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THE IMPROVEMENT OF COOMBE PLACE

David Brock

Coombe Place at Offham (but in the parish of Hamsey), near Lewes, is a small country house transformed by two mid 18th century owners and almost untouched since. It offers a well-documented case study of the differing approaches to such work in the earlier and later parts of the century, and of the increasing recourse to metropolitan advice and products.

The house occupies an enviable situation hard against the north slope of the South Downs (Fig. 1). "Its situation," wrote Horsfield in 1827, "gives it every advantage of pictorial effect: while the flourishing plantations ...destroy the uniformity which too much prevails in the unassisted Downs scenery".¹ The sheltered location indicates a pre-Georgian site, and we have a fair idea of the 17th century house which stood here from a survey of 1707 (Fig. 2).² This new build of 1657³ appears to have been innocent of classicism or symmetry, and was constructed in the traditional manner from flint with brick dressings. Its plan is unknown, though the painting strongly suggests two ranges with a service wing stepping down to the north, and there may have been a small courtyard. It is certain that there was a porch on the west side whereas none shows on the illustrated eastern front, which may indicate that the house faced both ways. The topography had been exploited by 1707 to produce a series of formal terraces across the contours in front of the house. The builder was Richard Bridger, a substantial landowner and MP for Lewes (1620-99).⁴

On the death of Richard Bridger junior in 1730, his son John (b 1703)⁵ set to work to recast his grandfather's house completely. The work is recorded in summary in his cash book⁶ under the catch-all heading "Charges towards and about building and repairing my house at Combe begun in 1733". Entries begin in the summer of 1733 and end in September 1735, with the bulk of the heavy work taking place in 1734 alone. The single most costly material recorded is timber



Fig. 1. Coombe Place from the east.

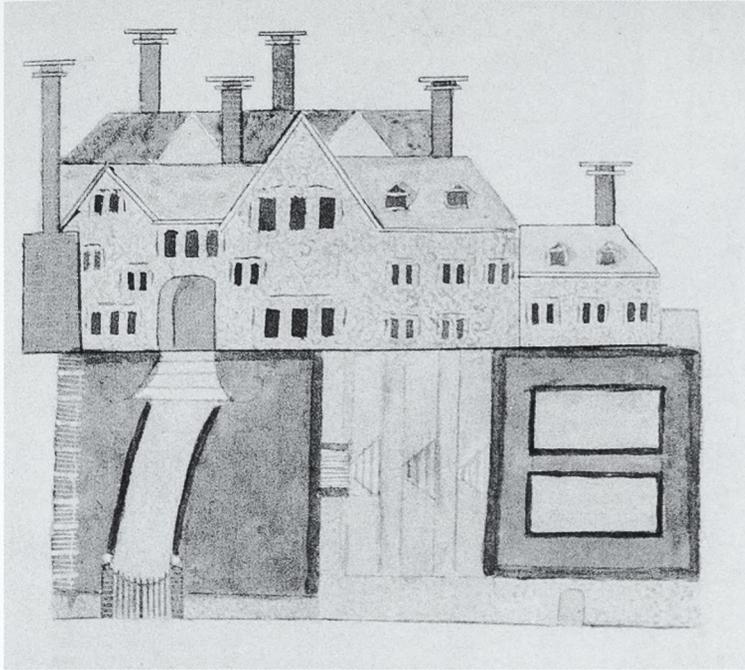


Fig. 2. Coombe Place “as it was in the year 1730” (but from a survey of 1707).

(£112, plus £66 for “500 of deals” and £25 for carriage); by contrast 10,000 bricks cost only £7.7s, possibly because they were not to be exposed outside or in. The main walling material, flint, appears nowhere and was perhaps salvaged or picked off the fields. However the cost of Portland stone and its carriage (£18. 10s and £12.11s) figure at the turn of the year, and by the autumn of 1734 glass (£15), lead (£28.17s) and tile (part of a payment of £33). Painting is a negligible item, and therefore probably external work. It was carried out by a Mr Dykes in the course of 1735, and also, improbably, by a Mr Vandyke.⁷ The interior thus fell to Mr Rickword the upholsterer who received £43.14.6 in August 1735, and “Mrs Guepin” (two payments totalling £46.14s.) may have been in the same line.⁸

The precise responsibility for the direction of the work cannot be established from these accounts, although it must lie between two men, Arthur Morris and “Belson”. Morris was paid continually at the height of the work, to the total of £195 (or £307 if he was the Morris paid for the timber delivery which opens the accounts), whereas Mr Bridger summarised the payments to Belson under the entry for 21 May 1735: “pd Belson at several times as appears by the Accompts £220.13.9 “. Morris (c1685-1744) was a stonemason in Lewes, a foreign member of the London Masons’ Company since 1712 and the beneficiary of much Whig patronage⁹. In 1719 he was acting for Colen Campbell at Compton Place and he had enough work from the Pelham family to acquaint him thoroughly with architecture. It is likely that he was the architect of Coombe Place in its present form, although there is no specific payment made for preparing plans or supervision. Belson is most probably Richard Belson the younger (1695-1769), the son and father-in-law of Lewes bricklayers. He is not known to have acted as an architect¹⁰.

It is somewhat surprising that the brickwork payments should have been so relatively high, as there is no visible brick of the 1730s in the house. The internal walls, however, are curiously thick and much bodging may have been required to adapt the existing fabric. Certainly the invisibility of the bricks must have been a conscious aesthetic decision in view of the cost of the work. Perhaps John Bridger wanted to recall the previous house in an acceptable way. The entries for payment to the bricklayers usually call them “Belson and men”, which appears to indicate that Belson brought his own gang; this expression is not used of any of the other crafts, nor did any other master have a separate account. While the payments for bricks and to Belson seem to represent the extreme of an imbalance between materials and labour, the recoverable figure for materials (about £300, or 20% of the costs) is almost certainly too low. Unfortunately the smaller bills do not always distinguish payments for labour and materials. The accounts also appear to be silent on the role of carpentry, which should have been a substantial item, but is presumably rolled up in Arthur Morris’ regular payments of around £20. The total bill was £1504.8s.3d.

The house as it stands today is largely as Morris left it. A sober block with shallow projecting wings on the southeastern front, it concentrates its charm and craftsmanship on this side where Portland stone pilaster strips frame walls of finely knapped squared flint (Fig. 3). The rear however struggled for coherence, and on the north the attached service wing still survived from the 17th century build. The appearance of the house in this phase is recorded in a survey of 1775¹¹.



Fig. 3. Coombe Place. Entrance (Southeast) Front.

Inside the plan was simple and it largely survives today (Fig. 4); it appears to be inscribed in a square of 60 feet, which should have been pleasing to the Palladian builder. At this stage there would have been only five substantial rooms on the ground floor. It is not certain in what style they were decorated, if at all, although the cash book contains a payment of £16.8s for stone for a chimneypiece.¹² The house now contains little craftsmanship which could date from this period except in the southeast bedroom. Here the wooden cornice with pulvinated oak-leaf frieze, and heavy skirting, indicate an opulent intervening zone now lost (Fig. 5). This may be what is described in 1765 as the Tapestry Room¹³. The well carved stair must also belong to this period: it has a slightly old-fashioned closed string and a much ramped and mitred handrail, but the balusters are all fluted (Fig. 6). Evidently Bridger intended the house to look expensive.

Whether it was more so than he could afford cannot be easily established, but in 1757 John Bridger was declared bankrupt,

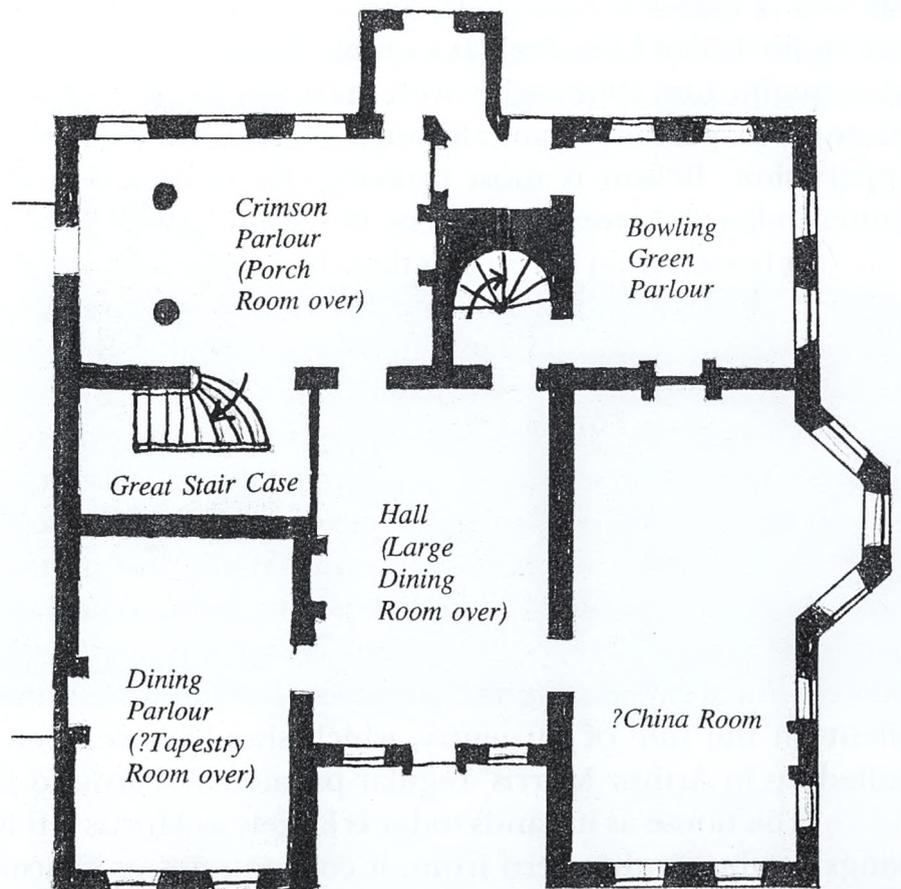


Fig. 4. Ground Plan of Coombe Place today, indicating the rooms mentioned in Robert Stark's bill (appendix 2). Not to scale: adapted from ESRO SHR 2838,2839.



Fig. 5. Coombe Place. The (?) "Tapestry Room" with portrait thought to be of Sir John Bridger.

owing large amounts to local farmers.¹⁴ Pastoral farming had brought diminishing returns over his lifetime.¹⁵ A more obvious reason than his building campaign of twenty years previously was his purchase of the post of Standard Bearer of the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners for his son John. This cost no less than £4000,¹⁶ and brought the young man (born 1733¹⁷) a knighthood at George III's coronation in 1761.¹⁸ Although the elder Bridger was discharged in 1767, having made his last payment in 1763,¹⁹ he retired to Wimbledon in 1765 leaving the field clear to his son.

In that year Sir John had just restored the family fortunes by marrying Rebecca Eliot, a Quaker of Croydon, said to be worth £22,000 in investments alone.²⁰ However she seems to have been over forty, so the chance of begetting an heir to which this good fortune could be communicated was rather slim.²¹ Miss Eliot gave him £1,000 as a wedding present,²² and seems to have retained considerable means of her own. Her father John Eliot was dead, and his relict died in the following year, leaving Sir John £11,839, which he noted at the outset of the cash book that scrupulously records the



Fig. 6. Coombe Place. Staircase, full landing.

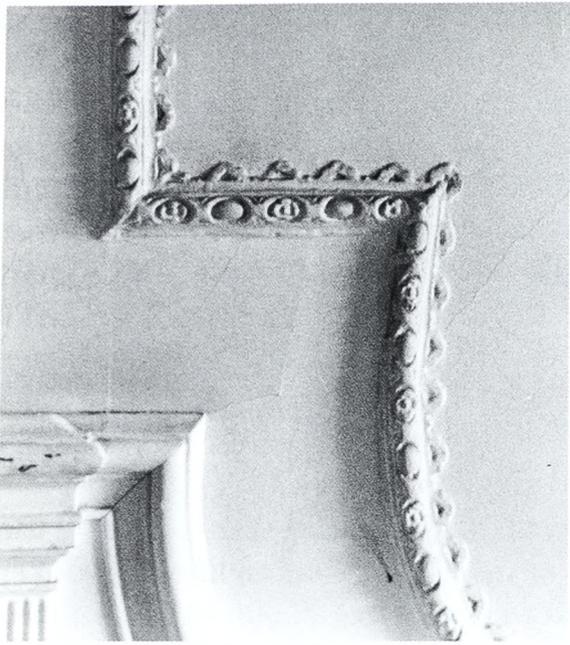


Fig. 7. Coombe Place. Details of staircase dado rail and papier maché panel moulding.

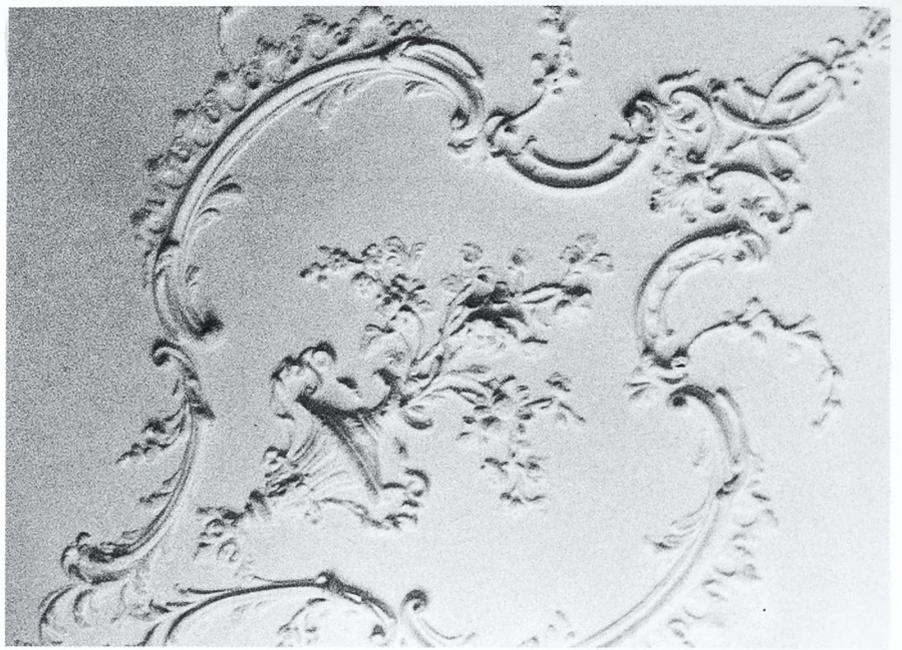


Fig. 8. Coombe Place. Entrance Hall. Detail of papier maché mouldings on the ceiling.

transformation of the matrimonial home.²³ This began within a few weeks of marriage if the payment of £76.4s to “Morris Stone Cutter” on 28 May was related to the main house. The work which Sir John now embarked on was to take 18 years, according to the paper he drew up in 1783 as a characteristic review of his outgoings (Appendix 1).

Whereas his father had borne the expense of the traditional materials of the carcass and had installed at least one stone fireplace (not now extant), the emphasis of Sir John’s expenditure initially fell on furniture, stuffs and “paper work”. Over the next 18 years he spent an average of £357 a year on building or earth moving, and £50 on furniture. 1765, the year which opens this series, was the most expensive for a decade, with £467.15s.9d. spent on repairs and new construction, and £246.14s.1d on furniture. These sums include four significant bills: “20 August. Stark for Paper Machee &c £235.15s.6d. Windle & Co for Cutt Glass &c £48.8s”, “21 August. Carr & Co for Stuff Damask £54.12s. Cobb Upholdsterer £126.6s”.²⁴ The extent of this work is shown, though the balance sheet scarcely affected, by the £39.10s received a month later for the sale of old furniture. Substantial as these bills are, Sir John was able to decorate the house for much less than it had cost his father to build, which was not always the experience.²⁵

The summary of Stark’s bill makes certain the assumption that the mouldings Sir John had applied to the walls of the house, many of which remain, were indeed papier maché rather than plaster (for which

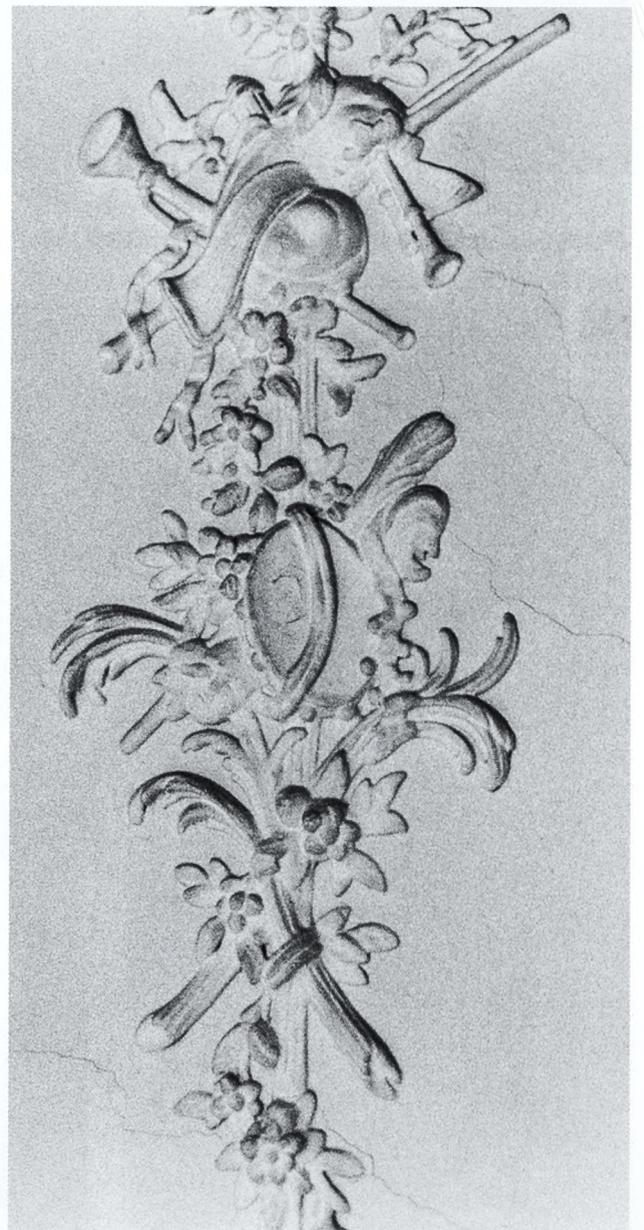


Fig. 9. Coombe Place. Staircase, papier maché enrichment

no bill is mentioned). As this is a comparatively early reference to the modish “chewed paper”²⁶ it is especially fortunate that Stark’s bill survives in a full transcription by Sir John (Appendix 2). Mr Stark was probably Robert Stark of 41 Ludgate Hill,²⁷ and he can be seen here to be offering a complete service including the incidental moulded items which were so easily executed in this medium — mirror surrounds, picture frames and girandoles. The coverage is astonishingly thorough, with 16 different locations mentioned, several of which can be tentatively identified today (Fig. 4). At this time the service wing was still attached to the north, rendering the rooms on this side comparatively modest. The compiler of the bill can be seen to have moved round the ground floor clockwise from southeast to northeast. The “Great Stair Case” which has the most extensive display of mouldings today was not the most expensive room, but the cost of the “Crimson Parlour”, probably the room now containing the columns on the western side, was presumably inflated by the items of furniture which Stark supplied, “Gerandoles included”.²⁸ Regrettably these and the rest of the furniture have been dispersed. The bill makes clear that the room above the hall was used as a dining room, a practice more familiar in urban situations. Presumably the lack of a second large ground floor room explains it here.

The impression of the interior is one of amiable stylistic latitude and a cheerful delight in ornament. Most of this is, inevitably in view of the material, in very low relief. The Hall has simple mouldings forming panels to the walls, as the stairs also have (Fig. 7), and both have pretty Rococo ceilings. The large rear Drawing Room, which was probably the “Crimson Parlour” (£38.15s.3d) has an attractive fireplace of which the carcass is in wood but the applied detail certainly in papier maché. The ornaments are invariably Rococo in character, combining sinuosity in artificial forms with naturalness in floral sprays (Fig. 8); they achieve remarkable variety with a multiplicity of small elements.²⁹ Only on the stairs is the treatment truly formal (Fig. 6), and here the largest single pieces of papier maché are found in the form of drops of musical instruments (Fig. 9). Sir John was taught music at Oxford at the cost (he records) of £47,³⁰ and occasionally purchased violoncello strings.

It is interesting to find that in the decoration of the two northeastern bedrooms there are Gothick touches, but these appear to be in wood and are notably cruder than the papier maché. Papier maché had been used by Horace Walpole in the Holbein Chamber at Strawberry Hill in 1759,³¹ but Bridger did not employ it in this first campaign. The decoration of these bedrooms is likely to date from the next phase. By the time Sir John resumed major works he was more clearly influenced by sensibility. In July 1768 he paid “Morris for building a Gothick Temple in Down Field £114.14s”³². This was a semi-octagonal structure of which the ruins are still visible,³³ clearly placed so as to enjoy the view out over his land to the north. “Morris”, who was regularly employed on maintenance work around the estate, was paid £75.9s.0¹/₂d for “masonry & materials” in 1773³⁴ and Langridge the carpenter³⁵ £50.10s for three carved chimneypieces in January 1774. Someone called Billingshurst supplied 36,100 bricks for £37.12s on March 23 that year,³⁶ which suggests that Sir John had a plan approved for substantial improvements.

He had become dissatisfied with the attached service wing and the network of walled gardens or yards which trammelled the house. In 1775 he commissioned a careful levels survey which shows the plan of the house as now, except for the service wing, attached eccentrically to the north front.³⁷ On July 22 he paid his brother in London 12s for an unspecified “Book of Architecture” obtained on his behalf, and on his own account on 30 September he bought “Kays Architecture” - probably “*The Practical Measurer*” (Ninth edition 1764) by Isaac Key.³⁸ The craftsmen’s bills account for the rising expenditure over these years, but the peak was not reached until 1776 because of the credit he was allowed by Morris and Langridge. The entries which embody the reckoning on 16 March show that Morris’ bill had been accumulating for three years. They also appear to show that Sir John took an interest in the measurement of the work, and perhaps undertook it himself:

Langridge for Carpentry about Combe House, Ice House &c to the 24th of Feby last
Including £186.6.11 Measure work
Materials &c Day work about the New Offices £227.10.0½
Mr. Morris & Co Some materials and work done at Combe
from the 27 Feby 1773 to the 24 Jan 1774£137.3.0½
Mr Morris & Co Masons to the 8 of Jany 1776 for work & materials at
Combe incl £184.5.5 Measure work at the new offices £30.9.6½
day work & some materials
abt Do £5.12.2 at the Gothick Cottage [in Lewes] £274.15.8

The Morris whom Sir John employed was John, almost certainly the son of Arthur (c1716-1792).³⁹ He had inherited his father's work for the Pelhams. However, he could not be guaranteed the right to design the new offices at Coombe. Sir John travelled occasionally to London where he may have retained some connexions at court.⁴⁰ His brother lived there and seems to have acted as his agent (for example in paying the elder Bridger's "sallery").⁴¹ Through his brother Sir John paid, on 16 December 1775, £20 to "George Robinson Esqr for Plans of Offices to Combe House & Laying out grounds about Do. executed by his late Brother Diseased [sic]".⁴² The late brother was almost certainly William Robinson of Greenwich, an Office of Works architect whom death had just deprived of the far more significant project of designing Somerset House.⁴³ He would have been known locally for the chancel of Laughton church.⁴⁴ But Sir John had also been "one of the commissioners for regulating the duties of excise" since 1760,⁴⁵ and



Fig. 10. Coombe Place. Stables or "new offices", 1776, by John Morris.

the architect of the Excise Office in 1768 was William Robinson.⁴⁶ Robinson and his brothers practised landscape gardening, and may have advised the removal of the terracing and the creation of the open lawns which still survive at Coombe. Regular payments are made to the workmen who moved the earth,⁴⁷ although no other payment for their supervision is distinguishable.

The demolition of the service wing was of a piece with this development. The services which had to be retained retreated to the basement, which was connected by a tunnel to the new "Offices". The scar was covered by a canted bay window, the brickwork of which is now exposed but was formerly at least washed.⁴⁸ On the ground floor the room created appears to have been redecorated since, although it is just possible that the ceiling ornaments are of Sir John's time; they could even have been supplied by Stark, who was still in business,⁴⁹ but no bill survives. On the first floor the two

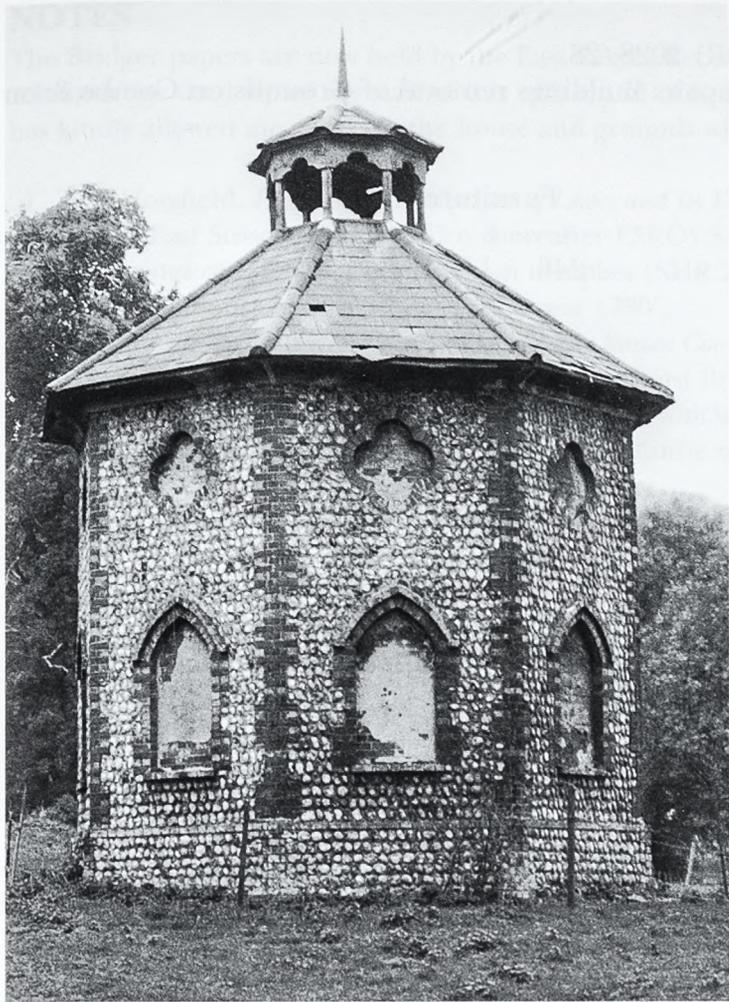


Fig. 11. Coombe Place, Dovecot, 1778, by John Morris.

rooms created or improved have Gothick detail as described above.

The occupier of these rooms looked out over the new lawn to the new offices (Fig. 10). These have the merest touch of Gothick, which is clearer in the Dovecot (Fig. 11) It is not certain who was the architect of the offices, containing laundry, brewhouse and stables, or of the two separate unexecuted designs which survive in the East Sussex Record Office (50). The one elevation is a cautious Classical exercise which appears more likely to be by Morris than Robinson. Moreover, the executed stable building has wide stone surrounds with projecting keystones, which would have been old-fashioned for a London architect by this date. The Dovecot was not constructed until 1778 when Morris was paid £76.1.101/2d for “Building a Pidgeon House” presumably to his own design.⁵¹

The centrepiece of the new block closely resembles the much grander composition which Morris designed in 1755 for the stables at Glynde Place.⁵² So it may be that Morris fought off the metropolitan challenge. In other respects, the multifarious projects of Sir John

show the advance of architectural and building practice. The house was furnished and decorated by workmen from London. The work was organised by two master craftsmen who billed him at extended intervals. So far as can be told, the materials no longer came from the estate. Whereas his father had bought chalk and made many payments to “Morris” for the cutting of “Bushes and Fyrzes”,⁵³ probably to convert the chalk to lime, Sir John forty years later bought lime through “Mr Morris Junr”.⁵⁴

Scrupulously, Sir John recorded that on 31 December 1775 he received “a present from my wife towards new buildings . . . £310.19s.9d”.⁵⁵ This touchingly suggests that building was recognised in his family as his hobby. The Record Office holds a crude drawing⁵⁶ of the house just before this work was done, and the view of the 1657 house is in fact an enlargement of the 1707 survey commissioned or even executed by Sir John. This reconstruction exists in two versions, one of which is endorsed by Sir John “Combe House before rebuilt in the year 1730”,⁵⁷ i.e. as it was just before its transformation and his own birth. These visual records complement the paper he drew up in 1782 to summarise his expenditure, and reveal how concerned he was to measure the distance Coombe House had come in the space of 50 years. One theme of his embellishments shows that continuity was important to him, as well as change: the chimneypiece of the rear Drawing Room has a small inset portrait said to be of Richard Bridger, in a papier maché surround. Similarly, the best bedroom has an oval half-length portrait confidently identified as Sir John himself,⁵⁸ let in to the earlier work (Fig. 5).

The restless, pernicky squire now folded up his measuring-rod, and lived until 1816⁵⁹ without undoing the work of his maturity. He left only a daughter, whose marriage into the Shiffners of Herefordshire⁶⁰ might have brought further changes, but in the event the house was preserved to this day almost without further change.⁶¹

APPENDIX 1

Lewes, East Sussex Record Office, Shiffner Archives (SHR) 2028/28.

Sir John Bridger's Memorandum: "Money laid out in Repairs Buildings removal of Grounds on Combe & on the Estate"

	Repairs and Buildings			Furniture		
	£			£		
1765	467.	15.	9	246.	14.	1
1766	87.	18.	2 1/2	2.	7.	6
1767	62.	1.	8	16.	16.	2
1768	216.	5.	8	20.	1.	4
1769	170.	5.	2	47.	4.	6
1770	207.	1.	6 1/2	14.	11.	5
1771	190.	3.	10 1/2	24.	18.	7 1/2
1772	197.	11.	8 5.	16.	3	
1773	460.	5.	9 3/4	38.	0.	8
1774	498.	17.	6 1/4	25.	0.	1
1775	534.	16.	9 3/4	67.	3.	7 3/4
1776	1114.	0.	10	41.	15.	9
1777	834.	4.	3 3/4	55.	5.	2
1778	385.	10.	7 1/2	39.	1.	7
1779	453.	5.	3 1/4	38.	6.	9
1780	260.	15.	10 1/2	40.	14.	4
1781	80.	11.	9	84.	16.	0
1782	238.	16.	10 1/2	95.	17.	0
	6440.	19.	2 3/4	905.	0.	10 1/4

APPENDIX 2

Lewes, East Sussex Record Office, Shiffner Archives (SHR) 2028/11.

"An Account of Paper Work done at Combe in March & April 1765 by Mr Stark Glasses & Pictures included"
[endorsed: "Paper Machee"]

Dining Parlour	29.	10.	5
Hall	24.	15.	6
Crimson Parlour Gerandoles included	38.	15.	3
Bowling Green Parlour	15.	2.	9
Little Passage to ditto	10.	0	
China Room	4.	2.	6
Great Stair Case.	23.	17.	6 1/2
Closet on the Best Stair Case	1.	16.	0
Large Dining Room	37.	4.	1
Tapestry Room.....	21.	8.	9
Ladys Bedchamber.....	9.	13.	10
Porch Room & Closet in Ditto.....	12.	2.	7
India Room.....	4.	11.	9
Closet in Ditto.....	1.	8.	9 1/2
Green Flock Room.....	7.	10	
Back Stair Case	13.	7.	0
	238.	14.	7

NOTES

The Bridger papers are now held by the East Sussex Record Office at Lewes as part of the Shiffner Archives. I gratefully acknowledge the help of the staff of this office, and of Colin Brent. Mrs Cannon, the present owner of Coombe Place, has kindly allowed me access to the house and grounds which I must emphasise are not open to the public.

1. T W Horsfield, *History and Antiquities of Lewes and its Vicinity*, II, 1827, 129.
2. Lewes, East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO) SAS/SH 391. Among the Shiffner papers are two enlarged renderings of the house copied from this plan [SHR 2829,2830]. SHR 2829 is endorsed by Sir John Bridger "Coombe House before rebuilt in the year 1730".
3. Viscountess Wolseley, "Coombe Place", *The Sussex County Magazine*, II, 1928, 388. *The Victoria County History of Sussex*, III, London, 1940, 84, remarks that Richard Bridger "is called "of the Pillar Parlour" but the only pillars at Coombe are those in the present entrance hall, which appear of Georgian date". This account (by Margaret Wood) misunderstands the description of the house by Viscountess Wolseley, in which Richard Bridger's portrait is described in its position in this room.
4. Richard Bridger was clearly a prominent and popular member of the local community. See B D Henning, *The History of Parliament: The Commons 1660-1690*, I, 1983, 719, and *The Sussex County Magazine*, II, 1928, 388 *et seq.*
5. Canon J H Cooper, "Cuckfield Families (III)", *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, XLIII, 1900, family tree opposite P18.
6. ESRO SHR 1363.
7. *Ibid.*, 26 May 1735. The Vandykes were painters and plumbers from Cliffe (Colin Brent, pers. comm.).
8. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1735 and 2 April 1736. She may have been related to Isaac Guepin, clockmaker of Lewes [Colin Brent, *Georgian Lewes*, Lewes, 1993, 173].
9. Brent, *op. cit.*, 209-210; Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, 1995, 664, under John Morris.
10. I am grateful to Colin Brent for this information.
11. ESRO SHR 2831.
12. ESRO SHR 1363, 30 September 1735.
13. ESRO SHR 2028/11: see Appendix 2.
14. F W Steer (ed), *The Shiffner Archives, a Catalogue*, Lewes, 1959, vii.
15. Joan Thirsk (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, V(2), London 1985, figure 13.14 and p80.
16. Steer, *loc. cit.* Announced in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XXVIII, March, 1758, 147. The availability of the post was the result of a rapprochement between the Pelhams and the local gentry [Brent, *op. cit.*, 179].
17. Cooper, *loc. cit.*
18. Steer, *loc. cit.*
19. *Idem.*
20. *Ibid.*, 83, quoting the marriage settlement, ESRO SHR 342. On the Eliots see Steer, *op. cit.*, xi; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XXXV, 1765, 97, where the marriage was noted, gives Rebecca Eliot's address as Grosvenor Square.
21. Cooper, *loc. cit.*
22. ESRO SHR 1376, 12 February 1765.
23. *Idem.*
24. *Ibid.* "Cobb" was presumably John Cobb (c1715-1778) of 72 St Martin's Lane, London, who is known to have supplied George III and numerous country houses [G Beard & C Gilbert (eds), *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*, Leeds, 1986]. Carr was perhaps a partner in Carr, Ibbetson, & Bigge "at the Queen's Head on Ludgate Hill", whose receipted bills of 1755 and 1760 are in the Guildhall Library of the Corporation of London. A splendid trade card for Maydwell & Windle is illustrated in R J Charleston, *English Glass*, London, 1984, plate 46, "datable between 1752 and 1762" [p178].
25. William Shenstone, for example, thought "the inside expenses of a House shou'd always be reckon'd at as much as the Shell" (letter of 6 June 1749) [Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor*, London, 1984, 93].
26. As Shenstone called it in 1752, [Thornton, *op. cit.*, 98]. Sir John Bridger stuck to the incorrect feminine form "machee", but it has been pointed out that in neither gender was the term then current in France [Oxford English Dictionary, 1971 under papier maché].
27. His shop was very close to Carr, Ibbetson & Bigge [Treve Rosoman, *London Wallpapers: Their Manufacture and Use - 1690-1840*, London, 1992, 57, Appendix II].
28. The "stuff-damask" at mid-eighteenth century prices probably came to about 150 yards, which would have more than sufficed to cover the walls of this room [J Fowler & J Cornforth, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 2nd ed, 1978, 133], but we cannot now tell whether the damask was for this or for curtains. The cost of the papier maché work rather suggests that it, rather than the damask, was used on the walls, but if so it has since been lost.
29. The build-up of such decoration is discussed in Michael Snodin (ed), *Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England*, London, 1984, 209 (in relation to the Spenser Room at Canons Ashby).

30. ESRO SHR 1373 records his time at Oxford, and contains the individual payments and his summary.
31. Thornton, *op. cit.*, 93.
32. ESRO SHR 1376, 19 July 1768.
33. It was still complete in 1928 and was photographed for *The Sussex County Magazine*, II, 389 [reproduced in Brent, *op. cit.*, 211].
34. ESRO SHR 1378, 24 February 1773.
35. *Ibid.*, 1 January 1774. William Langridge (c1716-1801) worked at Glynde Place and church, probably in association with John Morris [Brent, *op. cit.*, 212].
36. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1774.
37. ESRO SHR 2831.
38. ESRO SHR 1378. *The Practical Measurer His Pocket-Companion; Containing Tables Ready cast up, For the speedy Mensuration of Timber, Board &c . . .*, by Isaac Keay, London, 1704, was republished up to 1777 [Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785*, Cambridge, 1990, 254].
39. Colvin, *op. cit.*, 664.
40. ESRO SHR 1376, 1377, 1378, *passim*. The reason for these trips is never given, although he presumably had either duties to perform or a salary to draw as a commissioner of Excise (see note 45).
41. *Idem*. These payments were made every six months. The brother, Richard Bridger, worked for the Bank of England [Steer, *op. cit.* viii].
42. ESRO SHR 1379.
43. Colvin, *op. cit.*, 832. He held several clerkships in the Office of Works, and supervised the building of Horse Guards (1750-9). He practised in a Kentian Gothic for private clients, such as Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill. His executor was his brother Thomas [H M Colvin (ed), *The History of the King's Works*, V, London, 1976, 350] and no brother called George is recorded, but his eldest son bore this name [Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and heraldic History of Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1894, 1726, under "Robinson of Poston Court"].
44. Brent, *op. cit.*, 211. In this building Robinson was working for the Pelham family, so there may have been a continuing political connexion.
45. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XXX, 154.
46. Colvin, *King's Works* . . . , 349.
47. ESRO SHR 1378, *passim*.
48. There are traces of a wash on the brickwork of the bay.
49. His trade card dated 1782 is in the Guildhall Library of the Corporation of London.
50. ESRO SHR 2833,2834.
51. ESRO SHR 1378, 21 March, 1778.
52. *Country Life*, CXVII, april 28 1955, 1106.
53. ESRO SHR 1363, e.g. 18 January 1733.
54. ESRO SHR 1378, 13 January 1773.
55. ESRO SHR 1379.
56. ESRO SHR 2832.
57. See note 2.
58. The identifications are made by Lady Wolseley in *The Sussex County Magazine*, II, 1928, 388 and 390.
59. Cooper, *loc. cit.*
60. *Idem*.
61. The Shiffners made one major alteration, to which a set of plans in ESRO, dated 1844, seem to relate. Sir Henry Shiffner had succeeded to the property in 1842, and his mother, née Mary Bridger, died in 1844 [Steer, *loc. cit.*]. He commissioned plans from John Cuthell of Avery Row, Bond Street, London [ESRO SHR 2838,2839]. All three surviving versions differ from each other and the house as altered, but the consistent intention was to take the entrance away from the east front and bring it through the south side, where it still was in 1928. In the end the rear drawing room was chosen as the entrance hall, and the bottom of the stairs given a handsome splay to come down into this room rather than the former hall. The concern for privacy (which Lady Wolseley believed lay behind this) must have been acute, as the approach was poor and the effect on the interior was to waste one of the best rooms.