

Capability Statement



RIDGEMONT

Ridgemont is an established, boutique law firm with offices in central London and Bristol that specialises in construction and real estate law.

We represent exciting clients that have the same enterprising ethos as we do.

About us

We solve construction and real estate legal issues for investors, landlords, developers, main contractors and sub-contractors, providing pragmatic advice for a fair price.

Our experienced, expert lawyers take ownership of your legal issues, providing you with clarity and a way forward.

But we do more than just provide you with legal advice. We provide you with educational videos for you to cascade down to your teams, so that they are aware of potential legal issues before they arise. We are constantly finding ways to reduce your legal budget and our entire team regularly hold “what else” meetings, to identify new ways for us to help you grow your business.





Your future

We will resolve your construction and real estate issues, helping you grow your business and derisk.

Your contracts will be robust. Your disputes resolved intelligently. And you will have clarity as to where you stand on any given issue.

By behaving transparently and honestly, we will collaborate with you to achieve your goals and become an integral part of your team. We will do that by building a team of specialist lawyers, who are great at communicating and provide honest, pragmatic advice.

You will know that your legal issues are safe in our hands. Importantly, you will have clarity on those issues, so you can make informed commercial decisions.

Why

Our mission is to ensure that you have access to proper legal advice for a fair price. We believe that legal advice should be clear, pragmatic and that our lawyers should always recommend a way forward.

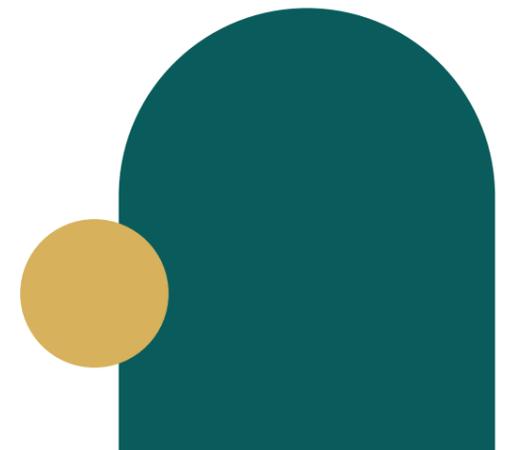
To achieve that, we live by our core values of always:

1. Providing pragmatic advice to enable informed commercial decision making
2. Recommending a way forward (not just list the options that you have available to you)
3. Promoting the growth of our clients' businesses by making useful introductions
4. Pricing proportionate to the benefit enjoyed by your business

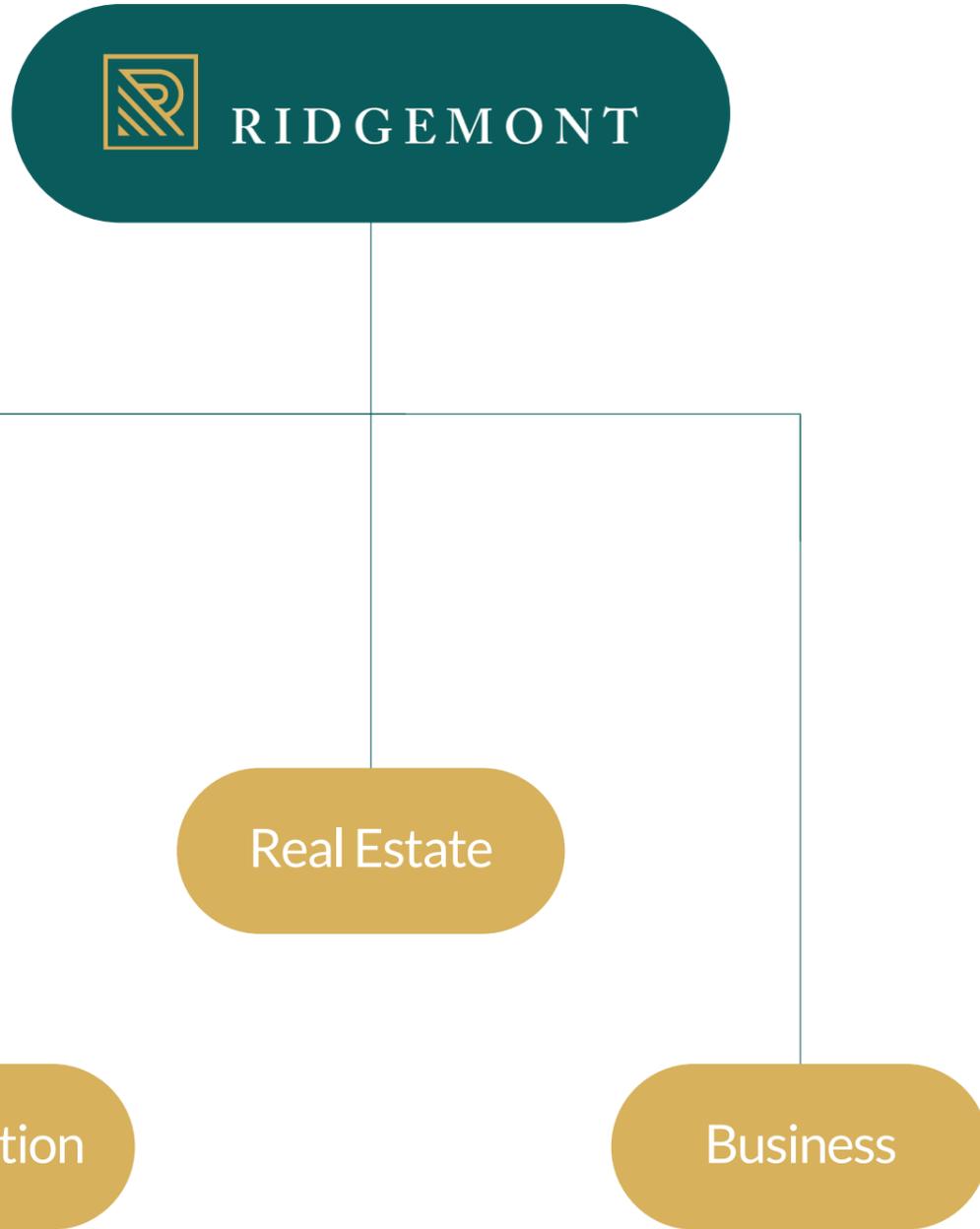
(...we also believe in having fun along the way)

We will deliver on our mission, vision and values by:

1. Pushing the boundaries of quality of advice and value by harnessing tech and being process driven
2. Using data to operate our business and advise our clients
3. Everyone in our business is a specialist, from lawyers to our marketers
4. Being a gateway for talented individuals from non-traditional backgrounds to work in the legal industry
5. Promoting an open, transparent and calm environment benefiting our team and our clients

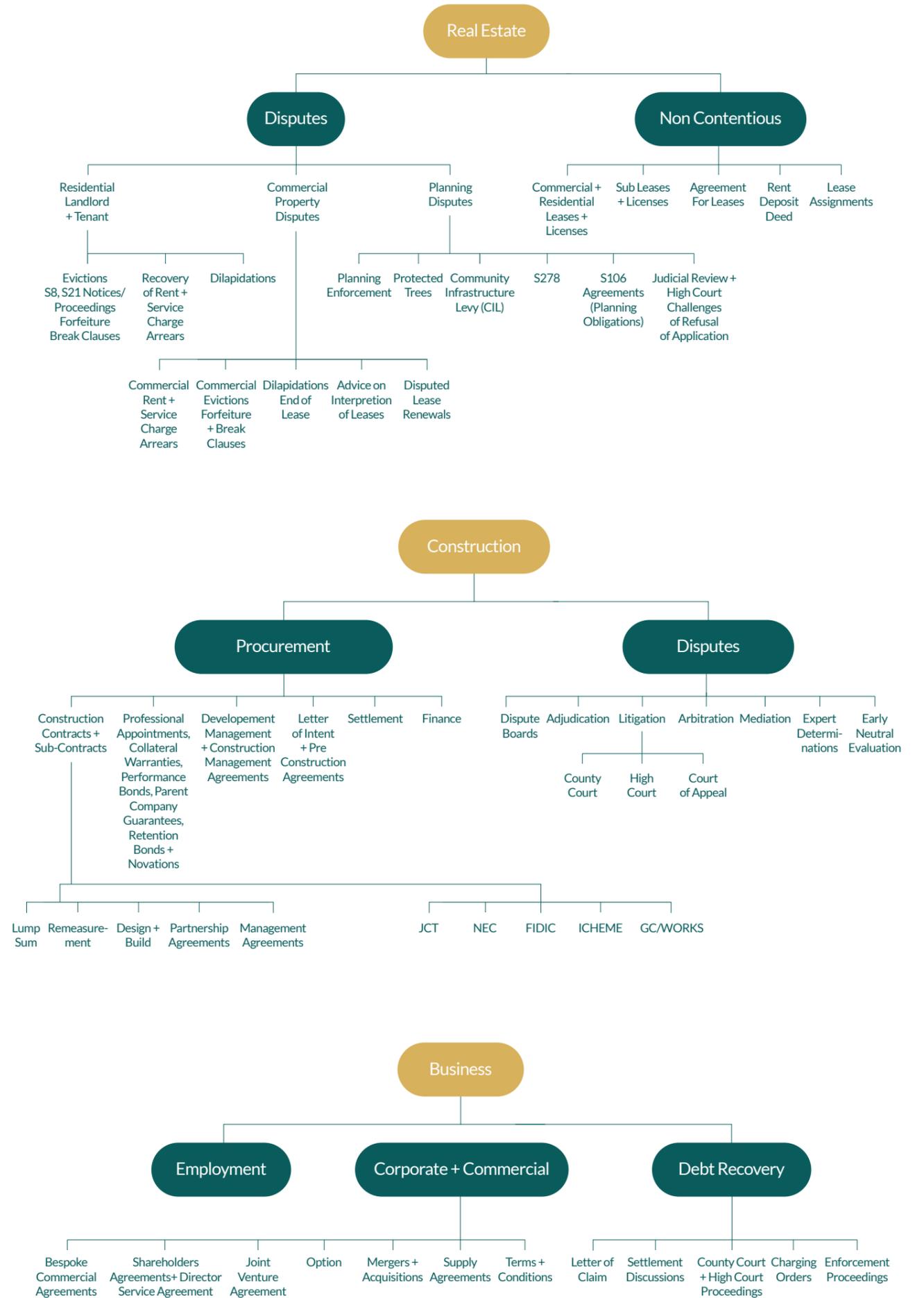


What



“Impressive real estate and construction advice. Pragmatic with an eye for detail.”

Aldo d’Aponte, Arbitrage Group



How

We will communicate effectively with you and other parties, provide you with clarity as to where you stand and ensure that what we charge you is proportionate to the work done and the value attributable to that work.

Our advice is led by senior construction and real estate solicitors. We do not allow unnecessary fee earners to sit on calls or in meetings. We only delegate work to juniors where it is more cost effective than the lead solicitor dealing with it themselves.

We are supportive of our fee earning team, taking away all non fee-earning duties enabling them to focus on providing you with great legal advice.

A key value for us is cost transparency. We will update you every Friday to Monday as to the work done in the preceding week. We will update you if a fee estimate needs to be revised and explain why. We are constantly looking for ways to use tech and smart thinking to provide legal advice more cost efficiently.



Capability

1. Construction/ Dispute Resolution

Our considerable experience of and expertise in dealing with construction disputes will help you manage away your problems right from when they arise, before they can develop into a dispute, where that is possible and in your best interests. If the dispute does develop though, we will encourage you to negotiate right through to any trial, in order to find a sensible compromise. That may be by mediation or written settlement offers for example.

Our expert, experienced team will quickly provide you with clarity on your legal position and set out a road map to resolve the issue in a cost proportionate way. We focus on the issues that have the greatest financial value to your business and will often advise you not to pursue lower value elements of a claim, if they cannot be pursued cost proportionately (including taking into consideration the value of your time).

You want to avoid the cost and loss of management time associated with legal proceedings and so we adopt this conciliatory first approach because dispute resolution should in most cases be a last resort, and that is certainly the approach that the Courts take.

We will provide you with clarity as to the most suitable proceedings for you, which may be adjudication, litigation, arbitration, expert determination, early neutral evaluation or dispute boards.

How can we help you?

We take ownership of disputes, taking them off your desk and enabling you to focus on growing your business. At the same time, we will provide you with valuable video content to educate your team on the issues that you face, so that you can avoid similar disputes in the future, saving you management time and legal costs.

You need and we deliver clear and concise advice ensuring that you can readily understand and implement what we say. You need pragmatic advice with commercial recommendations, nothing that can't be easily deployed and its business rationale understood. Measured advice and strategy, not unnecessarily hostile advice. We try to preserve your business relationships, not harm them.

We are also always alive to your exposure to paying legal costs, in terms of our fees and disbursements, and the fees of those we instruct on your behalf (eg experts and barristers). Similarly your exposure to paying your opponent's costs if you are unsuccessful in your claim or defence. Therefore we do what we can to keep your costs and your exposure to further costs, low and proportionate to the claim at hand.

We also believe in a close working relationship where that suits you. We want to understand your business and know those that we work with. Our advice can then be more tailored in that way.

2. Procurement (Contracts)

Our team of experienced construction contract experts will provide you with a clear traffic light system, identifying the key issues in a contract for you to consider and to inform the trade negotiations. We will focus on negotiating the clauses that matter to you, using our team's knowledge and experience to produce contracts that you understand, that balance risk and that make the project commercially attractive.

We are experts in all forms of procurement (eg lump sum, re-measurable, design & build, partnering and management contracting) and all standard form construction contracts (eg JCT, FIDIC, NEC, IChemE and GC/Works).

We will provide you with clarity as to how to procure construction works and the pros and cons of each option. We know our way around all the standard form suites of contracts, how they differ and how they have evolved over time we have a particular specialism in JCT contracts. We understand how the industry operates the different contracts and the amendments that need to be made and that are accepted in the market.

We advise on all forms of construction contract, not just the building contract itself. Those include: development agreements, sub-contracts, professional appointments, collateral warranties, bonds, funding

How we work?

First, by explaining the mechanics of the contract in a way that you understand and in a way that you can cascade down to your team. Then answering any specific questions that you have, providing you with clarity so that you can focus on commercial decision making. Our advice will be clear, concise, pragmatic and sensitive to your costs as always.

We get to know your commercial needs and risk requirements as fully as possible so that they can be translated into the contracts that we draft / negotiate.

We do not recommend overly onerous contract amendments without good cause, because that risks creating a problem down the line when implementing the contract.

We do not complicate the contractual relationships or provisions, unless that can't be avoided, because complexity breeds lack of clarity and hence uncertainty, and that suits no one. Construction contracts are complex enough already.

3. Landlord & Tenant

We act for commercial landlords, property managing agents, investors, developers, and commercial tenants and are commonly asked to advise on high value prime Central London property disputes.

We are here to take the worry off your hands!

We can explain the benefits and risks to different approaches, and always recommend a way forward. We always put ourselves in our clients shoes and think what we would do in your situation.

How can we help you?

- Breaches of covenant
- Claims on title
- Contractual advice on leases and licences
- Dilapidations and disrepair disputes
- Undisputed and disputed lease renewals
- Exercising break clauses
- Forfeiture
- Recovery of rent and service charge arrears
- Rent reviews
- Service of notices
- Tenant insolvency – rights and remedies
- Termination of leases
- Property management including rent reviews, licenses for alterations, assignments, sub-lettings and change use
- Dilapidation issues

Our team also advises landlords on agreements for lease (including pre-lets), leases, lease renewals, assignments, authorised guarantee agreements, licences, rent deposits and surrenders.



4. Planning Dispute Solicitors

We understand the stress and strain caused by planning issues arising on your development. We can help guide you through the ever-changing planning landscape and get your development back on track. We want you to focus on deliverables, we will take ownership of your planning challenges.

Our team of experienced lawyers will take ownership of your planning issue, provide you with pragmatic advice that is easy to understand.

We will always provide a recommendation on the best way forward!

We will provide you with clear legal advice to tackle planning disputes head-on.

How can we help you?

Our team regularly deals with and advises on Judicial Reviews and other High Court Challenges, Certificates of Lawful Development (CLDs), Section 106 Planning Obligations, Section 278 Highways Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Protected Trees, Planning Enforcement Investigations & Prosecutions and Maladministration Complaints.

5. Commercial Property

We understand the pressure that you are under dealing with legal issues in an ever-changing commercial property landscape.

We commit to providing you with pragmatic advice that enables commercial decision making. We also recommend the best way forward, where other firms would just set out your options.

Our team is full of experienced lawyers are here to help you achieve your goals. And our commitment to you, is to do all of that for a fair price.

How can we help you?

We provide advice on a wide range of matters, including development projects and commercial leases, asset management, planning, licensing, as well as landlord and tenant issues across all sectors.

We are experienced at advising clients on commercial property lease agreements, alongside drafting bespoke contracts.

Our services include:

- Advice on and drafting deeds of assignment and licences to sub-let, underlet and alter
- Break clauses
- Dispute resolution for landlords and tenants
- Drafting and negotiating agreements for leases
- Lease renewals
- Lease variations
- Rent deposit deeds
- Rent reviews
- Rights of pre-emption
- Service charges
- Termination of leases
- Commercial rent arrears recovery

6. Commercial Landlord Solicitors

We understand that the current commercial property market is difficult. You are under more pressure than ever to manage your assets effectively.

We are here to work with you by taking ownership of your asset management issues and resolving them quickly.

We will guide you through the maze of legislation and caselaw, ensure your compliance and enable you to do what you do best, in effectively managing the assets from a commercial perspective.

We are here to take the worry off your hands in respect of any legal issues, explaining the benefits and risks to different approaches.

How can we help you?

We offer a vast range of legal services to help landlords across a broad range sectors, including leisure and entertainment, retail, offices and industrial.

- Agreements for Lease
- Break clauses
- Business evictions
- Debt Recovery for Business Clients
- Disputes
- Drafting and negotiating leases
- Funding
- Heads of terms
- Lease assignments
- Lease renewals
- Licences to alter
- Licences to occupy
- Licences to underlet
- Rent arrears recovery
- Rent deposits
- Security of tenure
- Service charge disputes
- Tenancy at wil



7. Debt Recovery

We will help you get paid as quickly as possible and in a cost effective way.

How can we help you?

Listed below are some of the debt recovery options available to our clients:

Letters Before Claim

There is nothing that grabs the attention of a debtor more than a strongly worded letter from a London law firm. Often debtors pay up quickly once they know a law firm is instructed to pursue repayment.

Settlement Discussions

If you are looking to maintain a business relationship, you may want to consider this option. We can negotiate with the debtor on your behalf and help find a solution.

County Court Money Judgment Proceedings

If you are considering applying to a court for a County Court Judgment (CCJ), we can provide you with our advice and expertise. This process can be smooth after establishing

a positive response from the debtor. However, if the debtor has decided to not respond to your claim, you are entitled to apply for a 'judgment by admission' or 'judgment in default' where you will receive a CCJ in your favour.

We offer a small claims court "How to video" package for claims worth less than £10,000.

Charging Order Proceedings

If you do obtain a CCJ, then we can assist in seeking a Charging Order, which means that if the debtor has sold assets, or they have become insolvent, you may be entitled to recover all the debt owed by the debtor if they have the funds.

Enforcement Proceedings

There is another way of obtaining a CCJ and this is by ordering county court bailiffs or High Court Enforcement Officers to enter the debtor's premises where they will then be permitted to recover the debt that is owed.

It is important to contact us early on so that we can provide you with expert advice on the best course of action to ensure that the debt is settled in a timely and cost-efficient manner



Our work

Our work includes acting for large retail developers, employers, contractors, subcontractors and professionals.

Members of the firm have acted for parties in all manner of large construction projects in the pharmaceutical, technology, healthcare, education, leisure, hotel and engineering sectors; advising on construction and engineering contracts, warranties, bonds, guarantees and professional appointments.

Example matters

Negotiating a resolution

Engaged by an employer whose national main contractor had walked away from a multi-million pound art gallery project midway through the work. The contractor claimed that there was no contract, and that they were not liable for delays and defects in the works.

Agreeing a bespoke settlement

Representing a main contractor who had been engaged to build a co-housing village under a Standard Form Management Contract selected by the design team. This contract was completely unsuitable for how the parties actually intended to work, and was in itself causing problems and disputes.

Ridgemont specialises in a wide range of construction, engineering and general contract and commercial advice, including JCT and other standard form building contracts, bespoke contracts, warranties, bonds, guarantees and professional appointments.

To see a list of some of our clients and testimonials, please visit the final section of this document.

Handling an alleged breach of contract

Engaged by a sub-contractor working for a utility company on a multi-million pound term contract. Our client had been thrown off the contract for an alleged serious breach of contract.

Forming a new sub-contract

Advising on the terms of a private finance initiative sub-contract worth over £10 million, in particular identifying very high risk terms and conditions.

Recovering significant management costs

Acting for a sub-contractor and recovered over £500,000 for management costs

Our team

John Wallace

John is the managing director of Ridgemont! He has been a lawyer for 14 years working in London and Paris. He acts for developers, contractors, sub-contractors and prime central London landlords on property and construction litigation issues.

With years of experience in the enforcement of adjudication awards at the High Court, John has advised on matters relating to subsistence, liquidated damages claims, extensions of time/delay and a range of other matters.

Outside of work he enjoys spending time with his young family, cooking and watching football.

Tim Seal

Tim joined Ridgemont as Head of Construction in February 2022 after 20 years in leading private practice construction law teams and consultancy. He is building our full service team of specialist lawyers. Tim's knowledge of construction law and industry practice is considerable.



He also speaks and writes articles on construction law topics to a wide range of audiences. Tim's emphasis when providing legal services, is genuine expertise, delivered by decent human beings, to exceed individual client need .
Outside work Tim loves outdoor adventure sports and trail running and tries to spend as much time as possible with his 2 undergraduate daughters.

Testimonials

“Ridgemont advised us on potentially high value litigation regarding one of our real estate assets in the UK. They provided us with firm, consistent advice, which resulted in settlement being achieved and any risk associated with the proceedings being avoided.”

Marco Bigi, Navy Group SRL

“Ridgemont continue to advise us on a number of matters. They are responsive, detailed in their work and commercial in their approach. Ridgemont are currently acting for us on a dispute with a subcontractor. They have provided great advice and we are confident of obtaining judgment and costs in our favour with their guidance.”

Paolo Zechini, Segmento

“Ridgemont have advised us on a number of matters and provide straight forward, accurate advice in a way that is easily understood. They are currently advising us on on-going legal proceedings and we feel safe in the knowledge that they have it under control.”

Ziad Mir, B-Line

“Impressive real estate and construction advice. Pragmatic with an eye for detail.”

Aldo d’Aponte, Arbitrage Group

“John has assisted me on a number of recent litigious legal matters. Often, the results he has achieved have exceeded my expectations. His advice is always comprehensive and professional. The Ridgemont team are very client-orientated and efficient in time and fees. I will continue to instruct John as a legal partner and adviser.”

Silvia Lenzi, Property Agent

“Ridgemont acted for us on an adjudication and subsequent enforcement in relation to a dispute with a developer. We won the adjudication, but the developer did not pay us. Ridgemont used some lateral thinking, put pressure on the developer and procured payment prior to enforcement proceedings having to be initiated, which saved us time and money. We regularly use Ridgemont and trust in their expertise.”

Tim Carpenter, Firmitas

“Ridgemont acted for us when we were on the periphery of complex litigation relating to a property transaction. They provided advice along the way and achieved our goal at the end of the proceedings. We were really happy with them.”

Charles McDowell, Charles McDowell Properties

“Ridgemont have advised us on a number of matters, including commercial disputes, corporate advice and issues regarding our lease. We are a global company and they are always available. John Wallace, in particular, is able to take on board commercial considerations more than any other lawyer we have used.”

Amit Jain, Total IT

“Ridgemont are sharp and commercially minded lawyers who cut to the crux of the issue quickly and efficiently.”

Raj Nayyar, Fix Flo

“I have been impressed by their ability to understand the detail of each transaction and utilise their commercial acumen to resolve matters professionally and diligently. In addition, they are able to relay the legalities in a transparent and comprehensive manner hence why I choose to appoint them.”



Our office

24 Greville Street, London, EC1N 8SS

+44 (0) 203 909 9590

contactus@ridgemont.co

www.ridgemont.co



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