

OneSearch.

Solving the data puzzle.

The hidden data issues that delay property transactions – even when searches look complete

Three real-world scenarios and the checks that help conveyancers spot risk earlier



In this guide (at a glance)

Most search results don't fail because information is missing. They fail because the information doesn't quite line up.

This guide walks you through three practical scenarios from day-to-day conveyancing where search data looks complete at first glance but later creates delays, rework or uncertainty.

Key takeaways include:

- How planning history can belong to the wrong property without looking obviously incorrect
- Why tree works, protections, and boundaries don't always agree
- How Conservation Area boundaries can quietly change the advice you give

Plus, you'll also find a short set of sense check questions that you can use when something doesn't feel right.

Read on for actionable solutions to solve the data puzzle.



When data looks right but isn't

Property transactions rarely slow down because a search is missing information.

They slow down because small inconsistencies surface late, when timelines are tight and expectations are already set.

- A planning reference that exists but applies elsewhere
- A designation that depends on which system you look at
- A boundary that's close enough to be misinterpreted

Individually, these details don't always trigger alarm bells. Collectively, they create friction; often after a transaction is already moving.

That's why search data can sometimes feel like a puzzle. When the pieces fit, the picture is clear. When they don't, time and confidence are usually the first things that are lost.

The following scenarios show what this looks like in practice.



THE MEADOWS

Three transactions, one familiar pattern

Imagine you're acting for three clients purchasing properties in The Meadows, a typical residential area in a market town.

Searches are returned. Nothing stands out as problematic. Progress continues as planned.

Then questions start to arise:

- "Why does this look like a new build?"
- "If there were tree works, why isn't there a protection?"
- "Are we definitely inside the Conservation Area?"

None of these questions are unusual. What is unusual is how often they trace back to data that hasn't been fully reconciled.

Let's start with the first.



Scenario 1: The right data, from the wrong property

Mismatched planning reference

What the search shows

The planning and building regulation history suggests recent construction. References are present. Dates are clear. Nothing appears incomplete.

Why it looks fine

Planning data often carries an air of authority. When applications are listed and referenced correctly, it's easy to assume they've been attached to the right address; especially when everything else in the file appears straightforward.

What doesn't add up

A closer look reveals the planning history belongs to another property with the same street name and number, located elsewhere in the same council area. The data itself is correct. The connection isn't.

Why this matters

If the mismatch isn't spotted early, advice can be given on the basis of an incorrect planning history. This can lead to rework, delay, and uncomfortable conversations later in the process.

Sense check questions

- Does the timeline match the property's apparent age and type?
- Are there duplicate street names or numbering patterns locally?
- Do other parts of the search support the same story?



Scenario 2: When the records don't agree

Tree works without protection

What the search shows

Planning history includes applications for significant tree works. Land Charges show no Tree Preservation Order.

There's no indication the property sits within a Conservation Area. At face value, nothing looks missing – just disconnected.

Why it looks fine

Tree works appear regularly in planning records. When no protection is listed, it's tempting to assume the works were permitted and move on, particularly when time is tight.

What doesn't add up

Tree works that require formal applications often imply some form of designation; either at the time or introduced later.

When planning history, protections, and mapping don't align, it raises a quiet question: Is everything being surfaced together?

Why this matters

Tree protections and Conservation Area controls affect:

- Development potential
- Ongoing maintenance obligations
- The advice clients rely on

When the picture isn't joined up, assumptions can be made that later need correcting.

Sense check questions

- Do the dates align with the current protection status?
- Could protections have changed since the application?
- Are planning records, land charges, and mapping consistent?



Scenario 3: When boundaries change the advice

Is it really in the Conservation Area?

What the search shows

The property is flagged as being within a Conservation Area, implying additional restrictions and a different planning conversation with your client.

Why it looks fine

Conservation Area status is often treated as binary: in or out. When a designation appears in the search, it's natural to take it at face value.

What doesn't add up

Detailed mapping shows the boundary running just outside the property line. Further checks confirm the designation has been incorrectly applied.

Why this matters

Conservation Area status affects:

- Alteration and development rights
- Risk perception for buyers
- The advice you give early on

An incorrect designation can lead to unnecessary caution – or missed opportunity – all from a boundary that was assumed rather than confirmed.

Sense check questions

- Is the boundary confirmed across more than one source?
- Does it clearly include the property footprint?
- Has the designation changed since earlier records were created?



What these scenarios have in common

Across all three examples:

- The data exists
- The search looks complete
- The issue is how the information connects

These problems tend to surface:

- When data comes from different systems
- When records are updated at different times
- When pressure encourages surface-level checks

They're rarely dramatic errors. They're typically small misalignments; the hardest kind to spot when workloads are high.



What reduces these risks in practice

Reliable search data depends on a few core principles:

- Cross-referencing, not single-source reliance
- Clear accountability when records don't align
- Boundary and address validation, not assumption
- The ability to investigate anomalies before release, not after queries arise

Understanding these principles helps conveyancers ask better questions and spot issues earlier.

If these scenarios feel familiar

You're not alone. These issues are common precisely because they're subtle. Wherever your next transaction takes you, recognising these patterns early can make all the difference.

Questions worth asking when something doesn't add up:

- Do all parts of the search tell the same story?
- If they don't, is it clear why?
- Are boundaries and designations precise or approximate?
- Is there a clear route to clarification before advice is finalised?

Small checks, asked early, often prevent bigger delays later.



The examples in this guide are a powerful reminder of why a meticulous approach to data is so vital. At OneSearch, this level of uncompromising quality and expert problem-solving is not a feature; it's the bedrock of what we do. We're committed to ensuring every piece of your data puzzle fits perfectly, giving you the clarity and peace of mind you need to excel.



Elizabeth Jarvis
Managing Director | OneSearch

Prime.

Our comprehensive regulated local authority search combines a search of the Local Land Charges Register with responses designed to mirror the questions on the Law Society's form CON29.

Prime incorporates all the verification processes we've outlined, from our in-house data collection to specialist team cross-checking, ensuring you receive the complete picture without the data integrity issues we saw in The Meadows scenarios.

Prime comes at a fixed price with an average turnaround time of 8 days, and we will always accommodate urgent requests where possible. All searches are backed by £10 million Professional Indemnity Insurance, which also provides cover for errors and omissions in Local Authority records used to compile our search reports.

[Click here](#) for more information

Express.

When searches are causing unacceptable delays and a transaction is at risk, OneSearch Express provides a solution that combines the security of insurance coverage with over 70% of the data you would typically obtain from local authorities.

Express goes beyond standard indemnity policies to incorporate our additional due diligence and data verification. It means you and your client can complete quickly, securely and confidently, knowing the information has still been subject to our quality processes.

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About Landmark

OneSearch is part of Landmark Information Group, the UK's largest property and land data business supporting the entire value chain of the property industry. With unrivalled datasets, a comprehensive team of in-house experts, an extensive partner network, and advanced technology innovations and system capabilities, our mission is to make every property transaction feel effortless; making it both simpler and faster while reducing risks for all stakeholders.

With more than 25 years' experience, we power confident property and land decisions for architects, surveyors, estate agents, environmental consultants, mortgage lenders, real estate professionals, land developers, property lawyers and search providers across all these markets.

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Support from OneSearch

OneSearch is here to support you with practical solutions and unparalleled service that make search data less puzzling. We triple quality check all our data – at collection, on entry to our database, and when included in searches – so you can always have 100% confidence in the data we provide.



01782 433 270 | intro@onesearchdirect.co.uk | onesearch.direct

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