

External alterations and replacements - General information and guidance

Consent and Heritage Policy

Heritage sites are celebrated, protected and managed through planning policies and privately held covenants. In Port Sunlight village, there are three tiers of protection: statutory listing, conservation area designation and restrictive covenants.

In 1965 the Department for Media, Sport and Culture listed nearly all of the houses and all of the public buildings in Port Sunlight village at Grade II and in 1978 the council designated all of Port Sunlight village as a conservation area. Additionally, all of the houses are subject to restrictive covenants, signed to ensure the character and residential quality of the Village are maintained.

It may seem a bit heavy-handed, but Port Sunlight village is a special place. The village is considered to be one of the finest surviving examples of early urban planning in the United Kingdom. Nearly every period of British architectural history is represented here as a revival style domestic design. Over 30 different architects were involved in the creation of the workers' cottages, public buildings and monuments and memorials, which are set in 130 acres of parkland and gardens. It is one of the North West's primary tourist destinations attracting over 300,000 domestic and international visitors each year.

However, the Village is also your home and your community which makes it a living heritage site, not a collection of house museums. Planning policies such as statutory listing and conservation area designation are in place to properly manage, rather than to prevent change. They establish standards and guidelines that have proven to stabilise and improve property values whilst they protect the special character of the heritage site.

- ### What is statutory listing?

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. The Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport decides on applications for listing under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In England, English Heritage is the statutory body that manages the list and advises local planning authorities on managing changes to our heritage.

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.

Nearly all of the houses and the public buildings in Port Sunlight are Grade II listed. You can search the [National Heritage List](#) for your property's designation, which includes the year the property was added to the List, a brief architectural description and an area map for your property. You can also search the [Images of England](#) database for a photograph and brief description of your property.

- **From a practical standpoint, what does statutory listing mean for property owners in Port Sunlight?**

Listed buildings in Port Sunlight may not be demolished, extended or altered without Listed Building Consent from Wirral Borough Council's planning department. Listing restrictions protect the front, sides and rear of the property as well as the interior, associated outbuildings, boundary walls and other garden features. As the Port Sunlight buildings are Grade II listed, consultation with English Heritage is not typically required, but the Council may consult with English Heritage for a particularly difficult proposal.

- **What is Listed Building Consent?**

Listed Building Consent is written permission (consent) from the local planning authority (in our case Wirral Borough Council) for the demolition of a listed building or the carrying out of any works for the alteration or extension of a listed building in any manner that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Failure to obtain consent when it is needed may be a criminal offence.

A broad range of works at the exterior (front, sides and rear of your property) and interiors require Listed Building Consent. If you are in doubt, please get in touch with the Conservation Adviser at the Port Sunlight Village Trust. Email: h.alcock@portsunlightvillage.com or 0151 644 4813.

There is no fee to make a Listed Building Consent application. The application form and guidance document for completing the application can be found on the Council's [web site](#). Depending on the complexity of your application and the council's current work load, review and processing of Listed Building Consent applications can take up to eight weeks. Be sure to include this time when you plan for your works.

- **How do I apply for Listed Building Consent?**

Guidance documents, application check list and application forms for Listed Building Consent are available from Wirral Borough Council's [website](#).

If necessary, the Trust's conservation adviser can assist you with preparing your application.

- **What if my application for Listed Building Consent is refused?**

If consent is refused, you can amend your plans and re-apply or you have six months to appeal the decision to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The DCLG will decide to uphold the refusal or reverse the decision.

- **What happens if works are done without Listed Building Consent?**

Unauthorised works to a listed building can be a criminal offence and you could be prosecuted for doing the work. The offence is committed by the person who carried out the works (possibly a builder) and by anyone who caused them to be carried out (the owner of the property who instructed a builder). According to English Heritage, the maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine. It is also an offence to fail to adhere to a condition on a listed building consent and the same penalties will apply.

You could apply for retrospective Listed Building Consent, but if the completed work is not found to be appropriate, the application will be refused.

Wirral Borough Council could issue a listed building enforcement notice which requires that all work undertaken without consent is reversed.

Additionally, illegal works (work done on a Listed Building without consent) will be discovered by building surveyors when a property is for sale. The new owner of a property will be responsible for illegal works, so work done without Listed Building Consent can lower property values (as the cost to correct the illegal works will be factored into the sale price) and hinders the conveyancing process.

- **Do I need permission to install a satellite dish or aerial?**

Yes. You need Listed Building Consent from the Council and written permission from the Port Sunlight Village Trust to install a satellite dish, aerial or other antennae. The Trust will review the application you prepare for the Council so there is no additional documentation requirement. Permission will not be granted for satellite dish installation at the front of the property.

An application can be made to the Council and the Trust for retrospective permission if a satellite dish or aerial has been installed without prior consent. Please discuss this option (and possibly relocating the dish or aerial to a more appropriate location) with the Conservation Adviser for the Port Sunlight Village Trust. Email: h.alcock@portsunlightvillage.com or telephone 0151 644 4813.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to replace my windows?**

Yes. Listed Building Consent is needed to replace **ALL** windows in Port Sunlight. Listed Building Consent is required to replace windows at the front, sides and rear of your property as well as roof lights and windows in your outbuildings. According to the terms of the Restrictive Covenants, you also need permission from the Port Sunlight Village Trust to replace ALL windows in your home. The Trust will assess the same application that you prepare for the Council so there is no additional documentation requirement for our review.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to repair my windows and/or exterior doors?**

Most of the windows and exterior doors in Port Sunlight have original details. If you are repairing the windows or exterior doors so that these details will be conserved, consent is not required. If you are not certain, it is best to get advice before you do the work. Please get in touch with the Conservation Adviser at Port Sunlight Village Trust. Email: Heather Alcock at h.alcock@portsunlightvillage.com or by telephone to: 0151 644 4813.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to replace my exterior doors?**

Yes. Listed Building Consent is needed to replace ALL exterior doors in Port Sunlight. Listed Building Consent is required to replace exterior doors at the front, sides and rear of your property as well as doors in your outbuildings. According to the terms of the Restrictive Covenants, you also need permission from the Port Sunlight Village Trust to replace all exterior doors in your home. The Trust will assess the same application that you prepare for the Council so there is no additional documentation requirement for our review.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to do work at the interior of my house?**

It depends. If the proposed works include demolition of partition walls, removal of original details (for example original interior doors, partition walls, base mouldings, trim, fire surrounds, flooring, panelling, loft conversions or removal or alteration of other interior features), then Listed Building Consent may be required. Please contact the Conservation Adviser to discuss the proposed works. Email h.alcock@portsunlightvillage.com or telephone 0151 644 4813.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to replace my yard gate?**

Yes. The boundary walls, garden walls, some fencing and yard gates are protective features in the village. Listed Building Consent is required to replace these features. According to the restrictive covenants, you also need permission from the Port Sunlight Village Trust for this work. The Trust will review the application you prepare for the Council so there is no additional documentation requirement.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to put up a shed or other structures in the garden?**

Yes. You need Listed Building Consent and permission from the Port Sunlight Village Trust to put up a garden shed. The Trust will review the application that you prepare for the council so there are no additional documentation requirements.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to paint the exterior of my property?**

Yes, if the building has not been painted before or if the proposed new colour affects the character and appearance of the building.

There is a schedule of approved paint colour and finish treatments for the exterior of all of the houses in Port Sunlight.

Only the colours and finishes specified for your property in the schedule may be used on the exterior of your house. If these colour and finish specifications are followed (and no other exterior materials are to be painted), listed building consent is not required.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to repair or replace the roof covering?**

No, as long as the repairs or replacement roof coverings are done using exactly the same material. Where possible existing clay tiles, slates, or York stone tiles should be re-used. When new materials are introduced every effort should be made to match the existing roof coverings. The same is true for flashing and sheet metal roofing. Where the original cannot be reused, copper and lead should be used to replace like for like. Consent may be required if there are any proposed changes to the roof timbers or structure or to the appearance of the roof as part of re-roofing works.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to replace rainwater goods?**

It depends. You do not need Listed Building Consent if you are replacing a section of failed cast iron rainwater goods in the same material and with the same profile. However, Consent is required if you propose to replace cast iron rainwater goods in a different material or with a different profile.

This is especially true for ornate cast iron hopper heads. Original cast iron rainwater goods, such as gutters on brackets and hoppers are part of the character and appearance of Port Sunlight. These materials should be repaired and reused whenever possible. If they are beyond repair, replacements should be found to match the original in all aspects.

- **Do I need Listed Building Consent to put up a fence, wall or install gates within the curtilage of a listed building?**

If the proposed structure is to be attached to the main building or any curtilage building, then Listed Building Consent may be required. Planning permission may also be required. Please note that demolition of any existing boundary walls, fencing or gates may require Listed Building Consent or planning permission.

- **What is a conservation area?**

According to Wirral Borough Council, 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'. Conservation areas on the Wirral are designated and managed by Wirral Borough Council.

The individual buildings, street layout, street furniture, open spaces, monuments, trees and gardens all contribute to create the particular character of the Port Sunlight village conservation area. Like statutory listing, conservation area protections are in place to manage change rather than to freeze the village in time. Conservation area protections ensure that new developments do not harm the existing character of the village, by giving additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the loss of trees. New development is required to have a high standard of design.

- **What is the impact of living in the Port Sunlight village conservation area?**

In addition to the requirements for Listed Building Consent, conservation areas designation triggers a second layer of heritage management and protection. Fortunately for the owners of listed buildings in the village, with the exception of the requirement for trees, the works listed below also trigger listed building consent so only one application is required.

Planning permission is required for the demolition of ALL buildings (listed and unlisted buildings) within the Port Sunlight village conservation area.

Removal or pruning of trees requires permission.

Planning permission is required for work in a conservation area (on listed and unlisted buildings) that otherwise might be permitted development. This includes:

- changing the exterior finish of a building,
- the installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe,
- side extensions, rear extensions, roof extensions, including dormer windows, and
- any building or enclosure within the grounds of a house such as garden sheds, garages and summer houses.

- installation of satellite dishes or other aerials
- installation of solar panels
- **What can happen if works are done without planning permission (previously conservation area consent) in the Port Sunlight village conservation area?**

Works done without planning permission (formerly conservation area consent) in a conservation area are a criminal offence. The defences and penalties are the same as for listed buildings.