

Land Law

Fourth Edition

Nigel P. Gravells

LAND LAW: TEXT AND MATERIALS

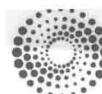
Fourth Edition

by

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LAND LAW: TEXT AND MATERIALS

PREFACE

The aims and objectives of the fourth edition of this book remain unchanged from the first three editions: to examine the main rules and principles of land law in a manner that makes them accessible to students while it requires but facilitates the important process of reading the primary sources of the subject; and to encourage and facilitate an understanding and a closer and critical study of the subject. The structure adopted for the realisation of those aims and objectives also remains unchanged.

However, there have been many important substantive developments in land law in the past six years.

Although there has been no major legislative development to match the Land Registration Act 2002, the fourth edition incorporates changes introduced by the Civil Partnerships Act 2004, the Housing Act 2004, the Consumer Credit Act 2006, the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Equality Act 2010 and the Mortgage Repossessions (Protection of Tenants etc) Act 2010. As for potential legislative developments, there is detailed discussion of the recommendations in the Law Commission Report on Termination of Tenancies for Tenant Default (2006) and the proposals in the Law Commission Consultation Paper on Easements, Covenants and Profits à Prendre (2008).

The legislative developments first noted in the third edition have generated some litigation. The central provisions of the Land Registration Act 2002 on priority of interests have received some recent judicial consideration in *Thompson v Foy* (2009), *HSBC Bank Plc v Dyche and Colleldevall* (2009) and *Link Lending Ltd v Bustard* (2010). The Human Rights Act 1998 has continued to form the basis of a number of challenges to the rules of English land law, particularly in relation to the protection of property and the protection of the family home; but in the overwhelming majority of cases (including a series of House of Lords cases) the courts have ruled that, although the 1998 Act is "engaged", existing rules and procedures of English land law are compatible with the rights protected by the Act.

In addition there has been a significant volume of case law in which established doctrines and principles have been clarified and judicial approaches have been reconsidered. Topics that have been the subject of such judicial (re)consideration include the acquisition of equitable ownership interests in the family home, the nature of leases, the scope and enforceability of leasehold covenants, the requirements of proprietary estoppel, the characteristics of easements, the acquisition of easements, the enforceability of freehold covenants and the mortgagee's power of sale. These judicial developments have prompted expanded treatment of the relevant topics.

I have endeavoured to state the law on the basis of materials available to me as at March 31, 2010; but I have been able to include references to some later developments at proof stage.

I am extremely grateful to those people who have provided practical assistance and/or less tangible (but no less valuable) support during the preparation of this edition. As with previous editions of the book, much of the preparation of this edition was carried out in the Law School at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and I wish to record my appreciation of the facilities and

hospitality afforded to me there. However, once again I owe the greatest debt to Linda. She has continued to demonstrate that she has very considerable reserves of patience and understanding, not least when I have appeared to be less concerned with The Brambles than with any other parcel of land; and this at a time when the real (spending) value of any royalties is decreasing. Indeed, I am writing this preface on our seventh wedding anniversary!

The Brambles
Wymeswold
May 3, 2010

Nigel P. Gravells

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Land law has a reputation as one of the more difficult subjects in the undergraduate curriculum; it is sometimes regarded as daunting to students, not least because the relevant legislation and case law, indeed the very terminology of the subject, appear to be less than user-friendly. The aim of this book is to examine the main rules and principles of land law in a manner which makes them accessible to students while it requires but facilitates the important process of reading the primary sources of the subject.

In the scope of the subject-matter and the selection of the materials the book is designed to cover the principal substantive topics of land law which form the basis of undergraduate courses taught in most law schools. Thus, after a consideration of certain introductory matters, the book concentrates on eight main topics, each forming the subject-matter of a separate chapter. (I have excluded (or considered in outline only) certain topics which (even in these days of modularisation and semesterisation) are sometimes included in land law courses: for example, strict settlements, the rule(s) against perpetuities, profits à prendre and limitation of actions; but I do not believe that the omission of these topics means that the book presents a distorted view of land law.) The intention is that, by limiting the range of topics covered, those topics can be examined in greater depth, thereby providing a clearer understanding of the subject and its principal components.

Although the treatment of the topics necessarily varies in its detail, largely in accordance with whether they are based essentially in statute or case law, there is a general pattern in the approach. Each chapter begins with an indication of the context of its subject-matter and of the major theme(s) of the chapter. Within each chapter most sections begin with an introductory text to provide some structure and guidance. This is followed by the selected materials. The selection of materials is necessarily in part a matter of personal preference, but I hope that overall the selection is a not unreasonable selection of the subject-matter. I have preferred extended extracts from fewer cases in the belief that this provides a better appreciation of the reasoning in the individual cases and, consequently, a clearer and more coherent understanding of their subject-matter: indeed, that belief has become stronger, with the result that at proof stage I restored passages that I had previously edited out. As originally envisaged, the book would not have included extracts from the 1925 property legislation and other statutory material, on the basis that most students acquire their own copies of the property legislation. However, I subsequently came to the view that it was essential to include certain fundamental provisions, so as to avoid creating a misleading view of the statutory basis of many of the topics under consideration. The materials in turn are followed by notes which are intended to provide, where appropriate, commentary on the extracts, indications of the views of commentators on the subject-matter and references to further primary and secondary materials. No less important for a critical study of the subject is an awareness of the defects in the current law and the proposals for reform. I have therefore included extracts (or summaries) of the reports of the Law Commission and other law reform bodies on many of the topics covered in the book.

It is hoped that overall this approach may encourage and facilitate a closer and critical study of

land law; and that this in turn may persuade students that land law offers intellectual entertainment and enjoyment.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to many people who have provided practical assistance and/or less tangible (but no less valuable) support during the writing of this book. First to Sweet & Maxwell: they suggested the project some time ago and, since then, they have continued to encourage and indulge me beyond any reasonable expectation. Secondly to my colleagues in the Department of Law at the University of Nottingham: not only do they continue to provide a friendly and stimulating environment in which to work but they also sustain the system within the Department which permits regular periods of study leave. Thirdly to my intermittent colleagues in the Law School at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand: the Canterbury Law School has become my second academic home over the past seven years; the facilities and the hospitality of friends there have made it an excellent research haven; and it was there that the first words of this book were committed to the word processor and it was from there that the final pages of the proofs were dispatched to the publishers. Finally to Linda: she has shown immense patience and understanding and she has provided all manner of support, all of which have made the writing of the book rather easier than it would otherwise have been; and so it will be with her that I shall spend and royalties!

University of Nottingham
May 26, 1995

Nigel P. Gravells

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