



Conservation Management Plan 2018-2028



Foreword

It may not be immediately evident in a village known for its well conserved period architecture and landscapes, but the one constant in Port Sunlight is change.

The Port Sunlight Conservation Management Plan outlines the history, significance, conditions, risks and plans for this unique 21st century community and heritage site. It guides us – PSVT and village stakeholders – in how we should go about managing change to ensure that what makes our village special will continue to do so for generations to come.

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Chapter 1: Executive Summary



1.1 Introduction

William Lever had a strong sense of social responsibility. It is what drove him to create Port Sunlight - his response to the poverty and desperation of Britain's late 19th-century working class.

The village was a way to improve the lives of his factory workers and their families, and in many ways it is still meeting Lever's aspirations. Architecturally interesting buildings, open green spaces and tree-framed vistas still make Port Sunlight an uplifting place to live and work. Those features, together with a fascinating history, also draw hundreds of thousands of visitors, students and life-long learners to the village every year.

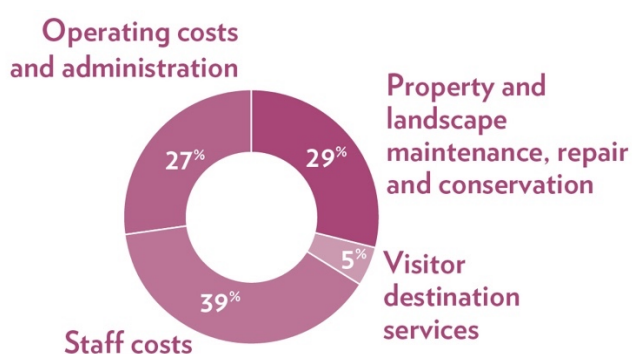
Just as Lever and subsequent custodians of the village 'moved with the times', introducing change as it was needed while preserving the character of the village, so it falls to Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) and to you, the village stakeholders, to meet similar challenges. We must make the most of the opportunities open to us while preserving what is so valuable about the village.

This Conservation Management Plan sets out PSVT's ten-year plan to do just that. It celebrates the history, buildings, open spaces and community of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area, and describes our approach to managing, maintaining, conserving and enhancing the village. However, the plan builds in flexibility, and we will conduct annual reviews to assess our progress and to address the new challenges faced by this 21st-century community.

What is Port Sunlight Village Trust?

Chances are that you have already been in touch with us, but if not PSVT is an independent charity founded in 1999 by Unilever. Our workforce of staff and volunteers is committed to preserving and promoting the Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

We invest nearly £3 million each year in many ways:



Since PSVT's creation Unilever has provided an annual grant to support the charity to become a financially strong, independent organization.

This financial support will continue up to 2022/23 and will provide PSVT with an opportunity to implement a number of major capital projects and other key business objectives. PSVT's other main source of income comes from its substantial tenanted housing stock as a private landlord.

It also:

- maintains the village landscape;
- operates the popular and award-winning Arts Council Accredited Port Sunlight Museum, including the Edwardian Worker's Cottage Experience;
- cares for the museum's important collection;
- runs a tea room, gift shop, community hub and holiday let;
- works with village residents to tackle social issues and promote community spirit and cohesion;
- looks after a diverse group of community, commercial and listed structures including a war memorial and an elegant fountain; and
- promotes the village as a visitor destination and plays an active part in the wider visitor economy.

We have a five-year strategic plan which outlines our ambitious new priorities, both for the organisation and the village.

PSVT has five strategic aims with supporting objectives for the coming years:

- 1. Conserve and promote Port Sunlight's unique heritage in a sustainable way.**
 - **Harness Port Sunlight's heritage** as an educational resource.
 - **Establish Port Sunlight** as a heritage site of international significance and a centre of conservation excellence.
 - **Develop the museum's collection** and village archive to support PSVT's work.
 - **Champion PSVT's heritage**, environmental and access policies to arrest erosion of the site.
- 2. Be a financially-strong and well-managed, independent charity.**
 - **Develop a robust approach** to long-term financial planning.
 - Ensure PSVT's approach to governance reflects **sector best practice**.
 - Develop a comprehensive, **business-wide approach** to achieving value for money.
 - **Develop a strategic approach** to fundraising.
 - **Identify and monitor key risks** to the business and develop appropriate strategies to ensure sustainability.
 - Develop a strategic approach to asset **management and investment** for PSVT's buildings, public art and amenity landscape.
- 3. Deliver high quality services across the Port Sunlight estate.**
 - **Be an excellent landlord.**
 - **Ensure effective, responsive repairs** and planned maintenance services, and a re-investment programme based on comprehensive and accurate data.
 - **Ensure the sustainability** of the community and the provision of appropriate facilities and services.
 - Fully comply with all **regulatory and health & safety standards**.
 - Provide opportunities for meaningful **resident engagement** to shape future services.

4. **Realise the potential of Port Sunlight as a leading visitor attraction.**
 - **Promote Port Sunlight** as a ‘destination’ for domestic and international markets.
 - **Tell the complete story** of Port Sunlight’s significance and relevance to the modern world.
 - **Generate new sources of income** from the visitor experience.
 - **Develop Port Sunlight’s infrastructure** to mitigate visitor impact on the community and heritage.
 - **Support Port Sunlight residents** to play a key role in the visitor destination.
5. **Be a brilliant place to work.**
 - **Develop a People Management Strategy** which supports the achievement of PSVT’s strategic goals.
 - Ensure PSVT’s workforce has a **shared passion and understanding** of the charity’s vision and how every individual contributes to its success.
 - **Embed PSVT’s values** across the workforce to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery.
 - Ensure PSVT’s workforce is **highly-skilled, well-supported and effectively managed**, to enable a high-performance culture.
 - **Develop first-class** internal communications.

The promotion and conservation of Port Sunlight’s unique heritage is central to our strategy, and this Conservation Management Plan underpins all areas of our business.

Why do we need a conservation management plan?

We need a plan because Port Sunlight is historically, socially and architecturally unique. As later sections of this plan describe, the village was founded in 1888 by William Lever and his brother, James, who wanted to create decent, affordable housing for their soap factory workers.

The idea was not a new one, but where Port Sunlight differs is in the fusion of social goals, beautiful landscapes and Arts and Crafts-inspired architecture.

Port Sunlight’s first conservation management plan was adopted in 2007. Many actions from that plan have been achieved, but given the challenging nature of the site, some of the actions proposed twelve years have not yet been achieved. For a review of the actions for built heritage and landscape heritage from the 2007 plan, see Appendices 2 and 3 of the full Conservation Management Plan.

As custodians of this historic village and vibrant residential community, we are conscious of the need to implement policies and plans which respond to the current condition of the village’s heritage and the needs of the community. We also want to take account of changes in our operating environment; how people live and interact, changing economic circumstances and organisational change.

Who is this plan for?

This plan is for everyone who has a stake in Port Sunlight, whether you live, work, learn or relax here. That includes external stakeholders such as Wirral Council and Network Rail. This is your

village and PSVT cannot deliver this plan without your input and support. Port Sunlight needs you to play your part.

What does the plan cover?

The plan covers the Port Sunlight Conservation Area and its heritage. When we say ‘heritage’ we mean the fabric of the village – the buildings (inside and out), open spaces, formal gardens, memorials, monuments, items such as street furniture, and the archives and collections that document the village’s story.

PSVT owns many assets in the Conservation Area but not all. PSVT’s properties are:

- **292 residential properties**, including an Edwardian worker’s cottage experience, community hub facility, and a holiday cottage
- **16 commercial and community buildings, including:**
 - Hulme Hall
 - Gladstone Theatre
 - Lever Club
 - The Lyceum
 - Port Sunlight Garden Centre
 - 93 & 95 Greendale Rd
 - 23 King George’s Drive
 - Fire Engine Station
 - EPF (Employee Purchase Facility) Shop
 - Church Drive Primary School
 - Church Hall
 - Boys’ Brigade building
 - Bowling Pavilion
 - Landscape Depot
 - Horticultural hut
- **323 garages**
- **All formal gardens and open spaces**
- **Front gardens** for all PSVT-owned commercial and community buildings and all residential buildings
- **All monuments and memorials** except those in Christ Church and the cemetery
- **1,350 trees**

More than two-thirds of the village houses are privately owned.

Nearly all the privately-owned residential buildings (built before 1955) are Grade II listed and PSVT has the benefit of restrictive covenants in their deeds which means owners must ensure they are well maintained.

In addition to the PSVT community and commercial buildings, the following buildings owned by village stakeholders are listed and/or integral to the heritage character and significance of the conservation area:

- Lady Lever Art Gallery
- Christ Church
- Bridge Inn

- Tudor Rose Tea Room
- Lever House and the Unilever Port Sunlight site
- Leverhulme Hotel

Although the following buildings are not listed, they are subject to conservation area controls and were designed to reflect the heritage character of the conservation area.

- Darcy Court
- Osborne Court
- Birch Tree Manor
- Philip Leverhulme Lodge
- Manor Lodge
- Newton Lodge

There are also 250 trees and the village public realm (pavements, streets and etc.) in Wirral Council's ownership.

PSVT provides all village stakeholders who have statutory obligations with support and guidance to protect our shared heritage. Therefore, our plan considers their roles, responsibilities and impact on the conservation area.

Who developed this plan and who was consulted in its production?

The Conservation Management Plan was written by PSVT's workforce. Our brief was to produce a practical document which will inform decision making across the organisation, guide the activities of our residents and support the work of key partners within and around the conservation area. Where necessary, specialist help was sought.

You are probably aware that in 2017 PSVT consulted widely with stakeholders to seek your views. This process reinforced much of what we knew but also raised new issues and opportunities for the heritage. Your feedback shaped every aspect of this plan and our strategy for the future of Port Sunlight, and we hope that you can also share in its realisation.

Our plan addresses the improvements we need to make to better serve both the community and our visitors, while also protecting the heritage of the village, so our first priorities were:

- To better understand the condition of the heritage. We surveyed the village landscape (in our care), the residential properties and all monuments and memorials.
- To learn about the village residents and our visitors. We have developed a good understanding of our residents' current and future needs and of our visitors – who visits, why and what we can do to increase tourism to the village.

In some cases, our intelligence is not as detailed and up-to-date as we would like, especially regarding drainage concerns, public buildings and the roofs and interiors of all properties. However, we have addressed these gaps in our action plan which can be found in Chapter 7 of the main report.

If you only read this executive summary you will get a good idea of our plans. However, for a fuller picture it would be useful to read the complete Conservation Management Plan and PSVT's other

‘heritage’ policies which are available through our website. They go into much more detail about the challenges that face our village and how we can meet them together.

List of Port Sunlight Stakeholders

- PSVT staff, trustees, volunteers
- All residents – tenants and private owner occupiers
- Landlords – PSVT, private, Family Housing Association and Sanctuary Housing Association
- PSVT commercial tenants
- Garage tenants
- Wirral Council
- Emergency services
- Church Drive School and other local primary and secondary schools
- Christ Church congregation, elders and United Reformed Church
- Visitors – all types and for all venues
- Commuters
- People who work in the village
- Community groups
- Contractors
- Historic England
- Local and national amenity societies
- Village businesses
- Unilever Port Sunlight corporate – Factory, Research & Development, and Core Services – and their employees
- Lady Lever Art Gallery and National Museums Liverpool
- United Utilities, Merseytravel, Network Rail, Stagecoach and Sky
- Conveyancing professionals
- Local further and higher education establishments
- Dog walkers
- Cyclists
- New Ferry and Lower Bebington - residents and businesses
- Politicians – local councillors and MP
- Port Sunlight River Park

1.2. A plan for our heritage

As well as the overall vision and strategic aims for Port Sunlight outlined earlier, PSVT has developed long-term heritage aims and objectives, based on the survey work undertaken.

We will use them to prioritise work, identify and allocate funds, and monitor progress. They will also guide the work of our volunteers, stakeholders and third-party contractors and consultants operating in the village.

A detailed action plan that expands on these heritage aims and objectives can be found in Chapter 7 of the main report, but to summarise they are:

1: Protect and conserve the character and appearance of Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

Objectives:

1. Become a centre of excellence for heritage conservation, and champion best-practice materials, methods and standards.
2. Advocate for heritage skills and develop schemes to increase local access to qualified tradespeople and conveyancing professionals.
3. Deliver a coordinated and consistent programme of maintenance, conservation and improvement for all heritage.
4. Engage external stakeholders, both within the village and along its boundaries, to inspire and increase awareness of their role in the sustainability of Port Sunlight.
5. Develop and maintain public realm features that are appropriate for the conservation area.

2: Manage change within and around the conservation area in a sustainable way.

Objectives:

1. Work with Wirral Council to resolve heritage enforcement issues.
2. Mitigate the impact of visitor activity on the community and the heritage.
3. Develop 21st-century facilities and services.
4. Ensure all new developments are in keeping with the proportions, palette and character of the conservation area, but discernible as modern improvements.
5. Improve PSVT's environmental credentials.
6. Ensure the successful implementation of an anti-social behaviour plan.

3: Increase understanding of Port Sunlight's significance.

Objectives:

1. Harness the value of Port Sunlight's heritage as a learning resource.
2. Raise the profile of Port Sunlight's unique heritage and PSVT's conservation work and their relevance to the modern world.
3. Tell the complete story of Port Sunlight's significance.
4. Develop Port Sunlight Museum's collection and archive to support PSVT's work.

4: Improve access for people visiting, working and living in the Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

Objectives:

1. Ensure accessibility is at the heart of everything we do.
2. Support elderly residents and those with disabilities to enjoy a good quality of life.
3. Ensure the successful implementation of a village transport strategy.
4. Continue to improve signage, information and wayfinding around the site.

What is the next step?

This plan will help us work towards a common goal which secures the future of our unique village. To reiterate, PSVT cannot deliver this vision alone. The village and its conservation area really do need all stakeholders to play their part, whether that is continuing to maintain their homes to a high standard or getting involved in community activities. Please read the rest of this document and think about how you fit into this plan. It gives some background to our vision by summarising Port Sunlight's story, explains why the village is so important, outlines the results of our condition survey, and details the risks and protections for the heritage. More detailed versions of each section can be found in the main report.

1.3. The history of Port Sunlight

Let's start by reflecting on the story of Port Sunlight, reminding ourselves why the village is so remarkable and how it has changed over the years without losing its character.

The founding of the village: 1888

The story begins in 1888 when William Lever (1851- 1925) and his brother, James (1854-1910), founded Port Sunlight village to house the workers of their soap manufacturing firm, Lever Brothers (eventually becoming the global giant, Unilever). They had outgrown the site of their first works in Warrington and wanted a site that could accommodate both a new factory and a workers' village.

Early development: 1888-97

The 56 acres Lever Brothers purchased in 1887 might have appeared a poor choice; marshy farmland, criss-crossed by tidal inlets from the River Mersey. However, it was accessible by river, rail and road, and there was available land nearby. There was also a ready supply of labour in New Ferry and Birkenhead.

Lever's vision differed to earlier industrial model villages in that not only did he want to provide sanitary, affordable housing and good working conditions for his employees, but he also employed architects to create Arts and Crafts-style architecture, ornamental details and public art to achieve his philosophy of 'prosperity sharing'.

Lever understood the importance of picturesque landscapes as both a setting for buildings and as healthy, green space for the community. Lever may have had to build around the marshy spots and tidal inlets in the early parts of the village, but the resulting curved, irregular streets suited the Arts and Crafts influences which he adopted throughout the site.

William Lever's wife, Elizabeth, (1850–1913), cut the first sod at Port Sunlight on the 3rd March 1888. Work on the factory began soon afterwards, with the first boil of soap coming off the production line in 1889. Then the first houses were built in the south- west corner of the site (Bolton Road and Greendale Road). In 1892, Lever Brothers bought more land, building housing and community spaces such as the Lyceum (1894-96) along the banks of a drained and landscaped tidal channel now known as The Dell.

Expansion: 1898-1910

At the turn of the century business was booming, so Lever expanded again, introducing recreational facilities including Hulme Hall (1901) and an open- air swimming baths (1902). By 1910, further housing developments had been completed, as were community facilities such as the gymnasium (1903), open-air theatre (1903) and Christ Church (1902-04).

A new plan: 1910-21

Until 1910, Port Sunlight had expanded to follow the lines of the landscape, however, that changed with the filling of the tidal channel basins, allowing axial and linear development. A competition held at the Liverpool School of Architecture and Civic Design resulted in an expansion and redevelopment plan for the village, with the École des Beaux Arts influenced axial layout of 'The Diamond and The Causeway' still forming the village centrepiece today.

On 3rd December 1921, the War Memorial was officially unveiled in the centre of the village, commemorating the over 500 Lever Brothers employees who died during the First World War.

The interwar period: 1922-38

On 16th December 1922, the Lady Lever Art Gallery was opened by HRH Princess Beatrice. It was constructed to house Lever's own art collection, and in its first year more than 100,000 people visited. The gallery was named to honour Lever's wife who had died in 1913. Lever himself died on 7th May 1925 and was entombed next to his wife in Christ Church. The Leverhulme Memorial was built on a site to the west of the art gallery.

Development of the village continued after Lever's death. In 1933-4, the monumental arch and adjacent terraced garden at the south end of The Diamond, designed by architect James Lomax-Simpson, were completed, and Jubilee Crescent was built in 1938 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Port Sunlight works and village. Despite the ongoing development and maintenance work in the village, the 1930s were witness to some of the village's most dramatic alterations. Several landmark sites were demolished, including the bandstand (demolished 1932) in The Diamond.

The Second World War: 1939

Port Sunlight did not escape damage during the Second World War, resulting in a major repair and rebuilding strategy which continued until 1951. A lack of man power during the war meant that the village landscape also suffered, so after the war areas of the landscape were reconstructed, with new trees and shrubs planted, and front lawns and formal bedding introduced. This all led to a period of landscaping excellence in the village.

Modernisation and sale: 1965-98

In April 1965 nearly all of the houses and community or commercial buildings in Port Sunlight were nationally listed as Grade II for their architectural or historic interest.

The listing description states that at the time, Port Sunlight was “a complete and virtually unaltered museum-piece of planning and architecture, unique of its kind, in the country”. This was about to change.

By the 1960s, Unilever had grown so large that Port Sunlight no longer represented a link between the company and its workforce. A new company was set up to manage Port Sunlight; Unilever Merseyside Limited (UML), which carried out an extensive modernisation programme in the village. More than 700 houses were altered, and allotments were sub- divided to provide back gardens for individual houses and garage blocks.

A change in Unilever’s business priorities in the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the sale of Port Sunlight village houses. In 1979 tenants were given the option to buy their properties; the first time the houses had ever been sold. The 1970s also saw a downturn in the quality of the village landscape; labour costs had risen, profit margins were squeezed and Dutch elm disease hit the village. It was the mid- 1980s before tree numbers recovered.

Port Sunlight was designated as a conservation area in March 1978 and the principal planning objectives for the village were included in Wirral Borough Council’s Unitary Development Plan.

Port Sunlight Village Trust: 1999 to the present

The increasing costs of maintaining a historic village contributed to the transfer of all Unilever’s village assets to the newly formed Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) in April 1999. Tied tenancies also ended at this date.

In 2002 English Heritage (now Historic England) registered The Dell and ‘The Diamond and The Causeway’ as Grade II in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

PSVT has worked to conserve the village’s heritage, to promote the village and its founder, to support residents in the care of their homes, and to work with stakeholders to celebrate Port Sunlight. It has also succeeded in finding new uses for community and commercial buildings which had fallen into disrepair.

PSVT has restored monuments and memorials in its care, and heavily invested in the repair and improvement of buildings and landscapes. Notable achievements include restoration of the war memorial and restoration and adaptive use of Hesketh Hall.

Other village stakeholders have had their own conservation success stories including houses in private ownership that have been lovingly restored, adaptations at Christ Church to meet community needs, and the recent refurbishment of the south galleries at the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Today, Port Sunlight's landscapes, architecture, public art and monuments are remarkably intact, and the village's story can be seen in every facet of its fabric.

It is important that we retain this unique heritage while adapting for current and future needs, which is the vision described in the rest of this plan.

1.4. The significance of Port Sunlight

The village is truly packed with architectural, social, historic and commemorative significance for many different people. What is Port Sunlight's significance for you?

Port Sunlight's layout and architecture

The features that immediately strike visitors to the village are its architecture and park-like setting. It was Lever's interest in architecture and his friendships with many architects which informed his vision for Port Sunlight, and he was heavily involved in its design. The range of architects, artists and craftsmen he employed is reflected in the buildings, decorative detailing and sculptural features found throughout the village.

Outwardly, the 'public' front of the buildings are decorative, with high-quality construction and detailing. However, the 'private' rear of the buildings can be more stark and repetitive. Lever utilised a 'superblock' system where the fronts of houses formed a perimeter around an internal courtyard of rear gardens and allotments that the public would not see.

None of the terraces are identical, with more than 30 architectural practices involved in the design of the village.

Internally, Port Sunlight cottages were built to adhere to a standard layout and plan - either kitchen cottages, with a kitchen and scullery on the ground floor and three bedrooms above, or a parlour cottage with a kitchen, parlour and scullery on the ground floor and three or four bedrooms above.

Overall, the architectural style for the village - its character - is an 'English cottage vernacular' using traditional building materials, sometimes creating a 'mock Tudor' effect. The impression is comfortable and cosy which some have called 'Olde English'.

While the village has many remarkable, fascinating and beautiful features, its greatest importance is that for the first time it offered a vision of a workers' settlement based on picturesque principles. This was without the grid plans and long regimented terraces of earlier schemes, and was due to the challenging nature of the site and to Port Sunlight's founder, William Lever.

The significance of Port Sunlight's founder

Lever's motivation for the establishment of the village was driven both by the needs of his business and by a highly developed social conscience. He believed that housing problems could be addressed by private enterprises, like Lever Brothers.

Lever had ambitions to become an architect, but his father insisted that he enter the family grocery business on leaving school at the age of 16. As a result, he immersed himself in the

planning and construction of Port Sunlight. His architectural interests extended beyond Port Sunlight. He purchased the nearby village of Thornton Hough, building housing to accommodate his workers, together with a school, church, shop and social club. He also established a Chair of Civic Design for Liverpool University's School of Architecture.

Lever's social impact also reached beyond the village. While sitting as a Liberal MP, he was involved in the introduction of old age pensions (which had already been adopted by Lever Brothers), created the 'Sunlight' soap brand – bringing cleanliness to the masses - and endowed the School of Tropical Medicine at Liverpool University. He also bought the Western Isles of Lewis and Harris, intending to capitalise on fishing and fish processing industries in the region and to transform economic and social conditions for local people.

Port Sunlight: a social experiment

Lever had seen the appalling living and working conditions in the UK in the second half of the 19th century and created Port Sunlight to provide workers with comfortable homes and gardens so that they might flourish and contribute to society. He developed a system called 'Prosperity Sharing' which provided his workers' families with sanitary housing, green open space, sports facilities, access to healthcare and education, and leisure opportunities. Lever did not see this as a philanthropic act; it was simply the correct way in which to conduct business. To improve relations with his workforce, Lever also introduced a co-partnership scheme, allowing all employees to share in the profits of the business.

Port Sunlight differed from earlier 'model villages' in the social institutions Lever provided, and the size and quality of design. There are still many community buildings, including assembly halls, schools, a pub and an art gallery, as well as shops and sporting facilities, clubs and village institutions.

Good living conditions were matched by the factory working conditions, which were superior for their time and described as a model of efficiency and employee safety. Lever also introduced a free life policy for employees which included sick pay. In almost every case the 'Port Sunlight experiment' produced exceptional social results, so much so that the death rate in the village was almost exactly half that of Liverpool on the opposite side of the Mersey.

The village's influence on the Garden City Movement

Port Sunlight was a major influence on the Garden City Movement, which in turn influenced much early 20th-century planning. This influence was particularly seen in the early development of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb, in which Lever played a role, then in the spread of garden cities and new towns across the country. Even today the legacy continues, for in 2017 the UK government announced its intention to build 14 new garden villages in Britain, drawing on the success of places like Port Sunlight.

International recognition

Visitors came to the village from early on (posters advertising tours of the works and village were displayed at railway stations around the country). The village was widely acclaimed in books and journals home and abroad, and reproductions of Port Sunlight cottages were erected at several international exhibitions.

The influence of American design

The monumental, classically-inspired architecture and axial arrangement of 'The Diamond and The Causeway' show the influence of American planning and design popular at the turn of the 20th century. Lever was a regular visitor to the USA and an admirer of its architecture and aesthetic movements, particularly those which connected civic beauty with morality.

Landscape design

Port Sunlight is a shining example of a planned village where the landscape is on a par with the architecture, reflecting Lever's own passion for garden design. The landscape sets off the architecture while also providing leisure space. The village remains a nationally and internationally significant example of early 20th-century planning and landscape architecture, and reflects a change in emphasis from dense and picturesque late Victorian landscaping to École des Beaux Arts ideals.

Art and advertising

Lever was a pioneer of modern advertising, with his passion for art beginning while collecting artwork to promote Sunlight Soap. He bought paintings he knew would appeal to his biggest consumer market - housewives - had them copied and added the Sunlight branding. The village itself also became an advert for the product it was named after, with posters advertising tours of the works and village displayed at railway stations.

As he grew richer and more confident, Lever's art collection expanded from business to pleasure. He was a passionate believer in the beneficial influence of art and good design on everyday life. To this end, he housed most of his painting, porcelain and furniture collections in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, making one of the most important private art collections in the world available to the public, and commissioned public sculpture from the leading artists of the day.

A feat of civil engineering

Port Sunlight is a testament to civil engineering expertise overcoming challenging site conditions. The village was built on a series of tidal inlets, marshland and sloping ground. Lever Brothers' civil engineering team made substantial changes to the flow of water in the village, damming the main channel and diverting other flows through a series of culverts which still run under the village roads.

Commemorative and spiritual meaning

There are 17 historically and aesthetically-important monuments, memorials and plaques in the village, most of which are nationally listed. The most significant is the Grade I-listed war memorial, commemorating the lives of Lever Brothers' employees and village residents lost in the two world wars. Lever himself is buried at Christ Church, which he dedicated to the memory of his parents. The Hillsborough Memorial, formerly the Jubilee Gardens, is a peaceful garden of remembrance for the 96 Liverpool football fans who tragically lost their lives at the Hillsborough stadium in 1989.

Port Sunlight's collections and archives

The village is significant for maintaining three unique and valuable on-site collections and archives. They are held by Unilever Archives and Records Management (UARM), Lady Lever Art Gallery and Port Sunlight Village Trust.

Port Sunlight today

More than 2,000 people live in Port Sunlight, and each has an important role to play in the conservation and development of their village. It is studied extensively by students of all ages, from Key Stage 1 children learning about Victorian times, through to doctoral research into the founder himself. No doubt you will have seen Port Sunlight in films and on TV, but you might not know that The Beatles' first performance with Ringo Starr was here.

The village is still considered the spiritual home of Unilever (formerly Lever Brothers) which employs more than 2,000 staff at Port Sunlight. Ultimately it is a reminder of how social ideals, good design and access to open green space can transform lives. For the 300,000 visitors, both domestic and international, who come to the village each year Port Sunlight has all the above significances and more.

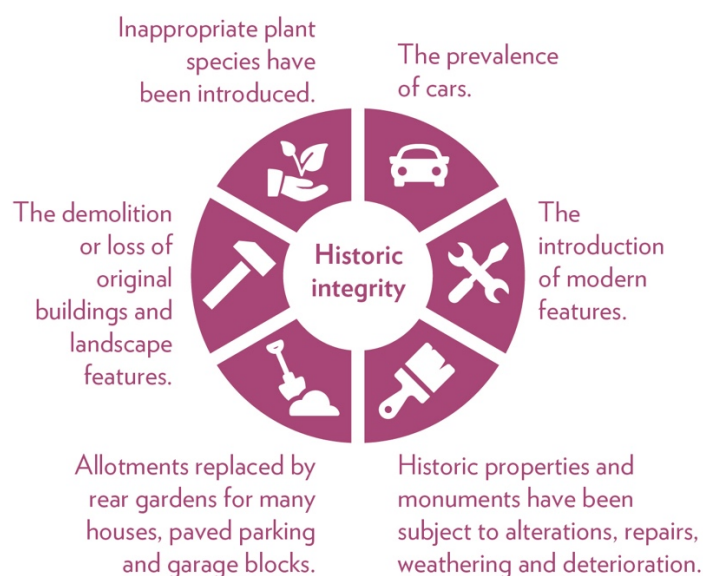
1.5 Condition of our heritage

In many ways, the village has changed very little over the years. It retains its architectural charm, community environment and open green spaces, and is a testament to the work and commitment of its many stakeholders.

However, in areas its integrity and character have been altered or have deteriorated. As you read this section it may be useful to think about your impact on the village and how you can contribute in future – every little bit really does count.

Historic integrity

Comparisons with historic maps and photographs reveal changes to the village features over time:



Assessing the conditions

We undertook a condition survey of the village, looking at listed houses built before 1950, the landscape, monuments and memorials. We needed to understand the condition of Port Sunlight's heritage assets, and how to prioritise work to address deterioration, inappropriate work and enforcement issues.

The general condition

Houses:

Erosion of building materials and inappropriate alterations are the greatest risks to heritage. Of the 918 properties surveyed, 552 need repair work, ranging from minor decoration to major structural repairs. There are 405 instances over 251 properties where a high priority repair is required within the next three years to prevent significant heritage loss. These high priority works include structural cracks, missing/damaged roof tiles and erosion of brick and stone walls. However, around 40% of houses need no repairs at all, and 44% of the work required is of a low priority.

Green open spaces:

Some of the green spaces, particularly those away from public frontages, are in a poorer condition than the front gardens and registered landscapes. They are also of more limited recreational value and therefore may offer the opportunity to increase biodiversity, without negatively impacting on the heritage or recreational value of the site.

Trees and planting:

Many trees are now too large, others are in too small an area, hiding important views and impacting on buildings. There are also cases of inappropriate plant species, due to their eventual size and high maintenance requirements, as well as areas of patchy planting that may require rejuvenation.

Commercial or community buildings:

The condition and integrity of these buildings is not known. A stock condition survey, cyclical survey programme and repair works are required.

Public realm:

The condition and styles of these features is mixed, e.g. lamp posts, public paths, signage and benches. Shared ownership and the lack of an overarching strategy or vision have resulted in differing approaches to design and maintenance.

Monuments & memorials:

High priority actions were recorded for The Dell Bridge, the Mill Stone, the Leverhulme Memorial, the Jubilee Garden arch, the boating pond, The Founder's Tomb and the Silver Wedding Anniversary Fountain. Medium priority actions were recommended for the Jubilee Garden balustrade, stonework and drains, Victoria Bridge's stones and marker and Gladstone Theatre's bronze plaque. Low priority actions were required for all other monuments in the village.

Access:

PSVT considered how well the village complies with The Equality Act (2010) and found access ramps in poor condition, steps and paving without visible edges, inaccessible entry points to some public spaces, and challenges for residents with reduced mobility.

1.6. Protecting our heritage

Port Sunlight Village Trust bears a responsibility to preserve, maintain and promote Port Sunlight. There are several protections and policies in place to assist us, helping us to

manage the changes required to make this a 21st-century village fit for our residents and visitors. They establish standards and guidelines, stabilise and improve property values, and protect the character, setting and appearance of the village.

Port Sunlight has three tiers of protection:

1. Listed building designations and registered landscapes

Most of the houses and buildings in Port Sunlight are nationally designated as Grade II listed, and almost all monuments and memorials are either Grade II, II* or Grade I. The Dell and 'The Diamond and The Causeway' are registered landscapes.

2. Conservation area designation

The entire village is a conservation area. These are “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. This designation also protects Port Sunlight’s trees, the front of properties and the wider setting.

3. Restrictive covenants

Covenants, held by PSVT, are in the title deeds for residential properties in Port Sunlight and essentially require owners to keep their properties in good repair and to obtain consent from PSVT before making any alterations.

Local planning policies

An area-specific planning policy has been included in Wirral Council’s adopted statutory Development Plan since February 2000, to preserve and enhance the character of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area and its setting, which is proposed to be retained in the Council’s latest emerging Local Plan.

There are also general policies for:

- Protection of heritage;
- Development affecting listing buildings and structures;
- Development affecting conservation areas;
- Demolition control within conservation areas; and
- Development affecting scheduled ancient monuments, non-scheduled remains and the preservation of historic parks and gardens.

Enforcement

Wirral Council is empowered to take the appropriate enforcement action when breaches of planning policy have taken place. Advice is provided, and if not heeded legal action can be taken and fines levied

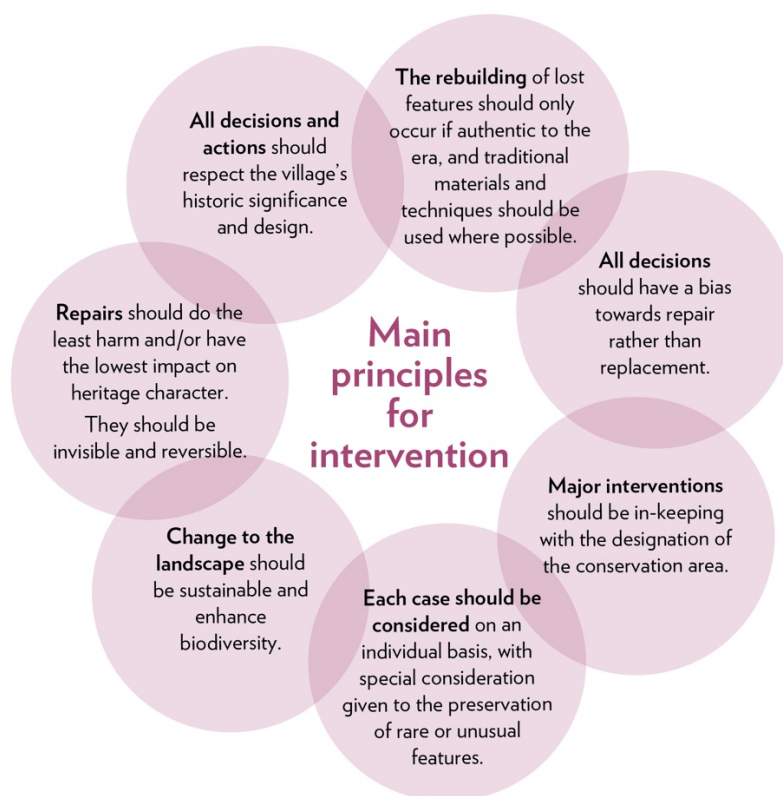
Heritage policy initiative

The Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) streamlines the consent process for the most common classes of work in the village. These include the appropriate installation of satellite dishes, and the replacement of severely deteriorated or inappropriate rear windows, rear doors and yard gates. Contact us if you need help in this area.

PSVT's heritage policies

PSVT has its own policies to protect and sustainably manage our landscape and built heritage. These policies guide and inform decision making regarding maintenance, repair and new work, and seek to ensure PSVT staff and contractors work consistently.

Our main principles for intervention, for e.g. new buildings, repairs, conservation etc., are presented in the diagram below:



Want to find out more?

These protections and policies can also help residents to make appropriate adaptations to their properties. You can find PSVT's heritage policies in the Appendices to the full version of this plan. Download them from our website or contact us directly for advice – **we are here to help.**

1.7 Risks to our heritage

There are many threats to Port Sunlight's heritage. They are the result of decisions and actions by the current generation, our predecessors and stakeholders, the climate and simple ageing. No single factor or party is solely to blame, and many of the dangers outlined can be addressed, but we must work together to tackle these issues and reduce the risks. Again, consult our website or get in touch if you have any concerns, ideas or queries.

Erosion or loss of the village's heritage character.

This includes inappropriate alterations and repairs, natural weathering and the demolition of buildings and landscape features.

An incomplete understanding of the history, significance and integrity of Port Sunlight and all associated connections.

Decisions on the maintenance and management of buildings (including their interiors), the landscape, monuments and memorials have often been made without understanding the significance of the site or the impact of decisions and actions.

Difficulty in maintaining a sustainable, ecological environment, balancing advances in green technology with the protection and care of heritage assets in Port Sunlight.

Technological advances present opportunities for appropriate thermal improvements to historic buildings, for reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and for increasing biodiversity in the village. However, a balance needs to be struck to preserve the traditional building materials and appearance of the village.

A lack of understanding regarding the statutory policies and protections for heritage.

There is confusion over the restrictions in place for alterations to listed buildings, registered landscapes and listed monuments and memorials, and about the nature and boundaries of the restrictive covenant.

The inconsistent management of boundaries.

The conservation area's landscape is important to the heritage of the village. Inappropriate fencing and gates have eroded the character of the inner green spaces. Incongruous developments beyond the conservation area boundary also impact on the character and appearance of Port Sunlight and its setting, as do neglected areas on the village edge.

A lack of understanding regarding the role of Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT).

PSVT does not work alone to care for the village. Several key stakeholders, including private owner-occupiers, Wirral Council and Merseyrail, play a large part in its care and improvement. People have unreasonable expectations regarding PSVT's role and misunderstand the restrictions in place, creating a risk to the heritage.

A shortage of local tradespeople with heritage skills.

There is an over-reliance on a small pool of heritage skills contractors working in the village. This shortage can lead to delays in starting work, reduces competition and is not sustainable.

Port Sunlight's suitability for 21st-century living, balancing the differing needs of an ageing population with those of families and young people.

There is often a conflict between modern living and the restrictions of living in a Grade II-listed terrace house in a conservation area. There are challenges for all residents, but especially for people with reduced mobility or growing families.

Gaps in knowledge over the condition of the heritage. We do not currently know the liability of our stock, either internally or externally.

No recent surveying of community or commercial buildings or hydrology has been carried out.

Different resources available to and priorities of the village's stakeholders.

There are lots of stakeholders who have influence on the future of Port Sunlight, but they do not necessarily share the same aims or objectives for the village.

The relatively high cost of maintaining historic properties.

Some owner-occupiers cannot afford to maintain and repair their properties, potentially resulting in dilapidation and heritage loss. Council cuts and a lack of government financial support make the situation more challenging.

Balancing the development of Port Sunlight as a visitor destination whilst preserving the unique heritage of the village.

If the development of the village as a tourist destination is not managed successfully it could have harmful effects on the fabric which forms Port Sunlight's unique heritage, as well as on residents themselves.

1.8 Adoption and review

The Conservation Management Plan was formally adopted by the PSVT Board of Trustees and by Wirral Council in 2018.

PSVT will monitor progress against the action plan. Our action plan will be reviewed annually to inform our budgets and maintenance and repair programmes.

An interim review of the plan will take place in 2023, with a full review and update in 2028.

1.9 What should you do next?

You have now read our conservation plans for Port Sunlight, and hopefully understand the rationale behind our heritage policy, aims and objectives, and our vision for the future of the village.

We hope that it reflects your thoughts and concerns, and that you feel inspired to contribute to the vision expressed here.

For further details please visit our websites: portsunlightvillage.com and portsunlightresidents.com where you can download the full Conservation Management Plan or individual chapters.

If you have a specific issue, please get in touch with us. We are happy to provide free advice and guidance. Port Sunlight's heritage is our shared responsibility and the village needs you to get involved.

Contact us

Phone **0151 644 4800** or email info@portsunlightvillage.com

An aerial photograph of Port Sunlight Village, showing a central canal with a bridge, surrounded by residential houses and green spaces. The image is in black and white, with a purple banner at the top containing the chapter title.

Chapter 2: The History of Port Sunlight

‘The History of Port Sunlight’ is just one chapter of Port Sunlight Village Trust’s Conservation Management Plan. The document describes the history and importance of the village, outlines the challenges facing stakeholders in the preservation of the internationally-significant landscape and buildings, and sets out to how those challenges will be met.

This chapter describes the history of the village from its foundation by William Lever up to the present day.

2.1 Introduction

William Lever (1851-1925) and his brother, James Lever (1854-1910), built Port Sunlight village to house the workers of their soap factory. Though the company was named Lever Brothers, James never took a major part in running the business. He fell ill in 1895 and resigned his directorship two years later.

The village was built in three main phases; 1888-97, 1898-1910 and 1911-21, with alterations and developments continuing until the present day. Port Sunlight holds a unique place in the history of town and country planning, and encapsulates Lever's vision of providing factory workers with decent and affordable housing in a considered architectural and picturesque setting.

Following subsequent expansion, amalgamations, acquisitions and mergers, Lever Brothers eventually grew to become the global manufacturing giant, Unilever.

2.2 Designations

Port Sunlight extends over 130 acres of maintained parkland and gardens, with trees forming an integral part of the landscape. Designated a conservation area in 1978, Port Sunlight contains 1,100 structures (including houses, apartments and public buildings), almost all of which are Grade II-listed for their special architectural and historic interest.

According to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

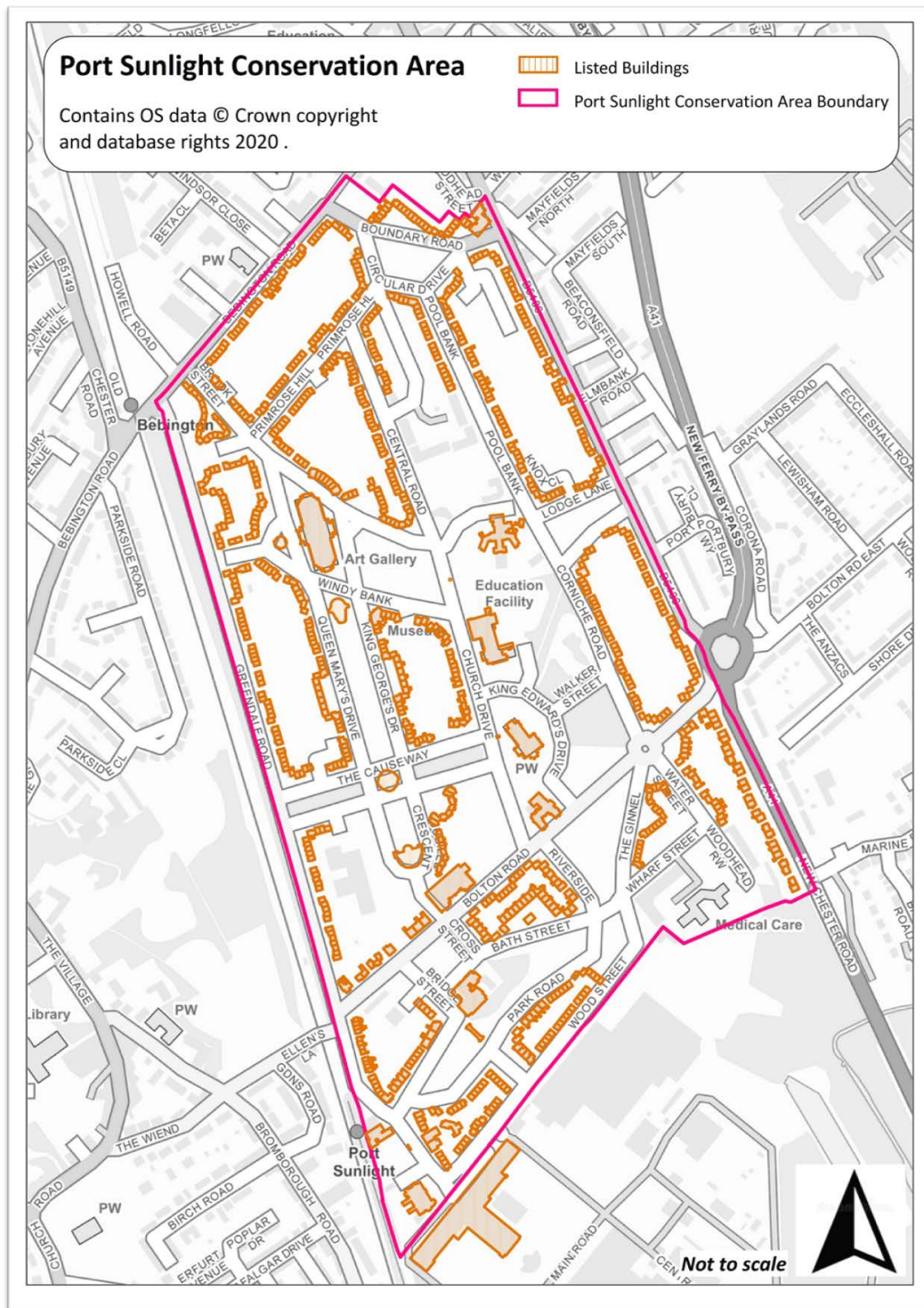
A listed building is a building that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest and included on a register called the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

There are three grades for listing:

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest.
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest.
- Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest.

The conservation area boundaries for Port Sunlight are the Unilever Port Sunlight site along Wood Street to the south, Greendale Road and the Chester-Liverpool railway line to the west, New Chester Road to the east and Bebington Road and Boundary Road to the north.

In 2002 The Dell and The Diamond and The Causeway were registered at Grade II in the 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England'. There are a number of important monuments and memorials eleven of which are Grade II listed, the Founder's tomb is Grade II*-listed, and the War Memorial - one of the largest of its kind in the country - is Grade I-listed.¹



Map of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area, with boundaries shown in pink and listed building hatched in brown. Reproduced with permission from Wirral Borough Council.

2.3 History of Port Sunlight village

From the late 19th century

William and James Lever started their first soap works at leased facilities in Warrington in 1885. Despite expanding and altering the Warrington factory the success of Lever Brothers meant that by 1887 the firm had outgrown the site. The two brothers developed the idea of building a new factory with associated housing for their employees.

At the end of 1887, Lever purchased his first tracts of land in Bebington.² The land had been improved over time, and was the site of a small number of cottages, Bebington Cement Works, a farm house known as Woodland Villa, Pool Bank farm house (all now demolished) and key thoroughfares such as New Chester Road, Bebington Road and Ellen's Lane (now Greendale Road). The Chester and Birkenhead Railway bordered the site to the south-west, and there was a small but functioning pier to the north-east.

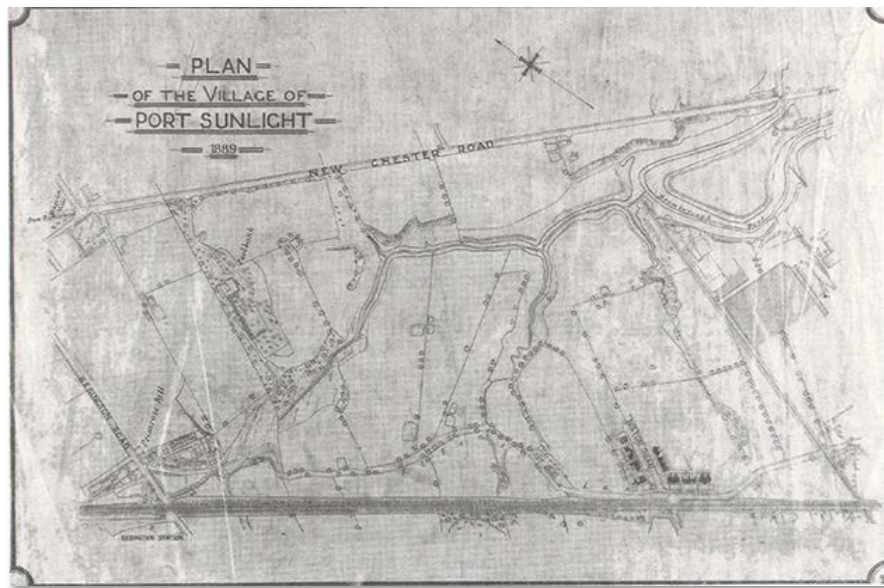
Port Sunlight's early development: 1888-97

Lever Brothers purchased 24 acres of land on which to site the business and works, and 32 acres for the village. The site might have appeared a poor choice; marshy farmland criss-crossed by tidal inlets. However, it was accessible by river, rail and road, and there was unimproved land nearby on which to expand. There was also a ready supply of labour from the nearby communities of New Ferry and Birkenhead.

William Lever was interested not only in town planning, but also in providing a healthy and attractive environment in which his employees could work and live. His ambition can be compared with New Lanark, created in Scotland by Robert Owen in 1793. Edward Ackroyd, a fabric manufacturer, later built a model town at Copley, Yorkshire and one in 1859 at Akroydon near Halifax. More famously, Titus Salt developed his factory for processing alpaca wool in the Aire Valley from 1853. The factory village, Saltaire, included houses, almshouses, a wash-house, an institute, public baths, chapel and church.

Lever would have known of the factory villages at Barrow Bridge (c. 1850) and New Eagley (c. 1835) in his home town of Bolton. He would have also seen the successful factory village developed by William Wilson and Benjamin Lancaster, founders of Price's Patent Candle Company, at Bromborough Pool, to the north of Port Sunlight between New Chester Road and the River Mersey. By 1858, Price's had built more than 140 terraced houses, a church, an institute, a shop and a library for its employees.³

William Lever's wife, Elizabeth (nee Elizabeth Ellen Hulme (1850–1913)) cut the first sod at Port Sunlight on the 3rd March 1888. Work on the factory commenced soon afterwards, to the design of William Owen (1846-1910), with the first boil of soap coming off the production line in 1889. The first houses were built in the south-west corner of the site⁴ and included an entrance lodge and 28 cottages designed by William Owen on Bolton Road and Greendale Road.



1889 plan of Port Sunlight Village – William Owen
(Reproduced with kind permission from Unilever plc from an original in Unilever Archives.)

The site was predominantly marshland, divided at this time by what Lever described as ‘ravines’.⁵ The development grew towards the east in 1890-92 when larger houses, more cottages and a shop were built to the designs of architects William Owen, Grayson & Ould (George Enoch Grayson (1834–1912) and Edward Ould (1852–1909)) and Douglas & Fordham (John Douglas (1830-1911) and Daniel Porter Fordham (1846-1899)). Owen also designed the village’s first community building, Gladstone Hall, which opened in 1891.

While on a world tour in 1892, William Lever made plans to expand the village. Additional tracts of land were purchased, and the Port Sunlight estate eventually amounted to c. 130 acres. This newly purchased part of the village was laid out around a drained and landscaped tidal channel which became known as The Dell. Lever is believed to have collaborated with William Owen on the layout of the village, but it is not clear to what extent Owen was involved with the landscape design. However, it is known that Douglas & Fordham were responsible for the design of Dell Bridge (1894) which spans The Dell, connecting the two sides of Park Road. They were also commissioned to design a number of community facilities at the heart of the village including the Lyceum (1894-96) and the Employees’ Provident Stores and Collegium (1894, demolished by enemy action during World War 2).

Several architects were involved in planning footpaths and planting beds on original site plans and block layouts, including Jonathan Simpson (1851-1937), James Lomax-Simpson (1882-1977), and Bradshaw & Gass (John Bradshaw Gass (1837-1912) and Jonas James Bradshaw (1855-1939)). Planned landscapes are evident in early photographs of the cottages on Greendale Road, showing them fronted by grassed areas with shrub beds and well-defined footpaths edged by low, loop style garden railings.



Victoria Bridge. Illustrated in a paper read by WH Lever at a meeting of the Architectural Association, 1902

During this period the roads to the ferry, railway and factory were designed to follow the most immediate routes around the ravines.⁶ Lever stipulated the general width of the roads to be 40 feet: 8 yards wide with 8 feet each side for footpaths, although some roads were 12 yards wide with 12 feet paths.⁷

As the turn of the century approached, development continued with the construction of Victoria Bridge (1897) designed by William and Segar Owen to span the large tidal inlet which ran from the pier head to the current museum green. The bridge improved access to the eastern section of the site.

Expansion: 1898-1910

By 1900 business was booming, so Lever Brothers was able to further expand the village, introducing recreational facilities and housing including Hulme Hall (1901) which was built as a men's dining room, an open-air swimming baths (1902) and terraced houses along Bebington Road (1898), New Chester Road (1898-1900), Greendale Road (1899-1902) and The Causeway (1901). Major civil works at this time also improved prospects for developing the site. Following drainage, a dam was built between the tidal inlets and Bromborough Pool in 1901-02, with the intention of creating parks and recreation grounds in the basins of Port Sunlight.

In 1902, William Lever gave a lecture to the Architectural Association entitled 'The Buildings Erected at Port Sunlight and Thornton Hough', later published with a Port Sunlight site plan. The plan showed proposals for new areas of housing and numerous features such as the 'new schools' (as opposed to the earlier school rooms at the Lyceum), a church, the auditorium, Bridge Inn, a site reserved for an isolation hospital, separate playgrounds for girls and boys, drained areas described as 'ravines', a bowling green, a tennis lawn, a football ground, and a formal open space described as The Diamond which formed the central feature of the layout, with allotment gardens to the east and west.

By this time, despite displaying great variety in traditional materials and revival-style designs at the exterior, housing in Port Sunlight had established a standard layout with repeated plan forms. The terraced cottages were built in outward-facing blocks with allotments to the rear, forming what is commonly referred to in Port Sunlight as 'superblocks'.



Port Sunlight allotments illustrated in a paper read by WH Lever at a meeting of the Architectural Association, 1902



Even by 1902 the trees showed maturity, suggesting that standard trees were used when the infrastructure was planted. Photograph of Greendale Road from a paper read by WH Lever at a meeting of the Architectural Association, 1902.

Internally, the houses were either 'kitchen cottages' with a kitchen and scullery on the ground floor and three bedrooms on the first floor, or 'parlour cottages' with a parlour, kitchen and scullery on

the ground floor and either three or four bedrooms above. The houses had hot running water on ground level for bathing, and a toilet in an outhouse in the paved yard behind the house.

Much of the vision presented in the 1902 plan was completed by 1910, including extensive housing development along Central Road (1906-07), Boundary Road (1904-05), Lower Road (1906-07) and Pool Bank (1906-07), and community facilities such as the gymnasium (1903), open-air theatre at the auditorium (1903), the Men's Social Club (1903), Christ Church (1902-04), the bandstand (1906) and the girls' dining room (1910). Aside from Christ Church, which was built as a gift from Lever himself rather than an investment from Lever Brothers and had a grander boundary, each complex was bordered by simple loop railings and overlooked lawns and shrub beds. The footpaths were planted with regularly spaced standard trees.

The basins created in 1901-02, when the tidal inlets were dammed, were filled in and levelled between 1909 and 1910.



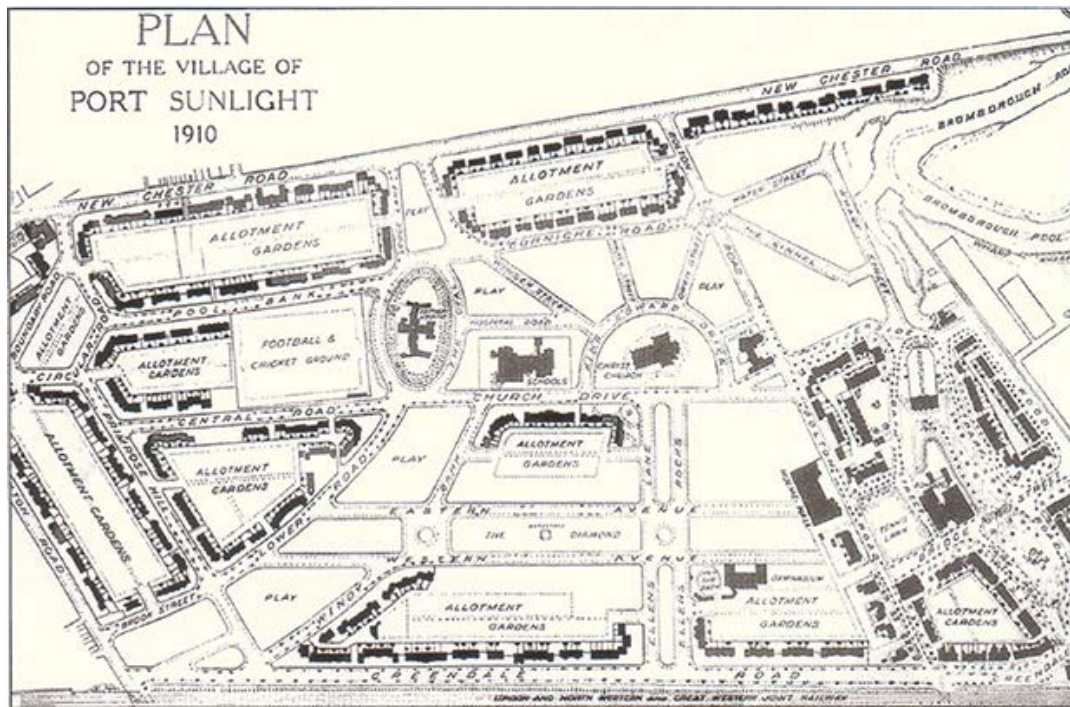
The Dell illustrated in a paper read by WH Lever at a meeting of the Architectural Association, 1902.

This work flattened the site and made possible future development, in particular axial or grid-like development. It was also at this time that Victoria Bridge was buried (it remains in situ beneath Bolton Road).

A new plan: 1910-21

Until 1910, Port Sunlight had expanded to follow the topography of the landscape, as the ravines and tidal inlets divided large sections of the village. The decision to fill in the tidal channel basins coincided with the decision to hold a competition at the Liverpool School of Architecture and Civic Design to create a revised plan which would see the village through to completion. (Lever had taken an active interest in the school, founding the Department of Civic Design in 1909.)

Ernest Prestwich (1899-1977), an architectural student at the School and pupil of Professor Charles Reilly (1874-1948) and Thomas Mawson (1861-1933), who was the first university lecturer in landscape architecture there, won the competition. Revisions were made to his design before work began, and some features were not included, but the École des Beaux Arts-influenced layout, with its strong axial emphasis which was in keeping with town planning style of the period, still forms the centrepiece of the village today.



1910 plan of Port Sunlight village by Ernest Prestwich
(Reproduced with kind permission from Unilever plc from an original in Unilever Archives).

The Diamond was extended to the south, and the curved band of land on Ellen's Lane that it crossed was straightened to become The Causeway. This provided a dramatic vista from the railway line to Christ Church. Views could also be taken along The Diamond, north towards a neo-classical-style bandstand (demolished c. 1932) and south to a bowling green. Four new roads radiated east from Christ Church, allowing views at intervals from Corniche Road and Bolton Road circus. James Lomax-Simpson designed cottages to be built along the roads but they were not constructed. (Lomax-Simpson was the son of Jonathan Simpson and godson of William Lever. He would later go on to head the Architectural Department of Lever Brothers and became a director of the company itself.) A square formed by civic buildings, including an art gallery, was also proposed south of The Causeway, but was not executed.

The final alteration to the landscape was made in 1914 when the channel, which lay between Bolton Road and Water Street, was filled in and The Ginnel was built over part of the area.

On the 3rd December 1921, the War Memorial was officially unveiled by Sergeant TG Eames, assisted by Private Cruikshank VC and Lord Leverhulme.⁸ (Lever had been made a peer in 1917 and had added his wife's maiden name to his own surname to form his title.) Located in the centre of the village (on the former gymnasium site), the memorial was designed by Sir William Goscombe John on the theme of 'The Defence of the Home', and commemorated the 512 Lever Brothers employees who died during the Great War.

The interwar period

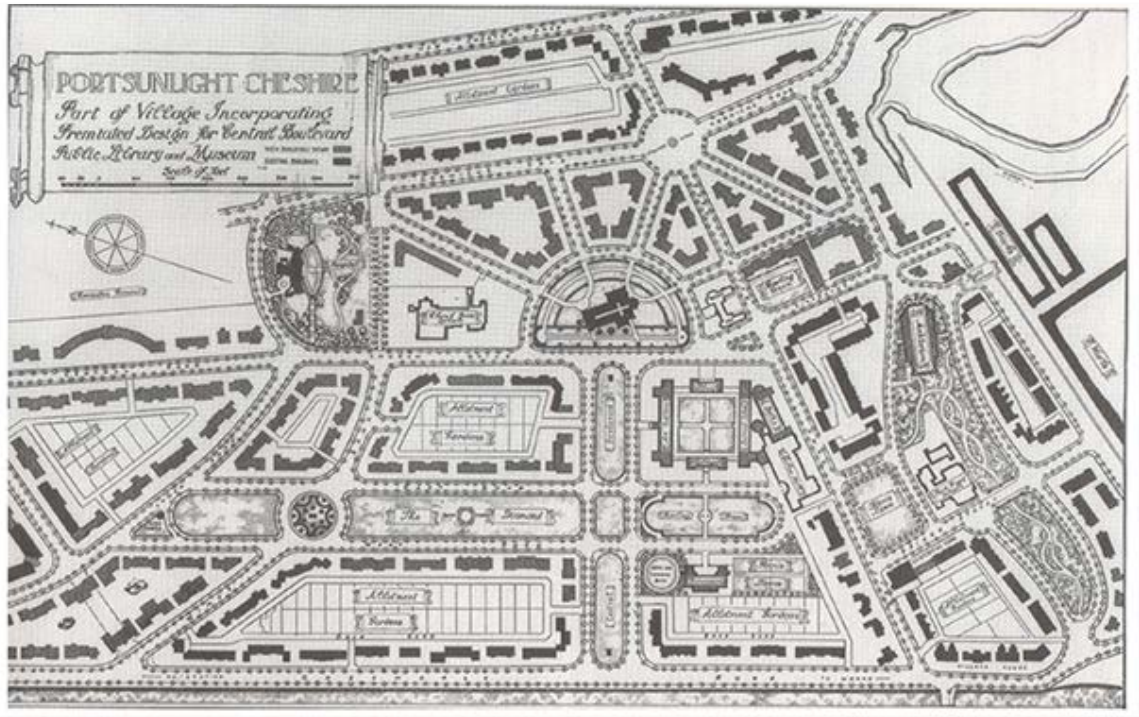
As life returned to normal after the First World War, the residents themselves started demanding more freedom to grow flowers, to brighten up their gardens, and to take advantage of the open spaces. In July 1923, Lever Brothers wrote to every resident asking them to look after their front gardens, and in August the Best-Kept Front Garden Competition was introduced. Rent reductions were awarded as prizes at the end of every July⁹ in the hope that this would stimulate interest and encourage everyone to cultivate their spaces. Residents were also encouraged to grow flower borders where paths to their houses allowed, but the cutting of shrubs, trees and climbers was still done by the estates department.

The interwar period really saw the village in full bloom, as residents competed for horticulture awards and the village trees reached maturity. Photographs of the period indicate that some roads had their railings removed at this point.



Mowing the lawn, flower borders and climbers at 97 Greendale Road, 1920s.
Port Sunlight Museum Collection.

On 16th December 1922, the Lady Lever Art Gallery was opened to the public by HRH Princess Beatrice. It was constructed to house Lever's own art collection and named to honour his wife who had died in 1913. It was built to the designs of William and Segar Owen and stands at the north end of The Diamond where a clock tower had been intended.



1911 Port Sunlight, Cheshire. Part of village incorporating award-winning design for the Central Boulevard, public library and museum - Thomas Mawson.

In its first year, the gallery welcomed more than 100,000 visitors, and was very popular with both residents and visitors.

On 7th May 1925, shortly after returning from a six-month tour of West Africa, William Lever died. He was entombed next to his wife in a narthex at Christ Church, completed to the designs of William Owen in 1914. The Leverhulme Memorial, created in 1930 by sculptor Sir William Reid Dick and architect James Lomax-Simpson, was built on a site to the west of the art gallery which had been redeveloped by Lomax-Simpson in 1924-26. The redevelopment opened up views towards the Lady Lever Art Gallery from Greendale Road and the railway line, and the setting was further improved with the demolition and construction of cottages between Windy Bank, Primrose Hill and Greendale Road.

In 1933-34, the monumental arch and adjacent terraced garden at the south end of The Diamond, designed by Lomax-Simpson, were completed. More cottages were built between Brook Street and Primrose Hill, and Jubilee Crescent was built in 1938 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Port Sunlight works and village.

Despite the on-going development and maintenance work in the village, the 1930s were witness to some of the village's most dramatic alterations. Major landmarks were demolished including the bandstand in The Diamond (1932), the auditorium in The Dell (1937), and Shakespeare Cottages, a reproduction of Shakespeare's birthplace built on Poet's Corner to the designs of Edmund Kirby in 1896 (1938).

The impact of the Second World War

Port Sunlight did not escape damage during the Second World War. It is not known whether its proximity to the docks of Liverpool and Birkenhead or the fact that Lever Brothers was given over

to munitions production was the defining factor, but many of the houses in the village suffered damage and a major repair and restoration strategy continued until 1951.¹⁰ The Collegium, on the corner of Bridge Street and Bolton Road, was destroyed and never rebuilt, although 8-16 Bolton Road, 8-13 Church Drive, 8-14 Bridge Street and 1-13 Boundary Road were all reconstructed.

A lack of man power during the war meant that the village landscape also suffered. In 1946-47, a five-year plan was drawn up by Lever Brothers' Chairman, George Nairn, and a new head gardener, Charles Goldsmith, was appointed. Areas of the village landscape were reconstructed, with many new trees and shrubs planted and 'open plan' front lawns introduced. The company maintained front lawns but tenants were responsible for planting 'front-of-cottage' flower beds.¹¹ Formal bedding displays were also introduced to the village, and the Front Garden Prize Scheme was revived. This all led to a period of landscape excellence in the village throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.



Corniche Road, 1950s. Port Sunlight Museum Collection.

In 1950, the centenary of the birth of Lady Lever was marked with the commissioning of a bronze sculpture, 'Sea Spirit' by Charles Wheeler, which was sited in the open basin in front of the art gallery.¹² From 1954, building control applications were filed to provide indoor toilets or first floor bathrooms for individual houses throughout the village.

Modernisation and sale: 1965-98

By the 1960s, Unilever companies on Merseyside alone had grown to such an extent that only 10% of their employees could be housed in the village. Given that the company was now a vast multinational with workers in every corner of the globe, Port Sunlight no longer represented an intimate link between Unilever and its workforce. As a result, a new company was set up to manage Port Sunlight; Unilever Merseyside Limited (UML).¹³

In April 1965, nearly all of the houses and community or commercial buildings in the village were nationally listed at Grade II. Christ Church was nationally listed at Grade II*. In the foreword for the listing, the unknown authors for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's paper note *"that when one sets foot over one of these [village] boundaries it is to enter a complete and*

*virtually unaltered museum-piece of planning and architecture, unique of its kind, in the country.*¹⁴” However, shortly after the buildings were listed, change came to Port Sunlight.

From the 1960s through to the 1980s, UML carried out an extensive programme to modernise Port Sunlight properties (carrying out works shown in the 1950’s building control applications), with minimal alterations to the frontages. The old sculleries were converted into modern kitchens, where possible part of the third bedroom became a bathroom and inside toilet, and in some cases an extension was built to provide a downstairs kitchen and an upstairs bathroom.¹⁵ More than 700 houses were improved. At the same time, allotments were sub-divided to provide back gardens for the houses or space for garages.

Port Sunlight was designated as a conservation area in March 1978 and the principal planning objectives for the area were later included in the Council’s Unitary Development Plan.

By the early 1980s, Unilever was the 26th largest business in the world and was undertaking a ‘bold strategy of change for the company where it decided to refocus on core product areas with strong markets and equally strong growth potential’.¹⁶ This strategy included the divestment of non-essential businesses and assets, including the sale of Port Sunlight village houses.

UML and Unilever made the decision to sell the Port Sunlight houses for several reasons, one of which was that the village only benefitted a small fraction of Unilever’s workforce in the UK; this could not be justified given the cost of managing, maintaining and improving the village. UML’s housing allocation policies and tied tenancy agreements could also be challenged by the Rent Act of 1976, which questioned the relationship between employment and tenancy. Meanwhile the issue of social engineering, an inevitable outcome of managed waiting lists and allocation priorities, was a growing concern for UML.

In 1979, Unilever announced that tenants would be given the option to buy their properties, and many decided to buy immediately. Others continued to rent, but by 1987 a third of the houses had been sold.

The 1970s saw a downturn in the quality of the village landscape. Labour costs rose nationally and Unilever’s profit margins were squeezed. The landscape workforce of 40 people was reduced to just 12. A new plan of action was drawn up by UML, but before it could be implemented Dutch elm disease hit the village, decimating the tree stock.¹⁷

It was the mid-1980s before tree numbers were replenished, and at the same time naturalised bulb areas and formal bedding displays were reintroduced. A ‘Britain in Bloom’ committee was formed in 1988, and between then and 1994 the village won five awards for horticulture excellence.¹⁸

In August 1989, UML rededicated the Jubilee Gardens as the Hillsborough Memorial Gardens, in remembrance of the 96 Liverpool fans who lost their lives at the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield during an FA Cup semi-final that year. The memorial was the first of its kind and was created for the many UML employees affected by the disaster.

Unilever transfers ownership: 1999-2017

From as far back at the 1960s, Unilever had been considering how best to manage the village. The increasing costs of maintaining a historic village and residential community, combined with the demands of running a global business were often in conflict. In April 1999, Port Sunlight Village

Trust (PSVT) was set up by UML with the responsibility of preserving and promoting the Port Sunlight Conservation Area. Everything within the village that was still in Unilever's ownership was transferred to PSVT including all the parks, gardens, monuments and memorials, as well as the majority of public buildings and nearly a third (just under 300) of the houses. In 2002 English Heritage (now Historic England) registered The Dell and The Diamond and The Causeway Grade II in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

PSVT also inherited some building works and new developments started under UML's management. PSVT set about finding new uses for empty sites including Osborne Court, a complex of 40 sheltered apartments with communal facilities across five lodges sited between Pool Bank and Central Road. Completed to the designs of local architects, Paddock Johnson in 2000,¹⁹ the apartments are on a site previously occupied by a Georgian farmhouse named Pool Bank, (demolished before 1903), and later a football ground. (The football ground was opened in 1903 with a game between Port Sunlight and Everton FC reserves, and demolished by c. 1980.²⁰) Unilever sold the land for development to Bovis, who began work on the site in 1999 before the formation of PSVT. Osborne Court is currently managed by Retirement Security Ltd. The neighbouring Philip Leverhulme Lodge apartment blocks on the corner of Lodge Lane and Pool Bank were completed in 2003 by Paddock Johnson Partnership.

Plans to develop on the open sites on Wharf Street and Water Street, and to redevelop the eastern end of Wood Street, initially faced opposition from local residents because of the density of housing units and the plans for a factory-style complex of apartments. As a result a revised planning application was submitted in 2007 for a scheme more in-keeping with Port Sunlight's Arts and Crafts-inspired character. Designed by Paddock Johnson, Woodhead Row was completed in 2009. In 2012, a new landscape depot at the eastern end of Wood Street, also by Paddock Johnson, was completed. In October 2015, the Sanctuary Group officially opened Darcy Court, an affordable housing scheme consisting of 58 apartments on Wharf Street. Unilever had earmarked this land for sale and development prior to the formation of PSVT.

2.4 Change of use and the refurbishment of community and commercial buildings and public art

Since its formation, PSVT has strived to find suitable uses for all of the community and commercial buildings in its ownership, both to support the commercial sustainability of the charity and also to contribute to the visitor experience and the health and wellbeing of the community. It has also restored and conserved some key pieces within the village's public art collection.

Key achievements include:

- **Sea Piece Fountain works**

Restoration and repair works were conducted by Andy Mitchell Sculptures and Burleigh Stone Cleaning and Restoration Co. Ltd in 2001. The bronzes were cleaned and rewaxed, the boating pond was cleaned and levelled, and the stone wall was cleaned. Further repairs were conducted by Fordwater Pumping Supplies Ltd in 2008. See Appendix 6 for more information.

- **Landscape management**
The care of Port Sunlight's landscape was brought in-house in January 2006 to improve the quality of management and maintenance.
- **War Memorial works**
A complete restoration of the memorial was completed in 2010. A new patina was applied to the bronzes, the stone work was cleaned, and the lead lettering was renewed. In 2015, Andy Mitchell Sculpture trained PSVT staff on how to rinse and re-wax the bronzes. See Appendix 6 for more information.
- **The Cottage Hospital**
In 2002, the Care Quality Commission closed down the former Cottage Hospital (which was being used as a nursing home) and the nearby Nurses' Lodge. The Lodge was converted into Manor Lodge in the same year, and now contains seven apartments. Inspiration from a trip to the World Heritage Site at New Lanark led to the transformation of the Cottage Hospital into a luxury hotel by the Contessa group in 2008.
- **Hulme Hall**
One of PSVT's biggest refurbishment projects saw the complete re-roofing of Hulme Hall in 2002. The roof was stripped, insulated and replaced, and the exterior oak work was maintained.
- **Gladstone Theatre**
In 2006, PSVT contributed £140,000 to major external repair of the building, and the creation of improved toilet facilities.
- **Girls' Club**
In 2006, PSVT opened Port Sunlight Museum in the former Girls' Club building. The £1.1 million scheme, partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Regional Development Fund, included permanent exhibitions, a dedicated film room, a learning centre and offices for PSVT staff. The learning centre was converted into the Tea Room in 2011.
- **Hillsborough Memorial Garden**
The memorial was vandalised in 2009 which caused extensive damage to the balustrade wall. Following a public appeal, funds were raised to reinstate the wall in Portland stone and a re-dedication ceremony was held.
- **Holiday cottages**
In February 2006, 21 and 22 King George's Drive were converted into holiday cottages. In May 2017, 21 King George's Drive was converted back into a residential property for long-term letting, and 22 King George's Drive was converted into a worker's cottage experience in April 2017 to form part of Port Sunlight Museum. 59 Lower Road was converted into a holiday cottage in February 2013 and still operates as such.

- **The Lyceum**

This former church and school underwent extensive external refurbishment in 2008-09. A partial conversion of the interior saw the creation of an architect's office, and a multi-use space in which PSVT can develop its formal and informal learning programmes.

- **Hesketh Hall**

A decline in membership forced the Port Sunlight British Legion to surrender its lease. The building was in a poor state of repair and needed a new use to secure its future. Hesketh Hall was converted into 14 senior apartments, with the work completed to the designs of Paddock Johnson Partnership in 2014.

- **Wharf Street development**

Minor building work commenced in 2016 for a scheme of town houses (piles were driven into the ground) however, to date, no further work has been completed.

- **Bridge Cottage**

PSVT purchased 23 Park Road, which William Lever and his family occasionally used when staying in Port Sunlight, from Christ Church in 2015. Following a pilot project with visitors and residents to determine its future use, PSVT adapted the house into a residents' hub. The work was funded by an Arts Council England grant, and the hub opened in May 2017.

- **Rebuilding following an explosion**

In March 2017, an explosion at 1 Boundary Road significantly damaged properties in New Ferry and more than 30 listed houses in Port Sunlight, including 2-8, 3-11 and 13-31 Boundary Road, 45-55 Bebington Road and 2-16 Circular Drive. PSVT and Wirral Borough Council together compiled master plan listed building consent applications for the worst affected terraces, with a view to streamlining and clarifying consent for replacement windows, doors, roof finishes and rainwater goods. The consents included specifications for materials and designs to be followed for each superblock affected, and were the result of research into the original designs using Wirral Archives and Unilever Archives.



Properties affected by the explosion, 25th March 2017.

¹ The War Memorial was upgraded from Grade II* to Grade I listing in October 2014.

² Ian Boumphrey & Gavin Hunter, *Yesterday's Wirral: Port Sunlight A Pictorial History 1888-1953*, (Great Britain: Ian & Marilyn Boumphrey, 2002) p.3

³ Standish Meacham, *Regaining Paradise Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement*, (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p.12

⁴ E Hubbard & M Shippobottom, *A Guide to Port Sunlight Village*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p.9

⁵ WH Lever, *The Buildings Erected at Port Sunlight and Thornton Hough: paper given to The Architectural Association, London, 27th March 1902*, (England: Port Sunlight, 1902), p.7

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ian Boumphrey & Gavin Hunter, *Yesterday's Wirral: Port Sunlight a Pictorial History 1888-1953*, (Great Britain: Ian & Marilyn Boumphrey, 2002) p.56

⁹ Port Sunlight News, 1923, *Beauty in Village Gardens*, December 1923, vol. 1, no. 14, p.18

¹⁰ Sue Sellers, *Sunlighters: The Story of a Village* (London: Unilever PLC, 1988), p.33

¹¹ Port Sunlight News, 1952, *In Praise of Gardeners*, May 1952. p.108

¹² Ian Boumphrey & Gavin Hunter, *Yesterday's Wirral: Port Sunlight a Pictorial History 1888-1953*, (Great Britain: Ian & Marilyn Boumphrey, 2002) p.107

¹³ Sue Sellers, *Sunlighters: The Story of a Village* (London: Unilever PLC, 1988), p.34

¹⁴ "Port Sunlight," Addenda to the Provisional List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest for Consideration in Connection with the Provisions of Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1962, Ref. No. 907/11/A

¹⁵ Ian Boumphrey & Gavin Hunter, *Yesterday's Wirral: Port Sunlight a Pictorial History 1888-1953* (Great Britain: Ian & Marilyn Boumphrey, 2002) p.35

¹⁶ Unilever Archives and Records Management, *1980-89 Focusing on the Core*
<<https://www.unilever.co.uk/about/who-we-are/our-history/1980-1989.html>> [accessed 20 January 2018]

¹⁷ JF Kelly, *Outline of the History of the Landscape of Port Sunlight*, January 2001 (unpublished) p.11

¹⁸ Ibid, p.12

¹⁹ Unilever, *Port Sunlight Village, Information Guide No. 1* (Port Sunlight: Unilever Archives & Records Management, no date), p.3

²⁰ Ian Boumphrey & Gavin Hunter, *Yesterday's Wirral: Port Sunlight a Pictorial History 1888-1953* (Great Britain: Ian & Marilyn Boumphrey, 2002) p.24



Chapter 3: The Significance of Port Sunlight

‘The Significance of Port Sunlight’ is just one chapter of Port Sunlight Village Trust’s Conservation Management Plan. The document describes the history and importance of the village, outlines the challenges facing stakeholders in the preservation of the internationally-significant landscape and buildings, and goes into some detail as to how those challenges will be met.

In this chapter, we examine the importance of the village from different perspectives; from the view of the people who live and work here, those who visit the village for leisure or learning, and others who take inspiration from its monuments and public buildings. The significance of its architecture, landscaping, art and founding ethos are also considered.

3.1 Port Sunlight's place in history

Layout and quality of architecture

Port Sunlight has many remarkable, fascinating and beautiful features, however, its greatest importance is that it offered, for the first time, a vision of a model settlement for workers based on picturesque principles. This was without the grid plans and long regimented terraces of earlier schemes, such as at New Lanark and Bromborough Pool.

It was Lever's interests in architecture, travel and books, and his friendships with architects which informed his vision for Port Sunlight. Thirty different architectural practices worked on the village. William Owen, a friend of Lever, was the first architect to be employed, becoming a director of Lever Brothers in 1897. James Lomax-Simpson, the son of Lever's close friend Jonathan Simpson, became head of the architecture department at Lever Brothers in 1910 and a director of the company in 1917. Other local practices that worked on the village included Grayson & Ould of Liverpool, Douglas & Fordham of Chester and JJ Talbot of Wilson & Talbot of Liverpool and Bolton. Between them they were almost entirely responsible for the first design stage of the village. It was in the second and third design phases that Lever extended his pool of architects, and London based professionals such as Ernest George, Maurice B Adams and Edwin Lutyens were employed.

Outwardly, the buildings at Port Sunlight show a great range of decorative ornamentation, with a high quality of construction and detailing. However, the internal elevations to the courtyards, which were not on public view, can be stark and utilitarian. This is an important architectural feature of Port Sunlight, and probably appealed to Lever's sense of 'economy'. It can also appear almost 'theatrical', eg 11-17 Greendale Road externally resembles the Elizabethan 'Kenyon Peel Hall', but the rear elevations are plain. Only the York stone roof is shared across both the front and rear of the row.



11-17 Greendale Road (by Wilson & Talbot) externally resembles the Elizabethan 'Kenyon Peel Hall'.

This contrast between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ faces of the buildings echoes Lever’s own desire for the village to reinforce his company’s image. Though he never made reference to the use of Port Sunlight for marketing purposes, images of the village were used in marketing materials, and there is no doubt that the reputation of the village was instrumental in enhancing his ‘Sunlight’ brand.

To maintain this public/private aspect of the housing, Lever devised a courtyard layout with housing blocks forming ‘beads’ around a perimeter. All the external ‘public’ facades look outwards, while the rear ‘plain’ facades overlook an internal courtyard of rear gardens, yards and allotments. As there are usually only two access points into these internal courtyards only the outward ‘public’ elevations are visible to the visitor. This layout has come to be known as a ‘superblock’ because of its extensive size. None are identical, with different areas often constructed by different designers in a deliberate attempt to introduce variety. The use of corner housing blocks and setbacks also helps to maintain the privacy of the internal courtyard areas and to ‘turn the corner’ at road intersections successfully.

There is variation in style, and some ‘classical’ elements were introduced to blocks, particularly those at the corner of Windy Bank and Church Drive, but overall the style is an ‘English cottage vernacular’. It uses traditional materials of Cheshire red brick with combinations of stucco, roughcast render, stone dressings and ‘black and white’ timber framing. Tudor spiral chimneys, combined with ‘four-centred’ perpendicular arches in various areas, give a ‘mock Tudor’ effect. The combination of largely two-storey buildings with pitched roofs and the variety of styles and finishes creates a comfortable and cosy environment which some have loosely termed “Olde English”.



14-16 Church Drive and 25-27 Windy Bank in 1900. Port Sunlight Museum Collection.



14-16 Church Drive and 25-27 Windy Bank in 2016. Port Sunlight Museum Collection.

The contribution of Lever towards the architecture and layout of Port Sunlight was confirmed by his son:

*“With him it was never a case of leaving everything to the architect and settling the bill when the work was finished. Expert advice he wisely sought and freely acknowledged, but the plan and layout of Port Sunlight were his own, and so, in the main, were the plans of the works and the buildings in the village, and in many cases of the houses also. The architects he employed all looked upon him as unique amongst their clients. He did not employ them - he collaborated with them”.*²¹

The founder

Port Sunlight’s architecture and the environment created are both of enormous significance. However, the vision of its creator, William Hesketh Lever, should also be acknowledged as fundamental to the foundation of the village, the artwork, antiques and collections held at Lady Lever Art Gallery, the adjacent Port Sunlight works, the founding of Lever Brothers (later Unilever) and its development into the global multinational company of today.

Lever had ambitions to become an architect, but his father insisted that he enter the family wholesale grocery business on leaving school at the age of 16.

*“It was galling for him to be left behind by Jonathan Simpson (his lifelong friend) who went on to bring credit to himself and the school by qualifying as an architect.”*²²

As a result, Lever involved himself extensively in the planning and detailed construction of Port Sunlight, and was heard to take personal credit for devising the layout of the village:

“There can be little doubt that Lever took delight in planning and building his village, from pouring over the details with the architects to expounding upon its beauties to national and international audiences.”²³

It would seem that Lever’s motivation for the establishment of the village was driven both by economic factors - the needs of his business - but also by a highly developed social conscience and a desire to improve the lives of ordinary men and their families. In the company magazine, ‘Progress’, he stated:

“...as an object lesson in social betterment Port Sunlight has no equal anywhere... it was an ideal garden city, and was undoubted proof that the housing problem could be solved even by private enterprise.”²⁴

Not only did Port Sunlight become an architectural hobby for Lever, where he could satisfy his creative desires, he also envisaged it as a model settlement where he could promote his beliefs and visions for utopian living. He may have been inspired by William Morris and his theory of the ‘happy worker’ who, as a result of his contentment, produces ‘good work’. Whatever Lever’s motivation, the result of this social experiment was a thriving and successful community, which because of its innovative design has had a major effect, both on the lives of its inhabitants and on society as a whole.

Lever’s impact extended far beyond the village. Building upon his early experience as a travelling salesman, Lever had the idea to create a quality soap, packaged in individual bars and sold under a brand name which, through intensive advertising, would become known worldwide. His large-scale production of ‘Sunlight Soap’ meant he was able to bring cleanliness to the masses for the first time.

When sitting as Liberal MP for Birkenhead, following election in 1906,²⁵ Lever was instrumental in introducing old age pensions (a similar scheme was already in operation at Lever Brothers). Following his private members bill, the Old Age Pensions Act came into being through government legislation in 1909. However, Lever’s time in Westminster was short-lived. He struggled to balance the needs of business and politics, although he continued his association with the Liberal Party and was knighted for his efforts in 1911.

Port Sunlight was not the only village to benefit from Lever’s influence. Altogether ten villages and towns were founded or reconfigured by Lever, including the nearby village of Thornton Hough where he made major additions. Lever bought the Western Isles of Lewis and Harris to capitalise on fishing and fish processing industries in the region. He believed that his investment in industry would transform economic and social conditions for the people who lived on the islands.

Concern for architecture and planning motivated many of Lever’s public benefactions, including his interest in Liverpool University’s School of Architecture. Over £90,000 in libel damages was awarded to Lever by The Daily Mail and other newspapers in 1907; some of this money was devoted to saving the eighteenth century former Blue Coat School, and the remainder was donated to the University, in part to establish a Chair of Civic Design,²⁶ but he also endowed the School of Tropical Medicine.

Lever's death in 1925 left many of his tasks uncompleted, but his legacy can be seen through the influence of Port Sunlight and the University of Liverpool's Department of Civic Design, which was the first school of town planning. The research awards offered by the Leverhulme Trust (established under the terms of his will) and the ongoing success of Unilever in all corners of the world continue his work and reputation.

"Lever was a compound of paradoxes. An uncompromising autocrat and a zealous reformer. An acquisitive man who gave away several fortunes. A demanding employer obsessively concerned with his workers' well-being. A visionary resolved to make all his dreams reality".²⁷

A social experiment

Port Sunlight was built in response to the appalling living and working conditions that existed throughout the United Kingdom in the second half of the 19th century. Lever had witnessed these first hand while a travelling salesman in the industrial north. In his speech at the cutting of the first sod in Port Sunlight in 1888 he proclaimed:

"We have secured the land so it cannot be taken away from us, and it is my hope and my brother's hope, someday, to build houses in which our work people will be able to live and be comfortable; semi-detached houses with gardens back and front in which they will be able to know more about the science of life than they can in any back slum, and in which they will learn that there is more enjoyment in life than in the mere going to and returning from work and looking forward to Saturday night to draw their wages".²⁸

In contrast with other businesses' profit-sharing schemes, which paid extra when trade was good but risked loss of wages when trade was bad, Lever developed a system called 'Prosperity Sharing'. This involved Lever Brothers providing its workers and their families with sanitary housing, green open space, allotments, sports facilities, access to healthcare and education and opportunities for wholesome leisure activities. Rather than providing these good living conditions as a philanthropic act or one which rewarded workers, Lever saw the system as the correct way in which business should be conducted, describing it as his attempt "to socialise and Christianise business relations".

Port Sunlight has been described as a 'model village', the culmination of pioneering settlements such as Saltaire and New Lanark, and Barrow Bridge and Egerton in Lever's hometown of Bolton. Most of these earlier 'model villages' had social facilities such as schools and institutes, however, the social institutions Lever provided, combined with the size and quality of design at Port Sunlight, were on a new scale. Most importantly, Port Sunlight offered for the first time a vision of a model settlement for workers based on picturesque principles, without the grid plans and long regimented terraces of earlier schemes.

A remarkable feature of the village, which was noted at the time, is the variety of community buildings provided. These include assembly halls, a church, schools, a pub and an art gallery, as well as shops and various sporting facilities, clubs and village institutions. Employee participation in village activities was encouraged, resulting in a large number of village societies.

From 1907 Lever provided a hospital within the village which gave free healthcare to all his workers and their families. Indeed, it became common for workers' sick relatives to move to Port Sunlight in order to benefit from this healthcare. In addition to schooling for all children within the village, Lever provided 'Further Education and Training Facilities' for all workers who wished to "better

themselves”. From July 1908, he announced that no employee under 18 would be engaged within his factory unless they had achieved a specified educational standard in school, and so existing employees between the ages of 14-18 were obliged to attend evening classes to meet the required standard.

Within 20 years of its foundation, the village was the subject of much social and academic debate, including a significant study by Walter Lionel George (1882-1926) in 1909.²⁹ George, like many others, was interested in how Port Sunlight combined both environmental and social reforms to create an ‘ideal society’. He noted that conditions within the factory were superior for their time, describing the Port Sunlight factory as a model of efficiency and employee safety, with regular factory inspections and health examinations, and 15 times more space given to each worker than in most other factories, resulting in fewer accidents through crowding.

Then in 1909, to improve relations with his workforce, Lever introduced a co-partnership scheme whereby all employees could share in the profits of the business. Lever also foresaw the important role banks would play in people’s lives and encouraged his employees to have their wages paid into savings accounts.

In almost every case the ‘Port Sunlight experiment’ produced exceptional social results, to the extent that George’s 1909 study noted that the death rate in the village was almost exactly half that of Liverpool on the opposite side of the Mersey.

“In Port Sunlight... conditions are so different from those of the immediate neighbourhood that it is almost possible to identify the inhabitants, and even more possible to identify the children.”³⁰

“These (results) show what a physical revolution has been worked in the children... by good food, good housing, open spaces, exercise and regular employment of the parents. It is not too much to call it a revolution...”³¹

“... the founder of the village may well rejoice in his work and pride himself on a practical achievement unequalled in the annals of industrial utopias.”³²

Lever also introduced a free life policy for employees in 1922, at a time when one sixth of the working age population of Britain was unemployed. It included half pay during any period of suspension, and a similar sum during absence because of sickness.

Influence on the Garden City Movement

Port Sunlight was a major influence on the Garden City Movement which in turn influenced much early 20th-century planning and planning theory. This influence was particularly evident in the early development of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb in which Lever played a role, then in the spread of the Garden City Movement across the country, and later still in the ‘homes fit for heroes’ campaign after the First World War.

The aim of the ‘Garden City’ movement was to create a place of humane design but without the direction of a patriarchal figurehead such as Cadbury (Bournville) or Lever. One of its chief advocates, the influential Ebenezer Howard, considered Port Sunlight to be an ‘exceptional development’. He was influenced by its idealised planning and design as well as its success, if not

by Lever's paternalistic form of management. Howard's book on garden cities was an outstanding success, and by 1914 Garden City Associations were already formed or active in eleven countries. Howard wanted his Garden Cities to offer town and country living in equal measure and for the inhabitants to be independent, in charge of their own environment which was to be financed by those with economic interests in the area.

The architect/planners Richard Barry Parker (1867-1947) and Raymond Unwin (1863-1940) were also key figures in the evolution of the Garden City Movement. The influence of Port Sunlight, including the development of the superblock plan, is apparent in Unwin's work at New Earswick (begun in 1902) and later at Letchworth.

Although its influential and picturesque areas post-date Port Sunlight slightly, the Cadbury Brothers' village of Bournville shared Port Sunlight's vision for future social housing. Bournville tended to be more popular with early Garden City advocates because tenancy and home ownership were not limited to employees of Cadbury's. For example, in his 1905 book on garden cities, Alfred Richard Sennett gives an overview of utopian societies, clarifying the difference between Port Sunlight and Bournville, while confessing that:

"Confining myself to industrial dwellings, I know of no instance where the provision of operatives' dwellings, combining ample internal space, comfort, and luxury of appointment with charming exteriors, has been pushed so far as in the Garden Village of Port Sunlight. I know indeed of no more enjoyable thing to offer to the reader interested in this grave problem than a visit to this architecturally picturesque village."⁵³

The influence of both Bournville and Port Sunlight over the Garden City/Garden Suburb Movement owed a lot to the publicity given to both schemes. Cadbury held the first Garden City Conference at Bournville and the second conference was held in Liverpool under Lever's presidency in order to visit Port Sunlight.

The legacy continues today, for in January 2017 it was announced that the government intended to build 14 new garden villages to alleviate the housing shortage. It is intended that these garden villages will be built outside current settlements, offering between 1,500 and 10,000 homes, the concept clearly following in the mould of Garden Cities as advocated by Ebenezer Howard, and following on from the Garden City precursors at Port Sunlight and Bournville.

International recognition

Visitors came to the village from early on, and are reported in the Lever Brothers' house journals, 'Port Sunlight News' and 'Progress'. (Posters advertising tours of the works and village were displayed at railway stations around the country.) Delegates also came from both the French and German Garden City Associations, and the village featured prominently in their related publications.

The village was widely referenced and acclaimed in books and journals home and abroad, not least in the work of Hermann Muthesius, whose writings were largely responsible for making English domestic architecture known on the continent. In 'Das Englische Haus' he wrote:

“If one wishes to obtain a quick and accurate appreciation of the achievement of contemporary English house-building, there is hardly a more comfortable means than by undertaking a journey to the factory village of Port Sunlight near Liverpool.”³⁴

Reproductions of Port Sunlight cottages were erected at several international exhibitions, including Paris (1900), Glasgow (1901) and Brussels (1910), with the Glasgow cottages still to be seen in Kelvingrove Park.³⁵

A treasure box of late 19th-century art and design

The village is unique for the wide range of different architects, artists and craftsmen whose work is represented in its buildings, decorative detailing and sculptural features, let alone the collections housed within the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Many of the notable architects/designers in the north-west at the time feature, including Douglas and Fordham, William and Segar Owen, Grayson and Ould, TH Mawson and Sons, and Charles Reilly. Lever’s great friend, Jonathan Simpson, and his son, James Lomax-Simpson, are also featured, as are national figures such as Ernest Newton, Ernest George and Sir Edwin Lutyens, alongside sculptors Sir William Goscombe John and Sir William Reid Dick.

This remarkable concentration of notable figures is matched by the similarly varied design and range of wonderful decorative details such as moulded rainwater pipe heads, leaded lights, decorative moulded plaster friezes, terracotta mouldings and quality joinery. It remains a joy to walk around the village, studying the variety and quality of the buildings’ design and craftsmanship.

The influence of American design on early 20th-century British architecture

While Port Sunlight has had a major influence on planning and housing design in Britain and overseas, particularly in the early 20th century, the influence of American developments on some later aspects of the village should also be recognised.

Lever was a regular visitor to the USA from 1888, and in time took over soap and other supply companies there. In 1892, upon seeing the (incomplete) Chicago Exhibition of 1893, he said:

“For picturesqueness of situation, beauty and extent of buildings, arrangement, conception and general execution it leaves nothing to be desired... In addition to size which itself is always impressive, each building from a purely architectural point of view is well conceived, duly proportioned and most admirably executed.”³⁶

The exhibition had a significant influence in America on the City Beautiful Movement, stimulating an interest in classical architecture and civic design. Reforming city planners believed that monumental architecture and beautiful environments could address the moral decline of the inner-city poor, and such enthusiasm must have inspired Lever’s liking for the grander planning which became apparent in the early 20th century. This is evident not only in the planning schemes for The Diamond at Port Sunlight but also elsewhere, e.g. the 1910 plans for Bolton by Thomas Mawson.

Lever’s founding of the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool in 1909 was much influenced by his friendships with Charles Reilly and Thomas Mawson. Reilly was an advocate of American classical design and planning, and interested in the City Beautiful

Movement. A key feature of Lever's founding of the department was that Reilly was to visit the USA each year and report back on the best new architectural developments there. When Lever briefed his architects for the Lady Lever Art Gallery he showed them a photograph of an important American gallery as an example of the building he had in mind. It has also been said that the later open planning of the frontage gardens in the village was a reflection of the American tradition for open lawns in front of domestic houses.³⁷

Landscape design

Port Sunlight village is a nationally and internationally significant example of early 20th-century planning and landscape architecture. Lever made well-informed use of progressive landscape planning and urban design, reflecting a change in emphasis from dense and picturesque late Victorian landscaping to the École des Beaux Arts ideals.

As described earlier, the village is considered by some to be the essence of 'Englishness', with its cottage housing and picturesque planting. However, in The Diamond it also features grander, more formal civic planning, with influences coming from the US. Two landscapes at Port Sunlight - The Dell and The Diamond and The Causeway- are registered by Historic England as designed landscapes of Special Historic Interest in England (Grade II).

Port Sunlight village is a key example of a settlement being planned where the landscape is on a par with the architecture. This is a reflection of Lever's own passion for garden design and his friendship with Thomas Mawson, one of the most important landscape and garden designers of the period.

Whether by accident or design, the tidal inlets prevented a uniform grid pattern of development, leaving large areas of the village as open space. Lever was a believer in the virtues of low density housing, and the extensive use of landscape is a significant and important element of that. It was in the design of the houses with their gardens and setting that Lever had particularly strong views:

"The picture of a cottage crowned with a thatched roof, and with clinging ivy and climbing roses and a small garden foreground suggesting old-fashioned perfume of flowers and a home in which dwell content and happiness, appeals straight to the heart..."¹⁵⁸

WL George also recognised the importance of the landscape setting to the buildings:

"The Port Sunlight secret lies in the tree and shrub, but still more in the broad meadow; the houses are generally built on one side of the road only and overlook broad spaces of grass or belts of trees. This increases the feeling of privacy..."¹⁵⁹

Lever saw lower density housing as a key factor in the environmental success of Port Sunlight. However, it is only one of a number of important factors which include:

- High-quality external landscaping, in particular at the two registered landscaped areas - The Dell and The Diamond and The Causeway.
- The sense of containment and enclosure achieved by closing off open vistas and the inward focus formed by the perimeter 'superblocks' discussed earlier.
- The use of prominent public buildings and features to act as focal points, particularly within the axial plan of The Diamond and The Causeway.

The development and expansion of the village coincided with the great surge of interest in both healthier living and in home grown produce. There was also a belief in the moral benefits arising from these, reflected in the Allotment Acts of 1887, 1890, 1907 and 1908.⁴⁰ Lever and his early architect, William Owen, developed the superblock plan of the village to include allotments in the central space of most of the blocks, with areas designated for children's allotments. Further encouragement was given through annual prizes for the best produce, which always well reported in 'Progress', the journal of Lever Brothers.

Art in the heart of the community

As a follower of both John Ruskin and William Morris, Lever was a passionate believer in the beneficial influence of art and good design on everyday life.

Locating his art gallery in the village, rather than donating his collection to an existing gallery, is one example of this, as was the hanging of paintings from his collection in the dining halls of the village. The annual 'Sunlight Year Book' also carried articles on art and architecture.

However, this interest is best shown in the design of the village and its buildings, which Lever supervised carefully and so reflects his wishes and taste. As he noted:

"Art and the beautiful unconsciously create an atmosphere in which happiness and the virtues grow and flourish..."⁴¹

The village is also rich in outdoor sculpture. Lever placed an important piece by the French sculptor, AG Guilloix outside the Lady Lever Art Gallery in 1922 (later moved), and engaged the leading sculptor, William Goscombe John for the War Memorial to be located in the heart of the village. The tradition was continued in the design of the Leverhulme Memorial, by Lomax-Simpson and W Reid Dick, and in the addition of the sculptural group in the fountain pool in The Diamond by Charles Wheeler.

Art and advertising

Lord Leverhulme was a pioneer of modern advertising, with his passion for art beginning while collecting artwork to promote Sunlight Soap.

He visited art exhibitions in London, buying paintings he knew would appeal to housewives - his biggest consumer market - and had them copied, adding the Sunlight brand name and slogan.⁴² From 1886-1906, Lever spent more than £2 million on advertising, and encouraged his customers to collect printed reproductions from his collection. As he grew richer and more confident, his art collection expanded from business to pleasure.

Lever's greatest contribution to public art, the Lady Lever Art Gallery, was officially opened in December 1922 in Port Sunlight. Dedicated to his late wife Elizabeth, Lever gave his time to every aspect of this project, from the design of the building to the arrangement of the exhibits. Here he housed the majority of the pictures, porcelain and furniture that he owned, making one of the most extensive and important private art collections in the world available to the public.⁴³

The village itself also became an advertisement for the product after which it was named. Posters advertising tours of the works and village were displayed at railway stations around the country,

and the village itself was designed to present its best side to the public with service areas, allotments and washing kept carefully concealed.

Feat of civil engineering

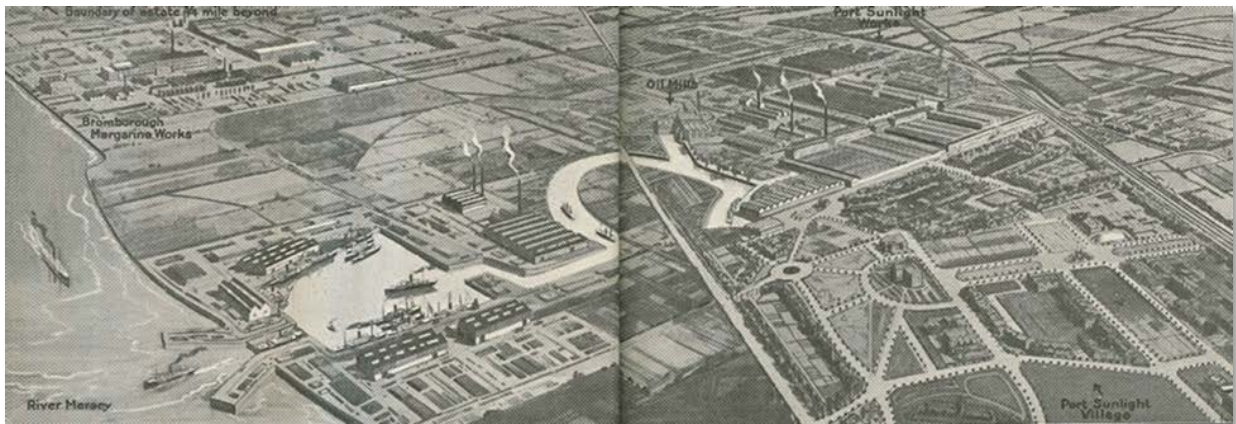
Port Sunlight is a testament to civil engineering expertise overcoming challenging site conditions. The village was built on a series of tidal inlets and marshland, and the land did not originally seem suitable:

“Anything more unprepossessing than this site can hardly be imagined... It was land suitable for a dock, but it did not at first sight seem fit for human settlement”⁴⁴

Despite the industrial potential of the site, the land was at the mercy of water from the east and west. Port Sunlight lies on sloping ground and is also built upon several important water courses that drain the local area of surface and rain water. There were also a number of tidal creeks that would fill with water from the River Mersey at high tide. These creeks covered a total area of 25 acres, but by 1902 Lever Brothers had acquired them as part of the village expansion. The company’s civil engineering team dammed the main channel at what is now Wharf Street, blocking water from entering the village from the Mersey. However, the water from higher ground still needed to be diverted and managed, so a series of culverts which ran under the roads was built, taking the water through the village and out into Bromborough Pool.



The dam under construction c. 1903. This became Wharf Street, and recent housing development has taken place on the ground to the left. Reproduced by kind permission of Unilever PLC from an original in Unilever Archives.



An artist's impression of Bromborough Dock, Port Sunlight works and the village from 1926. The undertaking had not long begun, and covered 14 acres with a river frontage of 1.75 miles.

One such culvert followed the course of the main tidal creek and picked up an underground stream which flowed into the village from the Dacre Hill area of Bebington. This culvert can still be identified above ground by several ornate vent pipes situated along village roads. All of the original culverts are still in operation; five-foot high, beautifully-built, blue brick drains that can be walked through at low tide, and fill with sea water twice a day at high tide.



One of the vent pipes, February 2015. Port Sunlight Museum Collection.

In 1912, the River Dibbin loop channel was eliminated by the excavation of a cut allowing easier water-borne access to Port Sunlight wharf, enabling parts of Bromborough Pool to be filled in. The unstable land and these areas of fill dictated that the foundations of the Lady Lever Art

Gallery needed to be carried on concrete piles, but elsewhere ordinary, good-quality strip foundations seem to have been the norm.

Beyond the conservation area boundary

Lever's own influence extended beyond Port Sunlight into the local area. From 1888, he rented the early-Victorian Thornton Manor, near Thornton Hough village and five miles south-west of Port Sunlight.

After a number of alterations, Lever bought the property outright in 1893 and later remodelled the house.⁴⁵ It was the Lever family seat until 2000, and today the manor and grounds are used as a conferencing and wedding venue.

Lever also purchased the village of Thornton Hough, making improvements in line with his work at Port Sunlight. Housing was built to accommodate his estate workers and managerial staff, together with a school, congregational church, a shop and a social club. In 1895, he rebuilt and considerably enlarged Thornton House for his brother, James.⁴⁶ The village was further expanded through the early 20th century, developing community facilities, increasing the number of properties on the periphery of the village and mirroring the third design phase of Port Sunlight.

Lever always sought improvements, whether at Port Sunlight, in his houses, factories or villages:

"Whatever practical reasons dictated his frequent changes of home, he loved the challenge of a new house and rarely failed to put in hand extensive improvements as soon as he was in... when the improvements were completed and he could see no scope for major reconstruction or development he was restless for a new challenge."⁴⁷

Lever made efforts to improve transport links in the area. Roads such as Lever Causeway in Storeton were built in an attempt to link Port Sunlight and Birkenhead to Thornton Hough. His ambition was to build housing along these roads to further bridge the gap between Port Sunlight and Thornton Hough, but the outbreak of the First World War meant his plan was never fulfilled.⁴⁸

Water has been an important factor in the Port Sunlight story: its use in the manufacture of soap, the reclamation of the land that the village is built on, and the River Mersey supporting the trade that allowed the Lever Brothers business to flourish. Bromborough Dock, which was owned by Lever Brothers, served the Port Sunlight factory and was once the largest private dock in the world, capable of handling a wide variety of cargo including paper, timber, and animal and plant fats (resin, tallow, palm oil and copra). It was closed in 1986 and used as a major landfill facility until The Land Trust transformed it into a landscaped public park which opened as the Port Sunlight River Park in 2014.

Extensive on-site archive

The village is significant for maintaining three valuable and comprehensive on-site archives. They hold original architectural drawings and site plans, historic photographs and other documentation, as well as personal records and individual villagers' memories.

The collections are held by Unilever Archives and Records Management (UARM), an accredited archive service with internationally-significant holdings at the Unilever Port Sunlight site; Lady

Lever Art Gallery, which is part of National Museums Liverpool; and Port Sunlight Village Trust's own archive and collection. These documents and objects are a unique resource and of a type rarely found at the location of its origin. The Port Sunlight Museum, which opened in 2006, in the heart of the village has allowed the display some of this material in changing exhibitions, with an appeal to both local people and visitors.

3.2 Port Sunlight's value today

For Port Sunlight residents

Around 2,065 people are estimated to live in Port Sunlight; a mixture of owner-occupiers and private tenants.

Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) commissioned a survey of those households in 2016, with a view to better understanding the demographic make-up of the village, their views on village life, and current and future challenges faced by residents. More than 62% of the 1,100 households completed the survey, and the findings confirmed that the overall experience of living in a historical environment, with maintained green, open spaces, is a hugely positive one:

- 69% of residents say they never want to leave Port Sunlight.
- 85% score their overall experience of living in the village as a 4 or 5 out of 5.
- The things people like best about living in Port Sunlight are:
 - peace and quiet
 - safety and security
 - the excellent public transport links
 - the style and architecture, and
 - the amount of good, green space.
- People tend to stay in Port Sunlight. The average time respondents have lived here is 15 years, and nearly a quarter of residents have been here for more than 26 years.

In 2016, PSVT was awarded an Arts Council England Museum Resilience Fund grant to enable it to determine its social role in the village, to further unlock the potential of the unique partnership that is developing with residents, and to formulate its first five-year strategic plan. The findings have helped PSVT to shape all aspects of its operating model, and come at a pivotal moment in its evolution when PSVT is moving towards financial independence. The project has created a shift in the way PSVT works with residents, and included the following:

- Appointment of a Community Engagement Officer.
- Creation of a community hub at Bridge Cottage with a programme of arts, gardening and social activities, and dedicated resident events.
- Ongoing consultation and trips to other planned villages to shape future services and facilities in Port Sunlight.
- Expansion of the museum volunteering programme to create new opportunities to volunteer across PSVT and the village.
- Development of a residents' website.
- Community engagement plan and support for all stakeholders, from groups and societies to village businesses.

As an education tool

Port Sunlight's significance is so broad that it is studied extensively by students of all ages, from Key Stage 1 children developing an understanding of how life has changed from Victorian times, through to doctoral research into the founder himself.

PSVT provides formal learning programmes in dedicated facilities, including tours and trails, specialist workshops, volunteering and work experience placements, and opportunities to research the collections and archives. Partnership projects have also been developed with local universities to support the needs of PSVT and the curricula.

The provision of informal learning opportunities for both the local community and visitors is also an important aspect of PSVT's work. The museum hosts permanent and special exhibitions, and the team delivers family activities during the school holidays, hosts regular talks and guided tours, and stages village-wide events, ranging from road races to open days.

In popular culture

Port Sunlight first featured in a musical comedy, 'The Sunshine Girl' in 1912 at the Gaiety Theatre.⁴⁹ The musical was set in Port Sunshine, the model village of a soap factory and one of the backdrops was influenced by Port Sunlight's own architecture. Later still, The Beatles' first performance with Ringo Starr on drums was at Hulme Hall.

More recently, the village has been used as the backdrop for films and dramas. In 1981 'Chariots of Fire' was partly filmed inside Bridge Cottage, Lever's residence in the village. In 2017, 21st Century Fox's major feature film 'Tolkien', which tells the story of the author's life and inspirations for his greatest works, was filmed in Bridge Cottage and The Dell. Popular programmes such as Michael Portillo's 'Great Railway Journeys', 'Songs of Praise', 'Antiques Roadshow', 'Flog It!', 'The Great British Interior Challenge', 'Peaky Blinders' and 'Coast' have also been filmed in the village.

Commemorative and spiritual meaning

There are 17 historically and aesthetically important monuments, memorials and plaques in the village, thirteen of them are listed.

The most significant is the Grade I-listed War Memorial, 'The Defence of the Home', designed by Sir William Goscombe John and unveiled in December 1921. The memorial was intended to commemorate the part played in the Great War by Lever Brothers' employees. There are 515 names from the First World War, with a further 118 names added in November 1947 to remember those killed in the Second World War, including civilians killed during bombing raids. Every year a special parade and service is held at the War Memorial and Christ Church on Remembrance Sunday.

The Grade II-listed Leverhulme Memorial, designed by Sir William Reid Dick (sculptor) and J Lomax Simpson (architect), was unveiled on 13th September 1930, five years after Lord Leverhulme's death. Around 22,000 Lever Brothers employees from around the world paid for it by subscription. The main figures represent Inspiration (at the top), Industry, Education, Charity and Art (base figures). The obelisk and sculpture base are made from black granite and the sculptures themselves from bronze.

Christ Church was built in 1902-04, and was designed by William and Segar Owen. The church was paid for by Lever himself and is dedicated to the memory of his parents. Today, it is a United Reformed Church with a strong following both from within and outside the conservation area. In 1914, a narthex (porch area) known as the Founder's Tomb was added; the final resting place of the first Lord Leverhulme, Lady Lever, the second Lord Leverhulme and his second wife. Every year in September, 'Founder's Day' is celebrated in the village to mark William Hesketh Lever's birthday, on the Sunday nearest his birth date (19th September).

Commemorated in August 1989, the Hillsborough Memorial was installed at the south end of The Diamond (in the Jubilee Garden) in remembrance of the 96 Liverpool fans who lost their lives at the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield during an FA Cup semi-final. Family and friends gather here to remember those lost in tragic circumstances.

In 2008, as part of Liverpool's Capital of Culture year and the village's 120th anniversary, the Port Sunlight Residents' and Conservation Society led a community project. They invited residents, village groups and children from Church Drive Primary School to donate items to a time capsule to reflect life in the village in 2008. The capsule was buried at the foot of the Hillsborough Memorial Garden on Festival Day and a mosaic, designed by a young resident, was laid to mark the spot.

A continuing and inspiring example of a planned community

As mentioned previously, in 2017 the UK Government announced its intention to build 14 new garden villages in Britain, drawing on the Garden City Movement heritage and success of places like Port Sunlight and Bournville.

In 2017, PSVT launched a Planned Communities Network to enable information-sharing, networking and future fundraising and project development. Six planned communities from England, including representatives from as far as Surrey, Swindon and Saltaire, have joined the network, and a start-up meeting was held to begin to shape the group.

For business

The village is still considered to be the spiritual home of Unilever (formerly Lever Brothers). One of their main global sites sits on the periphery of the village, comprising a production facility, research laboratories and core services. They employ nearly 2,500 staff across the three areas in Port Sunlight.

Other businesses also operate in the village including a family-run garden centre, a boutique hotel (part of the Contessa Group), a community theatre, two pubs and three venues offering events and conferencing space. Merseyrail has two railway stations in the village which serve the main Chester to Liverpool line.

Above all the village is a reminder of the business benefits arising from 'enlightened self-interest': what was good for the business was also perceived to be good for the employees whose future was bound to that of the company.

For visitors

Today the village attracts in the region of 300,000 visitors each year, both domestic and international.

They visit for a variety of reasons: to appreciate the art and architecture, to eat in the village cafes and restaurants, to better understand the founder, and to take part in recreational activities in the open spaces.

PSVT have ambitious plans to transform Port Sunlight into a major visitor destination, working in partnership with key stakeholders and village residents. Over the next five years the visitor experience will be developed to tell a much broader story of Port Sunlight's significance, increasing the village's national and international profile.

²¹ WH Lever, *The Buildings Erected at Port Sunlight and Thornton Hough: paper given to The Architectural Association, London, 21st March 1902*, (England: Port Sunlight, 1902), p.86

²² Ibid, pp.16-17

²³ Sue Sellers, *Sunlighters: The Story of a Village* (London: Unilever PLC, 1988), p.12

²⁴ Progress Magazine 1902, *Garden Cities and the Housing Problem*, September 1902, vol. 3, no. 36, p.321

²⁵ He stood for parliament on three occasions for the Liberal party. Each was an unwinnable seat, and Lever probably stood out of principle rather than any desire to actually win. He was successful in the Liberal landslide of 1906, and reluctantly took up his seat in Westminster.

²⁶ Hubbard, E. & Shippobottom, M. 'A Guide to Port Sunlight Village', Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2005, page 2

²⁷ GR Robinson & E Williams, *Port Sunlight – The First Hundred Years 1888-1988* (Port Sunlight: Lever Brothers 1988), p.2

²⁸ Ibid, p.8

²⁹ WL George, *Labour and Housing at Port Sunlight* (London: Alston Rivers, 1909)

³⁰ Ibid, p.177

³¹ Ibid, p.160

³² Ibid, p.210

³³ AR Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice: Principles of a New Architecture in Urban Planning* (London: IB Tauris, 1905) p.250

³⁴ Cited E Hubbard & M Shippobottom, *A Guide to Port Sunlight Village*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p.63

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid, p.7

³⁷ Michael Shippobottom, 'CH Reilly and the First Lord Leverhulme', in Joseph Sharples, Alan Powers and Michael Shippobottom (eds) *Charles Reilly and the Liverpool School of Architecture, 1904-1993, Catalogue of an exhibition at Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, 25 October 1996 - 2 February 1997* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), p.46

³⁸ WH Lever, *Art and Beauty and the City, three addresses by Sir William H Lever*, 1915 (unpublished), p.6

³⁹ WL George, *Labour and Housing at Port Sunlight* (London: Alston Rivers, 1909) p.71

⁴⁰ Twigs Way, *Allotments* (UK: Shire Publications Ltd, 2012), pp.19-20

⁴¹ WH Lever, *Art and Beauty and the City, three addresses by Sir William H Lever*, 1915 (unpublished), p.6

⁴² National Museums Liverpool, Art and Advertising,

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/history/advertising.aspx> [accessed 20 January 2018]

⁴³ WP Jolly, *Lord Leverhulme: A Biography*, (London: Constable & Co, 1976) p.53

⁴⁴ WL George, *Labour and Housing at Port Sunlight* (London: Alston Rivers, 1909) p.6

⁴⁵ WP Jolly, *Lord Leverhulme: A Biography*, (London: Constable & Co, 1976) pp.34-5

⁴⁶ Donald Insall Associates Ltd, *Thornton Hough Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan* (2007),

<<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/planning%20and%20building/built%20conservation/Thornton%20Hough/Thornton%20Hough%20%20Appraisal.pdf>> [accessed 20 January 2018] pp.8-9

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp.16-17

⁴⁸ Anthony Annakin-Smith, *Wirral Walks*, (Carmarthenshire: Sigma Press, 2005), p.34

⁴⁹ E Hubbard & M Shippobottom, *A Guide to Port Sunlight Village*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p.64



Chapter 4: The Condition of the Heritage

‘The condition of the heritage’ is just one chapter of Port Sunlight Village Trust’s Conservation Management Plan. The document describes the history and importance of the village, outlines the challenges facing stakeholders in the preservation of the internationally-significant landscape and buildings, and goes into some detail as to how those challenges will be met.

This chapter describes the work undertaken by Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) staff, consultants and volunteers to assess the condition of the village’s built and landscape heritage and their observations.

4.1 General condition

Port Sunlight Conservation Area retains remarkable integrity for its historic architecture, street plan and landscapes. Comparisons between the existing layout for the village and earlier maps or site plans, particularly a map of the village from 1938⁵⁰ demonstrate this to be true. More detailed analysis of the site, through comparisons between existing conditions survey work and historic photographs demonstrate how and where Port Sunlight has evolved, deteriorated or indeed improved over time.

Inappropriate planting and tree species, unsuitable alterations and repairs to historic properties and monuments, modern features, the prevalence of cars and the demolition or loss of original buildings and landscape features have all played their part in the subtle evolution of Port Sunlight. Respect for the quality and aesthetic character of the village, combined with stringent statutory policies to manage change, have conserved the significant character-defining aspects of the conservation area. These competing forces – the need to change and adapt for modern society and the equally-compelling need to conserve what is special here – make Port Sunlight an exciting place to live, work and visit. Please refer to Appendices 4-6 for a full description of these changes and existing conditions.

Open spaces

There are fewer open green spaces within the superblocks as a result of the decline in demand for allotments in the second half of the 20th century, coupled with increased car ownership and a need for garages. The landscape and garage blocks which have taken the place of former allotments provide a centrepiece and focus for the superblocks, and need to be well maintained and of a quality consistent with that of the rest of the conservation area. The open green spaces that remain are relatively well maintained but are not used to their full potential.

The loss of railings to define borders around the front gardens of properties has simplified the overall street scene.

Trees and planting

Inappropriate trees were planted to replace those lost to Dutch elm disease in the 1970s. The new species, lime in particular, are too large and hide important historic views across The Diamond and The Causeway. Careful selection of new trees, however, will be required to maintain the planting design and to ensure that the beneficial contribution that trees make to the conservation area continues. Shrub beds, planting and roses in public open spaces such as The Dell and The Diamond are well maintained and popular with visitors and residents alike.

Houses

Overall, the condition of the houses in the conservation area is fair. Of the 918 surveyed, 40% need no repairs or replacement works at all, and 44% of the work required is of a low priority, requiring only minimal aesthetic works. There is a clear distinction between the condition of the public frontages and the more private rears of the properties. More attention is paid to the fronts, which are for the most part in good condition, whereas the backs of the houses have been neglected.

Commercial and community buildings

All commercial and community buildings in the village are now in use. However, there is no cyclical survey plan in place for these buildings or regular programme of repair works for the exterior or interiors.

Public realm

There is inconsistency in public realm features within the village due to shared ownership and the lack of an overarching strategy, design guidelines, commitment to maintenance or vision for stakeholders. Bollards and lighting columns are particularly problematic as there is no consistent design adopted across the village, and historic examples have been replaced with modern, inappropriate solutions. This also applies to the free-standing village name boards, introduced by UML in the 1990s, which are of a markedly different character to those suspended from robust timber posts and which were introduced before the First World War.

Views and connections

The tree felling work along the railway line completed in 2017, although detrimental to the tree-lined character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, has unintentionally reinstated historic viewpoints along Greendale Road and The Causeway. Historically, there were no trees along the lines, allowing passengers to get uninterrupted views of the village.



This aerial view from 1934 shows the houses along Greendale Road, barren rail banks and houses backing onto the rail line in Lower Bebington.

Trees play an important part in the landscape heritage of the village, framing dynamic views along key visitor entrances and creating points of arrival throughout Port Sunlight. Unfortunately, there has been inappropriate replacement of tree species along King George's Drive, Queen Mary's Drive and The Causeway, as previously described. The incorporation of poplar trees adjacent to Hulme Hall and the Bridge Inn have had a similar effect, shadowing Christ Church and views down Church Drive from Bolton Road. However, this planting is historic and any replacement will need to be carefully considered and negotiated with Wirral Borough Council's Tree Officer to maintain the tree-lined quality of the road which is characteristic of the village.

4.2 Assessing the conditions

Over the last three to four years, the landscape, listed houses and monuments and memorials within the village have each been surveyed to understand the current condition of Port Sunlight's heritage assets. Community and commercial buildings and garages were not included in survey work completed for this CMP.

Houses

An exterior condition survey of every residential property built before 1950 in the Port Sunlight Conservation Area was carried out by staff and volunteers in 2013-16.

Surveys did not include high level or internal inspection, and visibility was particularly restricted at the backs of houses where tall boundary walls and deep, mature or overgrown gardens blocked views. For the same reasons, it was difficult to accurately assess the conditions of outhouses and other outbuildings. Roofs and chimneys were particularly difficult to assess from ground level. Please see Appendix 4 for full details of the Exterior Condition Survey.

Each deteriorated condition noted in the survey was assigned a treatment to address it and a priority level for repair. The priorities are split into three categories: high, medium and low.

Priority	Impact	Timescale to be addressed within
Low	Conditions which impact on the aesthetic character of the properties	5-10 years
Medium	Conditions which, if not addressed, may impact on the structural or watertight aspects of the house within five years	3-5 years
High	Conditions which if not addressed may impact the structural or water-tight aspects of the house in the very near future	1-3 years

Landscape

Ryder Landscape Consultants was commissioned by PSVT in 2017 to undertake a landscape condition survey of Port Sunlight. The survey allowed the various landscape elements to be assessed, with an A-E rating and a 'traffic light' system indicating the condition and maintenance required. Please see Appendix 5 for the full Landscape Condition Survey.

A Excellent	Excluded No element rated excellent
B Good	Good/Acceptable (Green)
C Acceptable	Little or no maintenance required
D Less than acceptable	Less than acceptable (Yellow) Some maintenance required e.g. cleaning or painting
E Poor	Poor (Red) Maintenance required/possible removal or replacement

Monuments & memorials

In January and February 2017, PSVT staff carried out a visual assessment of the village monuments and memorials. Existing conditions were recorded by hand on printed photographs and further photographs were taken of typical and/or exceptional conditions. No sampling, diagnostic tests, probes or quantitative work was done. The survey identified and prioritised work on the monuments and memorials, identifying objects or conditions where further diagnostic testing or assessment by a conservation specialist might be required. Existing conditions were prioritised to inform decision making with regard to capital repairs and cyclical maintenance budgets. Please see Appendix 6 for the full Monuments & Memorials Condition Survey.

Priority	Impact	Example	Timescale for repair
High	Hazard to the public	Tripping hazards, unstable or loose masonry	As soon as possible
	Presently damaging or threatening the monument or memorial	Overhanging trees, blocked drains, open mortar joints at wash surfaces, inappropriate coatings or harmful atmospheric deposits	
	Needlessly costing PSVT money	Costs for filling leaking boating pond	
Medium	If left unaddressed could damage the monument	Open mortar joints on vertical surfaces, inappropriate mortar, friable stone	Next 5 years (or sooner if deterioration accelerates)

	or memorial over time	surfaces, loss of ornamental detail	
Low	Primarily aesthetic in nature	Heavy soiling, minor losses	Do not need to be addressed unless deterioration accelerates. Instead these should be tracked annually to ensure conditions remain stable.
	Conditions which solely address the heritage character of the monument or memorial	Poor siting for the Silver Wedding Anniversary Fountain	

4.3 Designed elements: condition by character area

For the purposes of this section of the Conservation Management Plan, Port Sunlight has been divided into 13 character areas.

Character area 1: The Port Sunlight works

This lies outside the scope of PSVT's Conservation Management Plan.

Character area 2: The Dell



Map of character area 2 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

This is an extremely significant space; a green finger between the factory and Bolton Road around which the first four areas of housing were laid out. It was one of the former tidal inlets, extending across the plot of land purchased by William Lever, and its significance lies in it now being one of two remaining such landscape features in the village. (The other example is the sunken playground at the Church Drive School.) An informal Victorian park was created in the inlet, with a central footpath snaking through its centre and in between specimen feature trees. Many of these have now reached maturity, which compensates for the lack of trees in the surrounding housing areas. A large auditorium was built in the north-eastern 'mouth' of The Dell by 1905 but this was demolished in 1937. This area now features a formal lawn enclosed by stone walls and formal hedges. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

The Dell has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable condition, with some maintenance change required. The main concerns are:

- **Drainage:** there is annual flooding in The Dell which affects the use of the space and causes damage to the planting and grass areas.

A new drain was installed in 2006, but it has not been regularly maintained and appears to require repair or replacement. Drainage and flooding are still problems for character area 2, particularly around benches and low points.

- **Pavements:** these are in a less than acceptable condition, with repointing and/or cleaning required. There are also signs of uneven and cracked footpaths due to root heave where trees have been planted and not managed.
- **Planting:** bulb planting areas are patchy and shrub planting is inconsistent.



The Dell – significant drainage problem

Condition of listed properties

There are no properties within this character area.

Condition of monuments & memorials

The Centenary Marker requires no high priority work, but does suffer from wide, open kerb joints and sett joints, many of which are filled with macrobiological growth. There are also minor losses on the plaque's stone base which may become a higher priority work if it worsens in the future.

The Dell Bridge has a number of high priority works which need to be carried out to ensure the monument's longevity. It has previously suffered poor and inappropriate repair works, including sandblasting of the ornamental details and ball finials.



The Dell Bridge – carved ornamental detail at the busts is highly eroded and legibility has been lost. Elements of the sundial are also missing.

It has also suffered graffiti in places, and repointing is required on the stairs leading to the bridge, the coping stones and the stringcourse.

Repairs to the paving stones at the mill stone should be a high priority as two are heavily cracked and all need repointing. The drainage system in this area also needs further investigation. For more information, please see Appendix 6: Monuments & Memorials Survey.

Character area 3: south village housing



Map of character area 3 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

This area, between the factory-fronting Bolton Road and the arterial links of Bolton and Greendale Road, marks the first phase of the village, and includes some of its oldest and most historic buildings. The four main residential developments or 'superblocks' are arranged around The Dell (area 2), and although originally designed with trees in all pavements, these have since

been removed. The mature trees of The Dell somewhat compensate for the loss. The area would once also have had railings and backstays at the back of footpaths, but they were removed during the Second World War. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

Character area 3 has been categorised as being in less than acceptable/acceptable condition, where little change in maintenance is required. The main concerns are:

- **Bowling green:** greater maintenance contributions are needed, especially if it is to be used for league matches.
- **Dilapidated bus shelter:** a bus shelter, previously situated next to Port Sunlight train station became redundant and suffered from severe dilapidation. The bus station was removed from the site in 2018, but no works have been done to improve the vacant space remaining.
- **Infilling of gap strips in lawns.**
- **Simplification of planting beds to reduce maintenance requirements.**



Greendale Road – unfilled strips at edge of lawn

For more information, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 3 contains superblocks 14-18. For a full breakdown of where superblocks are located, please see Appendix 15- Superblock Location Plan.

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 14	10	10	100%	5	9	10

Block 15	44	44	100%	26	44	44
Block 16	39	30	76.9%	10	23	30
Block 17	37	27	73%	12	22	27
Block 18	38	24	63.1%	9	19	24

Block 14 on Bolton Road is the smallest superblock in Port Sunlight with just ten properties. All of these properties require aesthetic works, almost all require medium priority works, and half are also in need of high priority works. Superblock 14 is suffering from:

- Structural cracks which will require further specialist investigation to determine whether or not these are historic or are in need of repair.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting) or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous and very hard sand and cement mortars.

Fortunately, block 14 does not house any inappropriate, modern features such as uPVC windows, but items classed as ‘clutter’ (eg security lights in prominent, publicly visible locations, trailing cables and security alarm boxes) are common, with 9 out of 10 properties affected.

Block 15 is located on Cross Street, Bath Street Riverside and Bolton Road. It is considered a problem block as more than half of its properties require high priority repairs which must be completed within the next three years to prevent heritage loss, and all require medium and low priority works. Superblock 15 is suffering from:

- Structural cracks which will require further specialist investigation to determine whether or not these are historic or are in need of repair.
- Missing or heavily damaged roof tiles which if not addressed will lead to water ingress and significant damage to interiors.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning methods (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, sand and cement mortars.
- Poorly maintained porch and/or bay coverings.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.
- Rotten windows, doors or yard gates. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely impacts the aesthetic and heritage character of the listed properties.



Bolton Road – stone erosion caused by inappropriate and poor repointing

There are nine properties within **superblock 16** which do not require any form of repair work, and the overall condition of this superblock is fair. Although only ten of the 39 properties in the superblock need high priority works there are 23 properties that require medium priority works, which must be addressed within the next five years or else face becoming high priority repairs. Properties on Bolton Road, Greendale Road, Park Road and Bridge Street make up this superblock. Their high priority repairs include:

- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, very hard sand and cement mortars.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. Poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property if not addressed swiftly.

There are two inappropriate conservatories within superblock 16. Not only are they uPVC in their construction but their design will affect property owners' ability to maintain and repair first floor windows and rainwater goods.

Just over a quarter of properties within **superblock 17** do not require any form of repair work. Less than half of those requiring work are a high priority, but almost all requiring work need medium repairs. Superblock 17 comprises properties on Greendale Road, Wood Street, Bridge Street and Park Road.

The works which must be addressed as a first priority within this block are:

- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting) or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, very hard sand and cement mortars.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.

Block 18 comprises properties along the far east of the village, with some of the oldest surviving residences located here. These include properties along Bridge Street, Park Road, Poet's Corner

and Wood Street. The most significant issue in this superblock is aesthetic problems, with the installation of modern ‘clutter’ such as security lights in prominent locations where they are publicly visible. This affects 18 out of the 38 properties in block 18. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Built Heritage Exterior Condition Survey.

Condition of monuments & memorials

The Sphinx and Sundial are in reasonably good condition, with no high or medium repairs needed.

The bronze plaque situated above the original main entrance to the Gladstone Theatre requires medium priority works in the form of cleaning and re-waxing.

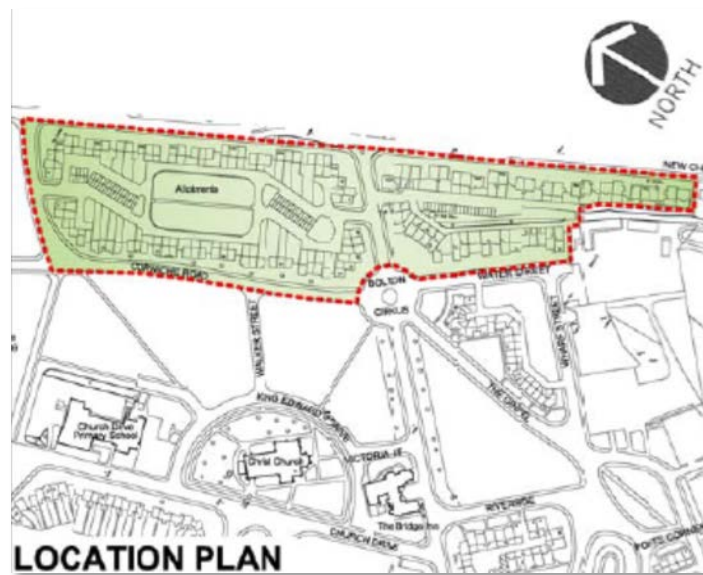
The Silver Wedding Anniversary Fountain should be a high priority as there is widespread loss of the pointing mortar, resulting in deep and often wide-open joints.



Widespread loss of pointing mortar has resulted in deep and often wide-open joints at the Silver Wedding Anniversary Fountain

There are also signs of movement/displacement in some of the coping units, which could become hazardous if not addressed swiftly, and signs of efflorescence at the rear of the monument, facing the bowling green. For more information, please see Appendix 6: Monuments & Memorials Condition Survey.

Character area 4: south-east village housing



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Development of the area

This area has four notable features, the first being the row of slightly larger than average semi-detached houses along New Chester Road (south). These were the first and largest properties on the periphery of the village (built in 1896-98), presenting a significant and imposing façade for the periphery of the village. Secondly, to the north of Bolton Road is the earliest and possibly most successful of the superblocks in the village, built from 1897-99 on virgin land and not affected by the tidal creeks. Thirdly, the internal rear space was completely allocated to allotments, as elsewhere in the village, but significantly approximately half of these still remain. Finally, the frontage and side roads are characterised by formal privet hedges, one of only two areas in the village with this form of boundary treatment. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

This area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/unacceptable condition, where a focused maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- Inappropriate trees: previous tree planting along New Chester Road property frontages has used tree varieties that are too large, reducing the visual impact of these key frontages.
- Miscellaneous items (such as railings) within hedgerows, reducing hedge maintenance efficiency.
- Tree maintenance: lifting, thinning and pruning is required as dense canopies are becoming oppressive to properties on New Chester Road and Bolton Road.
- Poor maintenance/unsightly appearance of concrete planters.
- Unresolved use of communal space.



Rear of Corniche Rd – unsuitable concrete planters

Character area 4 is the main ‘gateway’ into the village from the east and New Chester Road. Strategic maintenance and management is essential to rejuvenate the area, including tree work and the simplification of block backcourts. For further details, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 4 contains superblocks 1 and 2:

	No. of properties in superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 1	45	8	17.8%	2	4	8
Block 2	72	72	100%	62	72	72

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Block 1 comprises the extreme north-east corner of the village, incorporating parts of New Chester Road, Bolton Road and Water Street. There are 45 properties within this superblock, and it has been noted that they are in a particularly good condition, with only eight properties in need of repair work. Of these properties, there are just two that require high priority works but all eight require low priority, aesthetic works. There is just one satellite dish in an unsuitable location, located on a chimney where it is publicly visible.

Block 2 comprises the north-central streets including parts of New Chester Road, Bolton Road and Corniche Road. There are 72 properties within this superblock. There are 62 properties in need of high priority repair works and all require medium and low priority works, so block 2 is classed as a problem block. The highest priority works identified in the survey were:

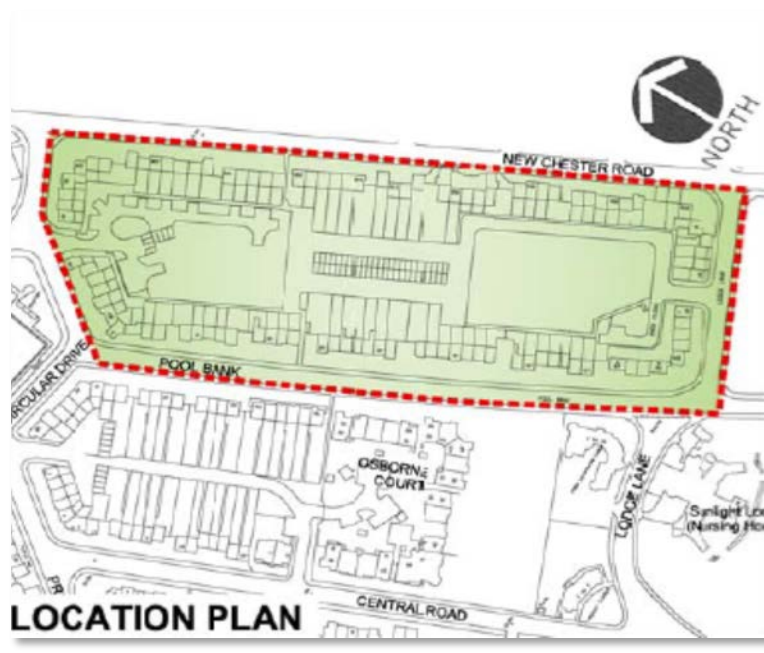
- Structural cracks, which will require further specialist investigation to determine whether the movement is historic or on-going.
- Missing or heavily damaged roof tiles, which if not addressed will lead to water ingress and damage to interiors.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting) or inappropriate alterations, including the introduction of non-porous, very hard sand and cement mortars.
- Poorly maintained porch and/or bay coverings.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.
- Rotten/rusted windows and doors. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely affects the aesthetic and heritage character of the listed properties and the conservation area.
- Weathering and loss of oak details.
- Severely rusted original roof lights which, due to their exposed location, are particularly vulnerable to further decay. If these are not treated soon they will become dilapidated beyond repair.



New Chester Rd – rusting metal casement window

Block 2 also houses a number of properties with inappropriate uPVC windows; a row of four neighbouring properties all have these windows. These windows detract from the heritage character of the listed houses and the integrity of the conservation area. For more information please see Appendix 4: Exterior Condition Survey.

Character area 5: north-east village housing



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Development of the area

The construction of this area followed on shortly after area 4, between 1899 and 1902, extending access across to Pool Bank, but retaining the trees and original landscape features of the wedge of land between areas 4 and 5. It has a similar character to the superblock of area 4, defined by a mature privet hedge along New Chester Road. The internal rear space was originally allocated to allotments, as elsewhere in the village, but these have since been replaced by grass areas, extended rear gardens, paved access roads and car parks. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

This area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/unacceptable condition, where a focused maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- **Pavements:** this is a village-wide issue. Tree roots have lifted footpaths in certain areas which could become tripping hazards.
- **Planting condition:** incorrect selection of species has resulted in over-grown hedges and shrub beds bursting over kerb lines, with a need for increased maintenance.
- **Street furniture:** there is a lack of continuity in lighting column design, with many along New Chester Road incorporating modern designs inappropriate for the setting of the village.
- **Trees:** many have reached maturity and require crown lifting, thinning and pruning. Because of their size, a number of trees in this character area are also obscuring buildings or leaning heavily into the carriageway.



Pool Bank – uneven paving caused by root upheaval

For more details, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 5 contains superblock 3:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 3	112	47	42%	17	36	47

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Block 3 comprises the northern streets including parts of New Chester Road, Lodge Lane, Corniche Road, Boundary Road, Circular Drive, Pool Bank and Knox Close. This is one of the larger superblocks, developed with 112 properties. Block 3 is classed as a problem block as 17 properties are in need of high priority works and 36 require medium works. However, there are only 47 properties that need aesthetic works carried out and 65 properties need no works at all. The highest priority works required for this block include:

- Structural cracks, which will require further specialist investigation to determine whether the movement is historic or on-going.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, very hard sand and cement mortars.

- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. Poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property if not addressed swiftly.
- Rotten windows and doors. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely impacts the aesthetic and heritage character of the listed properties and the conservation area.

Aesthetic works required in this superblock include the relocation of satellite dishes, the replacement of plastic rainwater goods, and repainting to comply with the village colour scheme. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Character area 6: north village housing



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Development of the area

This is the third rectangular superblock of the village, defined by the shape of the previous field patterns. As with areas 4 and 5, it was also started in 1899 but not completed until 1906 once decisions had been made as to how to resolve the links to New Chester Road to the east (via Boundary Road) and to the previous village of Primrose Hill to the south-west. It shares characteristics with the superblocks of areas 4 and 5, but without hedging and mostly without trees to footpaths or verges. The internal rear space was originally allocated to allotments, but the noticeable characteristic of this zone is that virtually all rear gardens have been extended, resulting in a narrower central strip of garage parking, and grass and paved areas, defined by parallel access roads. The two other noticeable elements in this area are the former crown bowling green and Hesketh Hall, built in 1903 and now home to seniors' apartments owned and managed by PSVT. Properties to the north-west corner of this character area were severely damaged by an explosion in March 2017. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable condition, where some maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- **Pavements:** large trees are causing root-heave damage to the footpath.
- **Public realm:** modern bollards and lighting columns adversely impact the heritage and character of the conservation area, and are inconsistent with heritage-style bollards and lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.
- **Planting:** shrub beds containing vigorous species are creating additional maintenance now they are fully matured.

For more information, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 6 contains superblocks 4 and 7:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 4	22	22	100%	5	17	22
Block 7	85	34	40%	12	23	34

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Block 4 comprises the north-west corner, including 22 properties on Boundary Road. There are only five properties that need high priority works here, although 17 need medium priority works and all properties need aesthetic repairs or replacements. However, the results from this survey were completed before the explosion in March 2017, and properties in this block will now require much more significant, high priority works, including stabilisation and structural works, replacement of windows, doors and yard gates, and major repairs to roofs where roof and ridge tiles have either been completely destroyed or are beyond repair. This repair work will take place in 2018.

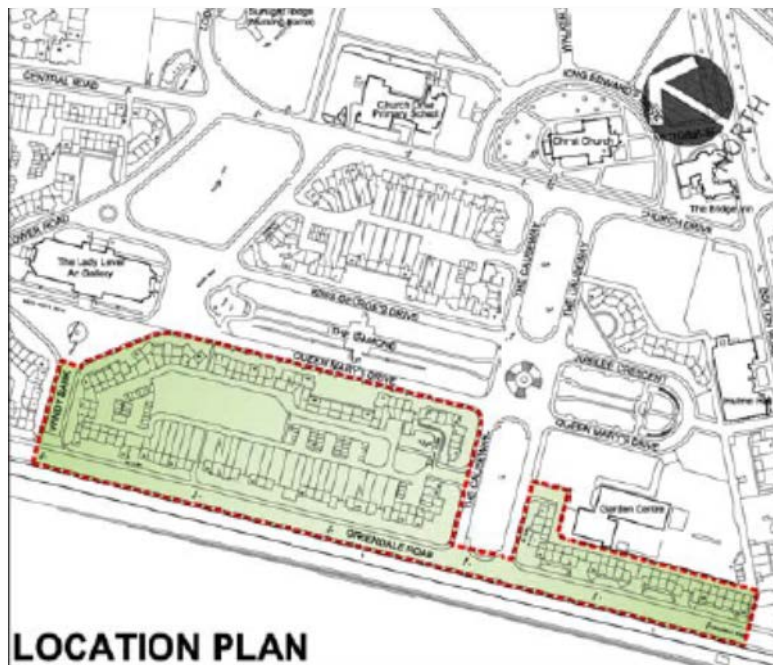
Block 7 is another large superblock and is in a good condition. Less than half of the properties in this block need some form of repair work and only 12 of the 85 need high priority works carried out within the next three years, including the repair of severely deteriorated rainwater goods.



Bebington Rd – rusted downpipe in need of repair

Block 7 includes properties on Brook Street, Primrose Hill, Circular Drive, Boundary Road and Bebington Road. However, again these results do not take into account the effects of the explosion in March 2017. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Character area 7: west village housing



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Development of the area

This area includes the largest rectangular superblock of the village. The main frontages along Greendale Road and up Windy Bank were built in 1901/02. Development was then paused for ten years while a decision was made on the structure of the areas on either side of what became The Causeway. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

- The main superblock enclosing space 7C (see Appendix 8) was completed in 1912, set-back from Queen Mary's Drive and mirrored along King George's Drive to form an attractive, articulated space either side of The Diamond.
- The northern 'nose' of this block was demolished to allow Windy Bank to be realigned in the 1920s (and framed by housing), so creating a new formal axis to showcase the Lady Lever Art Gallery from the railway, as well as from the south and east.
- The original open-air baths and gymnasium were demolished and replaced with a garden centre in the 1970s. The current design, the surface car park, fencing and building, are not in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

Condition of the landscape

This area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/acceptable condition, where little change in maintenance is required. The main concerns are:

- **Trees:** the avenue of trees along Queen Mary's Drive is affecting the amenity and enjoyment of residents, particularly where Queen Mary's Drive intersects with Windy Bank, where tree spacing varies between three and six metres. Every other tree should be removed and the remaining trees should be thinned and pruned
- **Public realm:** modern bollards and lighting columns on major roads such as Queen Mary's Drive and Greendale Road adversely impact the heritage character of the conservation area, and are inconsistent with heritage-style bollards and lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.
- **Bare earth:** the strip of bare earth behind the low, stone retaining wall is unsightly and requires regular weeding to maintain. Grass should be planted to improve the appearance and reduce maintenance requirements.

For more information, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 7 contains superblocks 10 and 13:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 10	96	40	41.7%	15	24	40
Block 13	26	16	61.5%	15	16	16

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Block 10 is another large block with 96 properties across Greendale Road, The Causeway, Causeway Close, Queen Mary's Drive and Windy Bank. Almost half of the properties require some level of repair and 15 of these require high priority works which must be carried out over the next three years to prevent significant heritage loss. High priority works include:

- Missing or heavily damaged roof tiles, which if not addressed will lead to water ingress.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, sand and cement mortars.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.
- Eroded/missing mortar, vegetation growth and erosion of masonry in chimneys. Due to the location of these defects they must be treated as soon as possible as they risk the health and safety of visitors and residents.
- Rotten windows, doors or yard gates. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely impacts the aesthetic and heritage character of the listed properties and the conservation area.

Block 10 also has a number of properties with satellite dishes in unsuitable locations, inappropriate paint colours, and visible 'clutter'. The majority of properties in this block also incorporate non-breathable paving up to their perimeter which could lead to issues such as penetrating damp.

Block 13 is a problem block with more than half of the properties in need of high priority and/or medium priority works. The properties in Block 13 are located on Greendale Road and The Causeway and are of mixed ownership. The biggest cause for concern in this block is that the majority of properties are suffering from eroded brickwork, including boundary walls which have been severely neglected. Signs of hard, sand/cement mortars and sandblasting techniques are evident which could explain the pattern of heritage loss. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Character area 8: core buildings & spaces (previous tidal zone)



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Development of the area

Housing blocks were developed in areas 8 and 2 as they were on higher ground, around what is now known as The Dell. The area 8 green spaces linked to form a network which, following the creation of The Diamond and The Causeway, now gives the village its unique blend of space and form. However, this green area is also the site of a number of high profile civic buildings including The Bridge Inn (1900), Christ Church (1902), Church Drive Primary School (1903), Sunlight Lodge (the original hospital, now The Leverhulme Hotel), and later the Lady Lever Art Gallery. As each was built with its own green surroundings, these buildings have generally not compromised the flow of green space. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

This area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable condition, where some maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- **Trees:** planted immediately adjacent to road kerbs on Lodge Lane. Where large trees, such as sycamores, have been planted root-heave damage to kerbs and pavements has occurred. A number of these trees are also leaning severely into the carriageway. Some of the large avenue trees on Bolton Road are now reaching maturity and will require crown lifting, thinning and pruning. The poplar trees surrounding the north and east of the field opposite Christ Church are too large, and detract from the high-profile visitor route that Church Drive provides. They need to be pruned and significantly reduced in height. There also needs to be a reduction in tree numbers in the open spaces to the east of Christ Church and Church Drive School as the usability of these spaces has diminished due to dense tree canopies and shading.

- **Lighting:** modern lighting columns on major roads are negatively impacting on the conservation area, and are inconsistent with heritage-style lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.
- **Railings:** the exterior railings surrounding Church Drive Primary School do not meet the high-quality design, specification and maintenance of both Christ Church and the Lady Lever Art Gallery.



Queen Mary's Drive – unfilled lawn edge

For more information, please see **Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey**.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 8 contains superblock 19:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 19	22	22	100%	15	22	22

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see **Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map**.

Block 19 is another small superblock, located in the south-east corner of the village, with properties along Water Street, Bolton Road and The Ginnel. Although small in size there are some large issues in this block. Fifteen properties are in need of repairs within the next three years or else face significant heritage loss. All properties require low priority repairs, affecting the aesthetic quality of the properties, and medium repairs which will become high risk issues if not addressed within five years. The biggest issues in this superblock are:

- Cracks in external walls which require further specialist investigation to determine if there is on-going structural movement.
- Missing or heavily damaged roof tiles, which if not addressed will lead to water ingress.
- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous, very hard sand and cement pointing mortars.
- Poorly-maintained porch and/or bay coverings.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.
- Rotten windows and doors. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely impacts the heritage and aesthetic character and significance of the listed properties and the conservation area.
- Eroded/missing mortar, vegetation growth and erosion of masonry in chimneys.

There is a proliferation of inappropriately-sited satellite dishes in this block. The common misconception here is that satellite dishes do not require consent to be installed. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Condition of monuments & memorials

The Founder's Tomb should perhaps be top of the priorities for a monuments and memorials repair programme due to its significance and the work required. The surfaces of the bronzes are covered in pustules which could indicate widespread bronze disease; a permanent and almost unstoppable corrosion process.



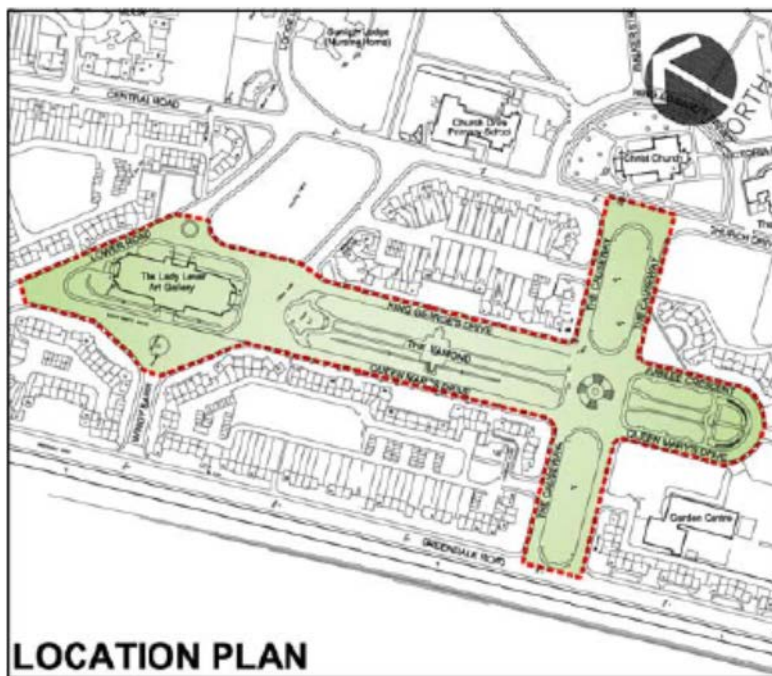
The Founder's Tomb – the surfaces of the bronzes are covered with pustules, which appears to be a sign of widespread bronze disease

The bust of Lord Leverhulme is missing from its stand too; either the stand should be removed or the bust replaced. The existing condition detracts from the character and significance of the site.

The overall condition of the Victoria Bridge stones and marker is moderate, although there are cracks and spalling at the front of the name stone, which have worsened since a 2015 survey.

Consolidation or resurfacing may be required to ensure that the damage does not progress to the inscription. For more information, please see Appendix 6: Monuments & Memorials Survey.

Character area 9: The Civic Cross (The Diamond and The Causeway)



Map of character area 9 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

The distinctive characteristic of this area is its impressive axial formality, which contrasts markedly with the rest of the village. The bold plan was implemented following a competition won by Ernest Prestwich, whose concept involved extending The Diamond towards Hulme Hall and creating a new boulevard up to the church from the railway. Importantly, this created another focal point at the crossroads of the two boulevards, which now features the War Memorial. (It should be noted that although Prestwich won the competition, Lever retained overall control, overseeing the final design and employing the landscape architect, Thomas Mawson, to assist Prestwich.) Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Other notable features are the Jubilee Arch and Hillsborough Memorial Garden to the south and the formal pool and fountain to the north. However, the jewel in the crown is the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/acceptable condition, where little change in maintenance is required. The main concerns are:

- **Trees:** due to an attack of Dutch elm disease along The Diamond and The Causeway in the 1970s, many trees were replaced with lime, an inappropriate species. Due to the dense form of these trees and the proximity in which they were planted, the original design view

has been lost. It is recommended that, for the health of the remaining stock, these trees are selectively thinned.

- **Lighting:** modern lighting columns on major roads such as King George's Drive and The Causeway adversely impact the heritage character of the conservation area and are inconsistent with heritage-style lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.
- **Planting:** the high density of roses and bedding plants along The Diamond, although a visitor attraction in their own right, demand the highest maintenance input across the village. This should be subject to regular review.
- **Public realm:** the Sea Piece Fountain and boating pond require a full conditions and mechanical survey to identify restoration needs, reduce ongoing maintenance costs and provide a year-round, functioning feature. The 'crazy-paved' areas surrounding the fountain present trip hazards and should be addressed in partnership with Wirral Borough Council.
- **Parking:** the open space between the fountain and the Lady Lever Art Gallery is used as a car park. However, there are no road markings so parking is haphazard and traffic flow is hindered. Also, the parking adversely impacts on one of the key character-defining views of the conservation area.

For more information, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

Aside from Lady Lever Art Gallery, which was not surveyed or specifically included in the plan, there are no properties within this character area.

Condition of monuments & memorials

This area has the highest density of monuments and memorials in the village.

The analemmatic sundial is in a fair/good condition, although the survey did identify a few low priority repairs including repointing and small-scale losses on the white and granite hour markers.

The Leverhulme Memorial should be classed as one of the top priorities in any repair programme conducted, as there are a number of high priority works required. The paving and kerbs for the memorial are in a very poor condition with many cracked and displaced units. These present serious tripping hazards and create an unsightly setting for the memorial. A specialist bronze conservator will be required to assess the deteriorated conditions of the bronzes and to make treatment recommendations.



A specialist bronze conservator will be required to investigate pitting and minor pustules on the Leverhulme Memorial

The Jubilee Arch requires high priority repair works. Overhanging mature trees have contributed to the deterioration of the Portland stone.



Mature trees overhang the arch – leaf/branch drop and shade may contribute to the deterioration of this Portland stone site

There are also tripping hazards beneath the arch, with six displaced paving units, and a further three paving units with significant losses. The underside of the arch is cracked in sections and further specialist investigation should be undertaken to inform a treatment strategy. Widespread pointing is also required throughout. Previous abrasive cleaning appears to have damaged the surface of the Portland stone, which originally had a smooth finish.

The balustrade for the Jubilee Garden at the south end of The Diamond is in a fair condition, with mostly medium priority works needed. The drains should be cleared and repaired as high priority work. There is evidence of previous inappropriate repairs to the balustrade, including abrasive cleaning of the Portland and Storeton stone, as well as the use of an inappropriate pointing mortar.



Previous abrasive cleaning of the balustrade appears to have damaged the surface of the Portland stone (which initially had a smooth finish)

The surface of the stone is blistered and detached or powdered and friable.

The top course of stone in the retaining wall (beneath ground level at the upper terrace) exhibits heavy biological growth and salt deposits. These appear to be causing the surface of the stone to blister and detach.



Balustrade – the top course of stone in the retaining wall exhibits heavy biological growth and salt deposits, causing the surface of the sandstone to blister and detach

The tarmac paving at the Hillsborough Memorial Garden may contribute to these conditions by channelling damp into the sandstone wall. De-icing salts have also been spread on the tarmac in freezing temperatures, which would introduce further salts into the sandstone wall.

The Memorial Garden itself is in a good condition, with only some bricks in the bedding plant walls requiring resetting or replacement. The site could, however, become vulnerable to anti-social behaviour as the tall hedge enclosing the Hillsborough Memorial Garden provides both privacy for mourners and also an opportunity for anti-social behaviour.

The lion mask fountain beneath the Memorial Garden is in a fair condition, with only low priority works required. There are losses and surface erosion at the lion mask itself but these are minor. The lion mask fountain has lost its setting as it no longer functions as a fountain and the pool or pond it once served has been filled in.

A mosaic commemorating the 2008 time capsule project (set in the paving in front of the lion mask fountain) is in a very poor condition, with large sections missing. Repairs would not be possible at this stage and it is advised that the mosaic should be removed completely.



Large sections of the Mosaic have been lost.

At the opposite side of The Diamond, the boating pond is in a poor condition and needs to be prioritised in any repair programme. Due to ineffective equipment and an issue with the pitch of the boating pond, drainage is poor and attempts to lessen algae growth have failed. The base of the boating pond is also an area of concern as it is heavily cracked and sections of the screed are missing.

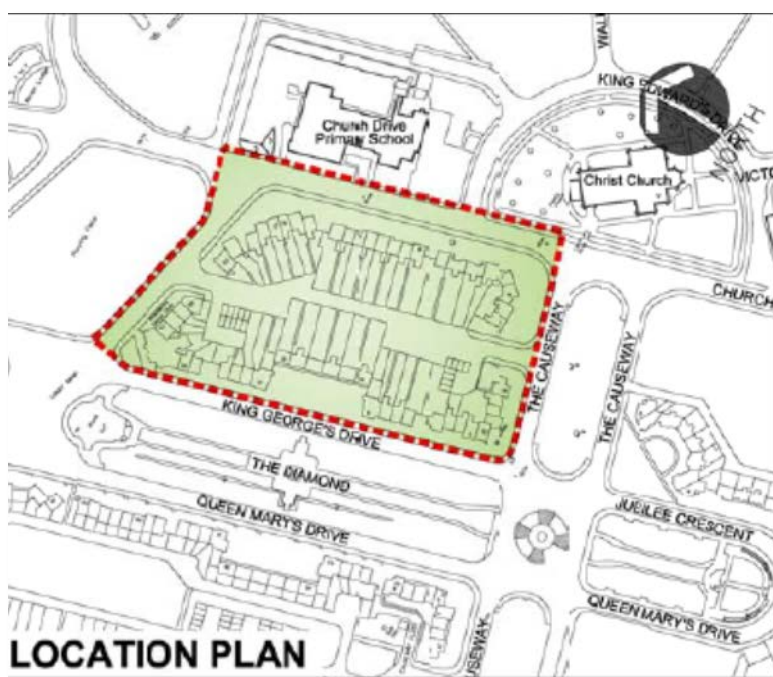


The base of the boating pond is cracked extensively, and sections of screed are missing/detached

The Sea Piece bronzes should be assessed by a specialist conservator as it exhibits a mottled, almost flaking finish.

The War Memorial is in a relatively good condition after open joints were repointed with lime mortar in February 2017 by Aura Ltd. However, there are some lower priority works that may need to be addressed in the long term. Half of the bronzes need to be waxed as they were not cleaned and waxed in 2015, and there is also signs of biological growth and copper staining which could be removed if necessary (if they affected the legibility or material performance of the site). For more information, please see Appendix 6: Monuments & Memorials Survey.

Character area 10: central village housing



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Development of the area

The three eastern blocks of terracing on Church Drive were the first built of a large housing area in the centre of the village, constructed in 1901-05. Its set-back design is similar to that of area 7 (see Appendix 8 for the Character Areas Map), along King George's Drive. In both form and date of construction, it mirrors the set-back terrace of Queen Mary's Drive, together enclosing an attractive space on either side of The Diamond.

The housing block was completed in 1926 upon the construction of the north-west corner building which faces the art gallery. Today it is home to PSVT's main office and Port Sunlight Museum.

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in an acceptable condition, where little or no maintenance is required. The only concerns noted in this area are:

- **Trees:** although forming part of the distinctive character of this area, the avenue of trees along King George's Drive is too dense. Although effort has been made to reduce these issues, remaining trees need to be thinned.
- **Lighting:** this is one of two blocks without any form of amenity lighting to the rear internal area which could pose a safety issue. Where there are lighting columns, the design is modern and negatively impacts on the heritage character of the conservation area. They are inconsistent with heritage-style lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.

For more information, please see **Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey**.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 10 contains superblock 11:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 11	55	41	74.5%	10	15	41

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see **Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map**.

The properties in **block 11** are located in the centre of Port Sunlight and span King George's Drive, The Causeway, Church Drive and Windy Bank. The block may seem like a problem superblock, with almost 75% of properties requiring repairs, but the majority of these properties only require aesthetic improvements. There are, however, ten properties which will need repair works within the next three years and these should be addressed as soon as possible to prevent heritage loss. The most common works required in this superblock are replacement of inappropriate windows at the rear of the property. Some of these are UML windows, introduced during the modernisation phase from the 1960s through to the 1980s. There are a further six uPVC windows in this superblock. For more information, please see **Appendix 4: Exterior Condition Survey**.

Character area 11: north-central village housing



Map of character area 11 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

There are two main areas of housing in this character area. The triangular block bounded by Lower Road, Central Road and Primrose Hill was begun around the turn of the century, and completed in two further phases, ending in 1906 and 1912. There are sensitive architectural resolutions on two corners of the triangle, and a curved terrace of great character. An articulated arrangement of housing also exists immediately to the south-east. Rear gardens have been extended to Central Road and Primrose Hill, with a rather piece-meal approach to garage provision. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

The other main housing area is bounded by Pool Bank, Circular Drive and Central Road. Lodge Lane House (now Manor Lodge) was built in 1930 on Lodge Lane. Later the Unilever data centre was also constructed on Lodge Lane; a flat roofed modern building which was occupied by Cabot Carbon in 1999, the same year that Port Sunlight Village Trust was set up. This was demolished and the Philip Leverhulme Lodge was built on the site in 2003. Osbourne Court is situated on the former football pitch, and was completed in 2000. The remaining land was deliberately left unused as a condition of planning permission, forming 'entrance elevations' facing the highway to correspond with Lever's superblock plan. For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/acceptable condition, where little change in maintenance is required. The main concerns are:

- **Bollards:** inconsistent bollard design adversely impacts the heritage character of the conservation area.

- **Parking:** insufficient provision of rear parking has resulted in on-street parking on many of the main network roads. Rear grass space shared by Lower Road, Central Road and Primrose Hill is under-utilised at present and could be given a more creative use, or else provide informal additional parking for residents.
- **Planters:** the timber planters surrounding Philip Leverhulme Lodge and Manor Lodge adversely impact the heritage character of the conservation area.



Inappropriate concrete bollards

For more information, please see **Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey**.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 11 contains superblocks 5 and 6:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 5	41	31	75.6%	12	23	31
Block 6	97	65	67%	19	51	65

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see **Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map**.

Block 5 comprises 41 properties across Circular Drive, Primrose Hill, Central Road and Pool Bank. Not all of the properties require aesthetic repairs but there are 23 properties which need medium repairs and 12 that need high priority repairs. Block 5 suffers from poorly maintained rainwater goods, which have become dilapidated to the point where they are in need of large scale repair or else will need to be replaced. Dilapidated chimneys are another key issue in this block, with many suffering from heritage loss and require significant repointing to prevent further loss. Of the 41 properties, there are 36 with either an alarm box or security light, classed as ‘clutter’.

Block 6 is considered a problem superblock. Although only 19 of the 97 require high priority repairs, 51 properties need medium repairs which could become high priorities if not addressed

within the next three to five years. The 97 properties included within this block can be found on Lancaster Close, Primrose Hill, Lower Road and Central Road. These defects include:

- Erosion of brick and stone, usually caused by weathering, inappropriate cleaning (such as sandblasting), or inappropriate alterations including the introduction of non-porous sand and cement mortars.
- Poorly maintained porch and/or bay coverings.
- Cracked, distorted or missing rainwater goods. As with dilapidated roofs, if not addressed swiftly poorly maintained rainwater goods could lead to further problems such as efflorescence or damp within the property.
- Rotten windows and doors. This not only affects the performance of the property but also adversely impacts the heritage character and aesthetics of the listed properties and the conservation area.
- Weathering and loss of oak elements.
- Severely rusted original roof lights which, due to their location, are particularly vulnerable to further decay. If these are not treated soon they will become dilapidated beyond repair.

For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Character area 12: north-west village housing



Map of character area 12 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

This zone features the penultimate phase of historic development in the village, split into two main areas to the north-west of the Lady Lever Art Gallery. Even when the gallery was completed in 1922, a green finger of open space still continued to the boundary of Bebington Road, but this was due for development in line with Mawson and Prestwich's competition plans of 1911. Please see Appendix 10 for an indication of Port Sunlight's evolving site plan.

The first area is set between the gallery and Greendale Road, bounded by Primrose Hill and Windy Bank. The latter was especially significant, since the northern 'nose' of area 7 was demolished purely to entertain Leverhulme's grand designs and facilitate a new vista to showcase the gallery from the railway to the west. This was carried through in 1925/26 and was then followed by the Duke of York Cottages to the north, completed in 1934. The cottages and their associated landscape have a distinctive character of their own which is highly prized by local residents, even if not usually observed by visitors. These cottages generally have slightly wider frontages but are less deep compared to most other properties in the village. Please see Appendix 8 for the full Character Areas Map.

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in an unacceptable or poor condition, where considerable maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- **Trees:** although forming part of the distinctive character of this area, the line of trees along Queen Mary's Drive is becoming too dense, particularly from Windy Bank up to Primrose Hill, where tree spacing varies between 3 and 6 metres. Every other tree in this area should be removed to improve accessibility. This is also one of the few areas in the village where the trees have been assessed as being in a poor condition and need to be treated as a priority.
- **Bollards:** inconsistent bollard designs adversely affect the heritage character of the conservation area.
- **Lighting:** modern lighting columns on major roads such as Greendale Road and Bebington Road adversely impact the heritage character of the conservation area and are inconsistent with heritage-style lighting columns found elsewhere in the village.
- **Planting:** this is one of the few areas in the village where the planting has been rated as being in a poor condition and is severely affecting the significance of the area.



Duke of York cottages – planting in poor condition

For more information, please see **Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey**.

Condition of listed properties

Character area 12 contains superblocks 8 and 9:

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 8	19	8	42.1%	2	8	2
Block 9	43	5	11.6%	1	2	5

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see **Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map**.

Block 8 is one of the smaller superblocks, located in the south-west corner of the village and consisting of the 19 Duke of York cottages. Half of the properties need medium priority repair works which could become long term issues if not addressed within the next three to five years. There are just two properties in need of high priority works. Structural cracks due to subsidence have been found in this superblock, which will require further specialist investigation to determine whether the movement is historic or on-going and in need of further repair.



Duke of York cottages – signs of movement
tell-tale dated 24/11/69

It has also been noted that there is a high concentration of York stone roofs in this superblock which are costly to repair, possibly explaining the high percentage of medium priority roof repairs prevalent in this superblock.

Only a small percentage of properties are in need of repair within Block 9, with just five in need of works and only one requiring a high priority repair. Block 9 has 43 properties overall, spanning across Greendale Road, Windy Bank, Queen Mary's Drive and Primrose Hill. For more information please see Appendix 4: Exterior Conditions Survey.

Character area 13: central south area - mixed use



Map of character area 13 - Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. License number 100020449

Development of the area

This zone includes the last significant block of the residential development, Jubilee Crescent, completed in 1938, less than 50 years after the first properties were laid out on Bolton Road immediately to the south-west. In between these areas is the southern formal access to The Diamond, somewhat compromised by its position behind Hulme Hall but redeemed by the imposing Jubilee Arch framing views to the War Memorial and Lady Lever Art Gallery beyond.

Area 13C (see Appendix 8 for the full breakdown of character areas) to the west has sadly evolved without a strong design framework, in contrast to much of the village. The historic plans reveal the early presence of the open-air baths and a gymnasium on this site, followed by some small garden centre buildings, and within the last 20 years by a larger purpose-built garden centre. Although a functional and valuable commercial enterprise, the garden centre's design and its extensive boundary piers and railings are out of character with the village, particularly in view of its prominent location on The Diamond.

Area 13E (see Appendix 8) has similarly suffered from being a 'leftover recreation space', with the perimeter poplars and conifers severely detracting from the space, and also extending round part of the Hulme Hall car park into area 13D (see Appendix 8).

Condition of the landscape

The area has been categorised as being in a less than acceptable/unacceptable condition, where a focused maintenance change is required. The main concerns are:

- **Conifers:** these trees are reaching maturity and causing severe loss of amenity for residents. These need to be programmed for crown lifting, pruning and height reduction.
- **Poplars:** the poplars planted around the edge of Hulme Hall car park and the former recreation field are now over-mature and have been previously pollarded, which is unsightly.
- **Trees:** the density of trees on either side of the entrance to the Civic Cross (13B- see Appendix 8) is overpowering, particularly on the west side. Those on the east side are now

of a size to be affecting the amenity of Jubilee Crescent residents. These trees cause major shading problems and when in full leaf create a particularly claustrophobic effect.

- **Bollards:** the timber bollards are easily damaged and out of character with the rest of the conservation area.
- **Railings:** the character of the extensive piers and railings along the garden centre car park on Queen Mary's Drive and The Causeway is incongruous with all other boundary treatments found in the village and does not support the heritage character of the conservation area.

For more information, please see Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

Condition of listed properties

	No. of properties in the superblock	No. of properties requiring repairs	% of properties requiring repairs	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Block 12	15	14	93.3%	4	11	14

For a full breakdown of superblock locations, please see Appendix 15: Superblock Location Map.

Block 12 is one of the smaller superblocks within Port Sunlight. Properties are located along Jubilee Crescent, and although seemingly a problem block with 93.3% of properties in need of repairs, only four of these require high priority works. For more information, please see Appendix 4: Exterior Condition Survey.

4.4 Biodiversity

As part of the Landscape Condition Survey, Ryder Landscape Consultants conducted a biodiversity and sustainability audit of each green space in Port Sunlight.

The aim was to assess which areas would be appropriate or have the potential for biodiversity (such as implementing wild flower fields to attract and home wildlife) and sustainable solutions (such as the use of more native planting species), and which of these areas already benefit from these solutions. The audit was split into three categories:

- **Red:** high sensitivity areas with limited potential for biodiversity and sustainability. Space with limited/no intervention potential.
- **Orange:** intermediate sensitivity areas with a moderate potential for biodiversity and sustainability. Space with some intervention potential.
- **Yellow:** low sensitivity areas with high potential for biodiversity and sustainability. Space with high intervention potential.

If you would like further information on the biodiversity and sustainability audit carried out by Ryder Landscape Consultants, please see pages 65-69 of Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey.

4.4.1 Red

For potential interventions to increase biodiversity and sustainability in these areas please see Appendix 5, page 67.

Character area 5: block 3 (northern area)

Block 3 has two large, open grass spaces. The northern space is more sensitive to biodiversity change due to its close proximity to residential flats and properties with residents' expectation of tidiness and order.

Character area 8: village amenity space (Lower Road) and The Ginnel amenity space

These two areas provide key community green space for local social activities and recreation, reducing potential for biodiversity enhancement within these areas.

Character area 9: The Diamond

The key visitor and residential core of the village, the planting design should remain as is due to its status within the village and the social benefits it affords.

Character area 4: allotments

These already provide some limited biodiversity opportunities but are primarily a community asset and should be maintained as such. If allotment demand ever reduces they could be rationalised.

4.4.2 Orange

For potential interventions to increase biodiversity and sustainability in these areas please see Appendix 5, page 68.

Character area 2: The Dell

The lowest part of The Dell (the mid-section) is prone to drainage issues, with planting failings and large gaps.

Character areas 7 & 12: west & north-west village housing

Duke of York Cottages/Greendale Road: amenity planting is in a poor condition, with empty planting beds and heavily pruned shrubs.

Character area 3: south village housing

Lady Lever Bowling Green: currently this green is not maintained to county level, yet is a key historic feature within this prominent location. This limits its potential biodiversity to small scale interventions.

Character area 4: south-east village housing

Block 2 back court: inappropriate raised planters with overly mature vegetation occupy these spaces. The two areas have the potential to become valuable for biodiversity/sustainability and a positive community asset, either through wildlife or planting interventions.

Character area 8: core buildings and spaces (former tidal zone)

Corniche Road: a high-density tree planting area which has been recommended for pruning, crown lifting, canopy reduction or selective removal to open up and increase potential use of the space.

Character area 11: north-central village housing

Pool Bank/Central Drive: a large, mown, grass space, formerly part of the football playing field before Osborne Court was built.

Character area 13: central-south area: mixed use

Church Drive: an area noted for future development. Until such time the space should be utilised so as to benefit the local community and also for the improved biodiversity and sustainability of the village. The significant poplar tree planting to the periphery along Church Drive and the implementation of tree planting on the western edge to the rear of Jubilee Crescent properties gives this space biodiversity potential.

4.4.3 Yellow

For potential interventions to increase biodiversity in these areas please see Appendix 5, page 69.

Character area 2: The Dell

The Dell (east end): a large open grass space which suffers from minor drainage issues. High-maintenance box hedging surrounds the space. Overall, this area requires positive reactivation for both social and biodiversity benefits.

Character area 3: south village housing

Bolton Road/Bridge Street: a small wooded section of amenity space with grass and bulb planting. This space could become part of a wildlife/green corridor network within the village. Due to its central location, it could provide educational benefits and community involvement in biodiversity and sustainability practices.

Character area 6: north village housing

Northern bowling green: this decommissioned bowling green provides additional green space for residents and visitors. The space has a high biodiversity and sustainability potential through the creation of a mini park along the village's northern edge.

Character area 8: core buildings and spaces (former tidal zone)

Wharf Street/Water Street: there is potential for further development of this space as a green corridor within the village, using existing trees, shrubs and ground cover.

Lower Lane/Corniche Road: this open space, with significant planting of various tree species, could become a key biodiversity area in the form of a village arboretum.

Bolton Road: amenity planting in the verge has high maintenance demands, but this is a key access corridor through the village. These verges can provide amenity value as well as biodiversity and sustainability opportunities.

Character area 9: The Civic Cross (The Diamond and The Causeway)

The Causeway: an open grass space with nearly mature trees and limited public access or usability. It could provide small scale biodiversity opportunities to add interest.

Character area 13: central-south area (mixed use)

Hulme Hall/Queen Mary Drive and Jubilee Crescent: this small woodland space with mown grass could become another village green corridor.

4.5 Access

Entrances

Port Sunlight is a 21st century village, and its landscapes, houses and monuments/memorials are accessible on foot or by car. The majority of the village offers on-street parking and there are limited parking spaces for residents in the service roads behind the houses. There are multiple entrances to the village from Bebington Road, New Chester Road, Wood Street and Greendale Road.

Cycling

There are no designated cycle routes through the village. However, New Chester Road provides a route on the eastern border of the site which could extend into the village. Some routes are used on an informal basis, and the village is very popular with local cycling clubs. Wirral Cycling Group, for example, encourages people to use their bicycles to explore the countryside and organises group rides which usually start from railway stations throughout the Wirral.

Public transport

Bus routes pass through the village along Bebington Road, Boundary Road, New Chester Road, Greendale Road and Bolton Road, although there are redundant bus stops along Church Drive, Greendale Road and Central Road where previous routes have been cancelled. There are also two railway stations, operated by Merseyrail, in close proximity to the site; Port Sunlight railway station at the south end of the village and Bebington station to the north.

Compliance with the Equality Act (2010)

General points of note:

- Most entry points to public areas and buildings have been provided with access ramps, however some are in a poor condition and are no longer user friendly (e.g. The Diamond).
- Steps need repointing in most areas, and are generally lacking handrails and visible edge markings.
- There are limited pavement markings to indicate vehicular or pedestrian circulation at road crossing points.
- Some public areas and monument entry points are not Equality Act compliant, eg the southern part of The Diamond and the War Memorial.
- Some houses have been provided with handrails, but these are not consistent throughout the village.

For full information please see 'Section 4: Accessibility and DDA Compliance' of Appendix 5: Landscape Condition Survey on pages 49-60.

⁵⁰ E Hubbard & M Shippobottom, *A Guide to Port Sunlight Village*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005)

The background image shows a historic brick building with a dark tiled roof. A large, leafy tree is in the foreground, partially obscuring the building. The building features ornate brickwork, including a decorative gable end with a lattice pattern. A chimney is visible on the left side of the roof. The sky is overcast.

Chapter 5: Protecting the Heritage

‘Protecting the heritage’ is the fifth chapter of Port Sunlight Village Trust’s Conservation Management Plan. As a whole the document describes the history and importance of the village, outlines the challenges facing stakeholders in the preservation of the internationally-significant landscape and buildings, and goes into some detail as to how those challenges will be met.

In this chapter we describe Port Sunlight Village Trust’s (PSVT) responsibilities in the conservation area which includes its landscape, buildings, monuments and memorials, streetscape, interpretation and collections. The protections and policies in place to preserve the heritage and manage change are also outlined.

5.1 Designations and protections

In Port Sunlight village, there are three tiers of protection:

- **Statutory listing**
- **Conservation area designation**
- **Restrictive covenants**

These policies and covenants are in place to properly manage, rather than to prevent, change. They establish standards and guidelines that have been proven to stabilise and improve property values whilst protecting the special character, setting and appearance of the village.

While PSVT is responsible for the ‘preservation and promotion’ of the majority of the landscape, community and commercial buildings, monuments and memorials in the village and a third of the housing stock, there are other stakeholders with significant responsibilities including Wirral Borough Council, housing groups, private and independent businesses, and private owner-occupiers and landlords.

5.1.1 Listed building designations

The majority of the houses and buildings in Port Sunlight were designated as Grade II-listed buildings in 1965, and almost all monuments and memorials are listed as either Grade II, II* or Grade I. This means that approval must be gained from Wirral Borough Council through the Listed Building Consent process before making any changes which might affect the special architectural, aesthetic, historic or communal interest. This applies to external and internal alterations.

5.1.2 Conservation area designation

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, local authorities have been empowered to designate as conservation areas those areas within their districts which were considered ‘special’.

Port Sunlight was designated as a conservation area in 1978, further protecting its trees, the external elevations of properties in the village and its wider setting. The views, vistas and the historic layout of roads, public spaces, parks, street furniture, trees and street surfaces all contribute to the special character and appearance of a conservation area.

5.1.3 Heritage Statements

The National Planning Policy Framework states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and an assessment made of potential harm or other impacts caused by the development proposal. Heritage Statements are required for all works requiring LBC or Planning Permission in Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

5.1.4 Restrictive covenant

The heritage and residential character of the village is protected through restrictive covenants agreed with PSVT. The covenants are in the title deeds for every residential property in Port Sunlight and require owners to:

- Keep their buildings, boundary walls and fences in good repair and condition.
- Paint the exterior of their homes according to the Trust's paint and finish scheme.
- Receive written permission from the Trust before installing aerials and satellite dishes.
- Receive written permission from the Trust before alterations, extensions or other additions to property are made.
- Use their property purely as a dwelling house.

5.1.5 Local Planning Policies

An area-specific planning policy has been contained within the Council's adopted statutory Development Plan since February 2000 to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting, which is proposed to be retained in the Council's latest emerging Local Plan.

Policy CH9 – Port Sunlight Conservation Area, in the Council's existing Unitary Development Plan, states that:

In relation to Port Sunlight Conservation Area the principal planning objectives for the area will be to:

- i. preserve the planned layout of the village and unifying features, such as the scale, massing, and design of buildings, including the use of superblocs, together with their landscape setting
- ii. to retain the historic factory frontage overlooking the village from Wood Street; and
- iii. to preserve the visual setting of the Church and Art Gallery, including the formal axis of The Diamond.

Priority will be given to retaining primarily residential uses within the conservation area and notwithstanding designation as Urban Greenspace, to preserving the formal character and layout of the open spaces and landscaped areas designated under Proposal GR2.

The open spaces at Lodge Lane, Corniche Road, The Ginnel, Park Road (The Dell), Bolton Road, Queen Mary's Drive, King George's Drive and The Causeway and at Lower Road (alongside the Lady Lever Art Gallery) and Circular Drive are designated for protection as Urban Greenspace and the open spaces at The Dell, The Diamond and The Causeway are nationally registered Historic Parks and Gardens at Grade II.

There are also more general policies for the protection of heritage (Policy CH01), development affecting listed buildings and structures (Policy CH1), development affecting conservation areas (Policy CH2), demolition control within conservation areas (Policy CH3) and development affecting scheduled ancient monuments (Policy CH24), non-scheduled remains (Policy CH25) and the preservation of historic parks and gardens (Policy CH26), which must also be complied with.

National planning policies for heritage are also set out in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

5.1.6 Enforcement

PSVT has previously acknowledged properties which have breached the restrictive covenant and have contacted property owners directly to reverse the works within a given time limit. However, PSVT does not currently have a strategy in place to enforce the restrictive covenants.

Wirral Borough Council is empowered by planning legislation to take the appropriate enforcement action when breaches of planning control have taken place. For Port Sunlight, this would include breaches of listed building and conservation area regulations (including trees). Advice is provided, sometimes in the form of a warning letter, to assist individuals and businesses in rectifying breaches as quickly and efficiently as possible, avoiding the need for further enforcement action. If however, the advice is not heeded then legal action could be taken against property owners and financial penalties may be applied.

5.1.7 Heritage policy initiative

PSVT worked in partnership with Wirral Borough Council and with the support of Historic England to develop one of the country's first Local Listed Building Consent Orders (LLBCO) to clarify and streamline the consent process for the most common classes of work in the village. The LLBCO reduces Wirral Borough Council's staffing and resource burden by removing work required to review and approve repetitive listed building consent applications for the village.

The Port Sunlight LLBCO was adopted in November 2015 and established blanket consent for the appropriate installation of satellite dishes and the replacement of severely deteriorated or inappropriate rear windows, rear doors and yard gates.

This ground-breaking work includes drawings and technical specifications for appropriate windows, doors and yards gates, and includes a strategy for ensuring replacement features are true to the original design and materials of the house.

The LLBCO has several benefits. It can be used as a tool to tackle enforcement issues as the appropriately designed and specified feature is clearly described in the documents. It supports owners by lowering the cost of the work: the LLBCO already includes drawings and specifications for rear doors and yard gates, so individual owners do not need to commission this work. The LLBCO has been particularly useful to both residents and the Trust when repairing features severely damaged by the explosion of March 2017. Lastly, the LLBCO can be used as a tool to ensure alterations to the rear of Port Sunlight houses are appropriate to the character and heritage of the individual listed houses and the conservation area.

5.2 Current maintenance arrangements

5.2.1 Built heritage

PSVT owns around a third of residential properties in the village, and cyclical maintenance works are carried out every five years under the supervision of dedicated maintenance and conservation officers. Works are then specified and tendered to external contractors. Some commercial and community buildings in PSVT's ownership are operated by the Trust while others are leased out to private businesses. The terms of the non-residential leases vary as to whether they are tenant repairing (i.e. the tenant is fully responsible for the repair of the building) or not.

Advice and support is also extended to private landlords and owner-occupiers in the village.

5.2.2 Landscape

All public landscape spaces and front gardens for every property are maintained and managed by a dedicated in-house landscape gardening team. They also care for the Sea Piece Fountain and the frontages of public buildings (excluding the Bridge Inn and the Lady Lever Art Gallery). Trees and hedgerows which are located within property frontages are also maintained by the Trust. Tenants, owner-occupiers and private landlords are responsible for the maintenance of rear gardens, including any trees which are located there. Permission is required from Wirral Borough Council for work on trees and any planning proposal which impact on the significance of the two registered landscapes - The Dell and The Diamond.

5.2.3 Monuments & memorials

PSVT owns and looks after the monuments and memorials within Port Sunlight, apart from the Founder's Tomb, which is owned and cared for by the Leverhulme family and the grave markers in Christ Church cemetery. Maintenance of Dell Bridge has been shared between Wirral Borough Council and PSVT (or its predecessors) over the years. Cleaning, repair and restoration works are tendered to external contractors. There is currently no cyclical maintenance programme in place for monuments and memorials.

5.2.4 Public realm

Benches, bins, bollards and wayfinding (such as pointer signs) are under the ownership of PSVT. There is currently no cyclical survey, maintenance and repair programme for these items, but they are repaired and replaced on an individual basis.

Wirral Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance and installation of other elements of the public realm, including streetlights, pavements and road surfaces.

5.2.5 Volunteers

Since its formation in 1999, PSVT has worked with a number of volunteers across all areas of our operations, each supported by a dedicated member of staff. The village benefits from its volunteers and from well-informed and motivated residents who are a valuable source of help and support. Past activities have included the creation of an analemmatic sundial on the site of the former bandstand. This project was led by the Friends of Port Sunlight Village who secured a BIFFA grant to deliver the work. Volunteers from local schools and the community plant seasonal bedding in the village, and assist in the maintenance of roses along The Diamond. Local residents and students from Salford University and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) also volunteered in the village-wide exterior conditions survey of each residential property.

5.3 PSVT's heritage policies

This section includes a summary of PSVT's policies for the protection and sustainable management of two of the three main strands of heritage in Port Sunlight: the landscape and our built heritage.

The collections policy and action plan will be developed in 2018.

Full policy documents are included in the appendices, along with PSVT's policies for access and the environment (see Appendices 11-14). Although separate from the heritage policies, these two policies are integral to the care and enhancement of the heritage of Port Sunlight.

A monuments and memorials management policy will be adopted in 2019.

5.3.1 Who are the policies for?

PSVT has developed the heritage policies and objectives to guide and inform decision making. These are core documents for staff and volunteers, setting the standards for work commissioned by PSVT and establishing standards of care for all stakeholders. Refer to the executive summary for a list of stakeholders.

5.3.2 Heritage policies

PSVT has developed policies for landscape and built heritage to guide and inform decision-making regarding cyclical maintenance, repair and new work.

Although separate policies have been adopted for landscape, built heritage the environment and access, all include requirements for documentation, justification, record keeping and review. These shared requirements will ensure the policies are consistently applied and proper records are maintained.

A. Documentation

- i. If proposed work will adversely impact on heritage (and it has been determined that the benefit of the proposed work outweighs the loss or damage to the heritage), then the heritage should be recorded with photographs and/or drawings. These files will become part of the property record and the history of the village.
- ii. All work should be justified or supported by reliable archival information, including period photographs, architectural drawings, maps or site plans, maintenance records and other documents.

B. Justification for intervention

- i. Testing and analysis should form the basis for work (new, restoration or repair) that could affect the material performance, longevity and appearance of heritage.

C. Record keeping

- i. All decisions, justifications, adverse impacts, benefits, direct costs and maintenance costs should be recorded by the decision maker in a central log.
- ii. The log will be reviewed annually to assess performance and to determine if the heritage policies are properly understood and fit for purpose.
- iii. As part of the on-going record of the heritage of the village, the action plan of the Conservation Management Plan should be updated to document interventions or changes.

D. Review

- i. The heritage policies should be reviewed by PSVT every two years to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and in line with current heritage philosophy and practice.

5.3.3 Landscape management policy

The landscape management policy includes all publicly-accessible soft landscape, planted and grassed areas, properties' front open spaces, trees, hedges, footpaths, street furniture and landscape settings (ie adjacent railway banking and New Chester Road). Basic standards of care for the private gardens and ownership boundaries to the backs of the houses are covered under the individual property covenants agreed with PSVT. The policy was written to sit alongside and complement the built heritage policy, the access policy and the environmental policy. For more information, please see Appendix 12.

A. Principles for intervention

- i. All decisions and actions relating to the landscape of Port Sunlight should respect its historic significance and design.
- ii. Change to the landscape (including maintenance, physical intervention or change of land use) should be sustainable and enhance biodiversity.
- iii. Trees should be managed safely in order to restore planned vistas, improve the quality of life for residents, increase resilience to disease outbreaks and enhance the historic character of the conservation area.
- iv. Where a proposed change to the plant/tree species is suggested this should consider the historical context and period, its location in relation to existing buildings and/or infrastructure and maintenance requirements.
- v. All decisions should have a bias and preference for repairing original or character features rather than replacing them (even if they are replaced like-for-like).
- vi. Where external bodies undertake work within the village, all work should adopt the principles of this policy and repairs should be invisible (not discernible from original conditions).
- vii. Major interventions, including new developments and major reconstructions, should integrate landscape proposals that are in-keeping with the scale, material palette and character of the conservation area.
- viii. If there is a proposal to rebuild a lost heritage landscape feature, this work should only be undertaken if it will be truly authentic to the agreed era and documented with photographs, drawings and archival records. If it is not possible to recreate the lost heritage authentically, the bias should be towards a new design that is in keeping with the heritage character of Port Sunlight.
- ix. It is accepted that the landscape is an ever-changing feature of the village and appropriate succession planting should be integrated within the management and maintenance of the landscape.

5.3.4 Built heritage policy

The built heritage policy covers works to the community and commercial buildings, houses and flats, major built-landscape features, and monuments and memorials. It has been written to sit alongside and complement the landscape management policy. For more information, please see Appendix 11.

A. Repairs, maintenance work, minor work and conservation

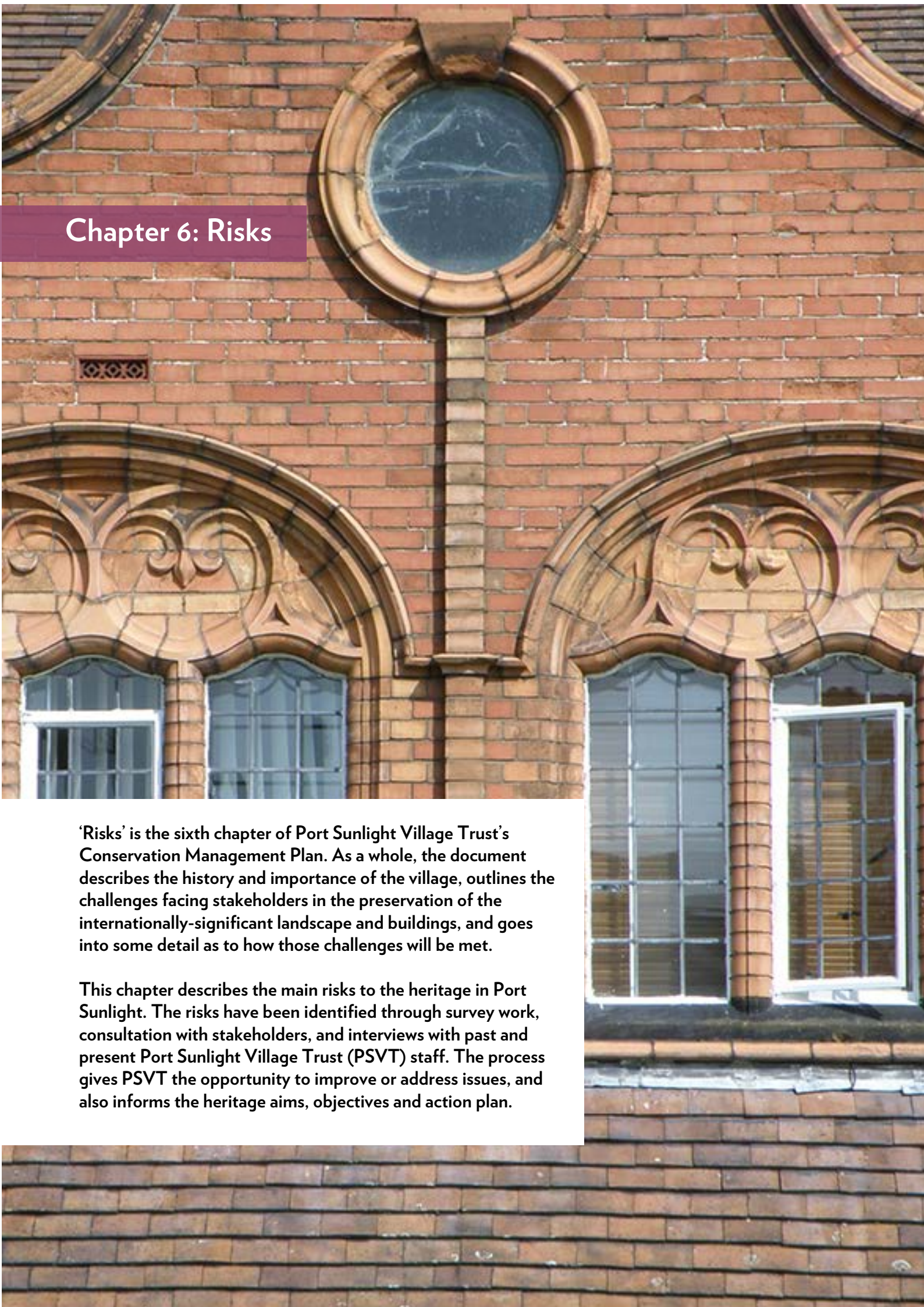
- i. There is no single solution for repairs or interventions to heritage features. Each case should be considered on an individual basis, taking into account: the age of the feature; the varied materials and architectural styles found throughout Port Sunlight; the rarity of the feature to be altered, repaired or replaced; the existing deteriorated

conditions, and any known or suspected previous interventions that might impact on material performance or heritage character.

- ii. Minor repairs should be invisible (not discernible from original conditions).
- iii. All repairs or interventions to a heritage feature should be reversible.
- iv. All decisions should have a bias and preference for repairing original or character features rather than replacing them (even if they are replaced like-for-like).
- v. Repairs or interventions should be designed to do the least harm and/or have the lowest impact on heritage character or features.
- vi. Traditional building materials and techniques should be used for the repair, replacement or improvement of heritage features. If modern materials or techniques are used, they should be time-tested and reversible.

B. New work

- i. Major interventions, including new extensions, new developments and major alterations, should be in keeping with the proportions, material palette and character of the built heritage and the conservation area, but should be readily discernible as modern improvements.
- ii. When assessing the appropriateness of interventions (alterations and new work), special consideration should be given to the preservation of rare or unusual features.
- iii. New interventions (interior, exterior, landscape or vistas) need be considered in a framework of benefit, compared to harm/adverse impact to heritage character. If substantial adverse impacts are identified, the corresponding benefit must be significant to merit loss or damage to the heritage asset.
- iv. If there is a proposal to rebuild lost built heritage, this work should only be undertaken if it will be truly authentic to the original, and documented with photographs, drawings and archival records. If it is not possible to recreate the lost heritage authentically, the bias should be towards a new design that is in keeping with the heritage character of Port Sunlight.



Chapter 6: Risks

‘Risks’ is the sixth chapter of Port Sunlight Village Trust’s Conservation Management Plan. As a whole, the document describes the history and importance of the village, outlines the challenges facing stakeholders in the preservation of the internationally-significant landscape and buildings, and goes into some detail as to how those challenges will be met.

This chapter describes the main risks to the heritage in Port Sunlight. The risks have been identified through survey work, consultation with stakeholders, and interviews with past and present Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) staff. The process gives PSVT the opportunity to improve or address issues, and also informs the heritage aims, objectives and action plan.

6.1 Summary of risks

The key risks affecting Port Sunlight are:

- Erosion or loss of the village's heritage character.
- An incomplete understanding of the history, significance and integrity of Port Sunlight and all associated connections.
- Difficulty in maintaining a sustainable, ecological environment, balancing advances in green technology with the protection and care of heritage assets in Port Sunlight.
- A lack of understanding regarding the statutory policies and protections for heritage.
- The inconsistent management of boundaries.
- A lack of understanding regarding the role of Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT).
- A shortage of local tradespeople with heritage skills.
- Port Sunlight's suitability for 21st-century living, balancing the differing needs of an ageing population with those of families and young people.
- Gaps in knowledge over the condition of the heritage.
- Different resources available to and priorities of the village's stakeholders.
- The relatively high cost of maintaining historic properties.
- Balancing the development of Port Sunlight as a visitor destination whilst preserving the unique heritage of the village.

6.2 Erosion or loss of the village's heritage character

- A. Inappropriate alterations and repairs:** Modern alterations and additions to historic properties and the landscape such as inappropriate tree species, unsuitable street furniture, paving over cobbles and setts (granite paving blocks), inappropriately-designed conservatories, poorly-sited satellite dishes, uPVC windows, poorly-designed extensions and plastic rainwater goods - adversely impact on Port Sunlight's special architectural character and heritage features, and threaten the integrity of the conservation area. Poor maintenance and inappropriate repairs to the built heritage and registered landscapes, such as repointing traditional masonry walls with sand and cement mortar, also result in irreversible loss of heritage materials and features.
- B. Natural weathering:** The natural weathering of Port Sunlight's heritage assets, including damage caused by wind, water ingress and exposure to sunlight or harmful atmospheric deposits, erodes the heritage features of the village. In the worst instances, weathering has resulted in a total loss of detail and ornament.
- C. Demolition:** The loss of key historic buildings and landscape features, such as the bandstand, gymnasium, open-air swimming pool and auditorium, have an immediate impact on the story of Port Sunlight, as well as its significance as a heritage site.
- D. Disaster management:** Risks to the heritage due to natural disasters (such as flooding or storm damage), intentional damage (graffiti) or accidental damage (such as fire damage or a traffic accident) will require a co-ordinated response with various stakeholders including Wirral Borough Council. A lack of understanding around the role PSVT plays in this response could lead to delays in repair works which will ultimately affect the condition of the heritage involved.

6.3 An incomplete understanding of the history, significance and integrity of Port Sunlight and all associated connections.

Throughout Port Sunlight's history, decisions have been made on the maintenance and management of residential and public properties, the landscape, monuments and memorials without understanding the significance of the site or the impact of decisions and actions. This is a village-wide concern and affects all stakeholders. Port Sunlight has been treated as a typical housing estate and has suffered inappropriate repairs and alterations, and sometimes even heritage loss, as a result.

There is also the potential for a slow erosion of the landscape heritage and its cohesive, designed aesthetic through inappropriate alterations. A lack of understanding regarding the history and importance of the Port Sunlight landscape, if combined with a lack of enforcement from PSVT and Wirral Borough Council, could lead to a gradual reduction in significance.

It is essential that the full significance of Port Sunlight as a whole is understood should pressures mount to consider undertaking more new development. The village is a remarkable survivor in its completeness and cohesion, with many areas little altered since the time of the village's founder.

With the exception of the garden centre, which was developed in the 1970s and is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area, recent development in the village has been designed to replicate Port Sunlight's architectural character. This strategy for the design of new work has maintained the cohesive character, scale and material palette of the village. However, there are risks to this approach as revival-style designs for modern buildings can be misleading or devalue the original design concept. New work should be designed to complement the heritage character of the village, but should be of its age and time.

The rear elevations and superblock inner spaces are important to the planning and design of the village, and the simple, dignified and well-considered rear elevations of cottages can easily be compromised or adversely impacted by ill-considered surface-run piping, extractor fans, cables etc and inappropriate rear extensions. Similarly, the landscaping and garage blocks which have taken the place of the former allotments and provide a new focus for these inner landscapes will need to be well maintained and be of a design and quality consistent with that of the rest of the village. If they are not they will negatively impact on the special character and appearance of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

6.4 Difficulty in maintaining a sustainable, ecological environment, balancing advances in green technology with the protection and care of heritage assets in Port Sunlight

Technological advances present more opportunities to retrofit a property and incorporate green technologies such as solar panels, double glazing and insulation. Although these can improve the thermal efficiency of a property and lessen its impact on the environment, at the same time a balance needs to be struck to preserve the special character and appearance of heritage assets in Port Sunlight. Key risks to the Port Sunlight Conservation Area and the wider environment include:

- A. Installation of renewable energy sources:** The installation of on-site, renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, could adversely impact on the heritage character of Port Sunlight if not designed sympathetically.
- B. Impact on the natural environment:** By doing 'too little, too late' in order to preserve the heritage we run the risk of impacting negatively on the natural environment through the use of non-renewable energy, wasteful watering strategies, inefficient recycling and waste disposal and few strategies to promote biodiversity.
- C. Failure to promote benefits of embodied energy and original design intent:** Port Sunlight's housing was designed and built with features to address thermal movement, to control condensation and to take advantage of natural lighting/heating. Many residents are not aware of these inherent features and alter them, little realising their negative impact on both the sustainability and heritage character of Port Sunlight.
- D. Whole house thermal retrofit:** Partial or inappropriate thermal retrofit of Port Sunlight houses could adversely impact on the health of residents and the heritage character of the village. Inappropriate thermal retrofit strategies could increase damp and condensation in houses, leading to health issues for residents and destroying or irreversibly altering period features.
- E. Climate change:** Dramatic changes in weather conditions could pose a big threat to the planting scheme currently adopted in Port Sunlight. If temperatures rise or fall dramatically the current planting scheme will deteriorate and die, and will need to be replaced with more suitable species. The rising water table and storms or high winds as a result of climate change would also cause damage to historic building materials and landscapes throughout Port Sunlight.
- F. Use of pesticides and herbicides:** Although efforts have been made to reduce the use of pesticides, they have not been eliminated completely from the landscape maintenance programme. Changes in legislation in the next ten years could prove a risk to future weed and pest control if pesticides become illegal.

6.5 A lack of understanding regarding the statutory policies and protections for heritage

There is some confusion over the restrictions in place for alterations to listed buildings, registered landscapes and listed monuments and memorials. Incorrect information has been shared through estate agents and conveyance solicitors on the responsibilities of owning a listed property in Port Sunlight. Although results from the 2016 Residents' Survey suggest that 94% of residents are aware that consent is required from PSVT and Wirral Borough Council before making alterations to a listed building, 44% of works specified in the External Conditions Survey (Houses) were to replace inappropriate additions which negatively impact on properties' historic and aesthetic significance. Furthermore, the misconception that the interiors of listed properties (residential and commercial or community buildings) are not protected by planning law has resulted in the loss of original internal features such as decorative fireplaces, cornices, interior doors, layouts and parquet flooring. This is a village-wide risk and affects all stakeholders.

There is also confusion over the nature of the restrictive covenant and how widely this can and should be used as an enforcement tool, both within the village and for properties outside the conservation area boundaries that are still covered by covenants.

6.6 The inconsistent management of village boundaries

The setting of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area can be as important as the heritage assets within its boundaries. Developments just outside the boundaries of the conservation area which do not support its architectural, historic and aesthetic merit impact on Port Sunlight's heritage character. Furthermore, properties, gardens and green spaces located along the periphery of the village do not receive the same priority as internal superblocks which attract greater visitor numbers.

- A. New developments in New Ferry:** The after-effects of the explosion in March 2017 pose a threat to the setting of the conservation area. Some of the properties in New Ferry have been demolished, and Wirral Borough Council is working to develop a regeneration plan for the area. While this could provide social and economic opportunities for Port Sunlight, replacement developments and new uses could negatively impact on the character of the village if not sensitive in scale, materials and design. Failure to redevelop the site for an extended period of time could also affect Port Sunlight as long-term dereliction and vacancy could attract anti-social behaviour and lower property values.
- B. Boundary treatments:** From the 1960's, when allotments fell out of favour, UML allocated individual back gardens to many of the village houses. Simple fences or low walls were introduced to define garden boundaries. Over time, these boundary treatments have been replaced or repaired in a haphazard way. Today they are inconsistent and often unsightly.
- C. Unfilled gap strips:** Unsightly strips of bare earth in the lawns in front of public and residential properties, which have appeared as a result of removal of boundary railings (during the Second World War), affect the aesthetic character of the site and cause maintenance issues for the Trust's landscape team.
- D. Rear gardens:** The subdivision of central allotments to create individual rear gardens for houses during the UML modernisation programme (1960s-80s) has itself become a risk. Because they were created in modern times, and indeed most were created after the houses were nationally listed, the extended gardens are not within the curtilage of the listed houses. The boundary for the listed houses ends at the boundary wall for the yard. However, these gardens are still subject to conservation area controls. This has created some confusion, and an additional burden for property owners over permitted and non-permitted developments. Inappropriate sheds and outbuildings have been built which negatively impact on the character and appearance of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area.
- E. Commuters:** Frequently the village boundaries of Port Sunlight are crowded with cars parked by commuters using trains from Bebington and Port Sunlight stations. Greendale Road, Park Road, Wood Street and Bebington Road are particularly affected. Not only is overcrowding an issue for traffic management but it also creates a risk for Port Sunlight as

a visitor destination and a residential community as it limits parking availability for nearby village businesses and properties.

6.7 A lack of understanding regarding the role of PSVT

There is confusion over the responsibilities and capacity of PSVT which could lead to tensions in the local community if not addressed. Traditionally, PSVT is seen as a solution to all problems, when responsibility lies with Wirral Borough Council, individual property owners or other key stakeholders.

Port Sunlight stakeholders also have failed to engage with the PSVT heritage and operations teams outside required statutory consultation. By not taking advantage of local knowledge and specialist heritage management skills, inappropriate works have been done which negatively impact on our historic landscape, treescape, outdoor art and historic buildings.

6.8 Shortage of local tradespeople with heritage skills

There is an over-reliance on a very small pool of conservation-accredited contractors or those with expertise in heritage skills. This shortage leads to delays in starting work, reduces competition and is not sustainable. It should be recognised this is a national issue, not particular to Port Sunlight.

6.9 Port Sunlight's suitability for 21st-century living, balancing the differing needs of an ageing population with those of families and young people

The conflict between 21st-century living and the restrictions of living in a conservation area is ever present and not always appropriately addressed. Residents expect modern conveniences and standards in a late Victorian and Edwardian infrastructure. While this is possible, strategies to meet these expectations have not been appropriate to the listed buildings or the conservation area. Examples include inappropriate installation of satellite dishes and ill-considered attempts (e.g. blocking air bricks) to stop draughts in homes.

The 2016 Residents' Survey estimated that more than 38% of residents living in Port Sunlight were 65 years or older, and 21% live with a health condition that limits day-to-day activities. An ageing demographic could potentially pose risks, especially in later life when the means and motivation to deal with repair and maintenance work can be significantly reduced. Access requirements mean the introduction of modern additions, both externally and internally, which may adversely impact on the historic character of Port Sunlight.

The survey also highlighted that fewer than 3% of Port Sunlight's residents are under the age of 25. It is clear that there are currently not enough facilities to encourage young people and families to move into the village, which could affect the long-term sustainability of Port Sunlight.

On a positive note, the residential community is fairly stable. 14% of residents have lived in the village for 16-25 years, 10% have lived in the village for 26-40 years and 13% of residents have lived in the village for more than 40 years. In terms of stakeholder engagement, this presents a great opportunity.

6.10 Gaps in knowledge over the condition of the heritage

- A. Existing conditions:** There are gaps in knowledge surrounding the condition of Port Sunlight's heritage. We do not currently know the liability of our housing and commercial

or community stock, either internally or externally. Survey work has been done externally at street level for the houses but without any diagnostics or sampling. No recent surveying of commercial or community buildings has been carried out.

- B. Hydrological study:** Draining and flooding is a big issue in the village, particularly surrounding The Dell, at the far end of Greendale Road (near Bebington Station), the museum green and in the open fields behind Christ Church. An even bigger issue is that there has been no hydrological survey conducted in the village to determine the impact of a steadily rising water table on the culverts and drains. This gap in knowledge currently affects the usability of these public spaces by residents and visitors, creates concerns over property value, and could prevent any future use if not addressed.

6.11 Different resources available to and priorities of the village's stakeholders

There is a large number of stakeholders who have influence on the management and development of Port Sunlight. Not all stakeholders share the same vision for the village or have the same level of resources. This poses a risk to the conservation of built heritage and landscapes within the conservation area, and has created inconsistencies in the management and maintenance of houses, trees, community and commercial buildings and public realm features.

- A. Deferred maintenance:** Many heritage features require regular maintenance to ensure their longevity and performance, including painting and decorating and clearing gutters and downpipes. However, when heritage features are not properly maintained they will deteriorate beyond repair and require replacement. Examples of deferred maintenance were identified in the conditions survey as both high and medium priority issues, and if not prioritised and addressed heritage features will be lost.
- B. Dereliction:** Although PSVT maintains waiting lists for tenancies in the village, some privately-owned houses in the village stand derelict and empty. These vacant homes have become a nuisance for neighbours due to deferred or inappropriate maintenance, fly-tipping in rear gardens and yards, and rodent or other pest infestations.
- C. Landscape:** The historic maintenance of the village landscape has been labour and resource-intensive compared to a similar area of a normal, suburban development. The significance of the landscape is vulnerable to erosion as available resources and stakeholder priorities (including those of PSVT) change over time.
- D. Trees:** Before the spread of Dutch elm disease in the 1970s, the majority tree species in the village was elm. They were subsequently replaced with lime trees which are inappropriate for areas of the village as their wide canopies have altered key, original views and vistas along The Diamond, The Causeway and Windy Bank. These wide canopies also pose a risk to the safety and significance of listed properties. Examples of damaged window frames, slipped roof tiles, fallen branches on nearby parked vehicles and severe shading and overhang on to roofs have all been noted in the landscape and built heritage condition surveys. Furthermore, a disease outbreak affecting lime trees would decimate the treescape in Port Sunlight.

- E. Street furniture:** The lack of a site master plan means that the design of public realm features is inconsistent and their maintenance is unplanned. Both factors have an adverse impact on the historic character of the conservation area.
- F. Paving:** The widespread use of non-permeable paving up to the façade of residential and public buildings in the village has had a detrimental effect on the performance of properties, exacerbating damp problems. Paving ownership and responsibility in Port Sunlight is shared between Wirral Borough Council, which owns public footpaths and access roads, and PSVT which owns paving located on property frontages and any paths which have not been adopted. This shared ownership has created inconsistencies in paving materials used and in appropriate replacement and repair techniques, especially concerning paving surrounding trees.

6.12 The relatively high cost of maintaining historic properties

Some owner-occupiers cannot afford to maintain and repair their properties which could result in dilapidation and eventual heritage loss.

- A. Council resources:** Cuts to local authority budgets mean there is less capacity within Wirral Borough Council to act on enforcement issues. Wirral Borough Council's failure to enforce heritage laws not only erodes heritage but also creates tensions within the village community. However, it should be made clear that there is no time limit for these illegal works to be enforced against.
- B. End of Unilever's covenant:** The end of the Unilever covenant, which has helped to finance PSVT's work since its formation in 1999, will potentially affect its ability to discharge the mission.
- C. Minimum wage:** The rise in the national minimum wage could see a reduction in staffing and skills at PSVT if current staff numbers become unaffordable.
- D. Government:** There are currently no local or national government incentives to support the maintenance and repair of listed properties. This, coupled with the possible impact of Brexit on funding from the European Union, could contribute to there being fewer, more competitive funding streams and therefore less opportunity for financial support in the preservation of Port Sunlight's heritage.

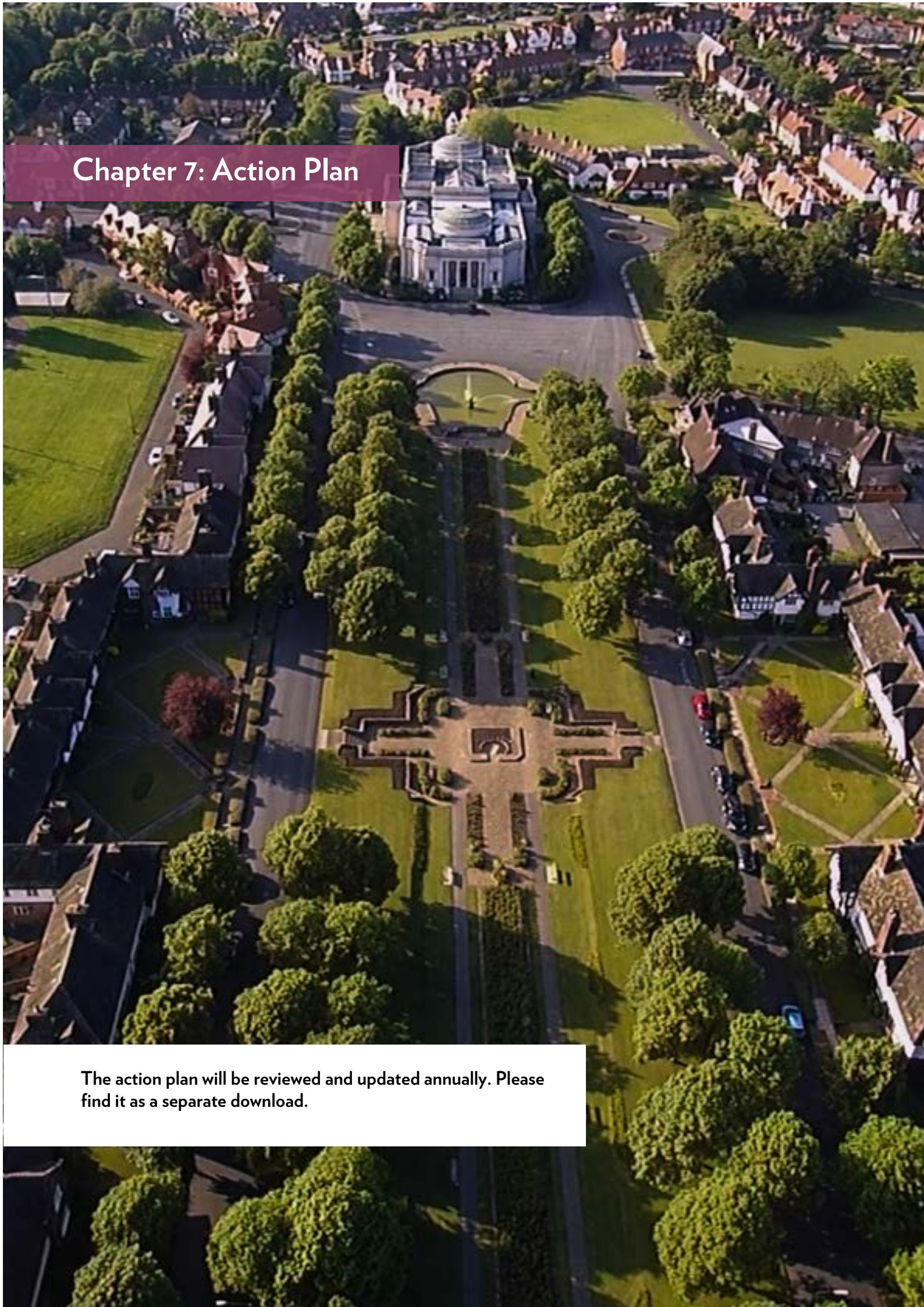
6.13 Balancing the development of Port Sunlight as a visitor destination whilst preserving the unique heritage of the village

If the development of the village as a tourist destination is not managed successfully it could have harmful effects on the fabric which forms Port Sunlight's unique heritage, as well as on residents themselves.

- A. Additional footfall:** Increasing visitor numbers to the village will impact on public realm items such as paving, road surfacing, benches and bins as all will be used more frequently.
- B. Pressure on facilities:** Increasing visitor numbers could see a requirement for extra facilities such as toilets and eateries. If not designed to be in-keeping with the village

aesthetic, these developments could harm the setting and character of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area.

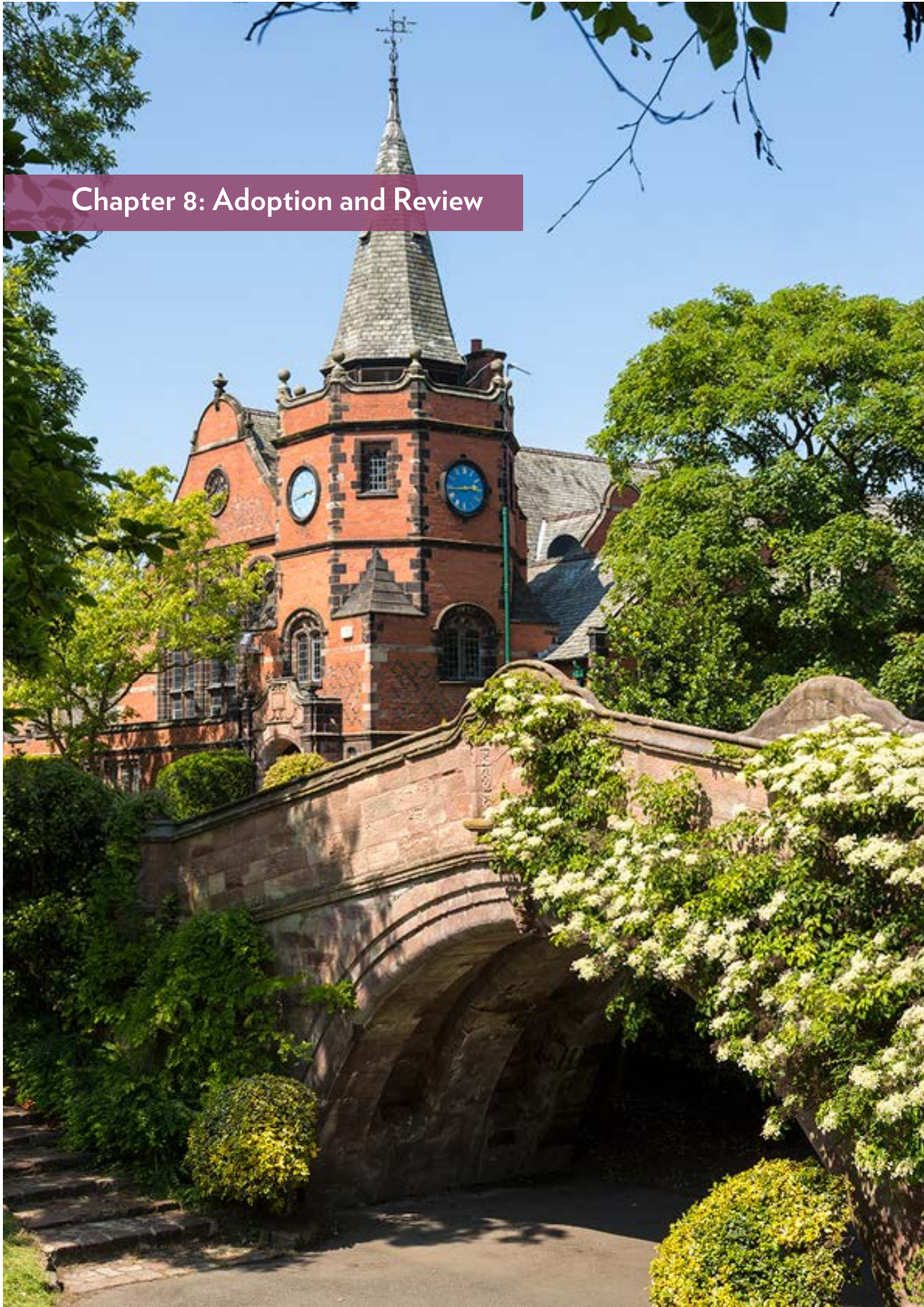
- C. Traffic management:** More visitors will require better traffic management in the village, including more designated parking spaces. If located or designed poorly these could negatively impact on the aesthetic of the village.
- D. Residents:** The quality of life of residents could be negatively affected by greater visitor numbers to Port Sunlight, which in turn could impact on their relationship with PSVT.

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the center is a large, light-colored building with a prominent dome and classical architectural features. Below this building is a large, paved courtyard with a central fountain. The courtyard is surrounded by green lawns and numerous trees. To the left and right of the central area are rows of residential buildings, likely student halls or faculty houses, with varying rooflines and colors. The overall scene is well-maintained and green.

Chapter 7: Action Plan

The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Please find it as a separate download.

Chapter 8: Adoption and Review



8.1 Adoption

The Conservation Management Plan was formally adopted by the PSVT Board of Trustees in February 2018. The local planning authority, Wirral Borough Council, adopted the plan in August 2018.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places on local planning authorities the duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts.

Historic England's "Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Advice Note 1" notes that proposals for conservation and enhancement will be most effective when all the departments within the local authority understand the significance of designation and work corporately to ensure that development decisions respect the historic context. Council adoption will also ensure that the CMP is considered 'local policy' for development decisions affecting the conservation area.

PSVT has worked with Wirral Borough Council to develop and adopt the CMP to ensure a successful and sustainable future for Port Sunlight's heritage.

8.2 Review

The policies, risks and actions outlined in chapters five, six and seven will be reviewed and updated annually to inform other plans, budget-setting and cyclical maintenance and repair programmes. This information will be shared with stakeholders.

An interim review of the plan will take place in autumn 2023 - five years after its initiation – and will be followed by a full review and update in 2028. The heritage directorate will be responsible for undertaking these reviews.

Wirral Council Review & Monitoring

A CMP needs to be current. This CMP has a life of 10 years before needing review. However if circumstances change, the CMP may need earlier reviews and revision, for example if there is:

- New research or information about the significance of the place;
- Deterioration in the condition of the place; and/or
- Impacts from a catastrophic event – for example a fire.

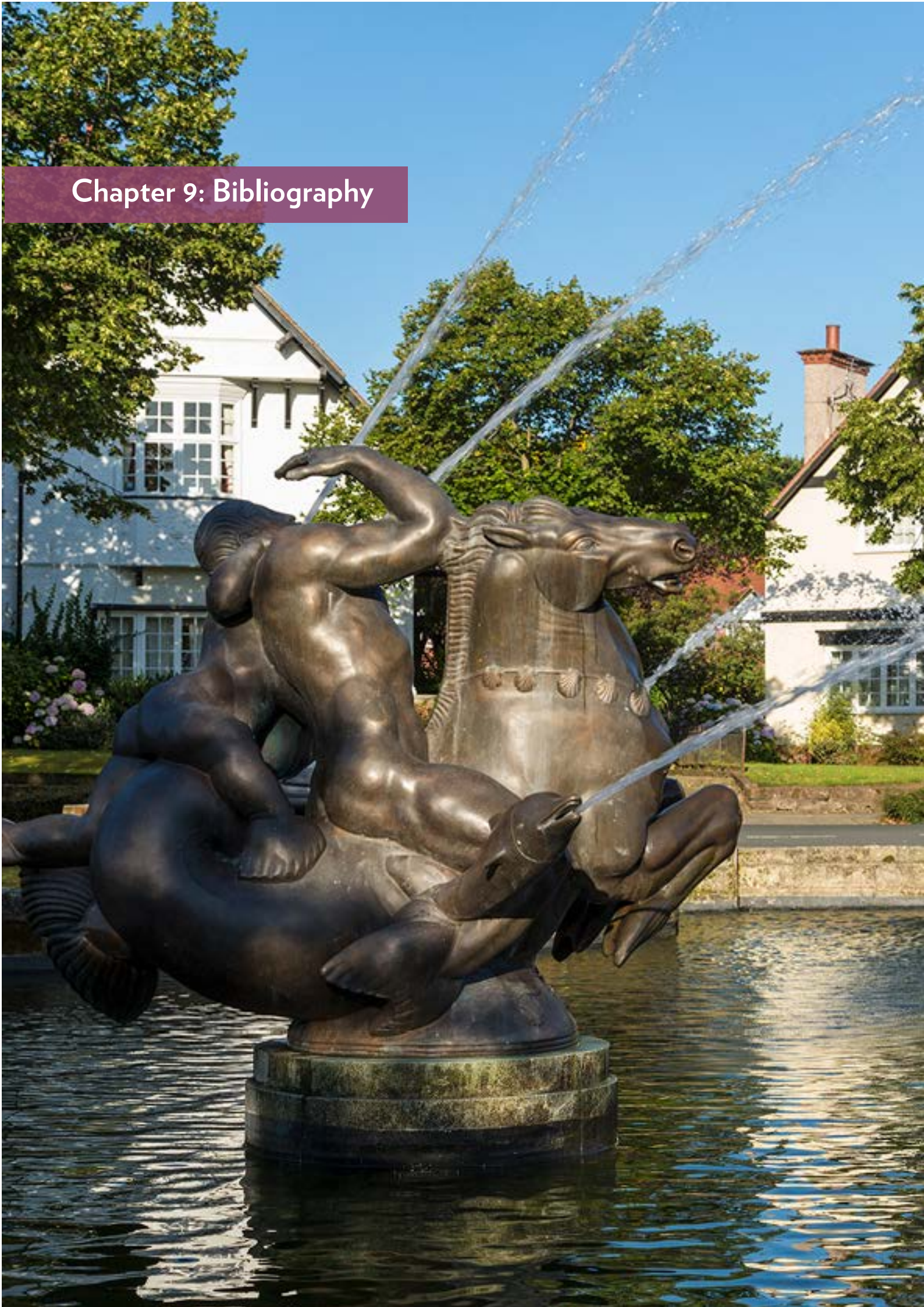
The understanding of history and heritage values can change over time; the CMP therefore needs to be monitored and evaluated periodically, every 1-2 years. Wirral Council can contribute to this by evaluating the quality of planning applications received. This will allow us to measure the condition of the conservation area at that time. Over time, this will allow us to tell whether the condition is improving.

8.3 Storage and access

A print copy of the executive summary of the Conservation Management Plan has been distributed to all village stakeholders. The full plan is available to download from PSVT's

website (portsunlightresidents.com) and Wirral Borough Council’s website. Hard copies can also be viewed by appointment in the PSVT office at 23 King George’s Drive and the Community Hub at Bridge Cottage, 23 Park Road.

Chapter 9: Bibliography



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