



Planning

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Client:

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Chiltern Nursery and Training College

18 Peppard Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JZ

*Change of use of the existing building to residential,
creation of new access to Peppard Road with new
railings and gates.*

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the change of use of the existing building to residential, creation of new access to Peppard Road with new railings and gates.
- 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:
 - 1:2500 Site Location Plan
 - 1:500 Block Plan
 - 1:200 Site Plan
 - Existing Elevations and Floor Plans
 - Proposed Elevations and Floor Plans
 - Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site comprises of multiple buildings, with gated access from Peppard Road. The property is immediately surrounded by hardstanding providing parking, with sections of landscape providing amenity space including various trees on the site boundary.
- 2.2 The site is located within an urban area where there are a variety of land uses. These consist of residential areas on the adjacent and surrounding roads, small businesses such as Bohemian Landscaping Services, Berkshire (0.29 KM to the north west) and Emmer Green Surgery (1.1 KM to the north).
- 2.3 The site has good access to surrounding areas, with Reading Train Station being located 1.66 KM to the south.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 There is an extensive planning history associated with the site linked to its wider educational use. The relevant planning history is outlined further below.
- 3.2 151663 – Retrospective change of use to a school for 4-11 year olds (D1 use) and associated alterations to parking circulation area – Granted – 12.02.16
- 3.3 Application for the removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission (151663) – Granted – 06.05.16
- 3.4 160408 – Application for approval of details reserved by condition (151663) – Granted – 09.05.16
- 3.5 160692 – Application for approval of details reserved by condition. (151663): Condition 2: Submission of boundary noise mitigation scheme – Granted - 15.12.16

- 3.6 180149 – Application for discharge of conditions 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18 and 19 as varied by 160522 – Granted – 20.04.18

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 change of use of the existing building to residential, creation of new access to Peppard Road with new railings and gates.
- 4.4 **Layout and Scale:** The residential conversion will utilise the existing building on site and so the scale, in terms of built form is a known quantity. The proposed creation of a new access with railings and gates will create a stepped back access from the highway compared to the existing situation but will be the same scale as the existing.
- 4.5 **Landscaping:** The proposal is within the wider site of Chiltern Nursery and as such, landscaping measures within the wider site are utilised.

- 4.6 **Appearance:** The proposed residential conversion will take place within the existing shell of the building and as such will not impact the appearance of the area. The proposed access with associated gates and fences will be stepped back from the highway compared to the existing situation.
- 4.7 **Access & Parking:** The proposed development will lead to the creation of 3 no. parking spaces.

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 119 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 126 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 134 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. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning consideration in all planning applications. In this instance, the relevant development plan documents include:
- Reading Borough Local Plan (RLP) (2019)
- 5.7 **RLP Policy H8: Residential Conversions** states that proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats will be assessed against the impact on character and amenity of the surrounding area particularly in terms of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.

- 5.8 The policy then outlines a number of criteria which need to be met in order for self-contained flats to be acceptable. Whilst the proposed conversion is for the creation of 1 no. dwelling, these are still considered applicable and as such have been assessed below.
- 5.9 Point 1 states that residential conversions will be acceptable where the proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features.
- 5.10 The building proposed for residential conversion is existing and so its impact on visual character will be neutral. Existing features such as doors and windows will be retained or upgraded where necessary. If upgrades are required, these will be done in a sympathetic nature to respect both the existing building and the character of the surrounding area.
- 5.11 Whilst not directly related to the residential conversion, the access gate and fences will draw on the existing design, also having a neutral impact on the character of the area.
- 5.12 Point 2 of this policy states that proposals would not either, individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of family housing. This is not the case with this application. If permitted, the proposal will result in the creation of 1 no. family dwelling.
- 5.13 Point 3 of this policy states that proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising through noise caused by either the proposed units or disturbance from surrounding properties.
- 5.14 With the existing building being used as part of an educational use, it is considered that the proposed residential conversion will have a

positive effect on these features, reducing the level of noise associated emanating from the site during specific periods such as during lesson changeover and during break times. Residential land use is not a typically a form of development that generates significant noise, and as such, it is expected that the acoustic outputs from the wider site will drop compared to the existing situation.

- 5.15 It is noted that some vehicle movements will take place which have the impact to generate short term periods of increasing audible outputs such as car doors shutting and vehicles departing the site. However, these noises are typical background noises that will be limited to certain periods of the day such as when people are leaving or returning from work.
- 5.16 The proposed access gate is not expected to generate any tangible increases acoustic pollution.
- 5.17 The site's location near an existing education use is also considered with regard to its impact on the residential element of the scheme. Any noise generated by the school is likely to be limited to school operating hours and could be mitigated through the use of double glazing and a course of noise insulation that could be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.18 Point 4 of this policy states that there should be no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units. This is not considered to the case and additional intra-development noise mitigation options can be implemented to further mitigate any remaining background noise pollution. However, as the proposed residential dwelling will be for single family usage, this is not considered as relevant as it would be for self-contained flat conversions.
- 5.19 Point 5 requests that suitable bin and cycle storage should be located in an appropriate area and be of an appropriate size. This will be

provided and the details can be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.

- 5.20 Point 6 states that resulting property/properties would need to provide appropriate internal floorspace and headroom for residents. The building is of a relatively large scale with ample head room for residents.
- 5.21 As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable.
- 5.22 **Sustainable Development:** NPPF Paragraph 8 outlines the three interdependent aims of sustainable development which are interdependent of one another. Paragraph 8.a) discusses the economic objectives of the planning system. As part of this it states the planning system should ensure that sufficient types of land should be available in the right area and at the right time in order to support growth.
- 5.23 As outlined within the supporting text of **RLP Policy H8** states that residential conversions '*have an important role to play in the housing land supply of Reading*'. The building proposed for conversion is no longer in use by the school and as such its proposed conversion to residential accommodation allows the creation of important residential accommodation within a key urban areas within the Thames Valley.
- 5.24 NPPF Paragraph 8b discusses the social objectives of the planning system and states that it should bring forward a sufficient number and range of homes to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Berkshire SHMA outlines how larger homes are needed for certain groups such as BAME communities which represent just a small sector of the population of this area who require larger homes. As such, the proposed development helps to meet the need for larger homes within this area.

- 5.25 NPPF Paragraph 8c discusses the environmental objectives of the planning system and states that it should make effective use of land and use natural resources prudently. Land is considered a key natural resource and is in extremely short supply within Reading due to its heavily urbanised nature. As such, ensuring land is utilised as efficiently as possible is of a great importance. As the proposed utilises an existing building, it helps to reduce emissions associated with the construction of a new residential dwelling whilst allowing the college to find an alternative use for a now redundant building within their portfolio.
- 5.26 **Density and Size of Dwellings:** The dwelling is 3 storeys and of a scale comparable to surrounding properties.
- 5.27 **Character and Appearance of the Area: RLP Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm** outlines the Council's approach to character and appearance. As part of this, it details that all development must be of high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area. The various elements of this include layout, landscape, density, scale and architectural detail.
- 5.28 As discussed elsewhere in this statement, the proposed conversion utilises the existing shell of the building. As such, the proposal is considered to have a neutral impact on character of the area.
- 5.29 Character and appearance would have been considered as part of the planning application that allowed for its initial erection and as such, whilst the nature of the use is changing, it is unlikely that this will have a harmful impact on the character of the area.
- 5.30 With regard to the fence and new access, this would be designed to accord with the existing design language of the pre-existing fence and as such is considered to fit within the existing urban grain of the area. With regard to the access, this area of Peppard Road and

especially the area that connects to Chiltern Nursery, the existing boundary is already punctuated by a number of accesses and as such, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the character of the area and helps to create a more active and engaging visual environment.

- 5.31 The policy also states that proposals will be assessed to ensure that they are able to create environments safe from crime or the fear of crime. As discussed elsewhere in this statement, the current building is no longer in use. As such, the proposed residential dwelling use will enable an active use for the property and reduce the potential for crime and disorder to take place around the building.

- 5.32 The proposed access gate and fences will be built from modern materials helping to increase the security of the site and allow for a lockable access/egress point.

- 5.33 **Residential Amenity – Impact on Prospective Occupiers:** The proposed residential dwelling will provide a large property with ample floor space for residential living. This will allow for prospective occupiers to have dedicated spaces for different activities such as working from home. Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, increased numbers of people are working from home and the importance of spatial distinctions between work and leisure are of growing importance.

- 5.34 **RLP Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity** outlines the Council's approach to residential development within the Borough. A number of factors are outlined within the policy, the relevant ones are discussed below.

- 5.35 Point 1 of this policy outlines privacy and overlooking. The proposed residential use will be located far enough away from surrounding

building in order to not have a harmful impact or be harmfully impacted by overlooking and privacy.

- 5.36 Point 2 of this policy states that residential properties should have suitable levels of access to daylight and sunlight. The proposed residential conversion will utilise the existing shell of the building and so will not introduce a level of development likely to impact these factors. Additionally, extensive amenity space is provided as part of the proposal allowing access light and airy outdoor amenity areas.
- 5.37 Noise and disturbance is another factor considered relevant to the development. As discussed above, this is due to site's relatively close proximity to the school. Any noise from the school is likely to be limited to operational hours whilst any noise generated from the property is likely to be constrained to certain periods such as when the residents are leaving and returning from work.
- 5.38 The proposed development is not considered to have a negative impact on the amenity of neighbouring land uses for the reasons discussed above. Any additional concerns can be addressed via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.39 **Trees and Landscaping:** A tree survey is submitted in support of this application and states that the current layout proposals will see the retention of all but 3 trees (only 1 due to the proposal) and the minor loss of two groups (G1 and G4). All the trees have been assessed as Category C (low).
- 5.40 The site contains a high percentage of existing hard surfacing that can be utilised as working area for the proposal. The existing hard surfacing will act as ground protection for all retained trees/groups.
- 5.41 Methodology has been put in place to address concerns with working within RPAs of retained trees.

- 5.42 The proposed landscaping scheme (amenity areas) for the site will allow new rooting areas for remaining trees. Additional proposed planting (See section 4.11 of Tree Report) will mitigate any lost trees and further improve site amenity.
- 5.43 The proposed development will only have a very minimal impact on the long-term health of the retained trees and amenity value of the site providing the mitigation measures outlined in this report are adhered to. It is considered that the proposal will not have any significant impact on retained trees or wider landscape.
- 5.44 **RLP Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands** states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance. The proposed development will accord with this and can be controlled by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.45 **Transport and Parking:** 3 no. parking spaces are provided for the property. Due to the site's location within key urban area and with strong public transport connections to Reading Town Centre, the parking provision and transport options is considered sustainable and acceptable.
- 5.46 The proposed new vehicle crossover provides the required visibility splays required to make the development acceptable. If the Council have any further concerns with the access, these can be addressed via condition if necessary.
- 5.47 **Cycle Provision:** Secure cycle storage can be provided within the existing building, and this is considered acceptable. These can be made adaptable for electric vehicle charging if required, further demonstrating the sustainability credentials of the site.

- 5.48 **Refuse Provision:** A number of residential properties are located in close proximity to the site refuse collection will be integrated into the existing collection procedures. A secure bin store can be controlled by condition if the Council deem it necessary.
- 5.49 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site is located in Flood Zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding. Due to the low risk of flooding and the small-scale nature of the proposal, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required in support of the planning application.
- 5.50 **Contamination:** The site is not known to be contaminated and this is unlikely due to the site’s historical educational use. If concerns are raised, these can be addressed via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.51 **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 2010 requires a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the 2006 standards. This is equivalent to Code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. 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. Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins;
- D. Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;
- E. Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport;
- F. 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;
- G. 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;
- H. Water butts fitted to the rainwater down pipes for watering the garden;
- I. Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;
- J. Permeable driveway/parking spaces to avoid increase in surface water runoff;

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

5.53 **Archaeology:** The site is not known to be in an area of archaeological potential and as such, this is not a relevant consideration within this application as no new construction of buildings is taking place. If concerns are raised during the course of the application, these can be addressed via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.

- 5.54 **Ecology:** The proposed conversion will not affect the roof space or roof line of the property and as such is considered acceptable.
- 5.55 **RLP Policy EN12: Biodiversity** and the green network states that development should provide new ecological enhancements. As outlined above, the existing mature trees on the site are to be retained. Further ecological enhancements can be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.56 **Special Protection Area:** The site is not located within the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area and as such, this is not a relevant consideration within this application.
- 5.57 **Affordable Housing:** RLP Policy H3: Affordable Housing states that residential development will make appropriate contributions towards affordable housing to meet the Council's needs. The policy outlines that on site's of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. As such, the site is liable for affordable housing and this can be controlled via legal agreement in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.58 **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 adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.

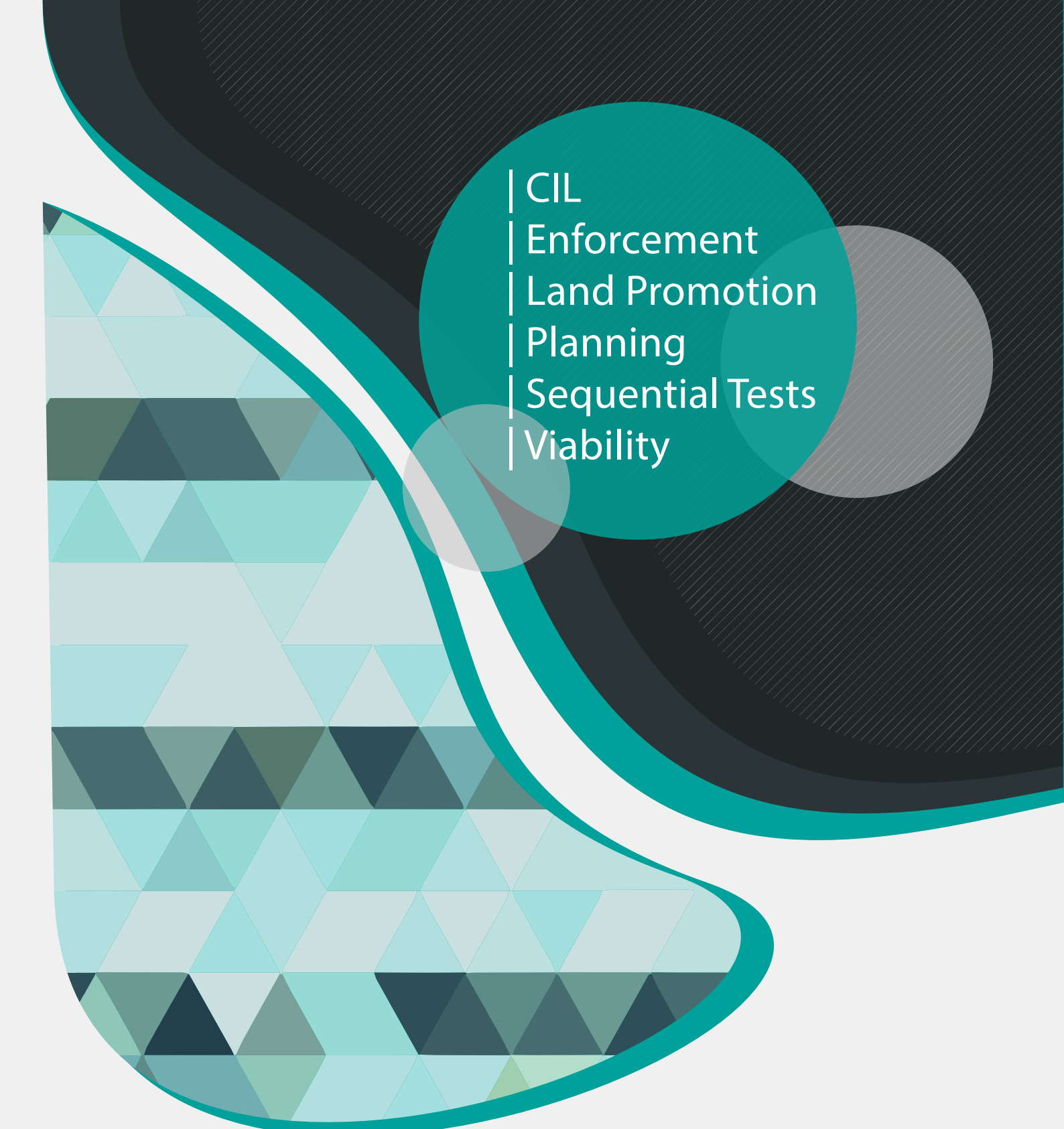
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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