



An early 15th-century wall inside 4 Silver Street, Maldon, recently uncovered and conserved. Interventions were kept to a minimum to preserve the unique wall's patina of age. Photograph by Angela Westgarth.

BUILDING CONSERVATION WINNER

4 Silver Street, Maldon

This award is for the major renovation of a grade II* listed 15th-century house for its owner, Neil Bresler. The architect was Simon Plater of *Plater Claiborne Architecture + Design*. The main contractor was *Hytec Construction* and the project managers were brothers Steve and Tony Collins. The property had suffered from a period of neglect and roof leaks, necessitating comprehensive repair work. The medieval oak structure was skilfully restored using new oak. Compatible breathable materials were deployed throughout including lime plaster, limecrete flooring and sheep's wool insulation. Numerous important discoveries were made including a medieval open hearth, ancient timber framing, and 17th-century painted decoration. These historic features have been exposed, expertly conserved, and displayed where appropriate. Unsympathetic modern windows were replaced with new windows more in keeping with the character of the property. Minor alterations were made to create a more convenient internal layout, affecting only modern fabric. The property is now a holiday let managed by *Niche Serviced Apartments* who aim to promote and explain the building's rich history to visitors. The judges were extremely impressed by this project, which has breathed new life into an important historic building. They applauded the owner's commitment to investing in a complex and challenging renovation. They also admired how the scheme was led by in-depth research into the building's history and archaeology.



A reconstruction drawing by Tim Howson showing the medieval open hall of 4 Silver Street with its front wall omitted. The hall was open to the roof and heated by an open hearth, akin to a bonfire burning on its floor. Remarkably, part of the hearth was discovered beneath modern flooring alongside sherds of medieval cooking vessels.



The rare surviving fragment of the medieval hearth, consisting of roof tiles bedded on edge into the earth floor, has been left on display behind glass.



A medieval wall in the hall with two original arched doorways (the left one blocked). The ceiling was introduced into the hall as part of a major refurbishment dated by tree-ring analysis to c. 1578.



The hall chamber during refurbishment.

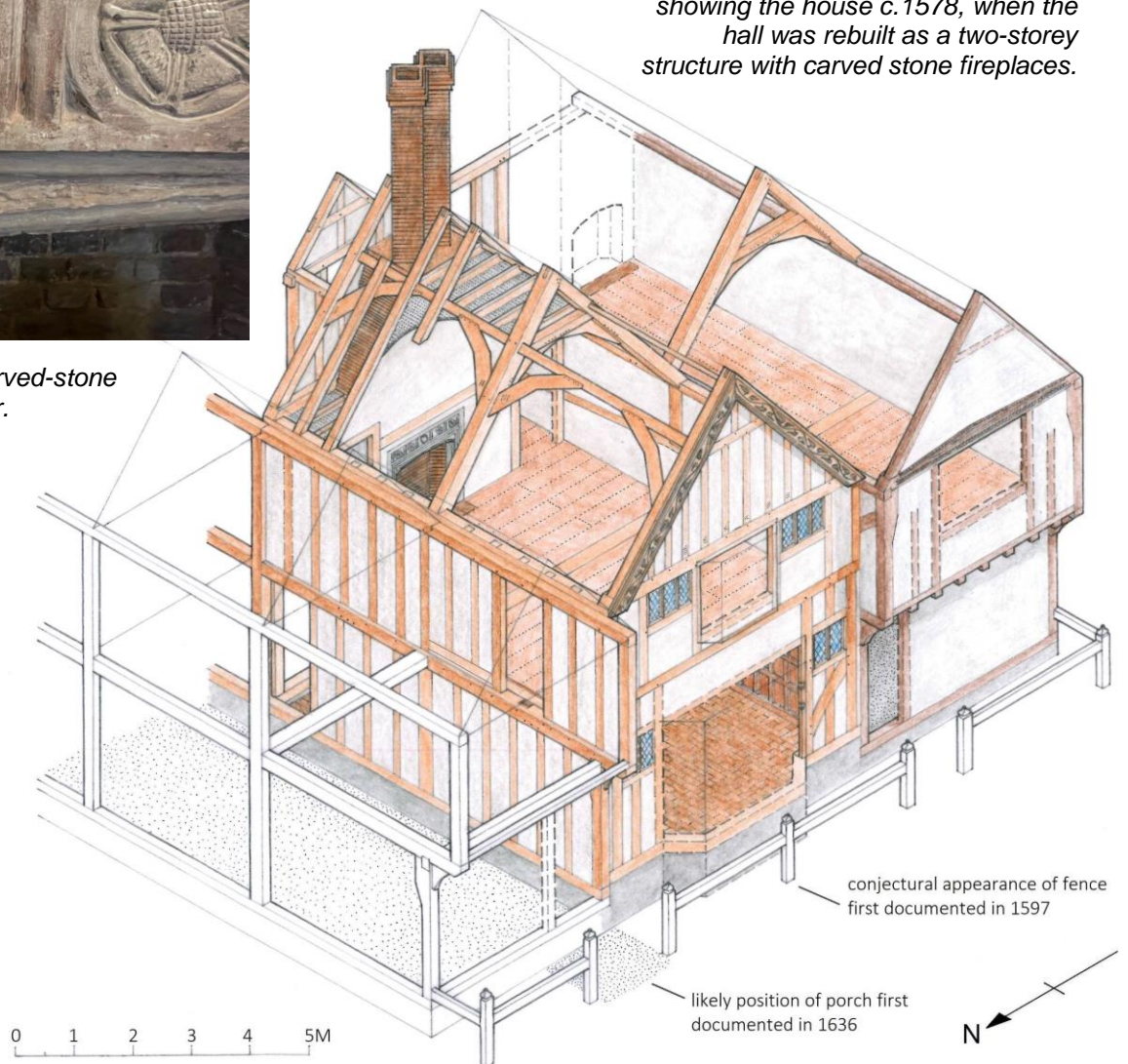


The hall chamber in 2023. A later ceiling was removed to re-expose the roof truss of c.1578.



Detail of the Elizabethan carved-stone fireplace in the hall chamber.

An isometric drawing by Tim Howson showing the house c.1578, when the hall was rebuilt as a two-storey structure with carved stone fireplaces.





Above: The rear elevation prior to renovation.



Right: The rear elevation following renovation, including the removal of a modern conservatory, replacement windows, re-rendering, and landscaping



The new kitchen introduced to the 18th-century rear range



Project manager Steve Collins on the left and architect Simon Plater on the right during re-roofing.



Jason Root, of Gower Brothers, lime plastering on oak laths in the hall chamber.



Conservator Emma Teale, of the Skillington Workshop, carrying out mortar repairs to the Elizabethan fireplace.



Tommy Scott, of Gower Brothers, lime plastering on softwood laths externally.



Ron and Lee of Dock and Cottee Carpentry carrying out timber-frame repairs in the hall