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THE EVOLUTION FROM KKS TO SAVILLS WORKPLACE & DESIGN

WE TAKE A BRIEF LOOK AT THE TRANSITION FROM KKS INTO THE SAVILLS PORTFOLIO AND EVENTUAL REBRAND INTO SAVILLS WORKPLACE DESIGN & STRATEGY, ALONG WITH INSIGHT INTO THE BUSINESS' PHILOSOPHY ON MODERN WORKPLACE DESIGN AND SOLUTIONS.

Acquired by Savills in 2019, KKS, now Savills Workplace & Design, has moved from its former studio in Victoria to Savills Margaret Street HQ. Now fully integrated, the team has benefitted from the organisations global reach and network of connections, all while supporting Savills ambition of rolling out an interconnected global network of workplace strategy professionals.

According to Caroline Pontifex, Director, Head of Workplace & Design, the transition has evolved what was once a small, boutique workplace strategy and design practice into a global business. As of today, it incorporates a team of around 150 skilled professionals which work day-in and day-out to support clients with the full spectrum of workplace solutions. Across a number of Savills divisions these capabilities include: workplace strategy, interior design, smart buildings consultancy, technical due diligence, decarbonisation, project management, M&E consultancy, and all of the service lines underpinning the delivery of a workplace project.

Taking a step back, it's interesting to first look at the approach Savills Workplace & Design takes with clients, and how this impacts the customer journey.

First and foremost, Savills Workplace & Design prioritises early collaboration with clients on a workplace strategy basis before a project has even been established. This, then, informs a clear pathway for the delivery of projects that can

both enhance and support a client's long term real estate ambitions.

These ambitions tend to hinge around themes that include everything from smart buildings and greater AI utilisation through to decarbonisation and creating a workplace that people truly want to come back to.

Out of all of these, decarbonisation is key and the team are there to help landlords, asset owners and investors to decarbonise their existing buildings to benefit all parties, including occupiers.

To learn a little more about this, we spoke with Charlotte Evans, GreenFit lead at Savills, who works closely with Workplace & Design:

"We tend to work with a lot of landlords and investors on the decarbonisation of their buildings. When we look at that piece it is significantly influenced by the tenants, how they occupy and use the space, how their fit-out interacts with the buildings services, and so a lot of what we do incorporates working with those stakeholders to make the building the best it can be. A landlord on their own can't make the significant changes needed for 2030 targets as they also need the tenants to help engage and work with them on that process."



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“It’s about designing a space that makes you feel much more human.”

– Yetta Reardon Smith

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As one can infer, the Savills Design & Workplace approach is one of collaboration between different property stakeholders to deliver a refurbishment strategy that ultimately works for both parties; this means achieving not only an improvement in overall building efficiency, but also operational efficiencies

Adding further commentary, Caroline Pontifex, Director, Head of Workplace & Design at Savills said: “Most occupiers are looking extremely carefully at what the landlord is doing in terms of refurbishment over the next few years, and how that’s going to be funded or paid for. We can work collaboratively with both the landlord team and design team to achieve that ultimate goal of having a building which is as sustainable as possible and one that a tenant can operate in as efficiently as possible – it’s for the betterment of all.”

Another factor to consider is understanding the importance of operational efficiencies. This is not just about the technological aspect, but also the efficient running of building services. One such example is how to manage low levels of occupancy, a byproduct of more hybrid working practices. This can be resolved through landlord and tenant collaboration and ultimately centralising operational activities to reduce unnecessary energy consumption.

What’s more, this is not just about the efficient deployment of services within a space, but also how to maintain them in a cost effective way. For instance, how can you reduce service charge to benefit occupiers, but still cover building costs? Primarily through the use of data and insights.

As the lead in smart buildings consultancy, part of the property management team who also work closely with Savills Workplace & Design, associate director Ivo Krastins, offered the following insight into this matter:

“1% of the spending that goes onto an asset is to do with services, 9% goes onto the fabric of the asset, and 90% onto the people that occupy it. If we look at it from that perspective in terms of having the biggest positive impact on an asset, then you look immediately at the 90%. If you keep the occupier happy then they maintain their lease for as long as possible from the landlord perspective, or the opposite when an occupier is trying to find space.

“By having a data led approach, you can drive more value and the asset can be much more appealing to the market.”

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“A lot of wellness programmes try to alleviate stress in the workplace, rather than creating a workplace that actively de-stresses you from the moment you walk through the door.”

Yetta Reardon Smith,
Director, Senior Workplace Strategist

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THE TRANSITION FROM BIOPHILIC TO SALUTOGENIC DESIGN

A design philosophy that focuses on the human need to connect with nature, biophilic design looks to capitalise on this desire within the built environment. By no means a new concept, it has proven critical in improving worker well-being and motivation by increasing levels of natural light and fresh air in the workplace, alongside the introduction of greenery.

Up until this point, biophilic design has been largely responsive following the increased focus on wellness following the pandemic. However, Savills Workplace & Design are now seeing a more salutogenic approach, focusing on the origins of health and factors that promote well-being, rather than on the cause, or a pathogenic response.

This should see workplaces designed in a manner which caters to accessibility and neurodiversity. This, in theory, should reduce refurbishment demand later down the line, creating the ideal workplace of tomorrow, today.

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“If we look at it from that perspective – 1% on services, 9% on fabric, and 90% on the people – then you look immediately at the 90%. Keep the occupier happy, and the asset becomes much more appealing to the market.”

Ivo Krastins,

Associate Director, Smart Buildings Consultancy



“We’d like to see a lot more salutogenic design. Where a lot of wellness programmes right now are trying to improve a situation that exists in a lot of workplaces, salutogenic design actively promotes health and wellbeing, in contrast to pathogenic design, which responds to illness,” explained Yetta Reardon Smith, Director, Senior Workplace Strategist at Savills Workplace & Design. “A lot of the wellness programmes right now might try to alleviate stress in the workplace, rather than creating a workplace that actively de-stresses you from the moment you walk through the door. It’s about designing a space that makes you feel much more ‘human’.”

Further to this, other key themes of note include: incorporating a

greater deconstruction philosophy, minimising material usage in workplace designs, and pressuring leaders to incorporate these sustainable options as the default for procurement technologies; this coming at a time where many AI-driven tools still prioritise off-the-shelf products which do not actually complement sustainable design thinking.

As for the business itself, Savills Workplace & Design comes off the back of rapid commercial growth due to its position in the Savills portfolio, which we don’t expect to slow down any time soon. To achieve this, the team will be looking to increase global operations and replicate much of the excellent work done in the UK in other geographies. We’ll report further in future issues.





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