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Low Farmhouse  
Low Road  
Keswick  
Norwich  
NR46TX

Listed Buildings Officer  
South Norfolk Council  
Cygnet House  
Long Stratton

6<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**Heritage Statement: Listed Building consent to remove Concrete Render and replace with Lime Render**

**Introduction**

1. This heritage, design and access statement has been prepared in support of an application to remove concrete and rough cast render from the front and rear elevations of Low Farmhouse and to reapply, after inspection and repair of the underlying timber frame and infill panels and new Lime render.  
The property is a Grade II listed building situated at the head of what would have been an ancient farmyard in the village of Keswick.

**Context**

2. Historical Context:  
Low Farmhouse is a Grade II listed (October 1951) building of timber frame construction under a tiled roof said to date from the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century (c1620). The listing describes the building as being known as the “King’s House Hall” during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Documents reveal that it was sold by the Gurney estate in the 1960s. The property was previously divided into two halves and the Land Registry Documents still show it as being numbers 4&5 Low Farm. It is a three cell, two storey house with later, probably Victorian “lean-to” extensions on either end. The Listing mentions the existence of a number of wooden mullioned windows with lozenge shape mullions to the rear of the property. There is evidence of further similarly designed windows on the North Gable end wall that is now internalised. Elaborate carvings are present on many of the beams throughout the property. Externally, the property has painted rendered elevations. There is an eclectic mix of other window frames in the property. The majority are metal framed casements but some windows have been replaced at later stages with wooden framed casement windows.
3. Aesthetic Context:  
Low Farmhouse stands in a prominent position at the head of a cul-de-sac comprising of former farm cottages and a large former threshing barn, now all converted to residential dwellings. It is visible from Low Road which follows the course of a Roman Road running northwest from the west gate of Venta Icenorum.  
The current appearance of the property is tarnished by the poor state of repair of the render applied to the front elevation and detracts from the general appearance of the dwelling and surrounding structures.
4. Structural Integrity:  
In September 1996 an inspection was conducted by Edwin Rose on behalf of the Planning Department. He noted that the house had previously been described as derelict at the time of a previous inspection by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in 1973. Rose himself described the building as having been in a poor external condition in 1979 and goes on to describe subsequent restoration as leaving “much to be desired”. The house has been “improved” with subsequent restorations. However, the poor state of repair and inappropriate use of concrete based renders is not protecting the underlying fabric of the building and is potentially causing further damage to the timber frame and panels between the framing posts.  
Photographs are included at the end of this document illustrating the state of repair of the render and appearance of the rough cast render on the rear of the property.

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## Works Proposal

5. The work will be undertaken in 2 phases a. and b.

a.

- i. Phase a. in 2021 will involve the removal of concrete render from the front elevation at first floor and ground floor level. This may/will require temporary removal of the tiled offset between the ground and first floor.
- ii. It is planned to initially remove small “pilot” exploratory areas as requested by S. Becket, Senior Planning Officer.
- iii. Removal of the render may reveal underlying issues with some of the first and second floor joists that may require repair or replacement with Oak
- iv. It is expected that some panels will require repair (previous work in the small bedroom at the northern end of the eastern wall revealed some panels to be unstable, although the framing posts were intact). Repair will be with lathe and plaster
- v. Window frames may also require repair
- vi. Once these repairs are complete then lime render will be reapplied and once dry the render will be finished in a Limewash or Kiem mineral paint.
- vii. The “tiled offset” will be replaced

b.

- i. Phase b. may take place in 2022/3 depending on funding. This will involve removal of roughcast render from the rear elevation at ground and first floor level to height of the eaves.
- ii. Again, small exploratory areas of the render will be removed
- iii. The underlying oak frame will be revealed allowing a full inspection.
- iv. Some repairs to lathe and plaster panels and the timber frame and joist may be required
- v. Some repairs to window frames and timber in the “lozenge” windows may be required
- vi. Once the timber repairs have been completed, lime render will be applied and then finished with Limewash or Kiem Mineral Paint

## Conclusion

The proposed works will not only improve the aesthetics of Low Farmhouse but, will also contribute in a significant way to the preservation of this “remarkably complete” and “elaborately detailed” building and will involve the use of traditional skills, methods and materials thus maintaining a nationally important building and craftsmanship.

Yours faithfully

T J Gilbert

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### ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE



Rear elevation showing mullioned window with lozenge shaped mullions



Timber detailing showing chamfer stops

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### Aesthetics of Low Farm



Front Elevation of Low Farmhouse. Note Tiled offset between ground and first floor.



Former farm cottages and cart sheds at Low Farm



Threshing Barn at Low Farm

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### Existing render



Internal picture revealing external render visible after “blown” panel removed at Low Farmhouse. Also visible is gypsum plaster board and gypsum plaster repair during earlier renovations and old pine floorboards laid over original badly damaged oak flooring.



Front Elevation south end showing damaged concrete render



Cracked render and poorly applied limewash flaking off the render.



Further patching of render at North end of Front elevation