

Render Information Sheet – Walls, Chimneys and Outhouses

All exterior walls and chimneys at Port Sunlight's listed homes are protected features. This includes walls and chimneys at the front, sides and rear of the property and outhouse walls. Wall and chimney finishes, details and materials contribute to the heritage value of the listed homes and the character of the conservation area.

The wide variety of revival style domestic designs used for Port Sunlight's houses, and the traditional building materials found throughout, differentiate Port Sunlight from other planned communities. We are unique because of the very individual designs and materials found at your home.

Demolition or large scale repair or rebuilding of the exterior walls and chimneys will require Listed Building Consent from Wirral Council and permission from PSVT.

What is Render?

Renders used in the late Victorian and Edwardian period were typically two or three-part coatings comprised of lime, sand and mild cement. This mix is not to be confused with modern cement renders, which are too inflexible and not breathable and are therefore not suitable for Port Sunlight houses.

Render found in Port Sunlight is smooth or has pebbles or small stones mixed in to give a rough finish (known as pebbledash, roughcast, or dash). Oftentimes the smooth finish render was whitewashed with lime (giving it a white colour), while the rough finishes were left natural (unpainted).

What to look for?

External renders are susceptible to cracking. Cracks in the render could allow damp into the wall. Therefore, it is prudent to check the condition of exterior renders every year. Common signs of deterioration are:

- Bulging sections of render or areas where the render has detached. Defective areas can be found by tapping the render and listening for a hollow sound, which indicates that the render has detached from the wall behind it.
- Cracks in the render.
- Surface loss or erosion of the render.
- Check finishes for blistering or flaking.
- Moss, dark staining or other signs of damp.
- Trailing or climbing plants that have not been regularly pruned or maintained.
- Blocked gutters, hopper heads or downpipes that are causing leaks onto the exterior wall surfaces.

*Although cracks in render are typically related to slight movement in the render itself, some cracking may indicate structural movement for your house. Arrange to have cracks, particularly new cracks or wide open cracks, investigated and remediated.

Maintenance or repairs

The maintenance or repair of renders can be quite challenging. Aside from repainting smooth render with limewash (confirm that the existing finish is limewash before proceeding), most repairs should be done by a renderer or mason who has experience with traditional renders and has worked on listed houses.

- Modern paints such as emulsions do not adhere well to traditional renders and can peel soon after they are applied. In the worst instances, these paints can crack and trap water between the paint layer and the render which damages the render and can lead to damp.
- Unpainted render (pebbledash, roughcast or otherwise) should be left in its natural condition and no coatings applied.

Lead Paint Advisory:

Paints found in older buildings may contain lead. Lead can be harmful to health, particularly for children. Sometimes lead paint has been covered by later, modern paints. If you are unsure if the paint used in your house (including windows, doors, walls, trim and other surfaces) contains lead, it should be assumed to be present and precautions should be taken when stripping, sanding or otherwise preparing painted surfaces.