



Planning

Planning Statement

Client:

Sailesh Tailor

9 Mays Close

Earley, Reading, RG6 1JY

Change of use from existing dwelling house to House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis Use), including a change in the maximum number of occupants from six to eight.

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- Appendix 1 – 181585 Decision Notice
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the proposed change of use from existing dwelling house to House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis Use), including a change in the number of occupants from six to eight.
- 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:
- 6194 OS 01p1 'Site Location Plan'
 - 6194/02p1 'Site Block Plan'
 - 6194/05p1 'Floor Plans – Existing'
 - 6194/06p1 'Elevations – Existing (Unchanged By Proposals)'
 - 6194/08p1 'Floor Plans – Proposed'
 - 251203-R001B Acoustic Report by ACA Acoustics
 - Transport Statement (with Appendices) by John Russell Transport Planning
 - STM-SPA-01 P01 'Vehicle Swept Path Analysis of a Medium Sized Car Arriving'

- STM-SPA-02 P01 'Vehicle Swept Path Analysis of a Medium Sized Car Departing'

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

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 9 Mays Close comprises a two storey semi-detached residential unit located in a predominately residential area, within the defined settlement of Earley.
- 2.2 The property contains a predominately hardsurfaced frontage for parking and turning, with a tree located on the southwestern corner of said frontage. The property also contains an enclosed garden with an outbuilding used for incidental residential purposes. The dwelling has been enlarged to the rear at ground and first floor levels, and had its original integral garage converted (as per the planning permissions listed in Section 3 below).
- 2.3 The property has been used for some time as a C4 House in Multiple Occupation ('HMO') for up to six individuals, as a change of use from its original C3 use. Whilst the property has current capacity for more than six bedrooms, the attic room has laid unoccupied (see also Section 4 below) to ensure this lawful operation. The use itself as C4 has been permissible under permitted development rights, however it is acknowledged that a Certificate of Lawfulness was not submitted for said change (not that one was mandatory).
- 2.4 The site lies in a predominately residential area, which contains other existing HMO uses. In very close vicinity to the north lies the May's Close convenience store retail unit. The A3290 lies due south of the site, at a lower land level, with the Bulmershe Allotments also located further east.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Application reference 181585 for 'Full Application for the proposed change of use from existing dwelling to House of Multiple Occupants including change in the number of occupants from 6 to 8'. Refused, 22.10.2018.
- 3.2 Application reference 152790 for 'Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing garage to additional habitable accommodation'. Approved, 12.11.2015.
- 3.3 Application reference 002293 (alternate reference F/2000/1467) for 'Proposed single storey and first floor rear extensions to dwelling'. Approved, 29.06.2000.
- 3.4 As per paragraph 3.1 above, this planning submission can essentially be considered as a re-submission of refusal 181585, albeit in acknowledgement that circa eight years have passed since the refusal.
- 3.5 Application 181585 was refused on the grounds of concerns of an 'over intensive use' of the site, which would be considered to impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents and the character of the area particularly through increased noise and disturbance, and competition for on-street parking. A partly related second reason for refusal involved failure to demonstrate that the provided on-site parking accommodation would adequately serve the proposal in terms of parking demand. Copies of the Decision Notice and Officer Report are provided as Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to this Statement.
- 3.6 The above matters have been addressed in this new submission.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the proposed change of use from existing dwelling house to House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis Use), including a change in the number of occupants from six to eight.
- 4.2 No operational development (i.e. external alterations) are sought as part of this proposal – it is solely for the change of use of land.
- 4.3 As per Section 2 above, the property has been used for some time as a C4 House in Multiple Occupation ('HMO') for up to six individuals, as a change of use from its original C3 use. As noted in the existing plans, the current property contains capacity for more than six bedrooms, however the attic room has laid unoccupied to ensure lawful compliance with the C4 requirements. Specifically the existing layout and activity is as follows:
- Room 1 – bedroom
 - Room 2 – amenity room for all occupants
 - Rooms 3 to 7 – 5no. bedrooms
 - Attic room - unoccupied
 - Separate kitchen & dining and shower/WC rooms, and bathroom
- 4.4 The proposal would make use of the attic room as a bedroom, and would also sub-divide the current kitchen & dining room to form a bedroom, with room 2 being preserved as a second amenity room (including for dining). This would therefore result in 8 bedrooms for up to eight occupants, giving rise to the proposed Sui Generis use.
- 4.5 Again further to Section 2 of the statement above, the existing property has been active under C4 use class for a number of years, however in the absence of a Certificate of Lawfulness to confirm this

(where one was not mandatory) the Council may consider the lawful use of the property to remain at C3. The headline point of this statement in respect of this is however that regardless of whether the existing use is C3 or C4, the development proposed is acceptable.

- 4.6 Also further to Section 3 of the Statement, the proposal can in respects be considered a re-submission of planning refusal 181585. It is acknowledged that notable time has passed since that refusal, however it was nonetheless determined under the same Development Plan that is in effect at time of writing.. Matters raised in that refusal are considered to be addressed in this submission, with reference to Appendices 1 and 2.

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 39 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 124 of the NPPF comments that planning should “promote an 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 61 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 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).

- 5.6 **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.
- 5.7 Wokingham Borough Council's Development Plan includes the following:
- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy ('CS') (adopted 29/01/2010);
 - Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan ('MDD') (adopted 21/02/2014), and
 - Policies Map
- 5.8 The Development Plan does not contain any specific planning policies regarding HMOs, and so therefore they fall to be determined under the more general residential and housing policies.
- 5.9 In addition the Council is advancing a new Local Plan, which has yet to be adopted. Given its current status in the examination process, it can be provided some weight. The emerging Local Plan does not have any planning policies directly relating to HMOs.
- 5.10 The site lies within the defined settlement of Earley, and is not within a Conservation Area or subject to an Article 4 Direction (hence the current C4 use being permissible under permitted development).
- 5.11 MDD Policy CC01 seeks for development within the Borough to align with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 5.12 CS Policy CP1 requires proposals to contribute positively to the character of the settlement and to meet identified housing needs.
- 5.13 CS Policy CP3 sets out the general principles for development, requiring development to be within or adjacent to settlements, and to protect the separate identity of settlements.
- 5.14 CS Policy CP9 establishes the area as being part of a 'major development location', to which the largest and most substantive developments should be focused, largely in view of the sustainability of this location.
- 5.15 CS Policy CP5 seeks for residential development to provide a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures, and sizes. Similarly, MDD Policy TB05 seeks for residential development to cater for an appropriate housing mix, which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of the Borough.
- 5.16 Whilst a Sui Generis Use, an 8 bedroom HMO contributes as its own type of residential occupation, thereby contributing to the overall mix of residential tenures. Similarly, a Sui Generis Use HMO contributes to the Council's Housing Supply, and therefore the proposal would not negatively impact this supply figure.
- 5.17 Turning to the NPPF, paragraph 123 sets out that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst at the same time safeguarding and improving the environment, and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.18 As the property is located within the defined settlement, the change of use of the residential unit to a Sui Generis HMO involving up to 8 individuals is considered acceptable in principle, in line with the above

planning policies, particularly in respect of the current operations as a HMO for up to 6 individuals.

5.19 The proposal is therefore considered appropriate, subject to matters including impact on the character of the area, residential amenity, and highway safety, etc. These are explored below.

5.20 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** CS Policy CP3 requires development to be compatible with the character of the area.

5.21 No operational development is proposed as part of the proposal – it is solely for the change of use of land. Therefore, no external alterations are proposed, the dwelling will retain a residential appearance, and the built form, scale and site coverage remains unchanged. The focus of any impacts to the character of the area are therefore based on the comparative intensity of use.

5.22 It is furthermore the case that various surrounding dwellings are also operating as C4 HMOs, under the allowances of permitted development rights.

5.23 Whilst the proposal would take this to an increase to up to 8 individuals, it must nonetheless be considered in the context of the comparison to the activities and intensities brought about by 6 individuals. Furthermore, family dwellings (C3) can include large families exceeding 6 individuals – while rare, the relevant point is it is permissible.

5.24 It is difficult to reconcile the Council's previous concerns regarding how an increase in two individuals would result in an intensification of use that would be inappropriate in what is a major development location and sustainably located defined settlement. This is notwithstanding the noise and parking concerns, which are addressed in separate relevant sections of this Statement.

- 5.25 With the proposal adhering to matters such as noise and parking concerns (as noted elsewhere), it is therefore not considered that the increase of 2no. individuals in this location would be inappropriate in any form. By contrast, being within a major development location, such population increases are intended to be maximised in such designated areas. The major development location forms part of the area's intrinsic character – they are interconnected elements.
- 5.26 **Residential Amenity – Impacts on Neighbouring Occupants (including Noise):** CS Policy CP3 requires development to not harm the amenities of adjoining occupants.
- 5.27 MDD Policy CC06 sets out that applications must demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect sensitive noise receptors from any potential noise impacts.
- 5.28 With no operational development proposed, there would be no material changes to neighbouring occupants in terms of elements such as loss of privacy, loss of light, etc. Focus therefore again turns to the impact of the increased intensity of use of 2no further individuals occupying the property, including in respect of the Council's previously raised concerns regarding ingress and egress of the site.
- 5.29 A Noise Survey has been submitted for this purpose. The Survey identifies that noise levels within the vicinity of the site are influenced primarily by the local road traffic – namely that of the A3290. The Noise Consultant considers that this noise serves to mask all other sound sources in the area during the daytime.
- 5.30 The Noise Survey then examined the potential for increase of sound levels relating to the change of use proposed. It concludes that, in a worse case scenario, the overall increase of the addition of 2no. individuals would amount to 1.25 dB. With the level of change

noticeable by humans starting from around 3dB, the proposal would therefore not result in a material change to noise levels.

5.31 Residential Amenity – Impacts on Prospective Occupants:

MDD Policy TB07 relates to providing acceptable internal space standards to residential development. While Policy TB07 does not contain an exact standard for Sui Generis HMO uses (noting the standards for social spaces are in relation to 'household' accommodation, not HMO accommodation), the proposal would offer a significant amount of gross internal area.

5.32 The proposal would retain the provision of two amenity rooms to the property, which is considered an appropriate level of amenity to an 8 individual HMO, alongside the garden space. Existing Shower & WC rooms and the bathroom would be retained.

5.33 **Trees and Landscaping:** The proposal would not have any impact on landscaping present on site. The existing tree would be retained as is (with no changes to hardstanding), with the rear garden retained in the same size as outdoor amenity.

5.34 **Transport and Parking:** CS Policy CP6 seeks to ensure development will, inter alia, encourage sustainable forms of transport, are located sustainably, provide appropriate vehicular parking (having regard to car ownership), and avoid any highway safety issues.

5.35 MDD Policy CC07 states that planning permission will only be given where the proposed parking provision meets the the Council standards (unless otherwise justified as not needing to meet the exact standard) and that proposals retain an appropriate level of off-street parking.

5.36 NPPF paragraph 115 sets out that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable

impact on highway safety, or if the cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 5.37 NPPF paragraph 111 also states that local parking standards should be flexible and take into account factors including car ownership levels relating to the development, and public transport opportunities.
- 5.38 The Council raised reasonable concern in the previously refused application regarding parking and subsequently this impact on highway safety, given it has not been demonstrated that parking capacity would be sufficient.
- 5.39 Subsequently within this submission a Transport Statement has been provided for consideration, to which its conclusions are summarised in the following paragraphs.
- 5.40 The existing site has capacity for 3no. off-street parking spaces, which are evidenced as being independently capable of access and egress.
- 5.41 As the Council's Parking Standards for an 8 bedroom HMO are 4 spaces (0.5 spaces per person) this then leads to an examination of the sustainability of the location combined with off-street parking capacity.
- 5.42 As mentioned elsewhere in this Statement, the site is located as part of a 'major development location' (CS Policy CP9). In association with this, the application site itself displays a very high level of sustainability in terms of access to public transport and local facilities without reliance on the private vehicle.
- 5.43 A train station with direct links to Reading and London is located in a 15-20 minute walk/5 minute cycle distance to the site. A bus stop is located less than 100 metres from the site, with a further bus stop

(Wokingham Road) located a 7 minute walk. These cumulatively provide for 4 service routes, including routes providing regular services on weekends.

5.44 Immediately to the north of the application site lies the May's Close convenience store, providing day-to-day groceries and other retail needs.

5.45 Within walking distance of the site are also:

- Highwood Nature Reserve
- Bulmershe Allotments
- St Peters Church and Hall
- Various amenities on the highway junction of Wokingham Road with Church Road to the south (M&S Simply Foods, restaurant, public house)
- Bulmershe Leisure Centre (18 minute walk)
- Palmer Park (15 minute walk)

Cumulatively these provide a range of social, cultural and leisure amenities.

5.46 The site is therefore considered to be highly locationally sustainable.

5.47 Turning to off-street parking capacity, two parking sureys were conducted in mid-january 2026. These observed that parking stress was 22% and 26%, and therefore there is significant available on-street parking capacity to accommodate any parking displacement, which is likely to be limited.

5.48 In addition to the above, private vehicle ownership amongst HMO users is typically low.

- 5.49 Secure cycle parking could be secured by planning condition, making use of the rear garden and outbuilding.
- 5.50 Refuse collection arrangements would remain as existing.
- 5.51 In conclusion, the application site is located in a highly sustainable location, and this is supplemented by the fact that any on-street parking that may result from the proposal would be highly limited, and capable of being accommodated – as evidenced. The proposal therefore offers the opportunities to maximise and encourage methods of transport other than the private car, in accordance with the Development Plan.
- 5.52 **Drainage and SuDS:** No operational development is proposed and therefore there would be no material impacts upon site drainage.
- 5.53 **Ecology:** No operational development is proposed, and the second floor (formerly attic space) of the property has already been previously converted. Therefore there would be no ecological implications of the proposal (including on bats), and the proposal would meet the de minimis exemption of biodiversity net gain.
- 5.54 **Special Protection Area:** As the development does not involve a net increase in residential units (rather an increase in occupants), it is not liable to SPA mitigation.
- 5.55 **Affordable Housing:** As the development does not involve a net increase in residential units, it is not liable to provide affordable housing.
- 5.56 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** As the proposal does not involve any operational development and involves actively used existing floorspace, the CIL Liability in this instance is zero.

6. Conclusion

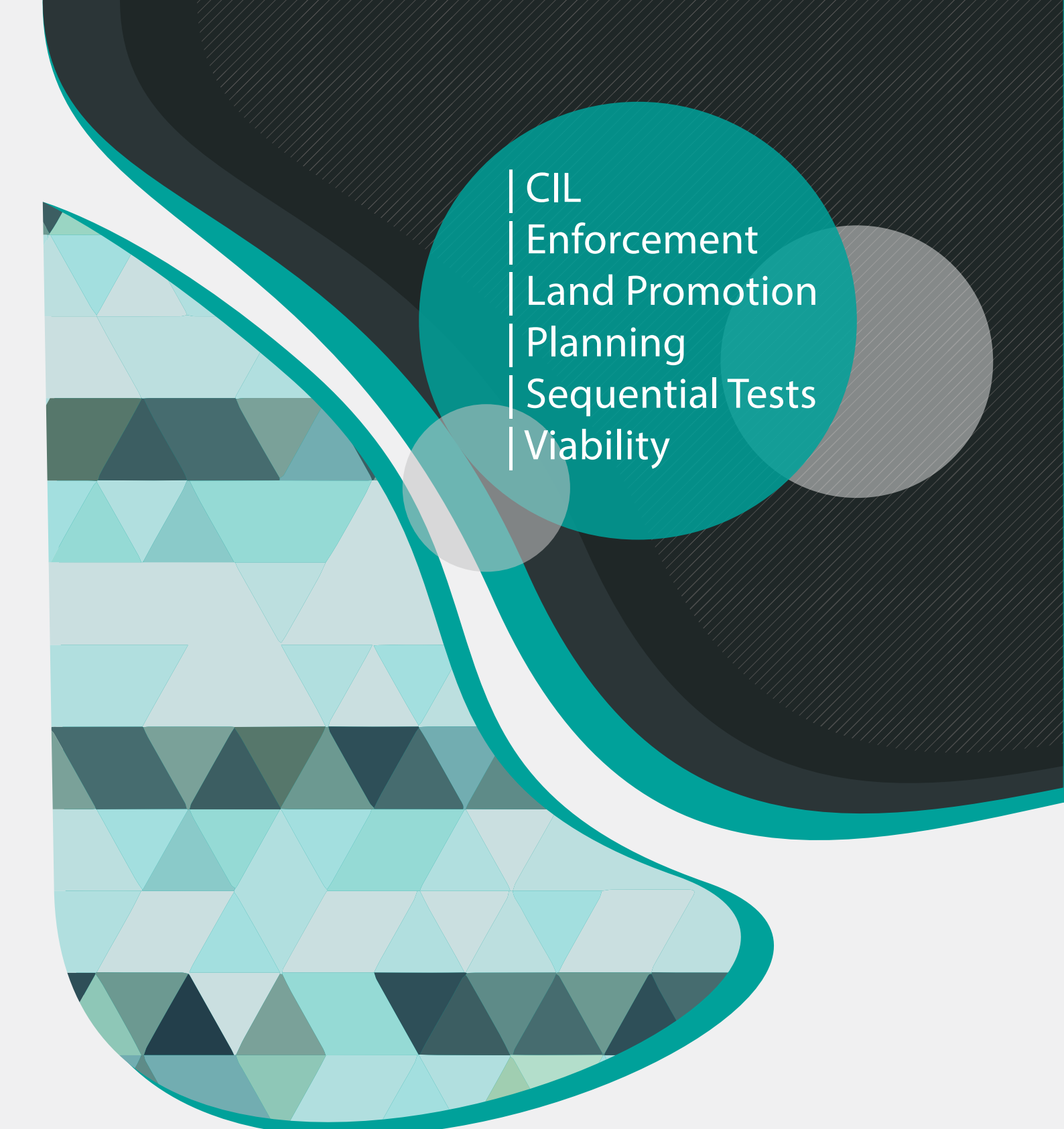
- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of existing residential unit.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. The increase in intensity of the use of land, amounting to up to 2no. individuals, has been evidenced not to result in any material noise or disruption, nor to result in an adverse impact on highway safety through indiscriminate on-street parking. By contrast, the site is located in a highly sustainable area which is able to accommodate population increases of this level in a comfortable fashion.
- 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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