



ET Planning

Planning Statement

Client:
Neil Goodhand

Wokingham Theatre

Twyford Road, Wokingham, RG40 5TU

Retention of temporary barn and the building of a studio block with an extension link to tie the main building/ studio theatre to the rear of the barn.

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CIL | Enforcement | Land Promotion | Planning | Sequential Tests | Viability

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the retention of temporary barn and the building of a studio block with an extension link to tie the main building/studio theatre to the rear of the barn.
- 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 TCB Architecture:
- 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - 1:500 Phase Plan
 - 1:500 Site Plan
 - 1:100 Existing Ground Floor Plan
 - 1:100 Existing First Floor Plan
 - 1:100 Existing Roof Plan
 - 1:100 Existing Elevations
 - 1:100 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - 1:100 Proposed First Floor Plan

- 1:100 Proposed Roof Plan
- 1:100 Proposed Elevations

The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Wokingham Theatre lies to the north of Wokingham Town Centre and is situated within Cantley Park to the east of Twyford Road.
- 2.2 The site falls partly within the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location and is one of the main recreational facilities for the borough.
- 2.3 The Theatre has been based in Wokingham since 1947 with the stated purpose of promoting the enjoyment of theatre in the community in Wokingham.



Figure 1 – photograph showing the site as existing

3. Planning History

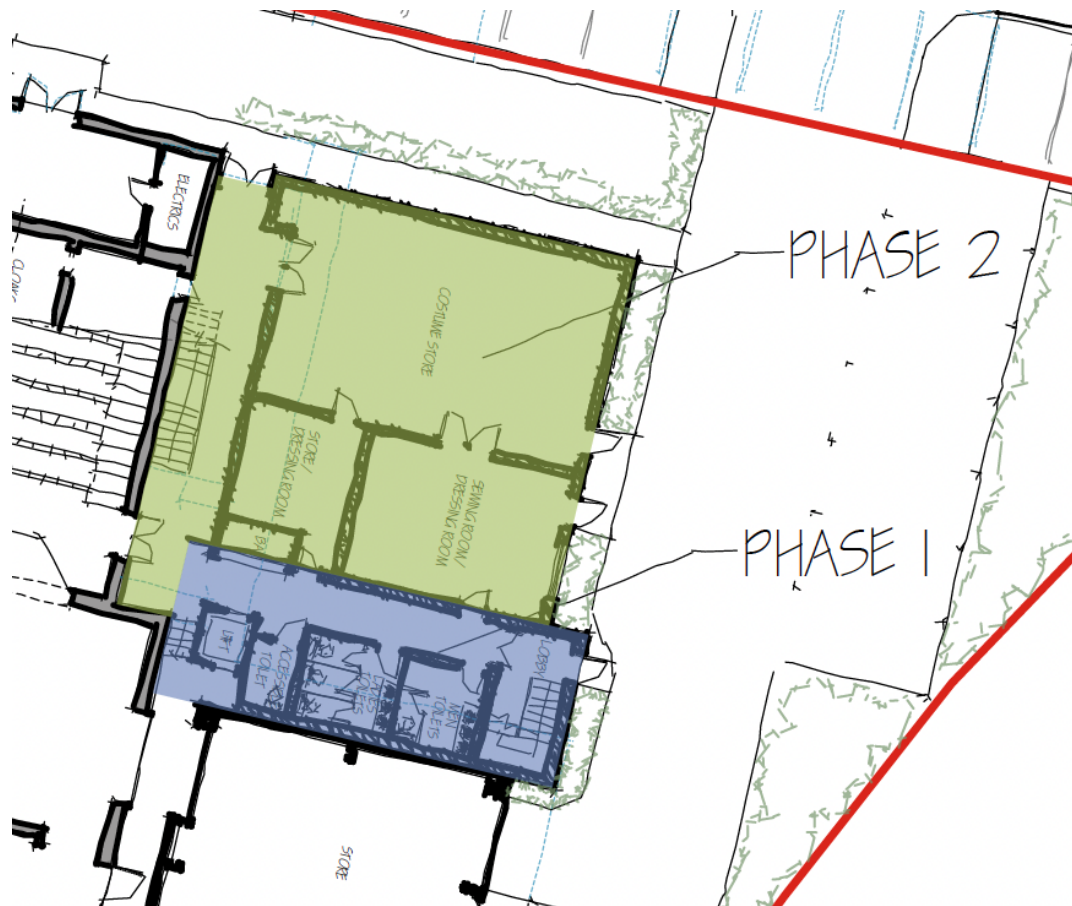
- 3.1 The relevant planning history is set out below.
- 3.2 Application Ref: 081593 – Proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to provide rehearsal space with ancillary dressing/sewing room and small increase to workshop to area. Granted 09/09/2008.
- 3.3 Application Ref: 090890 – Proposed erection of single storey rear extension to provide rehearsal space with ancillary dressing/sewing room increase to workshop area plus new WC and lobby. Amendment to consent F/2008/1693. Granted 08/06/2009.
- 3.4 Application Ref: 120929 - Application to extend implementation date of planning consent. F/2009/0172 for a further 3 years for the erection of a single storey rear extension to theatre. Granted 13/08/2012.
- 3.5 Application Ref: 163372 – Full planning application for the proposal internal/external alterations to theatre to provide additional backstage space, rehearsal space, new studio, public circulation areas and new storage barn. Granted 15/06/2017.
- 3.6 Application Ref: 172506 – Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 163372 (Dated 15/06/2017) 3. Materials 6. Landscaping 7. Tree Protection 8. Drainage 9. BREEAM Carbon Reduction 10. Construction management plan. Granted 10/11/2017.
- 3.7 Application Ref: 213162 – Full application for temporary permission for the erection of a storage barn (part retrospective). Approved 18 November 2021 for a period of five years.
- 3.8 The proposal at hands seeks for the permanent retention of the storage barn granted under application ref: 213162 prior to the

expiration of the temporary period. The proposal also seeks for extensions to create a link between the main theatre space and the storage barn.

- 3.9 Whilst it is apparent that the storage building was previously erected in a different location to what was approved under application ref: 163372, this proposal seeks to create an extension of a similar positioning to application ref: 163372. Furthermore, this application seeks to consolidate development within the confines of the site, reducing the spread of built form over previous application ref: 163372. As such, the proposal seeks to marry together the existing storage barn, and an extension to allow for a store/dressing room, with studio theatre above, to the original theatre building.

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 the creation of a costume store, sewing room/dressing room, store and toilets to the ground floor, and a studio theatre/rehearsal room, store, tech box and open air space for air con units to the first floor. The proposal has been split into Phase 1 and Phase 2 as illustrated below:



- 4.4 The development has been phased to ensure that the main fire exits for the auditorium can continue to be used as well as the retention of the air con units, ensuring that the theatre can remain open throughout the build process.
- 4.5 **Layout and Scale:** The proposal is two storeys and will adjoin the existing auditorium area to the south providing ease of access to the costume store and dressing room.
- 4.6 **Landscaping:** The proposal will have minimal impacts on the existing landscaping on site, should further planting be required as a result, this could be secured by condition where necessary.
- 4.7 **Appearance:** The proposed extension is designed to be sympathetic to the existing theatre building as well as the store, producing an extension which is read in context of the existing development.

- 4.8 **Access & Parking:** The proposal seeks to relocate the existing gated access approximately 25m to the east and provide 7 new parking spaces within the confines of the site to the east of the proposed extension.

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”. Paragraph 123 of the NPPF comments that planning should “make effective use of land” in “meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”.
- 5.3 Paragraph 60 confirms the Government’s objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.4 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.”

5.5 **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.

5.6 The site is located outside of settlement limits, where Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy applies. Policy CP11 does not permit development outside development limits unless they conform to the following criteria:

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 the 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 improvement; or
4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
5. In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must;
 - a) *Bring about environmental improvements; or*
 - b) *Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.*

6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
 7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.
- 5.7 Through the consideration of application ref: 163372 it was confirmed that whilst the proposal is located within the countryside, it would provide an important and essential cultural and leisure resource for the community, such that the proposal would not adversely harm the character of the countryside and as such would not conflict with the principles of point 6 of Policy CP11.
- 5.8 Furthermore, application ref: 213162 states that “the relocation of the barn building is acceptable, subject to a consideration of the scale of the development and the extent of encroachment and subject to the permission being conditioned as temporary (ie there is no possibility that this permission and the original 2016 permission could both be implemented).”
- 5.9 The Officers Report for application ref: 213162 states that when comparing application ref: 163372 to 213162, “there is a marginal reduction in footprint and volume and it is more contained within the site, being closer to the theatre building and better screened in wider views. The latter concerns are conditioned and unlikely because the location of the barn proposed in this application falls inside the footprint of the approved extension to the theatre building.”
- 5.10 Given this, it is established that the principle of development for extensions to the site is found to be acceptable subject to impacts on the character of the area and residential amenity.
- 5.11 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** The character of the area comprises largely of the existing theatre building itself, with the

extension element being sited within a contained area in close proximity to existing built development, as can be demonstrated by Figure 2 below. Furthermore, application ref: 213162 states that the siting of the storage barn as shown in Figure 2 would be confined within the site, being east of the existing theatre, as such, the proposal seeks to round off the existing footprint of the theatre.



Figure 2 – Google Earth screenshot showing the original theatre building to the far right, the existing storage barn to the centre, and the area for development falling within the grassed area fenced off from the car park

- 5.12 Furthermore, mature trees located directly east, south east and west of the development site provide sufficient screening with regards to Cantley House to the east and residential development to the west of the site beyond Twyford Road.

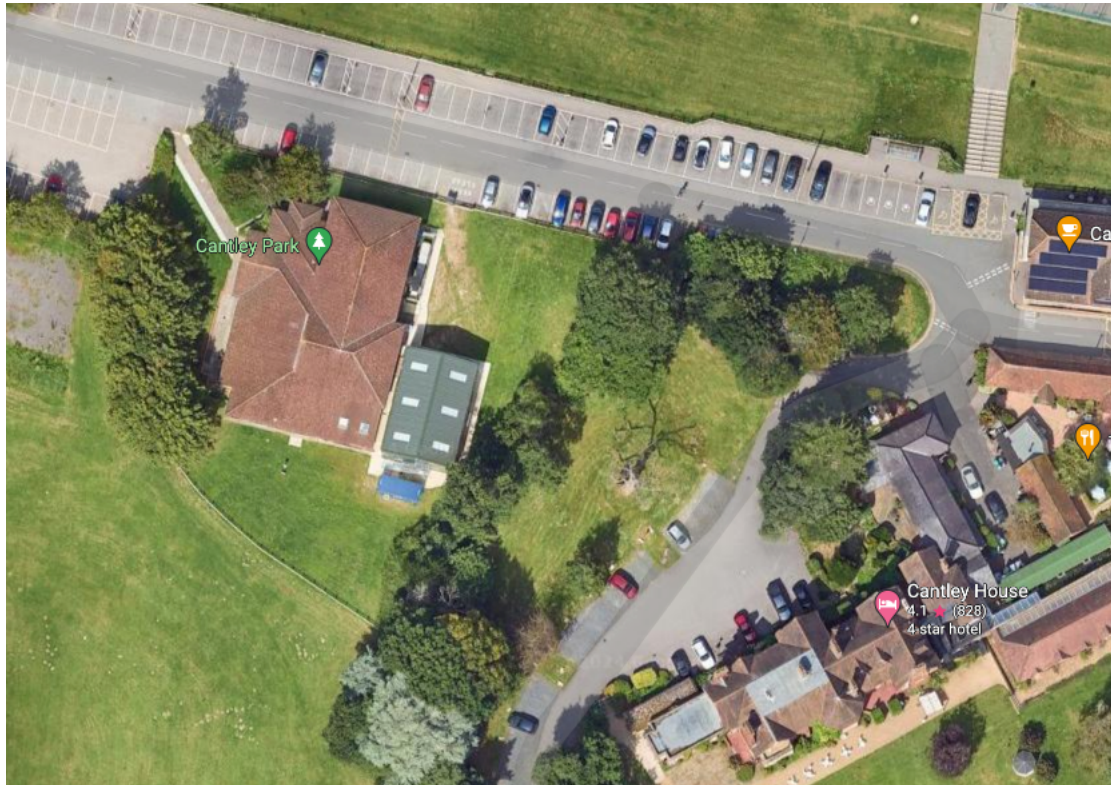


Figure 3 – Google Earth screenshot showing mature trees to the east, south east and west of the site

- 5.13 **Residential Amenity:** There are no residential properties in close proximity to the proposed extension. Due to the distance from the closest residential properties, namely approximately 75 metres, the proposal would not result in any harm to residential amenity. Furthermore, Cantley House Hotel located to the south east, and the extension remains approximately 40m away from the eastern boundary and is screened by mature trees.
- 5.14 **Trees and Landscaping:** Submitted alongside this application is a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment carried out by LandArb. The proposal is demonstrated to have no impacts on existing trees and landscaping on site.
- 5.15 **Transport and Parking:** The proposal seeks to relocate the existing gated access approximately 25m to the east and provide 7 new parking spaces within the confines of the site to the east of the

proposed extension. The new access will include the repositioning of two parking spaces and as such the existing external parking numbers will be retained, with a further 7 spaces within the site. This presents a minor change to the access arrangements and remains in accordance with Policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan.

- 5.16 **Cycle Provision:** Existing cycle parking arrangements will remain unaltered as a result of the proposal.
- 5.17 **Refuse Provision:** Existing refuse provision will remain unaltered as a result of the proposal.
- 5.18 **Drainage and SuDS:** The proposal falls within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 5.19 **Contamination:** The proposal is not known to fall within an area of contamination.
- 5.20 **Archaeology:** The proposal is not known to fall within an area of potential archaeological interest.
- 5.21 **Ecology:** The proposal is submitted alongside a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain calculations carried out by Wenman Ecology.
- 5.22 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The proposal is not CIL liable development as it is not for new residential or retail floor space.

6. Conclusion

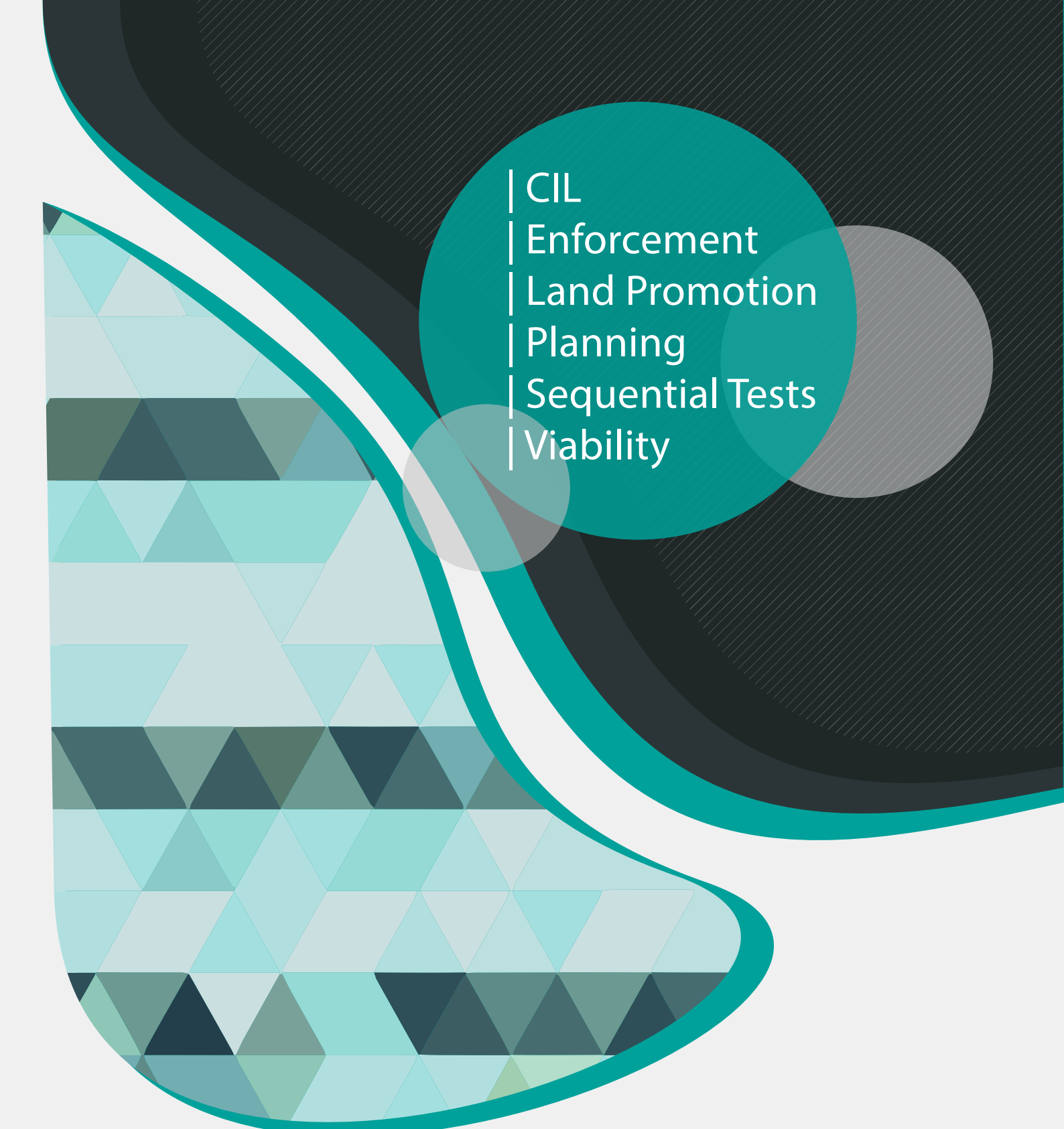
- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would not have adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 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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