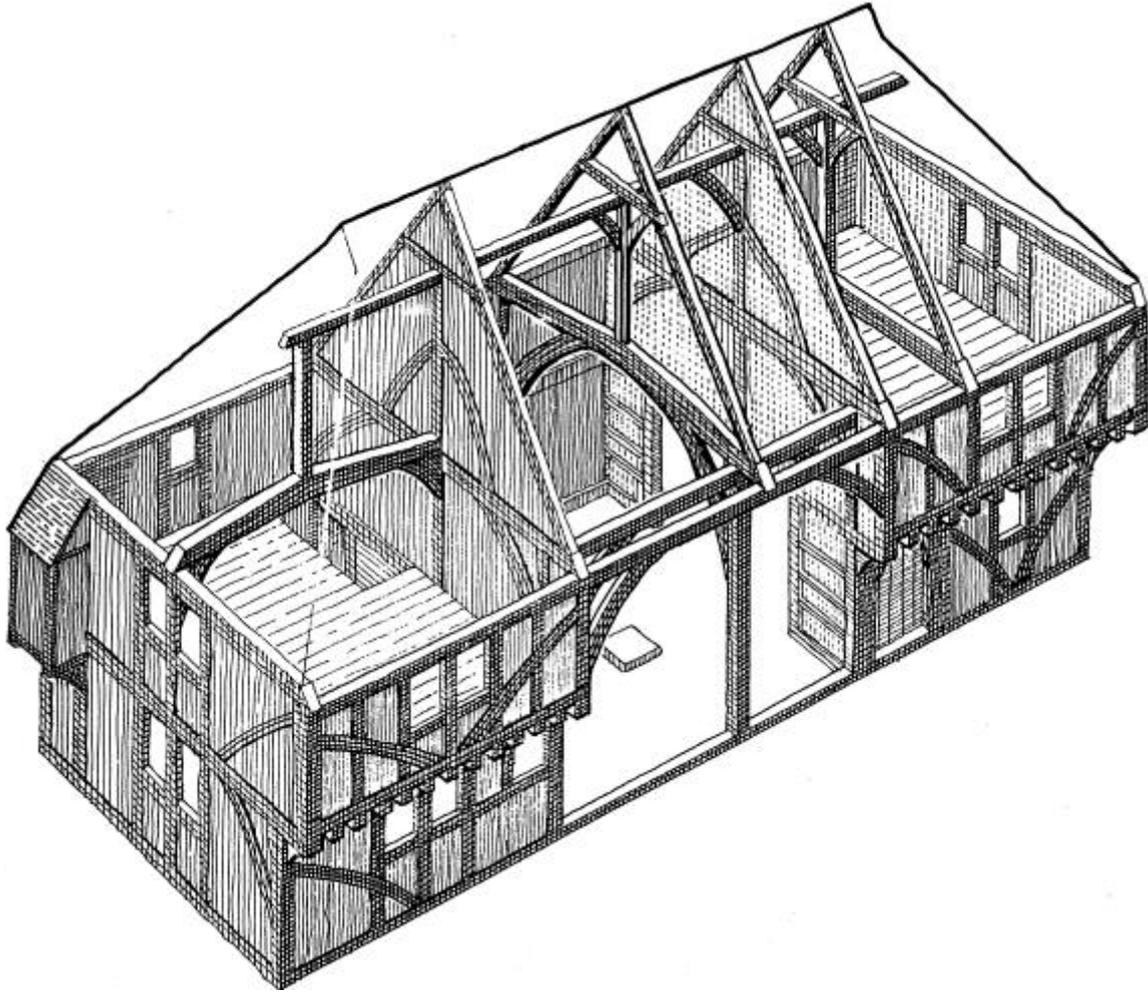




The Wealden House



Cutaway drawing of Bayleaf, showing structure and plan

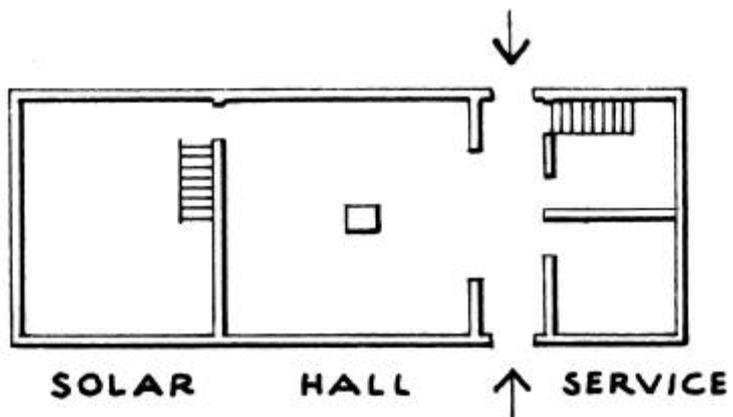
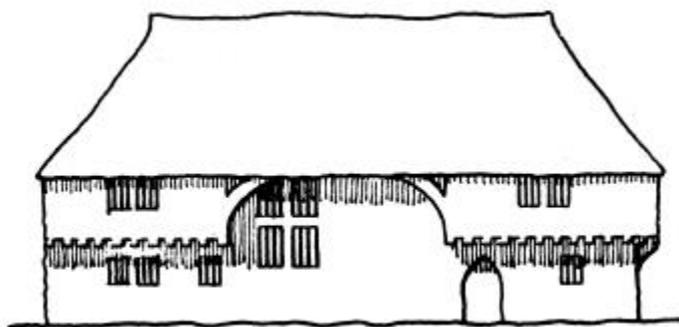
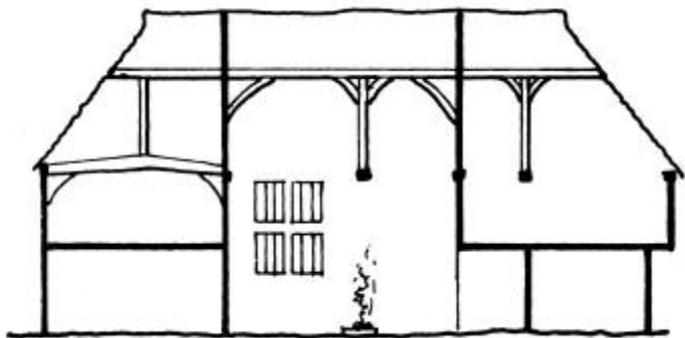
Bayleaf is an example of a type of house which is common in south-eastern England, and particularly in the Weald of East Sussex and Kent - hence the name 'Wealden' house. Its characteristic feature is the recessed front wall of the hall. The two end chambers are both jettied out at the front of the building but the hall has no upper floor and no jetty, and the upper part of the front wall is therefore recessed. Most of these houses were built by prosperous traders and craftsmen in towns, and by yeoman farmers in the countryside.

The entrance door opens into a cross passage, which is divided from the hall by short screens at either side of a wide opening. The open hall is of two bays, the 'lower' bay and the 'upper' bay. The lower bay has no windows, while in the upper bay double-height windows throw light on the high table - in the centre of which would have sat the head of the household. The fire on the open hearth produces smoke which deposits a thick layer of encrusted soot on the beams.

A doorway by the high table leads to the 'solar' end of the house. The upper room, traditionally known as the solar, probably provided the family's private bed-sitting room, while the lower room (which became known as the parlour) may have been used variously for sleeping, storage and working.

At the lower end of the hall are two service doorways with arched heads, opening into the two service rooms traditionally called the buttery and pantry. These rooms were for storing food, vessels and utensils. A third

doorway at the back of the house opens onto stairs leading to the service chamber.



SOLAR

HALL

↑ SERVICE