



<b>CEDR Accreditation:</b>	2015
<b>CEDR Panel</b>	2016
<b>CEDR Faculty</b>	2021
<b>Languages:</b>	English
<b>Location:</b>	United Kingdom

***‘The mediator had an excellent grasp of the situation. He was personable, easy to talk to, he created a relaxed atmosphere for everybody.’***

Client Feedback

## Laurence Cobb

### Overview

Laurence Cobb has sat and continues to act as mediator in a large number and variety of disputes since 2015 and has also attended many mediations over the years as a party representative. He was Head of Litigation, Head of International Construction, on the executive board at Taylor Wessing and was responsible for the management and delivery of the last office move and running an international office. As a mediator, Laurence has experience in disputes relating to the construction and engineering sector, real estate sector including both commercial and residential landlord and tenant disputes, boundary disputes, party wall disputes and disputes regarding building defects, commercial contracts, company and shareholder disagreements, boardroom disputes, financial sector disputes, insolvency, international disputes, professional negligence, probate and estate disputes and the retail sector. He has also sat as mediator in a large number of education sector disputes.

## Professional Background

Laurence is a member of CEDR Faculty, having been an active mediator since 2014. He previously specialised in construction and engineering law since 1986 and has over 30 years of advocacy experience and experience in contract management in the field of construction law, commercial disputes and professional negligence. He started practicing as a mediator in 2015 and retired from Taylor Wessing LLP in March 2019 to focus on his mediation practice.

## Expertise

- Boardroom Disputes
- Commercial Contracts
- Commercial and Landlord and Tenant Disputes
- Construction and Engineering
- Education
- Energy Disputes
- Financial Sector Disputes
- ICT Disputes
- International Trade, Logistics and supply chain Disputes
- Insolvency
- Professional Negligence
- Real estate and Land disputes
- Trust, Wills and Probate
- Workplace Disputes

## Dispute Experience

*(Non-Neutral work in italics)*

### Construction & Engineering

Laurence has over 30 years of experience of domestic and international disputes in the construction and engineering sector. He is a recognised legal expert in this area and has with considerable experience in dealing with dispute management for all forms of projects, ranging from traditional building contracts to complex infrastructure schemes, both national and international, dealing with all involved in the industry, from funders and developers to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers, and those involved in design and project management, as well as disputes with an insurance element. He also has considerable experience in the energy sector, including disputes regarding many forms of energy, including electricity, gas, nuclear, solar and other new energy sectors.

- *Acting for public authority in high profile UK construction dispute with multiple parties of high economic and political significance. Dispute went through three different ADR procedures over 2 years, eventually leading to settlement.*
- Facilitating and acting for international power contractor concerning dispute over power plant in the Middle East. After a number of full day negotiations, matter successfully resolved just before arbitration.
- *Acting for state body regarding international dispute in the energy sector and including presentations to the National Parliament and media.*
- Mediating disputes concerning termination and suspension of contracts.
- Lead Conciliator for FMB Conciliation Scheme.
- Sitting as mediator or conciliator on a large number of disputes involving multiple parties dealing with defects claims, loss and expense and extension of time claims, interim and final account claims, and issues regarding design and/or workmanship. Examples include:-
- Mediating dispute regarding repair and maintenance of lifts in high end residential property.
- Mediating dispute regarding self-build property as to design issues with specification and build.
- Mediating regarding multi-property development with issues as to time taken, quality of workmanship and design, suspension and termination.
- Mediating dispute regarding design, installation and water tightness of roof structures, windows and cladding.
- Mediating dispute regarding fitness of design and workmanship of specialist industrial building.
- Mediating dispute over cost, quality and time taken to construct a high end residential “dream home”.

## **Real Estate and Land Disputes/ Landlord and Tenant Disputes**

Laurence has dealt with many and a wide variety of mediations in the property sector which sits alongside his expertise in the construction and engineering sector including but not limited to:

- Disputes as to ownership and title to both commercial and residential property
- Dispute between charity and local authority as to rights of tenure, nature of use and hours of operation.
- Disputes as to party walls, access, rights of light, trespass noise and nuisance from neighbouring developments



- Disputes as to landlord and tenant issues regarding access, use, repair, and rent/service charges.
- Disputes as to land ownership and development rights.

## **Commercial Contracts**

Laurence has sat as mediator on a variety of commercial contracts in various sectors including:

- Acting as mediator on a number of shareholder disputes in the IT and retail sectors, leading to successful settlements.
- Mediating dispute between employment agency and employer in defence sector
- Mediating dispute regarding commercial contracts and IP rights in fashion industry

## **Partnership and Shareholder Disputes**

Laurence is very familiar with all forms of partnership and corporate vehicles having been a senior partner in a law firm in many years, with personal experience of managing such businesses and dealing with issues arising out of such scenarios.

- Mediating dispute on break up of partnership regarding property investment and management.
- Shareholder dispute regarding IT consultancy business.
- Dispute between trustees and senior management of charity as to roles and priorities within organisation.
- Mediating dispute between company founders regarding funding and future direction of the business

## **Financial sector and Insolvency related disputes**

Throughout his legal career Laurence was regularly involved in insolvency related disputes both acting for and against companies with financial issues and insolvency practitioners, concerning administration, receiverships, bankruptcy, voluntary arrangements and liquidations. Since becoming a mediator, he has been involved in many mediations where such issues have arisen including

- ADR between developer and bond provider following insolvency of building contractor.
- Mediating dispute between house owner and contractor regarding personal bankruptcy issues.
- Mediating between parties regarding services provided in divorce proceedings with both domestic and international insolvency issues.
- Mediating between FTSE100 bank and customer regarding claims in relation to financial management of funds
- Mediating Disputes between customers and leading lending institutions regarding issues concerning borrowing facilities
- Mediating disputes concerning ownership of assets in insolvency related disputes
- Mediator on BBRS Scheme between FTSE Banks and customers

## **Professional Negligence**

- Disputes regarding negligence claims against architects, engineers, surveyors and project managers in the construction and engineering experts.
- Disputes with the legal profession regarding quality and cost of services provided.
- Disputes with those in the accountancy profession regarding quality and cost of services provided.
- Disputes between law firms and experts employed in support of litigation regarding quality and cost of services provided.
- Independent Panel reviewer regarding complaints to the Solicitors Regulatory Authority.

## **Education and Healthcare Sector**

Laurence is an accredited SEND mediator with considerable experience in that area and with an excellent understanding of the wider education sector. Laurence has mediated on a variety of disputes between local authorities and young people, their families and representatives regarding their educational and healthcare provision from pre-school to 25. Laurence also sits on the independent review panel for complaints to OFSTED.

- Mediating between University and student regarding disciplinary issues, access to services and expulsion.
- Mediating between adult with complex health and social needs, local authority and service provider regarding nature, continuation and funding of support.
- Mediating between young people with educational needs and their families and local authorities regarding educational provision, also involving experts, health officials, and social services
- Mediating issues regarding disability discrimination and adoption issues
- Mediating disputes concerning school fees

## **Workplace Disputes**

Laurence is an executive coach and mentors senior executives regarding their career development.

- Mediating dispute between senior consultant and business as to nature and extent of role.
- Mediating dispute between Minister of Religion and leaders of the community.
- Mediating dispute regarding role of senior employee in fashion industry.
- Mediating between shareholders regarding ownership and management of IT consultancy.

## **Trusts, Wills & Probate**

Resolving complicated probate issues as mediator including IFPA claims by involvement of ADR and use of independent valuation experts in London.

- Disputes as to management of trusts.
- IFPA Disputes and estate related issues.

## **Personal Style**

Bringing experience and a commercial flexible approach, in combination with humour and compassion and great care in listening, with a willingness to deal with challenging issues.

## Feedback

- *"You were a fantastic mediator, I am glad we chose you to help settle our dispute."*
- *"Our case was complex, but the mediator had an excellent grasp of the situation. He was personable, easy to talk to, he created a relaxed atmosphere for everybody."*
- *"Laurence Cobb is "good at sorting out difficult situations", and "is very keen to find a sensible solution for the client"."*
- *"Settlement removes a time-consuming matter from my life."*
- *"X and I both think Mr. Cobb was great. He was very courteous, sympathetic but firm and fair."*
- *"Please could I take the opportunity to thank Mr Cobb for the wonderful job he has done. He has made a very stressful process far less stressful that it might otherwise have been."*
- *"He's been beautifully impartial and has taken all the emotion out of the process."*

## Professional Skills

Laurence lectures to industry bodies and clients. He is also an executive coach and separately gives strategic advice to companies and consultancies regarding strategy and resolving disputes, particularly in the construction and engineering sector. He was educated at King Edward VII School, Lytham, Manchester University and Chester Law College.

## Career

- 2021 Member of CEDR Faculty
- 2015 continuing Mediator and Conciliator
- 2017 - 2019 Consultant at Taylor Wessing
- 1996 - 2017 Partner at Taylor Wessing.
- 1990 - 1996 Partner at Freedman Church (previously Freedman and Co).
- 1986 - 1990 Assistant Solicitor at Freedmans.
- 1984 -1986 Trainee Solicitor at Addleshaw Sons & Latham.

## Education

- 1986 Admission as a lawyer in England & Wales.
- 1984 Chester Law College.
- 1983 LL.B (Hons) from Manchester University.

## Previous Publications

- Building magazine online-monthly legal blog.
- Regular contributor to RICS Journal.

## Memberships & Associations

- Member of CMC
- CEDR Faculty Member

## Awards & Recognition

- Recommended lawyer by Legal 500, 2014 and Chambers 2016 pre-retirement as solicitor
- SEND accredited mediator.

