



An Introduction To  
Land Law

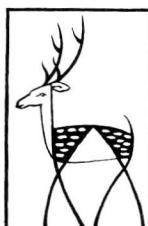
*Second Edition*

Simon Gardner

# An Introduction to Land Law

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO LAND LAW

The rules of land law are numerous, complex, and in some cases baffling to students and the study of land law is also often portrayed as dull. Too frequently those who find success in working out how the law operates in other areas of law find themselves defeated by land law. Even the great jurist Blackstone apparently succumbed to the depressing conclusion that the study of land law ‘afforded the student less amusement and pleasure in the pursuit’ than the study of crime and tort.

This book tries to make a difference. It aims to tell the rules’ story: to talk about them in terms of the work they do, in a way that will allow readers to understand and engage with them. And through the example it offers, it aims also to give students the confidence, spur and tools to go on to develop such perspectives for themselves.

The book covers the main points of land law found in the syllabuses of law schools in England and Wales. While it is not intended as a comprehensive textbook on the topic, it offers sufficient detail for anyone reading it to gain an overview of the subject, and for those seeking more the footnotes offer plenty of pointers.

As one reader of the first edition commented, ‘it shone light where none had shone before, and lit a clear path to understanding’.

# Preface

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The rules of land law are numerous, complex, and in some cases substantively baffling. The story that together they tell does not jump out from the page. Students who quickly see what is going on in other areas of law often find themselves beaten by land law. This is a worry. Land law is not, after all, some arcane optional extra: it is the set of rules governing, literally, the foundation of terrestrial life. We ought to be able to get a grip on it.

This book aims to help. It tries to offer students a perspective on the subject; and also to provide an example of how it is possible to develop such a perspective for oneself. For the account given here cannot conceivably be the only way of viewing the material. The most valuable thing it can do is give those reading it the confidence, spur and apparatus to do something similar—but better!—for themselves.

By way of content, this book covers most of the main rules of land law as that subject is captured by most university syllabuses. Given its aim, however, it does not set out to be exactly a textbook on the subject. In the effort to present a vision of what the rules are doing, it sometimes focuses on some details more than others. And throughout, it necessarily contains a large element of opinion. It ought, therefore, to be used alongside—most certainly—the primary sources themselves, and probably also some other secondary sources. There are many textbooks available, of various sizes and (like this book) with different strengths and weaknesses. There are also other books with aspirations not dissimilar to this one, each with its own set of viewpoints and insights. And there are some valuable books of essays, particularly perhaps the biennial volumes of *Modern Studies in Property Law*, presenting the excellent papers delivered to the conferences organised by the Centre for Property Law at the University of Reading. Use this book for ideas, support and reassurance that the material not only should but can add up to something—then see what you can do with it for yourself.

This second edition, two years after the first, was needed above all so as to take account of new decisions of the House of Lords in the areas of proprietary estoppel and family property, *Cobbe v Yeoman's Row Management Ltd*, *Thorner v Majors* and *Stack v Dowden*. The relevant parts of the book have been fully rewritten. Other changes in the law, and developments in the literature, have been incorporated too.

Simon Gardner  
1 April 2009

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