



Planning

Planning Statement

Client:

Mr Surit Patel

303 - 305 Oxford Road

Reading, RG30 1AU

Erection of a single storey rear extension, raising of roof height and formation of rear-facing roof dormer, first floor balcony, and fenestration changes including the insertion of front-facing roof windows and rendering.

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01 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the erection of a single storey rear extension, raising of roof height and formation of rear-facing roof dormer, first floor balcony, and fenestration changes including the insertion of front-facing roof windows and rendering. No change of use is proposed.
- 1.2 The application constitutes a re-submission of withdrawn planning application reference, 210200. It involves a reduction in the size of the proposed rear dormer as well as various internal alterations (which do not constitute planning development) to address the matters raised in the previous submission.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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 Hives Architects:
- 2689 013 P9 'Existing Block, Ground and First Floor Plan'
 - 2689 014 P10 'Proposed Block, Ground First and Second Floor Plans'
 - 2689 016 P9 'Existing elevations'
 - 2689 017 P9 P6 'Proposed Elevations'
 - 2689 018 P8 '3D Views'

- 2689 027 P8 'Bike Store Elevations'

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

02 Site Location & Description

- 2.1 The site is located within a mixed use area slightly to the west of central Reading. It combines two postal addresses but is used as a single overall property comprising a detached building, with a landscaped frontage and rear comprising a service and storage area, as well as a dedicated parking area. Historically the site appears to have comprised 2no. two storey semi-detached dwellings which have since been combined into one building.
- 2.2 At ground floor level this building is currently being converted into residential use as part of a prior approval permission. It was previously used as an estate agent (use class E(c)(i)), with a single retained residential apartment within the southeastern section. At first floor level the building comprises two residential apartments – 1no. four bedroom, and 1no. one bedroom.
- 2.3 The site takes pedestrian access from Oxford Road (the A329) to the north (front), with vehicular access provided via a private shared drive taken from Western Elms Avenue to the rear.

03 Planning History

- 3.1 Application reference 3379/25769 for the 'Conversion into 2 flats (303 Oxford Road)'. Approved, 07/01/1955.
- 3.2 Application reference 16801/42929 for 'First floor 305 residential, ground floor 303 as offices'. Approved, 30/01/1970.
- 3.3 Application reference 070758 (07/01067/FUL) for the 'Development of 5 flats – 3 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed – at land to rear of 303-309 Oxford Road with parking accessed from Western Elms Avenue. Refused, 02/10/2007.
- 3.4 Application reference 071461 (07/01664/FUL) for the 'Erection of a 2 storey building to accommodate 3 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom flats and car parking for occupants of neighbouring building as and for the proposed flats (resubmission of 06/01067/FUL) at 303 Oxford Road. Refused, 19/03/2008.
- 3.5 Application reference 201613 for the 'Change of use of building from Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 3 x 1-bed dwellings. Prior Notification under Class M, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended)'. Prior Approval Granted, 03/02/2021.
- 3.6 Application reference 210200 was for the erection of a rear-facing dormer, a single storey rear extension, first floor balcony and fenestration changes including the insertion of front facing windows and rendering. This was withdrawn in July 2021.

04 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 development comprises the erection of a rear-facing roof dormer, a single storey rear extension, first floor balcony, and fenestration changes including the insertion of front-facing roof windows and rendering.
- 4.4 No change of use is proposed. The proposed dormer would be used in association with utilising the existing loft space to continue the first floor use as two flats. The single storey rear extension would form an enlargement to residential apartments.
- 4.5 **Layout and Scale:** The proposed roof dormer, in conjunction with the loft conversion, would form two sets of kitchen and living space for the existing two flats, with storage space to the front. Roof windows would be installed to the roof's front elevation.

- 4.6 A rear terrace above the proposed single storey rear extension is proposed, forming two balconies, one to each of the first floor apartments. The balconies would include solid screens and metal railings.
- 4.7 Whilst internal changes to the layout of the first floor apartments are proposed, these do not constitute planning development in their own right, and do not propose a change of use. Therefore, these elements do not require planning permission and are considered acceptable.
- 4.8 The proposed ground floor rear extension would form an enlargement to the combined kitchen and living rooms for the rear apartments.
- 4.9 An enclosed bin store is proposed to the front of the property, with a cycle store to the rear.
- 4.10 **Landscaping:** Private amenity space would be provided to each of the four ground floor apartments. Planting strips would also be provided to the front of the building to provide beneficial visual softening.
- 4.11 A shared patio space is proposed to the southeast of the main building, forming further amenity provision, for all residents of the building.
- 4.12 **Appearance:** The proposed enlargements and alterations would be constructed of materials to match those of the existing building, and would be of a style matching the current architectural vernacular.
- 4.13 White rendering is proposed to various elevations of the building, which serves a dual purpose of external insulation.

- 4.14 A large number of solar panels and air source heat pumps are proposed to be installed, providing clear sustainability benefit.
- 4.15 **Access & Parking:** Access to the property from Oxford Road and Western Elm Avenue will remain as existing. The layout of the existing parking area to the rear will be altered and formalised to accommodate the proposed rear extension and amenity areas, with the inclusion of a disabled space, paved footpath access, and a cycle store.

05 Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application. Some weight also needs to be given to the content of the Ministerial Statement, 'Planning for Growth', issued in March 2011.
- 5.2 The 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance within the NPPF is the 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 *“In determining applications, great 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 The site is located in a sustainable location within the town of Reading, in very close proximity to the train station of West Reading, and within the local district centre of ‘Oxford Road West’.
- 5.8 Reading Local Plan (2019) (RLP) Policy CC1 sets out that a positive approach will be taken to considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF.

- 5.9 The site is located within a defined urban location, with the development involving physical enlargements and alterations to an existing building, with no change of use to what has been already permitted. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to considerations including impact on the character of the area, residential amenity, highway safety, etc. These are presented below.
- 5.10 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** RLP Policy CC7 establishes that all development must be of high quality design, which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located.
- 5.11 The local character of the area is characterised by predominately two and three storey buildings under a mix of residential and commercial uses, mainly in the form of historic terraced and semi-detached buildings.
- 5.12 The surrounding buildings contain a high incidence of roof dormers, either as enlargements or as part of the original buildings, and are present both to the front and rear of various buildings. Similarly, many buildings in the vicinity of have been extended to the rear.
- 5.13 The Council's 'A Design Guide' to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) advises that dormer extensions should be set within the roof slope and be proportionate to the remainder of the building in terms of both size and window shape, discouraging the use of 'box' dormers.
- 5.14 Whilst the proposed dormer would have a flat roof, it would be visibly set in from the sides and ridge of the roof, thereby preventing the appearance of a 'box' dormer. In any case, the dormer would be

located to the rear of the building, and its design an architectural form would be both consistent with the existing building and typical of the surrounding area. The dormer would be wholly proportionate in size to the building.

- 5.15 As is detailed within the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions SPD, all dormer styles will be considered on a case-by-case basis in relation to the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. As discussed elsewhere in this statement, the dormer is considered to assimilate into existing design language and character of the area. The proposed dormer is of small scale, ensuring there is a transition of built scale and lines of built form are accorded with. RLP Policy CC7 outlines continuity as an important urban design objective.
- 5.16 Furthermore, the Council has also previously raised concerns that the previous proposal did not accord with Policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation. This policy states that an extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location and design as well as respecting the character and pattern of neighbouring properties. Additionally, the policy puts forward the idea that any proposal should also pay due regard to principal architectural features and any important features on the existing building line.
- 5.17 Additionally, due to the reduction in size of the dormer, concerns surrounding the size of the fenestrations previously raised by the Council have also been addressed accordingly. The 'Design Guide to House Extensions' SPD discusses fenestrations and states that proposals are refused if windows and doors are featured in design that are inappropriate in terms of size, scale or placement. This serves the

purpose of preserving the character and appearance of the street scene and horizontal rhythm.

- 5.18 The proposal is considered to accord with the above, ensuring the proposed dormer extension fits within existing lines of built form whilst also drawing on approved dormer designs in the surrounding area such as the one at no. 307 Oxford Road which the Council acknowledged in an email dated 14th July 2021 as being 'significantly smaller in scale and not so visually prominent' compared to the dormer previously put forward at the site. Consequentially, the proposal is considered acceptable.
- 5.19 The proposed single storey extension would be of a height, massing and scale proportionate to its nature and to the existing building. Given the incidence of flat roofed rear extensions in the vicinity a flat roof is considered most appropriate to this development given also its overall size and connection to the main building. The extension would result in improved visual legibility of the rear of the dwelling in comparison of the current small rear projection that covers only part of the width of the rear elevation.
- 5.20 Roof windows are a common feature within the area and the proposal would offer modest roof window sizes in order to prevent any detracting from the overall architectural style of the building. The remaining fenestration changes would be limited to the replacement of aged window frames with like-for-like external finishes that would offer a visual improvement.
- 5.21 The proposed rear balconies would be typical in appearance, and their siting to the rear of the dwelling would also limit any impact on the area.

- 5.22 As detailed on the submitted plans, the proposed materials to be used would closely match those of the existing building, and this includes in respect of the proposed white rendering. Furthermore, the proposed bin and cycle enclosures would be of a modest, subordinate appearance.
- 5.23 The proposed solar panels and air source heat pumps would be of a standard appearance, and whilst the typical appearance of these features are not always the most attractive, any impact on the character of the area must also be balanced against the clear and significant sustainability benefits.
- 5.24 The provision of a dedicated bin enclosure to the front of the property, where bins are currently stored, would result in a net benefit to the street scene.
- 5.25 In combination with the proposed improvements to landscaping (see below section), the proposal as a whole would offer benefit to the character of the area, with the enlargements proposed fully proportionate to and typical of the defined character of the host building and surrounding area, including the prevailing architectural style.
- 5.26 ***Residential Amenity – impacts on neighbouring occupants:*** RLP Policy CC8 states that development must not result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of (occupants of) existing residential properties, or for (occupants of) new residential properties.
- 5.27 The proposal would not result in any adverse loss of light impact or be overbearing to the amenities of the occupants of the neighbouring residential properties to the west. This is because of the siting of the proposed dormer in respect of the existing roof lines and the locations

of windows present at the neighbouring properties. The single storey height of the rear extension would also prevent any such issues, and attention is given to the fact that the rear projections of these neighbouring dwellings is currently greater than that of the existing.

- 5.28 No side-facing windows are proposed. Whilst some changes are proposed to existing side-facing windows, these would not materially impact upon residential amenity. The proposed 'juliet' balcony would not contain external platforms and would therefore be equivalent to windows in terms of potential impact.
- 5.29 The proposed balconies would contain 1.7 metre high solid side panels on their western sides, to match the composite fence panelling provided to the cycle storage. These would provide privacy not only between the individual balconies, but also the neighbouring occupants of the properties to the west.
- 5.30 This, combined with the siting of existing windows on the rear elevations of the dwelling, and the separation distances involved in respect of the proposed front-facing roof windows, the proposal would not give rise to any loss of privacy impacts.
- 5.31 ***Residential Amenity – impacts on prospective occupants:*** The proposed development has been designed to improve the amenities of both existing occupants, and those of prospective occupants of the prior approval apartments, and this is presented as a significant material consideration. The ground floor units would each contain private amenity spaces, which, while modest in size, would nonetheless represent a notable material improvement over the current situation.

The proposed dormer would also provide additional space and amenities for the occupants of the first floor apartments.

5.32 Alterations to the internal arrangements have been put forward to address the Council's concerns surrounding loss of privacy. This is detailed on the supporting documents submitted as part of this application package. The 3D graphics and other supporting documents submitted in support of this application highlight how changes have been proposed to ensure sufficient light to the rooms can be achieved. Additionally, roof lights are proposed which would follow the existing roof line. As they are angled away from neighbouring windows, they would provide light to the habitable areas whilst mitigating any privacy concerns. Therefore, the Council's concerns are considered addressed and the proposal is deemed to be acceptable.

5.33 **Landscaping & Trees:** Improvements to the existing landscaping are proposed in order to provide a greater degree of visual softening, to the benefit of the character of the area. This would be in the form of planting strips provided to the front elevation, as well as overall improvements to hardstanding arrangements within the rear of the site, combined with the provision of private and shared amenity spaces. This is presented as a material benefit in comparison to the existing situation.

5.34 A Tree Report is submitted in support of this application and concludes that the proposal to renovate the property can be done with minimal rootzone impact and sets out the ways in which this can be achieved. Furthermore, it outlines that the existing sycamore does not need to be pruned along with how new planting can be conditioned as part of any future application. This allows the proposal to accord with RLP Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change which states that the use of

trees and other planting as part of an appropriate landscaping scheme can providing shading to amenity areas and meet the expected changes caused by climate change.

5.35 Furthermore, compliance with RLP Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands is achieved due to the proposal making seeking to protect existing landscape features such as the existing sycamore whilst have capacity to accommodate additional planting within the application site that can be controlled via condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.

5.36 **Transport and Parking:** The site lies within the Zone 2, Primary Core Area of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011).

5.37 The submitted plans show the provision of seven parking spaces to meet parking standards, including the provision of a disabled parking bay. The proposal would therefore fully accord with the Council's required standards, and would offer further benefit in the form of the formalisation of the existing parking area.

5.38 Access arrangements would remain unchanged from existing, with the property and its occupants benefitting from a right of way through the private access from Western Elms Avenue.

5.39 A cycle store for 4 bicycles would be provided within the rear of the property. It is noted that the property currently does not contain cycle parking, and so irrespective of the Council's standards this would represent a significant material improvement over and above the existing situation. In any case, the Council's standards require 2 cycle

spaces for the resulting ground floor flats, and 1 space for each first floor apartment.

- 5.40 Whilst the proposal would accord with the Council's parking standards, it is also highlighted that the site is located in a highly sustainable location, where there is less reliance on personal vehicles, particularly given the close vicinity of the site to various retail and food outlets and other amenities, bus routes, and a train station.
- 5.41 **Refuse Provision:** The proposed arrangements would remain as per existing, with a dedicated area to be provided to the front of the property for bin store.
- 5.42 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site lies within Flood Zone 1, and the proposal forms enlargements to an existing established building.
- 5.43 The proposed additional and replacement hardstanding would be formed of a permeable material to assist with drainage.
- 5.44 **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.
- 5.45 RLP Policy CC2 states that within the redevelopment/refurbishment of existing buildings, regard will be had to sustainable design and construction.

5.46 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 the inclusion of roof windows;
- D) 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;
- E) Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;
- F) Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport;
- G) 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;
- H) Where windows are to be replaced, 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;
- I) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;
- J) Permeable driveway/parking spaces to avoid increase in surface water runoff, and;
- K) Replacement of gas fired boilers with electric equipment to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

5.47 The proposed external rendering will double as external insulation, thereby improving the current building's heat efficiency.

- 5.48 A number of solar panels and air source heat pumps are to be installed, providing a significant proportion of the resulting building's energy requirements via renewable sources.
- 5.49 It is highlighted that that the current layout, size etc. of these solar panels and heat pumps are indicative and subject to further design, along with final technical specifications.
- 5.50 The proposal is therefore considered to offer major sustainability benefits, which should be given significant weight.
- 5.51 **Affordable Housing & Air Quality:** As the proposal would not result in a net increase in residential units, with the additional ground floor apartments permitted under separate prior approval which has now been implemented. The Council have previously stated in an email dated 14th July 2021 that the proposal would be required to make an affordable housing contribution. However, as the prior approval application has been implemented, this application is solely related to the extension and alteration of different property aspects. As such, the proposal is not liable for affordable housing.
- 5.52 The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area. RLP Policy EN15: Air Quality states that development should have regard for the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. Due to the nature of the work, it is not anticipated that the proposal will have a negative impact on the air quality of the surrounding area and as such, is considered acceptable.
- 5.53 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The additional floorspace created by the proposal would be less than 100 square metres, and would be

formed of enlargements to permitted residential units, as opposed to the creation of new residential units. The proposal is therefore not CIL liable.

06 Conclusion

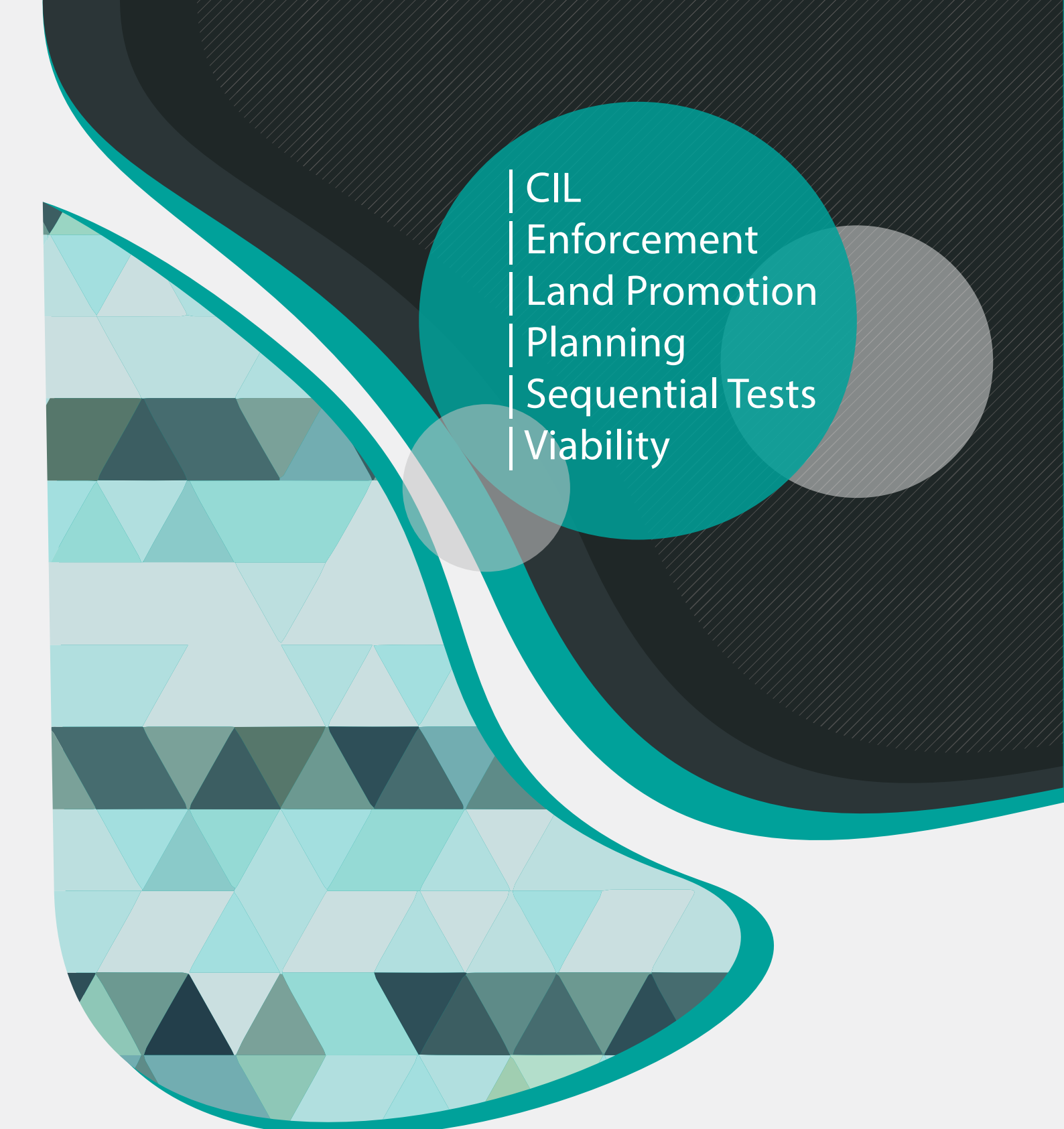
- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents.
- 6.3 It is also highlighted that the current property and building are in a poor state of disrepair, and the proposal would serve to rectify this, as well as improving the safety and security of the site by providing a more active use and passive supervision, alongside improved security. The property forms part of an historically socially problematic area including in respect of criminal activity, and the proposal would contribute significantly towards overcoming this.
- 6.4 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Furthermore, the proposal would result in significant material benefit in respect of the amenities of the occupants of the existing building, soft landscaping, parking and cycle arrangements, and sustainability. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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