



Planning, Heritage and Design and Access Statement

West Court

Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4QJ

Application for installation of Swimming Pool

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced by ET Planning to support a planning application for the installation of a swimming and associated hardstanding and at West Court, Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4QJ.
- 1.2 This Planning, Heritage and Design and Access Statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by:
- 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - 1:250 Proposed Site Plan
 - 1:100 Proposed Site Section (A-A)
 - Flood Risk Assessment prepared by GeoSmart
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Collington Winter
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises land to the east of West Court (a Grade II listed building). The land subject to this application comprises a small garden courtyard within the footprint of the wider building.
- 2.2 The site is located within the Arborfield Garrison SDL however, it is sited adjacent to the southern Settlement Boundary of Arborfield Garrison, therefore, the site is considered to be within the Countryside.
- 2.3 The wider site is surrounded by West Court SANG required to provide natural greenspace to help mitigate the impact of the 3,500 dwellings approved in the SDL.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 **Application Ref. 161090** 'Application for listed building consent to remove book case from Library. Retrospective.' **Approved 08/08/2016.**
- 3.2 **Application Ref. 213704** 'Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed replacement of 10 no. windows to second floor dormers.' **Approved 07/02/2022.**
- 3.3 **Application Ref. 240428** 'Full application for change of use from an Officers mess to Hotel with 49 bedrooms. Erection of a single storey bicycle store along with the installation of a staircase and removal of a water tank (part retrospective)' **Approved 03/06/2024.**
- 3.4 **Application Ref. 240429** 'Application for Listed Building consent for the installation of a spiral staircase and the removal of a water tank (retrospective).' **Approved 12/06/2024.**

- 3.5 **Application Ref. 240430** 'Full application for the proposed erection of a Victorian style green house following removal of the existing greenhouse. Replacement of the pump house roof and repairs to the adjoining wall along with new coping stone to match existing. Works to the potting shed building to include fenestration repair.' **Pending consideration.**
- 3.6 **Application Ref. 240431** 'Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed erection of a Victorian style greenhouse following removal of the existing greenhouse. Replacement of the pump house roof and repairs to the adjoining wall along with new coping stone to match existing. Works to the potting shed building to include fenestration repair.' **Pending Consideration.**

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The application seeks permission for the installation of a 11x6 sqm swimming pool to the east of West Court, within the complex of the wider building. The existing land currently comprises a patio/ grassed area. The proposal also features a hardstanding patio terrace connecting the main building with the swimming pool.
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use and Amount:** The proposal is for a swimming pool within the grounds of the existing building to support the existing hotel use. The swimming pool will be part of the planning unit of the hotel.
- 4.4 **Layout and Scale:** The proposal relates to the installation of a swimming pool. This is proposed to a scale that is in keeping with the existing building. The proposed swimming pool will be 11x6 sqm and

will be located within the garden courtyard, enclosed by the main building.

- 4.5 **Scale, Height & Mass:** The scale, height and massing of the proposal will be in keeping with the main building.
- 4.6 **Landscaping:** The application seeks to extend the patio by providing hardstanding between the main building and the swimming pool.
- 4.7 **Appearance:** The appearance of the wider site will remain unchanged from its existing appearance. The installation of the swimming pool will not alter the appearance of the main building. The proposed development will only be visible from the eastern side of the site, as it will be visually screened by the main building and would be at existing ground level.
- 4.8 **Access & Parking:** The access to the site is to remain the same as existing. The proposal will not create an increase in traffic to the site.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise:
- 5.2 In this instance the Development Plan comprises Wokingham Borough Council's:
 - Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan document (January 2010) (hereafter referred to as 'CS');
 - Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Hereafter referred to as 'MDD').

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) ('NPPF') is a material consideration of significant weighting in the assessment of application.
- 5.4 It is acknowledged the application site is within the countryside however the proposal seeks to install a swimming pool within the complex of the wider building ancillary to the existing hotel use.
- 5.5 Policy CP11 of the CS seeks for development proposals to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. CP11 states development will not normally be permitted in the Countryside except where:
- "1) It contributes to **diverse and sustainable rural enterprises** within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development **away from original buildings**; and*
- 3) It is **contained** within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements".*
- 5.6 The swimming pool would be sited within the complex of the wider existing building, contributing to the rural enterprise of the hotel, and would therefore meet the exception of CP11.1 and CP11.2. In short, the development plainly does not excessively encroach or expand development away from the original building.
- 5.7 It is acknowledged that CP11 (1-3) require all sub-paragraphs of the policy to be met, however, the proposal would be unable to comply with CP11.3 owing to the swimming pool being neither a conversion nor replacement building. This is not considered a barrier to

development as the policy is worded for other forms of development outside of the list of exceptions ('not normally') to be acceptable. In any case, the proposal would result in a development that would not encroach into the countryside and would not materially conflict with CP11. As such, it is considered the proposal would still be acceptable in principle.

- 5.8 In summary the proposal is considered to comply with CC02 of the MDD and CP11 of the CS and is acceptable in principle.
- 5.9 **Character and Appearance:** Policy CP3 of the CS states planning permission will be granted for development proposals that are an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form and character of the area.
- 5.10 The development would be effectively enclosed by the northern, western and southern elevations of the main building. Due to the nature of the swimming pool, the proposal will be located at ground level.
- 5.11 The proposal is not considered to cause any significant change to the relationship of the building to the area, nor the proposal's own relationship to the Listed Building as the swimming pool would not have detrimental visual intrusion from wider views.
- 5.12 Notably, owing to the development being at ground level and not coinciding with any level changes the views of the development when facing west (the only 'unscreened' view of the development) will appear the same as existing and would in no way compete with the building.
- 5.13 In summary the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant principles of CP1 and CP3 of the CS.

- 5.14 **Listed Building (Setting and Fabric):** Policy TB24 seeks for development to conserve or enhance the important character and special architecture or historic interest of Heritage Assets (including its setting and views).
- 5.15 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF is clear that a description of the significance of any affected Heritage Assets is required but also that the level of detail is proportionate to the Assets importance and no more sufficient that to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 5.16 The site this application relates to is located within the setting of Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number 1118093). The formal listing of West Court is as follows:

"Reasons for Designation

West Court, a former manor house with a C17 core and substantial additions and rebuilding in 1800, 1835, 1901 and 1964, latterly used as an officers' mess, is listed at Grade II, for the following principal reasons:

** Architectural interest: accumulated fabric and alterations to a house of which the core dates from the C17 built on an earlier moated site; the south elevation is a strictly symmetrical, formal composition and designed to be visible from the long avenue leading up to it;*

** Interiors: principal rooms have rich decorative treatment dating from 1835 and 1901;*

** Interior fixtures: highly ornate Jacobean panelling and chimney pieces incorporating grotesques, heraldry and symbolic motifs, reused from the earlier house and elsewhere; an unusual ensemble, particularly given its reputed date of installation in 1835;*

** Historic interest: the general development of the house is discernible through the building fabric and documentary evidence, and there is potential for further understanding.*

History

Situated upon a Roman road known as the Devil's Highway which linked Silchester and Staines, the site of West Court has been occupied since the Middle Ages; 14 generations of Sir William Banastre's family were recorded before its sale in 1704. Built on a moated site, the earliest part of the present house dates from the C17 and was built for Charles Howard, the Earl of Arundel's youngest son. James Goodyer bought and partially rebuilt it in the early C18. It remained in the same family until 1931.

The windows to the south façade were extended to ground level in 1800. In 1835 substantial alterations were made by Reverend Henry St John, including the addition of a two-storey porch and a large chimneystack, infilling the surrounding moat, removing the drawbridge, and reconfiguring the house internally, which included reorientating the stair, reordering rooms and, records assert, inserting much panelling and a number of timber chimneypieces. Whilst certain features such as the porch and its margin-glazed inner lobby are 1830s Gothick in manner, there is limited evidence to prove that the panelled Jacobean rooms are of this date rather than later C19 or early C20 introductions, although the less formally arranged assemblage of Jacobean panelling and fittings in the hall may well date from 1835 and are thereby unusual. In 1901 (a more probable date for much of the Jacobean treatment), the east wing was added, providing a library and lounge, the latter of which contains an earlier fireplace.

The building was requisitioned in 1941 by the War Department for

*use as a training establishment by the Special Operations Executive; it was then purchased by the War Department in 1950, and in 1964 was greatly extended, adding a dining room, bedroom wing and service rooms to the north, while parts of the earlier building were demolished, and other parts given new decorative elements. The building was used as the officers' mess for the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME). These additions were built in a neo-Georgian manner and include a single-storey range with six bays, the five to the right each have a full-height sash window. This links the earlier building with the new bedroom range to the north. It is a three-storey, 12-bay range with a sash to each floor of each bay. These ranges have stone architraves to the doors, hipped, tiled roofs, and stone drip course above the ground floor windows separating the two types of brick and are not of special interest.**

To the north of the building are the remains of the kitchen garden walls.

Details

A former manor house with a C17 core and substantial additions and rebuilding in 1800, 1835, 1901 and 1964, latterly used as an officers' mess.

MATERIALS: the older parts of the house are red brick laid mainly in English Bond with tiled roofs and brick chimneystacks.

PLAN: the building is situated in large grounds with its main entrance following the line of the Roman road to the west. To the south is an avenue bounded by a row of trees to each side, and to the north the remains of a kitchen garden.

The names of the rooms are taken from the 1947 sales particulars. The C17 building occupies a roughly rectangular area on the south of

the current building plan, within which are a large entrance hall, drawing room, stair hall and a parlour, known as the Oak Room. The porch dates from 1835. The 1901 east wing contains a library and lounge.

*The 1964 northern extensions, in neo-Georgian manner, excluded from the listing, include a single-storey range with a very large dining room adjoining a three-storey bedroom wing and service accommodation.**

EXTERIOR: the principal elevation of the C17 building is set on a terrace, facing south onto the former gardens and avenue; it is a strict symmetrical composition and is plain in its detailing. It is arranged in five bays and two storeys and an attic; the ground floor has full-height nine-over-nine pane sash windows recessed from the façade in plain reveals beneath flat red brick arches, and with plain - probably C20 imitating 1835 - chamfered glazing bars. The first floor has six-over-nine pane sashes in flush frames, and in the attic there are three-over-six pane sashes in dormer windows set in the hipped roof. It has a brick string course and painted quoins.

The east return uses the same proportions and features in three irregularly spaced bays.

The 1901 extension to the east follows the style of the earlier building on the south elevation; the sashes have single lights to their bottom sashes. The north elevation of the wing is mostly blind and to the right is a gable to a truncated range of the C17 building, removed for the 1964 extension.

The west elevation faces the principal driveway to the house, but is far less formal than the south. The two-storey 1835 porch projects from the façade. The entrance has a pair of doors, each with three

raised moulded panels, beneath a fanlight within a gauged brick arch, above which a plaque with the REME crest has been applied. The porch has six-over-six pane sash windows on the first floor front elevation and on the ground floor returns, the sash windows to which have been replaced in the late C20. The porch has a hipped tiled roof. To the right of the porch is a wide chimney stack, also dating from 1835; the string course continues from the south elevation as far as the porch. To the ground floor, left of the porch, is a Gothic Revival six-light window with stone mullions and transoms and a wide brick relieving arch; above this are two adjoining six-over-six pane sash windows. There is a recessed two-bay section to the left with sash windows which was rebuilt in the mid-C20; there is a wide stack at the junction with the earlier building.

INTERIOR: the entrance is into a baronial hallway decorated in a Jacobean-revival style, fully panelled, with a large inglenook fireplace and exposed, timbered ceilings. The Gothic Revival window on the west elevation lights the space, and there is another, reused Gothic window with stained glass to the east, overlooking a light well. The internal double doors of the porch are half glazed and leaded with some coloured glass in 1835 Gothick manner. The hall, the Oak Room and the principal rooms to the first floor are panelled in oak, with relief panelling, heraldic devices, and decorative motifs some of which is reused from the Jacobean period, but with later embellishment and additions. The hall panelling includes incised moulded pilasters and strapwork panels with a recurrent decorative motif, reused carved overmantels and sections of carved panels. The hall has a deep inglenook fireplace lined with seating and with a balustraded rail to the front. It has a chimneypiece with carved grotesque figures supporting the mantelshelf, the overmantel is of square panels interspersed with figures and decorative panels. The fireplace is lined in Delft-style tiles. The Oak Room is lined in plain oak panelling to

cornice height, with a moulded frieze. It has an elaborately carved chimneypiece, much of which appears to be C19 work, and is lined in blue Delft tiles.

The drawing room has plaster panelling, moulded cornices and ceiling roses; the walls are fully lined in fielded panelling in a C18 manner. The fireplace has a moulded over-mantel echoing the pattern of the walls, a moulded marble surround and is lined with Chinoiserie tiles. The architraves to the doors are fluted and have paterae in the corners; doors are of six moulded panels. The windows have simple chamfered glazing bars, which echo the 1835 internal front doors, and panelled shutters and linings.

The closed-string staircase has square-section newel posts, closely-spaced twisted balusters and a deep moulded handrail; the stair hall has the same plaster panelling as the adjacent drawing room.

The library is a relatively modest room; it has a carved and moulded timber chimneypiece, picture rail, plain coving, and a mid-C20 ceiling rose. There is a heavily moulded built-in bookcase with floral and fruit decoration. The lounge has plaster panelling, and a recessed alcove contains an elaborate chimney piece with heraldic symbols and figures, with a coffered ceiling above.

On the first floor there are two principal rooms on the south side of the building. They are fully lined in plain, small panelling, some of which is modern replication; there are doors concealed within it. The south-east room has a particularly ornate Jacobean chimneypiece that incorporates carved figures, moulded panels and heraldic devices, the overmantel supported on paired Ionic columns. The stone fireplace has a four-centre arched opening with moulded spandrels.

At the head of the stairs, at first floor level, are a pair of moulded C18 doorcases with two-panel doors. The C18 stair to the attic within the main range has square-section newels, turned balusters and a heavy moulded rail. The C19 rear stair has a closed string, square newels, slender turned balusters and a simple shaped handrail.

Above the entrance hall is a low, windowless room known as the 'Priest's Hole', though is unlikely to ever have functioned as such. A section of stud wall is visible and it has a late C18 - early C19 fireplace with a simple timber surround and iron grate. The late C17 or early C18 side-purlin roof structure is visible in some of the attic rooms, and has evidence of replacement timbers.

** Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), it is declared that these aforementioned features are not of special architectural or historic interest".*



The listed building(s) is/are shown coloured blue on the attached map. Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), structures attached to or within the curtilage of the listed building (save those coloured blue on the map) are not to be treated as part of the listed building for the purposes of the Act.

5.17 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that LPAs should account for:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

5.18 The swimming pool would be enclosed by the western and northern elevations of the northern extensions to the building which is the 'less formal' elevation as per the listing (does not comprise part of the significance).

5.19 When viewing the 'principal' elevation of the dwelling from the south, this would remain as a symmetrical formal composition. The swimming pool would be located behind the southern elevation and due to the nature of the proposal, the swimming pool would be located at a ground level. As such, the swimming pool located in the enclosed space by the building would in no way have any bearing on the experience of the asset or how it is viewed – preserving its significance. As such, it is considered there is no harm to the significance of the Heritage Asset.

5.20 The proposal would make a positive contribution to the conservation of the heritage asset by enhancing the economic viability of the Hotel Use which in turn sustains the longevity of the asset.

5.21 Finally, whilst no external alterations are proposed to the building, the development would retain the appearance of the asset which is listed partly for its external appearance and ergo makes a positive and distinct contribution to the character of this part of the countryside.

5.22 It is considered that the proposal would conserve the Heritage Asset. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy TB24 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

5.23 **Impact to Residential Amenities:** The proposal is not immediately adjoining any neighbouring residential uses or properties. The

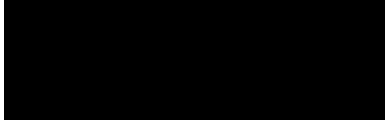
proposal will also be located within the complex of the wider building and will be enclosed by the building itself. Owing to its siting the pool will not have any impact detrimental or otherwise to the amenities of neighbouring land uses.

- 5.24 **Ecology:** The application has been submitted with a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which demonstrates that the proposed habitat creation creates a net gain of 0.02 habitat units equating to a net gain of biodiversity within the site of 19.27%. In order to provide the required 10% net, gain a total of 0.04 Biodiversity Habitat Units must be provided through habitat creation within the clients ownership.
- 5.25 **Drainage and SuDS:** Although the site is located in Flood Zone 1, which entails a low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment.
- 5.26 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The proposed development does not create any floorspace and is not CIL liable.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and conserves the setting of the heritage asset.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would be acceptable in principle without an adverse effect on the character of the area and Listed Building, and that of the amenity of neighbouring land uses.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National

Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

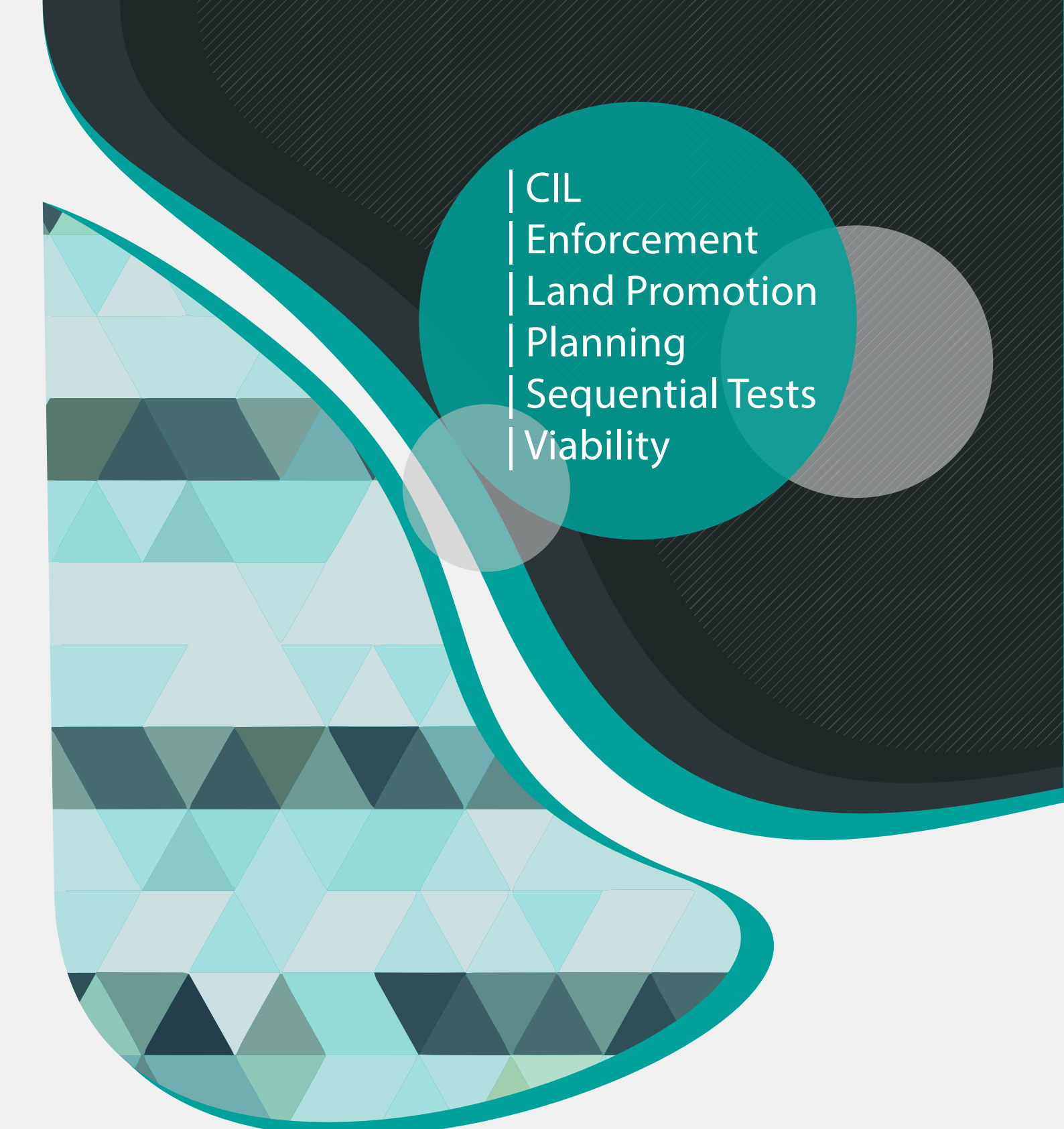


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