



Alethea Redfern



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Alethea Redfern specialises in construction, insurance and reinsurance, professional negligence, property damage and commercial disputes. She has successfully appeared in the High Court both as sole counsel and as part of a team of counsel in larger disputes, and is regularly instructed in relation to arbitrations and adjudications.

Prior to joining Chambers, Alethea achieved First Class Honours in English Language & Literature at New College, Oxford, before converting to law with Lord Haldane and Lord Denning scholarships from Lincoln's Inn. She worked on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and as an intern for the UN Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals.

Alethea co-authors a chapter on construction bonds and guarantees in a leading textbook, Emden's Construction Law.

Insurance & Reinsurance

Alethea has experience in relation to a range of insurance and reinsurance disputes both led and as sole counsel. She is well-positioned to advise on construction, breach of claims conditions, and avoidance.

At the beginning of 2024, Alethea undertook a secondment within the Casualty team of a leading London law firm, during which she advised on several complex, high-value coverage disputes.

Examples of her current and recent work include:

- World Challenge Expeditions Ltd v Zurich Insurance plc [2024] 1 All ER (Comm) 786: Acting for a large travel company in its claim for indemnity for refunds to customers arising from cancellations of trips in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case raised issues over the construction of the insuring clause of a market standard wording and estoppels due to prior claims handling. Led by Daniel Shapiro KC and Michael Harper.
- Acting for an insurer in an arbitration brought by a company seeking indemnification of defence costs in excess of USD\$8m under a D&O policy. Led by Daniel Shapiro KC.
- Assisting Daniel Shapiro KC in preparing an advice on coverage for the liability insurers of a beauty

company in respect of claims by two of the “big three” recording companies for copyright infringement in social media marketing posts.

- Advising a company and its liability insurers as to the merits of its defence for various claims for loss and damage brought by seven different parties totalling more than £8m following a fire at an industrial estate. Led by Daniel Shapiro KC.
- Advising as sole counsel on English law in relation to a coverage dispute arising from proceedings brought in Warsaw against the Polish subsidiary of a UK company by Orange, the telecommunications provider, involving allegations of fraud and misrepresentation relating to service contracts valued in excess of €1.8m.
- Advising on a dispute between two insurers arising from a refusal to contribute in accordance with the ABI Domestic Subsidence Agreement based on an alleged failure to provide updates on the progress of the underlying £0.5m claim. Led by Mek Mesfin.
- Advice on the prospects of successfully defending a claim for business interruption losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in light of the Supreme Court’s decision in FCA v Arch Insurance (UK) Ltd [2021] UKSC 1 (as a pupil).
- Research for Andrew Rigney KC on whether a clause excluding coverage for “intentional” breaches of intellectual property would also exclude liability for a reckless breach (as a pupil).
- Drafting a skeleton argument in a substantial dispute concerning a Qatar-based insurer’s entitlement to indemnification under two reinsurance contracts against the risk that certain construction bonds it had issued would be called upon (as a pupil).

Alethea is a member of the London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association.

Construction & Engineering

Alethea is developing a practice in construction and engineering law, and is particularly interested in developing a practice in the Middle East and internationally.

Examples of her work in this area include:

- Acting for a cladding company in a complex, high-value adjudication involving allegations of fraud arising from the redevelopment of the Oracle Shopping Centre in Reading. Led by Carlo Taczalski.
- Advising an NHS Trust in relation to delays and defects in the region of £1m arising from the demolition of a single-storey building and construction of a new two-storey Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit at a hospital after the Contractor threatened adjudication. Led by Mek Mesfin.
- Acting as sole counsel for the successful main contractor in an adjudication against a sub-contractor arising from a dispute over the completion of groundworks for a multi-million-pound residential estate development.
- Acting as sole counsel for the successful contractor in an adjudication brought by a disgruntled former client in respect of a high-value residential development, valued in excess of £225,000.
- Advice on the prospects of a construction company successfully defending a claim for liquidated damages for alleged delays to a scheme of maintenance and public sector dwellings for Lewisham Council, in light of a settlement agreement and Deed of Variation (as a pupil).
- Drafting a skeleton argument on behalf of the respondent to an application to enforce payment of the remainder of a judgment sum in a high-value construction dispute, on the basis of a real prospect of disputing jurisdiction (as a pupil).



She is a member of the Technology and Construction Bar Association and was a Masterclass speaker at DIAW 2024.

Professional Liability

Alethea has experience dealing with a wide range of professional liability matters involving solicitors, tax planners, directors, consultants, engineers, architects, surveyors and specialist sub-contractors. Examples of her current and recent work include:

- *Surveyor*: Advising and drafting a defence for a surveyor concerning an allegedly negligent overvaluation of a 55-bedroom hotel and spa, set in approximately 14 acres of land, including a fishing lake. The valuation was relied upon for lending security purposes, and suffered a complete loss of the loan funds supplied to a third-party borrower, in the region of £350,000.
- *Engineer*: Advising and drafting the defence for a specialist steel engineer in relation to allegedly defective steel beams at a luxury contemporary residential property, with damages claimed in excess of £135,000.
- *Solicitor*: Advising and acting for various firms of solicitors in relation to claims brought by former clients in respect of allegedly negligent estate planning, tax planning, stamp duty liability advice, and claim mismanagement resulting in the loss of an interest in two properties said to be worth £1m.
- *Client*: Advising and drafting a defence and counterclaim alleging professional negligence against a firm of solicitors seeking to recover unpaid legal fees in excess of £80,000 for contentious divorce proceedings.

Alethea is a member of the London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association.

Commercial

Alethea welcomes instructions across a broad range of commercial disputes, including sale of goods, contracts for services, agency, bailment, and debt claims. She benefits from experience gained as a pupil during supervisions with Carlo Taczalski and Richard Sage.

Alethea is regularly instructed in commercial disputes engaging issues such as misrepresentation, breach of contract, sale and supply of goods and services, duties of good faith, and advancing and defencing allegations of fraud.

Examples of her recent and current work include:

- Advising and drafting a defence in a claim brought by a lender arising from the allegedly negligent overvaluation of a substantial asset against which a business loan to a third party was secured, after the borrower defaulted and went into administration.
- Drafting a Defence and strike-out application in relation to a claim against a director of a company in liquidation.
- Assisting Jason Evans-Tovey (leading Michele De Gregorio) with preparations for a trial concerning a petition for relief under Part 30 of the Companies Act 2006 on the grounds of unfairly prejudicial conduct of the affairs of a family-owned car company (as a pupil).



Alethea is a member of the Commercial Bar Association.

Property Damage

Alethea has a growing property damage practice. She is regularly instructed to provide drafting, advice and representation in relation to a range of scenarios including fire damage, storm and flood damage, water ingress issues, and defective design and building work.

Examples of her recent work include:

- Advising a company and its liability insurers as to the merits of its defence for various claims for loss and damage brought by seven different parties totalling more than £8m following a fire at an industrial estate. Led by Daniel Shapiro KC.
- Advising the owner and occupier of a property on the prospects of successfully bringing claims against the property developer and a drainage surveyor in respect of damage caused by a waste water ingress problem.
- Successfully defending a charitable trust for the preservation and restoration of historic English canals, operated by volunteers and funded by the public, against a claim for property damage brought by a local dog-walker.
- Drafting a Particulars of Claim relating to a fire at a residential treatment facility which resulted in several million pounds of damage, reinstatement, reputation damage, and rehousing costs for displaced patients (as a pupil).
- Drafting a Particulars of Claim against a plumber for alleged breaches of implied terms under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Defective Premises Act 1972 resulting in a flood and property damage (as a pupil).

Product Liability

Alethea welcomes instructions relating to product liability. She has experience of product liability disputes in contract, tort, and under the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and in both industrial and consumer contexts.

Examples of her recent work include:

- Advice on the prospects of pursuing claims for breach of contract, negligence or under the Consumer Protection Act against the manufacturer and distributor of an electrical component, the parent company, and the installing electrician (as a pupil).

Personal Injury

Alethea's personal injury practice focuses on road traffic accidents, employer's liability, and occupier's liability, in relation to which she has conducted a number of successful strike-out applications.

As well as her own cases, Alethea gained personal injury experience as a pupil for Alexander Macpherson during the "practising" six months of her pupillage. She has assisted other members of Chambers with a



variety of personal injury matters, including in relation to secondary psychiatric injury, occupiers' liability, industrial and occupational diseases, and drafting schedules and counter-schedules.

Examples of her recent work include:

- Advising a defendant bus company on the most appropriate procedural course of action in response to a claimant passenger's late service of the Particulars of Claim and medical evidence.
- Defence, counter schedule and advice in relation to a case of alleged acoustic shock, tinnitus and hearing loss, including consideration of whether vicarious liability would be established against a further education college for a student (as a pupil).
- Defence and advice on whether a strike-out application might be appropriate in relation to a claim for psychiatric injury brought by a secondary victim (as a pupil).

She is a member of the Personal Injury Bar Association.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Before commencing pupillage, Alethea gained experience as a researcher and reviewer for the team representing the largest group of survivors and victims' families involved in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. She has a keen interest in inquiry law.

She is regularly instructed to advise and represent a range of interested parties at inquests, including care providers and councils.

Qualifications

- English Language & Literature (First Class), University of Oxford
- GDL, City University
- BPTC, BPP University

Memberships

- PIBA
- COMBAR
- TECBAR
- PNBA
- LCLCBA