

**Mill House,
Mill Lane,
Dedham, Essex**

Heritage Asset Assessment



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This assessment is intended to inform and accompany an application for Listed Building Consent to Colchester Borough Council.

Summary

Mill House is a grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered building on the eastern side of Mill Lane, approximately equidistant between St Mary's church and Dedham Mill. In addition to its historic fabric, which includes fine carved details of the early-17th century, the property is of special importance as the home of John Constable's sister Martha between 1821 and her death in 1843. Constable is known to have visited the house, and a view of Mill Lane apparently painted from a first-floor window is now in the V&A. The house was initially built as an open hall at the beginning of the 16th century, but was much enlarged a century later and again in the mid-19th century. A major refurbishment in the Mock Tudor style followed during the 20th century, probably in at least two phases, and the building displays many features that are typical of the work of Mrs Grace Faithfull Roper, a Dedham-based amateur architect of the Arts and Crafts movement. A red-brick detached bake-house or brew-house to the rear is among the most sophisticated and best preserved examples of its kind in the county, surviving complete with bread oven, copper, sink, pump and ventilation shutters. A partly demolished brick structure in one corner is a slightly later insertion that appears to have supported a missing brewing vessel. The tithe map of 1838 shows an earlier bake-house with a markedly different alignment on much the same site, but the present structure dates from the mid-19th century. A second detached building to the east of the house consists of a timber-framed and weatherboarded stable, cart shed and hay loft of the late-18th century with a mid-19th century red-brick extension to the north. This too is unusually well preserved, retaining its mid-19th century wainscot, loose box doors and manger, but its most historically significant feature is an original boarded stall at the northern end of the 18th century section. This has remained almost completely unaltered since John Constable is likely to have used it, and provides one of Dedham's most tangible links with the artist.

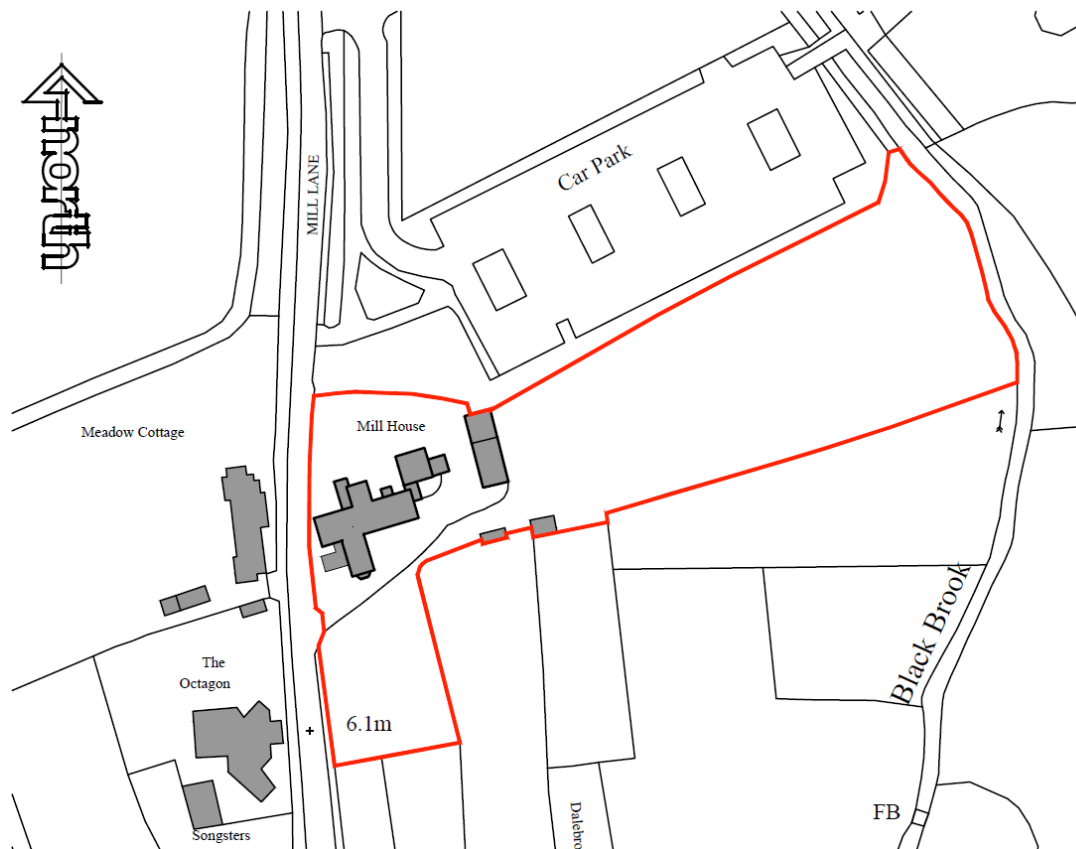


Figure 1
Current site plan outlining the property boundary in red (as supplied by the owner).

Documentary and Cartographic Evidence

Mill House is a grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered building on the eastern side of Mill Lane, approximately equidistant between St Mary's church and Dedham Mill. In addition to its historic fabric, which includes fine carved details of the early-17th century, the property is of special importance as the home of John Constable's sister Martha between 1821 and her death in 1843. Constable is known to have visited the house, and a view of Mill Lane apparently painted from a first-floor window is now in the V&A (figure 7).

The 1838 tithe map of Dedham parish shows the house in red with a rectangular outline and a stepped projection at the western end of its northern elevation representing the 'office' and lean-to 'hall' of figure 9. A detached outbuilding occupies the approximate position of the existing brick brew-house, almost abutting the north-eastern corner of the house, but its markedly different alignment indicates that it must be a timber-framed predecessor of the present structure. (Tithe maps typically show brick and domestic structures in red with framed outbuildings in grey.) A rectangular outbuilding to the east of the site is likely to represent the weatherboarded southern end of the present stable range as it extends less far to the north: the boundary of the adjoining field curves sharply southwards to meet its north-eastern corner where the current boundary is straight.



Figure 2. Dedham on Chapman & Andre's map of 1777, showing Mill House as a stylised rectangle on the right-hand side of the road equidistant between the mill to the north and St Mary's church to the south.



Figure 3. The 1838 tithe map of Dedham. Mill House is conspicuous as the only building depicted in red on the right-hand (eastern) side of Mill Lane. See detail below.

The house, mill and much of the adjoining land belonged in 1838 to Abram Constable (1783-1862), the artist's younger brother, who took over their father's various businesses when John chose not to. According the tithe apportionment Mill House was occupied by his tenant, Mrs Whalley in conjunction with a garden to the south (plots 74 and 75 in figure 3). The property was described as a 'house, outoffices and yard', and included an earlier building on much the same site but a different alignment to the present brew-house. 'Outoffices' is an unusual term but was used consistently by the Dedham tithe surveyor to refer to outbuildings in general. The present garden to the east of the stable formed a separate pasture retained in hand by Abram Constable and known as Hurds Meadow – possibly indicating an older name for Mill House (plot 143).

It is unclear whether the property ever operated as a mill house – i.e. as the home of a miller – or was so named simply as the result of its proximity to the mill. Millers typically lived either in or immediately adjacent to their mills to constantly monitor river conditions, and Mill House is abnormally distant. The tithe apportionment includes another house alongside the 'water mill, offices and yard' (plot 148), all of which were both owned and occupied by Abram Constable who presumably lived in the more refined surroundings of Westgate House (the last house on the western edge of Dedham village, plot 125 in figure 3, which he also owned and occupied). This would suggest the miller himself lived beside the mill as Constable's tied tenant. The present red-brick mill was rebuilt after a fire in 1908, according to local historian G.H. Rendall (*Dedham Described and Deciphered*, Colchester 1937), but John Constable's painting of the early-19th century clearly shows what appears to be an attached single-storied domestic house with smoke pouring from its chimney. White's Directory of Essex in 1848 records Philip Mason as a 'corn miller' in Dedham, while 'Abraham Constable' was listed as a 'gentleman'.

Mrs Whalley, Abram Constable's tenant in 1838, was his older sister Martha (1769-1843), and this connection with John Constable represents the property's chief claim to fame. She married Nathaniel Whalley (1765-1838), a cheesemonger and wholesaler of London, where they resided until retiring to Mill House in 1821 (National Trust website of Bridge Cottage in Flatford). Nathaniel was never a miller, contrary to certain published sources such as Ian Yearsley's *Dedham, Flatford and East Bergholt: A Pictorial History* (Phillimore 1996) which refers to 'Martha and her miller husband'. John Constable (1776-1837) appears to have visited his sister at the house on a regular basis, and on Easter Day in 1821 he even penned a letter from 'Martha's parlour' wishing he too had a house in the village (quoted by G.H. Rendall on p. 51 and on his title page). The artist's childhood home in East Bergholt no longer stands, so Mill House arguably possesses the strongest connection to him of any in the area; certainly Randall believed that 'no house in Dedham has more intimate associations with John Constable'. Still more dramatically a watercolour taken from a sketch book of 1831 and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum appears to be a view of Mill Lane from the upper windows of Mill House (figure 7). The museum catalogue notes that John Constable's daughter Minna stayed with her aunt Martha in Dedham in July 1831 and again in July 1832.

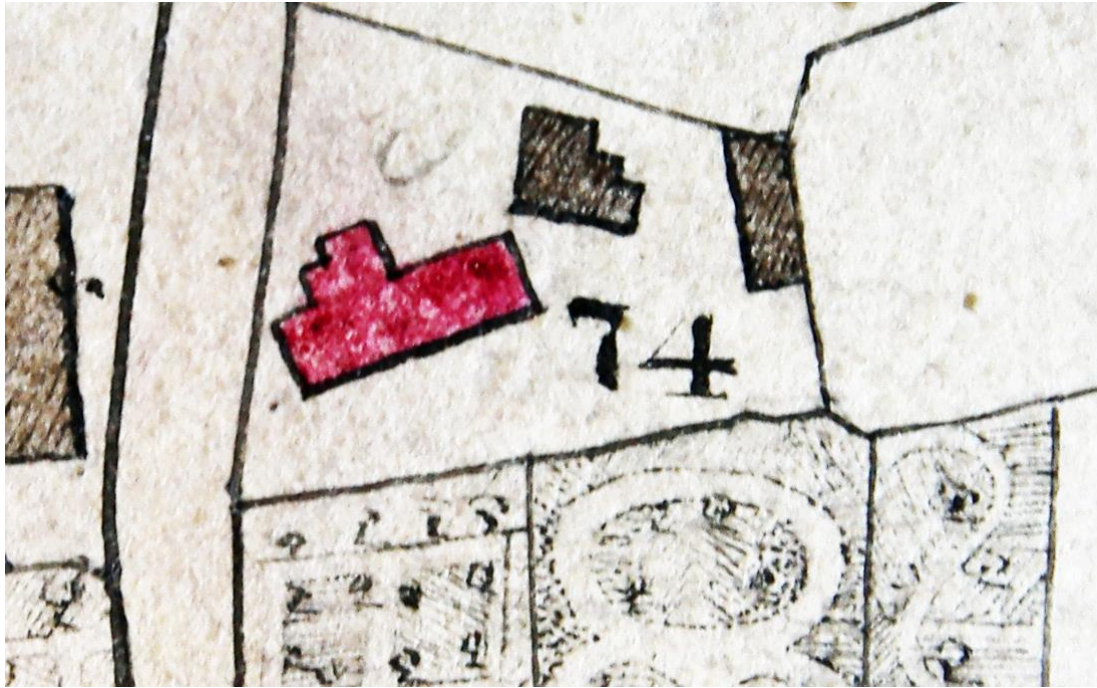


Figure 3a. A detail of the 1838 tithe map. The existing brew-house had yet to be built but its approximate site was occupied by an earlier structure on a markedly different alignment that almost certainly served the same purpose. The outbuilding on the east extended less far to the north and probably represented only the timber-framed portion of the present stable (B in figure 7).

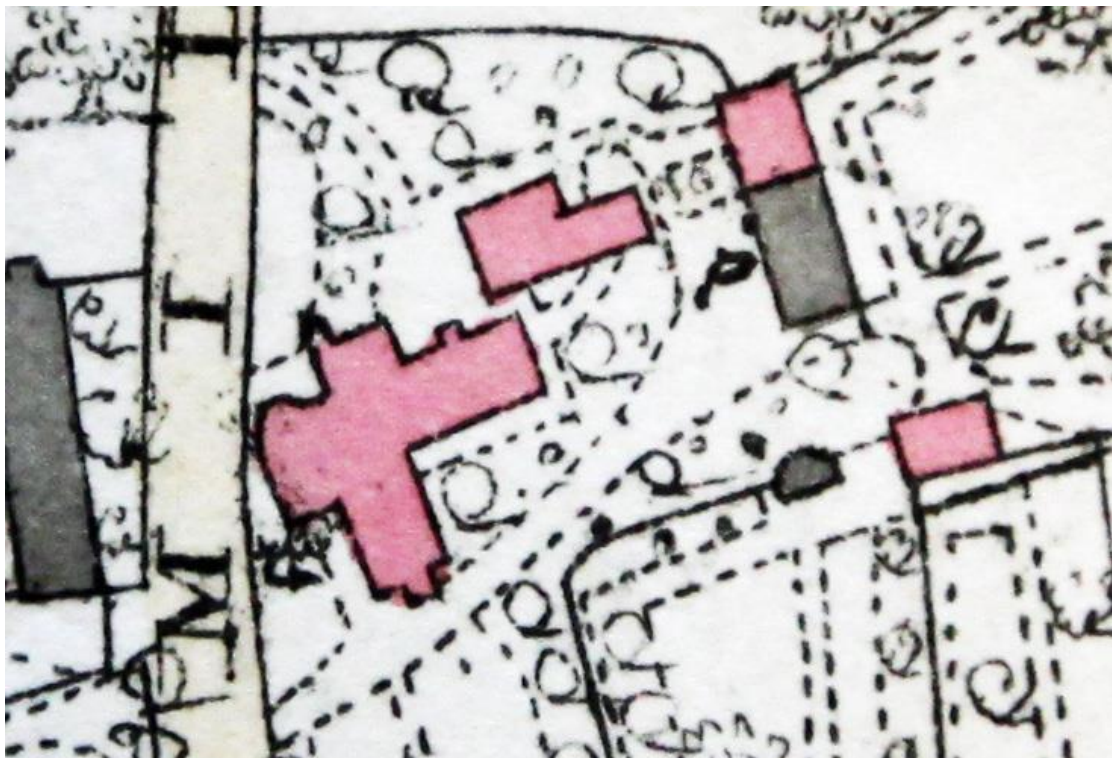


Figure 4. A detail of the 1875 first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey. The property had undergone extensive enlargement and alteration since 1838, including the construction of the surviving brew-house and the brick extension to the stable (A in figure 8). A canted bay window had been added to the western end of the house's northern elevation, with a small porch to the east and a large southern extension (the lounge in figure 9).

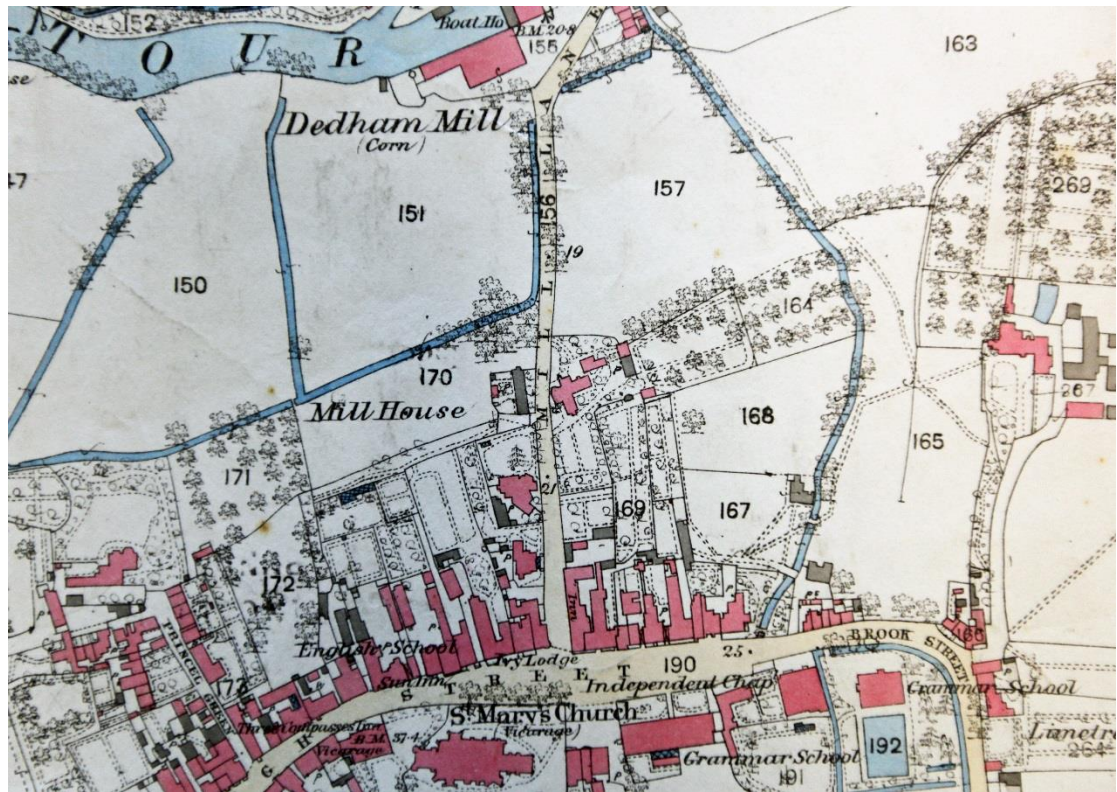


Figure 4a.
The first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1875.

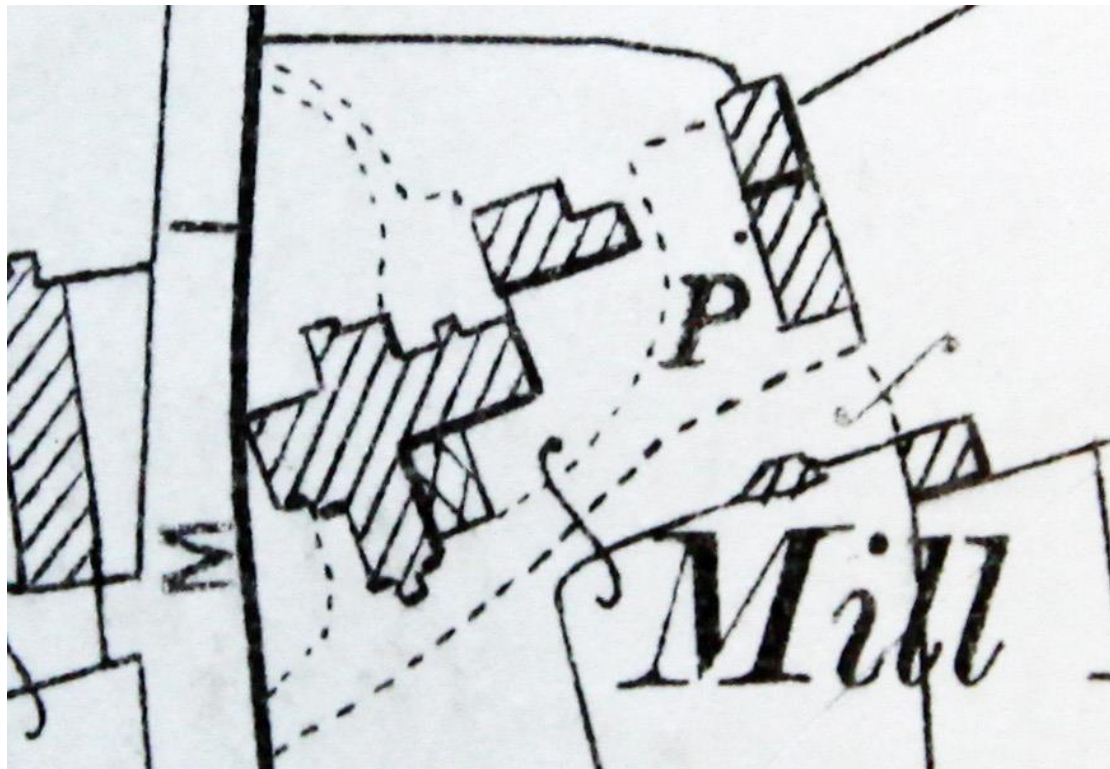


Figure 5
The second edition Ordnance Survey of 1896. A glass-house had been added to the house since 1875 (indicated by cross-hatching) and the mid-19th century bay window to the north-west seems to have been removed.

Martha Whalley died aged 74 in 1843 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard. Mill house was extensively refurbished after her death, and possibly after that of her brother Abram in 1862. A substantial new wing with a two-storied bay window was added to the southern façade along with a canted bay window and small open-sided porches to the north; the existing red-brick brew-house was built on the site of its predecessor, a brick northern extension added to the stable and the western half of Hurds Meadow was transformed into a walled garden. These changes, shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1875, are stylistically consistent with the 1850s and 1860s but it is impossible to determine whether they occurred at precisely the same time and were the work of Abram Constable or his successor – although the latter seems more probable given that major investment rarely occurs in old age. By 1896 a glass conservatory of which no trace now survives had been added in the angle of the original house and its southern extension, but the bay window at the western end of its northern elevation seems to have been removed. A similar first-floor window immediately above evidently survived at least until *circa* 1905 when it was shown on a postcard (figure 6) instead of the 17th century-style casement windows with leaded lights that now dominate the exterior. These windows bear witness to a major process of Mock Tudor restoration during the 20th century which probably occurred in several phases ranging from the 1920s to the 1970s. The use of genuinely ancient timbers and panelled doors to create new partitions and Tudor-style fireplaces is typical of the work of Mrs Grace Faithfull Roper in Dedham during the second quarter of the 20th century. Mrs Roper was a property developer and amateur architect responsible for numerous similar restoration projects elsewhere in the parish, most famously at 'Le Talbooth' Restaurant, using reclaimed materials to modernise historic buildings in the Arts and Crafts taste and thereby dramatically increase their market values. Mill House is today of equal architectural interest as an early-17th century house and as a fine example of 20th century Mock Tudor restoration which illustrates a major but often overlooked fashion in British interior design.



Figure 6. Mill Lane from the north in *circa* 1905. The Mock Tudor restoration of Mill House had not yet taken place as its gable preserves a Victorian canted bay window. (From a postcard published in *Dedham, Flatford and East Bergholt: A Pictorial History*, Ian Yearsley, Phillimore 1996. Pictorial postcards became popular from *circa* 1900.)



Figure 7. 'Houses in Dedham, with the church tower'. (V&A. Reynolds' *Catalogue of the Constable Collection* no. 370). A watercolour by John Constable painted in *circa* 1832 and identified by Reynolds as a view from Mill House Dedham. The pedimented gable of the house in the centre of figure 6 is visible here to the right.



Illus. 1. Mill House from the north, showing St Mary's church to the right, the red-brick brew-house to the left and the roof of the stable to the extreme left. The low section of the house in the centre was built as an open hall in the 16th century and the right-hand parlour cross-wing was added in the 17th century. The central wing is also a 17th century addition and appears to have formed a rare 'closet' tower with an integral cellar.

Building Analysis

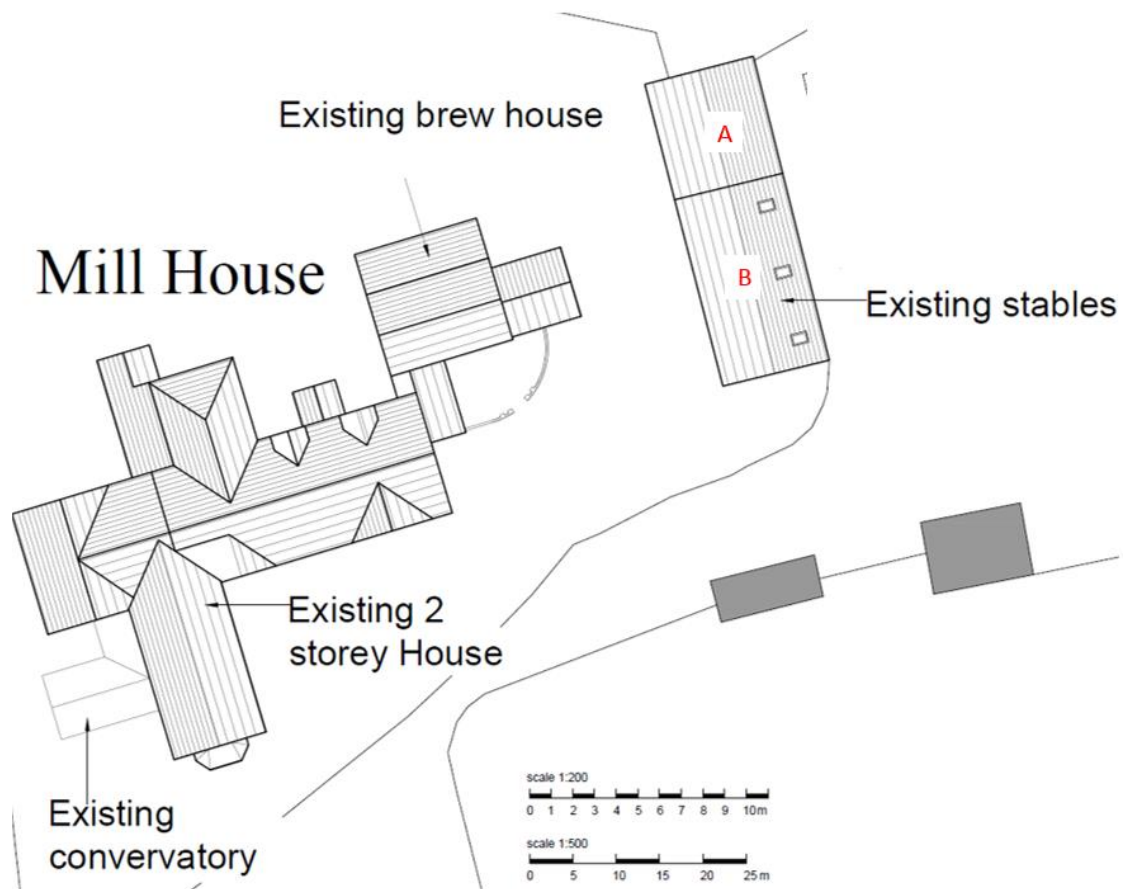


Figure 8

Site plan showing existing structures, adapted from a drawing supplied by Complete Construction and Developments Ltd. The two phases of the stable are indicated by A and B.

The three principal buildings at Mill House are discussed separately below, viz. the main house, the adjoining red-brick service building currently known as the brew-house and the stable range to the east. Some reference is made to proposed alterations, but these do not necessarily form part of the final Listed Building Application this report is intended to accompany.

The House

Mill House is listed at grade II as ‘a 16th century house of complex plan with 18th and 19th century additions’. Surprisingly the attached red-brick brew-house is not mentioned, and this somewhat inadequate analysis seems to have been prepared without benefit of internal inspection.

16th century hall range

The earliest part of the timber-framed and rendered building is the low 1.5 storey range to the west which contains the dining room, kitchen and playroom as identified in figure 9. The dining room and kitchen were open to the roof, forming a barn-like hall, while the playroom was floored over and probably operated as a storage area in the standard medieval manner described in the Appendix. There is evidence of diamond mullioned windows in the northern

roof-plate of the chamber over the playroom, and part of an original brace can be seen in the north-western corner of the kitchen (illus. 4). This brace would have risen to a tie-beam that spanned the walls and supported the roof with a central crown-post, but its upper section has been removed along with the northern end of the tie-beam. The central section of the original tie-beam survives intact, having been incorporated into a first-floor partition during the 17th century (illus. 6). This partition now divides a WC from the bathroom above the dining room, and retains some contemporary wattle-and-daub (the coppice poles recently exposed) along with the jambs and lintel of a 17th century doorway. The evidence of a crown-post indicates a date prior to the mid-16th century, when this form of roof disappeared from Essex, but the lack of sooting from an open hearth suggests the hall is a late example of its type, built at the beginning of the same century when many were provided with enclosed chimneys. More detailed analysis of this structure is impossible given its later alterations and the extent to which the framing is either lost or hidden within the modern walls.

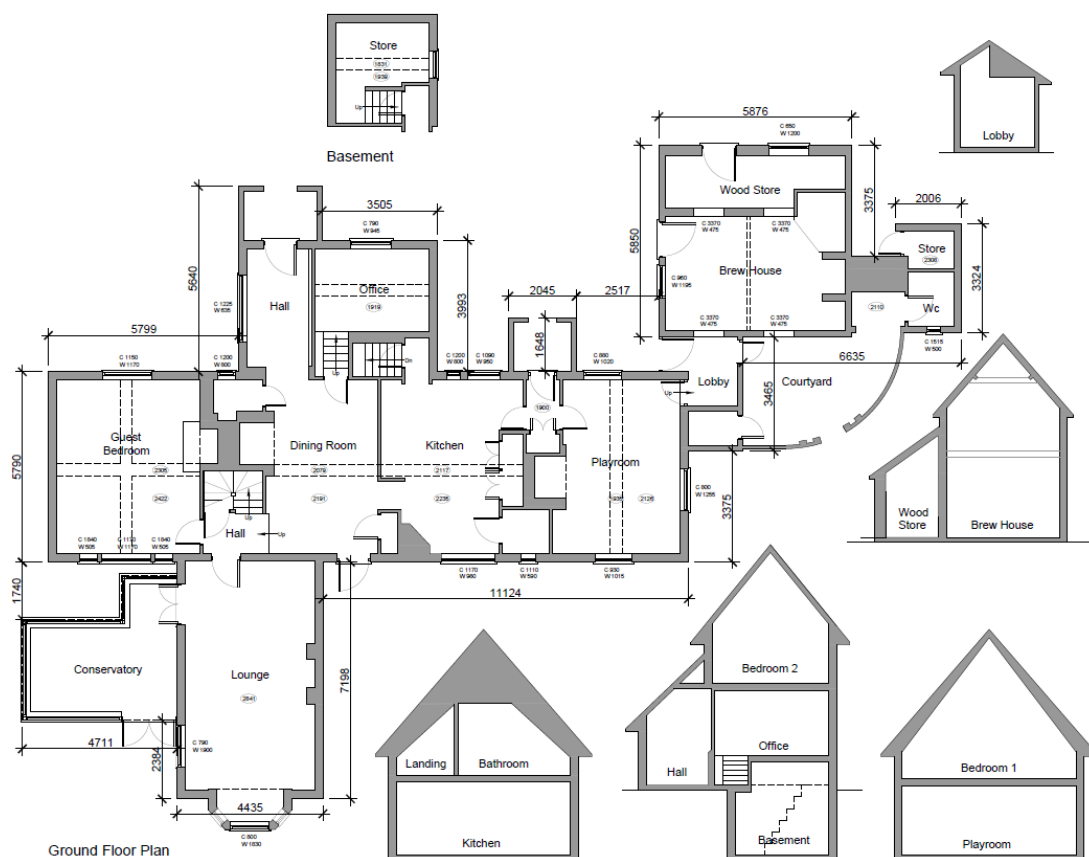


Figure 9
Ground plans and sections of the house and brew-house as supplied by Complete Construction and Developments Ltd.

17th century refurbishment

During the first half of the 17th century, and probably around 1630, the modest Tudor dwelling was dramatically refurbished and enlarged. A new two-storeyed parlour cross-wing was built to the west (the guest bedroom in figure 9), a ceiling was inserted into the former open hall, its roof was rebuilt and a small wing or tower was added to its northern wall. The 16th century range was also provided with a pair of projecting false gables (resembling large dormer windows) supported on elaborately carved brackets to mirror the much taller parlour wing and provide a degree of fashionable unity to the southern façade. This distinctive new

façade is now interrupted by a large Victorian extension (the lounge in figure 9) which obstructs the westernmost gable of the hall as shown in illus. 3 but was typical of its era; many local houses combine low hall and service ranges with much higher 17th century parlours as their medieval predecessors were rebuilt to accommodate changing domestic expectations of scale and comfort. The short section of high roof between the parlour gable and the hall was designed to accommodate a massive chimney stack containing back-to-back fireplaces heating the hall, parlour and parlour chamber, but this has been removed and the present stack is a much later replacement. The 17th century northern wing (the office in figure 9) is a highly unusual feature containing a contemporary half-cellar and small chambers adjoining each floor that probably operated as ‘closets’; a gentleman’s closet at the beginning of the 17th century was expected to measure 12 ft by 12 and functioned as a relatively private dressing room. The ground floor room with a neatly chamfered ceiling may have formed a study in much the same manner as today.



Illus. 2. The house from the south, showing the large mid-19th century extension with its canted bay window in the centre. A similar window is visible to the north in figure 6.

This elevation was the principal façade of the 17th century building and preserves a series of finely carved brackets beneath its gables.

Mock Tudor Restoration

The house preserves many fine 17th century features such as the external gable brackets, which are particularly good examples of their type, but it has been subjected to extensive Mock Tudor restoration in two or more phases and some of these may represent 20th century copies or have been imported from elsewhere. The internal ceilings bear the distinctive ‘nicked’ chamfer stops which became popular during the second quarter of the 17th century but some if not all of the dentilated external tie-beams show a suspicious lack of weathering and are likely to be replacements. The small northern porch certainly contains 17th century elements, including its turned balusters, but is conspicuous by its absence from the 1838 tithe map (figure 2). Most of the 17th century style windows, with leaded lights and ovolo-moulded mullions, date only from the 20th century and figure 6 shows a Victorian canted bay window to the north of the parlour cross-wing. Some of these windows appear to date only from the 1970s, but other elements of the restoration, such as the brick fireplaces, are similar to those

installed elsewhere in Dedham at the beginning of the same century by Mrs Grace Faithfull Roper and her followers.

Possible Alterations

The internal first-floor partitions above the dining room and kitchen form a corridor and bathrooms as shown in illus. 5. These partitions appear to consist of mid- or late-20th century plasterboard and could be remodelled without damaging the historic fabric or integrity of the building. The exception is the partition between the bathroom above the dining room and its small WC, which dates from the 17th century and preserves part of the original 16th century tie-beam as described above and shown in illus. 6. The door frame is part of the 17th century refurbishment but could be blocked without affecting historic fabric. The door between the first-floor corridor and the eastern bedroom is a 17th century feature but hangs on 20th century hinges and is not original to its position. The ground-floor partition between the dining room and kitchen (illus. 4) is also a secondary insertion consisting of re-used studs and including a genuine panelled door. The ceiling joists above these studs contain the nails of a lath-and-plaster ceiling that was removed before their insertion, and the dining room and kitchen was formerly a single space. The partition probably dates from the early-20th century restoration from which much of the property's present character derives, and is accordingly of some historic significance despite its relatively late arrival.



Illus. 3. The best preserved section of the southern façade to the east of the Victorian extension which retains fine early-17th century brackets beneath its projecting gables. The brew-house is visible to the right.

The Brew-House

The red-brick building to the north-east of the house is one of the best preserved traditional bake-houses in the county. Service structures of this kind were usually known as bake-houses (or back-houses), but this example has been referred to for some time as a brew-house and this term is accordingly adopted for the purpose of this report.

The building was originally separate from the house, as shown on the 1875 Ordnance Survey (figure 4), but is now linked to its corner by a narrow 20th century passageway of 1 metre in width with external doors to east and west (illus. 11). This detached corner-to-corner abutment is typical, and was designed to minimise the spread of fire and fumes. Its brickwork and softwood roof structure indicate a mid-19th century origin, and this is confirmed by the 1838 tithe map which shows an earlier bake-house on exactly the same site but with a significantly different alignment. The rebuilding is likely to have taken place when the rest of the house was enlarged but it is uncertain whether this occurred before or shortly after the death of Abram Constable in 1862.

The interior contains a spacious chamber of approximately 18 ft by 11.5 ft which rises to 13 ft at its eaves and has never contained a loft. The deal beam which spans its walls was designed to suspend meat and other items, for which purpose it retains a number of iron hooks, and is not a ceiling joist (illus. 9). The domed bread oven remains completely intact behind an iron door set in the back of a chimney, with an arched ash hole beneath (illus. 10). The chimney has never contained a grate and was designed to ventilate the oven rather than as a fireplace. A washing or hot water copper complete with wooden lid lies to the right, with a furnace beneath and a box flue linked to the chimney, although its present brickwork is of slightly later origin. A vertically hinged shutter immediately above the copper can be used to block a series of ventilation loops arranged in a square in the brick gable. An unusual large brick structure to the left of the chimney presumably supported and partly enclosed a domed brewing vessel but the latter has been removed and the brickwork partly destroyed. This brickwork is also a slightly later addition as it is not integral to the walls or fireplace and blocks a similar series of ventilation loops in the western gable. A stone sink abuts the eastern gable, alongside the external entrance, with a pump in the south-eastern corner. A pair of rectangular ventilation louvers are placed at eaves height in both the southern and northern walls, all of which retain original vertically hinged shutters – presumably operated from ladders.

The lean-to wood shed adjoining the northern elevation is an integral feature, despite its slate roof (contrasting with the peg-tiles of the main range), although its present external entrance is a later insertion and appears to occupy the position of a former window (as indicated by the distribution of closers (quarter bricks) in the adjoining wall). The original entrance lay in the eastern gable which has been rebuilt. A privy and shed attached to the eastern gable of the main brew-house are also integral features with a loft above to which there is no current access.

Possible Alterations

While the brew-house is an exceptionally sophisticated and well preserved example of its type it is redundant for its original purpose and a sympathetic conversion into a domestic annexe may be necessary to ensure its continued survival. It should be possible to achieve this end without destroying the building's key historic features and character. The insertion of a new doorway in the southern elevation would link its interior to the present house, and would destroy only a limited area of brickwork if located to avoid the pump. In my view the pump itself is a significant element of the building's historic character, albeit in need of some repair to its woodwork, as are the copper, bread oven, chimney, suspension beam, ventilation loops, louvered windows and vertically hinged shutters. The sense of space in the main working area

is also important to the building's integrity, although it may be possible to retain this while inserting a partial (mezzanine) floor. The fragmentary brick structure which appears to have supported a brewing vessel to the left of the chimney cannot be sensibly restored as key elements are missing (e.g. the vessel itself) and as a secondary insertion could, in my view, be safely removed after photographic recording, thereby re-exposing the ventilation loops in the southern gable. (A number of photographs were taken for the purpose of this report, as in illus. 10.) It may also be possible to insert a doorway to the lean-to northern shed (the wood store in figure 9) thereby allowing the latter's conversion into a bathroom; the present external door is a later insertion, as described above, and could be replaced with a window.



Illus. 4. The kitchen from the east (as named in figure 9) showing the intact 17th century ceiling which interrupts an earlier arch-brace in the top right-hand corner. This brace rose to the tie-beam of a barn-like open hall before the ceiling's insertion.

The Stable and Cart Shed

The stable range to the east of the site consists of two structures labelled A and B in figure 8, corresponding respectively to a mid-19th century brick extension and a timber-framed and weatherboarded building of the late-18th or very early 19th century.

The timber-framed structure extends to 26 ft in length and rises to 11 ft at its eaves with a low loft above its internal ceiling (illus. 15). The wall framing is hidden by internal and external boarding on the lower storey, much of which is original, but where exposed in the loft consists of re-used material from at least two buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries. (The edge-halved scarf joint of the rear (eastern) roof-plate is typical of the 16th century while the face-halved version to the west is not found until the 17th century.) It is possible but unlikely that something earlier survives intact at a lower level. The southern section of the interior forms a cart shed entered by 20th century sliding doors to the west, and retains a number of wooden harness hooks in its north-eastern corner (illus. 14). A narrow horse stall of 9 feet in length at the northern end of the building is entered separately from the west and retains an

impressive original boarded interior with a brick floor and a wooden manger to the east. The manger extends through the original northern gable into the brick extension, and is evidently a mid-19th century replacement, but in other respects this stable survives unaltered. An internal door in the boarded partition links the stall to the adjoining tack room and cart shed.

The single-storeyed slate-roofed brick extension rises to 8 ft at its eaves and extends to 18 ft in length, with two windows on the south and another in its northern gable. As in all historic stables the rear (eastern) wall is devoid of features at it was abutted by a manger and hay rack – of which only the former now survives. A small gable hatch at the end of the western passage was designed to facilitate mucking out but now opens onto the adjoining car park. The internal cladding of its two stalls, with low wainscot of narrow vertical boards, differs markedly from the impressively wide, horizontal boarding of the earlier stable to the south.

Possible Alterations

The framing of the stable's southern section consists of re-used material and is not of special historic value in itself. The external and internal boarding is of greater interest and visual character, but would not normally preclude the insertion of a modest number of windows as part of a conversion process – although an absence of doors and windows from the rear elevation may be considered a key feature of any stable. The wainscot, loose-box doors, and manger of the mid-19th century brick extension are increasingly rare survivals and, ideally, should be retained where possible. By far the greatest historic significance and character lies in the narrow stall at the northern end of the timber-framed range, which retains its original brick floor and a high proportion of its impressively wide horizontal boarding. Despite the replacement of its manger in the mid-19th century this part of the stable remains precisely as it was when Martha Whalley occupied the house and represents its most tangible link with John Constable. It is highly likely that Constable himself would have stalled a horse here, surrounded by the same surfaces we see today, and on this basis alone this part of the building might, in my view, be permitted to escape all modern alteration.

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Leigh Alston is a building archaeologist and architectural historian who lectures in the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge University but also undertakes commissions on a freelance basis for the National Trust and various county archaeological units. Publications include 'Late Medieval Workshops in East Anglia' in 'The Vernacular Workshop' edited by Paul Barnwell & Malcolm Airs (Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage, 2004) and the National Trust guidebook to Lavenham Guildhall (National Trust 2004).

Additional photographic evidence follows on pp. 16-23

Additional Photographic Evidence (pp. 16-23)



Illus. 5. The first floor corridor immediately above the kitchen, seen from the east. The roof-plate to the right of the steps (which lead to the upper chamber of the ‘closet’ tower) contains a dovetail joint for the missing horizontal tie-beam to which the bracket in illus. 4 originally rose. The central section of the tie-beam survives intact beyond the 20th century partition to the left (illus. 6).



Illus. 6. The intact central section of the tie-beam which spanned the width of the 16th century open hall, seen from the east. The pegged mortise in the centre of the beam (to the left of the toilet-roll holder) held a crown-post which supported the original roof, but this was rebuilt in the 17th century when the present wattle-and-daub partition was inserted. The left-hand section of the beam is interrupted by a 17th century door frame.



Illus. 7. The dining room from the west, showing the entrance to the kitchen. The dividing partition consists of old timbers and incorporates a 17th century panelled door, but is a 20th century insertion that post-dates the removal of lath-and-plaster from the ceiling joists. The dining room and kitchen originally formed a single hall.



Illus. 8. The unusually well-preserved red-brick brew-house seen from the north. Despite their different roofs the slate lean-to in the foreground and the pantiled shed on the left are integral to the peg-tiled structure. Note the original ventilation louvers above the lean-to wood store. The right-hand (north-western) corner of the lean-to has been rebuilt and its present doorway occupies the position of an original window.



Illus. 9. The southern interior of the brew-house with pump and sink to the right and chimney to the left. Note the vertically hinged shutters to the ventilation louvers matching those of the opposite wall shown in illus. 8. The space has never contained a ceiling and the wooden beam spanning the walls retains a number of meat hooks.



Illus. 10. The impressive original bread oven at the eastern end of the brew-house, with a slightly later copper to the right. The vertically hinged shutter above the lidded copper conceals a series of ventilation loops in the brickwork. The domed oven is intact behind its iron door with an ash hole beneath. The partly destroyed brick structure to the left probably supported a large brewing copper approximately 1 m above the floor, but this has been removed.



Illus. 11. The southern external wall of the brew-house seen from the secondary ‘lobby’ (figure 9) which now links the structure to the main house - the corner post of which is visible to the left. It should be possible to insert a new door to the right of this wall and so avoid damaging the internal pump in the south-western corner of the brew-house.



Illus. 12. The western façade of the stable from the north-west. The single-storied red-brick structure on the left is a well preserved mid-19th century stable with its original fixtures and fittings (area A in figure 8). Two windows are hidden behind the undergrowth. The timber-framed structure was probably built as a stable, cart shed and hay loft in the late-18th century (B); the sliding doors to the right-hand section are insertions of the 20th century but much of the chamfered weatherboarding is original.



Illus. 13. The stable range from the rear (east). This elevation lacks windows and doors as in the typical manner of early stables which contained mangers and hay racks against their back walls. The tarred weatherboarding of the timber-framed section to the left appears to be intact behind the vegetation.



Illus. 14. The rear (eastern) internal elevation of the southern section of the stable, now used as a vehicle shed but with 19th century wooden harness hooks visible to the left. The walls consist chiefly of re-used 16th or 17th century timber but it is possible that a small section survives *in situ* behind the ostensibly original boarding at lower levels.



Illus. 15. The loft above the timber-framed stable (B), seen from the north. Almost all the timbers visible here have been re-used from one or more older structures in a manner typical of the 18th century. The (re-used) rear roof-plate to the left contains an edge-halved and bridled scarf joint of the 16th century.



Illus. 16. The stall at the northern end of the timber-framed stable, which retains its impressive late-18th century boarding and brick floor along with a mid-19th century wooden manger. The diagonal scar of a missing hay rack can be seen above the manger to the right. John Constable may well have used this very stall on his visits to the house.



Illus. 17. The interior of the 18th century stable from the south, looking into the single-storied mid-19th century extension which retains almost all its original fixtures and fittings. The turned 17th century column to the left is not part of the structure.



Illus. 18. The stall with its original boarded manger at the northern end of the 19th century red-brick stable, viewed from the west. The wainscot consists of narrow painted boards in contrast to the much larger horizontal boards of the 18th century stall to the south. A small aperture in the northern gable to the extreme left was designed to assist mucking out and is a common feature of early stables.

Appendix

The Standard Room Plan of Medieval and Tudor Houses

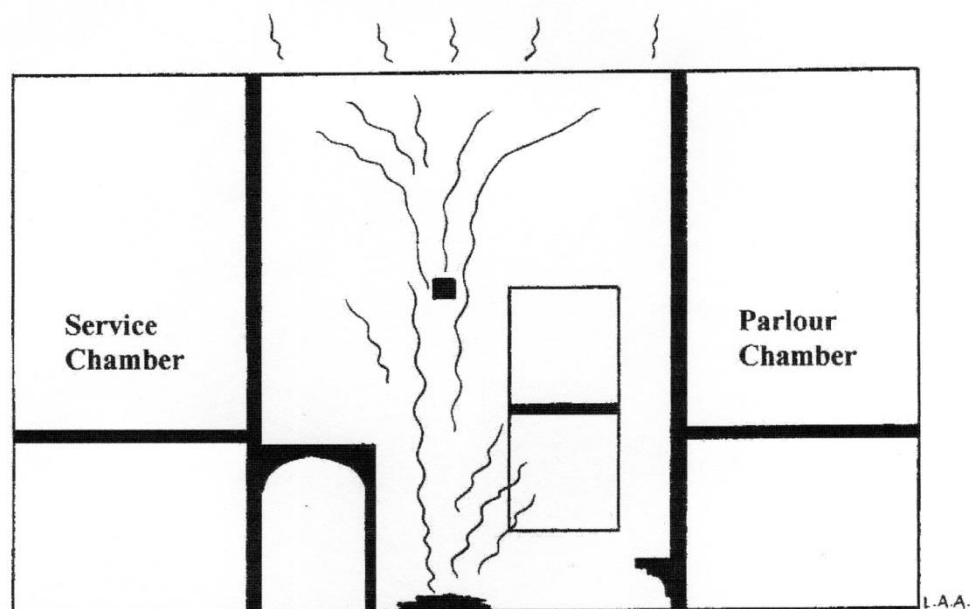
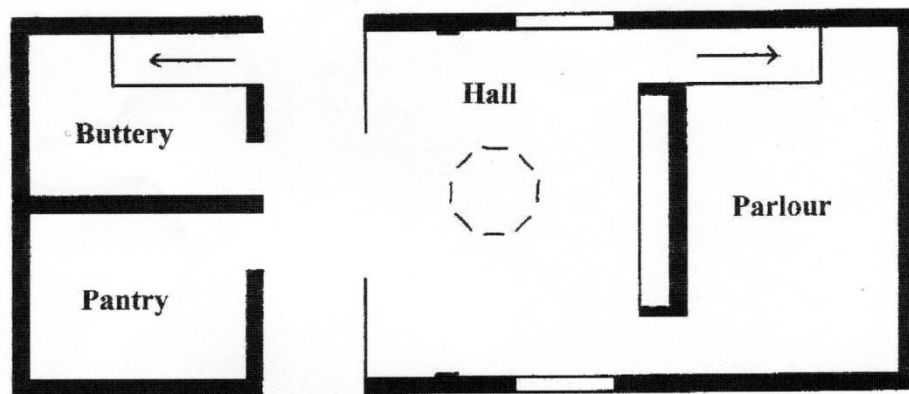
Although identical houses are rare, almost all domestic buildings constructed between the mid-13th and the early-17th centuries reflect the same room layout (see accompanying diagram). Until the opening decades of the 16th century the only heated space in a typical house comprised an open hall with an open hearth akin to a bonfire burning on its floor. In the absence of a chimney the hall, as its name suggests, was open to its roof in the manner of a barn to allow smoke to escape through the roof covering and through tall, unglazed windows which rose from normal sill height to eaves level. The hall was a communal space with little or no fixed furniture, and was used as a dining room, a dormitory for household servants and apprentices, and as a kitchen and general purpose working area at varying times of the day. The hall was also designed to display the wealth and status of its owner, and at meal times was arranged like a modern college dining hall, with the head of the household sitting with his immediate family behind the 'high table' at one end, while his servants and employees were arranged in order of precedence at secondary tables along the side walls. The lower an individual's status in the household, the further he sat from the 'high' end of the hall. The high table was often raised on a platform or dais, but contemporary references to the high and low ends of houses relate rather to social than physical hierarchy. Halls were usually divided into two structural bays, separated by a pair of principal posts carrying a tie-beam that spanned the walls at eaves level, with the great windows in the high-end bay towards the dais. Fixing pegs for the high-end bench, which was often attached to the wall, can sometimes be seen in surviving examples. The front and back doors of the house (which often stood open for ventilation purposes) lay opposite each other at the low end of the hall, forming a cross-passage that was partly screened by boarded partitions to exclude the weather.

The open hall in the middle of the typical medieval house was flanked by additional rooms that were usually floored over. Beyond the high end of the hall lay a single room known as a parlour, that served as the main bedroom for family members and guests and contained at least one bed (perhaps consisting of nothing more than a straw mattress) and perhaps a few pieces of furniture that normally included a storage chest. The parlour was entered by a door to one side of the high-end bench, and sometimes a second door on the opposite side of the bench opened onto a stair to the solar (upper room) above. Medieval living took place primarily on the relatively warm ground-floor, and the two solars of the house were used chiefly for storage purposes. An increasing demand for domestic privacy during the later 16th century saw the provision of additional bedrooms on the first floor, and the 'parlour chamber', as the room over the parlour came to be known, was often provided with its own fireplace. Principal bedrooms, used more and more for sitting and entertaining as well as sleeping, remained downstairs until well into the 17th century.

Beyond the low end of the hall lay two service or storage rooms termed butteries and pantries (or collectively as 'spences', i.e. dispensing rooms). As their names suggest, these were used for storing wet and dry goods respectively, and represent the household larder. The front service rooms of town houses often contained shops, and the buttery sometimes served as a dairy in rural contexts. Two doorways lying side by side in the middle of the low-end wall gave access to these rooms, usually in conjunction with a third door against the back wall that opened onto a stair to the service chamber above. Although the original arches of these doorways have frequently been removed, their position may be revealed by the distribution of peg holes used to secure the mortise and tenon joints of the wall timbers.

The tripartite plan described here is found in both large manor houses and small peasant cottages in the countryside, but is sometimes condensed in towns where houses consisting of only a hall and subdivided parlour (or occasionally a hall with service rooms) may be found. Houses of high status might also possess rear courtyards, containing additional

accommodation or perhaps bake-houses and workshops, but rarely add to the tripartite arrangement in their main ranges. Rectangular houses under a single roof are common, but more ostentatious town houses frequently contain their parlour and service rooms in relatively expensive cross-wings with jettied gables built at right-angles to their halls. From the beginning of the 16th century chimney stacks were inserted into open halls, and new houses built with ceilings throughout, but the standard layout endured. By the end of the same century fireplaces were typically provided in parlours as well as halls, and often the parlour chamber was also heated (but rarely the hall chamber). Not until the second quarter of the 17th century did the cross-passage plan begin to disappear from new houses, to be gradually replaced by a number of different layouts of which the 'lobby-entrance', where the main door opens into a narrow 'lobby' in front of a chimney stack between the hall and parlour, was the most common.



The Standard Medieval House Plan

Mill house reflected this layout in the 17th century, with a central hall flanked by a parlour on the right (when viewed from the north) and a service room on the left. Given the extent of its alterations the precise configuration of the 16th century structure is now difficult to establish, but was probably much the same.