

John Steel QC



- **Year called to the Bar, Gray's Inn:** 1978
- **Year appointed Silk:** 1993
- **Recorder:** 2000
- **Bencher Gray's Inn**

Head of Aviation and Aerospace Sector,

Joint Head of Planning, Property and Environment Sector,

39 Essex Chambers

John is recognised as a leading practitioner in aviation, aerospace, planning, transport and environmental law.

His clients include airports, airlines, aerospace companies, major utilities and industrial companies in the UK and elsewhere, as well as banks, insurers, Government departments and agencies, local authorities, NGOs and individuals.

He has been involved in some of the leading cases in matters such as major airport development, aviation law, planning and environmental law, noise and key infrastructure projects including new roads, motorways, railways, tramways, ports, guided busways, power stations and waste to energy plants.

In aviation and aerospace, high-profile cases have included the development of London Heathrow, London Gatwick and London Stansted airports, as well as the development and use of regional and other airports at London Luton, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Coventry,



Farnborough, London Oxford, Biggin Hill, Southend, Newcastle, East Midlands, Liverpool John Lennon, Sheffield, RAF Northolt, Dunsfold, Fairoaks, Plymouth, and a number of smaller General Aviation aerodromes and proposed heliports. He is the joint author of one of the key papers submitted to the Davies Commission on UK Airport Capacity in 2014 and has been appointed the legal adviser to the All Party Parliamentary Group on General Aviation in the UK Parliament. He is also the Chairman of The Air League, the voice of the aviation and aerospace sectors in the UK.

John is a well-known senior practitioner probably uniquely with detailed knowledge of the design, workings and regulation of airports and aerospace both in the civil/airline as well as military/defence sectors, involving the UK CAA, Ministry of Defence, Department for Transport, NATS, Eurocontrol, EASA, ICAO, airport operators and airlines, on the use and regulation of airports and aircraft, including the three dimensional aspects of air traffic control, radar, aircraft safety and accidents, airport design and surface access.

He has represented and advised or been involved with major international and other airlines both in the courts, at public inquiries and in government commissions and consultations. He has been a contributor on behalf of the airline industry to aviation policy documents including the UK Aviation and Airport Policy published by the UK Government.

Clients have included various Airport Operators and Authorities, Airlines and Aircraft Operators, Cargo Operators and Aviation and Aerospace Organisations and Companies including BAA, British Airways, BMI, BAE Systems, Farnborough International, Cathay Pacific, Dragonair, Low Cost Airlines including Ryanair and EasyJet, Flybe, TAG Aviation, Gama Aviation, Hangar 8, BBGA, and AOPA. Private individuals have included the Reuben Brothers, Dial Partners, banks and other airport owners, investors and operators.

John has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, a member of the Aviation Club of the UK, with affiliation to the Aerospace Forum Asia, The Aero Club of Washington and The International Aviation Club, also in Washington. John was for a number of years the honorary legal adviser to The Air League and is now Chairman. Within its membership and Council are a number of the UK's foremost aviation and aerospace companies and organisations. Membership of the Aviation Club and or the Air League includes Airbus, Boeing, Rolls Royce, CFM International, British Airways, Emirates, Bombardier and CASCO, as well as a number of leading members of the UK Parliament.

His practical knowledge as an instrument rated fixed wing (aeroplane) pilot, a qualified rotary (helicopter) pilot, and his regular flying both in the UK and abroad is an invaluable addition to his skills when involved in aviation and aerospace matters professionally.

He trained as a scientist with a degree in Honours Chemistry with subsidiary computing, and holds qualifications in law and international arbitration. He is an Honorary Fellow of Law at his University at Durham, UK, was appointed to the Advisory Board of Durham Law School, the Durham Global Security Institute and sits as a Recorder/Judge in the Crown and County Courts of England and Wales.



Recommendations

John is a recommended leader in Chambers & Partners, Legal 500 and Legal Experts for Aviation, Planning and Environmental Law.

He was awarded Acquisition International UK Aviation Law QC of the Year 2012/2013.

Quotes

Chambers & Partners, 2018:

Recommended leader in Planning Law and Aviation Law: "an incisive decision-maker who inspires confidence within clients", "(he) is particularly rated for his fantastic knowledge of airports and aircrafts-related work, he is a master of planning law tactics who is very good at managing clients expectations. Diplomatic and effective in style" (2008), "generates acclaim for his client-friendly attitude and nose for the best strategy... [he is a] terrier in court and really quick on his feet" (2009), "an excellent silk-particularly when it comes to cross-examining and a really superb team player" (2010) and "outstanding ... [he] is an impressive lateral thinker who offers innovative legal and commercial solutions" (2011); "an impressive lateral thinker who offers innovative legal and commercial solutions" and is "great with clients." (2012). "He thinks outside the box and challenges himself, clients and others to think in a different way which is refreshing" (2015), "A real expert in planning and aviation law; he is very impressive on that and on the crossover between the two areas" (2016), "Knowledgeable and tactically aware, particularly on CPO matters, "Has a good grasp of the issues and provides excellent advice on tactics and procedures." (2017), "His technical nous enables him to tackle complex cases, whether they are in relation to engineering, environmental or compulsory purchase complications." "He is a highly experienced advocate and specialist in aviation and planning issues," "He is great to get advice from, as he's very responsive and considered, but more commercial than the average silk" (2018). Local Government Law: "his advice on planning and environmental law is particularly prized" (2009), "robust yet user-friendly approach" (2010), "He has great clarity of thought and displays enthusiasm for his cases." "Reasonable in terms of both his fee and his approach, he really takes the time to try and understand what it is the client wants to achieve." (2014),

Legal 500, 2017:

Recommended leader in Aviation Law "Recommended for his airport development expertise" (2010 and 2011); Environmental Law: "very impressive environmental specialist" (2008) and "a results-driven focus" (2010), "very enthusiastic and can think his way through complex problems to provide very practical outcomes" (2011), "An innovative and creative problem solver" (2015), "Major infrastructure projects, airport noise and pollution controls are his forte" (2016), "He provides robust and strategic advice, which provides clear guidance." (2017), "a heavy hitter" (2017); Planning Law: "good for no-holds-barred planning appeals, especially in the retail sector" (2008) and "results-driven" (2010), "(he is) able to think outside the box and come up with approaches to tackle novel and unusual issues" (2011), "A very experienced practitioner" (2015), "There is nobody stronger for issues surrounding major infrastructure projects" (2016), "Recommended for his expertise in the aviation sector and his wider industry knowledge" (2017)



Qualifications

University of Durham BSc (Hons Chemistry) 1976
Barrister, Gray's Inn, 1978
Fellow Royal Aeronautical Society
Fellow Royal Geographical Society
Fellow Royal Society of Arts
Fellow Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Diploma in International Arbitration
Accredited Mediator: CEDR
Instrument Rated Fixed Wing (Aeroplane) Private Pilot; Rotary (Helicopter) Private Pilot

Appointments

Queen's Counsel 1993
Recorder (Crime and Civil Law) 2000
Bencher Gray's Inn; Chairman of Management Committee 2012/13
Honorary Fellow School of Law Durham University
Honorary legal adviser to The Air League
Honorary legal adviser to the British Business and General Aviation Association
Board Member Durham Global Security Institute, Durham University

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