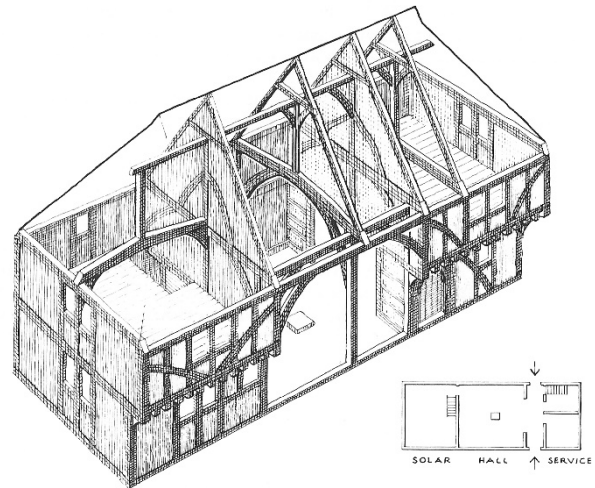


Mason's Court, Rother Street, Stratford-upon-Avon



Some of the best surviving examples of medieval buildings are found today in streets that were originally nearer the edge of town. These early homes could take various forms and the best preserved in the town, Mason's Court in Rother Street, is of what is known as the 'Wealden' type. Typically this would have had a central hall, originally open to the roof to allow smoke to escape from a central hearth, flanked by two-storeyed wings, with jettied upper floors. The solar wing to the left was reserved for the family when they wanted some privacy, and the kitchen and service area was to the right. A passageway through the house would divide the hall from the service wing.



Mason's Court is easily recognisable as of this type, built in the 1480s by John Hodgkins.

Following the introduction of chimneys to deal with smoke from the fire, a floor was often inserted into the central hall of these houses; and in this case, one of the jettied wings has also been underbuilt at a later stage, but leaving the ends of the joists clearly visible. The building was also extended to the right by an extra bay, with wings to the rear added later. The original passageway, once closed at both ends, is now open, after the conversion of the building into separate units.

The plot ran back to what is now Grove Road, then the borough boundary, beyond which was open farmland. Indeed, for much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the building was occupied by yeoman farmers, including, from 1582 to 1625, John Gibbs chosen as a member of the Corporation in 1584 and serving as bailiff on four occasions.