

# UK Planning Permission Cheat Sheet



## Overview

Planning portals offer lists of **everyone who has applied for changes to land or a property in the local authority area**, such as extensions and new builds. These applications often include names, addresses, plans, and dates. There are **9m + applications** available across **300+ local council authorities**.



## Why It Matters

- Identify **ownership or residency** when electoral roll is absent
- See where someone is **investing, developing, or residing**
- Detect **rental setups or unlicensed HMOs** via conversions
- Link people to **second homes, investment properties, or land**
- Understand **lifestyle and wealth indicators** from large renovations



## Limitations

- **No central search** — **data is siloed** across 300+ portals
- **Name-based searching is rare** — most **require address**
- **Data quality** – Some records **omit applicant name**



## Where to Search

- **Register of Planning Decisions** – Find the right portal
- **Public Insights** – Search across all UK council records by name or company
- **Land Registry** – Confirm ownership



## Tips and Considerations

- Search **name and address variations** — e.g. “John Smith” vs “J. Smith”
- Check **appeals and refusals** to identify contentious activity or regulatory conflict
- **Cross-reference** with electoral roll, land registry, and rental licensing for validation and to confirm legal owner



## Investigation Support

- **Asset Tracing** – Identify **owned or controlled property** under development
- **Rental Enforcement** – Spot **illegal conversions or unlicensed HMOs**
- **Due Diligence** – Review **high-value projects, addresses, or business interests**
- **Executive Protection** – Flag **publicly listed renovation details and floor plans** linked to high-profile people
- **Surveillance Planning** – Find **locations of importance** linked to a subject
- **Environmental/Planning Journalism** – Investigate **land use trends, improper developments, or conflicts of interest**

### About Public Insights

Public Insights helps investigators find addresses, associates, and financial signals tied to UK people and businesses — all from a single search. The platform brings together government and commercial records to uncover properties, companies, directorships, insolvencies, and more. Designed for OSINT workflows, it's the starting point for investigations into fraud, due diligence, asset tracing, and more. Try Public Insights today at [cradle.publicinsights.uk/accounts/signup](https://cradle.publicinsights.uk/accounts/signup) to see how our platform can support your investigation workflows.