

Fireplaces

The Museum's buildings contain examples of the development of fireplaces from a simple open hearth through smoke bays to chimneys. The buildings are listed chronologically.

Note - numbers refer to entries in the Museum guidebook

Hangleton Cottage c13

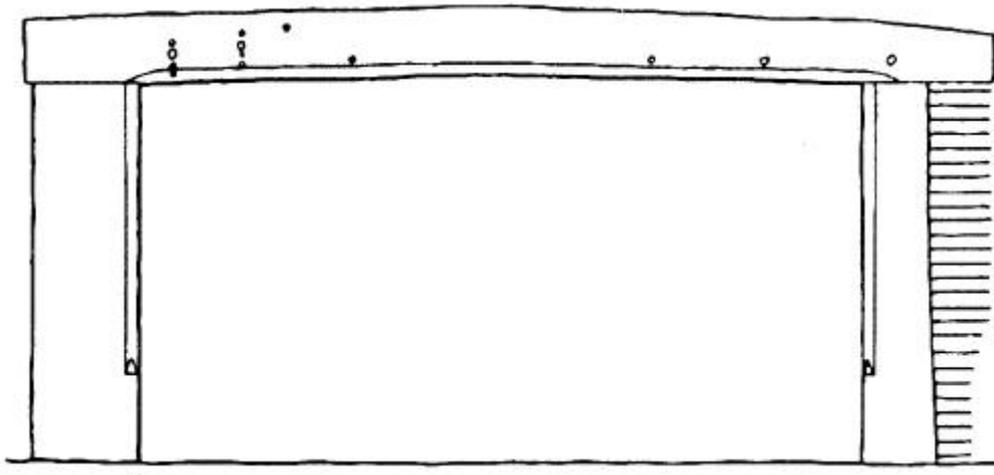
The Hangleton cottage is based on archaeological evidence alone, and for this reason the hearth is the most authentic reconstruction of an open hearth at the Museum, as it was copied from the one that was discovered at the original site. It is made of clay tiles set on edge, like our other medieval hearths, but is an irregular oval in shape, rather than square.

Bayleaf Farmhouse c15

Bayleaf is the Museum's best example of a hall house, of the particular type known as a "Wealden house" because of the recessed bay in the front wall of the hall. The fire is built on a rectangular open hearth in the centre of the hall, reconstructed following archaeological evidence from other hall houses in our region: the hearth is made of roof tiles set on edge, and is positioned about seven feet from the dais end partition.

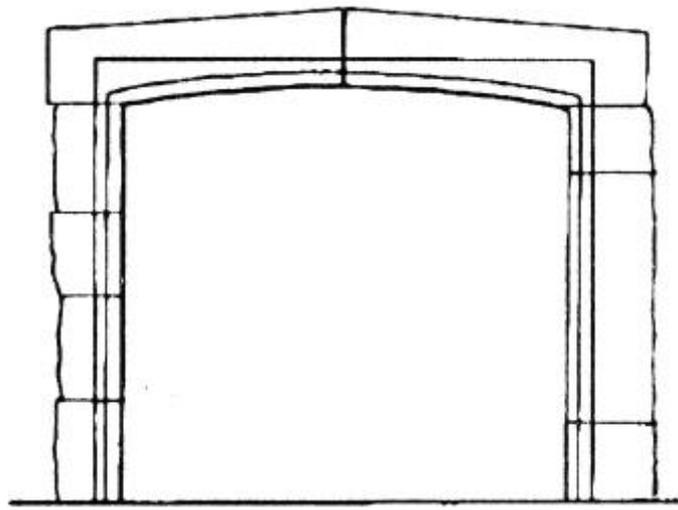
Longport Farmhouse (Entrance and shop) c15-19

The chimney in Longport has been omitted from the reconstruction in order to create space for the visitor entrance to the Museum, but its outline has been marked in bricks on the floor. It was built in the early-mid seventeenth century when the "hall" range (now the shop) was added to the mid-sixteenth century cross wing.



Longport Farmhouse: the hall fireplace

There were three hearths, two back-to-back on the ground floor and one upstairs. The hall fireplace was ten feet wide and would have been used for cooking. Each jamb was formed from a large upright stone block, and a timber lintel spanned the opening. The other ground-floor fireplace, for the parlour, was constructed with ashlar stone blocks forming chamfered sides and an arched head. The upstairs fireplace was built of brick with a wooden lintel.

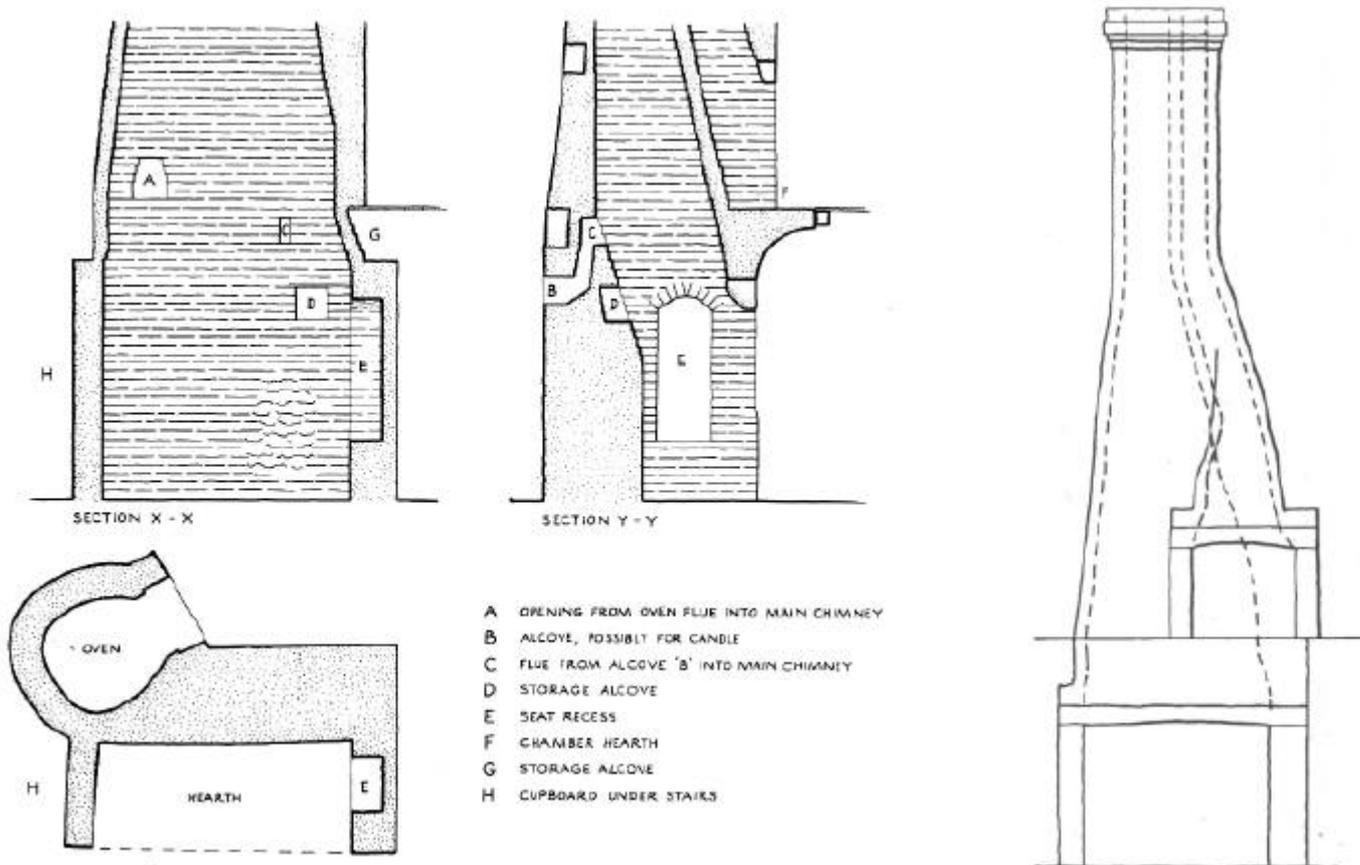


Longport Farmhouse: the parlour fireplace

House from Walderton c15

The chimney, fireplace and oven in the house from Walderton are the most intensively studied reconstructions in the Museum. The chimney was dismantled course-by-course, with a plan being drawn of every course — over eighty altogether — because only in this way could the complex shape and design be unravelled.

The chimney was inserted into the medieval timber-framed house when the walls were rebuilt in flint and brick in the early seventeenth century. It has one hearth on each floor. The most interesting feature is the oven, which was attached to the back of the chimney at an angle, with a flue to take smoke from the oven into the main shaft of the chimney. The original oven was later rebuilt and a succession of four ovens could be detected. In the fireplace itself, notice the recess on the right, probably used as a seat, and the other recesses in the back wall. The cupboard on the left of the fireplace is original.



*House from Walderton.
 Details of the ground floor fireplace (left). Elevation of the chimney (right).*

Winkhurst Tudor kitchen c16

Winkhurst was originally the kitchen forming part of a larger farmhouse, and we have erected modern buildings to represent the

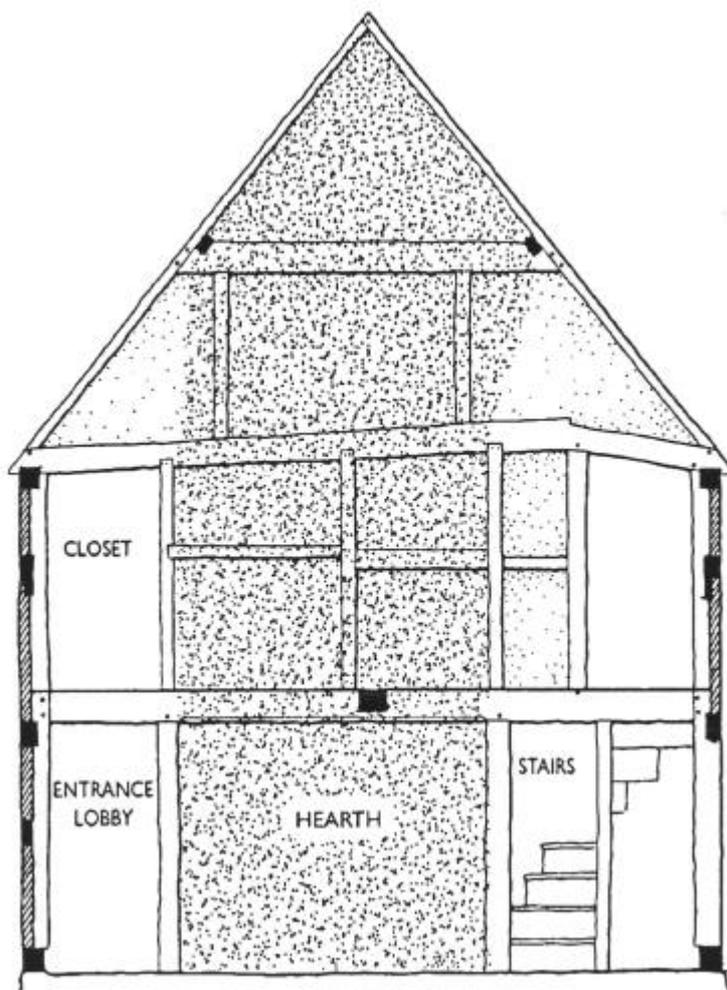
“footprint” of the original house. The interior has been reconstructed as a working kitchen, with a large hearth, an oven and a copper. All these elements are conjectural, but based on known examples.

Medieval house from North Cray c16

The hearth in North Cray has been positioned following the same archaeological evidence as Bayleaf, except that here we have used a different pattern of tiles, copied from an excavated medieval hearth in Middlesex.

Poplar Cottage c17

Poplar cottage shows an important transitional stage in the story of fireplaces. Instead of an open hall with the fire on a central hearth, Poplar cottage has a “smoke bay” in which the smoke from the fire is confined. Seen from the living room it appears to have a large inglenook fireplace, but instead of being gathered into a narrow flue, as in a chimney, the smoke rises into the upper part of the smoke bay.



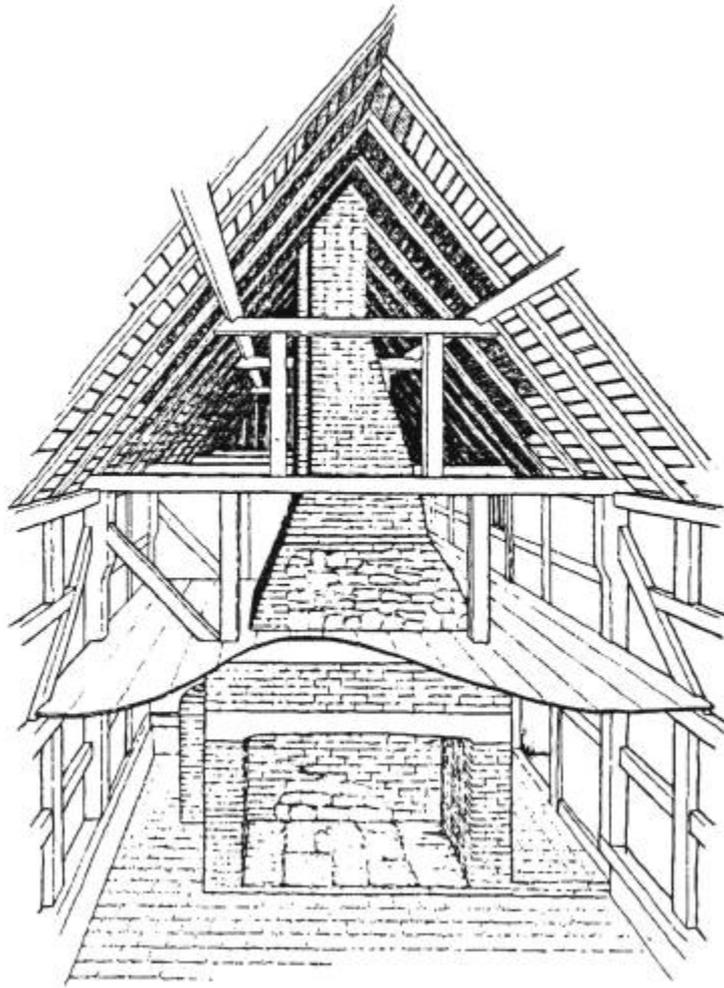
Poplar Cottage: the smoke bay partition showing (stippled) the area to which smoke is confined in the smoke bay.

We are not certain how the smoke escaped at the top: we have reconstructed the gable with a small triangle open at the top, but it is possible that there was a structure like the top of a chimney to allow the smoke to escape vertically.

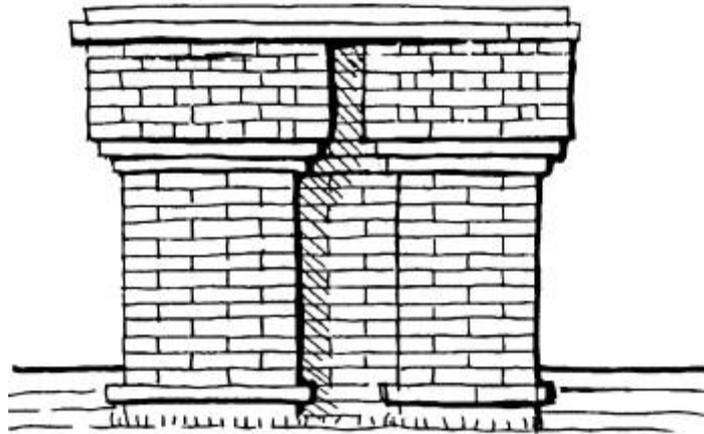
Pendean Farmhouse c17

Pendean has a fine and typical example of a farmhouse chimney with three hearths. One of the two ground-floor hearths is slightly wider than the other, probably indicating that it was used for cooking, and this hearth (which is in the end room) also has a bake oven opening off it (although there is some doubt that the oven opening has been correctly reconstructed).

Photographic evidence from an early post card has enabled us to reconstruct the chimney top in its correct original form.



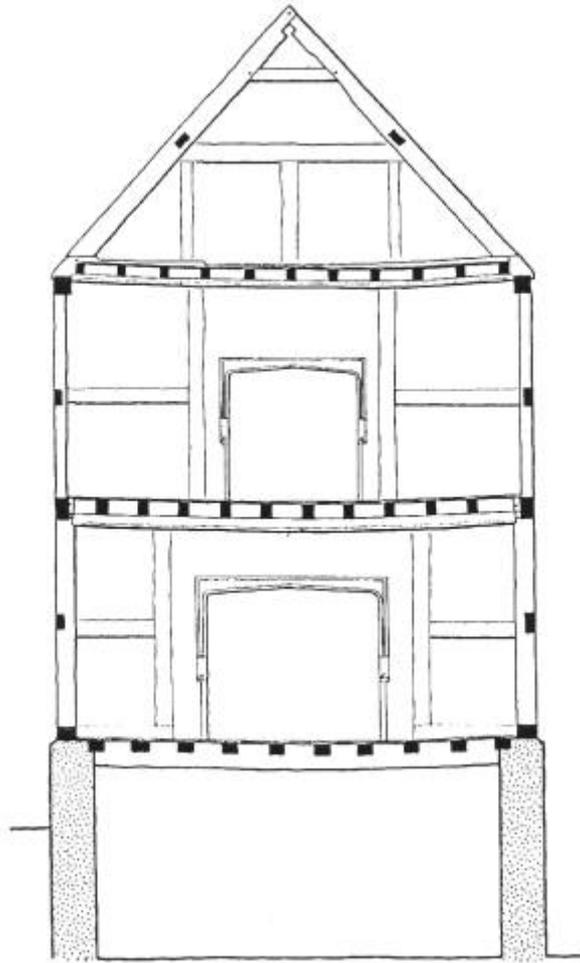
Pendean Farmhouse: the chimney stack.



Pendean Farmhouse: the original design of the chimney cap.

House extension from Reigate c17

The house extension from Reigate was built in the seventeenth century and provided a high quality heated parlour and chamber. Both fireplaces survived and have surrounds of Reigate stone (Upper Greensand). Their design is typical of the period, but a rare survival is that the upper fireplace retains some of its original painted decoration on the stone, and an overmantel painting of Saint George and the Dragon.

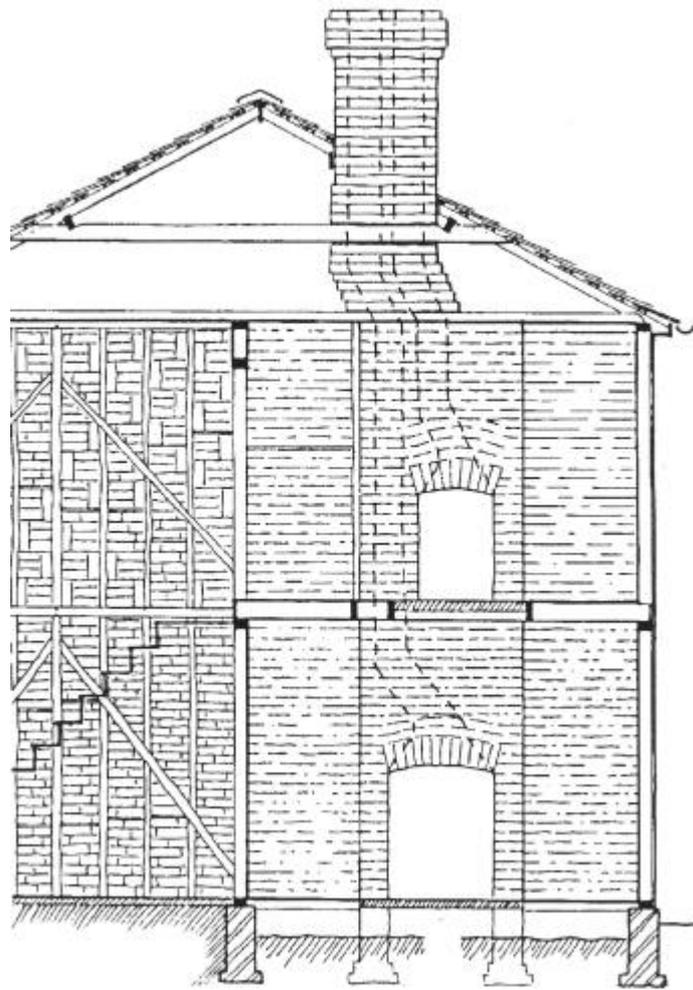


House extension from Reigate: section showing the fireplaces.

Whittaker's cottages c19

Like the toll cottage, Whittaker's cottages have a two-room ground plan, with a fireplace only in the front room. Although quite small, the fireplace contained a range for cooking. The original range did not survive, but we have installed a suitable one that was made locally in Chichester.

In the reconstruction, the right-hand cottage has been left unfinished inside to expose the structure, including the chimney. Notice how its footings have spreader courses of brickwork to distribute the load.



Whittaker's cottages: section showing the chimney stack.

Toll cottage c19

The toll cottage has two rooms, only one of which was heated. The original fireplace and chimney were removed after the cottage was damaged by a lorry in the 1960s and they were reconstructed at the Museum from photographic evidence.