

Jonathan Selby KC

Call: 1999 Silk: 2018

"An absolute star. He's a great advocate, extremely strong on the law and at the heart of the strategy."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024



Practice Areas

- Adjudication
- Advisory
- Arbitration
- Dispute Boards
- International Arbitration
- Litigation
- Mediation
- Professional Negligence
- Property
- Construction & Engineering
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Infrastructure & Utilities
- Offshore Construction & Marine Engineering
- PFI & PPP
- Independent Appointments

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Practice Overview

Jonathan Selby KC was called to the Bar in 1999 and was made Queen's Counsel in 2018. He specialises in Construction and Engineering, Energy and Professional Negligence claims (architects, engineers and surveyors) and was the Chambers & Partners Construction Silk of the Year in 2023.

He was recently described as "a real fighter who puts his heart into things and gets results" who "gets to the issues straight away, and is very pragmatic and a good tactician." Jonathan frequently appears in high value litigation in the Technology and Construction Court and has a long list of reported cases from that Court and the Court of Appeal. He is particularly well known for his work on cases concerning apartment blocks, hotels, fire safety and building warranty claims, which has led to Jonathan being appointed as Special Legal Counsel to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Building Safety.

Jonathan is often instructed to act for clients in arbitration, adjudication and mediations and is a practising accredited Adjudicator.

Practice Areas

Construction & Engineering

- Acted as Leading Counsel for SVDP and Get Living in one of the first reported cases concerning remediation contribution orders under section 124 of the Building Safety Act 2022.
- Successfully represented Martlet Homes in the first decided claim following the Grenfell fire tragedy relating to the recovery of the cost of removing and replacing an external wall insulation system from four high-rise towers and associated waking watch costs. Judgment obtained for c. £6.9 million.
- Successfully obtained judgment for over £5 million in a claim concerning fire safety and electrical engineering defects which meant that a single fire or fault could take out both primary and secondary power supplies to the whole of the largest oncology centre in the North of England. The case was of particular significance because the Court rejected the Defendant's case that the installation complied with an approved fire strategy.
- Acted as Leading Counsel for leaseholders of 30 flats at New Lawrence House in Manchester in a four-week trial against Zurich Insurance in which it was established that the Building Inspector had fraudulently issued Final Certificates for the development and judgment was given for £3.6 million in respect of claims under the Zurich New Home Warranty for the rectification of numerous defects in the common parts, including wholesale fire safety failures and a roof that needed to be replaced. Jonathan also successfully represented the leaseholders in the associated appeal to the Court of Appeal, with the result that the leaseholders' recovery was increased to £10.8m.

- Acted as Leading Counsel for a glass recycling company in an ICC arbitration concerning the design and installation of the plant for a bottle bank and MRF processing facility.
- Acted as Counsel for Grandlane Developments Ltd against Skymist Holdings Ltd in a series of hearings in the TCC and Commercial Court concerning whether or not an adjudicator had been properly appointed, whether an adjudicator's decision had been obtained by fraud and an application for pre-action disclosure.
- Acted in *Universal Piling v VG Clements*, where the issues turned on the rights of the parties under NEC3 in relation to interim payment applications.
- Advised a dredging contractor about the inter-action between the compensation event and joint insurance provisions in NEC3.
- Acted for a University in a series of adjudications with its contractor under a NEC3 contract concerning a £1 billion development project. The disputes concerned: how partial possession under the NEC3 affects the quantification of delay damages; the operation of the value engineering provisions and the quantification of the claimed saving; and the pricing of variations.
- Acted in a two-week arbitration concerning a c. \$60 million final account dispute between a foreign state department and its contractor about the construction of a road around its headquarters.
- Acted for the Dorchester Collection in its TCC claim against a national contractor for the payment of undeclared discounts which had been obtained from sub-contractors for work carried out under an "open book" contract."
- Jonathan regularly advises and acts for employers, contractors and sub-contractors in connection with the various JCT and NEC standard form contracts in relation to all sizes and type of project.
- Acted in a four-week trial concerning a claim under the Defective Premises Act in respect of the construction of a block of 171 apartments.
- Instructed on behalf of a large utility company in a series of adjudications under an IChemE form of contract about the design and construction of a sewage treatment works.

Professional Negligence

- Defended an architect against a c. £50m claim for the cost of rectifying fire safety defects to blocks of flats which formed part of a large supermarket development in London. The case raised undecided issues about whether an architect would be negligent in relation to the specification of missold combustible insulation and would also have resulted in a significant decision regarding building liability orders.
- Instructed for a developer in a multi-million pound TCC claim against their quantity surveyor, project manager, development manager, architect, M&E and structural engineers concerning the cost and time overruns on a mixed use retail/residential development in Berkshire: see *Standard Life Assurance Ltd v Gleeds (UK) and others* [2022] 1 WLR 878 (TCC).
- Acted for a Building Regulations Approved Inspector in a £9 million claim in respect of the cost of rectifying cladding defects at a development of 270 flats in London. This case was of particular note because the issues included whether the Approved Inspector owed a duty of care in tort to the design and build contractor who had appointed them.

- Acted for a developer in a £16 million claim against their design and build contractor, contract administrator, architect, M&E and structural engineers for the cost of rectifying multiple defects in a new build residential development in Manchester.
- Defended an architect in a two-week trial of a £10 million claim made by a property developer who claimed that the architect had failed to design a planned 5-star hotel in accordance with his budget.
- Acted for a property developer in a c. £4m claim against structural engineers who were alleged to have negligently designed a reinforced earth bank for a housing development comprising 99 homes.
- Acted for an NHS Trust in a £10 million claim against its architect, M&E and structural engineers concerning a number of defects in and the delayed completion of a new hospital in the Rhondda Valley, Wales.
- Acted for the claimants in a two-week trial against an architect who had negligently designed damp-proofing measures and negligently inspected the mechanical and electrical works for a substantial property overlooking the River Thames. Also acted in the subsequent appeal to the Court of Appeal.
- Instructed on behalf of a property developer in connection with claims against its quantity surveyors and structural engineers arising out of the Regent Quarter Development in Kings Cross, London.
- Acted for the claimant in a five-week trial where the architect, engineers and project manager were alleged to have been negligent in their design and supervision of a £4 million residential property in Jersey to such an extent that the property was demolished and had to be rebuilt.

PFI/PPP

- Acted for a major public authority in an adjudication concerning a claim for increased costs arising out of measures required to comply with Covid-related restrictions during works for a substantial infrastructure project. The claim was said to be worth in excess of £200m.
- Acted for a School Trust in its dispute with the Local Authority about responsibility for utility payments under a Project Agreement.
- Acted for a large contractor in relation to adjudication and TCC proceedings concerning the design, construction and performance testing of a MBT waste treatment facility in Cambridgeshire.
- Acted for a contractor in an early neutral evaluation concerning a claim for the rectification of the payment formula in a concession agreement relating to the provision of three schools in Hampshire.
- Acted for a contractor in connection with its extension of time claims concerning the delayed completion of a hospital in Coventry.
- Acted for a contractor in an adjudication regarding the scope of its obligations to provide and maintain telecommunications systems for an educational establishment in Croydon.

Energy & Natural Resources

- Advised a pipeline contractor about whether the compensation event provisions in a NEC3 contract were conditions precedent to their entitlement to claim additional monies in respect of unforeseen ground conditions.
- Acted for a M&E contractor in a £3 million arbitration claim against a main contractor in respect of delay and disruption to their work at a power station in Nottingham.
- Acted in a multi-million pound arbitration claim by a pipework sub-contractor in connection with the construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal in Wales.
- Acted for a piping and mechanical erection sub-contractor in connection with disputes regarding its work on a CCGT power station in Wales. Those disputes gave rise to adjudication claims concerning its final account and injunction proceedings in the TCC seeking delivery up of testing documentation.
- Represented a large international contractor in an ICC arbitration relating to a multi-million dollar dispute concerning an oil pipeline in North Africa.
- Instructed as Junior Counsel to Petromec in its litigation with the Brazilian State oil company in the Commercial Court regarding the cost of constructing an oil rig in the South Pacific.

Offshore Construction and Marine Engineering

- Instructed in a professional negligence action concerning the failure of temporary works intended to enable the installation of two sheet-piled cofferdams.
- Instructed in arbitration proceedings concerning a buyer's entitlement to rescind a contract for the design and construction of a drillship.
- Advised a dredging contractor in relation to its ability to recover the costs of repairing damage to its dredger after it had struck a submerged pile during the course of its works and whether the incident gave rise to a compensation event under its contract.
- Represented Van Oord in a trial concerning the erosion of backfill material and adequacy of scour protection laid over offshore culverts connected to a power station: see *Mouchel v Van Oord (No. 1)* [2011] EWHC 72 (TCC).
- Represented a dredging contractor in a final account dispute which included issues concerning the inundation of a foundation, over-dredging and the use of unsuitable fill material.

Party Walls

- Advised and acted for parties in connection with issues arising under the Party Wall Act 1996 and appeals in respect of party wall awards.
- Represented a residential property owner in a 3-day appeal of an award relating to the party wall between neighbouring cottages.

Other Specialist Areas

Insurance

- Jonathan has experience in relation to claims under insurance policies including professional indemnity policies, NHBC policies, the Zurich Building Guarantee and home insurance policies.
- Acted as Leading Counsel for leaseholders of 30 flats at New Lawrence House in Manchester in a four-week trial against Zurich Insurance in which judgment was given for £3.6 million in respect of claims under the Zurich New Home Warranty for the rectification of numerous defects in the common parts, including wholesale fire safety failures and a roof that needed to be replaced. Jonathan also successfully represented the leaseholders in the associated appeal to the Court of Appeal, with the result that the leaseholders' recovery was increased to £10.8m.
- Acted for a large insurance company in connection with a £750,000 claim by home-owners for the cost of reinstating an old barn which had burnt down in a fire. The trial resulted in success for his client who recovered their costs on an indemnity basis.
- Acted for the NHBC in claims against builders who have failed to comply with the NHBC Rules.

Hotels and Hotel Management

- Jonathan has acted in a number of cases about the design and construction of well-known hotels in Central London.
- Jonathan also acted in an ICC arbitration concerning the management, sales and marketing of a 5-star hotel in Zanzibar.

Rail

- Acted in a \$12.5 million ICC arbitration claim for breach of three contracts for the supply of sleepers.
- Acted for a designer and supplier of level crossing panels in connection with claims in the Commercial Court (including injunction proceedings) against the product manufacturer for breach of an exclusive distribution agreement.
- Advised a contractor responsible for the maintenance of the London Underground lines in relation to the termination of one of its sub-contracts.
- Acted for a telecommunications provider in an adjudication regarding the scope of its testing obligations in respect of communications systems on the London Underground.

Reported Cases

- Triathlon Homes LLP v Stratford Village Development Partnership & Others [2024] UKFTT 26 (PC)
- Building Design Partnership Ltd v Standard Life Assurance Ltd [2022] 1 WLR 878
- Martlet Homes Limited v Mulalley & Co. Limited [2022] EWHC 1813 (TCC)
- Manchikalapati & Others v Zurich Insurance PLC [2019] EWCA Civ 2163
- St James's Oncology SPC Ltd v (1) Lendlease Construction (Europe) Limited (2) Lendlease Construction Holdings (Europe) Limited [2022] EWHC 2504 (TCC)

- Standard Life v Gleeds and Others [2022] EWHC 1310 (TCC)
- Mulalley & Co. Ltd v Martlet Homes Ltd [2022] EWCA Civ 32
- Standard Life Assurance Limited v Gleeds [2021] EWHC 2081 (TCC)
- Standard Life Assurance Limited v Gleeds [2021] EWHC 2081 (TCC)
- Grandlane Developments Ltd v Skymist Holdings Ltd [2019] EWHC 747 (TCC)
- Zagora v Zurich [2019] EWHC 140 (TCC)
- Riva Properties Ltd v Foster + Partners Ltd [2017] EWHC 2574 (TCC); 175 Con LR 45
- WES Futures Ltd v Allen Wilson Construction Ltd [2016] EWHC 2863 (TCC); 170 Con L.R. 121; [2016] 6 Costs L.R. 1083
- Purton v Kilker Projects Ltd [2015] EWHC 2624 (TCC); [2015] B.L.R. 754
- Rendlesham Estates Plc & Ors v Barr Ltd [2014] EWHC 3968 (TCC), [2015] BLR 37, [2015] TCLR 1, 157 Con LR 147, [2015] 1 WLR 3663
- West v Ian Finlay & Associates [2013] EWHC 868 (TCC), [2014] BLR 324
- Oak Leaf Conservatories Ltd v Weir EWHC 3197 (TCC)
- Stella Willis v Mr J Rundell & Associates Limited EWHC 2923 (TCC); [2013] 6 Costs LR 924
- Hills Contractors & Construction Limited v Struth [2013] EWHC 1693 (TCC), [2014] WLR 1, [2014] 1 WLR 1
- Natas Group Ltd v Styles & Wood EWHC 526 (TCC)
- Partner Projects Ltd v Corinthian Nominees Ltd 1 BLR 97
- Mouchel Ltd v Van Oord (UK) Ltd EWHC 72 (TCC); 135 Con LR 183
- Mouchel Ltd v Van Oord (UK) Ltd (No 2) BLR 492, 137 Con LR 105
- Speymill Contracts Ltd v Baskind BLR 257, 129 Con LR 66
- Euro Construction Scaffolding Ltd v SLLB Construction Ltd CILL 2679 TCC, [2008] EWHC 3160 (TCC)
- Maurice v Leriche All ER (D) 264 Privy Council
- Sydenhams (Timber Engineering) Ltd v CHG Holdings Ltd 112 Con LR 49 TCC
- McGlenn v Waltham Contractors (No 4) BLR 188, 112 Con LR 148, [2007] EWHC 698 (TCC), and [2008] Bus LR 278
- McGlenn v Waltham Contractors & Others (No. 3) 111 Con LR 1, [2007] CILL 2441, [2007] EWHC 149 (TCC) and [2008] Bus LR 233
- Tonkin v UK Insurance Lloyd's Rep IR 283; 107 Con LR 107
- Tonkin v UK Insurance (No. 2) EWHC 1185 (TCC) and [2006] Con LR 107
- McGlenn v Waltham Contractors & Others (No. 2) BLR 489
- Rolls Royce Power Engineering Plc v Ricardo Consulting Engineers Ltd 98 Con LR 169 TCC

- Harry Neal v Stargem All ER (D) 287
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Other information

Education & Professional Career

- Chambers & Partners Construction Silk of the Year, 2023
- Special Legal Counsel to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Building Safety, 2023
- Queen's Counsel, 2018
- Lay Member of the RIBA Professional Conduct Panel, 2017-to date
- Public Access Training, 2008 & 2015
- TECBAR Accredited Adjudicator, 2007
- Keating Chambers, 2001
- Pupillage, Keating Chambers, 2000-2001
- Research Assistant, Law Commission (Company and Commercial Law Team), 1999-2000
- Marshalled Colman J in the Commercial Court, 1999
- Called to the Bar (Gray's Inn), 1999
- CJ Hamson Prize for Aspects of Obligations, University of Cambridge, 1998
- MA in Law, St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, 1998

Additional Information

Jonathan is a big sports fan and particularly enjoys football, cricket, tennis and swimming. His other passions are food and cinema.

Memberships

- Technology and Construction Bar Association (TECBAR)
- Society of Construction Law
- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
- London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association.

Recommendations

"He is also brilliant at making himself part of the 'client team'."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"He is super bright, hardworking and a real pleasure to work with."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"The standard of his written work is of the highest order."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Jonathan Selby is incredibly cerebral."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"He is hands on, aggressive for the client and personable and nice to work with."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Jonathan is a very good tactical leader."

Construction, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Jonathan gets to the heart of a complex issue with consummate ease, and dispenses advice on strategy with absolute clarity."

Construction: Professional Negligence, Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2025

"Jonathan is an excellent all-rounder. He is thoughtful, analytical, questioning, inquisitive and an excellent advocate."

Construction, Legal 500 UK Bar 2025

"He is exceptional in his ability to absorb and to understand complicated technical matters very quickly."

Professional Negligence, Legal 500 UK Bar 2025

'Jonathan has worked tirelessly to assist with demanding and difficult cases.'

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

'An exceptionally talented KC, Jonathan is very quick to understand technical and delay matters regardless of the complexity.'

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

'He is extremely approachable. His advice and presentation of advice is very user-friendly and clear.'

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

'An absolute star. He's a great advocate, extremely strong on the law and at the heart of the strategy.'

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

'Jonathan Selby is absolutely brilliant. His advice is unparalleled and he is brilliant intellectually; you know he's left no page unturned.'

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

'Jonathan is a brilliant advocate - in a trial, there cannot be many better.'

Legal 500 2024

'Jonathan is a brilliant advocate - in a trial, there cannot be many better. He has fantastic attention to detail, a probing and inquiring mind and is therefore devastating on technical and factual cross examination. His written and advisory work is excellent - commercial and authoritative.'

Legal 500 2024

'Jonathan meticulously prepares for hearings and trials, and this shines through - his advocacy is excellent, his manner is reassuring and his cross-examination is devastatingly effective. He is a fantastic addition to any litigation team.'

Legal 500 2023

"His strategic advice is spot-on and he is a master at cross-examination."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2022

"He gives brilliant strategic advice throughout proceedings, from gathering evidence through to trial. His judgement, advocacy and written submissions are spot-on."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2022

"Jonathan is spot-on with his advice. But Jonathan doesn't limit himself to advising on the legal outcomes - he effectively transposes that into how this advice can be used to resolve the dispute out of court. Furthermore, Jonathan's demeanour with clients and his presence in the court room are evident."

Legal 500 2022

"He is very considered in his advice and pleadings, able to see the big picture very easily and not someone who gets taken in by the other side's tactics."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2021

"Great legal brain. A formidable opponent who gives clear, punchy advice. Adored by clients."

Legal 500 2021

"A hard-working and dazzlingly bright silk, he provides superb legal advice, mixed with insightful commercial strategy."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2021

"Destined for the top. He is a very good technical lawyer, a pleasure to work with and excellent with clients."

Chambers UK Bar 2020

"Utterly brilliant in every respect, his mind is razor sharp."

Legal 500 UK

"Tenacious, driven, totally focused and relentless in getting the right commercial outcome."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2019

"He shows grit and determination, and is very good at cross-examination."

Legal 500 2018

"He's a very bright chap who's good all around, especially when it comes to giving advice and making himself available."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2019

"Impressive silk who draws praise for his top-notch work in high-value matters."

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2018
