

ET Planning

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Client:

Tom and Emily Plews

8 South Drive,

Wokingham, RG40 1DH

*Erection of a detached garage and pool house
extension to the existing property.*

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the erection of a detached garage and a pool house extension to the existing property.
- 1.2 This planning 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 Martin Butler Partnerships, Urban Tree Experts and GHA Trees:
- Site Location Plan
 - Site Plan
 - Existing Floor Plans and Elevations
 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations
 - Ecological Information
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is a detached residential property set within the defined settlement of Wokingham. The property itself is set within a large, spacious plot, to the south of South Road with both natural trees and man-made boundaries defining the site.
- 2.2 Residential development is the dominant land use in the surrounding area, but other land uses are located nearby such as St Teresa's Catholic Academy to the north east, Mulberry Business Park to the west and Squires Garden Centre to the south.
- 2.3 The site is located in close proximity to Wokingham Town Centre which contains a number of amenities such as various eateries and public houses, cinemas and the train station that allows for onwards journeys to London and the wider South East.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 112145 - Proposed erection of two storey side/rear extension, front porch extension, re-alignment of bay window area to rear, provision of new dormers to front and rear of loft space, and demolition of existing garage and outbuildings (Amendment to F/2008/2608 for proposed two storey side extension, new front porch and demolition of existing garage and outbuildings). – Granted – 17.10.11
- 3.2 091911 - Proposed erection of two storey side extension and new front porch – Granted – 28.05.09
- 3.3 080538 - Proposed erection of two storey side extension and new front porch. (Demolition of existing garage and outbuildings) – Refused – 02.12.08

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 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 proposed use is for a detached garage and an extension to the existing house to provide a swimming pool.
- 4.4 **Layout and Scale:** The proposed pool extension is single storey and the proposed garage is also.
- 4.5 **Landscaping:** The site benefits from existing landscape features and further landscaping measures can be controlled via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 4.6 **Appearance:** The proposed extension and garage are single storey in height. The proposed pool house extends backwards from the eastern elevation of the property.
- 4.7 The proposed garage and extension utilise a gable style roof according with the design cues found on the existing property.
- 4.8 **Access & Parking:** The property benefits from an existing access off South Drive and parking is provided to the front of the property. In

addition to this, the proposed garage will provide covered car parking spaces for the applicant's cars.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that "Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way" and "at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".
- 5.3 Paragraph 131 identifies that "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities", whilst paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to "outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."
- 5.4 The National Design Guide builds on the above, and clarifies that "well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use" (para 109).

5.5 **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. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning consideration in all planning applications. In this instance, the relevant development plan documents include:

- Adopted Managing Development Delivery (2014) (**MDD**)
- Adopted Core Strategy (2010) (**CS**)

5.6 MDD Policy CC01 and CC02 are of relevance to the proposal. The former states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The latter relates to the defined settlement boundaries.

5.7 Linked to this, CS Policy CP9 is of relevance and relates to the scale of development proposals needing to relate to the environment in which they are located. The site is located within the defined settlement of Wokingham which is outlined in the policy as a major development location – this is an area with the greatest level of services and accessibility via various modes of transport.

5.8 New residential development including extensions is acceptable in the settlement boundary subject to accordance with other policies in the development plan.

5.9 For these reasons, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

- 5.10 **Sustainable Development:** NPPF Paragraph 8 outlines the three interdependent aims of the planning system. NPPF Paragraph 8.a) outlines the economic objectives of the planning system. The applicant intends to utilise local construction firms in order to bring forward the development.
- 5.11 Given the precarious economic situation the UK is currently facing and the importance of construction to wider GDP, it is important for construction firms to have sufficient pre-scheduled work in order to overcome the difficult economic headwinds and lay the foundations for success when economic difficulties subside.
- 5.12 Paragraph 8.b) outlines the social objectives of the planning system. This outlines the need to support healthy well-being amongst current and future individuals. The proposed swimming pool will enable the applicant to undertake daily exercise, promoting both physical and mental health.
- 5.13 Paragraph 8.c) outlines the environmental objectives of the planning system. This outlines the need to make effective use of land and helping the transition to a low carbon economy. Both elements of the proposal will utilise an existing plot that is already in residential use within a major development location. In addition to this, the proposed garage has been designed with the future in mind and could be easily adapted to incorporate an EV car charger as the popularity and usage of electric cars becomes more common.
- 5.14 These requirements are further echoed in CS Policy CP1 which outlines the Council's approach to sustainable development.
- 5.15 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** CS Policy CP3 is of relevance when considering the impact of the proposal on the character of the area. Point A of this policy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale, mass, layout, form height and of

benefit to the character of the area without detriment to the amenities of surrounding land users.

- 5.16 The proposed development is considered to represent high quality design, utilising a number of design features on the existing dwelling to allow it to assimilate in with the surrounding design language of the plot.
- 5.17 The scheme has been designed to be subservient to the existing property, with a lower ridge height to the existing property allowing both the extension and the garage to be read over time as a story of the plot's development which emphasises the applicant's high quality design vision.
- 5.18 It is noted that the proposed garage is located forward of the front elevation of the dwellinghouse. However, given the highly screened nature of the plot, this is not considered to harmfully impact the character of the area.
- 5.19 Point 6.2.1 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that on plot parking may be provided to the front, rear of side of dwelling and may be located garages or car ports. The Borough Design Guide does go on to note that '*structures for parking such as car ports, should **generally** be set back from the building line*' [my emphasis].
- 5.20 It is important to note that that the BDG does not say 'must', 'has to' or 'will be required'; this is a deliberately designed to provide flexibility in the application of this guidance on this matter.
- 5.21 The relevant test as a result is whether the proposed development is considered harmful to the overall character of the area. As detailed, the plot is heavily screened by both man made and natural features.
- 5.22 The BDG outlines at point 24 of the residential design checklist that for proposed extensions or alterations to existing dwellings, the

proposal should be well designed in relation the original building, neighbouring properties and the character of the local area.

- 5.23 The proposal is considered to accord with this. The extension and garage are considered high quality additions to the existing property and as such, are acceptable in character of the area terms.
- 5.24 Considering this further in national policy terms, NPPF Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings is essential to what the planning system should achieve. Further to this, NPPF Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, appropriate and effective landscaping. The development proposal is considered to meet these policy tests.
- 5.25 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered acceptable in character of the area terms.
- 5.26 **Heritage Considerations:** The site is not a Listed Building but the adjacent 7 South Drive is a Grade II Listed Building.
- 5.27 As such, it is important to consider the impact of the proposal on the setting of this property. The site is also located within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area.
- 5.28 The Official List Entry for this property states that number 7 is '*a bold and striking design exhibiting Arts & Crafts influences particularly in the form of its unusual porch. An Edwardian house which displays confident handling, unusual detailing, quality materials and which is finished to a high standard.*'
- 5.29 The Murdoch Road Conservation Area Appraisal goes on to discuss 7 South Drive at several points including discussing the prominent,

striking design of the property. The Conservation Appraisal is somewhat out of date referring to 7 South Drive as a 'key unlisted property' – the appraisal was published in 2003, with the listing of the property itself taking place on 30th June 2008.

- 5.30 As such, the weight attributed to the preservation of the special qualities of this property have been uplifted since the publication of this appraisal given the property is now Listed, whereas at the time of the appraisal, it was not. The relationship between the proposed extensions and this is discussed further below.
- 5.31 NPPF Paragraph 200 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. This is addressed through the submission of this statement.
- 5.32 Taking into account the scale of the plot and substantial offset between the existing property and 7 South Drive as well as the point that the property utilises the eastern portion of the plot and therefore introduces built form away from the neighbouring property, the setting of the neighbouring property has been a key consideration within the overall design process. Alongside the significant screening that already exists and can be further controlled by condition in the

event of a grant of planning permission, this is considered an additional benefit of the scheme when considering any potential impact on the surrounding heritage assets.

5.33 NPPF Paragraph 203 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- 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.

5.34 As outlined above, the proposed development is considered to have been sympathetically designed in order to respond to the special historical nature of the neighbouring property.

5.35 The conclusion on the statutory test to preserve or enhance the setting of the adjacent Listed Building result in less than substantial harm.

5.36 It is in turn appropriate to consider local policy, MDD Policy TB24 is of relevance as a result. This states that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated Heritage assets and their settings by requiring works that affect the setting of heritage assets to demonstrate that they would conserve and where possible, enhance the important character/historical interest.

- 5.37 As has been discussed in detail above, the proposed development is considered to meet this test and as such, the proposal is considered acceptable in heritage terms.
- 5.38 **Residential Amenity – Impact on Occupiers:** The proposed development has been designed to accord with the internal space standards outlined in MDD Policy TB07.
- 5.39 The proposed swimming pool extension will provide the applicant with easy access to exercise, enabling them to keep healthy in the comfort of their own home.
- 5.40 The proposed garage will provide a safe, secure space for the storage of the applicant's cars.
- 5.41 **Residential Amenity – Impact on Neighbours:** Due to the separation distances with other properties, it is unlikely that any detriment with regards to loss of light or overbearing will occur.
- 5.42 The proposed extensions will also not impact overlooking positioning of the fenestrations at the front and the rear of the extension which will look on to the front drive and rear garden respectively.
- 5.43 **Trees and Landscaping:** A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment by GHA Trees are submitted in support of this application.
- 5.44 The proposed scheme requires the removal of a small number of relatively insignificant (C and U category) trees and shrubs, which will not significantly impact the local or wider landscape. The proposal requires a new structure to be installed within the root protection area of a nearby tree; however, mitigation is proposed to ensure these structures will not adversely affect these trees.

- 5.45 These mitigation measures (and any additional tree planting) can be secured via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.46 For these reasons, the proposed development is considered to accord with MDD Policy CC03.
- 5.47 **Transport and Parking:** The proposed garage will provide additional parking for the site in addition to the existing driveway parking.
- 5.48 **Cycle Provision:** The proposed development will not lead to a change to the existing situation.
- 5.49 **Refuse Provision:** There will be no change to the existing situation.
- 5.50 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site is under 1 ha in size and is located in Flood Zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding. As such, a flood risk assessment is not considered necessary.
- 5.51 **Contamination:** The site is not known to be contaminated and this is unlikely to due to the residential nature of the plot. If concerns are raised during the course of the planning application, these can be dealt with via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.52 **Sustainability and Energy:** Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2022 requires a 30% reduction than current standards. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;

- A. The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
- B. Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable;
- C. Maximizing the use of natural light through floor-ceiling windows;
- D. Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;
- E. 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;
- F. 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;
- G. Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;

5.53 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

5.54 **Archaeology:** The site is not known to lie in an area of archaeological potential. If concerns are raised during the course of the planning application, these can be dealt with via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.

5.55 **Ecology:** A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Activity Survey by Urban Tree Experts are submitted in support of this application.

5.56 Looking at the former firstly, the report found that no evidence of bats was discovered during the initial survey but that overall the property had low suitability for bat roosting potential. As such, the latter survey was commissioned.

- 5.57 It is anticipated that there will be no ecological impacts from the garage which is proposed as part of this application.
- 5.58 The Bat Activity Survey details how a number of bats were located in the surrounding area but that the suitable roost features in the existing single storey extension are not considered to be used by bats. Additional ecological enhancements such as bird boxes can be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.59 The site is located within an Amber area for Great Crested Newts (GCN) meaning that it is a suitable area, and that GCN are likely present. A GCN Avoidance Statement is submitted in support of this application and can be controlled via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.60 For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development is considered to accord with **MDD Policies TB23 and CS Policy CP7**.
- 5.61 **Special Protection Area:** The site lies within the 5KM Buffer Zone for the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. However, due to the nature of the proposal for residential extensions to an existing dwellinghouse mitigation is not required.
- 5.62 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The relevant forms have been submitted in support of this application.

6. Conclusion

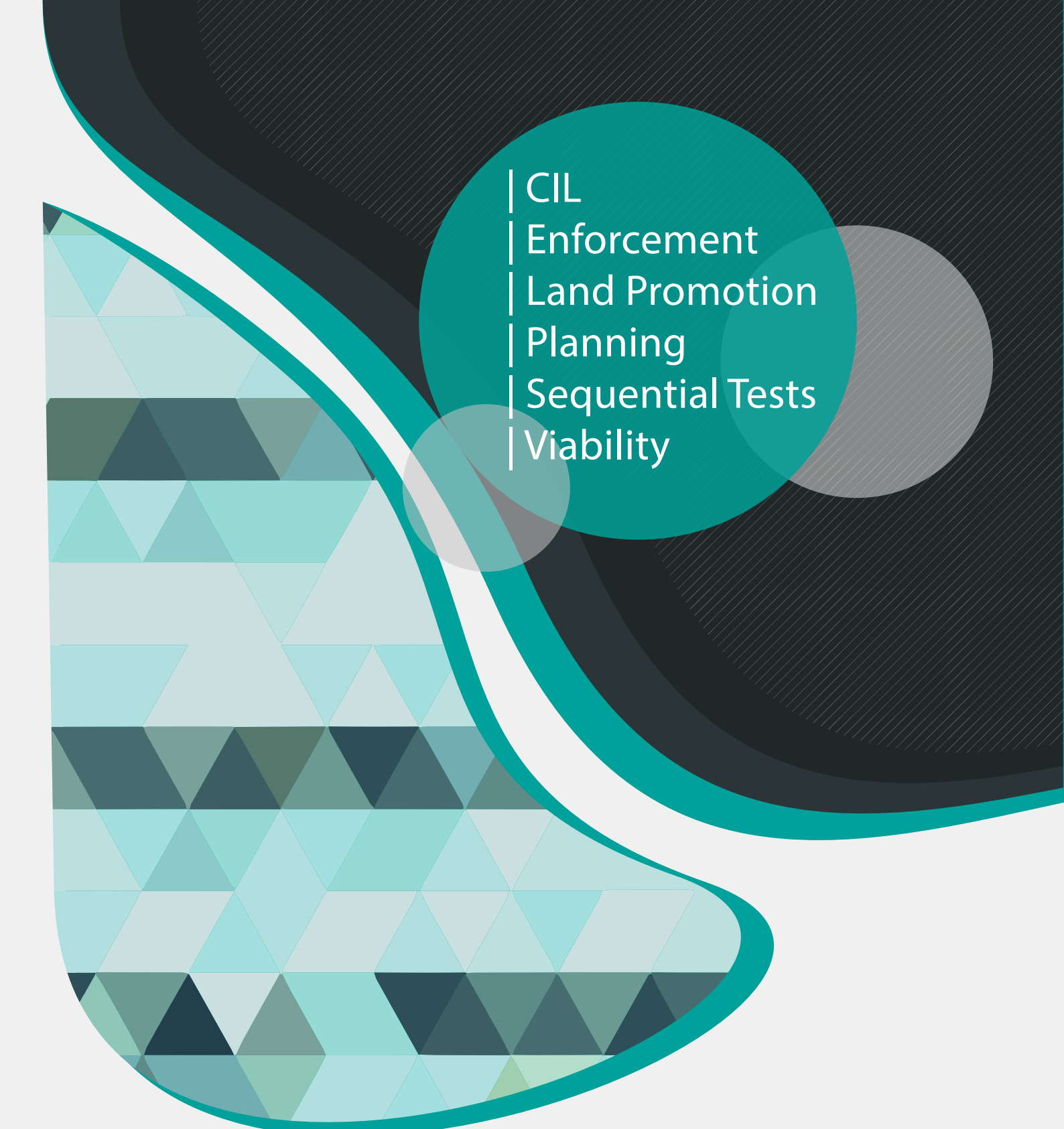
- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would constitute a high quality development without harm to the character of the surrounding area of setting of the Listed Building or Conservation Area.
- 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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