

Expert Witness Team To Support Rise In Litigation

Tuffin Ferraby Taylor has formed its first dedicated expert witness team with a warning that the industry can expect to see a dramatic rise in construction and property related litigation during the recession.

History shows that when a recession bites there is a significant increase in building related conflicts as businesses look to recoup costs. Building owners start to look more carefully at areas where they can recover costs and start picking designers, contractors and tenants up on issues that, during the boom years, they might have turned a blind eye to. As a result we expect to see a rise in legal proceedings being issued between landlords, tenants, property owners, investors and contractors.

To meet the rise in demand, TFT has formed a specialist team to focus on the provision of expert witness services, which is being headed by David Tuffin. Having spent much of 2008 as the president of the RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), David is regarded by his peers as one of the most respected chartered surveyors in Europe and as a result is regularly called upon to provide expert evidence in professional negligence cases and matters concerning construction quality and performance. Having worked in surveying and building defect diagnosis for almost half a century, he has also held the positions of President of the Building Surveyors Division of the RICS; and member of the RICS International Governing Council.

The team will also include two of TFT's most experienced partners who themselves have been called upon to provide evidence in high profile and value disputes. In order to be able to provide the most reliable evidence, the team will work closely with colleagues throughout TFT, calling on the specific expertise of specialists in fields that may be relevant in particular circumstances.

David Tuffin, who steered TFT through the 1990's recession as well as the property crash of the 70's states: "During years of exceptional growth property owners have been inclined to brush under the carpet a lot of what they see as collateral damage, such as minor defects in building works or marginal dilapidation claims against tenants. However, when the market slows down they start to discover the time and inclination to pursue builders and designers for mistakes made during the rush to complete projects. They are also more reluctant to cover the cost of repairs caused by perceived lack of maintenance by outgoing tenants."

The new team will operate out of TFT's five regional offices and will provide a completely independent service for both claimants and defendants.



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