

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Low House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
N side NC 61, 0.1 mi. E of jct with SR 3076

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Whitsett

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Guilford

CODE

81

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. J. D. Mackintosh, Jr., City Manager

STREET & NUMBER
Box 1358

CITY, TOWN

Burlington

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 27215

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Guilford County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square on Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Greensboro

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Low House is a representative, substantial Federal-style brick dwelling handsomely sited on a gentle hill. The house consists of a simple gable-roof main block, which when it was acquired for renovation in 1968, suffered from an inappropriate porch and jarringly incompatible sash. The 1968-1969 renovation removed these intrusions but added one-story gable wings, also of brick, to each side, a relatively simple but inappropriate "Williamsburg" frontispiece around the entrance, and replaced the sash with more appropriate six over six sash. While the wings and frontispiece are somewhat intrusive, the character of the restrained, handsome main block remains essentially intact, and the interiors are among the finest of their period in Guilford County--and intact.

The two-story main block is built of brick laid in one to three common bond, and rests on a basement with foundation walls of stone rubble. Particularly handsome is the arched basement entrance to the left of the first-story main entrance; this doorway springs from the stone foundation walls but rises into the brick and are outlined by a single course of headers. The house is five bays wide, with a central entrance at both levels. Windows with replacement six over six sash occur at both levels, and are surmounted by well-executed flat arches. The central entrance is treated with an open pediment "Williamsburg" frontispiece, and a simple balcony serves the second-level entrance. The facade terminates in a simple, slightly overhanging boxed cornice.

The side elevations were originally windowless except for small vents flanking the chimney at the attic level. The first level of each side elevation is covered by the recently added wing, but the upper portions of the sides remain unaltered. The house has interior end chimneys, which rise flush with the side walls, high above the roofline; these chimneys and the windowless end walls contribute strongly to the restrained dignity of the house.

A one-story wing extends from the rear of the house.

The interior of the house is little altered. It follows a center-hall plan, one room deep, and the finish is of high quality, restrained Federal character. The stair rises front to back along the right partition wall of the hall; this wall is of brick. The walls are plastered above handsome flat-paneled wainscots. Baseboards are simple molded ones, and much of the original wide pine flooring is intact. The doors leading out of the hall are framed with symmetrically molded architraves with especially notable cornerblocks: a radiating stylized foliate pattern is incised into the cornerblocks. Other doors have normal three-part molded mitered frames.

The stair is of typical Federal design. Very slender balusters and a slim turned newel carry a rounded handrail, which ramps gently at the landing. The open string is ornamented with curvilinear sawn brackets of simple but flowing design.

In the left parlor is the most elaborate mantel in the house. It is an unusually large, tripartite mantel. Engaged colonnettes carry a band of intricate fretwork that breaks out over the colonnettes. Above is a richly articulated frieze and cornice of considerable distinction. On the vigorously projecting center tablets and end blocks are sunbursts in high relief; very unusual is the occurrence of additional sunbursts on

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the reveals, as it were, of the tablet and end blocks as well as on their front faces. Above, the unusually deep, richly molded cornice shelf breaks out over all three elements.

Other mantels in the house are also of Federal design--some being three-part, others two-part. Handsomely proportioned and well-executed, they lack the ornament of the chief mantel, and are articulated by various combinations of moldings.

To the rear of the house are two simple frame outbuildings, each covered with vertical boards and topped by gable roofs.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Low House is a substantial early nineteenth century brick dwelling in rural Guilford County. Its simple rectangular gable-roof form and handsome brickwork are representative of the characteristic regional architecture of the more prosperous farmers of the Piedmont in this period. The house was probably built for John B. Low in the 1820s; he was a farmer of considerable property including 14 slaves. The house remained in the Low family until 1935.

Assessment of eligibility: The Low House has already been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria C as a "representative Federal Style brick house with essentially intact interiors that are apparently the finest of their period in Guilford County," as noted in December 13, 1976, letter from U. S. Department of Interior, Jerry L. Rogers to Lawrence D. Connor, Jr.

Located near Whitsett on the south side of Little Alamance Creek in Guilford County, the house known as the Low House was probably built by John B. Low sometime in the 1820s. John Low received land on Little Alamance Creek where the Low House now stands in two separate deeds. One of these documents was recorded in 1819 and the other in 1824. Since the boundaries mentioned in these deeds were formed according to landmarks that are now obscure, it is not possible to determine if the site of the Low House was included in the deed of 1819 or the one for 1824. The deed of 1819 was transacted between John Low and several other members of the Low family who jointly sold to him 208 acres of "a certain tract of land . . . situated on the Alamance" for \$800.¹ In 1824 Daniel Low, John's brother, also sold him "a certain tract of land lying on the south side of the Little Alamance" consisting of 24 acres.² The site of the Low home could have been transferred in either of these documents, but the latter deed is the most likely since it is somewhat more precise in locating the land "south of the Little Alamance."

That John Low built the structure located near Whitsett is fairly certain since it is first mentioned in the Guilford County records in connection with his name. The estate papers for Low who died intestate in 1846 refer to his "mansion house and all the necessary outhouses attached thereto." The same estate papers also refer to "the home tract of John Low."³

Low was a relatively wealthy man who owned considerable land, the mansion house, and a number of slaves. Evidently he was a farmer. When his estate was settled in 1847, fourteen slaves belonging to that estate were sold by the county court at public auction for \$3541. That sum was divided equally among his surviving children.⁴

The Guilford County Court also ruled in August, 1847, that John Low's "children and

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Heirs-in-law . . . are entitled to have partition of [his] land made equally between them." As a result Low's land was divided equally among his heirs,⁵ and the portion containing the Low House was awarded to his daughter, Emily C. Low.

In November, 1863, Emily Low deeded her share of her father's property, including his home, to her brother Barney F. Low.⁶ Then, in January, 1919, the County Court complied with the first of two wills of B. F. Low and awarded to his son, W. F. Low, "a certain tract of land lying in North Carolina, Guilford County, Rock Creek Township, and known as the home place of the late B. F. Low."

W. F. Low and his wife, Mattie, sold the Low property as part of 72.69 acres to W. A. Brooks in 1927. Eight years later Brooks sold the tract to Mrs. Emmie Massey Holt.⁸

In 1960 Mrs. Holt sold 72 acres of land in Rock Creek⁹ Township, which apparently included the Low home, to Thomas Lee Younts of Burlington. Mr. Younts owned the property until 1968 when he sold the Low House and 25 acres of land to Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Doornheim. In that year the Doornheims began restoration and remodeling of the Low House, and they completed their renovations in 1969. They lived in the house only a few years and then sold it and the surrounding 25 acres to William Matson. Mr. Matson recently sold the property to the city of Burlington. The city now owns and rents¹⁰ the Low House which was threatened by destruction by a proposed Burlington reservoir.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Guilford County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, Deed Book 19:519, hereinafter cited as Guilford Deed Books.

² Guilford Deed Book, 19:520.

³ Guilford County Estate Papers, 1775-1920, John B. Low, 1847, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as John B. Low Estate Papers, Guilford County.

⁴ John B. Low Estate Papers, Guilford County.

⁵ John B. Low Estate Papers, Guilford County; Guilford Deed Book 49:197.

⁶ Guilford Deed Book 43:171.

⁷ Guilford Deed Book 319:230.

⁸ Guilford Deed Books 566:641, 770:62.

⁹ Guilford Deed Book 1885:610.

¹⁰ Burlington Times-News, July 31, 1969.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burlington Times-News, July 31, 1969.

Guilford County Deed Books. Greensboro: Office of the Register of Deeds. Guilford County Courthouse.

Guilford County Estate Record. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Description prepared by Catherine W. Bishir, Head, Survey and Planning Branch
Significance prepared by Joe Mobley, Researcher

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History DATE

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE 733-4763

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE January 12, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

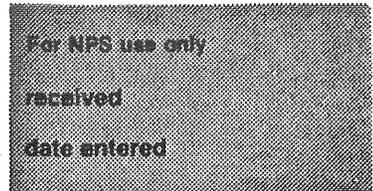
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Low House Item number Page

AMENDMENT

Item 8:

Criteria exception:

- B. The Low House is being moved to prevent its destruction by the proposed rerouting of NC 61 and the empoundment of the Little Alamance Creek. The house is a very fine, and rare, example of brick Federal architecture in Piedmont North Carolina. The interiors present strong, good interpretations of the vernacular Federal style. The house will be relocated about 400 feet to the northwest of the original site, still along the creek and in the same rural setting. The orientation of the house will shift only slightly from south southeast to the southeast.

Item 10:

Geographical information:

Acreeage of property nominated 1.6 acres

USGS Quadrangle Gibsonville, N. C.

Scale: 1:24 000

UTM References: (original site) 17 628780/3990220
 (proposed site) 17 628700/3990220

Boundary description and justification:

The property being nominated as the new site of the Low House is a 1.6 acre tract immediately to the northwest of the original site. The original nomination included only the house and yard, a less than one acre tract; the new site will include the house site and 1.6 acres surrounding it, retaining a wide yard/buffer to preserve its rural setting. See enclosed plat map with property outlined in red.

The Low House is being moved because its present/original location is threatened by the rerouting of NC 61 and the empoundment of Little Alamance Creek. The house will be situated approximately 400 feet to the northeast of the original site and will retain its close proximity to Little Alamance Creek. The siting of the house will change only slightly: from the south southeast to southeast. Since the house will remain in such close proximity to its original location the setting will remain rural.

