

Architects

We stand out for our effective, practical advice, as well as multi-jurisdictional and cross-border experience in handling architecture-related professional indemnity claims. We are also unusual in the value we attach to reducing the risk of claims by giving detailed and experienced legal and practical advice on contracts.

We understand that, like many industries, architecture is in a transition period as it moves fully into the digital age, whilst also responding to the demands of tighter regulations and ever-increasing accountability. The continued popularity of Design & Build procurement (despite its complications) means that there is a greater need for closer involvement with contractors on large projects at an earlier stage, whilst Building Information Modelling all members of the Construction Team. Clients traditionally view architects as the central figure in projects and there remains therefore great pressure on architects to deliver projects cost-effectively and within the client's budget, whilst implementing the inevitable client refinements that arise along the way.

Who we are

We are also acutely aware of the impact of the changes in the professional indemnity insurance market and in particular recent restrictions on protection afforded to potential cladding and fire-stopping liability. With this background, the challenges architects face are compounded by the rising number of complaints made against them through RIBA and the ARB, often as a threat to secure a financial concession.

Whilst these may not all end up in litigation, the consequences of adverse outcomes can be huge, (leave alone the commitment of time to address the complaint and the emotional toll) so it is crucial to take legal advice at an early stage. Our expert professional indemnity team is known for responding swiftly and cost-effectively at both a national and global level, with advice that is both legal and practical.

Our legal specialists have deep and broad expertise across all areas of architecture-related professional indemnity from advising on potential liabilities and commercial commitments through to responding to responding to claims brought by way of litigation or adjudication, as well as mediation, arbitration and other dispute resolution processes. We are known for our team-wide in-depth knowledge of our clients' businesses, having dealt for several

decades with practices of all descriptions, so we are sympathetic and responsive to the challenges you face.

Our size as well as our position within one of the largest insurance teams in the UK, means we can adapt to each of the claims you face, from the largest multi-jurisdictional claim or multi-party action, to smaller claims.

With a strong track record for advising practices of all sizes, from some of the largest in the country down to sole practitioners, as well as liaising with insurers and brokers, we are trusted by many of the UK's leading architectural firms.

Our expertise includes:

- advising architects on their contractual responsibilities and on contract appointments on projects within the United Kingdom and internationally, including Germany, France, Holland, Denmark, other European countries, North America, the Middle and Far East and Australia.
- defending them against professional misconduct claims before the Architects Registration Board and the RIBA Disciplinary Panel
- advising on the merits of fee claims and their interaction with potential counter claims for negligence/ breach of contract.
- defending claims in a variety of forums, including litigation, domestic and international arbitration, mediation, expert witness determination and adjudication, seeking cost effective solutions to prevent legal costs from dictating whether a resolution can be achieved.
- an early and informed understanding of the cases' strengths and weaknesses is considered critical.
- defending, sometimes in liaison with preferred local litigation partners, overseas claims brought against English consultants.

Examples of our work in this field include:

We have advised on claims involving iconic constructions all over the United Kingdom, including major Arts Centres in Manchester, the North East and in Scotland; a landmark project in Berlin, projects in Saudi, Libya and Kuwait and on contract documentation on a number of French projects, in Paris and elsewhere; bridge projects and airport projects, all both nationally and internationally. We have also advised architects in relation to numerous claims arising from a project to refurbish substantial commercial properties as well as many high end residential projects.

claims from arising or as the case may be, addressing claims in a robust and realistic manner.

Our non-contentious advice service is regarded as the gold standard in the insurance industry and identifies not only problems with contract wordings but also how those problems might be remedied in order to conclude contract discussions. The longevity of our association with RIBA, its legal helpline and other legal (insurance) helplines to which architects are frequently referred is testament to our long-standing commitment to the profession and to the depth of our contemporary understanding of the issues confronting architects and their insurers.

Why DWF?

Our team is led by practitioners who have been dealing with insurance claims and specifically claims against architects for more than thirty years, and supplemented by other experienced and energetic lawyers, dedicated to achieving the right answer to the client's requirements.

The team liaises readily and easily with colleagues recruited from the insurance industry to provide early and practical guidance designed to prevent, where possible, formalised

What clients say

“ *The team is comprised of highly intelligent, commercial and experienced lawyers.*”

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