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SARAH WILLIAMS

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Areas of practice

- Construction & Engineering
- International Arbitration
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Adjudication
- Infrastructure
- Professional Negligence
- Telecommunications & Utilities

Clerks' Details

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Practice overview

Sarah Williams is an award-nominated barrister, specialising in construction, engineering, infrastructure and energy disputes. She appears regularly in the Courts of England and Wales, in international arbitrations, and in UK adjudications and their enforcement.

Sarah's practice encompasses a diverse range of subject matter, contractual form, and dispute forum. She has recently been involved in a long running technically-complex infrastructure dispute to trial in respect of the design and construction of a guided busway in Cambridgeshire, UK. Sarah has been involved in a number of glass curtain walling disputes, both domestically and internationally. She has also been instructed in a number of oil and gas disputes, including an ICC arbitration in respect of issues of termination arising from an oil and gas facility in the Middle East, throughout an LCIA arbitration to final hearing concerning an EPF in the Middle East, and in respect of a Section 68 challenge arising out of that dispute. Further details of the range of work Sarah undertakes is set out in the sections below.

Sarah is recognised for the quality of her oral and written advocacy, and her approachable, straightforward style. She is recommended in the directories as one who "punches above her weight in seniority and is certainly a junior to watch", "her cross-examination has been precise and incisive" and "she is completely on top of the detail". Alongside her practice, Sarah volunteers as Councillor for the Society of Construction Law ("SCL"), in which she chairs the SCL sub-committee on Ethics, Equality and Diversity and co-chairs the International Committee. As part of her voluntary work for the SCL, Sarah has spearheaded changes to monitor and improve diversity, has led a number of successful international Astra conferences, most recently in Paris in 2022, and has promoted changes to SCL's constitution to

make the SCL Council more accessible for younger members.

In chambers, Sarah is the Environmental and Ethical officer for chambers, is a pupil supervisor, and she sits on the pupillage committee, mini-pupillage committee and marketing committee. In her spare time, she likes looking at art and sometimes creating it.

Recent Cases

Construction & Engineering

- *Cambridgeshire County Council v BAM Nuttall Limited (TCC)* Repeat instruction from the Council to trial in respect of the design and construction of a bespoke guided busway in Cambridgeshire under the NEC2 form of Contract. The council claimed damages for various defects in the busway, raising complex issues of engineering and quantum (with Piers Stansfield KC)
- Acted for the developer in a multi-handed dispute in respect of multi-million pound claims for remedial works and delay to a development in London, with particular emphasis on compliance of the external cladding with Part B Building Regulations (with Sean Brannigan KC).
- Acted for the Respondent main contractor to a claim in a DIFC-LCIA arbitration for defects in the bespoke and unique glazing to an award-winning building in the Middle East (with Simon Hughes KC).
- Advice and assistance in the commencement of proceedings from a repeat instruction European EPC contractor in respect of electrical defect disputes at offshore wind farms.
- *Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust v Lendlease and others (TCC)*. Acted for the M&E subcontractor in respect of a multi-million pound claim for defects and consequential costs arising in respect of a new hospital in the north east of England (with Piers Stansfield KC).
- Repeat client instruction in an ICC arbitration concerning the termination of works for an oil and gas booster station facilities in the Middle East (with Veronique Buehrle KC).
- *125 OBS v Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Limited (TCC)*. Represented the Defendants in the trial for a claim for direct and consequential losses arising from glazing failures in a property in the City of London (with Adam Constable KC).
- *Costain v Haase Environmental Consulting GmbH (TCC)*. Acted on behalf of the main contractor of a waste management facility in the north of England in a claim against its specialist sub-contractor (with Adam Constable KC).
- *Exchequer Partnerships v Lendlease (TCC)*. Instructed on behalf of the Claimant against the main contractor and hard facilities management contractor, relating to alleged defects in the Government Offices, Great George Street, London (with Alexander Nissen KC).
- *Accolade Wines Limited -v- VolkerFitzpatrick (TCC)*. Acted for the tenant in a substantial defects claim (circa £130m) in respect of a large wine distribution warehouse (with Alexander Nissen KC and Calum Lamont). Listed by The Lawyer as one of the top 20 cases of that year.
- *Multiplex Constructions (UK) Ltd v Mott MacDonald Ltd*. Instructed in the Wembley Stadium litigation as part of the counsel team for Brookfield (formerly Multiplex) in a professional negligence claim against the consultant engineers.

“Her drafting of pleadings is exceptionally clear and concise, and she gets a really good grasp of the facts very quickly.”

Chambers & Partners UK Bar Guide 2023

International Arbitration

- Acted for the Respondent main contractor to a claim in a DIFC-LCIA arbitration for defects in the bespoke and unique glazing to an award-winning building in the Middle East (with Simon Hughes KC).

- Repeat client instruction in an ICC arbitration concerning the termination of works for an oil and gas booster station facility in the Middle East (with Veronique Buehrlen KC).
- Instructed throughout an LCIA arbitration to the successful final hearing on behalf of the EPC contractor in respect of matters of defects and causation concerning an EPF in the Middle East, and in respect of a Section 68 challenge arising out of that dispute (with Richard Harding KC).
- Instructed by the Claimant French mining company throughout all stages to the successful final hearing in an ICC arbitration claim concerning questions of force majeure, bailment and causation in a mining facility in Western Africa (with Veronique Buehrlen KC).
- Acted for the claimant JV in an LCIA arbitration concerning issues of substantial delay and variations in respect of a large nuclear power facility (with Simon Hughes KC).
- Acted for an international JV in a substantial claim in respect of a major municipal facility in Doha, Qatar (as part of the counsel team led by Richard Harding KC).
- Instructed by an Indian energy and infrastructure company to draft proceedings and advise in relation to an ICC arbitration dispute arising out of a major transport construction project in Qatar.
- Instructed by the shipbuilder in a variations claim against the purchaser of a mega yacht.

Energy & Natural Resources

- Advice and assistance in the commencement of proceedings from a repeat instruction European EPC contractor in respect of electrical defect disputes at offshore wind farms.
- Advice on English law in respect of issues relating to stacks at gas-fired power stations in the Middle East, for use in European appellate enforcement proceedings.
- Repeat client instruction in an ICC arbitration concerning the termination of works for an oil and gas BS facilities in the Middle East (with Veronique Buehrlen KC).
- Instructed throughout an LCIA arbitration to the successful final hearing on behalf of the EPC contractor in respect of matters of defects and causation concerning an EPF in the Middle East, and in respect of a Section 68 challenge arising out of that dispute (with Richard Harding KC).
- Instructed by the Claimant French mining company in the preparation and trial of an ICC arbitration claim concerning questions of force majeure, bailment and causation in a mining facility in Western Africa (with Veronique Buehrlen KC). ICC arbitration to final hearing concerning questions of force majeure, bailment and causation in a mining facility in Western Africa.
- Acting for the claimant JV in an LCIA arbitration concerning issues of substantial delay and variations in respect of a large nuclear power facility (with Simon Hughes KC).

“Sarah has a canny ability to digest and simplify complex, intricate matters into straightforward, accurate drafting.”

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

Adjudication

- Various instructions in respect of representation during the adjudication and at enforcement hearings, including:
- Instruction in adjudication proceedings concerning issues raised by the decision in Spartafield and whether an LOI can be superseded where there is a requirement for agreement under seal.
- De Haan v 89 Drayton Gardens Limited (TCC). Instructed at all stages of the successful adjudication enforcement, which considered jurisdictional challenges in respect of variations and multiple contracts.
- Universal Sealants (UK) Ltd (t/a USL Bridgecare) v Sanders Plant and Waste Management (TCC). Enforcement proceedings concerning s. 105(2)(d)(ii) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Infrastructure

- Acted for a major European train manufacturer in disputes with train operators in respect of delay and defects under supply agreements (with Sean Wilkens KC).
- Cambridgeshire County Council v BAM Nuttall Limited (TCC). Repeat instruction from the Council to trial in respect of the design and construction of a bespoke guided busway in Cambridgeshire under the NEC2 form of Contract. The council claimed damages for various defects in the busway, raising complex issues of engineering and quantum (with Piers Stansfield KC).
- Instructed by an Indian energy and infrastructure company to draft proceedings and advise in relation to an ICC arbitration dispute arising out of fuel supply infrastructure at a major transport construction project in Qatar.

“Sarah is extremely organised, into the detail and sees arguments and angles to a claim that no-one else seems to.”

Legal 500 UK Bar 2024

Professional Negligence

- Acted for the developer in a multi-handed dispute in respect of multi-million pound claims for remedial works and delay to a development in London, with particularly emphasis on compliance of the external cladding with Part B Building Regulations (with Sean Brannigan KC).
- Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland v Watts PLC (TCC). Acted for the Claimant in a claim against its project monitoring surveyor in respect of residential development in the North (with Veronique Buehrle KC).
- Multiplex Constructions (UK) Ltd v Mott MacDonald Ltd Instructed in the Wembley Stadium litigation as part of the counsel team for Brookfield (formerly Multiplex) in a professional negligence claim against the consultant engineers.

Telecommunications & Utilities

- Repeat instructions from British Telecommunications Plc at all stages to trial in respect of claims of varying scale and nature, including multi million pound disputes regarding nuisance, negligence, fire damage and wayleaves under the Telecommunications Code.
- Costain v Haase Environmental Consulting GmbH (TCC). Acted on behalf of the main contractor of a waste management facility in the north of England in a claim against its specialist sub-contractor (with Adam Constable KC).
- Acted for a JV in respect of disputes arising out of public waste water processing facilities across the north of England (with Alexander Nissen KC).

Selected Reported Cases

- Cambridgeshire County Council v Bam Nuttall Limited
- Universal Sealants (UK) Ltd (t/a USL Bridgecare) v Sanders Plant and Waste Management Ltd
- 125 OBS (Nominees1) v Lend Lease Construction (Europe) Limited
- Accolade Wines v Volkerfitzpatrick

Education & Professional Career

Public Access Training

2015

Barrister, Keating Chambers	2009
Pupillage, Keating Chambers	2008-2009
Called to the Bar (Gray's Inn)	2008
Nottingham Law School – LLB (1st Class Hons) BVC (Very Competent)	2007-2008
Nottingham Law School - Graduate Diploma in Law (Distinction)	2006-2007
Cambridge University, Jesus College – Natural Sciences M.A. (1st Class Hons)	2001-2004
Keswick School, Cumbria	1994-2001

Awards

Bedingfield Scholar, Gray's Inn	2007 - 2008
Scholar, Jesus College, Cambridge	2003 - 2004
Exhibitioner, Jesus College, Cambridge	2001 - 2002

Memberships

Technology and Construction Bar (TECBAR)
Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
Society of Construction Law (SCL)

Seminars, Publications & Papers

Sarah is guest speaker at numerous events in London, the regions, and internationally. She is a contributor to several leading texts including Keating on Construction Contracts, Keating on Offshore Construction and Marine Engineering Contracts, and the Construction Law Reports, and she contributes to the Practical Law Arbitration Blog.