



Curtis Farm, Wicker Street Green, Suffolk
Proposed Rendering and Replacement Window
to Gable Elevation



DESIGN and ACCESS STATEMENT
with Heritage Impact Assessment
for
Mr and Mrs S Del Mar

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Project ref. 21065

1. INTRODUCTION and PROJECT PROPOSALS

The proposal is to render the gable end of the house, remove a projecting oriel window and replace this with a new window to match those elsewhere on the house. The prime objective is to make the exterior weathertight, as the exposed frame and infill panel details have developed a number of leaks over time, either through joints or around window heads. The top of the oriel window is particularly prone. Some frame repairs have previously been made and further decay is developing in one location. The changes will alter the appearance of the exterior, as is considered below, but not so as to diminish the significance of this heritage asset.

Application Documents:

This Design and Access Statement.
Drawings numbered ...
21065-301-PL1 – gable details

2. CURTIS FARM – HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The present exterior character owes much to a renovation in the 60s that including the exposure of the timber frame and the installation of a complete set of Crittall windows with leaded lights in oak frames.

A Heritage Asset Assessment was undertaken by Leigh Alston in 2020. The report traces the farmhouse substantially back to circa 1580 and with an earlier house on the site. The house stood open to the top end of a green with its entrance on the opposite side of what is now its main approach. The core of the C16th house survives, with part rebuilt mid-C17th and an early-C19th service wing, but then little changed until after 1959 when substantial alterations and extensions were carried out. The quality of the timber frame remains evident internally. Leigh Alston's report sourced archive photographs, dating from 1959, from the RCHM. These depict a house with sash windows and a fully rendered exterior. This is relevant in justifying the covering over of timbers that is now proposed, even 'though these would originally have been exposed; the plaster dating from the Georgian period.



Archive photograph showing the house in 1959, fronting the green, with red brick service wing and the rest of the house rendered. The south-east gable is to the right-hand side.

Royal Commission on Historic Monuments

Curtis Farm is Listed Grade II with the following description:-

KERSEY WICKER STREET GREEN 1. 5377 Curtis Farmhouse TL 94 SE 41/479 II 2. A timber-framed and plastered building on an L-shaped plan with wings extending to the south-east and south-west. Roof tiled, with a good C17 ridge chimney stack with saw-tooth shafts. The south-east wing has exposed timber-framing and is probably of C15-C16 hall house origin with floor and replaces inserted in the C17. The south-west wing is of C17 origin with modern refacing. Two storeys. Modern casement windows with leaded lights. There is an original window with diamond mullions. The interior has exposed timber-framing and there is an old winder staircase possibly with original solid risers under modern casing. At the north-east side there is a modern addition.

(Aspects of the above are noted as inaccurate with the benefit of Leigh Alston's closer inspection.)

The oriel window in the gable end is of no architectural or historic significance.

3. PROPOSAL OPTIONS and CONSIDERATIONS

The option to stop up gaps in the timber frame and apply limewash to the whole was considered. This would be a recognised treatment for exposed framing. However, the elevation suffers from actual water ingress, the exact source of which is difficult to pinpoint. Moreover, the framing is exposed on the inside also, and with a wall thickness of less than 4" the wall construction is generally inefficient. Although no thermal insulation is proposed (it would be impractical to accommodate the thicker wall details) the application of a vapour-permeable render would be of some benefit to the interior environment.

The drawing submitted with this application details the intended construction, junctions, etc. No historic fabric will be removed.

It has also been considered whether the two timber framed side elevations should then be rendered for visual consistency. This would leave the house with no exposed framing externally. It was concluded that these should be left, adding visual interest and historic reference to the house. The eaves overhang shelters these two elevations.

4. CONCLUSION

The significance of Curtis Farmhouse does not pertain to its current fenestration nor to the exterior exposure of the timber frame; all of which survives well alongside fine historic features internally. The significance is not therefore harmed by the proposals.

Nicholas Jacob Architects ~ February 2024