

HOME BUYERS GUIDE

BUILT TO INSPIRE

PORT SUNLIGHT

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This guide has been created in partnership with Port Sunlight Village Trust's Heritage Homes Advisory Group, a volunteer led group that supports residents and homeowner with signposting when it comes to their homes, including maintenance and planning queries.

A ROLE MODEL VILLAGE

Port Sunlight is one of the most distinctive historic villages in the United Kingdom. Designed in the late nineteenth century as a model industrial village, it is recognised for its unique architecture, landscaped streets and strong sense of community.

Today the village remains a special place to live because its character has been carefully preserved. Most of the buildings are listed, and the village itself is protected as a conservation area, which means there are a number of obligations to residents.

For all, this means living somewhere that is both historically significant and architecturally unique.



02 Why the village is protected

The special character of Port Sunlight is protected through conservation policies and heritage legislation, enforced by the local authority (Wirral Council), with support from Port Sunlight Village Trust.

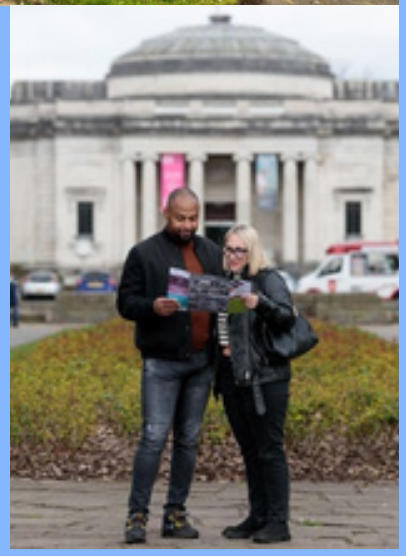
These protections help ensure that the village's buildings, streets and green spaces retain the qualities that make them unique, for residents this means that:

Alterations to buildings will require consent in most cases.

There are resources and groups including Heritage Homes Advisory Group, and the Trust's conservation team that can support your queries.

While these protections create responsibilities, they also ensure that the historic character of the village is preserved for future generations.





03 Organisations that support the village



Several organisations play important roles in supporting the conservation and management of the village.

Port Sunlight Village Trust works to protect the heritage and character of the village while supporting its community.

Planning and heritage regulation is overseen by **Wirral Council**, which administers conservation and listed building legislation from Historic England.

The Trust's Advisory Groups and the **Port Sunlight Village Residents Association** also help to ensure accountability and promote voluntary activity.

Together, these organisations and groups help ensure that the village's historic environment is protected while continuing to support people who live here.

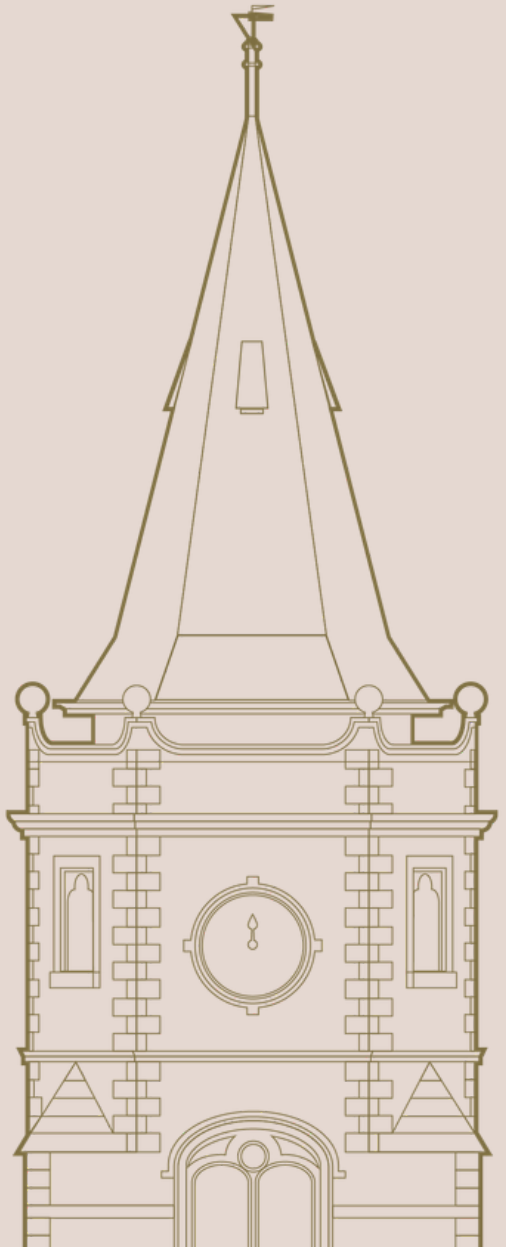
04 What custodianship means for homeowners

Owning a home in Port Sunlight is about more than property ownership; it means **becoming a custodian** of a nationally significant heritage asset. The village remains one of the country's finest surviving model villages because generations of homeowners have cared for its buildings with sensitivity and respect.

Nearly all the homes in Port Sunlight are listed buildings, and will appear on the **Historic England** asset register - this sets out the unique descriptors that form the listing of the building. Not a single building in the village is the same, all are unique in their own way.

As a custodian, your role is to maintain and repair your home in ways that preserve its historic character while ensuring it remains a comfortable place to live.

Every thoughtful decision, from repairing original features to using appropriate materials, helps protect not only your home, but the unique character of the village.



05 Myths and misunderstandings

“Because I own the property, I can do whatever I want.”

Reality: While you are free to enjoy your home, alterations that affect its historic character will usually require approval before work begins. This helps protect not only your property, but the unique character of the village as a whole. Remember breaches of planning are legally enforceable.

Contact Wirral Borough Council if you are unsure if consent is required.

“I heard PVC windows are allowed at the rear of my property.”

The rear of a listed building is protected in the same way as the front. Replacement windows should match the approved design, materials and appearance of the original building. Some rear windows may be replaced under the Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO), but they must follow the approved specifications.

The Village Trust has a range of documents, plans and supporting information around LLBCOs.

“If the previous owner installed it, it must be compliant?”

Not all alterations carried out by previous owners will have received the necessary approvals. As the current owner, you may become responsible for addressing unauthorised works, even if they were completed many years before you purchased the property.

Check with your solicitor and surveyor if you are unsure of any previous repairs or alterations in the property.

06 Compliance and planning



Most external alterations to listed buildings require formal consent before work begins.

This ensures that changes preserve the architectural and historic significance of both the individual building and the wider village.

When purchasing a property, it is also important to understand that previous alterations may not have received the necessary approvals.

Features such as replacement windows, doors or other external works may need to be regularised or replaced if they do not comply with current heritage requirements.

Checking the **planning history** of a property before purchase and seeking advice before carrying out works can help avoid unexpected costs and ensure your home continues to remain compliant.

Contact Wirral Council if you are unsure whether consent is required: heritage@wirral.gov.uk

07 What is a LLBCO?

A Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) is a legal framework that allows certain pre-approved works to be carried out without submitting a separate Listed Building Consent application each time.

In Port Sunlight, the LLBCO covers specific alterations, such as approved designs for certain rear windows, doors and gates, provided they follow the published specifications. It helps simplify routine works while ensuring that repairs and replacements remain sympathetic to the historic character of the village.

If proposed works fall outside the LLBCO, separate consent may still be required, so it is always recommended to check the correct approval route before work begins.

The full LLBCO, toolkit and supporting documents can be downloaded from wirral.gov.uk

Beyond the jargon and technicalities of listed buildings, many residents feel a sense of pride and duty of care towards their homes. Which makes the village a special place to live. You can find more on living in the village at **portsunlightvillage.com**





06 Understanding your responsibilities



Did you know that the front gardens are owned and maintained by Port Sunlight Village Trust? With conditions attached to how they are used.

Historic buildings require specialist care, and maintaining their character is an important part of home ownership in Port Sunlight.

When original features reach the end of their life, replacements should match the historic building in both material and appearance.

For example, broken windows may require heritage glazing, while corroded gutters and downpipes should be repaired or replaced with cast iron.

These requirements help preserve the building's architectural integrity and ensure repairs remain compatible with its historic construction.

Any future owner, will also be responsible for addressing any unauthorised alterations that form part of the property,

09 Why materials matter

The materials used to repair and maintain a historic building are just as important as its appearance. Traditional materials such as lime mortar, timber, cast iron and heritage glass were chosen because they work together, allowing buildings to breathe and perform as intended.

Did you know linseed and lime based paints are the preferred way to treat interior and exterior surfaces of heritage properties?

Modern substitutes, fillers, expanding foams, cement-based mortars, etc can trap moisture and cause long-term damage to historic brickwork, stone and interiors.

Original interior features, including plasterwork, timber joinery, staircases and fireplaces, also form part of the building's listing and historic fabric and should be retained wherever possible.

Using appropriate materials and conserving original features helps protect both the performance of the building and prevents the need for expensive remedial action.





10 Home buyers checklist

- [ ] **Understand your responsibilities**
  Know what you'll be responsible for maintaining once you become the homeowner.

- [ ] **Check previous alterations**
  Identify windows, doors, extensions or other changes that may not be compliant.

- [ ] **Understand the covenants**
  Ask your solicitor to explain restrictions and obligations attached to the property.

- [ ] **Check permissions and consents**
  Confirm previous alterations received the necessary planning and heritage permissions.

- [ ] **Budget for heritage repairs**
  Traditional materials and specialist repairs may cost more than standard replacements.

- [ ] **Look beyond the building survey**
  Specifically inspect historic features, rainwater goods, boundaries, windows and external joinery.

Useful links

portsunlightvillage.com/residents
wirral.gov.uk (LLBCO)
wirral.gov.uk (Port Sunlight Conservation Area)

Next steps

This guide was produced by the Heritage Homes Advisory Group in partnership with Port Sunlight Village Trust. For more information and guidance on the content, and advice on buying in Port Sunlight please contact:

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PORT SUNLIGHT VILLAGE TRUST