

**1.0 Application Number – [2/2019/1554/FUL](#)**

**Site address:** Bleet Farm , Bleet Lane, Gillingham, SP8 5RG

**Proposal:** Erect replacement dwelling, retain 3 No. parking spaces.

**Applicant name:** Mr & Mrs Mike & Lindsay Ford & Bower

**Case Officer:** Ms Charlotte Haines

**Ward Member:** Cllr. V Potheary; Cllr. D Walsh, Cllr. B Ridout

**REASON APPLICATION IS GOING TO COMMITTEE:** At request of Head of Planning.

**2.0 Summary of Recommendation:** Grant, subject to conditions

**3.0 Reason for the recommendation:**

- The proposed changes to the design, its re-siting away from the north western boundary as well as the screen planting/landscaping would ensure that the proposed replacement dwelling would appear no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling
- It is considered that the concerns of the previously refused application have been overcome.
- It is considered the amended proposal and accompanying landscaping scheme would meet criteria a - f of Local Plan policy 28: Existing dwellings in the countryside.
- The proposed replacement dwelling would not cause significant harm to the character of the surrounding rural landscape and would comply with the North Dorset Local Plan Policies 4, 24 and 28 and Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Policies 24 and 25.
- The proposal would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity, highway safety and biodiversity.

**4.0 Table of key planning issues**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Location of Development	The proposal would comply with the criteria a - f of Local Plan policy 28: Existing dwellings in the countryside.
Design and Impact on Character of the Surrounding Area	The proposed design would meet with the requirements of Local Plan Policy 24 – Design and the relevant parts of Policy 24 – Plots and Buildings of Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

Trees and Landscaping	The soft landscaping proposals would result in a dwelling that would assimilate within the local landscape and better relate to the surrounding area including views, vistas and landmarks and would therefore comply with Policies 4 and 24 of North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2011-2031) and Policies 24 - Design and 25 – hard and soft landscaping of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2031).
Impact on Residential Amenity	Due to its isolated position, the proposed replacement dwelling would not overlook or having an overbearing/overshadowing impact on residential properties.
Access and Parking	The proposed access and parking arrangements for the proposed replacement dwelling are considered to be acceptable. As the proposal is for a replacement dwelling, there would not be an intensification of the existing access.
Biodiversity	An approved biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan was submitted with the application, it is considered that the proposal will have no adverse impact on biodiversity interests, subject to the recommendations contained within the document being followed.

## 5.0 Description of Site

Bleet Farmhouse is a detached stone dwelling which is adjacent to a number of agricultural buildings. The site is situated in an isolated and elevated position within the countryside to the south west of Madjeston and to the north west of East Stour. The site is accessed via Bleet Lane from Madjeston and Folly lane from East Stour, both of these are single tracks.

Bleet Farmhouse and its associated agricultural buildings sit on an elevated ridge, within the Limestone Ridge landscape character area. The site is not within a designated landscape but is in open countryside and affords views across the Stour Valley. From the North Western boundary, the ground falls away leading down into the Valley. Due to its prominent location on raised ground, the site is highly visible within open long range views from both Nations Road and the settlement of Bugley on the opposite side of the Valley. The site is visible from Stour Valley Way which partially follows Nations Road before heading further south to the village of West Stour.

The existing farmhouse faces towards the farmyard to the west with the rear garden situated to the east. This leads to the house having its side gable

elevation facing towards the valley to the North West. In public views on the opposite side of the valley, the narrower gable end of the dwelling is visible with the farm buildings located immediately to the west. This results in the majority of the bulk and scale of the dwelling not being apparent in views. The narrow gable end thus appears relatively discreet in open views between the conifers to the east and the farm buildings to the west. This narrow gable end presents a natural stone wall with only one small first floor window.

The existing dwelling house is a good quality building built of local stone under a clay pantile roof, with two chimney stacks on either end of the ridge of the main part of the dwelling. The character of the property is defined by its simple form, its Dorset vernacular proportions including a narrow span.

The rear garden is enclosed by a row of conifers/leylandi along the North Eastern boundary and a mix of mature trees around the South Eastern boundary. The existing farmhouse is set down in relation to the higher ground to the South East with a retaining stone wall curtailing this end of the building. A stone wall runs along the North Western boundary between the house and the existing farm buildings. The North Western end of the house comprises a lower element which is set down on lower ground.

The area immediately between the farmyard and the house is laid to lawn and a fence forms the boundary.

## **6.0 Description of Development**

The proposal is to erect a 2-storey detached dwelling which would be re-oriented 90 degrees resulting in the length of the dwelling facing in a North Western direction towards Stour Valley. The proposed replacement dwelling would have a split level arrangement in order to accommodate the change in levels within the site. A two storey element would be situated on the north western end of the site and a single storey element would be situated on the south western end of the site with an element of cut and fill to achieve level footings and same ridge heights across the two elements. The two elements would sit under respective curved standing seam roofs and would be linked by a central tower feature (stairwell) between the roofs. The dwelling house is to be constructed of a mix of natural stone and horizontal timber clad walls as well as glazed elements under zinc curved roofs.

The existing vehicular access is proposed to be used leading to a turning area to the south west of the proposed replacement dwelling. The private external garden area would be to the North East of the replacement dwelling. The existing farm yard buildings to the South West lie outside of the application site.

This application follows a previous scheme for a replacement dwelling which was refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal. Whilst the proposed dwelling

adopts the same contemporary split level design with the curved standing seam roofs, a number of changes have been made to the design of the proposed replacement dwelling which are as follows:-

- Repositioning of the proposed replacement dwelling which is set back approximately 5 metres from the North Western boundary where previously it was set back approximately 1m from the boundary;
- Omission of driveway/courtyard to the South East of the dwelling;
- Reduction in the width of the two storey element of the dwelling closest to the North Western boundary which faces towards the valley;
- Increase in the width of the single storey element of the dwelling set back within the site;
- Setting back of the raised balcony/decking area which previously projected from North Western elevation into the adjoining field;
- Reduction in the amount of glazing particularly at first floor level;
- Full height glazing at first floor set behind balcony/decking area and projecting canopy;
- Inclusion of an overhanging roof canopy over the balcony/decking area which projects from the roof slope of the replacement dwelling;
- Amended red line to omit the extension of the curtilage into an adjoining field which was previously included to accommodate the projecting raised balcony/decking area;
- Incorporation of a proposed landscaping scheme.

## 7.0 Relevant Planning History

Application No.	Application Description	Address	Decision
2/2017/1884/FUL	Demolish existing dwelling and erect 1 No. replacement dwelling.	Bleet Farm , Bleet Lane, Gillingham, SP8 5RG	Refused and Appeal Dismissed.

## 8.0 List of Constraints

Outside of a settlement boundary

## 9.0 Consultations

### Gillingham Town Council: Objection

- Bleet Farm is in an elevated position and currently blends in with the surrounding countryside.
- It is considered that the replacement contemporary building will be over-dominant in the countryside, particularly when viewed from Nations Lane, and will have a negative visual impact on the character and appearance of the area.

- The proposed development will result in light pollution which will also have a negative effect to the rural area.

**Dorset Council Highways** – No objection.

**Dorset Council Trees Officer** – No objection subject to the following conditions:-

- Detailed Arboricultural Method Statement with detailed Tree Constraints Plan required;
- Tree and hedgerow protection;
- Landscaping scheme as detailed within drawing no: 0035-CMS-DR-GF-GA-LA-2000 B to be conditioned with requirement of written confirmation following implementation. Please note the Council are minded to protect this new planting by way of TPO;
- Landscaping maintenance to cover a minimum 5 year period.

## **10.0 Representations**

Letters of objection have been received from 10 individuals. The following main concerns are raised within these letters:-

- No significant change from the previously refused proposal that was also dismissed on appeal;
- Proposal fails to comply with criteria (e) and (f) of Local Plan Policy 28 for replacement dwellings in the countryside;
- Proposed replacement dwelling would be 65% larger than the existing dwelling;
- Size and bulk of proposed replacement is more visually intrusive within the landscape than existing dwelling;
- Proposed wavy zinc roof would appear incongruous within the landscape and does not respect existing character and appearance of curtilage, setting and wider surrounds;
- Extensive glazing would result in light pollution over an otherwise dark Stour Valley Way;
- Existing north west gable end of existing building is 7.5 metres and has 2 modest windows whereas proposed north west gable elevation would be 16 metres (increase in width of more than 100%) and extensive glazing;
- Half the proposed north west elevation is obstructed by a tree which is an ash which may die out in the future and therefore, its longevity is not ensured;
- Size of existing dwelling is 214 square metres and proposed replacement dwelling is 343 square metres (excluding proposed covered decking) resulting in a 60% increase in size;
- Proposed footprint extends well beyond footprint of existing dwelling;

- Footprint of existing dwelling is 107 square metres and footprint of proposed dwelling is 252 square metres resulting in an increase of 135%;
- Existing development characterised by agricultural buildings or domestic properties of traditional design;
- Proposed modern large glass dominated structure would appear incongruous within the landscape;
- Proposed extensive raising decking which is 3 metres above ground level and part covered around the south west and north west elevation is out of character with locality;
- Proposed re-orientation of dwelling overlooking Stour Valley to give much greater size and bulk would result in an adverse effect on the surrounding landscape;
- Proposed north west elevation is not fully shown with part of the elevation set back behind the Ash tree marked by a dotted outline;
- The proposed north west elevation set behind Ash Tree which is deciduous and therefore, would be visible for 6 months of the year;
- Total length of north west elevation would elongate existing built form along ridge including existing agricultural buildings;
- Design of proposed replacement dwelling is urban and industrial and therefore not in keeping with rural character of surrounding area;
- Top lit central stairwell sits above the roofs and would result in further light pollution;
- Proposed use of Purbeck stone is not appropriate for the location and should be Marnhull;
- Floor space calculations should not include buildings marked B, C and D on the existing plans as these do not form part of the original dwelling;
- Proposed contemporary design of dwelling is not innovative nor does it achieve very high standards;
- Use of agricultural building as a starting point means that dwelling subverts the existing arrangement of farm buildings and farmhouse as well as contradicts surrounding local vernacular (building style);
- Proposed dwelling would alter the character of the surrounding built environment;
- Proposed covered decking adds to the massing of the proposed dwelling;
- Proposed replacement dwelling extends up to the edge of the escarpment over the valley whereas existing dwelling set back.

The following concerns were also raised which are not material in this case and thus, not relevant to the assessment of this application:-

- Existing narrow lanes to the property.
- Concerns over the future of the farm yard buildings.

## **11.0 Relevant Policies**

### **Adopted North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)**

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development  
Policy 2 - Core Spatial Strategy  
Policy 4 - The Natural Environment  
Policy 20 - The Countryside  
Policy 23 - Parking  
Policy 24 - Design  
Policy 25 - Amenity  
Policy 28 – Existing Dwellings in Countryside

### **Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 (made July 2018)**

Policy 23 - The pattern and shape of development  
Policy 24 - Plots and buildings

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Section 4 - Decision Making  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places  
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

## **12.0 Human rights**

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.  
Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.  
The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property

This Recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

## **13.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty**

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove OR minimise disadvantage and in

considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the PSED.

Arrangements would be made to ensure people with disabilities or mobility impairments are accommodated in order to comply with Building Regulations.

#### **14.0 Financial benefits**

Jobs would be created during the construction stage.

#### **15.0 Climate Implications**

The replacement dwelling would have to be designed to meet current building regulations which in turn would help reduce the carbon footprint of the ongoing heating and running of the building.

In fact, the applicants' agent in their supporting statement state that the 'U' Values are 20% better than current building regulations. The building would be highly insulated which would further reduce heat loss and be a more energy efficient building. A ground source heat pump is also proposed for the heating of the building.

However, the proposal involves the demolition of an existing house and there is no indication from the submitted details that any of the materials of the existing house are to be re-used.

#### **16.0 Planning Assessment**

##### **Location of Development**

The site lies outside any Settlement Boundary and is located in the countryside. In respect of Policies in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 - Adopted January, 2016, the provisions of Policy 28 for replacement dwellings in the countryside is relevant to the assessment of this proposal. There are no relevant policies contained within the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan that relate to proposals for replacement dwellings.

Policy 28 of the adopted North Dorset Local Plan - Part 1 permits the replacement of an existing dwelling in the countryside provided six criteria are satisfied.

The proposed dwelling is now considered to satisfy the six criteria. The existing dwelling is permanent and has not become derelict and it is proposed to replace it with a single new dwelling. Therefore, the proposal complies with criteria (a) and (b) of Policy 28.

The other four criteria seek to ensure that the replacement is located on the footprint of the existing dwelling, that there is no extension of the residential curtilage, that the replacement is of a size and design that is no more visually intrusive in the landscape and, finally, that the replacement is of a size and design that respects the character and appearance of the existing curtilage, its immediate setting and its wider surroundings. The previously refused proposal that was also dismissed at appeal did not meet the latter three criteria.

A replacement dwelling in the countryside should normally be located over the footprint of the existing dwelling. The previous proposed replacement dwelling due its re-orientation and increased size resulted in a dwelling which would extend well beyond the footprint of the existing house. In dismissing the appeal, the Inspector acknowledged this, however, they noted that Policy 28 does not state that existing and proposed footprints must corresponded entirely and as such considered the previously refused proposal complied with criterion (c). The amended proposed replacement dwelling subject of this application adopts the same orientation albeit is smaller in size. Having regard to the inspectors' comments above, it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling complies with criterion (c).

The existing house has its narrow gable end (5 metres in length) currently facing towards the open valley to the north. The proposed replacement dwelling would be re-orientated 90 degrees resulting in the length of the dwelling facing towards the valley.

The previously refused replacement dwelling proposed a small extension of the existing residential curtilage which was deemed contrary to criterion (d) of policy 28. This was to allow for a projecting balcony supported by stilts which would sit within the sloping field beyond the North West boundary. This element has been omitted from the scheme.

The revised design includes a balcony spanning approximately 10 metres in length and 3 metres in depth in front of the two storey element which would be set back from the north western boundary by 2 metres and would be covered by an overhanging roof canopy. The overhanging roof canopy would reduce the visual prominence of the balcony, as well as the first floor glazing sitting behind it. It is therefore considered that the revised proposal now meets with criterion (d) of Local Plan Policy 28.

Criteria (e) and (f) criteria of Policy 28 are concerned with scale and design. The main issue is whether the proposed replacement dwelling, having regard to its size and design, would be significantly more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling. As a guide, a replacement dwelling should not be more than 50% larger than the existing dwelling it replaces. The above percentage increase is a guide and the fundamental requirement of Policy 28 is

that the proposed replacement dwelling is no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling.

The existing dwelling has a total external floor space of 261sqm. The previously refused replacement dwelling was calculated as being approximately 70% larger than the existing dwelling and thus, far exceeded the 50% maximum. The proposed replacement dwelling which has been reduced in size would now have a total external floor space of 384sqm (excluding the balconies which cover an area of 60sqm). This calculation was reached by officers and agreed with the agent. The proposed replacement dwelling would have an increase in external floor space of 123sqm over the existing dwelling. This equates to the proposed replacement dwelling being 47% larger than the existing dwelling it replaces. This percentage increase falls within the 50% maximum guide figure.

It is acknowledged that the existing dwelling is a low key C19 farmhouse which assimilates into its environment due to its scale, the use of local stone and clay tiles. It has the appearance of a traditional farmhouse and uses materials typical of rural dwelling houses in North Dorset. In addition, the position of the existing dwelling on the site with the narrower side gable facing towards the valley and the presence of existing soft landscaping features ensures the dwelling appears relatively discreet in views from the opposite side of the valley.

The previously refused replacement dwelling consisted of a two storey high built form spanning a total width of 23.5 metres along this elevated ridge. This two storey high built form extended up to the boundary which also forms the edge of the field which slopes down to the valley. It was considered that this further increased its prominence within the landscape.

The amended proposal would have a two storey built form spanning a total of 13 metres along this elevated ridge. This has led to a reduction of 10 metres in the width of the two storey element of the dwelling. Furthermore, this element has been set back approximately 5 metres from the boundary.

The previously refused scheme sought to have the main length of the dwelling fronting the North West boundary and thus, facing onto the valley. The revised design would set the main length of the dwelling further back within the site which would be at single storey height and set behind the smaller two storey element.

A section of the main length would project beyond the two storey element by 10 metres. However, it would be set back from the North West elevation of the two storey element by 9 metres and from the North West boundary by approximately 15 metres. Whereas the previous design resulted in a continuous two storey elevation spanning a length of 23 metres facing towards the valley, the revised design results in this elevation split with the two storey element spanning 13 metres and a single storey element spanning a further 10 metres set back a significant distance within the site. Furthermore, this element would be obscured

by the two storey element and the proposed new tree and hedge planting. The setting back of the single storey element within the site along with the lower height of its elevation would also reduce its visual prominence within the surrounding landscape.

The stepping back of part of the North western elevation breaks up the mass and width of the proposal as this elevation would be viewed as two distinct elements and would not be viewed together. This is in direct contrast with the previous proposal which incorporated an elongated continuous two storey high elevation. It is therefore considered that the development would have an acceptable prominence in long range views obtained from the roads and footpaths to the North West along Stour Valley Way.

Turning to the matter of glazing, the amended proposal does reduce the extent of full height glazing. Furthermore, the reduction in the two storey element facing towards the valley would result in an overall reduction in additional glazing that existed on the longer elevation of the previously refused dwelling. In dismissing the appeal, the inspector considered that the previously proposed replacement dwelling "would feature extensive glazing, characteristic of an urban development" which did not accord with the "surrounding rural character". The inspector went on to state that the proposed orientation would not only extend the development over the ridgeline which would significantly increase the harmful impact of the heavily glazed design. The inspector in the previous appeal considered the extent of glazing was a compounding factor taken in conjunction with the size and orientation of the dwelling.

The amended design would reduce the extent of glazing on a smaller two storey high elevation which in turn would be set back from the ridge of the valley by 5 metres. This amended design in conjunction with their position behind a projecting roof canopy (which sits over the balcony) does reduce the visual impact of the replacement dwelling.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling is now of a size and design that would be no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling and therefore, it is considered to comply with criterion (e) of Local Plan Policy 28.

The principle of a contemporary design at this site is considered acceptable. Indeed, the inspector recognised that it "is accepted in principle by Policy 28 and innovative design is supported in national policy contained within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018)". The inspector recognised the proposed design would "seek to take inspiration from the rolling landscape and adjacent agricultural buildings". However, in dismissing the appeal for the previously proposed replacement dwelling, it was considered that the contemporary design in so far as its large size and urban glazed design in

conjunction with the orientation proposed would be visually discordant with the rural landscape.

Whilst a contemporary design is still proposed, the proposed changes outlined above would ensure the dwelling appears more recessive in its setting due to the reduction in scale, footprint and the use of glazing as well as the setting back of the dwelling from the ridge (North West boundary). The proposed replacement dwelling is considered to be of a size and design that would respect the character and appearance of the existing residential curtilage, its immediate setting and its wider surroundings.

As noted above, the amended proposal not only has a significantly reduced width and has seen a reduction in glazing; it also has been set back further within the site. This recess not only ensures that the proposed replacement dwelling does not appear as visually prominent along the ridge but it also provide space for soft planting and landscaping to be included which would further soften its appearance when viewed from the opposite side of the valley. This is discussed in more detail below.

Whilst the proposed replacement dwelling would be greater in size than the existing, it is not considered to be significantly larger and would not cause significant visual impact on the landscape. It is therefore considered that the amended design would appear no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling in so far as it would not have a materially or significantly greater impact on its surroundings.

The amended proposal due to its reduction in scale and floor area, repositioning of the dwelling away from the North West boundary, the re-configuration of its footprint inclusion of design features including louvres and roof overhang, the proposed replacement dwelling would not appear to have a significant visual impact on the landscape. For these reasons, the proposal would comply with the criteria a - f of Local Plan policy 28: Existing dwellings in the countryside.

### **Design and Impact on Character of the Surrounding Area**

Bleet Farmhouse and its associated agricultural buildings sit on an elevated ridge, within the Limestone Ridge landscape character area. The farm is in a fairly isolated position, approximately 500m above the small settlement of Bugley, and is accessed via Bleet Lane.

Open long range views of the site are primarily obtained from the West on public footpaths and roads accessed via Bugley. Closer, fragmented views can be obtained from the North via the Stour Valley Way which partially follows Nations Road before heading further south to the village of West Stour.

The current farmhouse is presently quite unobtrusive in views due to its side elevation positioning and the presence of existing soft landscaping features situated to the immediate North West.

The previously refused dwelling was considered to be of an excessive scale which when combined with its orientation and contemporary design including modern glazing, would result in a dwelling that would be more visually intrusive than the existing. It was for these reasons that the previously refused dwelling would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The previous proposal comprised of a wider 2 storey elevation facing directly onto the sloping field and valley beyond and comprised of 4 large patio doors at first floor opening up onto a projecting balcony and a row of large first floor picture windows. The large size of the dwelling extended built form further along the ridge. It was noted by the landscape officer in objecting to the previously refused and dismissed proposal that the new dwelling was far more visually intrusive than that of the existing dwelling and this was "mainly due to the extension of built form being brought further out across the ridge line."

The amended design has reduced the size of the two storey elevation facing towards the valley by roughly half. Whilst there is a longer single storey element further back within this site, this is set back at some distance from the ridge onto the valley. Given its lower height and position behind a substantial amount of planting, this elevation would appear less apparent within public views.

The previously refused dwelling incorporated a larger extent of glazing on the two storey high North West elevation with the resultant light spill into the surrounding countryside.

The revised proposal would still retain a level of glazing. However, the extent of glazing along the North Western elevation has been significantly reduced in comparison to the previously refused application. This in conjunction with the reversal of the design with the reduced span of the two storey element results in a less imposing structure upon this visually important ridgeline.

Furthermore, the glazing would be set back behind an overhanging roof and the addition of louvres have also been incorporated into some of the glazing. These features will seek to minimise the extent of light spill into this unlit rural area as well as ensuring the glazing is less visible.

The previously proposed design had glazing beneath a very shallow roof overhanging on an elevation that faced directly onto the ridge which due to its prominent and exposed nature would draw the eye in public views. In comparison, the revised design has reduced the extent of the glazing which would be set behind a 3 metres deep roof overhang (covering the balcony) on an elevation that is set back 5 metres from the ridge. This would ensure that the first

floor full height glazing would not appear overly visible at a distance within public views.

The proposed balcony whilst more extensive would sit close to the dwelling and set back from the north western boundary. The balcony would consist of lightweight structures that would sit beneath a roof overhang.

A query was raised regarding what appeared as a connecting bridge between the new dwelling and existing outbuildings but no information regarding the potential use of these buildings or necessity of the bridge have been submitted. These buildings sit outside the red line and therefore, do not form part of the application. However, the buildings sit outside the residential curtilage for the dwelling and therefore, their use is agricultural. The agent advised that the intention is for these buildings to remain in agricultural use. In terms of the connecting bridge, amended plans were submitted to clarify this arrangement. However, this would effectively be an additional balcony element with a glazed balustrade which would abut the farm building.

Concerns have been raised by objectors regarding the retention of a similar contemporary design to that of the previously refused application which was dismissed at appeal. However, as acknowledged above, the principle of a contemporary design is considered to be acceptable. In dismissing the appeal for the previous proposal, the inspector considered that the contemporary design in respect of its size and bulk in conjunction with the extent of glazing would be visually discordant with the rural landscape. The proposed changes in the design would ensure the dwelling appears more recessive in its setting and is considered to be of a size and design that would respect the character and appearance of the existing residential curtilage, its immediate setting and its wider surroundings.

The replacement property would have a contemporary appearance and would be significantly different to the existing dwelling. However, the surrounding development is of a mixed character. As such the proposed contemporary design is not considered to be so out of keeping with the character of the area as to have a significant adverse impact on the character of the area. The proposed materials are typical of those used in a rural context but will be applied to a contemporary design.

The proposed changes in the design have been secured to ensure that the replacement dwelling would blend well into the landscape and would not harm the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area. The height and massing of the building would relate well to the adjoining farm buildings. The heights are set down lower than the existing dwelling which would further reduce its visual impact.

As noted above, the previously refused dwelling was re-orientated 90 degrees and positioned close to the North West boundary. This resulted in the elongated North West wall of the house forming the boundary with the field dropping drops away resulting in the building appearing visually prominent. The revised two storey element has been set back from the boundary with the field to further reduce its visual prominence.

Whilst the proposed replacement dwelling would be re-orientated 90 degrees, the reduction in the length of the two storey element would restrict the amount of built form that would be particularly noticeable when viewing it from across the valley. This increase would not result in a significant visual impact on the landscape. The single storey element that is set back would be concealed by a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and hedgerow planting.

The proposed materials for the elevations would comprise of a mix of stone and timber cladding. It is noted that Purbeck stone has been proposed although Marnhull Stone would be more appropriate in this location. The use of cedar for the horizontal timber cladding is considered to be acceptable but should be treated with something which enables natural weathering and the resultant silvering colouration. The proposed stained vertical timber should be kept fairly dark in colour to ensure it does not stand out. The proposed material for the roofs is mill finish standing seam zinc roof. No further details have been given as to the colour and finish of the roof material. It is therefore recommended that a condition be attached requiring the submission of material samples to ensure that a suitable palette of materials in neutral tones are used that would ensure the dwelling blends into the landscape.

The proposed design would meet with the requirements of Local Plan Policy 24 – Design and the relevant parts of Policy 24 – Plots and Buildings of Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

As acknowledged above the current farmhouse has a discreet appearance in views due to its side elevation positioning and the presence of existing soft landscaping features situated to the immediate North West. The previously refused scheme proposed the removal of the trees which would be replaced by the additional built form of the larger replacement dwelling; with new planting being positioned further back in the site on the South Eastern boundary. Consequently, the previously refused dwelling appeared exposed and eye catching within the landscape when viewed from Nations Road.

The proposed replacement dwelling has been set back within the site and a reduction in the length of the two storey element. This has led to a revised layout which would provide sufficient space for soft landscaping and planting as well as ensuring existing trees within the site can be retained.

Despite the design improvements, the tree officer did have concerns over the proposed landscaping originally submitted with the application. This was due the over reliance on existing tree planting (Ash Tree and a group of Leylandi) within the site which was deemed to be of poor quality and not worthy of protection. Therefore, the long term preservation of these trees could not be guaranteed. Notwithstanding this, the existing planting is not sufficient in quality or quantity to mitigate the visual impact of the proposal.

Although there would be some visual impact on the Local Landscape Character of Stour Valley, it is considered that this visual impact could be mitigated by suitable planting which, once established, would provide a foil and softening effect to the development.

Therefore, it was considered essential that a robust landscaping scheme is secured at this stage. The councils' tree officer advised that any planting should look to be placed to the North East of the dwelling with some hedgerow planting (and emergent trees) along the North Western boundary. This planting will have a stronger chance of offering a long term contribution to the amenity of the wider landscape and to secure this, the Council would be minded to serve a Tree Preservation Order upon completion.

A proposed landscaping plan along with details of the proposed planting palette as well as indicative illustrations of the planting at various successive years following the development were submitted. The proposed landscaping would involve the removal of the existing leylandi although it is proposed to retain the existing ash tree.

A native hedgerow is proposed to be planted along the North Western and North Eastern site boundaries which would comprise of a mix of deciduous and evergreen species.

The majority of the trees proposed with a few smaller trees also proposed to be planted within the hedgerows. The trees will also be a mix of deciduous and evergreen which are native, offer large branch spread and in the case of the Hornbeam offer year round leaf cover.

It is therefore considered that the proposed tree and hedge planting provide an attractive foil to the proposed development on this prominent ridge line position. The proposed planting would soften the appearance of the proposed dwelling and reduce its visual prominence. The councils' tree officer supports the proposed landscaping subject to the submission for approval a more detailed maintenance scheme for the trees. This can be conditioned.

In addition, a condition is required for the protection of existing features and in the case of the Ash which sits in close proximity to the proposed dwelling, a

condition requiring the condition detailed Arboricultural Method Statement with detailed Tree Constraints Plan. The councils' tree officer also advises that they are minded to protect the new planting by way of a tree preservation order. This would ensure the long term preservation of the tree and hedge planting which suitably mitigates the landscape and visual impact of the proposed dwelling.

It is considered that the proposed landscaping would mitigate the visual impact of the proposed dwelling. Extensive planting is proposed along the north western boundary and as such the two storey high glazed elevation would be exposed to the valley. The proposed replacement dwelling would therefore appear nestled between the group of farm buildings to the south west and the existing established and new planting to the north east.

Subject to the mitigation measures and suggested conditions set out above, it is considered that the proposal would not result in significant harm to the local landscape character of the Stour Valley and as such would comply with Local Plan Policy 4. Furthermore, the proposal secures a good quality landscaping that would ensure the new dwelling would integrate successfully into the local environment and as such would comply with Policy 25 of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2031).

Overall, it is considered that the proposed design along with the soft landscaping proposals would result in a dwelling that would assimilate within the local landscape and better relate to the surrounding area including views, vistas and landmarks. Thus, the proposal would comply with Policies 4 and 24 of North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2011-2031) and Policies 24 - Design and 25 – hard and soft landscaping of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2031).

### **Impact on Residential Amenity**

There would be no immediate neighbours that would be affected by the proposed development. The neighbours to the North West are situated a significant distance away from the proposed replacement dwelling. The proposed replacement dwelling would therefore neither overlook nor overbear or overshadow nearby residential properties.

### **Access and Parking**

The Highway Authority have no objections to the proposal. It is considered that the proposed access and parking arrangements for the proposed replacement dwelling as shown on the submitted site layout plan are considered to be acceptable.

Concerns were raised regarding the narrow lanes leading to the site. However, the proposal is for replacement dwelling and as such there is no net gain in

residential dwellings at the site. Therefore, there would not be an intensification of the existing access.

### **Biodiversity**

Having had regard to the Bat Emergence Survey undertaken by Enzygo and accompanying approved biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan, it is considered that the proposal will have no adverse impact on biodiversity interests, subject to the recommendations contained within the document being followed.

## **17.0 Conclusion**

The proposed replacement dwelling has been set back from the edge of the valley escarpment. The amended design of the proposed dwelling includes a significant reduction in the size of the two storey elevation facing towards the valley by roughly half. The remainder of this elevation has been set further back within the site at a single storey height. The extent of glazing has also been reduced and set behind a covered raised decking area.

The proposed changes to the design, its re-siting away from the north western boundary as well as the screen planting/landscaping would ensure that the proposed replacement dwelling would appear no more visually intrusive in the landscape than the existing dwelling in so far as it would not have a materially or significantly greater impact on its surroundings. It is considered the amended proposal and accompanying landscaping scheme would meet criteria a - f of Local Plan policy 28: Existing dwellings in the countryside. Therefore, the proposed replacement dwelling would not cause significant harm to the character of the surrounding rural landscape and would comply with North Dorset Local Plan Policies 4, 24 and 28 and Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Policies 24 and 25.

## **18.0 RECOMMENDATION** Grant, subject to conditions.

### **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission. Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly and only in accordance with the following approved drawings and details: 1707-L1C, 1707-L3C, 1707-L4D, 0035-CMS-DR-GF-GA-LA-2000 B, 0035-CMS-DR-GF-GA-LA-2002 A, 0035-CMS-DR-GF-SP-LA-2001; forming the approved application.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify the permission.

3. Notwithstanding the materials schedule shown on the approved drawing 1707-L4D and prior to the construction dwelling above damp proof course level, samples and details of all external facing materials for the walls and roofs shall submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance of the development.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and detailed Tree Constraints Plan prepared by a qualified tree specialist providing comprehensive details of construction works in relation to trees that have the potential to be affected by the development must be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Council. All works must be carried out in accordance with the approved details. In particular, the method statement must provide the following:
  - a) a specification for protective fencing to trees and hedges during both demolition and construction phases which complies with BS5837 (2012) and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing;
  - b) a specification for scaffolding of building works and ground protection within the tree protection zones in accordance with BS5837 (2012);
  - c) a schedule of tree work conforming to BS3998;
  - d) details of the area for storage of materials, concrete mixing and any bonfires;
  - e) details of any no-dig specification for all works within the root protection area for retained trees;
  - g) details of the supervision to be carried out by the developers tree specialist.

Reason: This information is required to be submitted and agreed before any work starts on site to ensure that the trees and hedges deemed worthy of retention on-site will not be damaged prior to, or during the construction works.

5. The soft landscaping works detailed on approved drawing 0035-CMS-DR-GF-GA-LA-2000 B must be carried out in full during the first planting season (October to March) following the substantial completion of the development. The planted scheme must be maintained in accordance with the agreed details. Following the implementation of the soft landscaping works, written confirmation of these works shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.  
Reason: To ensure the satisfactory landscaping of the site in the interests of ensuring the long term visual amenity and character of the area.
6. Prior to the commencement of development above damp course level, a schedule of landscape maintenance covering a minimum period of five years following substantial completion of the development (including details of the arrangements for its implementation) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The subsequent maintenance of the development's landscaping shall accord with the approved schedule.  
Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by the proper maintenance of existing and/or new landscape features.
7. The protected species mitigation proposals set out in the approved NET Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Plan, prepared by Enzygo Ltd, dated 18th December 2019; shall be undertaken in full before the development hereby approved is first brought into use and shall be maintained in the approved condition permanently thereafter.  
Reason: To ensure adequate habitat is provided and protected to accommodate protected species
8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification) no enlargement(s) or alteration(s) of the dwelling house hereby approved, permitted by Schedule 2 Part 1 of the 2015 Order, shall be erected or constructed.  
Reason: To protect amenity and the character of the area.
9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification) no garages, sheds or other outbuildings permitted by Class E of Schedule 2 Part 1 of the 2015 Order shall be erected.  
Reason: To protect amenity and the character of the area.
10. No external lighting shall be erected or installed at any time other than in accordance with details that have been approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include drawings showing the appearance, siting, technical details, orientation, intensity and screening of any lamps.  
Reason: To protect the character of the surrounding landscaping.