

**Cambridge City Council**  
**Online Planning Register (Public Access) Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Document Updated: 9 July 2012**

Listed below are answers to the most popular enquiries we have received regarding the Online Planning Register. If these do not answer your query, please contact [applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk).

No.	Question	Type	Advice
1	How quickly will new applications be added to the system?	General	Applications will be available to view online as soon as they are deemed to be valid. There is therefore a delay between receipt of the application to the council and applications appearing online while this validation process takes place.
2	How often is the information updated?	General	The information contained within the online system is 'as live' as our back office systems, and therefore the information contained within is continuously updated throughout every working day.
3	How quickly will documents be uploaded onto the system?	General	<p>Documents are being continuously added to the system as documents are processed.</p> <p>Comments on applications received through the online system automatically appear against in the "comments" tab.</p> <p>Letters and other documents sent to the council will take 2-3 working days to appear as these are scanned, assigned to the application and checked for any personal information, which is masked, before being published.</p>
4	How does the Council protect my personal information when publishing documents online?	General	<p>All comments and letters received on planning and tree work applications are open to public inspection and may be repeated in public documents. They will be published on our online planning register as part of the application file. If the application is referred to a committee for decision they may be published within the committee pages of our website. <a href="http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy">www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy</a></p> <p>In following the council's <a href="#">data protection policy</a> the following procedures are followed for publishing documents online.</p> <p><b>General correspondence (includes letters of representation) - private individuals</b> - We publish the sender's address and mask out the sender's name, personal signatures, personal email addresses and personal telephone and mobile</p>

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			<p>numbers before documents are published online.</p> <p><b>Applicants</b> - Applicants' names and addresses are published as these form part of the statutory planning register. We mask personal signatures, personal email addresses and personal telephone numbers before documents are published online.</p> <p><b>Business letters</b> - We mask signatures only.</p> <p>We publish many documents as part of the planning process, and human error can occur and we may miss something. If you notice something that causes you concern please email <a href="mailto:applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk">applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk</a> noting the application reference and document details and we will do our best to resolve the matter.</p>
5	I can't find an application when searching by partial reference number.	Searching	<p>You can use a 'wildcard' (either a '*' or '%') within the application reference number to improve your search. For example, you can use 10*/TTCA where you know the applications you want are from 2010 and is a tree works application, but you don't know the reference number.</p> <p>You don't need to add a wildcard at the start or end of your search term as the system assumes this. For example, /0001/FUL will search for planning application 0001 for each year.</p>
6	I can't find my application using the simple search e.g. I entered 14 Regent St.	Searching	<p>The search tool does not understand abbreviations - e.g. St, Rd, Dr, Cl, Ave – please type in full and do not include any punctuation (full stops, apostrophes or commas) in the address.</p> <p>Note - When searching on part of an address, this may pick up unrelated information not relevant to your search.</p>
7	I searched for an application that covers more than one site e.g. 21 to 23 Milton Road.	Searching	<p>Wildcards do not work with complex addresses. (e.g. 21 to 23 Milton Road will not be found by entering 21 % Milton Road). We have reported this to our software supplier.</p> <p>To ensure you find all applications associated with a property you are interested in, it is best to use the "Property Search" or "Map Search" functions.</p>

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8	I can't find any applications when searching by date.	Searching	The date search boxes shouldn't be format sensitive. However, by clicking on the calendar icons you can select the date of interest to automatically fill the box for you.
9	I can't find decision details.	Searching	<p>The decision is located under "Details" on the "Summary" Information</p> <p>The date of the decision is located under on the "Details" tab under "Important Dates" and a summary of the decision are located under the "Decision" tab.</p> <p>A copy of the decision notice, setting out conditions of consent or reasons for refusal, is located under the "Documents" tab.</p>
10	I can't find plans/documents.	Searching	These are located under the "Documents" tab.
11	What documents are available to view online?	Documents	<p>Planning Application decision notices from the early 1960's are available online.</p> <p>Full documentation associated with planning applications for the years 2005 onwards are available to view online.</p> <p>Documents for the period 2000 to 2005 can be made available online on request, turnaround time, subject to availability of resources.</p> <p>Historic applications between 1963 and 2000 are available on CD and microfiche to view in person at our <a href="#">customer service centre</a>.</p> <p>Where we have scanned documents for historic applications (2005-2009), we have reduced costs by scanning each document type (e.g. all drawings) into a single file.</p> <p>Application Information contains forms, validation and historical information, site notices and fees.</p> <p>Drawings contain any plans associated with the application.</p> <p>Application Decision Notice contains the condition notice and any conditions.</p> <p>Correspondence contains any letters between the planning department, applicant, agent or any other parties involved.</p>

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12	When I click on a document I receive a message "This document is unavailable for viewing at this time", what does this mean?	Documents	<p>This is normally because the document is in a queue awaiting the removal of personal data from the document. If the document is not viewable within 2-3 days, please email <a href="mailto:applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk">applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>You may also see this message, if someone has sent you a URL (shortcut) to the document from the system. Unfortunately, this system is not able to provide direct links to individual scanned documents at this time.</p>
13	There are no details of file sizes for documents.	Documents	<p>The system is not able to display this information at present. A request has been made to our software provider to include this feature.</p>
14	Is there an online measuring tool for scaling off plans?	Documents	<p>If an application has been submitted to the Council via the planning portal, drawings and plans normally have an embedded tool, which can be used when viewing these in Adobe Reader.</p> <p>We are in discussions with our software supplier over the provision of a tool for all other plans/drawings.</p>
15	Why do some documents take a long time to download?	Documents	<p>Firstly, there is a small delay as the online system is linking to our document management system to pull through the correct document.</p> <p>Download times are also subject to the speed of your internet connection, the speed of our network, and the size of the file requested.</p> <p>Where we have scanned documents for historic applications (prior to 2009), we have reduced costs by scanning each document type (e.g. all drawings) into a single file. This has meant that these files can be quite large.</p> <p>We will split larger documents e.g. design and access statements, where possible, in order to minimise download times. If you need assistance please contact us and will be happy to help.</p>
16	Why do I need to register to make a comment?	Comments	<p>Although we do not reveal personal details such as your name or email address when you make a comment via the online planning register, registering with the system means your comment will be sent, along with your details, to the case officer dealing with the planning application.</p> <p>By registering, this also stops us receiving automated spam appearing as comments on the website.</p>

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17	What should I do if I get an error message after pressing submit?	Comments	<p>It would help us if you noted the error message and the URL address of the page and contacted us via <a href="mailto:applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk">applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk</a> so we can investigate.</p> <p>Occasionally the online system maybe interuptted by other work on our network, so please re-submit the comment later in the day.</p>
18	On the notification email received after comments have been sent, any formatting (bold, paragraphs etc) has been removed, why is this?	Comments	<p>Formatting is removed so the comments can be easily automatically transferred into our planning database. The case officer will receive a fully formatted PDF document version.</p>
19	Why am I unable to submit comments on an application even though deadline is today?	Comments	<p>The system rule determining the deadline for comments is incorrect and currently does not let users submit comments on the day of the deadline. This is a bug, which is being fixed by our software provider and will be resolved with the next software upgrade – we expect this to take place during Summer 2012.</p> <p>Please email the case officer (<a href="mailto:firstname.surname@cambridge.gov.uk">firstname.surname@cambridge.gov.uk</a>) with your comments in this instance, until the bug is fixed.</p>
20	Why is the boundary of my property is shown incorrectly?	General	<p>The information shown on this site relates to Planning Applications only. It does not reflect land ownership. For ownership information please contact the Land Registry <a href="http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/www.landregistry.gov.uk">http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/www.landregistry.gov.uk</a></p>
21	Why are there no constraints for this planning application?	General	<p>Constraints for applications are shown as correct at the time the application is made. Therefore, for example, an application may show that it doesn't fall within a conservation area, even though today it does.</p> <p>To determine the current constraints on a property, please do an address search and view the constraints tab for that property.</p> <p>Older applications (pre 2006) were held in a system that did not calculate what constraints existed at the time of the application and therefore they all show as having no constraints.</p>
22	Why do older tree applications not display on the map?	General	<p>These were not captured spatially until January 2010.</p>

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23	How do I suggest improvements to the online planning register?	General	<p>The Online Planning Register (Public Access) is software provided by <a href="#">IDOX Group</a> who provides the Council's planning database.</p> <p>Feedback on the system can be submitted to <a href="mailto:applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk">applicationsupport@cambridge.gov.uk</a> and we will liaise with IDOX over improvements and can log a change request, which IDOX will consider and may include in a future software release.</p>
24	What internet browsers does the online planning register (Public Access) support?	Technical	<p>The Online Planning Register should operate with any of the major, currently supported, browser types. This includes, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari running on Apple OSX.</p> <p>If you experience any problems where a window does not pop up, you may need to check that the site 'http://idox.cambridge.gov.uk/online-applications/' is set up in your browser settings. You may experience problems if you are using pop-up blocking utilities. If this is the case, turn off the pop up blocker temporarily.</p>
25	Note for Windows XP users	Technical	<p>Windows XP Service Pack 2 has increased security, by stopping pop-up windows. The online planning register relies on these to provide you with results and Help. It is recommended that you add the online planning register web page address to the "Allowed Sites" list in the "Exception" settings for the pop-up blocker.</p>