

MALDON DISTRICT



CONSERVATION & DESIGN AWARD SCHEME 2026

CONSERVATION &
DESIGN AWARDS
43
years



Building Conservation Winner
The Forge, Bradwell-on-Sea



Design Winner
Church of St Sophrony, Tolleshunt Knights



Building Conservation Highly Commended
Mountview, Maldon



Design Highly Commended
8 Tenterfield Road, Maldon



Sustainability Winner
The Bear, Wickham Bishops



The Forge in 2018, prior to renovation.



The Forge in March 2026, following renovation

BUILDING CONSERVATION WINNER

The Forge, Bradwell-on-Sea

This award is for the renovation of a grade II listed 18th-century timber-framed former smithy in the Bradwell-on-Sea Conservation Area. Over several years, the building has been adapted gradually to become an annexe to the adjoining cottage for its owners, David Thorpe and Roman Huszak. David designed and managed the project himself, with support from numerous local contractors, friends and family. The timber frame was skilfully repaired by carpenters Andrew Blowers, Lee Robinson and builder Tony Baker, retaining the building's remarkable sideways lean and crooked windows. Small and sympathetic extensions were added to the side and rear. The builder, Tony Baker, handled the groundwork, and the internal and external fit-out, aided by his team of experienced tradesmen. Replacement weatherboarding was fixed with hand-forged nails. Old external doors have been retained, with new doors hung on the inner side of the external openings. Black solar panels which blend well with the black-painted corrugated tin have been mounted on the least prominent parts of the roof. The interior incorporates many artefacts from Bradwell's past, reflecting a lifetime passion for the village's heritage.

The judges were completely taken aback by the way in which the Forge has been transformed while respecting its history. In so many ways, David and Roman could have cut corners but chose not to take the easy path. In particular, the inventive reuse of materials and historic fixtures stood out. The work has benefited not just the building, but the village conservation area. It is a good example of how solar panels can be employed without spoiling the special character of a listed building.



Interior of the Forge in August 2026



Interior of the Forge in August 2026



David showing the Judging Panel around the Forge in August 2026



Carpenter Andrew Blowers admiring his timber-frame repairs in June 2023.



Owner David Thorpe contemplating the restored roof in June 2023



Tony Baker and Lee Robinson replacing cladding in 2024.



David Thorpe and Roman Huszak in June 2023



A cast-iron advertisement plaque on the front of the building.



91-year-old joiner, Bernie Read, who reconstructed the wonky workshop windows



*From left to right: **Neil Davis**, Neil Davis Glass Ltd; **Cllr Tony Fittock**, Chair of the Judging Panel; **Tony Baker**, Excell Building Services; **David Thorpe**, owner; **Roman Huszak**, owner; **Cllr Ron Pratt**, Chairman of Maldon District Council*



Mountview in 2026, photo provided by Church and Hawes Estate Agents

BUILDING CONSERVATION HIGHLY COMMENDED

Mountview, Maldon

Mountview is an imposing grade II listed hilltop mansion built in 1880 for local timber merchant John Sadd. Its roof is crowned by a belvedere affording panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, including Sadd's own wharf at Fullbridge. In 1955 the house was acquired by the Franciscan Sisters who established a convent and school there. The school, now St Francis Roman Catholic School, occupies adjacent buildings, and the house fell out of use around 20 years ago. This award goes to Gary Walker and Beverley Walker who bought the house in 2020 and sympathetically converted it back to a residence. The architects were Plater Claiborne Ltd. Window repairs were undertaken by Shaun Chapman, and other building work was by Connect Construction.

The work included major roof and joinery repairs. Unsympathetic alterations to the belvedere windows were reversed. Minor adjustments were made to the internal layout to achieve convenient access to ensuite bathrooms. New doors and steps were introduced to provide a connection between the basement level and the garden.

The judges admired the considerable effort and thought that has gone into bringing this landmark building back to life. They felt the changes were well-considered, and that the layout of the house has not been compromised. The judges were particularly impressed by new joinery elements which replicate the original detailing.



Inside the Belvedere at Mountview prior to restoration. The space was dominated by a large water tank. Several of the original windows had been replaced by unsympathetic louvred windows.



The belvedere in 2026, following restoration. The water tank was removed and the original window design reinstated. Photograph provided by Church and Hawes Estate Agents.



Inside the basement in 2017



The basement in 2026, following renovation including new doors to the garden, photo provided by Church and Hawes Estate Agents



The grand entrance hall and staircase, photo provided by Church and Hawes Estate Agents



One of the refurbished 1880 windows, photo provided by Church and Hawes Estate Agents



*Members of the Judging Panel inspecting the
new steps to the garden in August 2026*



*From left to right: **Cllr Tony Fittock**, Chair of the Judging Panel; **Simon Plater**, architect at Plater Claiborne Ltd; **Tristan Walker-Hut**, owner's son-in-law; **Cllr Ron Pratt**, Chairman of Maldon District Council*



DESIGN WINNER

Church of St Sophrony, Tolleshunt Knights

This award is for a new church at the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, Tolleshunt Knights. The Monastery is the oldest Orthodox religious community in the UK, founded in 1959. The new church was consecrated in June 2025 and is dedicated to the Monastery's founder, Saint Sophrony the Athonite (b.1896 – d.1993). Sophrony developed the design concept for the church, inspired by traditional Greek churches, having a circular nave and walls faced with stone. The internal walls and ceiling are adorned with intricate murals painstakingly hand-painted by Sister Gabriela, who was trained by Sophrony. The floor of the nave features a Cosmati-style mosaic.

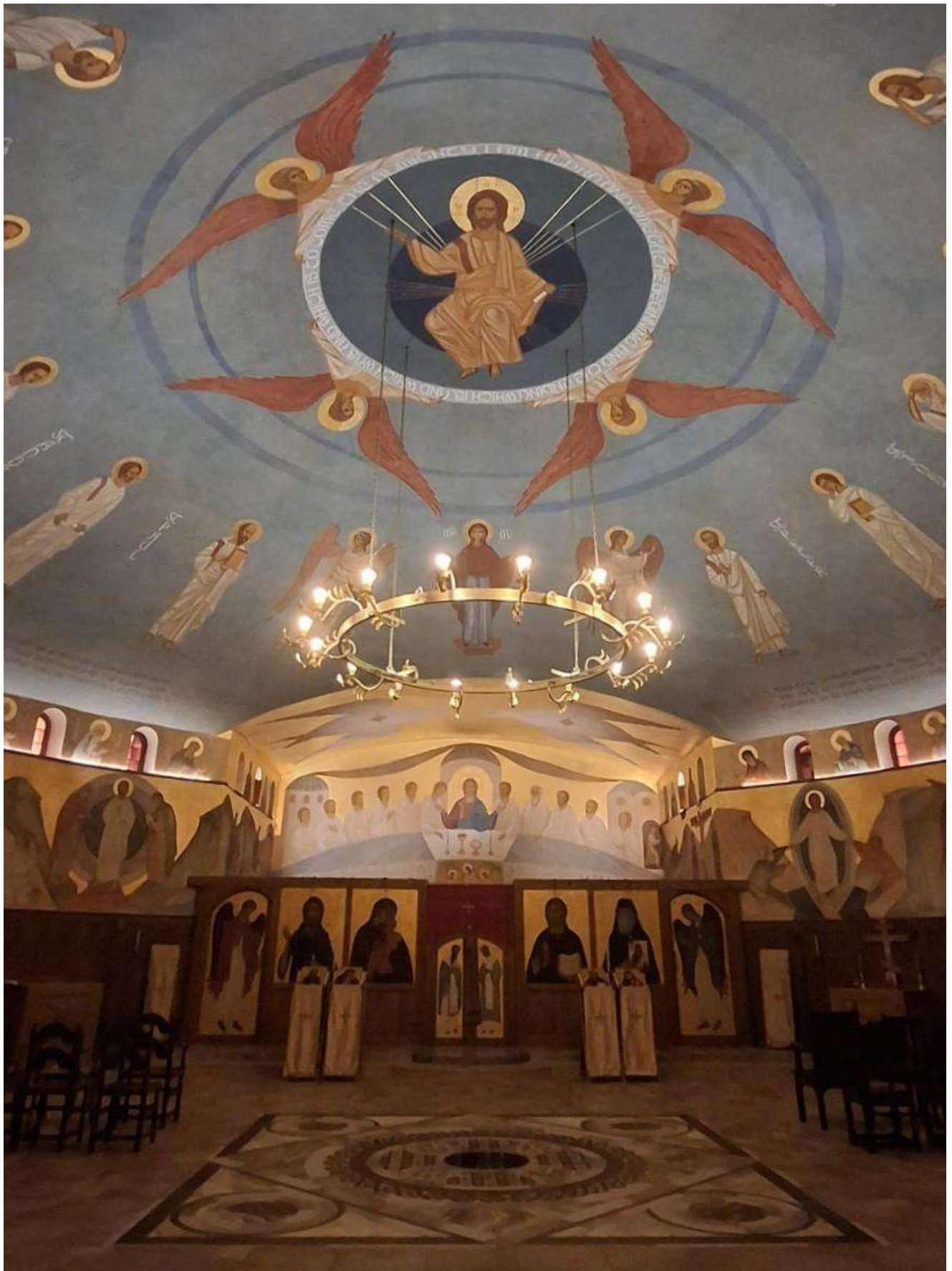
The judges were hugely impressed by this stunning and beautifully crafted building. The materials, execution and detailing are all top quality. But it was the excellence of the artwork which really stood out, creating a powerful, moving and ethereal space. The panel was amazed by the talent and energy of Sister Gabriela who was responsible for the artwork.



A painting of St Sophrony.



The sanctuary



In the nave looking east towards the sanctuary



From left to right: Cllr Tony Fittock, Chair of the Judging Panel; Superior Father Peter; Sister Gabriela; Cllr Ron Pratt, Chairman of Maldon District Council



DESIGN HIGHLY COMMENDED

8 Tenterfield Road, Maldon

This award is for the design of a new three-bedroom dwelling in the Maldon Conservation Area. Replacing a small bungalow, the new 1 ½ storey house has been carefully designed to make the most of its small plot, while respecting the character of Tenterfield Road.

In deciding to give this award, the judges wished to make the point that architecture does not have to be showy to be great. The new house sits quietly on its plot. Its simple 'hall-and-crosswing' form and traditional materials fit in well with the street. The internal layout works really well, and the client is very happy with the result. The architects were Plater Claiborne Ltd and the owner is Jo Ginnaw. The principal contractor was Smith Construction.



From left to right: Cllr Tony Fittock, Chair of the Judging Panel; Simon Plater, architect at Plater Claiborne Ltd; Cllr Ron Pratt, Chairman of Maldon District Council





SUSTAINABILITY WINNER

The Bear, Wickham Bishops

The Bear is a Grade II listed pub dating back to at least the 1740s. Formerly known as The Chequers Inn until 2018, the building was then acquired in 2024 by local residents Debbie Brewster and Darren Gardner, who shared a vision of restoring it as a welcoming village pub. Together, Debbie and Darren have undertaken an extensive and sympathetic renovation, breathing new life into a building that had become rather neglected and rundown. This included repairing a rather large hole in the roof of the Victorian stable and carefully restoring the pub's historic fireplaces with the help of local builder Kevin Quantrill.

While so many village pubs are closing, the judging panel agreed that Debbie and Darren's aspiration to buck the trend elsewhere and reinstate a village pub deserved applause. The panel particularly appreciated their ambition to be inclusive to all, with different areas to appeal to different customers, including the child-friendly nature of the venue's offer. They employ local people and are keen for it to become a community meeting place and hub. In terms of the scope and quality of the work, the panel noted that the owners have "gone above and beyond", particularly in preserving elements of the building's structure uncovered during the build work. They felt that this project deserved the Sustainability Award for its contribution to supporting a sustainable community. The judges noted that "pubs are like churches; we are much poorer without them".



The interior before the refurbishment



The interior in 2026, following renovation



Restored fireplace, including bread oven, inside the ladies' loo at The Bear. A washing copper has been adapted to become a baby changing area.



The new bar



*From left to right: **Cllr Tony Fittock**, Chair of the Judging Panel; **Darren Gardner**, owner; **Debbie Brewster**, owner; **Cllr Ron Pratt**, Chairman of Maldon District Council*



All the winners of the 2026 awards.



This year's Judging Panel

*From left to right: **Cllr Tony Fittock**, Chair of the Judging Panel; **Mark Jaggard**, Director of Place, Planning & Growth, Maldon District Council; **Hilary Brightman**, Conservation Architect; **Paul Carlier**, Essex & Suffolk Regional Group of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB); **John Buchanan**, Nature Conservation Specialist; **Peter Harland**, Hazeleigh and Woodham Mortimer Parish Council; **Mike Turner**, the Maldon Society.*