



Fiona Webb
Wiltshire Council

Sunday, February 22, 2026

Dear Ms Webb,

Re: Owls Barn, Chirton, SN10 3QS

FORMAL OBJECTION TO UNAUTHORISED WORKS AND REQUEST FOR ENFORCEMENT

I write to formally object to the unresolved and longstanding breaches of Listed Building Consent at Owls Barn, Chirton, SN10; and to bring your attention an application for Listed Building Consent that is attempting to regularise these works (PL/2025/09564).

Statutory Context

Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes it a criminal offence to execute works for the alteration of a listed building in a manner that affects its character without Listed Building Consent.

Under Sections 16 and 66 of the Act, the Council must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest. No statutory time limit exists for unauthorised works to a listed building; time does not confer immunity.

Objection

As an immediate neighbour to Owls Barn, these unauthorised alterations directly impact both the enjoyment and value of my property [REDACTED] and perhaps more importantly, they have caused harm to a Listed Building and to the character and setting of the Chirton Conservation Area.

Numerous alterations have been carried out to Owls Barn, almost all apparently without Listed Building Consent. I state 'apparently' because the Listed Building Consents that have or have not been granted are unnecessarily difficult or impossible to find due to the fundamental deficiencies in the Wiltshire Council planning public register (search portal). These deficiencies make it extremely hard to identify legacy planning decisions, and so it is effectively impossible to raise planning objections (see Annex D).

The current owner [REDACTED] recently submitted application PL/2025/09564 seeking consent for alterations that already exist; to which I have already strenuously objected (see my letter to Adrian Smith dated 23 Sept 2025) and that to which, as yet, I have not had a formal response from Wiltshire Council.

This application is attempting to retrospectively regularise unauthorised works. Given the extent of these apparent consent breaches, I request that Wiltshire Council now take firm and decisive action in accordance with its statutory duty to protect buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and to prevent unauthorised works that harm their character and setting, rather than rubber stamp them.

Owls Barn – Planning History:

1989 Conversion

In 1989, Listed Building Consent was approved with conditions (K14034 and K15593L) to convert a barn (formerly part of Manor Farm, Chirton) into a dwelling. The building subsequently became known as Owls Barn. Of note is a letter dated 13 Feb 1990 referencing K15593L, by the Conservation Officer at the time which stipulated that the guttering should be cast iron and the soil vent pipe should be internal. Owls Barn has white plastic guttering and a modern external soil vent pipe (see Annex B).

The owner [REDACTED] subsequently gifted Owls Barn to [REDACTED]. During [REDACTED] (or possibly [REDACTED]) tenure, a number of alterations were made to Owls Barn for which I can find no evidence of Listed Building Consent (see Annex B for detail). For clarity, I set out below the relevant planning history and the alterations of concern.

1995 Rooflight application

Application K31933L for roof lights was refused and dismissed on appeal. Notwithstanding this dismissal, 3 x Velux-style rooflights were installed; probably after 2005 and before Oct 2014, and 2 of which before May 2009; they are not 'conservation roof lights' and these windows overlook my property (see Annex B).

Subsequent alterations pre-2014

In addition to the rooflights, the following have been installed, also apparently without Listed Building Consent (Annex B):

- External soil vent pipe
- Satellite dish
- Television aerial
- Boiler flue
- External wiring affixed to the boundary wall

2014 Boundary Wall alterations

In 2014 a new window and 2 x vents were cut into the north facing Owls Barn boundary wall. These alterations were carried out during [REDACTED] occupation, and once again, there is no evidence that Listed Building Consent was applied for, or granted, for this work.

Of particular concern is the damage to the wall which was carried out between early Oct 2014 when we viewed our property (Heron House) and 26 Oct 2014 when we moved in. [REDACTED] installation of this modern window and 2 x plastic vents used extremely poor workmanship (see Annex B).

Email enquiries by my wife to PLOCentral@wiltshire.gov.uk and my telephone calls to Wiltshire Council (asking if these alterations had received Listed Building Consent) were inconclusive – Wiltshire Council was unable to provide an answer. My searches of the Council's Planning & Building Control Public Register also proved fruitless – principally because many of the legacy planning application documents have not been digitised, so are unavailable online (see the Public Register deficiencies in Annex D).

Without access to a functioning Wiltshire Council Planning & Building Control public register, the population of Wiltshire are unable to adequately search for or find those applications affecting them; and so we, the public, effectively cannot submit formal objections. The system is therefore broken.

Local authorities are required to maintain a planning register that is available for public inspection under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Subsequent Ownership

██████████ purchased Owls Barn in 2021. I had already written to ██████████ asking for proof of Listed Building Consent (Annex C), and received no reply; however I also copied this letter to the Agents acting for ██████████ whom I subsequently met when she had bought Owls Barn.

██████████ wholeheartedly acknowledged the issue, and personally assured me, at length, that these unauthorised and damaging alterations — including the window and the two vents — would be reversed (she even told me that one of the vents was not even connected). Sadly ██████████ these remedial works could be undertaken, and Owls Barn was sold in 2023.

██████████ purchased Owls Barn in 2023 from ██████████. He has now submitted application PL/2025/09564 seeking retrospective Listed Building Consent for the window and 2 x vents that already exist. This application seeks to legitimise works that were previously unauthorised and which the former owner, ██████████ had promised me would be removed and made good.

Heritage Impact

Owl's Barn is a designated Grade II heritage asset within the Chirton Conservation Area. The insertion of a modern style window and plastic vents into a historic English Bond brick boundary wall:

- Corrupts the historic integrity of the facade
- Introduces incongruous modern detailing
- Harms the character and setting of this Listed Building
- Impacts the adjoining heritage context of the Chirton Conservation Area

Furthermore, while the Heritage, Design and Access Statement for this Application (PL/2025/09564) answered <Yes> to the question ***“Can the site be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land?”***, the same application also states that these alterations are ***“not visible from the public realm”***. Not only is this contradictory, it is patently untrue (see Annex B). The Heritage, Design and Access Statement also suggests that these alterations are ***“not considered to adversely affect the architectural or historic interest of the building”*** which is also quite obviously false (see Annex B).

These alterations have had a significant impact on my property, this Listed Building, and the Chirton Conservation Area. Remedial work to reverse them is straightforward and would return this beautiful English Bond brick wall back to its original state. Moreover, doing so would cause no loss of amenity. Regardless of its legality, this window either doesn't open, or is never opened (the handle being too high off the floor to reach), it is too small to let in any significant daylight, and it only serves to create light pollution (often throughout the night, such that we have to draw our bedroom curtains in order to sleep).

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, any harm to a designated heritage asset must be clearly justified and weighed against public benefits. No public benefit arises from these alterations.

Installing this window was a deliberate act (rather than a misguided mistake), and as well as being both a pointless and thoughtless alteration, it has done great damage to a historically significant feature.

Similar to the window, the 2 x vents (one of which has apparently never been connected) were installed using crude workmanship (see photos Annex B). Even had these 2 x vents had actually been granted Listed Building Consent, they should have required the use of appropriate period fixtures to blend with the aesthetics of a 200 year old building in order to retain the character of the setting. They do not.

These alterations have fundamentally altered the appearance of this beautiful boundary wall that is the primary outlook of my house; and this has materially affected the enjoyment and value of my property.

Conclusion

The Council has a statutory duty to protect heritage of Wiltshire.

Given the history outlined above, and the repeated and extensive harm caused to this Listed Building and its setting, I strongly object to this application – it causes immense and pointless harm to the building; not only by its destruction of the historic fabric but also its extremely poor design and detail; this destroys the entire aesthetic of this lovely facade and its setting within the Chirton Conservation Area.

Moreover, I am amazed that Wiltshire Council's response to a straightforward enquiry alerting them to a possible breach in Listed Building Consent has been inadequate, inconclusive, and evidently ignored. This, coupled with the lack of a functioning online public register of planning, has prevented this issue from being addressed before now, reflecting a wider malaise in the Wiltshire planning system.

Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes works such as these unlawful without Listed Building Consent. This application is flagrantly retrospective, seeking to legitimise alterations that were previously acknowledged by the former owner as unauthorised and harmful.

Equally, the multiple unauthorised works by Owls Barn's owners over many years, demonstrates a consistent and ongoing indifference by some people to the threat of the statutory penalties afforded to the Council by law. These penalties are designed to deter those who would do harm Listed Buildings; unless used they are pointless. The Council has both the duty to safeguard, and the means to enforce any harm to buildings of special architectural or historic interest; it appears that they are doing neither.

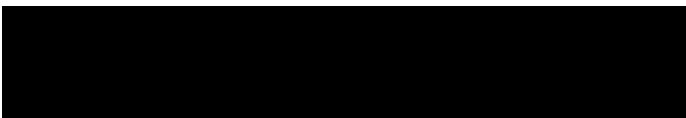
Retrospective applications should not legitimise unauthorised works that have already harmed a listed building and its setting within a Conservation Area. The Council's statutory duty is to preserve history, reverse such damage, and punish offenders - not regularise and thereby encourage such behaviour.

I therefore formally request:

1. That application PL/2025/09564 is refused.
2. That Wiltshire Council fully investigates historic breaches of Listed Building Consent at Owls Barn.
3. That the damaging alterations are reversed and made good.
4. That enforcement action under Sections 38 and 59 of the Act is taken where appropriate.

I would be grateful for confirmation that these matters are being reviewed.

Yours sincerely,



Tim & Louisa Reeve
Heron House, Chirton

Encl:

1. Annex A - PL/2025/09564 – Heritage, Design, and Access Statement
2. Annex B – Alterations to Owls Barn
3. Annex C– Letter to Mr Mouncher 22 June 2021
4. Annex D – Deficiencies in Wiltshire Council's Planning Portal

Our Ref: MP/221208



Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Proposal: 1 no. rooflight, 1 no. window, and 2 no. vents on northern elevation.

At: Owls Barn, The Street, Chirton, SN10 3QS

Design & Access Statement

Use

No change of use is proposed under this application.

Owls Barn is a residential property, and this will continue to be the case going forward.

The submitted Floor Plans indicate to the Council, which parts of the house that the proposed development serves.

Amount

There is no increase in floor area resulting from the proposed development.

There is 1 no. rooflight proposed as part of this application, the dimensions of which are shown on the submitted Rooflight Detail.

There is 1 no. window proposed as part of this application, the dimensions of which are shown on the submitted Window Detail.

There are 2 no. vents proposed as part of this application, the dimensions of which are shown on the submitted Vents Detail.

Scale

The scale of Owls Barn will not change as a result of the proposed development.

Layout

The internal layout does not change as a result of the proposed development.

The submitted Elevations Plans show the location of the various elements of this scheme. They are all on the northern elevation of Owls Barn.



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Appearance

The proposed development does not adversely affect the appearance of Owls Barn.

The window, rooflight and vents are not visible from within the public realm, and they occupy a very small percentage of the total surface area of this elevation.

Landscaping

There are no landscaping proposals put forward under this application.

Access

The access arrangements will remain as existing.

Heritage Statement

None of the proposed changes are considered to be harmful to the significance of this Grade II listed building, or the Conservation Area designation.

The proposals are not visible from within the public realm, and are not considered to adversely affect the architectural or historic interest of the building.

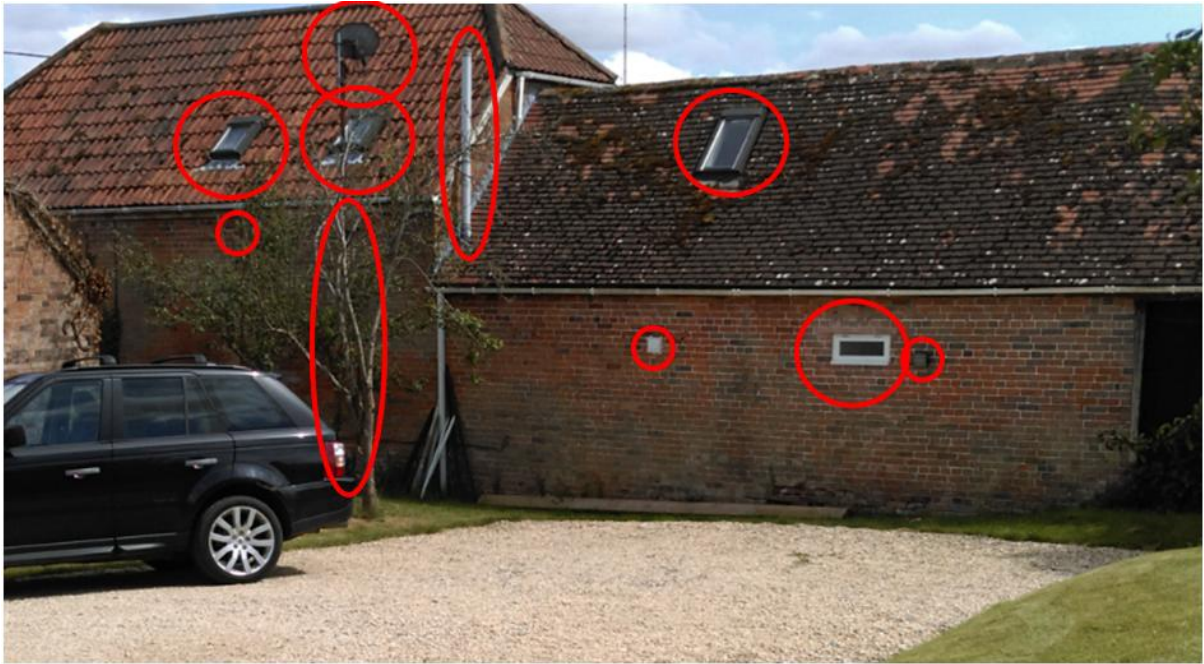


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ANNEX B – ALTERATIONS TO OWLS BARN



Owls Barn as it looks now with alterations



Owls Barn as it should look



Owls Barn viewed from Google streetview



Owls Barn viewed from Google streetview



Owls Barn viewed from The Street, Chirton



Owls Barn viewed from The Street, Chirton at dusk



Vent 1 - installed Oct 2014



Vent 2 - installed Oct 2014



Window - installed Oct 2014



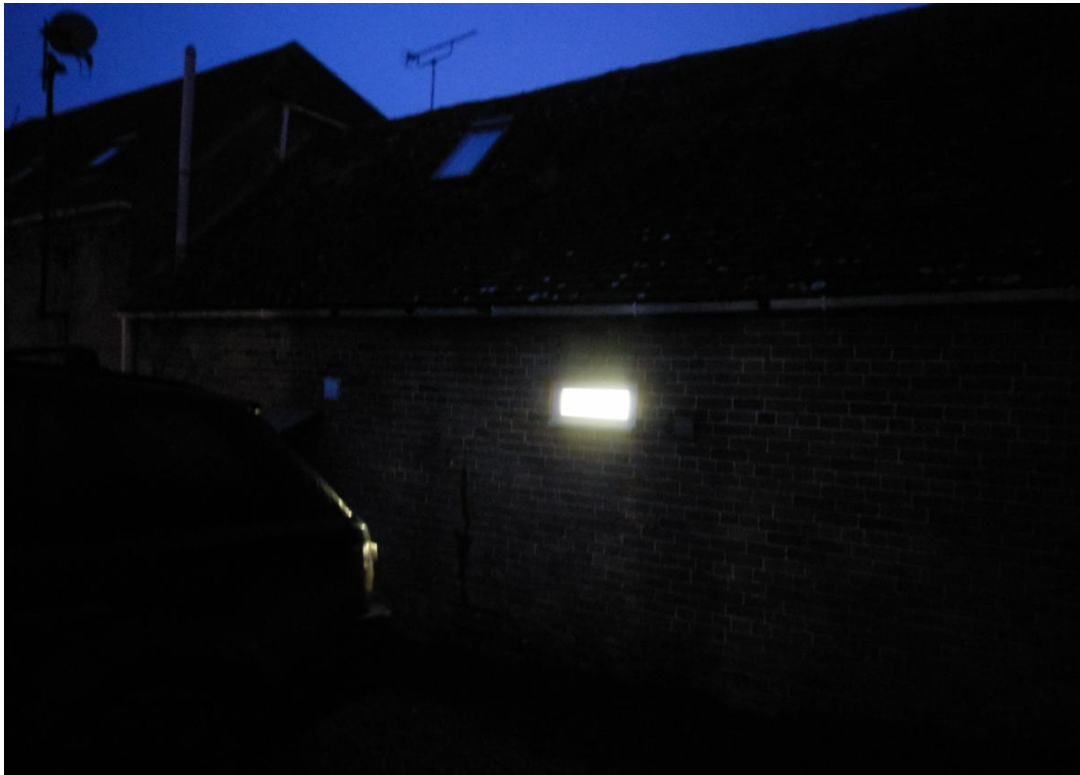
Roof lights x3, satellite dish, vents x 3, television aerial, new window



External wiring, rooflights, satellite mount, and boiler vent



Daytime view of window and light pollution



Night time view of window and light pollution

ANNEX C: LETTER TO DAVID MOUNCHER 21 JUNE 2021



Tuesday, Tue, June 22, 2021

David Mouncher
Owls Barn, The Street, Chirton,
DEVIZES
SN10 3QS

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

I understand that Owls Barn is for sale; and while I have no wish to disrupt this, I equally feel the purchasers should not have to deal with previous issues. As you know, without Listed Building Consent the buyer of Owls Barn can be forced to rectify, at their own expense, any unauthorised modifications to the building, regardless of when the alterations were made or who made them.

As you are also aware, on or between the 1st September 2014 and the 2nd October 2014, three (3) apertures were cut in to the brickwork of the north facing wall of Owls Barn, consisting of two vents (measuring c14x14cm and c12x12cm) and one window (measuring c65x32cm); see Annex A.

If Listed Building Consent has been granted for this work then none of this is an issue, however Consent has not been granted, then the alterations will need to be restored to their original state.

Owls Barn is a Grade II listed building (Historic England List Entry Number 1364625¹), and not only do these alterations overlook my property; they directly affect the character and value of my house.

As I can find no details of any planning applications or Listed Building Consent for these works, I would be grateful if you will confirm that this work has in fact been granted Listed Building Consent.

I also note that while that Planning Application K/15593/L (dated 02/02/1990) included the provision of 2 x roof lights was approved, the subsequent Planning Application K/31933/L (dated 18/08/1995) to install roof lights ("Alterations and provision of roof lights to form room in roof space") was Refused on 29/09/1995, and the appeal lodged on the 29/09/1995, was also Refused. Please can you confirm that the third roof light (see Annex A) has also received Listed Building Consent.

In summary, please would you confirm in writing by 2359hrs on Thursday 24 June 2021 that these works were properly authorised; specifically that Listed Building Consent has been granted for:

- 1) the 3 apertures cut into the north facing wall (2 x vents and 1 x window), and
- 2) the third velux roof light.

If confirmation is not forthcoming by this time I will assume that there is no Listed Building Consent and be compelled to inform those parties involved in the purchase and sale of Owls Barn of this.

If a written undertaking is made to make good the alterations for which there is no Consent to their original state within a reasonable time frame, then there will be no need to take this matter further.



Tim Reeve
Mob: 07973 199873 email@mail@timreeve.com

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1364625>

ANNEX C: LETTER TO DAVID MOUNCHER 21 JUNE 2021



21st September 2014 – no window



13th October 2014 – window and vents installed



Window, vents, and third Velux roof light



Vent 1



Window and Vent 2



Day view



Night view



Window and Vent 2



Vent 1 and window

ANNEX D – DEFICIENCIES IN WILTSHIRE COUNCILS PLANNING PORTAL SEARCH

The issues below were discovered while trying to establish what Planning Permission and Listed Building Consents were granted to Owls Barn.

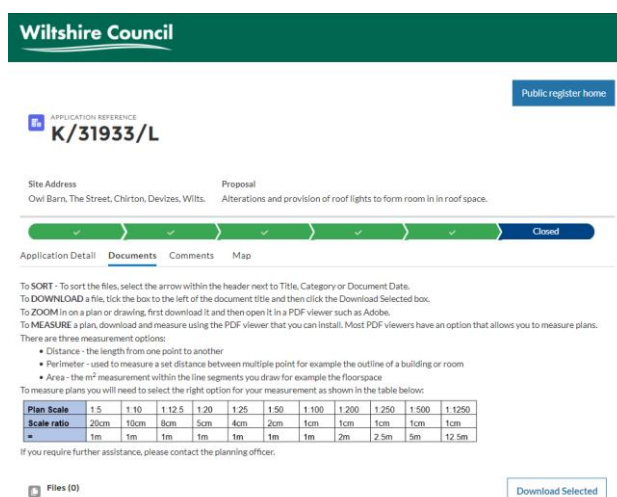
- The address search does not reliably return applications for a property.
- The public are prevented from reasonably identifying planning applications for a property.
- Documents listed in the application record are missing or unavailable.
- This undermines the public planning register requirement.

It is in many cases impossible to properly search for, and view planning permission applications and documents. This effectively prevents members of the public to object to planning.

Local authorities are required to maintain a planning register available for public inspection under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

In many cases, documents are not available. In other cases documents which were once available have now disappeared e.g. planning application K31933L – no documents are currently available; the application and refusal documents I have on file were downloaded in 2017. Screenshot below:



The same is the case with:

K/12513 – no documents	K/38678/T – no documents	K/44671 – no documents
K/31349 – no documents	K/39377 – no documents	K/47190 – no documents
K/31443 – no documents	K/52221/F – no documents	K/47206 – no documents
K/32318 – no documents	K/39375 – no documents	K/47207/L – no documents
K/32318 – no documents	K/43606 – no documents	K/47180/T – no documents

ADDRESS INDEXING

K/14034 relates to Owls Barn, though is not found when searching using <Owl's Barn, Chirton>. K/14034 is only found when searching using <Manor Farm, Chirton>. This needs to be updated.

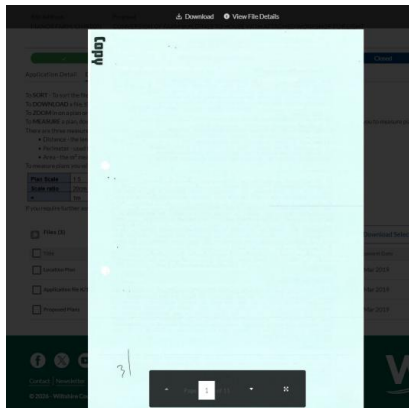
>Please note, the items listed above are not exhaustive

ANNEX D – DEFICIENCIES IN WILTSHIRE COUNCILS PLANNING PORTAL SEARCH

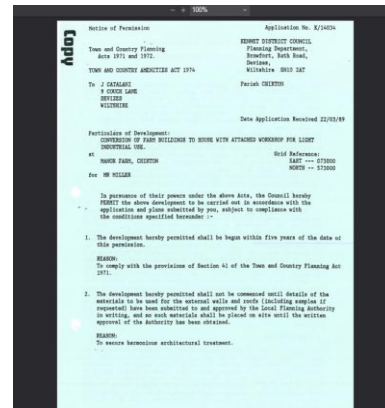
DOCUMENT VISIBILITY

In many cases, even when documents are available they cannot be read. Documents are not properly rendering onscreen and therefore cannot be read or appear blank (unless, as I have discovered they are downloaded and read offline). The result is the same on Android Chrome, Google Chrome and MS Edge.

For example see the screenshot (left) where the online document appears blank, compared to a downloaded and locally viewed screenshot (right) - the document is rendered correctly and is viewable:



Online rendering



Offline rendering

This is probably caused by coding in the browser's native PDF viewer which often fails to render images due to complex compression protocols (e.g. JPEG2000), or missing fonts, or GPU acceleration issues. Using extensions like PDF.js would provide for better compatibility across multiple platforms.

DOCUMENT DATING

Application K/14034 – submitted 23 March 1989 is dated 12 March 2019 on the search portal. Applications E/09/0572/FUL and E/09/1169/CAC allegedly date from 30 Dec **1899**.

POSTCODE SEARCHING

Currently a search on the postcode <SN103QS> produces 1 x result. Searching on postcode <SN10 3QS> produces 181 x results including planning applications for buildings in SN15 3QS which is in Chippenham.

This is because of whitespaces in the postcode input. Stripping out white spaces from postcode inputs in online forms is a crucial data cleaning step to providing accurate results.

This can be solved with a new database column for the postcode field with the spaces stripped, and which has a unique index. This can then be used for the lookup and provide accurate results.

Similarly, searching using <Chirton, SN10 3QS> produces 177 x results that include planning applications for buildings in Hopton Park, Devizes SN10, because the look up logic is partial (SN10). Again, this can easily be solved with the correct coding and database structure.

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE SEARCHING

Searching <K/14034> produces x 29 results, including buildings in Salisbury, Royal Wootton Bassett, etc.

Searching using <K14034> (without a "/") produces the correct result. Again, this is easily remedied using the right database structures and coding.