHI/43UC/LSC/2023/0062, 6 October 2023);
- *Markham v Salanson* (CHI/21UD/LIS/2023/0005, 4 September 2023); and,
- *Barnet LB v Gabay* (LON/00AC/LBC/2022/0077, 20 April 2023).

Commercial Property

Hugh is often instructed to advise or appear in County Court and High Court forfeiture proceedings, service charge disputes, lease renewals under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, dilapidations, breach of covenant matters, and commercial property development disputes.

Hugh recently appeared unled and was successful in a commercial forfeiture appeal in the case of *Maduforo v Adil Property Investment* (unreported, 22 July 2024). Hugh successfully overturned the decision of the lower Court that there had been an effective tender of rent such as to disentitle the landlord to forfeit the premises.

Hugh also succeeded in recovering a seven-figure sum of arrears for a commercial landlord in West London, and has developed a particular speciality in advising on mixed-use developments. Other recent cases include a dispute over the terms of a rent variation agreement in a North London development, and the role of restrictive covenants in the development of a shopping centre.

Hugh regularly advises and assists in claims concerning terminal dilapidations, injunctions relating to user clauses, and 1954 Act disputes.

Commercial and Company Disputes

Hugh has been instructed in a range of commercial disputes, including breach of contract, construction, rectification, rescission, mistake, and misrepresentation arising out of the Partnership Act 1890, Insolvency Act 1986, Companies Act 2006, including breach of directors' duties and unfair prejudice petitions.. Hugh is often asked to provide discrete opinions in these matters and has also conducted a number of successful trials in these areas.

Hugh is often instructed to act in associated insolvency disputes, obtaining interim orders, advising in relation to the appointment of administrators, and has recently been instructed in a High Court dispute concerning an alleged transaction at an undervalue.

Hugh works for a range of clients – from high street firms to multinational corporations.

His recent led work in this area includes:

- *Kulkarni v Gwent Holdings Limited* [2024] EWHC 1357 (ChD), a ten-day High Court commercial dispute arising out of a Shareholder's Agreement. Hugh was then instructed on the appeal in the Court of Appeal. He was led by Andrew Butler KC. Hugh also appeared in subsequent appeal to the Court of Appeal
- Hugh was instructed as Junior Counsel in the case of *Mobile Telecommunications Company KSPC v HRH Prince Hussam Bin Saud Bin Abdulaziz al Saud* [2025] EWHC 85 (Ch), in which he was led by Geraint Jones KC, Peter Arden KC, and Marc Glover in successfully resisting a bankruptcy petition presented against Prince Hussam on grounds that the Court had no jurisdiction as the Petitioner could not establish 'residency' in jurisdiction in the relevant period.

The case was subject to an expedited appeal, giving Hugh and his leaders only four clear days to prepare as Respondents. Nevertheless, the Court of Appeal sided with the Respondents on all points and permission to appeal was refused ([2025] EWCA Civ 681)

- *Birch v Meredith* (unreported, 9-13 September 2024) led by Nick Isaac KC, a five-day misrepresentation, negligence, and harassment trial concerning a mixed-use development in Arundel. They succeeded on the principal claim and the counterclaim, and secured a 2-year injunction against the Defendant harassing his client. The case involved the interesting finding that a solicitor's letter requesting access could amount to harassment.
- Hugh was led by Marc Glover in a successful two-day summary judgment application to the High Court in *Gupta v Shah* [2023] EWHC 540 (Ch), a \$14million international commercial fraud claim

Hugh is equally comfortable appearing unled and recently acted:

- For the successful Part 20 Claimants in a four-day High Court trial concerning a dispute over Company shareholdings and a property development in Nottingham, raising questions of proprietary estoppel, constructive trusts, and resulting trusts (*Butt v Butt & Ors* [2024] EWHC 3222 (Ch)).
 - A breach of fiduciary duty claim (*England Kabaddi v Dillon* (2024)). Hugh appeared for the Claimant throughout and eventually the Defendant was forced to file a Part 14 Notice admitting the claim the week before the trial (listed for three days) was due to commence.
 - Instructed to advise on a misrepresentation claim in the High Court worth more than £150,000, and as sole counsel in a series of related ex parte commercial freezing injunctions in the High Court.
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Mortgages

Hugh has acted in a range of matters including receivership disputes, consumer protection legislation, and undue influence. He regularly appears in the County Court in possession matters acting for both the mortgagee and mortgagor. Hugh is comfortable advising in a range of mortgage related matters including the validity of charges, and Consumer Credit Act matters.

Hugh was recently instructed a part of a long-running receivership dispute in the High Court, and successfully extended an injunction preventing the Receivers from completing a contract for sale in exceptional circumstances.

Enfranchisement & Right to Manage

Having gained detailed experience in this area under the supervision of enfranchisement expert, Piers Harrison, Hugh is comfortable being instructed as a junior or sole counsel in this area and has previously been instructed in proceedings involving the validity of notices and valuation claims.

Hugh is a co-author of both *Right to Manage: Law and Practice* (Wildy, Simmonds & Hill, due in 2026); and, *Tanfield on Enfranchisement* (Lexis Nexis, due in 2026)

Hugh is happy to advise on a range of topics in this area, from the applicability of the relevant Acts to the assignment of the benefit of notices. Hugh regularly appears in the County Court in particular in disputes under Chapter I and II of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, Part I of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967; and, Part I of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987.

Building Safety

Hugh has developed a particular niche in advising on issues arising out of the Building Safety 2022 Act. Hugh regularly advises on all matters relating to the Building Safety Act 2022, including qualification criteria, (principal) accountable persons, and remediation (contribution) orders.

He has appeared in the Court of Appeal (acting Pro Bono) in *Adriatic Land 5 Ltd v Long Leaseholders at Hippersley Point* [2025] EWCA Civ 856; [2025] H.L.R. 43 earlier this year, led by Mark Loveday. Hugh was also led by Andrew Butler KC in *Wilson v HB (SWA) Ltd* [2025] EWCA Civ 1360 | [2025] 4 W.L.R. 114, a key case concerning what damages can be recovered in relation to defects in a residential development.

Together with a number of members of Chambers, Hugh is the editor and a co-author of the second edition of

Building Safety Act 2022; A Guide for Property Lawyers (Wildy & Sons, 2026) having previously contributed to the first edition. Hugh has given a number of lectures on topics and issues arising out of the 2022 Act and is also a contributor to *Dovar and Sawtell on the Building Safety Act* (Sweet & Maxwell, 2025).

Private Client Trusts and Probate

Hugh has been instructed to advise on a number of discrete issues in this area including in relation to the powers of executors and administrators. Hugh has repeatedly advised disputes concerning the Inheritance (Provision for Family & Dependents) Act 1975.

Hugh was instructed as sole counsel in a three-day County Court trial in front of HHJ Johns KC concerning allegations of fraud concerning the deceased's estate (*Maduforo v Adil Property Investment* (unreported, 22 July 2024)). Hugh successfully represented the executors in defending allegations of misrepresentation, deceit, and unjust enrichment.

Hugh regularly advises on matters connected with the administration of estates in particular where there is a property aspect to the dispute.

Insolvency

Hugh regularly advises on a wide range of insolvency disputes, such as Company Voluntary Arrangements, Receiverships, and Bankruptcy petitions.

Hugh specialises in the intersection between insolvency and other matters, such as property, probate, and commercial contracts. As a result of this, Hugh was instructed as junior counsel in the case of *Mobile Telecommunications Company KSPC v HRH Prince Hussam Bin Saud Bin Abdulaziz al Saud* [2025] EWHC 85 (Ch), in which he was led by Geraint Jones KC, Peter Arden KC, and Marc Glover in successfully resisting a bankruptcy petition presented against Prince Hussam on grounds that the Court had no jurisdiction as the Petitioner could not establish 'residency' in jurisdiction in the relevant period.

The case was subject to an expedited appeal, giving Hugh and his leaders only four clear days to prepare as Respondents. Nevertheless, the Court of Appeal sided with the Respondents on all points and permission to appeal was refused ([2025] EWCA Civ 681).

Professional Negligence

Hugh is happy to accept instructions in any matters of professional negligence related to property or commercial disputes and often advises on professional negligence in the context of failed property transactions.

Hugh is happy to advise on both quantum and liability in relation to such disputes and often acts for insurers in that regard. For example, Hugh recently advised on a seven-figure claim relating to a failed enfranchisement.

Notable Cases

Tabassam v Manchester CC [2026] EWCA Civ 361

An appeal of an improvement notice concerning the scope of the reasonable excuse defence in cases of deemed

service. Hugh acted for the successful Respondent, led by Riccardo Calzavara. Both Hugh and Riccardo was instructed pro bono via Advocate

Wilson v HB (SWA) Ltd [2025] EWCA Civ 1360; [2025] 4 W.L.R. 114

A complex residential property dispute concerning the assessment of damages for defective premises, including claims for diminution in value, rental income loss, and other consequential losses. Hugh was led by Andrew Butler KC instructed on a Direct Access basis.

Meridian Quay Management Company Limited v Meridian Quay Limited LVT/0023/07/24 (unreported, 24 November 2025)

A five-day trial in the LVT, in which Hugh was led by Phillip Rainey KC and succeeded in persuading the LVT that the landlord was liable for substantial arrears for void units, and on the basis of a Braganza style implied term, that the landlord's attempt to take over management functions was invalid.

Kulkarni v Gwent Holdings Limited [2025] EWCA Civ 1206

This important appeal concerning the remediability of repudiatory breaches of contract, the proper effect of estoppel by deed, and construction of a shareholders' agreement. Hugh was led by Andrew Butler KC, and opposed by Jonathan Crow KC and Justin Higgo KC.

Evans v Albermarle Ealing No 1 Ltd LON/00AJ/LSC/2023/0470, LON/00AJ/LSC/2024/0157 & LON/00AJ/LSL/2024/0502 (unreported, 12 September 2025)

A four-day trial in the FTT relating to a complex development proposal in North London. Hugh successfully navigated complex issues relating to leaseholder objections, development works, and statutory compliance.

Okoye v Gray's Inn Capital Limited [2025] UKUT 195 (LC)

Hugh acted unled and successfully resisted an appeal before the Upper Tribunal on the basis of written representations in the most recent word on the current law with reference to insurance on residential flats.

Mobile Telecommunications Company KSPC v HRH Prince Hussam Bin Saud Bin Abdulaziz al Saud [2025] EWCA Civ 681; [2025] B.P.I.R. 971

Successfully resisted permission to appeal being granted by the Court of Appeal following CICC Judge Brigg's judgment in the matter for which Hugh appeared below. Hugh was led by Geraint Jones KC, Peter Arden KC, and Marc Glover.

Adriatic Land 5 Limited v The Long Leaseholders At Hippersley Point [2025] EWCA Civ 856

The leading case on the Building Safety Act 2022 and the retrospectively of service charges protections for residential leaseholders. Hugh was led by Mark Loveday acting pro bono for the successful respondent leaseholders. Hugh is instructed in the forthcoming appeal to the Supreme Court.

Mobile Telecommunications Company KSPC v HRH Prince Hussam Bin Saud Bin Abdulaziz al Saud [2025] EWHC 85 (Ch); [2025] B.P.I.R. 518

In a bankruptcy petition presented against Prince Hussam, Hugh acted for the Prince in successfully resisting the petition on the basis that the Court had no jurisdiction as the Petitioner could not establish 'residency' in jurisdiction in the relevant period. Hugh was led by Geraint Jones KC, Peter Arden KC, and Marc Glover.

Butt v Butt & Ors [2024] EWHC 3222 (Ch)

Hugh acted unled for the successful Part 20 Claimants in this four-day High Court trial concerning a dispute over Company shareholdings and a property development in Nottingham, raising questions of proprietary estoppel, constructive trusts, and resulting trusts.

Birch v Meredith (unreported, 13 September 2024)

A five-day misrepresentation, negligence, and harassment trial concerning a mixed-use development in Arundel.

Hugh was led by Nick Isaac KC and succeeded on the principle claim and the counterclaim, and secured a 2-year injunction against the Defendant harassing their client. The case involved the interesting finding that a solicitor's letter requesting access could amount to harassment.

Maduforo v Adil Property Investment (unreported, 22 July 2024)

An appeal concerning the proper construction of a forfeiture clause, and the principles of tender in the context of a commercial lease. Hugh was unled in representing the successful Appellant.

Hedges v Ironmonger (unreported, 1 May 2024)

A three-day County Court trial in front of HHJ Johns KC concerning allegations of fraud concerning the deceased's estate. Hugh successfully represented the executors in defending allegations of misrepresentation, deceit, and unjust enrichment.

Kulkarni v Gwent Holdings Limited [2024] EWHC 1357 (Ch D)

A two-and-a-half-week commercial dispute concerning principles of materiality, remediability, persistence, estoppel by deed, and the role of repudiators breaches outside the common law mechanism. Hugh was led by Andrew Butler KC.

Centaur v Scott [2023] EWHC 2712 (Ch)

An appeal to the High Court involving proprietary estoppel and rights of way and parking in a commercial context and countervailing benefits. Hugh was led by Marc Glover.

Gupta v Shah [2023] EWHC 540 (Ch)

Hugh succeeded in a two-day High Court summary judgment application on a \$14million international commercial fraud claim. Hugh was led by Marc Glover.

English Rose Estates Ltd v Menon & Ors. [2022] UKUT 347 (LC)

An appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) concerning rectification by construction and issues of procedural fairness in the First-tier Tribunal. Hugh was led by Daniel Dovar.

Publications

Books

- Editor and co-author, *Building Safety Act 2022; A Guide for Property Lawyers*, 2nd Ed. (Wildy & Sons, due in 2026)
- Co-author, *Right to Manage: Law and Practice* (Wildy, Simmonds & Hill, due in 2026)
- Co-author, *Tanfield on Enfranchisement* (Lexis Nexis, due in 2026)
- Co-author, *Service Charges and Management*, 7th Ed. (Sweet & Maxwell, due in 2026)
- Co-author, *Dovar and Sawtell on the Building Safety Act* (Sweet & Maxwell, 2025)

Journals

- 'The cost of entry: when service charges ring the wrong door bell', L. & T. Review 2026, 30(2), 67-69
- 'Short-circuiting professional fees: consultation requirements bypassed', L. & T. Review 2026, 30(2), 69-70
- 'Gym and bear it: reasonableness and rationality', L. & T. Review 2026, 30(1), 38-40
- 'Teoh many mistakes: when notice goes missing', L. & T. Review 2025, 29(6), 248-249
- 'Kemp-licated matters: when excuses hold up rent repayment', L. & T. Review 2025, 29(6), 249-250
- 'The hypothetical hat: the tribunal's jurisdiction', L. & T. Review 2025, 29(5), 204-206
- 'Equating equitable leases', L. & T. Review 2025, 29(4), 170-171
- 'Managing applications to appoint a manager', L. & T. Review 2025, 29(4), 174-175

- ‘Variations in virtually vertical divisions: RTM and the self-containment test’, L. & T. Review 2025, 29(3), 128-130
 - ‘Equitable owner is not a landlord - Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002’ L. & T. Review 2025, 29(2), 74-75
 - ‘The building blocks of a section 5 notice’, L. & T. Review 2025, 29(2), 79-81
 - ‘An email is enough - procedural non-compliance after A1 Properties’, L. & T. Review 2025, 29(1), 31-32
 - ‘Did you notice that? Multiple notices in possession claims’, L. & T. Review 2025, 29(1), 32-33
 - ‘Rent repayment orders - Rakusen revisited’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(6), 260-261
 - ‘Bearing the legal consequences of forfeiture’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(5), 213-215
 - ‘Meaning of self-contained part of the building’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(4), 168-169
 - ‘Business occupation: section 30(1)(g) of the 1954 Act’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(4), 169-171
 - ‘Appropriation and double hatting’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(2), 72-74
 - ‘Separate section 5 notices suffice under the 1987 Act’ L. & T. Review 2024, 28(2), 74-76
 - ‘The dangers of not providing a section 48 address for service’, L & T. Review 2024, 28(1), 30-32
 - ‘Entitlement to forfeit and peaceable re-entry’, L. & T. Review 2024, 28(1), 32-34
 - ‘RTM companies having breaches of covenant determined in the First-tier Tribunal’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(6), 248-250
 - ‘Uncertain start date of term: no binding agreement for a lease’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(5), 215-216
 - ‘Once is enough: defining eviction and differentiating harassment under the 1977 and 1997 Acts’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(4), 161-164
 - ‘Rent repayment orders: insufficient evidence of reasonable excuse?’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(3), 109-110
 - ‘Rent repayment orders: reasonable excuse during whole period of dispute?’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(3), 111-112
 - ‘The four-step approach to rent repayment orders’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(1), 25-26
 - ‘Failure to licence an HMO: management or control?’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(1), 26-28
 - ‘Mad hatters – the dangers of double hatting’, L. & T. Review 2023, 27(1), 28-30
 - ‘Rent repayment orders – subletting no excuse’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(6), 243-244
 - ‘Selective licensing – the councillor’s choice’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(6), 244-245
 - ‘Rent repayment orders – companies and control’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(6), 245-247
 - ‘Rent repayment orders – the role of inference in HMOs’ L. & T. Review 2022, 26(6), 247-248
 - ‘Substance over form: the importance of evidence in establishing development value’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(1), 19-20
 - ‘Absurd results: a paradigm of the arbitrary and irrational’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(1), 21-22
- ‘Reasons, Reductions and Respondents: Refining the Scope of Rent Repayment Orders’, L. & T. Review 2022, 26(3), 93-96

Education & Qualifications

City Law School (2020): Bar Professional Training Course (LLM) (Outstanding with Distinction on LLM)

City Law School (2019): Graduate Diploma in Law (Distinction)

Oriel College, Oxford University (2018): B.A. (Hons.) Philosophy & Theology; MA (Oxon.)

Memberships

Property Bar Association, Committee Member

Chancery Bar Association

