

PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LANDSCAPE REPORT



**BUREAU
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VOLUME 1
Text & Appendices



on behalf of
PORT SUNLIGHT VILLAGE TRUST

February 2007

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VOLUME 1 Text & Appendices

Read with Volume 2 (Figures)



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LANDSCAPE REPORT

VOLUME 1

incorporating
Ecology &
Landscape History

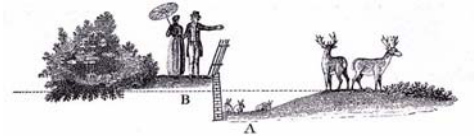
BUREAU VERITAS LANDSCAPE

The Heath Business & Technical Park
PO Box 13 Runcorn Cheshire WA7 4QX



BUREAU VERITAS ECOLOGY

The Heath Business & Technical Park
PO Box 13 Runcorn Cheshire WA7 4QX



FIONA GREEN

Landscape Historian

Station House Lanchester
Co. Durham DH7 0HA

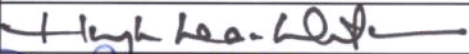
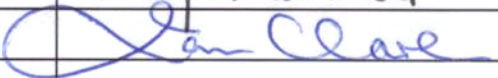
Produced in association with

BYROM CLARK ROBERTS (Architects)

Washbrook House, Talbot Road
Manchester M32 0FP

APPROVAL SHEET AND FOREWORD

Port Sunlight Conservation & Management Plan

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	Name:	Signature:
Author:	Hugh Lea-Wilson	
Approved:	Ian Clare	
Issued for and on behalf of Bureau Veritas HS&E by the above signatories.		

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Port Sunlight Conservation & Management Plan

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PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN LANDSCAPE REPORT (including Ecology and Landscape History)

February 2007

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PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 Background to the Plan

- 1.1 Many plans and reports have been drawn up for the village of Port Sunlight from its inception to the end of the 20th century, but none of these have been focussed on enabling the village to develop a positive plan for its future in terms of practical conservation, management and development.

To this end, Bureau Veritas have been part of the team selected by the Port Sunlight Village Trust (hereafter referred to as PSVT), together with Byrom Clark Roberts (BCR) and Fiona Green (Landscape Historian) to produce a Conservation & Management Plan which we trust will be a practical, working document to assist PSVT in conserving, enhancing and developing the village in a sustainable manner for the foreseeable future.

- 1.2 This section of the report is authored by Bureau Veritas, chartered Landscape Architects with a specialism in historic landscapes.

After brief consideration of the historic evolution of the landscape (covered in detail in Appendix C), this report:

- sets out the current character of the village defined by its built form and landscape
- illustrates these together with analysis of key strengths and weaknesses of each character area
- assesses the significance and risks to key landscape elements within each area of the village
- considers potential opportunities within each area, with some outline recommendations and management/maintenance measures,
- schedules generic issues of concern (related to type, not area), and
- concludes with a summary list of Prioritised Outline Recommendations.

- 1.3 Many Conservation & Management Plans are often very bulky and unwieldy documents which are less practical and useable, but the intent of this document from the outset has been to provide as accessible and practical a document as possible. Following initial site surveys and consultations, the significance and risks to key landscape elements within the village were identified and scheduled, together with outline recommendations for each Landscape Character Area. These have been combined in one table, included as Appendix A, which forms the background detailed data for the report.

- 1.4 The central and most important part of the landscape report, however, are the illustrated character sheets in Volume 2, which combines illustrations of key landscape elements for each Landscape Character Area together with a summary of the above in the form of strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities.

- 1.5 The scope of the report does not extend to every piece of landscape on the estate and does not presuppose to have all the answers, but recommendations are clearly given regarding where further research or survey are needed. Equally, it is not the place of this report to prescribe full policy aims and objectives for the estate, but management and maintenance recommendations are given to assist PSVT in this process.

- 1.6 It is important to note how this report builds upon others carried out in the past. Gillespies (Landscape Architects) were commissioned by UML Ltd for a number of projects in the 1990's related to the village, the most significant of which were a limited 'Landscape Management Plan' in 1995 (unfortunately not showing any trees), and a limited Condition Survey in 1997.

The former has been used to good effect by PSVT as a basis for compartmentalising the village into sub-areas for everyday maintenance operations, and is included as Figure 05. Both, however, are somewhat restricted in their usefulness for ongoing management and steering a course for the future direction of the village, hence the reason for this commission.

2 Stakeholders

- 2.1 The general programme of stakeholder participation and consultation is described separately by BCR, but additional consultation with key stakeholders has also been carried out by Bureau Veritas, including with Andrew Church (PSVT) and Wirral Borough Council.
- 2.2 Results from the Community Consultation carried out in October 2006 are also referred to in BCR's report, which also includes a plan summarising the results of the 'Townscape Notation Exercise'.

3 History of the Village

- 3.1 The village in its current form has evolved as a result of a very carefully managed, one could even say stage-managed approach, which aligns it alongside other 'model villages' such as Saltaire in Yorkshire, rather than the Garden City Movement pioneered by Ebenezer Howard. Even its name can be seen in this regard. Reference can be made to the idealised approach to the development of Port Sunlight outlined in BCR's report, and the phased aspect of its development by Fiona Green in Appendix C.

It is not intended to duplicate either of these fuller accounts in this section, but a brief overview of the historical development of the village is imperative to enable sense to be made of the village as it stands today.

- 3.2 Figure 2 Early Village Phasing Plan (1889/ 1905/ 1910/ 1914)
The early development of the village took place at a remarkable pace, illustrated by the phasing sequence of these 4 plans over a 25 year period.
- 3.3 Figure 2A: Plan of the Village, 1889
This is the first surviving plan we have of Lever's development, proudly labelled 'Plan of the Village of Port Sunlight', but at that stage indicating only the beginning of the factory complex and the first new housing at the southern end of Bolton Road. The No. 1 Soapery was completed and operational by 1889, the remainder of the factory taking several more years to build. Of particular note are the 3 tidal creeks in their 'natural' state prior to being filled in during later phases. The small hamlet of Primrose Hill was already in existence adjacent Bebington Station to the north, part of which was later to be demolished to accommodate the new village layout.

3.4 Figure 3 Bird's Eye View, 1898

This is a remarkable illustration of the early site development, showing the Soapery and offices as fully intended (not fully built by 1898), and the first phase of the village, built around the Dell. This significant inclusion of open space into the planning process was therefore evident from the very beginning, and set the scene for future development.

In the middle distance of the drawing, one can see the perimeter rapidly being built up, with classic 'circus' residential layouts around open space/allotments adjacent what is now the New Chester Road, but with the centre still significantly crossed by the tidal creeks and left largely open. The railway is seen on the left, and Lever's astute choice of location is evident - as well as in its practical industrial and economic benefits - in how well the factory and village are 'shown off' to those arriving by train, either at Bebington Station or *en route* to Birkenhead.

Reference should also be made at this point to Figure 9, outlining the principle thirteen Landscape Character Areas of the current village, which have been numbered to correlate as closely as possible to its phased development. These numbers are then sub-divided further for use in consultation and cataloguing processes. Therefore, related to this Figure 3, current character areas can clearly be seen:

- Area 1 Lever Factory Complex
- Area 2 The Dell
- Area 3 Phase 1: residential development - South Village
- Area 4 Phase 2A: residential development - South-east Village
- Area 5 Phase 2B: residential development - North-east Village
- Area 6 Phase 2C: residential development - North Village (just beginning)
- Area 7A Phase 2D: residential development - West Village (just beginning)
- Area 8 Phase 2E: as then undeveloped open space and tidal creeks

3.5 Figure 2B: Plan of the Village, 1902

This correlates closely to the above drawing but illustrates how, over a 6 or 7 year period, most of the current road system was put in place, a number of key public buildings had rapidly been built (Christ Church, Church Drive School, and Bridge Inn in the previous tidal zone, and Hulme Hall and the Auditorium), perimeter residential development was almost complete to the north and west, and the low-lying tidal areas were being filled in on a semi-formal basis.

The allotment gardens can clearly be seen within each 'superblock' of residential development, and were thus 'designed in' to the village from its inception. They were seen as private, productive internal spaces, in contrast to the external frontages showcasing the village from both the railway and the main road network. Having said this, the quality of brickwork to the rear yard walls was quite exceptional and is still evident, in contrast to later boundary treatment to extended rear gardens.

In terms of the landscape design and philosophy for progressing development in the western central area surrounding the Diamond, it is clearly evident that the main designers were struggling to come up with a layout to enable a confident progression through this area. This is evidenced by the three proposed roads between the Diamond and Hulme Hall, which were not implemented.

3.6 Figure 2C: Competition Plan for Central Boulevard, 1911

In light of this, a competition was organised in 1910 to resolve this central dilemma, and Figure 2C illustrates an adaptation by Thomas Mawson (1911) of the winning design by Ernest Prestwich (1910, illustrated in Fiona Green's Report, Plan 3), whose genius hinged on the following:

- introducing a formal axial layout to extend the Diamond towards Hulme Hall (shown in pink),
- creating a new boulevard up to the newly built Christ Church, thus setting up a 'show-off' space at the cross-roads of these two boulevards,
- foreseeing an opportunity to create a radial road network which focussed maximum attention on this church, the largest United Reform Church in Merseyside,
- and achieving a minimum amount of demolition in the process (namely the Gymnasium and 2 small terraces of housing either side of the Diamond).

Many of the already-commenced housing blocks were shown completed on his plan (shown bright yellow), but his proposals were not all inspired. The proposed housing in light yellow/buff appears to be just filling in many of the open spaces both from the previous layout and his own competition design, which seems at odds with the policy of open space provision already established for the village. If fully implemented, his design would have resulted in no large open spaces remaining in the village apart from the Diamond and Central Boulevard.

The layout does, however, largely resolve the design challenges of how to 'complete' the development south of the Central Boulevard, envisaging a civic theme which ties in the above with the developing civic nature of Bolton Road. Proposals included an educational quadrangle comprising a library, Arts Society and various schools, together with covered baths, and also incorporating a replacement gymnasium. The latter was built as shown and remained into the 1930's, but the unresolved nature of the proposed 'quadrangle space' has remained an enduring weakness in the overall village design which still exists today.

A strong principle of providing allotments had already been established, but perhaps with the loss of some of the larger open spaces, this plan advocates a balancing provision of formal recreational facilities (the gymnasium was rebuilt, and a number of additional bowling greens and tennis lawns were proposed but not implemented).

3.7 Figure 2D: Plan of the Village, 1914

A bold decision was taken in 1911 to implement the main tenet's of Prestwich's design (incorporated by Mawson as above), and by 1914 we observe the new axial formation of the extended Diamond and Central Causeway already in place, with new housing development completing the main blocks either side and north of the Diamond.

Also implemented were two roads and associated housing radiating from Bolton Circus, deliberately focused on the factory and the church. The full radiating network of paths north and east of Christ Church were also in place by around 1914.

Noteable from this plan was the footprint of the proposed Art Gallery, very similar to its final form, and the completed Cottage Hospital, similar but different to that stylishly drawn on the competition plan.

Also of note is the string of open spaces curving round from New Chester Road through the hospital site, either side of the Art Gallery and on towards Bebington Station. This maintained Lever's philosophy of show-casing the village to the outside world, with significant roads and green fingers focusing in towards the Art Gallery and hospital. The extended Diamond focussed even more formally on the intended gallery, and perhaps most significant was the double Causeway, drawing views from passing trains towards the church.

The gymnasium was also built as above (relocated from the site of the current war memorial to the south), and a formal recreation ground set out opposite, together with a tree nursery adjacent Hulme Hall to facilitate future large scale tree planting.

3.8 Figure 4A: Plan of the Village, 1917

This plan is only 3 years after that above, but shows the confident footprint of the Art Gallery (opened in 1922), and perhaps most significantly the principle of pavement tree-planting to virtually every road, (as opposed to tree-planting in verges as carried out in later phases, but not part of the original design). It seems the extended allotments and cemetery indicated on the plan were not realised, since the radial network of 1914 (Figure 2D) is still present in 1938 (Figure 4B).

A notable event in 1920 was the removal of garden railings at the rear of foot-paths, which has had a significant effect on the landscape character of the village ever since (referred to later).

The auditorium was pulled down in 1937 and the blue corner of housing was also demolished in later years, purely for the vain interests of Lord Lever in show-casing the new Lady Lever Art Gallery to the railway and thus the outside world.

3.9 Figure 4B: Plan of the Village, 1938

The new housing in this area is fully illustrated on this plan, either side of Windy Banks, and framing the new view toward the art gallery and memorial. The Duke of York Cottages completed development in the north-west corner, and interestingly two new terraces are shown to Jubilee Crescent, which was rounded-off by this time as indicated in the original competition design.

The Diamond was also framed at this point by a new classical arch at its southern head, and an attempt was made to push a larger access through to Bolton Road, which still remains unsatisfactory, certainly for visitors approach the art gallery by car. A war memorial 'The Defence of the Home' was built at the junction of The Diamond and The Causeway, designed by Sir William Goscombe John and unveiled in 1921. This is a memorial of national significance, considered by many as second to none outside London.

A formal pool was also put in place at the other end of the Diamond, and the 'Sea Piece' Fountain designed by Charles Wheeler completed in 1949. The gymnasium and open-air baths were demolished in future years, again highlighting the unresolved nature of this area south of the Diamond.

3.10 Figure 4C: Plan of the Village, 1995

A rather second rate garden centre occupied this site for a time, in shocking contrast to the formal nature of the Diamond, and in particular the war memorial at the Diamond/ Causeway.

The most important feature of this plan, however, is the treatment of the rear spaces to the housing blocks. Only one set of allotments remains, defined by Bolton Road and New Chester Road, but otherwise every space has been developed to accommodate changing trends, namely:

- increased car ownership (incorporation of rear (unadopted) roads, garages and parking spaces),
- the desire for 'personal space' (hence extended rear gardens to many blocks),
- and the dramatically reduced demand for allotments.

Other features of note on this plan are the two buildings north of the hospital site (block of flats and a flat-roofed 'Data Centre' built in the 1980/90's), and the formal bowling greens in place of previous tennis courts or amenity space.

3.11 Figure 4D: Plan of the Village, 2005

The two significant features on this plan are the new Port Sunlight Garden Centre replacing the original one south of The Causeway/Queen Mary's Drive and 'Osbourne Court' Between Central Road and Pool Bank, which sadly contravenes all previous planning guidance and assumed forms of development. This was basically show-casing frontages to the outside road whilst maintaining all rear facades internally, which this development blatantly disregards. Furthermore, a leftover green strip has been created, which is both difficult to develop for housing and also of limited value for amenity purposes.

4 **Landscape Character of the Village**

4.1 Figure 6 Aerial Photograph

As already inferred, much of the present landscape character is determined by the extent and nature of tree cover in the village, and this figure helpfully provides a quick impression of tree coverage. Close inspection reveals much about both tree size as well as planting density, and the photograph has been overlain with the current OS map for added clarity.

The implications of this are picked up in following sections.

4.2 Figure 7 Landscape Character Plan

The main character sheets of Volume 2 illustrate the village character in detail, with 2 pages of photographs for each area, the first page of each area being particularly relevant in their focus on strengths and weaknesses. Figure 7, however, has been developed to highlight principal features on a generic basis, in order to provide an overall appraisal of landscape character. These are briefly considered below, with initial assessment being given to vertical elements in the landscape, since these are such a strong determinant of landscape character.

4.3 Residential frontages

Reference should be made to the full report by BCR, but clearly the attention to detailed design and careful commissioning of architects to maximise individuality and character has been hugely significant in creating an historic village of such national and even international reknown. This individuality is evident on three scales, firstly on individual houses and buildings themselves, secondly on clusters or mini-terraces of typically four to seven properties each, many of which have their own particular style, and thirdly on an area basis where zones of housing have been deliberately designed around central rear spaces, therefore ensuring (in almost every area) that only residential frontages 'front' onto public roads.

On an individual level, tenants have a fairly free reign to express their individuality within rear gardens, but a very disciplined approach has been taken by PSVT to ensure that the above frontage character is not compromised by satellite dishes etc and inappropriate fencing and planting. However, of note are the annual competitions for 'Best Front Garden/Border', 'Best Tub/Trough or Window Box' and 'Best Hanging or Wall Basket' (as well as rear garden competitions), which have resulted in some residents trying to outdo each other, with some truly outstanding creations as a result.

Many of these courts or 'superblocks' of housing form the basis of the character areas featured on Figure 9, but they are also clearly evident in the yellow-brown shaded areas on Figure 7.

4.4 Frontage Trees to Residential Areas

These superblocks can largely be divided into three categories, namely those without trees to frontages, those with trees in verges (represented by green circles on Figure 7, for instance King George's and Queen Mary's Drive) and those having trees within pavements, usually just behind kerblines (green dashes).

Furthermore, many of these lines of trees were planted at very close centres (3.75-4.5m), particularly along the formal axes of The Diamond, and are now consequently forming very dense canopies which, although maybe acceptable in the public avenues, are already causing problems of over-shading to many streets.

4.5 Frontages with and without railings

An original design characteristic of the village was the inclusion of formal iron railings at the back of footpaths, but railings to residential frontages were largely removed in 1920. This has opened the village up to good effect, but one negative result was the resultant troughs at the rear of footpaths which were not filled in, and have since swallowed large chunks of annual maintenance budgets with the multiple maintenance operations required.

Some sections have been retained to public buildings such as around the church (very high quality) and other lengths either butchered or renewed with very poor quality railings (for instance around the school, where 4 different types are noted, some not even repainted). This is therefore a key issue to be addressed.

4.6 Tree Cover to Open Spaces

Pirko Higson & Associates were commissioned in the late 1970's to assess the devastation caused by Dutch Elm Disease and develop a tree replanting policy to replace these major losses. The results can clearly be seen on the aerial photograph, Figure 7, with principal planting of limes to The Diamond, the above residential frontages and parts of The Causeway (especially the west), together with many of the open spaces, notably east of the church. These are shown by full green lines.

Unfortunately, the species of lime chosen was too vigorous and tree centres were too close (as above). The result has been an inherited landscape which is already in urgent need of management.

4.7 Lighting Columns

The main road network is all adopted by Wirral BC (to the back of footpaths and entry into the courtyards), and lighting columns and fittings were replaced to many of these main roads when this replanting policy was undertaken. Unfortunately

these are now reaching the end of their design life, with most heavily rusting and many damaged. Notable exceptions, however, are evident down Bolton Road and it is hoped that this quality of product can be extended into the heart of the village.

An appropriate amenity light column and fitting is present in most of the rear spaces, incorporated when these were reformed in the 1960's and 70's.

4.8 Signage and Furniture

These both have an important bearing on visitor and resident perception of place, and it is unfortunate that much of the signage to the village has been implemented without a co-ordinating framework of hierarchy and appropriate detail. This is exemplified by signage on the junction of Bolton Road and Church Drive, where 3 details are evident. Of these, two are illegible (traditional fingerpost and traffic sign) and one inappropriate (blue parking sign).

4.9 Green Space

Figure 7 also illustrates 3 main types of green space. Immediately noticeable are the large green spaces which broadly still link up, reflecting the original tidal creeks and their floodplains (Area 8 on Figure 9). Secondly are the green spaces within most of the housing superblock enclosures. All blocks were originally laid out around allotment gardens, but the only remaining allotments are now within Area 4. Other areas have been replaced by a series of open grass spaces, longer rear gardens, garage parking and supporting road networks.

Thirdly, are the areas identified for leisure purposes. Originally this included both tennis courts and larger formal recreation areas for football etc, but now the only two spaces are the bowling greens to the south.

4.10 Roses and Bedding plants

The only other major features on Figure 7 are the presence of intensive areas of roses and bedding plants. In combination with individual bedding displays described in 4.3 above, these displays create a major effect in the summer, particularly down Bolton Road and The Diamond. Although demanding intensive maintenance, they certainly play a significant role in defining the character zones of Areas 8 and 9.

4.11 Figure 8 Landscape Features Plan

Individual features are numbered on Figure 8 and scheduled in more detail in Fiona Green's report section 2.7.

4.12 Figure 9 Landscape Character Plan

This has already been referred to but goes a stage further than the Landscape Character Plan in dividing the whole village up into 13 distinct character areas, which are then assessed individually in Volume 2 in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, and then their risks/threats and opportunities (section 5). This assessment also builds upon some of the landscape features identified in Fiona Green's section 2.7 above.

Fiona Green has also used these character areas in her report section 2.6, and are tabled accordingly with their dominant attributes and various notes.

The following table schedules these 13 areas with sub-categories for each area, which are referred to in section 5 and Appendix A.

Table 1 Port Sunlight Landscape and Development Character Areas

	Character Areas		Sub-Character Areas
1	Lever factory complex		
2	The Dell (incl' Bridge)		
3	South Village	3A 3B 3C 3D 3E 3F	Gladstone Theatre/ Bowling Green/ Station Wood St/ Bridge St/ Park Rd frontages Park Rd/ Bridge St/ Greendale Rd & Church Hall Bowling Green/ Lyceum Women's Club Cross St/ Bath St/ Riverside/ Bolton Rd frontages Bolton Rd and Hulme Rd frontages
4	South-east Village	4A 4B 4C 4D	New Chester Rd/ Bolton Rd frontages (south) New Chester Rd/ Bolton Rd frontages (north) Allotments and garages Corniche Rd frontage
5	North-east Village	6A 6B 6C	New Chester Rd frontage Rear grass spaces and garages Pool Bank frontage
6	North Village	6A 6B 6C 6D	Boundary Rd frontage Bowling Green Primrose Hill/ Bebington Rd/ Brook St frontages Rear grass spaces and garages
7	West Village	7A	Greendale Road south of Causeway
		7B	Greendale Road north of Causeway
		7C	Rear grass spaces and garages
		7D	Queen Mary's Drive
8	Core buildings & spaces (post-tidal zone)	8A 8B 8C 8D 8E 8F 8G 8H 8J 8K	Open Space linking to New Chester Road The Ginnel frontage Open space and Poets Corner Bolton Rd/ Bolton Circus King Edward's Drive/ Christ Church/ Bridge Inn Church Drive Primary School Open Spaces Former Hospital site Playing Field Wharf Street Development Site
9	The Civic Cross	9A 9B 9C 9D 9E 9F	The Diamond The Causeway Hillsborough Memorial Garden The War Memorial Windy Bank Car Park Lady Lever Art Gallery and surrounds
10	Civic north: housing	10A	King George's Drive to Church Drive
11	North-central village	11A 11B 11C 11D 11E 11F	Central Rd/ Lower Rd/ Primrose Hill frontages Rear grass space and garages Pool Bank/ Central Rd (north) Osborne Court Open space (part of former football field) Lodge Lane apartment blocks
12	North-west village	12A 12B 12C	Greendale Rd (railway embankment and bridge) Duke of York Cottages Windy Bank/ Queen Mary's Drive/ Primrose Hill
13	Civic south: mixed	13A 13B 13C 13D 13E	Jubilee Crescent Entrance to The Civic Cross Port Sunlight Garden Centre Hulme Hall Car Park Former Recreation Ground

5 Assessment of Significance and Vulnerability

- 5.1 Following assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the 13 different areas above, the risks and threats of each area are considered (generally on the second page of each set). The central Landscape Character Sheets of Volume 2 should be therefore again be referred to in association with Figure 9, their location plan.
- 5.2 The above character sheets give a good overview of details and issues in each area, and in many cases give a full story, but these were preceded by a much more detailed analysis of the significance and vulnerability of each area. These are set out in Appendix A1 within Volume 2.

6 Recent Landscape Management History

- 6.1 Until 1995, Unilever maintained all of Port Sunlight including the whole village estate. Having its own power station on the banks of the Mersey, it was very much an all-encompassing and self-sufficient company. In 1977, it set up a company called 'Greenhand' to maintain its landscape (but within the Unilever fold), with a turnover of around £1 million pounds/ year.
- 6.2 Gradually, however, it began to sell off certain branches of the company, the power station and garden centre being two early examples. In 1995, Greenhand was sold to Continental Landscapes, who then inherited the maintenance contract for the village. This they continued for ten years, with mixed fortunes, until the end of 2005 when the Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) took over maintenance of the village under the stewardship of Mr Andrew Church.
- 6.3 He has a team of 7 maintenance staff working under him, with a budget of £240k/year, with a brief to carry on and improve the standard of maintenance. This is already paying dividends. For instance, after a disastrous previous programme of spraying the rose beds by Continental Landscapes, a majority of rose beds were replanted in the spring of 2006, with the remainder programmed for the coming season.

7 Summary List of Outline Recommendations

- 7.1 An internal meeting was held on 31st January 2007 between Lionnel Bolland (PSVT), Graeme Ives (English Heritage), Graham Arnold (Wirral Conservation Officer), Ian Lucas (BCR Architects) and Hugh Lea-Wilson (Bureau Veritas) to appraise progress and review the main issues arising from the report. This was a very useful meeting, at which many of the key challenges facing PSVT were discussed in some detail. The overall report content was set out and approved, and a number of detail areas and issues were also discussed.
- 7.2 Regarding specific areas and actions required, reference should be made to the Photographic Landscape Character Sheets and Volume 2: Appendix A, which provide detailed schedules of recommendations for each character area of the village. It was agreed at the meeting, however, to set out a list of prioritised outline recommendations which, although not exhaustive, will enable PSVT to practically start addressing these issues as soon as possible. This is set out below, and major landscape items broadly fall under the following six headings:
- Health and safety issues – public (vehicles)
 - Health and safety issues – public (pavements)
 - Health and safety issues – buildings
 - Severe loss of amenity – residents
 - Severe loss of amenity – public
 - Severe drain on budget – maintenance budget
- 7.3 Schedule of Outline Recommendations.
Please refer Table 2 on pages 13-18.

Table 2 Schedule of Outline Recommendations*Note: Issues themed, not prioritised*

	Item	Issue	Action
	Letters from PSVT, and Policy Issues (external partners)		
1	<u>Letter to all residents</u> advising that Conservation & Management Plan (CMP) has recently been undertaken (available for viewing), possibly with invitation to Open Meeting to outline proposals and receive comments.	Communication	LB
2	<u>Letter to Wirral Conservation and Planning Departments</u> regarding CMP, and intention to start a rolling (10 yr?) programme of significant tree management, for reasons of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & safety to vehicles (leaning trees) • Health & safety to pedestrians (root damage to pavements) • Potential damage to buildings (trees too close to frontages) • Visual Amenity of residents (trees too close in verges) • Visual and leisure amenity of public (trees planted too close in public areas). Planning application required?	Policy/Plan'	LB
3	LB to ask PSVT chairman to <u>write to Unilever Chairman</u> regarding need to access archive records, not just for historical records but for very real practical reasons. In particular, PSVT need to ascertain Pirko Higson's planting philosophy for her tree planting plans of early 1980's, and establish whether a Management Plan was produced. Gillespies Landscape Consultants were also commissioned in 1990's to produce Landscape Management Plans but no references have been made to trees. This seems surprising since trees represent the most significant management issue on the estate.	Policy/Maint'	LB/PSVT chair
4	<u>Letter to Wirral Lighting</u> regarding CMP (and meeting), specifically re policy on lighting replacements. Stress positive effect of investment in appropriate high grade columns/fittings down Bolton Road, but compare with both previous columns of late 1970's (?) which are now heavily rusting and damaged (eg Church Drive – continuation of the main visitor access to the Art Gallery), and also recent replacements, eg around Art Gallery itself. The choice of the latter (a very utilitarian 'highway' column) is particularly unfortunate, considering the high civic profile of this space, and although appreciating that these are adopted roads in Wirral's domain, a positive partnership and dialogue is to be encouraged with Wirral to identify principal routes/spaces where higher standard columns are desirable, and those where a lesser specification may be acceptable.	Policy/Plan'	LB
5	<u>Letter to Wirral Highways</u> regarding CMP (and meeting), re policy on standard and specification of street furniture in Wirral's domain, in particular focusing on bollards (and also tree damage to pavements: refer item 9.). Conclusion of CMP is that current standard timber bollard is not durable, easily damaged and is not a suitable material for use in such a high profile Conservation Area. Suggest a similar style of bollard in cast iron or similar.	Policy/Plan'	LB

6	<p><u>Letter to Wirral Education</u> regarding CMP (and meeting), re the standard of railings around Church Drive School. 4 types of railing have been identified, with certain lengths unpainted and overall creating a very poor external face to parents, pupils, passing residents and visitors. Considering the desire to reinforce the route along Church Drive and past the school for visitors, there would be wider cost-benefits to improving the standard of these railings.</p> <p>It may also be appropriate to ask whether any alternatives are possible to substitute the highway standard pedestrian guard rails, which are not considered appropriate in a conservation area.</p>	Amenity Conser- -vation	LB
Action required on trees			
7	<p><u>Tree Survey.</u> The tree survey carried out by Continental Landscapes in 2005 is a useful tool already being used by the Trust. It is recommended that if possible, this should be extended to include information on structural and health & safety defects (eg leaning into carriageway or causing excessive pavement-heave), with trees numbered (possibly tagged) and prioritised for management.</p> <p>It is noted that the Trust do not currently favour adopting a GIS approach to tree scheduling, in view of the recently completed conventional survey.</p>	Policy/ Plan'	PSVT
8	<p><u>Potential Tree Damage to Vehicles.</u> A number of streets feature trees which are severely leaning into the carriageway (for instance Lodge Lane, The Ginnel and Church Drive {north}). One recent accident involving a Luton box van on Central Road brought this into sharper focus, and these trees will require attention soon.</p> <p>Some trees with potential liability have already been identified with a yellow sprayed dot, but there is a need for an updated survey (tied into 6 above) and a clear policy decision on this issue, with possible options including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road narrowing by white lining (will be resistance on conservation grounds) • Signage of affected roads (ditto) • Dedicated route for high vehicles • Selective felling of such trees <p>It is considered that a few of the trees in the above streets are in the 'highest priority' category already and should be felled within the next season (part of phase 1 within the CMP).</p>	H&S/ Maint'	PSVT
9	<p><u>Tree Damage to Pavements.</u> Many streets are featured by trees having been planted immediately adjacent road kerbs. Where large trees have been planted (eg Sycamores), this has resulted in substantial 'root-heave' damage to kerbs and pavements, notable for instance down The Ginnel, but also in many other streets.</p> <p>It is recommended that these are surveyed and given a priority ranking in terms of which trees present the greatest health & safety risks (trip hazards), with recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective trees to be felled (and replanted) • Protective measures implemented around trunks of certain 	H&S/ Maint'	PSVT

	<p>trees (eg wider areas of stabilised gravel etc), and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of root/crown surgery to selective trees to enable some flagged pavements to be relayed (eg The Ginnel). <p>It is recognised that progress on any such remedial work must involve Wirral Council Highways' Engineers, since although the trees are in the Trust's domain, responsibility for adopted pavements rests with the council. Early liaison/discussions should therefore be commenced with Wirral Council to formulate policy on this, as well as on lighting and furniture (items 4 and 5).</p>		
10	<p><u>Dense Canopies of Trees to Residential Frontages.</u> Certain lines or avenues of trees (mostly limes) have been (re)planted at too close centres (3.75-4.5m) within verges of many residential frontages (eg The Ginnel, King George's Drive, Queen Mary's Drive, Windy Bank and Primrose Hill). These are now forming very dense canopies and causing problems of both severe shading (loss of amenity) and even more significantly potential structural damage to some buildings.</p> <p>It is recommended that alternate felling and grubbing out commences as soon as possible, as the longer this is left, the harder and more expensive the operation becomes.</p> <p>Note: alternate thinning has already taken in some areas (eg either side of the pool in front of the gallery) which has brought immediate benefit (reducing tree spacing to 8-9m). Benefits can clearly be demonstrated to residents from these examples.</p> <p><u>Working example.</u> Tree centres along the line between Windy Bank and Primrose Hill alternate between 3 and 6m, with lighting columns every 9m. If every other tree was felled along this stretch, centres would be reduced to 9m, lighting columns would be perfectly distanced at 4.5m between remaining trees, and pedestrian accesses would be retained through the hedging as at present. Hedging would then need to be replanted where trees removed, and smaller trees possibly planted in lieu (suggest consultation?)</p>	Structur'/ Maint'/ Amenity	PSVT
11	<p><u>Dense Canopies of Trees to Public Areas.</u> Dense groups of trees were also planted at very close centres in some of the larger open public areas to replace the lost Elms in the late 1970's, which are now forming very dense canopies in some areas (eg The Diamond, The Causeway (west), The Ginnel (south), areas east of the church and east of the gallery).</p> <p>These will also soon need thinning out. Again, the longer this is left, the harder and more expensive the operation becomes, with greater potential for disfigurement of trees being retained.</p>	Maint'/ Amenity	PSVT
12	<p><u>Trees obscuring or potentially damaging buildings.</u> A few individual trees have been noted either obscuring important buildings (eg south of Hesketh Hall on New Chester Road) or sited very close to buildings which have the potential to create structural damage. These should be identified, felled and replaced where appropriate.</p>	Amenity Maint'/ Structur'/	PSVT
13	<p><u>Open space on junction of Church Drive and The Causeway.</u> The enclosure afforded this space by the existing poplars and conifers</p>	Amenity Maint'/	PSVT

	<p>is considered inappropriate, being both out of scale and also giving a very untidy appearance to visitors approaching via Church Drive.</p> <p>A 2-phase operation is recommended for the conifers - initially being cut back to form a hedge, with small to medium scale trees being planted concurrently, then the hedge felled once the trees have established.</p> <p>The poplars could be pruned heavily or pollarded further to good effect, creating a more amenable space. This would reduce the barrier effect of these trees (currently out of scale and character with trees in other high profile areas within the village), prior to possible subsequent development of the site.</p>	Struct'	
	Action required on other items		
14	<p><u>Strips behind Stone Edgings at rear of footpaths.</u> The extremely high labour-intensive nature of maintaining these 'troughs' has been noted several times, and it is recommended that budget costings are obtained for filling in all such strips (survey already carried out and shown on Figure 33).</p> <p>A clear policy decision can then be made on the viability of filling in all such strips (initial capital costs are likely to be recouped quite quickly from reduced long term maintenance costs).</p>	Maint'/ Amenity	PSVT/ BV
15	<p><u>The stone crazy paving around the fountain</u> is deteriorating and becoming a safety hazard. A minimal option is to identify the potentially dangerous sections and steps, and just to relay these, although ideally the whole area could be resurfaced in stone.</p>	H&S Conser- -vation	PSVT
16	<p><u>The area in front of the gallery</u> has by default become its main car park, which greatly detracts from its setting. It is recommended that a feasibility study is commissioned to look at options for this area, redesigning the area between the gallery and pool to become a more pedestrian-friendly zone, with disabled parking adjacent the gallery and a gridded piazza capable of incorporating car parking.</p> <p>Comments have been noted regarding the nuisance experienced by some from certain groups such as skateboarders, and any change to the landscape design should take this into account. Another approach however, may be to formally develop certain areas to positively encourage such groups (although probably not in such high profile locations).</p>	Amenity Conser- -vation	PSVT/ BV
17	<p><u>Policy decisions on railings, bollards and street furniture.</u> PSVT have already started setting standards for these items, but this should be reinforced, with suggestions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Railings:</u> current bobble top palings (eg in Character Area 11) are entirely appropriate in this conservation area, and could be the standard for all future new railings. Also good on H&S grounds. • <u>Bollards:</u> current diversity of 'highway-standard' bollards reflects very badly across the village (eg timber bollards to public footways, and mixture of concrete/recycled plastic in rear spaces). Standard bollards should be selected for these 2 different situations, preferably cast iron, but the 	Conser- -vation	PSVT

	<p>former in conjunction with Wirral Highways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Planters:</u> The quality of the 3 main types of planters should be reappraised. The brick planters in Area 5 have been recommended for removal (replaced by parking or ground level trees). The temporary timber planters in Area 11 opposite the old hospital site are to be removed as part of the redevelopment, and the half barrel planters by the Leverhulme Memorial should be reviewed for appropriateness. • <u>Seats:</u> The current Broxap 'Harrogate' seat is considered entirely appropriate as the village standard. • <u>Litter Bins:</u> Again, the Broxap 'Chester' bin is considered entirely appropriate as the village standard, although new bins should have a different ground fixing system as the first generation 1988 bins are now suffering from corroding post bases. 		
18	<p><u>Signage.</u> We gather a review is already in process, which undoubtedly will incorporate issues within this report, for instance the different signage types at the Bolton Road/Church Drive junction, and their illegibility. Signage here and elsewhere needs to be coordinated and in some cases replaced. At the very least needs to be maintained/cleaned. Refer for example item 8E.3.</p>	Conser- -vation	PSVT
19	<p><u>Bowling Greens.</u> The main green associated with the Lever Club is maintained to county standard and is on a viable and sustainable footing. The Lady Green is somewhat more vulnerable, and the Boundary Road green currently unsustainable. All these spaces, however, have a crucial structural, amenity and leisure significance to the village.</p> <p>In discussion with PSVT, we feel that their current usage and potential redevelopment should be seriously appraised, together with the associated buildings of the Lyceum and Hesketh Hall respectively. For instance, quality changing rooms and associated facilities could be incorporated to both buildings, to service a greater use of both spaces.</p> <p>An early option for the redundant southern Bolton Road green was to convert it back to a grass tennis court (original use), but current views of the Trust are to return it to a bowling green for general amenity use in the village (not maintained to County Standard). Regarding the northern Boundary Road green, options include grass tennis courts or hard court facilities.</p> <p>BCR/BV could be commissioned to undertake a feasibility study on these proposals if felt appropriate by PSVT.</p>	Amenity Maint'/ New facilities	PSVT/ BCR/ BV
20	<p><u>Rear Open Spaces and Play Areas.</u> Most of the rear open spaces are under-utilised and provisional proposals have been indicated on Figure 33 indicating new play areas, additional car parking, and new planting. Clearly further consultation and appraisal is required to ensure appropriateness of location and facility, but as with item 19 above, opportunities must be considered to attract families to the village and so ensure its vitality and very survival in the longer term.</p>	Amenity Maint'/ New facilities	PSVT

21	<p><u>Pool</u>. The water quality of the pool in front of the gallery is often poor, detracting from this most prominent of settings. Although not a priority, it is proposed that an independent inspection of the fountain and its water supply/circulation is carried out by a suitable specialist company, with options on updating or renewing current filtration systems etc.</p>	Amenity H&S	PSVT
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PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LANDSCAPE REPORT

APPENDICES

PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LANDSCAPE REPORT

APPENDIX A1

SCHEDULE OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE & VULNERABILITY
(Refer Volume 2)

PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LANDSCAPE REPORT

APPENDIX A2

SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE ISSUES ADDRESSED IN REPORT

PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX A2: Preliminary Appraisal, following Site Visit and Meeting with Andy Church, 14th July 2006

Item	Main issues	Issues to be addressed in Conservation & Management Plan	Possible Actions to address issues of concern
1	Tourism and 'Arrival Point's	Very poor sense of arrival and 'gateway' as currently directed off Bolton Road and around Hulme Hall. High investment in bedding plants etc down Bolton Road, then narrow tight entrance, poorly signposted, focused on garden centre, with timber bollards in poor condition, and dense tree group crowding space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New signage • Possible alternative access to Art Gallery (via Church Drive?) • Possibly improved boundary treatment • New high profile bollards • Restrict parking • Tree felling and management
	Trees and Boundaries		
2	Tree Density - Public Areas	Dense groups of trees were planted at very close centres in some of the larger open public areas to replace the lost Elms in the late 1970's, which are now forming very dense canopies in some areas.	These will soon be in need of thinning out. The longer this is left, the harder and more expensive the operation becomes, with greater potential for disfigurement of trees being retained.
3	Tree Density - Residential Frontages	Dense lines of trees were planted at very close centres (3.75-4.5m) along the formal axes of The Diamond and to adjacent residential streets, as above. These are also now forming very dense canopies which, although maybe acceptable in the public avenues, are already causing problems on streets.	These will soon be in need of thinning out. The longer this is left, the harder and more expensive the operation becomes, as above. Note: alternate thinning has already taken in some areas (eg either side of the fountain/pool) which has brought immediate benefit (tree spacing at 8-9m)
4	Tree Damage to Pavements	A number of streets are featured by trees being planted immediately adjacent road kerbs. Where large trees have been planted (eg Sycamores), this has resulted in 'root-heave' damage to kerbs and pavements, in some cases being quite substantial.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual trees to be surveyed • Selective trees to be felled • Protective measures to be implemented
5	Tree Damage to Vehicles	A number of streets also feature trees which are severely leaning into the carriageway (for instance Lodge Lane off New Chester Rd). No serious incidents have so far been lodged (check) but these trees will require attention soon, as PSVT are currently being notified of about 2 incidents per year.	Need for clear policy decision. Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road narrowing by white lining (will be resistance on conservation grounds) • Signage of affected roads (ditto) • Dedicated route for high vehicles • Selective felling of such trees
6	Trees Obscuring Buildings	Certain examples have been noted of trees which have either naturally colonised or been inappropriately planted in certain locations, for instance a Sycamore on New Chester Road which obscures Hesketh Hall.	Such trees to be included in felling programme, and possible replacements to be considered (eg other suitable existing trees along New Chester Road).

7	Conifers Requiring Pruning	A group of conifers to the north of the terrace at the junction of Jubilee Crescent and The Causeway has been planted at very close centres.	These conifers are in need of early attention (thinning and pruning) due to their close building proximity. The adjacent open space to the north is somewhat redundant and in need of review of use (potential for new residential development?).
8	Strips behind Stone Edgings/ Plinths (previous railings)	A major issue for the maintenance team is the zone previously occupied by railings and backstays, before their removal in the war. Currently, 3 maintenance operations are required for this strip: half-mooning the edges, spraying with herbicide (undesirable) to keep the soil free from weeds, and litter picking. A few of these strips have been filled in and reseeded but most remain, restrained by current budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full survey of all such unfilled strips is required. • These can then be costed (topsoil volumes, seeding and labour). • A clear policy decision can then be made on viability of filling in remaining strips (initial capital costs would most likely be recouped quite quickly from reduced long term maintenance costs).
9	Obstacles to Hedge Cutting	Hedges normally cut twice/year (June and October). Most obstacles are unavoidable and cannot be moved, but some posts and miscellaneous items have been noted which impede easy maintenance.	A survey is recommended of all such hedges to identify the extent of possible items which could be removed to speed up maintenance operations.
Planting and Maintenance			
10	Rose Beds	These are located principally on the Diamond, and also adjacent a few key buildings (eg opposite the station), where intensive maintenance reaps maximum benefit. Most rose beds were replanted in spring 2006, following a disastrous maintenance regime of the previous maintenance contractors.	Initial replanting has taken very well. Remaining beds are programmed for replanting in Autumn 2006. Care needs to be taken to ensure previous mistakes are not repeated.
11	Shrub Beds	The standard of maintenance to most shrub beds is high, with well-stocked beds suppressing weeds. Main pruning works are carried out in quieter winter months (October to February), with spring-flowering shrubs shortly after. The beds are weeded 4-6 times/year.	Certain beds contain shrubs which are perhaps out of keeping, and may benefit from smaller shrubs which require less pruning.
12	Bedding and Basket Displays	A number of formal bedding plant situations are evidenced within the village, mostly down Bolton Road, within the Diamond and around the Art Gallery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanging Baskets: 105nr to major buildings & flats • Lighting Column Baskets: 48nr along Bolton Road • Half Barrel Planters: 40nr around Art Gallery • Bedding Plants: Bolton Rd, The Diamond (incl the Hillsborough Memorial Garden) & Art Gallery. <p>Great care and attention is also currently given to maintaining these landscape elements, and although highly labour-intensive, they play a significant part in raising the profile of the village, particularly to visitors accessing the Art Gallery via Bolton Road.</p>	<p>PSVT has acknowledged that there is a very large amount of bedding material which comes with a high price-tag (eg the bedding displays requiring watering every day through several weeks of summer 2006).</p> <p>Attention has already been given to minimising maintenance obligations (eg hanging basket reservoirs reducing watering to twice-weekly rather than daily operations).</p> <p>There clearly remains a strong case for retaining bedding material, but in view of the fact that there were very few bedding displays in the original village, perhaps it is time to rethink the strategy on bedding plants.</p>
13	Herbaceous Planting	No herbaceous planting currently exists in the village.	PSVT are in favour of re-introducing herbaceous material (possibly in favour of some of the bedding displays), and one suggested area is the 'amphitheatre' (enclosed by the hedging and the looped path) at

			the top of the top north-east nose of The Dell.
14	Naturalised Bulb Planting	PSVT are keen to maintain diversity in planting interest through different seasons, and large areas of naturalised bulbs (especially crocuses and daffodils) are a feature in spring, cut back end of June.	
15	Wild Flora and Grass Planting	As well as no herbaceous planting, another notable absence is any kind of wild flora throughout the village, although PSVT would very much like to increase such diversity in terms of introducing flora and managing the grassland through different mowing regimes.	The public have grown accustomed to a very 'managed' and well-kept estate, and perceive any form of wilder grassland and flora as a sign of unmanaged landscape. However, maybe this can be addressed through education and local involvement through local consultation and encouragement, with The Dell and larger open spaces being prime target areas already identified by PSVT.
16	Maintaining The Dell	The Dell is the one remaining example of the original drained 'ravines' or tidal inlets. As such it has a distinctively different character from other areas in the village, although as already noted it is currently well managed. A notable feature has been that of the factory using significantly less water over recent decades, with the result that the water table has risen in the last 30 years. The Dell has become increasingly wetter over recent years, with 2005/06 winter being the wettest on record, rendering even the top of the banks out of action. This has not been a particular problem, pumping stations existing within the village to pump out excess water.	However, the situation necessitated a new drain being laid through the Dell in 2005/06, and its condition needs to be closely monitored through the next few years, possibly with an ecological/ hydrological survey each winter. Following this, decisions can be taken on how best to manage or develop this key feature, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the status quo • Developing more of a wetland habitat approach • Developing wild flora and varied grass-cutting regimes on the banks • Other options
17	Grass Cutting	Front and backs are cut every 1 or 2 weeks, approx 18 cuts/year, including one in November and a top cut in January. Some higher profile areas in front of public buildings are cut regularly once/week.	Grass cutting regime to be reviewed, but it is noted that this has been fine-tuned over time and is probably hard to improve upon.
18	Bowling Greens	Only 2 of the original 4 greens are now maintained, namely the large Lever Green to the south (adjacent The Gladstone Theatre), maintained to County standard, and the Lady Green, the northernmost of the 2 greens adjacent the Lever Women's Club. Given the exceedingly high labour costs of maintaining bowling greens, the relatively close proximity of these 2 greens makes sound business sense, with the current maintenance yard to the south-east.	This rationalisation (understandable on purely economic grounds) sadly leaves those living in the centre and north of the village without ready access to any green. The remaining 2 greens are still maintained, but only to standard amenity level, with the large northern green having been shrub-planted 2 years ago in its centre to discourage football etc. This latter green has perhaps the greatest landscape and architectural setting, being on the northern approach into the village, with one of the 2 shelters still present, although closed. This was originally thatched but is now tiled; however, still has great potential should funds ever be found to reinstate the green.
19	Front Gardens	PSVT own and maintain all front gardens in the village, including the two thirds of owner-occupied properties (approx 800 total), with various restrictions such as no satellite dishes on frontages. However, the company strongly encourages distinctiveness, and sponsors various categories of Competition Garden Displays.	This policy is highly commended, encouraging a high degree of participation and competition, which has resulted in increasingly stunning displays of hanging baskets and pot plants etc, and ensuing 'Best Kept Village' status over a number of years.

20	Litter Picking and Dog Fouling	A daily litter pick is carried out on a zonal basis, with bins being emptied on average 3 times/week. Dog fouling is not a problem, due to personal accountability on the very few occasions it has been present.	
	Furniture		
21	Lighting Columns	Wirral MBC are in a process of replacing previous period or matching lighting columns with modern columns and fittings. In some cases, both types are in close proximity, and most notably in front of the Art Gallery where both columns are side by side.	As well as being unsightly, this clearly detracts from the heritage of the village (especially in the Diamond) and a clear policy decision is needed for the future. A meeting is required with Wirral MBC (contact Sean Brady, tel 0151 606 2429) to resolve this key concern.
22	Finger Posts and Signage	A number of finger posts exist within the village. Visibility to some is restricted by vigorous trees etc; others are somewhat 'tired' and in need of restoration or renewal. The same applies to some signage and railings, for instance the entrance sign and railings at the junction of Lodge Lane and New Chester Road.	Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal: cut back obstructing vegetation etc • Medium: refurbish/ repaint etc • Maximum: renewal (would tie in with item 1) Survey/research to be carried out of all existing and previous signage.
23	Miscellaneous Bollards: Public Areas	A plethora of different types of bollards exist through-out the village, which detracts from a strong village identity. The original 'standard' seemed to be a cast iron bollard with weather-struck top and a series of ridged bands below, on which it seems Wirral MBC have modelled their timber 'standard detail'. This seems entirely inappropriate for this conservation area.	The timber bollards have a limited life and are easily damaged. As with comments on the lighting columns, this clearly detracts from the heritage of the village (especially on the approach to the Diamond) and a clear policy decision is needed for the future. A meeting is required with Wirral MBC (contact Sean Brady?, tel 0151 606 2429) to resolve this key concern.
24	Miscellaneous Bollards: Private Areas	A number of different bollard types have also been noted in the rear space/ allotment areas, including steel, concrete and recycled plastic. Although a lower specification is expected in these lower profile areas, the current situation is confusing and detracts from a coherent theme for village residents.	These bollards are all in the private domain of PSVT, and a clear decision is required for future bollards. One detail should be selected for all private areas if at all possible, and a policy of gradual replacement adopted when existing ones become damaged etc. This would also prove cost-effective, drawing on one source/ stock of bollards rather than several.
25	Raised Planters	3 types have been noted in the village: half barrels near the Art Gallery, square timber planters at the old hospital hammerhead, and circular concrete ones adjacent some of the garages.	Whilst understanding the aim of trying to brighten up some rather sterile spaces (bitmac and garages), some of these nevertheless detract from the character of the village, and the selection should be rationalised to one main type in keeping with the village character.
26	Benches	The Broxap 'Harrogate' seat is the village standard.	
27	Litter Bins	The Broxap 'Chester' bin is the village standard.	Some post bases of the 1988 bin have 'rotted' and new bins are to have a different ground fixing system.
28	Fencing to extended Rear Gardens	Original rear garden wall and copings have exceptional brick detailing. Unfortunately, the standard of boundary treatment to many of the rear garden extensions (when the allotments were developed) is very poor, with a combination of concrete panel, mesh and hedging.	This is obviously not an original detail, but equally there can be no return to the widespread allotment layout. The scale of this element is too large to warrant large scale replacement (and does not detract from the public face of the village), but it may be that the worst cases could be identified for remedial/replacement details.

	Roads, Paths and Spaces		
29	Condition of Public Roads	Standards are fairly high, with maintenance to all public roads being in the domain of Wirral MBC.	
30	“ “ “ Footpaths	Ditto, although a number of footpaths have been noted in poor condition, for instance approaching the Diamond from the east.	Footpaths to be surveyed.
31	Condition of Private Roads	Most of these are in reasonable condition(?). All roads into previous allotment areas are under PSVT regime.	To be reviewed.
32	“ “ “ Footpaths	Ditto: footpaths in all allotment areas and those beyond the rear of footpaths to public roads.	One area of concern has been noted around the fountain (name?), where an area of stone crazy paving is deteriorating and becoming a safety hazard. This ideally should be resurfaced in stone, but current budgets would not stretch to this specification; an option could be to identify the potentially dangerous sections and just to relay these.
33	Water Features	The fountain at the northern end of the Diamond has a key role, focusing views towards the Lady Lever Art Gallery, and equally views from the gallery toward the War Memorial. Sadly, however, water quality is often poor, detracting from this most prominent of settings.	The fountain and its water supply/circulation are in need of review (date of previous review?). It is proposed that an independent inspection is carried out by a suitable specialist company, with options on updating or renewing current filtration systems etc. It is also proposed that the previous small filled-in semi-circular pool at the south of The Diamond is also assessed, with a view to possibly restoring this feature.
34	Rear Allotments	The only allotment gardens which have been maintained are those between New Chester Road and Corniche Road, used enthusiastically by owners across the village (many sheds with wood-burning stoves!).	There seems no demand to bring other spaces back into cultivation for this traditional form of gardening.
35	Rear Open Spaces	Most previous allotment gardens have been developed into a variety of uses – large open spaces, garden extensions, and parking and garages.	The routing of telephone pylons/cables through the middle of 3 or 4 of these spaces precludes a possible wider use (as well as being unsightly), especially between New Chester Road and Pool Bank. An alternative could be to route these either side of the open spaces.
36	Car Parking to Art Gallery	Car parking. The area in front of the gallery has by default become its supporting car park, which hugely detracts from its setting (photos 9.1 and 9.5) and is unacceptable.	We recommend that a landscape design is commissioned to redesign the area between the gallery and pool as a pedestrian priority zone, with disabled parking adjacent the gallery and a gridded piazza capable of incorporating car parking.
37	Former Hospital Site	Area gradually becoming recolonised and taken over by seeds and wild plants species. Forming an attractive eco-habitat but not appropriate as a long term feature within the village.	Need for this site to be developed as soon as possible.

PORT SUNLIGHT CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LANDSCAPE REPORT

APPENDIX B

ECOLOGY REPORT: BUREAU VERITAS ECOLOGY

APPENDIX B

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE DELL

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1 INTRODUCTION

Bureau Veritas were commissioned to comment on the Schedule of Significance of the ecology of Port Sunlight village and advise on management measures that could enhance the ecological value of "The Dell", an area of ornamental planting to the south-east of the village.

2 METHOD

A drive-about inspection was made of Port Sunlight and a walk-about inspection was carried out at "The Dell". Notes were made of the baseline conditions of the existing ecology, paying particular attention to the possible presence of any protected species. Specially protected species in the UK are badger (under the Protection of Badgers Act 1997) and those listed in: (i) Annexe IV of the Habitats Directive (European protected species); and (ii) Schedules 1, 5 & 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Enhancement measures are suggested to improve the ecological interest of "The Dell".

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Port Sunlight village contains extensive areas of amenity grassland, avenues of tree planting, shrubberies and areas of formal bedding/rose displays. All grass areas are closely mown and offer little ecological value.

The Dell is an area of ornamental planting with predominantly non-native plant species. A network of footpaths runs south-west to north-east through the area, surrounded by shrub borders and amenity grassland, with mature tree planting within the grassland areas. The footpaths through the Dell are at a lower level than the surrounding pavements/roads, with grass banks, ramps or steps leading up to the road level. For the purposes of this report, the Dell is divided into three sections. Section 1 is the area at the south-west end and runs north-east to a stone bridge which crosses the Dell near the "Lyceum". Section 2 runs north-east from the bridge to three shrub beds surrounded by low clipped Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) hedges. Section 3 is at the north-east end of the study area.

3.1 Section 1

This section contains raised shrub beds at the south-western end, formed by retaining walls constructed of large pieces of stone (Photograph 1). Plants in these beds include *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, *Amelanchier lamarckii*, *Phormium tenax*, *Gaultheria mucronata*, *Rhododendron* sp. *Lonicera pileata*, *Viburnum tinus*, *Hedera helix*, *Elaeagnus* sp. and non-native conifers. There are several small Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) seedlings growing out of the ornamental planting and a small clump of Broad Buckler Fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*). At road-level the pavement is separated from the shrub beds by a low hedge of *Berberis x stenophylla*. Next to the steps leading down into the Dell there is a mature Oak, opposite the old fire station.

Towards the bridge, east of the footpath there is a grass slope which runs up to road-level with no hedge running along the pavement (Photograph 2). Along the slope, there are two mature Beech (*Fraxinus excelsior*), three mature Oaks and a line of four *Cordyline australis*. Near to the path there are *Rhododendron* spp. and *Fuchsia magellanica*. The lawn underneath the middle Oak shows a large bare patch due to shading. The steps next to the bridge on this side have a line of *Symphoricarpos albus* growing up to road-level, with *Hydrangea petiolaris* growing behind and attached to the bridge (Photograph 3). There is a single Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) seedling growing out of the *Symphoricarpos*.

Towards the bridge, west of the footpath, there is a hedge of *Cornus* sp. along the pavement at road-level, with Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) surrounding several benches along the hedgeline. There are also specimens of *Malus* sp. planted at 5 m intervals along and behind the *Cornus*. Behind the hedge, in the Dell, there is more shrub planting including *Hypericum* sp., *Cotoneaster* sp., *Elaeagnus* sp. *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Acer palmatum* "Dissectum Atropurpureum" and non-native conifers. In front of the bridge on this side, there is a mature Ash, *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Camellia* sp. and *Wisteria sinensis* growing against the bridge. From the shrubbery to the path, there is a grass slope planted with two mature Limes (*Tilia* sp.), a mature Oak, a mature Beech and a mature Willow (*Salix* sp.), all of which have bare patches beneath their canopies. There is also a single *Cordyline australis* to about 5 m.

3.2 Section 2

Directly north-east of the bridge, the path is lined on both sides by dense growth of *Rhododendron* spp. Along the back of the "Lyceum" there is a shrub border running along the top of the slope including *Berberis ottawensis* "Purpurea", *Cotoneaster* sp. *Rhododendron* spp. *Pieris japonica*, *Prunus laurocerasus*, *Mahonia aquifolium*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Prunus lusitanicus*, *Syringa vulgaris* and ornamental Cherry trees (*Prunus* sp.). The grass slope from the "Lyceum" is planted with several mature trees including a Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) (Photograph 4), a Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), a young Ash, a mature Ash, an Oak, several ornamental Cherries and a Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) (Photograph 5). To the north-east of the "Lyceum" there is another mature Tulip Tree and two Lombardy Poplars (*Populus nigra* "Italica"), one with abundant Ivy growth.

The eastern edge of this section contains a small lawn area with raised beds retained by a stone wall with grassed slopes behind, leading up to the road-level. Shrubs in these beds include *Forsythia* sp., *Cornus* sp., *Photinia fraseri*, a couple of small Cherries and Oaks, *Weigela florida*, *Magnolia* sp., *Sambucus racemosa*, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Berberis x stenophylla*, *Lonicera nitida*, *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Berberis julianae* and *Euonymus fortunei*. The lawn area includes a mature Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and there is a London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) on the grass near the road.

There are three small shrub beds surrounded by low clipped (1 m) Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) hedges near the north-eastern end of the site (Photograph 6). Species include *Viburnum davidii*, *Aucuba japonica*, *Skimmia japonica*, *Euonymus fortunei*, *Mahonia japonica*, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Syringa vulgaris*, *Lonicera pileata*, *Magnolia* sp., *Elaeagnus* sp., *Rosa* sp. and *Prunus laurocerasus* "Otto Luyken".

3.3 Section 3

The north-eastern section of the Dell consists of a flat area of closely mown grassland with three benches located at the edge of the grass (Photographs 7 & 8). There is a path running around the grassed area with a thin strip of grass running outside the line of the path. A low dry stone wall runs around the thin grass strip with a shortly clipped *Lonicera pileata* hedge above. The area from the hedge to the pavement consists of grass verges including Lime, Ash and London Plane trees.

3.4 Protected Species

There were no signs of protected species during the walk-over survey of the Dell. The grassland areas were very species-poor, being predominantly Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) with occasional common lawn weeds such as Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*). Other wild plant species observed at path edges and in shrub borders included Broad-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*), Shepherd's-purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) and Procumbent Pearlwort (*Sagina procumbens*).

Animal species observed during the survey included a large population of Grey Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and several bird species including Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Magpie (*Pica pica*) and Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*).

4 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

The Dell is currently of negligible ecological interest, with a planting scheme consisting of very few native species. The ecological interest is further diminished by the current management regime which is aimed at keeping the area well maintained through regular cutting of lawns, pruning, removal of dead wood, weed removal and presumably pesticide and herbicide use.

Although the area is intended primarily as an ornamental and recreational feature, there are a few measures which could be employed to increase ecological interest without impacting significantly on the aesthetics, outlined below.

Careful selection of plant species can benefit wildlife by providing a range of trees, shrubs and herbaceous species that together would produce flowers and/or berries over a long period and would provide foraging, nest sites and shelter for a variety of birds and invertebrates. The usual recommendation for encouraging biodiversity is to plant native species, but in the context of the site's isolated urban location and the preponderance of non-native vegetation in the current planting, the extensive use of native plants, possibly at the expense of popular or colourful non-native species, seems unnecessary. Nectar providing shrubs include *Buddleja*, the most widely planted species' being *B. davidii* and the less widely planted, earlier flowering *B. globosa*. An even earlier source of nectar is provided by Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*) which flowers before the leaves emerge in spring. Other nectar providing shrubs include *Caryopteris* species, California Lilac (*Ceanothus* species), *Escallonia* species, *Fuchsia* species, *Hebe* species, Lavender (*Lavandula* species), Daisy Bushes (*Olearia macrodonta* and *Olearia x haastii*), *Spiraea* species, Lilac (*Syringa* species) and *Viburnum* species. The inclusion of herbaceous species such as Ice Plant (*Sedum spectabile*) and Michaelmas Daisy (*Aster* species) would enhance interest for insects and provide a colourful late-season display at the front of borders.

Many of the Daisy family (*Asteraceae*) also provide seeds for winter feeding birds. Trees and shrubs which provide winter fruit or berries for birds include *Cotoneaster* species, Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna* and *C. laevigata*), Firethorn (*Pyracantha* species), Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Whitebeam and Rowan (*Sorbus* species), Wild Roses (*Rosa* species), Blackberry (*Rubus* species) and female Holly varieties (*Ilex*). Structural diversity can be enhanced by stratified planting, with trees underplanted with shrubs to give a canopy and understorey layer as occurs naturally in woodland.

Where there are bare patches in the grass underneath tree canopies, it may be better to plant woodland bulbs such as Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) or native ground cover species such as Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) where the conditions are obviously not optimal for grass growth.

Breeding birds could be encouraged by providing a selection of nest boxes, including hole-entrance (for species such as blue tits and house sparrows) and open-fronted boxes (for species such as robins and wagtails). Boxes should be located on trunks at least 2m above the ground.

Bats could be encouraged by the provision of artificial bat boxes mounted within the existing mature trees. The aspect of the box should capture sun for part of the day. North or north-easterly sited boxes will have little chance of being used as summer roosts because the box will not be warmed by the sun, but may be used by hibernating bats. Groups of two or three boxes are preferable to one, but a single box has a chance of being used, although this depends on the species present.

Any Ivy growth on mature trees (e.g. one of the Lombardy Poplars) should be retained as Ivy growth greatly enhances the suitability of trees as potential bat roosting sites. Ivy growth on trees is also used as nesting sites for birds and shelter for insects. The larvae of the Holly Blue Butterfly (*Celastrina argiolus*), a fairly common species of parks and gardens on the Wirral, also use Ivy as a summer food plant. Holly is used as a food plant in spring.

A range of features to provide opportunities for hibernating and nesting invertebrates, particularly bumble bees, ladybirds, lacewings and solitary wasps are available. These are small, inexpensive structures, usually about the size of a bird box, and could be positioned on trees or within areas of shrubbery.

Encouraging beneficial insects such as Lacewings and Ladybirds, which feed on aphids, may allow less reliance on chemical pesticides. Pesticide and fertiliser use should be kept to a minimum to encourage biodiversity.

The north-eastern section consists of a flat area of closely mown grassland and paths (Photographs 7 & 8). This is probably the least ecologically interesting area of the Dell. This could, however, be transformed into one of the most interesting areas by the construction of an informal wildlife pond where the central area of lawn is currently located. If successfully established, this area would add greatly to the ecological and aesthetic value of the area. The pond should be shallow sided, at least in parts, to allow animals to exit the water and it should vary in depth to allow planting of deep and shallow water marginal plants around the edges. Planting within the pond should include submerged macrophytes (e.g. *Myriophyllum spicatum* and *Ceratophyllum demersum*) and surface covering plants such as Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*).

5PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1

View towards raised shrub beds at south-western end of The Dell



Photograph 2

View from under bridge, facing towards south-western end of The Dell



Photograph 3
View of bridge facing north-east



Photograph 4
Tulip Tree near The Lyceum



Photograph 5
Swamp Cypress near The Lyceum



Photograph 6
Shrub beds surrounded by clipped Box hedges



Photograph 7
North-eastern end of The Dell



Photograph 8
North-eastern end of The Dell

