# Savills accelerates heritage planning expertise with Citydesigner acquisition



Savills UK has recently announced the acquisition of Citydesigner, a well-established independent heritage, townscape, and architectural design consultancy based in Central London. This strategic move is intended to strengthen Savills’ already robust heritage and townscape team, which functions within its UK planning division led by Henry Ryde. Citydesigner, founded in 1997 by architect and heritage specialist Richard Coleman, was the first bespoke consultancy dedicated to these fields and currently employs an eight-strong team of architects, urban designers, and heritage consultants.

According to Richard Rees, Managing Director of Savills UK, the acquisition is a significant milestone: "We are thrilled to have acquired this fantastic business that we have long admired with such a great reputation. Richard and his team have a proven track record of working on successful and notable projects, and their arrival will enhance our 350-strong planning consultancy team, which operates across 23 locations and is the largest in the UK." This addition aligns well with Savills’ expansive planning services, which already include a comprehensive archaeology, heritage, and townscape consultancy. The multi-disciplinary team provides expert advice on heritage sites, built heritage analysis, statements of significance, planning applications related to heritage, and engagement with regulatory bodies across the UK.

David Jackson, Head of Planning at Savills Earth, emphasised the timely nature of the acquisition: "With such emphasis on delivering sustainable economic growth in the planning world, heritage planning will play a significant role in promoting the reuse of existing buildings and contributing to sustainable development. We are looking forward to expanding our service and capability for clients across the country." This highlights an increasingly critical role heritage consultancy has in driving sustainable development, particularly through adaptive reuse policies which contribute both to environmental and economic goals.

The clientele that Citydesigner brings includes major London estates, developers, real estate investment trusts (REITs), UK and international funds, insurers, and public sector clients, notably the Greater London Authority, many of whom already have relationships with Savills. This acquisition builds on Savills’ previous strategic moves, such as the 2011 takeover of the London Planning Practice, which helped Savills establish the largest planning team in London with a focus on key districts including the West End and the City.

Further strengthening Savills' capability in related areas, the company has recently expanded its sustainability consultancy team by recruiting experts in ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and climate risk management. Such additions underscore Savills’ commitment to providing comprehensive consultancy services that meet contemporary demands for ESG integration in property development and management.

Savills has also invested in deepening its heritage and townscape expertise through senior hires in recent years, including specialists with backgrounds in local government planning and commercial archaeology, further enhancing its advisory capacity on heritage asset management and development. These developments reflect a broader industry trend where heritage and sustainability are becoming inseparable components of placemaking, urban design, and development consultancy.

With the acquisition of Citydesigner, the firm is well-positioned to leverage a broader range of heritage skills and insights to serve an expanding client base across the UK, complementing its already extensive planning and environmental advisory services. This move illustrates how heritage consultancy is evolving from a niche specialism into a fundamental aspect of sustainable development strategies within the property sector.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[2]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[2]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[2]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[5]](https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/115331-maison-residences-rises-at-hunters-hill)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/371149-0/savills-strengthens-sustainability-consultancy-with-new-hires), [[4]](https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/350245-savills-strengthens-heritage-and-townscape-team-with-double-hire)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/350245-savills-strengthens-heritage-and-townscape-team-with-double-hire), [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx> - Savills UK offers a comprehensive Archaeology, Heritage & Townscape consultancy service, providing expert advice on heritage sites, townscape environments, and archaeological matters. Their multi-disciplinary team delivers reliable and commercially aware guidance to clients across the private sector and local authorities, assisting in the development of heritage sites and buildings. Services include identification and analysis of built heritage issues, production of statements of significance, applications for certificates of immunity from listing, assessment of townscape and visual impact effects, and engagement with local planning authorities and statutory consultees. The team operates from Savills' head office in central London and the Wimborne office, covering heritage and townscape planning matters across the UK.
3. <https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/371149-0/savills-strengthens-sustainability-consultancy-with-new-hires> - In January 2025, Savills expanded its Sustainability Consultancy team within its property management division by hiring three new strategic consultants: Olivier Garnier and Tom Bardwell as Principal Sustainability Consultants, and Megan Steven as a Senior Climate Risk and Resilience Consultant. Olivier brings over 13 years of experience as an ESG specialist, Tom has nearly 10 years of experience in sustainability strategy, and Megan has expertise in assessing and managing climate-related risks. These appointments aim to enhance Savills' position as a market leader in sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) services, addressing the growing demand for transparency and effective management of ESG factors in the property sector.
4. <https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/350245-savills-strengthens-heritage-and-townscape-team-with-double-hire> - In August 2023, Savills appointed Trystan Lever and Harry Smith as senior consultants to its Heritage and Townscape team. Trystan, formerly a planning officer at Islington Council, has expertise in managing and developing heritage assets and sites within their setting. Harry, with a background in heritage consultancy and commercial archaeology, has experience working on a range of heritage projects for both private and public sector clients. These appointments aim to strengthen Savills' heritage and townscape consultancy services, enhancing their ability to advise on the management and development of heritage assets and sites.
5. <https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/115331-maison-residences-rises-at-hunters-hill> - In August 2011, Savills acquired London Planning Practice (LPP), creating the largest planning team in the capital. The acquisition added 16 planning specialists from LPP to Savills' existing team, resulting in a 60-strong London planning team. LPP, founded in 2003, had clients including Harrods, Minerva, Northacre, and Finchatton. The merger aimed to enhance Savills' focus in the West End and City, solidifying its position as the largest planning consultancy among major property advisory firms in London.
6. <https://en.savills.com.cn/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/219692-0/savills-appointed-by-capitaland-development-as-property-manager-for-heritage-west-lake> - In January 2025, Savills Vietnam was appointed by CapitaLand Hien Duc, a joint venture between CapitaLand Development and Hien Duc Group, as the property manager for Heritage West Lake in Hanoi's Tay Ho District. This project marks the fifth collaboration between the two companies and features residential apartments, office spaces, commercial shops, and SOHO units. The development emphasizes sustainability and quality, with Savills managing over 130 high-end projects in Vietnam, including commercial centres, office buildings, luxury apartments, and urban areas.
7. <https://savillsgraduates.teamtailor.com/jobs/5537555-2025-savills-graduate-programme-urban-design> - Savills offers a 2025 Graduate Programme in Urban Design, part of its Planning Division, which comprises over 300 professionals across the UK. The programme provides opportunities to assist with a range of placemaking projects, including masterplans, urban regeneration, and new settlements. Graduates will work as part of the national studio, regardless of office location, and receive training and development geared towards enabling them to reach their full potential. Locations available include Oxford and Southampton.