Falcon Chambers

Catherine Taskis KC

Called 1995 Silk 2021



Practice Summary

Catherine Taskis KC is ranked as a leading silk for both Property Litigation and Agriculture and Rural Affairs in the Legal 500, and in the Chambers & Partners UK Guide. Described as “an exceptional property litigator”, Catherine specialises in commercial and residential property disputes, with a particular emphasis on agriculture. She is a compelling advocate, “able to see both legal and tactical sides of cases” delivering “killer cross-examination” and “wonderful to listen to”; and is equally recognised for her client skills – “very knowledgeable”, providing “well thought-out, collaborative and commercial” advice and “a real pleasure to work with”.

Catherine has a wealth of experience across a diverse range of real property and landlord and tenant disputes: including development agreements; restrictive covenants; easements; land registration and title; forfeiture and relief; contractual interpretation; contractual remedies including misrepresentation, rescission and rectification; service charges and dilapidations; and commercial and agricultural rent review and lease renewal. In recent years, she has been instructed on a range of issues arising under the Building Safety Act 2022.

Catherine has developed particular expertise in agricultural and rural disputes, where an “excellent eye for detail” and “emotional intelligence as to what clients want” gives her a distinctive edge. Key specialisms include agricultural holdings (especially succession and notices to quit); proprietary estoppel; farm business tenancies; sporting rights; and agricultural partnerships and partnership dissolutions. She has an expanding interest in natural capital, conservation covenants, and environmental agreements in the context of agricultural tenancies and rural land.

Catherine has appeared in courts at all levels, both at first instance and on appeal; she regularly represents clients in the various property tribunals, at arbitration and in mediation. She has also acted as a legal assessor. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and sits as a Deputy District Judge in the county court: a valuable insight into litigation from another angle.

Catherine is the Vice Chair of the Agricultural Law Association. She is co-author of Muir Watt on Agricultural Holdings (15th edition), a leading practitioners’ text; a contributing author to Atkins Court Forms Volume 4, Agricultural Land; and co-editor of the quarterly Woodfall Landlord and Tenant Bulletin. She regularly lectures and provides training to professional organisations and solicitors' firms.

Education

- Worcester College, Oxford: BA Jurisprudence (1993) (Andrew Dixon Scholar)
- Worcester College, Oxford: BCL (1994)

Professional

- Inns of Court School of Law, Bar Vocational Course: Outstanding (8th in year)
- Winner of Inner Temple Mooting Championship (1995)
- Called 1995, Inner Temple; Princess Royal Scholarship
- Deputy District Judge 2013
- Silk 2021
- Fellow of Chartered Insititute of Arbitrators (FCIArb)
- Vice Chair of the Agricultural Law Association (ALA)
- Member of the Agricultural Law Association (ALA), the Chancery Bar Association (CBA), and the Property Bar Association (PBA) (former committee member)

Recent Cases

- **Freeman v. Home Farm Ellingham Ltd** [2025] EWHC 878 (Ch) (claim for specific performance of an obligation to procure the adoption of an access road to housing development; refused on the ground of impossibility where there was evidence to show that the local authority would not effect adoption).
- **Digwood v. Digwood** [2024] EWHC 2729 (Ch) (issues arising on the dissolution of a farming partnership, including the application of s.42 of the Partnership Act 1890 to an outgoing partner's entitlement to a share of the post-dissolution profits attributable to the use of their share of the partnership assets).
- **Govier v. JA and JC Watkins Ltd** [2023] (Business and Property Courts) (arbitrator's award set aside under s.68 of the Arbitration Act 1996 on the ground of serious irregularity).
- **Smith v Official Custodian for Charities (Trustees of the Ovington Fuel Allotment)** (ALD/E/S/2016/002) 11 October 2021 (application for succession under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986; considering the assessment of the applicant's principal source of livelihood where part of that livelihood was provided by a co-habitee, and the operation of the test of material extent under s.41).
- **Kirby v. Baker and Metson Ltd** [2020] 1 WLR 5133 (on the proper meaning of the words of Case B(b)(ii) in Schedule 3 of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986).
- Also **Kirby v. Baker and Metson Ltd** [2020] EWHC 3181 (Ch) (on the application of CPR r.52.3(2)(a) to a second appeal under s.69 of the Arbitration Act 1996: a lower court has no jurisdiction to consider a retrospective application for permission to appeal if the unsuccessful party has not applied for permission on the handing down of the s.69 judgment and there has been no adjournment to allow further time for an application).
- **Kingsley v. Kingsley** [2020] EWCA Civ 297 (upholding the decision of the judge below to make an order under TOLATA 1996 for the sale of land at a court-assessed price rather than ordering a sale on the open market; and addressing issues arising from the occupation of land by a partnership).
- **Kingsley v. Kingsley** [2019] EWHC 1073 (Ch) (an order under the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 following the dissolution of a farming partnership after the death a partner, permitting one of the remaining partners to buy farm land which she had owned in equal shares as tenants in common with the deceased partner. The court considered issues in relation to the valuation of the property, and the need to reduce the risks of the estate of the deceased partner not receiving full value for the jointly held land).
- **Abberley v. Abberley** [2019] EWHC 1654 (Ch) (whether heads of terms agreed at a mediation constituted a binding contract).

Earlier Cases

- **Marshall v. Scaman and others** [2017] EWHC 291 (Ch) (a s.68 challenge to an arbitrator's award under the Arbitration Act 1996: concerned issues as to the use of legal assistance by the arbitrator; whether agreed procedures had been departed from and whether this was a procedural irregularity causing substantial injustice; also s.24 applications for removal of the arbitrator).
- **The Crown Estate v. Wakley** [2016] EWHC 3610 Ch (Bristol District Registry) (landlord's application for forfeiture of a farm business tenancy of a dairy farm; tenant's counterclaim for misrepresentation, breach of covenant and unfair contract terms (UCTA 1977). Damages for misrepresentation under s.2 of the Misrepresentation Act 1967, and questions of causation and quantification of loss in a complex case involving expert veterinary, herd production and accounting evidence).
- **Kerai, Re** [2014] UKUT 153 (LC) (the modification of restrictive covenants under the jurisdiction in s.84(1) of the Law of Property Act 1925).
- **Nigel Monkman v. Peter J. Mitchelson and John D. Mitchelson**, ALT/Y/S/59: Agricultural Land Tribunal (Yorkshire and North Humberside), 1 September 2009 (whether the applicant satisfied the livelihood test in s.36(3)(a) of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 and so was eligible to be granted a new tenancy of a farm in succession to his father. Subsequently the leading authority on the method of assessing the principal source of livelihood for the purpose of this test).
- **Duffield v. Gandy** [2008] EWCA Civ 379 (in considering an application to modify or discharge a restrictive covenant against building a residence in the garden of a property, the Lands Tribunal had been entitled to conclude that the practical benefits of the restriction to the neighbour were of substantial value or advantage by preventing the erection of a bungalow, which would also involve the ancillary use of the garden adjoining her property).
- **Cameron Ltd v. Rolls-Royce plc** [2008] L & TR 22 (a licence to occupy commercial premises granted under an agreement for lease pending the grant of the lease itself was not severable from the lease, was granted in the context of the acquisition of a larger interest, and therefore was not capable of amounting to a protected lease under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 Pt II).
- **J. D. Wetherspoon v. Jay Mar Estates** [2007] BLR 285 (a commercial tenant unsuccessfully invoked the Arbitration Act 1996 s.68(2) to remit a rent review arbitration award for reconsideration. The tenant had not established an irregularity and, even assuming an irregularity, there was no evidence that would have made a substantial difference to the result so the substantial injustice test in s.68 was not met).
- **Platt v. London Underground Ltd** [2001] 2 WLUK 602 (derogation from grant of lease of a kiosk at exit of underground station by closure of exit).
- **Ropac Ltd v Intrepreneur Pub. Co (CPC) Ltd** [2001] L&TR 93 (the courts' jurisdiction to extend time for compliance with a consent order under the CPRs)
- **Re Davies Application** [2000] 10 WLUK 144 (a restrictive covenant was not obsolete merely because the person entitled to the benefit of it was prepared to negotiate terms for its release. An objection to an application under s.84(1)(c) Law of Property Act 1925 for the discharge or modification of such a covenant would inevitably fail if the only loss to the objector was the loss of any opportunity to share in the development value of the subject land).
- **McDonnell v. Griffey** [1998] EGCS 70 (declaratory relief as to the interpretation of a covenant refused where the exercise was purely hypothetical).
- **Re Priceland Limited Waltham Forest London Borough Council v. Registrar of Companies** [1997] 1 BCLC 467 (considering factors relevant to the exercise of the Court's discretion to restore a company to the Register under section 653 of the Companies Act 1985).

Publications

- General Editor, Muir Watt & Moss: Agricultural Holdings, 15th edition, Sweet & Maxwell 2018
- Assistant Editor, Muir Watt & Moss on Agricultural Holdings, 14th edition, Sweet & Maxwell 1998
- Contributor to Woodfall "What's New?" Property Update Service
- Editor, Atkins Court Forms, Vol.4 (Title: Agriculture)
- Co-editor of quarterly Woodfall Landlord and Tenant Bulletin.

Published Comments

"Catherine is truly impressive. She cuts straight to the heart of an issue and delivers advice with remarkable clarity and ease. Responsive, helpful and altogether great to work with, I always look forward to working with Catherine." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2027 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine is incredible at assimilating lots of information and explaining it to lay clients. She's also extremely adept at cross-examination. She's always hugely prepared and very detailed in her line of questioning." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2027 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine Taskis was very thorough, user-friendly and accommodating; just a real pleasure to deal with – and her advocacy was really first-rate." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2027 (Real Estate Litigation*

"Catherine is very user-friendly, approachable, and responsive. She works collaboratively with me and clients alike and provides confidence in complex and document-heavy matters. She recently assisted me and helped navigate the path for our client. I continue to recommend her to clients and would have no hesitation in doing so in the future." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2027 (Property Litigation)*

"I have consistently found her to be an excellent barrister to work with. Catherine is able to assimilate large quantities of documentation quickly and effectively, identifying the key issues and understanding the position from both a legal and commercial perspective. That ability is particularly important to our clients, who value clear, practical, and strategically focused advice. " *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2027 (Property Litigation)*

"Catherine's analysis is her leading strength, allied with a real ability to deal with effective cross-examination. Clients recognize her skills." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2027 (Agriculture)*

"Catherine Taskis is an exceptional property litigator who can deliver on all fronts, from perfect advisory work to killer cross-examination to excellent client-handling." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine gets to grips very quickly, is user-friendly and quick on her feet. She ticks all the boxes." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"She was a real pleasure to work with and her advocacy was really first rate." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Catherine’s advice cuts straight to the heart of the issue. Her advice is well-thought out, collaborative and commercial." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine Taskis' service is brilliant. She hits every deadline. She is very calm and collected." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Catherine Taskis was very thorough, user-friendly and accommodating. Her advocacy was really first-rate." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine has an excellent eye for detail and is great to work with." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"She is calm in a crisis and suggests pragmatic, sensible solutions" *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2026 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Catherine is thorough in her preparation. Her advocacy is wonderful to listen to, she makes points clearly and ever so effectively." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2026 (Agriculture)*

"Catherine is very knowledgeable, easy to deal with and super smart about her approach to cases." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2025 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Catherine is adept at client handling and makes clients feel at ease and confident in the approach being taken." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2025 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Catherine is a very solid silk. She is all over her brief and the detail and retains a strong commercial solution focus." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2025 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"She is highly intelligent, succinct and measured, and exudes calmness and control. A dynamic and assiduous silk." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2025*

"Really bright and easy to work with. Easily absorbs a great deal of information in a short period of time." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2025*

"Catherine Taskis is very approachable, really knowledgeable, really experienced and a very, very safe pair of hands." *Chambers and Partners UK Guide 2024 (Agriculture and Rural Affairs)*

"Catherine Taskis is very switched on and a great strategic thinker." *Chambers and Partners UK Guide 2024 (Agriculture and Rural Affairs)*

"Excellent on the law, good personality and emotional intelligence as to what clients want, with a calm manner in court." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2024 (Property Litigation)*

"Catherine is excellent on the law. She has a serene court manner and is great with clients." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2024 (Agriculture)*

"She provides excellent, solid, commercial and timely advice on various agricultural disputes." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2023*

"Catherine is very commercial and very focused on practical and strategic outcomes." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2023*

"Catherine Taskis is first choice for technical agricultural matters." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2023*

"Calm in court and personable with her clients, Catherine is a wonderful and intelligent silk." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2023*

"Catherine is simply fantastic. She is very thorough and leaves no stone unturned." "She is excellent." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2022 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Good commercial as well as legal brain, very approachable and good with all manner of clients. Quick to see pragmatic solutions but happy to roll up sleeves if required." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2022*

"She knows her stuff and is really forensic. She gets into details and is a sharp practitioner." "She's very knowledgeable, has a measured and calm style and gives very good advice." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2021 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"She is incisive and forensic in her approach." "She knows technical law inside and out." "She is very knowledgeable and she has a very measured approach and a calm style." *Chambers and Partners UK Bar Guide 2021 (Agriculture & Rural Affairs)*

"She is an excellent practitioner in this area - very quick to pick up and grasp the issues, and excellent technical knowledge." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2021*

"She is extremely impressive, both in writing and on her feet." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2021*

"Extremely good on details." *Chambers UK Bar Guide 2019 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"It is always a pleasure instructing her." "She is user-friendly, bright and a go-to real estate specialist." *Chambers UK Bar Guide 2017 (Real Estate Litigation)*

"Great with clients and really understands their commercial requirements." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2018 (Property Litigation)*

"Clients appreciate her technical ability and her cross-examination skills." *Legal 500 UK Bar Guide 2018 (Agriculture)*