



## **Russell Harris QC**

Call: 1986    Silk: 2003

Email: [rharris@landmarkchambers.co.uk](mailto:rharris@landmarkchambers.co.uk)

### **Practice Manager**

#### **Bill King**

Email: [bking@landmarkchambers.co.uk](mailto:bking@landmarkchambers.co.uk)

Phone: **0207 421 1350**

#### **Michael Gooch**

Email: [mgooch@landmarkchambers.co.uk](mailto:mgooch@landmarkchambers.co.uk)

Phone: **0207 421 1305**

---

## **Expertise**

Planning, Environment, International

---

## **Overview**

Russell Harris was called to the Bar in 1986 and took silk in 2003. He built a successful mixed common law practice before, in 1990, accepting an invitation from Sir Frank Layfield QC to join his planning and environmental law chambers. Since that time he has specialised in planning and environmental work.

He is now involved in most of the UK's highest profile development schemes. He is advising on the redevelopment of Battersea Power Station and on Bishopsgate Goods Yard, the largest remaining City redevelopment site. He continues to advise on football stadia for Spurs, Fulham and Brentford. He is promoting the large-scale redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle with Pinsent Masons LLP and has acted on the plans to remodel Shepherd's Bush and Earls Court, two of London's largest Opportunity Areas.

He has also in 2020/21 promoted Foster and Partners "Tulip" in the City of London and has acted for the developers of most of the City cluster buildings including the most recent buildings in Gracechurch Street. He also appeared at appeal to promote Lee Polisano and Sir David Adjaye's large Whitechapel Estate development including two residential towers and a new urban residential and medical quarter..

Russell has also acted for the developers of many of the Canary Wharf cluster including at appeal for the Make Towers at 225 March Wall in 2020.

In Wales he successfully promoted the Circuit of Wales and is acting for National Grid on several critically important NSIPs.

Russell is particularly experienced in preparing for and acting at large public inquiries. He is noted for his ability to understand large volumes of technical evidence, to formulate effective cross examination of expert witnesses and to present a client's case clearly and effectively.

Russell has appeared in almost all London's Tall Building inquiries and has developed a special expertise in presenting cases involving world class architects and architecture. Thus, Russell has successfully acted for the developers of "The Shard of Glass" by Renzo Piano, the Heron Tower by Lee Polisano, the Minerva Tower by Nicolas Grimshaw, 20 Fenchurch Street by Rafael Vinoly, the Beetham Tower Blackfriars by Ian Simpson, Founder's Place by Sir Terry Farrell, and Vauxhall Towers site by Michael Squires.

Russell advised Herbert Smith Freehills on Rem Koolhaas' plans for the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington and on Foster and Partners proposals at Bishop's Place on the fringes of the City of London. He is promoting for Ashurst, a 42-storey mixed-use development for Foster and Partners in Islington, and the Chris Wilkinson and Richard Horden proposals on the Embankment with Town Legal.

On the South Bank he promoted with BCLP the large David Chipperfield design at Elizabeth House.

In March 2020 Russell was again asked to assist in the production of the London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for London) by Mayor Khan's team, meaning that he has assisted in promoting every single London Plan, alteration and review since the creation of the London Mayor and Greater London Authority.

In the energy and environmental field, Russell has successfully promoted linear and energy DCOs including high voltage overhead lines through DCO hearings for National Grid and Western Power Distribution.

---

## Qualifications

Russell Harris is a graduate of St John's College Cambridge where he read economics and was a McMahon scholar. He sits on the Wales Assembly Government Planning Forum. He has been appointed a Special Advocate by the Attorney General and is a Bencher and trustee of Gray's Inn.

When not at work Russell spends most of his time on the Atlantic Ocean. He is also a WRU rugby coach.

---

## Recommendations

Russell is recognised in the leading UK directories as one of the top silks at the planning and environment bar. *Chambers & Partners* writes:

*"His style of cross-examination and advocacy is pitched very nicely, and he puts clients and inspectors at ease." "He gives very firm advice and he knows the market well so he has insight on how people will react." [2021]*

*"He is one of the best advocates there is. He is tenacious, has great attention to detail and is great on his feet." "Always one of my go-to people. He is very experienced, strategic and client-friendly." [2019]*

*"He is engaging, lucid, forthright and supportive. He offers first-rate analysis, is excellent with clients, and is both a brilliant strategist and a first-rate scrapper when on his feet." "He gives commercial advice that is always robust and carefully thought through." [2016]*

*"Famed for his "flawless client service" is the extremely well-regarded Russell Harris QC. One instructing solicitor described his approach as "really helpful and client-friendly," and went on to say that once in court he is "up and at them, and not willing to take any prisoners." [2011]*

*"Valued for his effective style of presentation in court and his ability to predict outcomes, he is excellent on his feet with the*

ability to offer clear, commercially tailored advice.” [2009]

“One of the most approachable barristers in planning Russell Harris QC was recommended as a very effective market leader, who works well as part of a team at court. He has exceptional understanding of retail, highways and transportation issues.” [2008]

The Legal 500 recognised his position by ranking him in the top tier of silks:

‘Russell is the go-to barrister for central London schemes. He is a great team player and won the confidence of the client straight away. He is very user friendly which is great for an instructing solicitor! His closing submissions at the inquiry were very impressive. He commands presence and respect across the inquiry floor.’ [2020, Planning]

“In a class of his own, he has a very good reputation for substantial London development schemes, design and heritage issues.” [2018, Planning]

Russell is “a top-class performer who quickly gets to the nub of any planning issue.” [2015, Energy]

A “very highly respected, and a strong performer.” [2015, Environment]

“A strong performer”. [2015, Planning]

Landmark Chambers is ‘the country’s top planning set’. Russell Harris QC ‘remains the top planning counsel’. [2013]

“The set includes a raft of highly regarded silks including the ‘excellent and experienced advocate’ Russell Harris QC.” [2010]

“He rises to the top tier for his work by acclaim which includes the London Plan and the Sir Terry Farrell Guy’s Hospital Inquiry, as well as developing a niche in dealing with tall buildings.” [2007 & 2008]

Russell was named as *Silk of the Year* for Environment/Planning at the 2008 Chambers Bar Awards and again short listed as *Silk of the Year* in 2013.

The latest *Planning Magazine* law survey ranks Russell in the top three planning silks in the country, and as a leading silk for residential, commercial and infrastructure. He is said to have “carved out ‘a second-to-none reputation’ when dealing with major controversial schemes in London”, and is described as a “phenomenal advocate” who is “good on his feet on the day”.

## A phenomenal advocate

Chambers & Partners

---

### Cases

10 Oct 2013	Earl’s Court SPD challenge rejected
10 Oct 2013	Shepherd’s Bush Market judicial review dismissed

---

### Inquiries

06 Jul 2018	Chiswick Curve tall building inquiry closes
08 Sep 2015	Brentford Community Football Stadium CPO Inquiry
01 Jan 1970	Mayor’s spatial development strategy

---

01 Jan 1970	Croydon Gateway CPO
01 Jan 1970	Earl's Court Casino inquiry
01 Jan 1970	Sir Terry Farrell's Founder's Place
01 Jan 1970	Peruvian Wharf inquiry
01 Jan 1970	Inquiry into Sir Terry Farrell's twin towers at Chelsea's Lots Road
01 Jan 1970	Renzo Piano's Shard of Glass Tower at London Bridge
01 Jan 1970	The Heron Tower inquiry
01 Jan 1970	The Welsh Highland Railway

---

---

## **Publications**

---

11 Feb 2021	Tall Buildings in London - where next? The London Plan Perspective
11 Feb 2021	Tall Buildings in London - where next? - webinar
03 Sep 2020	Infrastructure in Wales: Failure to deliver?
03 Sep 2020	Delivering Infrastructure in Wales: Current issues - Webinar
06 Jul 2020	Tall Buildings and Regeneration in London
06 Jul 2020	Planning for investment in London - Webinar
02 Dec 2019	Secretary Of State Recovered Appeals And Call In Decisions
18 Apr 2012	NPPF - A Commercial Perspective

---