# Savills enhances UK heritage planning with Citydesigner acquisition



Savills UK has announced the acquisition of Citydesigner, an independent heritage, townscape, and architectural design consultancy based in Central London. The move is intended to complement and strengthen Savills’ established heritage and townscape team within its UK planning division, which is led by Henry Ryde. Citydesigner, founded in 1997 by architect and heritage expert Richard Coleman, is recognised as the first bespoke consultancy of its kind and has built a strong reputation for its comprehensive expertise in heritage-sensitive development projects. Its team of eight professionals includes architects, urban designers, and heritage consultants.

Richard Rees, Managing Director of Savills UK, expressed enthusiasm about the acquisition, highlighting Citydesigner’s proven track record of delivering successful high-profile projects. He noted that the consultancy’s arrival will enhance Savills’ 350-strong planning consultancy team, which operates across 23 locations and is the largest of its kind in the UK. The acquisition aligns well with Savills' strategy to broaden its specialist services in heritage, townscape, and architectural design advisory.

David Jackson, Head of Planning at Savills Earth, emphasised the significance of heritage planning at a time when sustainable economic growth is a priority within the planning sector. He pointed out that heritage planning plays a crucial role by promoting the reuse of existing buildings, which contributes to sustainable development goals. According to Jackson, expanding capabilities in this area is expected to benefit clients nationwide, given the increasing emphasis on sustainability in urban planning.

Citydesigner’s client base includes major London Estates, developers, REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), UK and international investment funds, insurers, and public sector bodies, notably including the Greater London Authority. The consultancy provides a range of services such as heritage assessments, townscape and visual impact assessments, expert witness services, and historical research, facilitating optimum planning outcomes for challenging or heritage-sensitive developments across the UK and Ireland.

This acquisition echoes Savills’ earlier strategic expansions in planning consultancy services. For instance, in July 2018, Savills UK acquired Porta Planning LLP, a firm specialising in corporate commercial, industrial, logistics, life sciences, education, and central London mixed-use developments. Porta Planning’s integration helped strengthen Savills’ presence in these sectors and complemented its existing national planning team, the largest in the UK at that time. More recently, in August 2023, Savills bolstered its Heritage and Townscape team by appointing senior consultants with expertise in commercial and local government heritage projects, further enhancing the breadth and depth of their heritage advisory capabilities.

Savills’ Archaeology, Heritage & Townscape consultancy offers multi-disciplinary specialist planning guidance for the development and management of heritage sites and buildings within townscape environments. Their services include the identification and resolution of built heritage issues, production of heritage statements, applications for certificates of immunity from listing, and engagement with local planning authorities and statutory consultees. Their approach is aimed at providing commercially aware, robust, and clear advice to clients navigating complex heritage-related planning challenges.

The acquisition of Citydesigner is part of a broader pattern of Savills expanding its consultancy expertise. For example, the company previously acquired KKS, a London-based workplace consultancy and design studio, to create an integrated client service linking occupier services, landlord leasing, and development management. This indicates Savills’ ongoing commitment to offering comprehensive, specialised consultancy services that respond to evolving client needs in the real estate and planning sectors.

Overall, Citydesigner’s integration into Savills is positioned as a significant step forward in enhancing the firm's heritage and townscape consultancy capabilities. It underscores the growing importance of heritage planning in sustainable urban development and reflects Savills’ strategic intent to build a market-leading national consultancy team with diverse, specialist expertise.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[2]](https://citydesigner.com/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[2]](https://citydesigner.com/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[3]](https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/247932-0/savills-completes-acquisition-of-london-based-planning-practice--porta-planning)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx), [[5]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/heritage-and-townscape.aspx), [[6]](https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/350245/savills-strengthens-heritage-and-townscape-team-with-double-hire)
* Paragraph 7 – [[7]](https://www.savills.com/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/283160/savills-acquires-kks-to-create-new-market-leading-workplace-consultancy-service)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://pbsanews.co.uk/2025/07/01/savills-acquires-heritage-planning-consultancy/), [[4]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx), [[5]](https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/heritage-and-townscape.aspx)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## 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://citydesigner.com/> - Citydesigner is an independent consultancy based in Central London, specialising in heritage, townscape, and architectural design advice. Established in 1997 by architect and heritage expert Richard Coleman, the firm offers comprehensive historical research and planning guidance for projects across the UK and Ireland. Their team comprises architects, urban designers, planners, and heritage experts, assisting design teams and local authorities in achieving optimal planning outcomes for challenging or heritage-sensitive developments. Services include heritage assessments, townscape and visual impact assessments, and expert witness services.
3. <https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/247932-0/savills-completes-acquisition-of-london-based-planning-practice--porta-planning> - In July 2018, Savills UK completed the acquisition of Porta Planning LLP, a leading planning and development consultancy established in 2010. Porta Planning focuses on sectors such as corporate commercial, industrial and logistics, life science, education, and central London mixed-use development. The acquisition aimed to strengthen Savills' representation in these key sectors and add depth through major new clients, complementing the business’s 270-strong national planning team, the largest of any UK consultancy. The ten-strong Porta team joined Savills' London planning team based in Margaret Street, W1, working with clients across Savills UK offices.
4. <https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/archaeology--heritage-and-townscape.aspx> - Savills' Archaeology, Heritage & Townscape consultancy offers specialist planning guidance for developing heritage sites or buildings within townscape environments. Their multi-disciplinary team comprises heritage and townscape planning experts who work nationwide to provide reliable and commercially aware advice to help clients where heritage-related matters may pose challenges. Services include identification and analysis of built heritage issues, production of statements of significance and heritage assessments, applications for certificates of immunity from listing, expert witness services, and engagement with local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.
5. <https://www.savills.co.uk/services/consultancy/heritage-and-townscape.aspx> - Savills' Heritage & Townscape consultancy provides guidance throughout planning, development, and transactional processes, offering specialist advice on a range of related issues. Their approach is robust, personable, and commercially-minded, making intricate topics of archaeology, built heritage, and townscape approachable and clearly communicated. Services include identification and analysis of archaeological, built heritage, and townscape considerations, analysis of significance and setting, resolution of unauthorised works, applications for certificates of immunity from listing, expert witness services, and engagement with local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.
6. <https://www.savills.us/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/350245/savills-strengthens-heritage-and-townscape-team-with-double-hire> - In August 2023, Savills strengthened its Heritage and Townscape team with the appointment of Trystan Lever and Harry Smith as senior consultants. Both bring experience across commercial and local government sectors. 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 worked on a range of private and public sector heritage projects. Both will be based in Savills' Margaret Street office in London, enhancing the specialist built heritage, townscape, and archaeology offerings of the team.
7. <https://www.savills.com/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/283160/savills-acquires-kks-to-create-new-market-leading-workplace-consultancy-service> - In June 2019, Savills acquired London-based workplace consultancy and design studio KKS. The acquisition aimed to create a new UK-based client service for the international real estate advisor, providing a strategic link to enhance its occupier services, landlord leasing, mixed-use development, and building & project management offerings. Established in 2004 by CEO Katrina Kostic Samen, KKS employs 26 staff members. Katrina assumed the role of director, head of workplace – strategy and design at Savills, in addition to continuing her position as President of the British Council for Offices (BCO) until July that year.