



COMMISSIONING BRIEF:

Invitation to Quote: Conservation Architect/Principal Designer for remedial roof works at the Lyceum, Port Sunlight Village.

1. Introduction

Port Sunlight Village Trust has been awarded a Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) grant to support vital repairs to our Grade II listed Lyceum building. The Lyceum is home to our SoapWorks Gallery where we welcome thousands of schoolchildren every year as part of our learning programme.

We are now looking for a suitably experienced and qualified Conservation Architect/Principal Designer to support the delivery of this project.

2. About Port Sunlight

Port Sunlight was founded in 1888 by industrialist William Lever. He wanted to provide the employees of his new Lever Brothers soap works and their families with decent and affordable housing and a wide range of facilities, services, policies, and incentives to ensure their well-being and 'betterment'.

Port Sunlight is not the first example of an industrial worker village, but it is one of the finest surviving examples in the world. It was an immediate precursor to and a model for the Garden City movement and influenced the design of planned worker settlements, garden villages and garden suburbs around the world from the turn of the twentieth century to the present day.

Lever Brothers became Unilever in 1929 following a merger with the Margarine Union. Today, Port Sunlight is an advanced manufacturing hub for Unilever and a centre for the company's Home Care and Beauty & Personal Care Research & Development. The company considers Port Sunlight its historic home in the UK.

Port Sunlight is a Conservation Area and most residential properties; public buildings and monuments are Grade II listed. The war memorial is Grade I listed. These provisions provide statutory protection for the village enforced by the local planning authority (LPA) Wirral Council. The council is also responsible for transport and the maintenance of pavements and roads in the village. Further protection is provided through restrictive covenants in the title deeds of all residential property. Two sections of the landscape – The Dell, and The Diamond and The Causeway - are included in Historic England's register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Ten of Port Sunlight's green spaces are also designated for protection as Urban Greenspace by Wirral Council.

The village is home to approximately 2,000 residents, a mixture of owner-occupiers and private tenants, living in 1,059 residential properties.

According to Place Informatics Town Visitor Data, the Port Sunlight Conservation Area had a footfall of just over 1 million people in 2024.

3. About Port Sunlight Village Trust

Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) is an independent charity founded in 1999 by Unilever Plc. Our vision is to make Port Sunlight 'an environmentally conscious and socially vibrant place, where residents are happy and engaged, visitors are captivated, and everyone can learn from its stories'. Our mission: 'PSVT is the charity that keeps Port Sunlight relevant, working with village residents and other partners to tell stories, care for historic collections, buildings, and landscapes, and create an inviting place for people to live, work and visit.'

PSVT is directly responsible for:

- A diverse group of monuments (listed and unlisted).
- A permanent museum collection and village archive.
- All landscapes within the Conservation Area except the back gardens of houses but including the large green spaces to the rear of the properties.
- 292 Grade II-listed houses, equating to approximately one-quarter of the housing stock.
- 22 non-residential/community buildings including The Stables, The Lyceum and Hulme Hall. Some of these buildings have tenants, both community and commercial, others are used by PSVT for its own activities.
- All garages within the village of which there are currently 309. PSVT is also responsible for the rear service road areas where the garage sites are located.
- Port Sunlight Museum & Gift Shop, including the Worker's Cottage, learning experience SoapWorks, and The Gallery at Bridge Cottage.

It also works with partners and stakeholders to:

- Tackle social issues and promote community cohesion.
- Manage the visitor destination and raise its profile.
- Provide conservation advice to homeowners.

PSVT employs approximately 50 members of staff and works with organisational and community volunteers to discharge its charitable objectives. We are governed by a paid Chair and voluntary Board of Trustees with expertise in housing, surveying, finance, conservation, landscape, planning, museums, and heritage.

Village residents contribute to our work, decision-making and village life through a formalised resident engagement structure that includes a number of resident advisory groups and two residents with relevant expertise serve on the PSVT Board.

About the Lyceum

The Grade II listed Lyceum and adjacent Dell bridge were designed by Douglas and Fordham, an architectural practice in Cheshire which also designed many of the buildings in the village centre. John Douglas is considered the most influential architect in Cheshire in the late 19th/early 20thC. The Lyceum, the first public building in Port Sunlight, was built 1894-96 in Arts & Crafts style of Ruabon brick and sandstone to provide village schooling and place of worship. After a dedicated school and church were built, the Lyceum became a staff training college. It now houses the Port Sunlight Museum's SoapWorks interactive gallery for schools, a social club and a commercial architect's office.

The Lyceum is a priority capital project in Port Sunlight Village Trust's Strategic Plan. The Trust recently submitted a successful application to Arts Council England for MEND funding to repair the roof over Soapworks. This project is part of a larger scale ambitious plan to adapt the Lyceum building into a museum and multi-purpose arts space.

The Lyceum is a landmark building, in poor condition, and under-utilised by the public. Its condition is deteriorating, with increasing water ingress. A recent condition survey provides us with a comprehensive report highlighting the need for intervention to arrest deterioration and risk to the built heritage.

4. The project

The Lyceum MEND grant programme will deliver essential works to the SoapWorks roof, adjacent areas, and the spire. We also propose to take the opportunity to introduce solar panels. We have designed this scope to be delivered in one single phase whilst scaffolding and access is in place. The MEND scope will include:

- Renewal of Roofs Over Soap Works and Adjacent Roof: The roof over the soap works (and the adjoining roofs over the side of the Lyceum Club) have issues with the lead valley gutters and across the slate tiles following many years of patch repairs.
- Works to increase capacity of roof/RW goods
- Repair to rainwater goods.
- Repair to cracking and other masonry works.
- Works to Spire and Tower: Whilst not a dedicated part of the Soap Works museum, it forms a primary element of the building and of the entrance façade of which the museum is a part.
- Comprehensive re-roofing/re-slating/introduction of breather membrane.
- Repairs to the weathervane and ironwork.
- Renewal of the flat roof/gutter, new flashings, dressings, overflow etc.

We have an Environmental Sustainability policy to ensure all our work contributes towards positively combatting climate change. It is essential that works undertaken now consider long-term resilience. The scheme therefore proposes:

- Increasing gutter/outlet sizes to deal with the impact of climate-change and more significant one-off rainfall events.
- Introduction of appropriate insulation through areas which are to be re-roofed.
- Introduction of solar PV panels to discreet SoapWorks roof slopes.

Our documents include Stage 3 drawings and a condition survey which are available on request.

5. The commission

We wish to commission a suitably qualified Conservation Architect who will also undertake the role of Principal Designer. The appointed consultant will work closely with the Quantity Surveyor and wider project team to support delivery of this project.

6. Scope of Works

[Conservation Architect/Principal Designer scope of works](#)

RIBA Stage 4

- Preparation of Stage 4 information, preliminaries and all associated documentation.
- Preparation of NBS specification for repair works.
- Principal Designer Services (CDM & BSA).
- Support the procurement of a structural engineer, if required.

RIBA Stages 5 & 6

- Issue documents to QS for preparation of Bills of Quantities. Review and report on quality submission of tenders.
- Conduct site inspections (minimum 16 for a c.32-38-week programme).
- Attend on-site start-up meeting.
- Attend on-site monthly project team meetings (these will be scheduled to coincide with site inspections when these occur).
- Administer the building contracts to practical completion, including responding to queries, site responses, and all other associated work.
- Principal Designer Services (CDM & BSA).
- Provide written information to the client to support MEND grant claims and associated reporting.
- Complete defects inspection after 12 months.
- Work closely with the Quantity Surveyor to ensure co-ordination of all information.

7. Skills and Experience

Proven experience of working on large scale Heritage projects to tight deadlines.
Strong communication skills.

8. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

PSVT is actively working to be a diverse and inclusive organisation. As part of PSVT's commissioning practice, we welcome submissions from people who are from the Global Ethnic Majority, Disabled, Neurodiverse, D/deaf, LGBTQ+, and/or from working-class backgrounds.

9. Budget

The budget allowance for this contract is £31,300 ex VAT

10. Reporting relationships

Director of Heritage
Conservation & Maintenance Manager

11. Application method

You are invited to submit a proposal that must demonstrate the following:

- Your proposed approach and schedule to deliver the scope of work described above.
- Examples of previous relevant projects, the names of two referees who have experience of working with you on similar projects and CVs for you (and your team, if applicable).
- Breakdown of costs by scope of work.

12. Timescales

Date	
20/07/2026	Invitation to Quote advertised
07/08/2026	Deadline for responses

12/08/2026	Clarification interviews
14/08/2026	Contract award

Indicative delivery programme

Please note that the programme will be reviewed and finalised when the project team has been appointed.

Conservation Architect/Principal Designer appointed	14/08/2026
Quantity Surveyor appointed	14/08/2026
Project start up meeting/mobilisation	w/c 17/08/2026
Preparation of tender documentation including all RIBA Stage 4 drawings and appointment and mobilisation of contractor	01/09/2026 - 01/03/2027
Works on site	02/03/2027 - 20/03/2028
Completion Report	21/03/2028 - 03/04/2028

Please note that the above programme may be subject to change and will be finalised when the project team has been appointed.

13. Further Information

To submit a response please send the below information by the deadline above to j.milton@portsunlightvillage.com

If you have any queries, please email j.milton@portsunlightvillage.com and G.Dean@portsunlightvillage.com

PSVT's 3-year Strategic Plan 2025-28 and 10-year Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2018-2028 are available to download from our website www.portsunlightvillage.com



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