

JOHN CARR, STONECUTTER EXTRAORDINARY, AND THE ARCHITECTURAL VIRTUOSI

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and

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W. A. Eden, about the time of his death, was in the process of drafting an article on the architect, John Carr of York (1723-1807). Dr R. B. Wragg, an early collaborator, has since completed the first part which essentially covers the early years of the architect's career.

The parish register of Horbury, near Wakefield, records that John, son of Robert Carr, mason, was baptized on 15th May, 1723. From the same source we learn that John's grandfather (1668-1736) and great-grandfather, Robert (1644-1689), had also been masons in Horbury; and, from the genealogy submitted with young John's application for an award of arms in 1805,¹ we learn further that the great-grandfather, Robert 1644-89, "Purchased Estates at Horbury...for his Residence".² In the same document the father, also named Robert, is described as 'architect' and is recorded as having married Rose, daughter of John Lascelles of Norton-in-the-Clay (Norton-le-Clay, near Boroughbridge) Gent. As Kitson points out,³ the Lascelles of Harewood came, originally, from near Northallerton, 14 miles to the north, a circumstance that renders it highly probable, considering the rarity of the name, that Rose Carr, young John's mother, was, at least, distantly related to the Lascelles of Harewood.

Correspondence¹ between Carr's niece Elizabeth and her brother, perhaps significantly called Robert *Lascelles* Carr, shows that they too were firmly of that opinion although the *published* genealogy of the Lascelles of Harewood does not support their belief. Certainly the fortunes of the Carr family appear to have been quietly in the ascendant since the first Robert became a free-

1. Radcliffe Corres, Lot 112, Yorks Archaeol Soc, Leeds

2. The impression of wealth is hardly borne out by an examination of the family papers at Browsholme Hall. Still, Robert was by no means a pauper: in 1679 he bought a small house "at the Bottom of Town" with an acre of land; in 1685 half an acre; and in 1688 another acre for £40.

3. *RIBA Jnl*, Jan 22, 1910, 247.

holder in Horbury. His son, the first John, seems even to have had some cultural pretensions for he possessed a Family Bible which contained within its covers handwritten annotations in Latin and Greek. This is not to say that Grandfather John is likely to have received the elements of a classical education — a course that would have conflicted with the necessity of his having to serve his apprenticeship as a mason. He must, however, have observed what he conceived to be the benefits of such an education among some of those whom he served and others with whom he habitually associated — as, for instance, the vicar of the parish. He was perhaps sufficiently intrigued to seek, in idle moments, scraps of improving information from anyone who was willing to impart it, a habit he had learned, perhaps, from his mother, Edith, wife of the first Robert, who had been school dame in Horbury for 52 years.¹ His grandson, Samuel, a younger brother of our John, born less than a year before the grandfather died, entered the Church and became a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral.² He, at least, had received an education befitting a gentleman.

It is, indeed, clear that the Carrs belonged to the class of superior tradesmen who benefited from the growing prosperity of the still mainly agricultural north during the middle decades of the 18th century. Those who know their North Country will find no difficulty in reconciling this statement with the stories³ which the successful York architect loved to tell in his old age. How, for instance, he often had to lie in bed of a morning whilst his only pair of breeches was being mended, or how, when he was working on a job that was too far from home for him to return each evening, he would set out on the Monday morning provided with a large circular meat pie which he would proceed to divide, with his mason's compasses, into six equal parts, one for each working day of the week. The successful north countryman never tires of pointing out the perennial degeneracy of the younger generation as compared with the prudent frugality of their elders "when we were lads like them".

Another story, indicating talent appearing in early life, is set at Bretton Hall, five or six miles from Wakefield. Workmen were trying unsuccessfully to design a small building when Robert Carr called out "Let my lad try". No sooner said than done: our young hero solved the problem and his plan was adopted. We are also told that John was one of the masons building a new part wall at Chevet for Sir Lionel Pilkington, going the four miles from Horbury to his work in a morning and returning in the evening.

1. Horbury Parish Register

2. Radcliffe Corres, Lot 112, York Archaeol Soc, Leeds

3. Davies, R. *A Memoir of John Carr*, Yorks Archaeol Jnl, iv, 1877

Presumably such stories relate to the period of young John's apprenticeship or to the relatively short time when he may have worked as a journeyman for his father, or for some other mason. Indeed the period is likely to have been brief for Carr himself, late in life, claimed to have been in business as an architect prior to 1744¹. However, there is a local tradition that he was employed as a mason during the building (1744-5) of Heath House, near Wakefield, for Robert Hopkinson. George Benson goes one better and states that he acted as clerk of works². In either case the experience for Carr could have been most valuable and significant, for the designer of the mansion was the up-and-coming architect, James Paine (1716-89). Paine, perhaps the foremost of the second generation of Palladians, became so successful as to lead Thomas Hardwick to declare that Paine and Sir Robert Taylor "...divided the practice of the profession between them till Robert Adam entered the lists..." Unfortunately neither tradition nor Benson offer documentary proof of Carr's connection with Heath House and it seems likely that both were confusing the mansion with nearby Heath Hall, later extensively altered by Carr, where the surveyor of works was Robert Carr⁴. As Carr certainly had some regard for Paine—a print of Paine's Middlesex Hospital is pasted inside his copy of Robert Morris's *Select Architecture* in the Soane Museum—it is particularly unfortunate that certainty cannot be given to an association with the virtuoso which could have made a profound impression on Carr's subsequent development. At least we can say that Carr must have been aware of Heath House and probably profited from its design.

Details are lacking of Carr's early manhood but it is implicit that the association with his father, only broken by the latter's death in 1760, was particularly close in the formative years. And Robert was well qualified to give a wide practical training. Tradesmen were not so hidebound in the 18th century as they are today: it is likely that the elder Carr would be prepared to supply stone from the family quarry, act purely as mason sub-contractor or, more extensively, as a builder, correlating his own work with that of other master tradesmen, carpenters, slaters and so on, with whom he made contracts. On other occasions, he might act as designer submitting drawings, specification, estimate of cost and further offering to organise the building of the whole job. Indeed, constructional knowledge, ability to write reports, to estimate and to

1. Porteous, Beilby. *Occasional Memorandums and Reflexions*, vol 4. ms 2103, Lambeth Palace Library
2. Benson, George. *An Account of the City and County of York*, 1925
3. Hardwick, Thomas. *Memoir of Sir William Chambers* in Joseph Gwilt's ed of *Chambers' Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture*, 1825, xlix
4. Green, Lady Mary. *The Old Hall at Heath*, 1889, 56

draw were the requisites of Robert's appointment as Bridge Surveyor to the West Riding in 1743.¹ It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that John acquired not only a trade but an early knowledge of draughtsmanship from his father. Similarly, Carr must also have been indebted to the father for his introduction to architectural design. Robert, an intelligent man—he is described as mathematician as well as architect in his epitaph²—when confronted with a problem, doubtless turned for guidance to the many pattern books of the period. These he recommended to his son.

Pattern books are sometimes treated as something of a joke largely because of their proliferation by every Tom, Dick and Harry, their often comic titles—“The Builders' Jewel or the Youth's Instructor” and “Workmen's Remembrancer”, for example—and the highly extravagant claims made for them by their authors. At one extreme there were the expensive books intended primarily for prospective clients—tomes, with plans and elevations of buildings, exemplified by the three volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715, 1717, 1725) by the architect Colen Campbell,³ and by Gibbs' *Book of Architecture* (1728). At the other extreme, aimed at the tradesmen, were the practical books from which it was possible to learn something about simple arithmetic, mensuration and pricing, geometry and perspective, construction, details of the Orders, rules of proportion and the design of buildings. Ignoring the self-advertisement and plagiarism, we can see that the books were often in fact serious pieces of work. But it is not true to say that anyone lifting the rules from the books could overnight turn architect and produce competent classical buildings. Guidance, study and experience were necessary before a proper appreciation and application of the Orders could be achieved. John Carr had to go the hard way; there is nothing to show that anyone other than his father acted as tutor. If the aesthetics were perhaps missing, at least the practical problems of building were ever close to young Carr.

At Featherstone, near Pontefract, on 31st August, 1746, Carr aged 23, married Sarah, daughter of Thomas and Mary Hinchliffe of Cold Hiendley. Ten years older⁴ than her husband, she is said by Davies⁵ to have been one of the domestics at Bretton Hall where Carr was then working. The entry in the register⁶ reads “John Carr of the Parish of Wakefield and Sarah Hinshliffe (sic) of

1. Order Books, West Riding, 12 April 1743, Wakefield

2. Mural tablet, Horbury Church

3. Campbell (1676-1729) with Burlington, is credited with popularising the Palladian movement

4. St Peters, Felkirk Parish Register. Bapt, 11th Dec, 1712

5. R Davies, A Memoir of John Carr. *Yorks Archaeol Jnl*, iv, 1877

6. St Peters, Felkirk Parish Register



Fig. 1. Huthwaite Hall (1748): The Garden Front.

the Parish of Silkstone by virtue of a Licence from Mr Lee were married by me C Driffeild''¹

About this time the Carrs were engaged by John Cockshutt, one of a family of ironmasters connected with the Wortley iron-works, to undertake alterations and additions to Huthwaite (pronounced Huthet) Hall, Thurgoland, about fifteen miles from Horbury. The work was the first attributed to John Carr as an architect and the dating given as 1748.²

Huthwaite Hall is L-shaped in plan. John, in practical fashion, retained the seventeenth century wing with its characteristic detailing, to accommodate the domestic offices and, at right angles to it, added a new block. The back of the latter is plain as plain as can be—in fact, typical West Riding tradesman's classic of the mid 18th century. But on moving round to the garden front we find ourselves in a totally different world (fig 1). Here is decent regularity and conspicuous modelling in the three story facade, the elements of which are competently disposed and detailed. Of particular interest is the ground story with its central pedimented doorcase and flanking windows rusticated in a manner reminiscent of the windows of the principal story of the sixteenth century Palazzo Thiene at Vicenza, the architect of which, like John Carr, was by early training a stone cutter, commonly known as Andrea Palladio (1508-80).

How then did the Yorkshire mason—who so far as we know had never travelled beyond the confines of the three Ridings—become acquainted, albeit by proxy, with the geometry of Palladio's masonry and produce a sympathetic response in an isolated Pennine valley. The answer must surely be through the medium of the pattern book. A probable source is a detail in the *City and Country Builders and Workmans Treasury of Designs*, 1740, (Pl xxvii), a book by that most prolific of authors whose unusual first name has prompted so many easy witticisms, Batty Langley.

Whatever the inspiration, Carr's was not a slavish imitation of detail but an intelligent adaptation of an idea to suit the scale of the masonry, together with an amusing little trick—though perhaps not to the taste of the purist—of cutting the subsidiary keystones of the windows and the uppermost rustication of their plain architraves, on each side, out of *one* stone.

There are two further points concerning the total design on

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1. She remained very much a background figure. Childless, she died in 1787 and was buried at Felkirk where there is a memorial tablet
 2. (i) Architectural Publication Soc *Dictionary*, s.v. Carr, John
(ii) Mary & Brian Wragg, *A House for Mr Cockshutt*, Hunter Archaeol Soc Trans, vii, 5, 271

which we should comment; firstly, the use of the gabled roof and not the more fashionable hipped roof indicates a designer, perhaps little travelled, who had been accustomed to building only in the traditional Yorkshire manner; second, the economy of concentrating all, or nearly all, the elevational features on one face of the building—a trait which characterises much of Carr's work.

Perhaps, above all, the house illustrates Carr's remarkable facility for providing a building most suited to the needs of his client; hence the secret of his success. It is evident that the embryo architect, at the age of 25, was already a competent and much practised designer. He could have had few fears as to further employment, and so it transpired.

It is likely that alterations to Askham Hall next occupied Carr's attention, and although details are lacking, it is significant at least that the building was only five miles away from York. Association with the Northern Metropolis was becoming increasingly apparent. Indeed, it is possible that Carr had already taken lodgings in York itself for there are several buildings attributed to him—for example, Micklegate House and Nos 53 and 55 Micklegate²—which must have been started in the 1740s. And when he took the lease for £180 of a house in Skeldergate "with a Raff Yard, Garth and a Kiln" in October 1751, he was described as "of the City of York, Mason"³ as though he had been established in the town for some time.

However, we take as our next illustration Kirby Hall (fig. 2), one of the milestones in Carr's career. Stephen Thompson, wealthy London merchant but whose family and estate were in Yorkshire, wrote in 1748 to another Yorkshire squire, mentioning that he was going "to meet my New Overseer to put him in a way of going on with my Workmen...". Later he said, "I have got a clever Young Fellow of a Mason at the Head of my Works". Carr is identified as this paragon.

Kirkby Hall, now demolished, was considered to be of sufficient importance to justify inclusion in Vol V of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1771)—"E of Burlington and R Morris" being named as the architects.

Lord Burlington (1694-1753) the fount of Palladianism, needs no introduction. His associate, Roger Morris (1695-1749), a

1 Yorks Archaeol Jnl, iv, 1877, 212

2 Trans East Yorks Georgian Soc iv (2) 1955-6

3 York City Archives. CRO, Northallerton

4 The first record of his working in York occurs in the Minute Books of York Assembly Rooms for March 1752, when Mr Carr was ordered to examine and arrange the repair of the roofs of the Rooms, the dogmatic creation of none other than Lord Burlington, *Ibid.*

5 Ingram, *M E Leaves from a Family Tree* (1951), 29



Fig. 2. Kirby Hall, Yorkshire (now demolished) from *Vitruvius Britannicus* V, 1771.

successful architect, born in Yorkshire, was also the collaborator with another but lesser known arbiter of taste in the first half of the century, Henry, 9th Earl of Pembroke, and is remembered popularly for the delightful Palladian Bridge at Wilton, and the rebuilding of Inveraray Castle. If Carr could not be connected with the Palladians at Heath Hall, Kirby more than provides compensation.

“Overseer” gives the impression of a foreman permanently on the works, but the terminology of the 18th century was different from that of today, and an overseer or director of works could signify a man who gave advice and organised building work, visiting the site only when it was essential. Obviously, Carr with his other commitments could not afford to take up permanent residence. His status is indicated in an engraving of the mansion published by Stephen Thompson after completion of Kirby Hall, inscribed “Elevation by Ro. Morris, Archt. and the Earl of Burlington: Executed, and the inside finishings, by J Carr, Architect, Plans by the Owner, S T”

Carr’s inclusion in such honourable company is perhaps due to a quirk of fortune. Morris died before the works were properly under way, in 1749, and Burlington in 1753; thus the responsibility

1. B M King’s Maps, xiv, 24-1. Engraving by Basire, drawing by William Lindley (Carr’s assistant). Thompson, incidentally, subscribed to Isaac Ware’s translation of Palladio (1738)

was thrown onto the shoulders of the young man. It was an opportunity not to be missed. That Carr took on the burden successfully is evinced by Thompson's acknowledgement in the engraving.

It is hardly likely that Morris or Burlington were ever greatly involved in the erection of the mansion. Even so, Carr must have met, if not Morris, then Burlington whose Yorkshire estate of Londesbrough was less than 30 miles away. For the first time, perhaps, he became aware of horizons beyond those of his native county, became aware of the deficiency in his excellent but limited technical background: the aesthetics of Palladianism. Kirby Hall made a lasting impression on the young man, as well it might, for it is an interesting building. Slightly top-heavy with a shallow basement story of offices, a first floor—the piano nobile—containing the main rooms, an attic story for the lesser bedrooms and the whole surmounted with a great pyramidal roof: it all clearly demonstrates Italian ancestry.

Henceforth the plainness and masculinity of Kirby Hall became the characteristics of Carr's designing. The square plinths and string courses marking floor and window cill levels were reproduced time after time, as were the hipped roofs and particularly the tall bays rising the full height of the building. The elevational gimmick of the pedimented projection—for there was no justification for it in plan—was stored away for future reference. Other details were taken up though not so enthusiastically: for example, the sweeping architrave, so redolent of Burlingtonian design, to the window over the front entrance appeared shortly and almost contemporaneously at Arncliffe Hall, Heath Hall, Kirkleatham Church and at the Steward's House, Harewood, afterwards being dropped from the Carr vocabulary. But it was not so with the plan: the simple, square shape of the central block was eagerly adopted and became an established part of the repertoire; the internal top lit staircase and the shapes of the rooms—square, rectangular, circular and apsidal-ended—were especially noted.

The interior finishings were by Carr and it is therefore of interest to see from Thompson's print that they appeared to be of the rococo type, distinctive of the York School.

Kirby Hall apparently took a long time to build, for Thompson did not occupy it until 1755¹. In the meantime Carr had acquired other commissions and it is necessary to go back a few years.

Arncliffe Hall (fig. 3), started about two years after Kirby Hall, sits firm and square amongst the trees on the hillside above the village of Ingleby Arncliffe, more than thirty miles north of York.

1 In correspondence with John Grimston in 1748, Thompson expected completion as early as 1752. Grimston Papers, CRO, Beverley

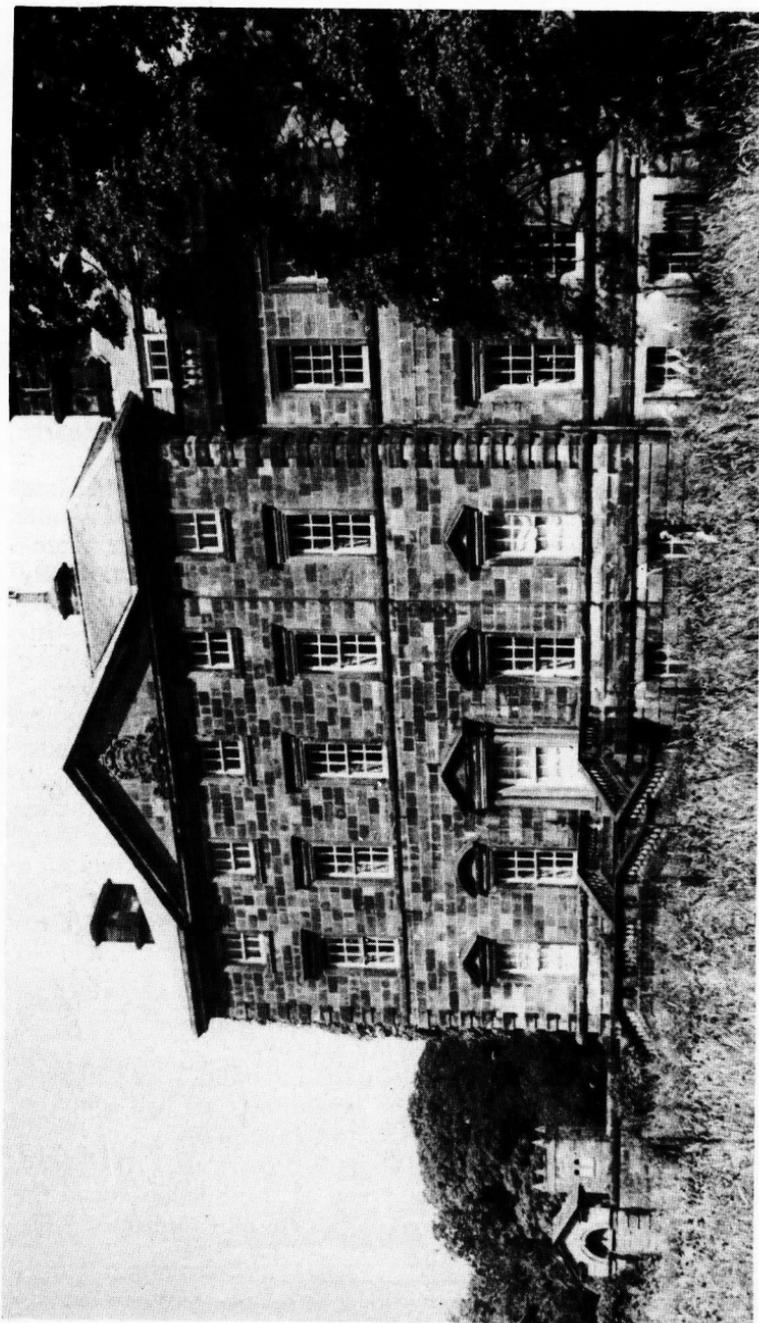


Fig. 3. The Garden Front of Arncliffe Hall, c. 1750-54. The Victorian wing on the right has since been demolished.

The south-facing garden elevation five bays wide, with the elevational trick of a central pedimented projection, and pyramidal roof—the existing flat-topped one is a replacement after fire—all bear testimony to Carr's own experiences at Kirby. The house also early affirms some of Carr's own characteristics. The unusual quoins match those at Huthwaite, the balusters (the profile of which Carr reproduced without change until the end of his days) and, particularly, the theme of a simple variation of detail on each elevation—thus, the openings on the garden side have architraves but those on the entrance front, having none, are simply crowned with detached cornices—can be recognised in virtually all of Carr's buildings.

Campsmount Hall (1752-5)² Campsall near Doncaster is our next illustration. On 8th January, 1757, John Carr acknowledged a payment:

Sept 8 1750. To making a Design of Plans and Elevations of a house proposed to be built at Campsall by Thomas Yarborough Esq . .	£5.5.0
Jan 7 To 4 journies to Campsall	£3.3.0

Shortly afterwards, Robert Carr submitted an estimate for the erection of the new mansion, Campsmount, of £4707.9.4, but Yarborough, who had pondered long over his architectural requirements, even getting a plan from the eminent architect, 'Burlington Harry' Flitcroft, in 1745, was not entirely satisfied, and asked James Paine for advice. Here, then, is the possibility of Carr having met or derived benefit from the submissions of the two Palladians but, alas, the proof is lacking. However, that as may be, resolution eventually came to Yarborough and in January 1752 an agreement was made with Robert Carr to superintend the erection of the house and to provide designs for both the exterior and interior work. £100 was to be paid to Robert and John for their trouble. John Watson, partner of Robert in the superintendence of the West Riding bridges, was also to assist. Work started in 1753 and finished two years later in 1755. The result could hardly have been simpler: an orthodox three-story, five-bay hipped central block, with closely attached wings—similar to those at Kirby Hall. Yarborough was satisfied and recorded that "A plain regular building composed with all the beauty of order is beyond all carving and ornaments".

Although by now Carr was clearly accepted as a professional it is likely that he also dabbled in trade to the extent of supplying stone to Campsmount and to other jobs. For supportive evidence

1. The pedimented centre of the Assembly Rooms, York, a building attributed to Burlington, may also have encouraged Carr to use the arrangement.
2. *Yorks Archaeol Soc Jnl*, xvii, 1975, 121-32.

we move back to York where those plying a trade in the city were expected to take up the Freedom. Many quietly avoided the issue for, if patrimony could not be claimed, the not inconsiderable charge of £25 was made. Carr was left without choice. In 1752 his tender of £88.13.0 for a building at Pikeing Well was accepted by the Corporation—with the proviso that £25 would be deducted for the Freedom¹. The work must have been delayed for it was not until 1757 that payment,² less £25, was made to Carr who thereupon was entered in the Freeman's Rolls as "Mr John Carr, *Stonecutter by Order*".

The designation is surprising for Carr at this stage could have claimed architect or surveyor as his profession and, most certainly, the craft of mason. Possibly stonecutter was the trade in which he became involved when first he came to York many years previously, continuing with it as a second string even though primarily acting as an architect. In support of a sideline, the Register of Apprentices' Indentures dated 20th July 1757³, records the indenture of Robert Rhodes (who later took up his Freedom as a mason) to John Carr for a period of seven years. And years afterwards when Carr was at the height of his fame, we find from building accounts that habitually he was supplying marble fireplaces of the less ornate kind to many of his jobs.

Perhaps it was the gaining of the commission for the grandstand at York and the meeting with the Marquis of Rockingham (1730-82) which placed Carr's feet firmly on the road to professionalism and to national acclaim.

The Marquis, destined to become Carr's principal patron, had succeeded his father in 1750 inheriting great estates principally at Wentworth in the West Riding. Young, wealthy and one of the most influential men in the country—Rockingham had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of the North and East Ridings⁴—he was already embarking on the political career which culminated in the premiership on two occasions. His interest in racing and also, we suspect, in York's political importance, encouraged his enthusiastic participation in the building of the Stand.

The method of procuring a design is not entirely clear. Rumour has it that John Carr won a competition but competition in modern parlance implies a properly organised impartial affair, whereas, in fact, the procedure most probably would have been much looser, interested parties merely being asked to submit proposals. Three competitors only have been traced: Sir Thomas Robinson, James Paine and John Carr.

1. York City House Books, 9th July, 1752. CRO, Northallerton

2. York Chamberlain's A/cs, 16th May 1757. CRO, Northallerton

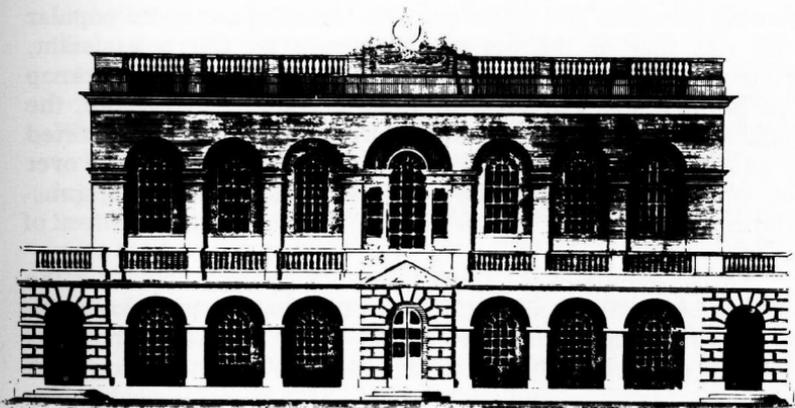
3. York City Archives. CRO, Northallerton

4. DNB, s.v. Watson-Wentworth, Charles

Lord Burlington had earlier held the same appointments.

Sir Thomas's design¹, dated 27 October 1753, was a simple affair consisting essentially of a rectangular room at ground level with a similar but loftier one lit by arched window openings on the first floor. It offered as alternatives a hipped roof or a flat balustraded one for viewing "in very serene weather". The composition of the paper was careful, the drawing in ink was neat but the design, pedestrian and completely lacking in imagination, could only be described as the work of an amateur. This is surprising for Long Sir Thomas, although best known as a man of fashion, had considerable reputation in architectural matters. A keen supporter of Burlington, he even then was engaged on the not inconsiderable western extension to Castle Howard.

The second competitor, James Paine, could not by any stretch of imagination be classed as an amateur. His design, or designs², for there were two, illustrate his professionalism. Elegant in plan with apsidal-ended main rooms and circular stair, and in elevation, with columned and elliptically arched openings characteristic of Paine's other work, they display an imagination far superior to that of Sir Thomas. But it was probably their elegance and preciousness, redolent of the boudoir or of the garden loggia, which invited the suspicion of the hard riding gentry, and they were turned down in favour of that by the emerging architect John Carr.



VIEW of the GRAND-STAND upon the RACE-GROUND at YORK.

Fig. 4. The Grandstand at York Racecourse (1754-56) from Sotheron's guide to York, 1787.

1. Two drawings of the same design by Robinson hang in the racecourse buildings, York.
2. Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments. Sheffield City Library.

Direct and simple—deceptively simple—Carr's was not a design which any mason or builder could have lifted out of a pattern book. It was the work of a man conversant with classical detailing. Combining directness with exactly the right degree of imagination, it was chosen on merit (fig. 4).

William Hargrove gave a brief description¹: "The Grand Stand, a large and neat brick building, was created by subscription under the superintendence of Mr Carr, in 1754, at which time a very considerable number of admission tickets were issued at five guineas each...The Ground floor of the Stand comprises several convenient rooms and offices for a resident, and for the entertainment of company, who may be accommodated with any kind of refreshment. On the Second Floor² is a very commodious and handsome room, with a balustrade projection in front, more than 200 ft in length, supported by a rustic arcade 15 feet high, and commanding a fine view of the whole course. The top, or roof of the building is leaded, and constructed peculiarly for the accommodation of spectators". A footnote explains that "Small parties often repair here from York and have tea prepared. Dancing assemblies are also not uncommon here".

Rockingham and the other promoters now had a design, and to encourage other subscribers, His Lordship, after conferring with Carr, negotiated the publication of a print of the Stand showing elevation and plans, price 1s. Another and more popular print was that of the perspective drawn by Carr's assistant, William Lindley. The prints and the Stand itself helped to keep Carr in the public eye for many years to come. Furthermore, the initial advertisement of becoming architect to a venture supported by so many gentlemen with the means to build—there were over 140 subscribers—placed the reasonably successful local practitioner at one stroke on the road to becoming an architect of national repute.

The payments in the impressive looking cash book³ for the building of the Stand show Carr's professional status. No longer did he act as superintendent or head of the works; another was paid "for overseeing the whole for two years". Conclusively Carr was now an architect and appropriately £160.10.0 was paid to him as fees. The dating of the payments indicate construction as starting in 1755 (or possibly late in '54) with completion in 1756.

Without Rockingham's promotion of the Stand, without Rockingham's bountiful financial support—the nobleman must have borne at least a quarter of the costs—Carr might never have received his chance. To Rockingham, Carr must remain eternally

1. Hargrove, *W History and Description of the Ancient City of York*, 1818, II, 575.
 2. We say "Second Story" or "first floor".
 3. Rockingham Papers. City Library. Sheffield.

grateful. But Rockingham's patronage did not stay there: Carr was later to be appointed architect to the Rockingham estates. However, that is another story.

In the meantime, our brief consideration of the early years of Carr's life and practice will best be finalised by turning to the estates of the Lascelles family where events lead up to the designing of Harewood House which, like the Stand, was a milestone in the architect's career.¹

Henry Lascelles, whose wealth largely derived from the sugar plantations of the West Indies, bought the Harewood and adjoining Gawthorpe estates in 1739. On his death in 1753, he was succeeded by his son, Edwin, an imperious and ambitious man whose desire for ennoblement impelled him to extend his birth-right as a setting and qualification for a title.² Together with brother, Daniel and Edward, his cousin, he acquired the estates of Ribston, Goldsborough, Plumpton and Stapleton so that the Lascelles empire dominated the area between Knaresborough and Leeds.

Control of the considerable building work necessary for the development of the estates was beyond the range of the hard-worked steward, Samuel Popplewell. John and his father, Robert Carr, were brought in to assist about 1753/4 when Edwin succeeded to the Harewood property. Perhaps the employment of the two men could be ascribed to distant family ties but, as the Lascelles were not noted for philanthropic gestures, it is more than likely that the Carrs were chosen simply because they were a combination unmatched for competence elsewhere in Yorkshire.

Daniel Lascelles, primarily responsible for the Lascelles' West India merchant house in London, had a sharp temper similar to that of his brother but he was by no means as decisive. Seemingly he followed in the steps of his elder brother: Edwin was improving an estate; Daniel would do the same. After vacillating over steward Popplewell's carefully presented advice, he bought the Plumpton estate about 1755. The lake and rocks at Plumpton were renowned and formed an excellent nucleus for the fashionable pursuit of creating a romantic situation complete with views, hills and serpentine walks. Work on a new dam head, designed by Carr, was started and extensive planting initiated. The responsibility for the landscaping is conjectural. Carr certainly helped in

1. For the subsequent writing the authors drew initially on the Harewood Papers—drawings, correspondence, accounts etc—formerly in the old estate office and now largely transferred to Leeds City Library, Sheepscar Lane.

See also (i) R B Wragg, *Harewood House*, Archaeol Jnl, cxxv, 1969, 342-7; (ii) Mary Mauchline, *Harewood House*, 1974.

2. Though it was not until 1790 that he was made Baron Harewood.

siting the various buildings; Capability Brown, probably already consulted by Edwin at Harewood, may have offered advice, but alas there is no proof.

However, Carr, on purchase of the estate, had made a survey of the old mansion—according to Leland “a fair house of stone with two towers”—and suggested several renovations. These were eventually accepted by Daniel in 1757, who tersely put it to the steward “I would now execute what I have paid him (Carr) for”! The alterations were carried out and in addition various estate buildings including a gothick farmhouse were started with Carr acting as architect¹. The father also worked as a visiting building consultant at a salary of 10/6d a day which apparently included some designing for, on one occasion, Daniel wrote “I might perhaps misunderstand Old Carr in his design for the little House, if not, he has Ordered it to be an octagon within and to appear square without”.

Undoubtedly, the most remarkable building remaining today is the two storied stables started about 1757. Entrance to its courtyard is gained through a great rusticated archway surmounted by an octagonal cupola reminiscent of that to Colen Campbell's Houghton stables—indeed, the quoins, the engaged arcading and the ball-ornamented parapet also have a similar affinity. The cupola was not what Lascelles wanted, and communications went awry. When Daniel discovered that it had been made large enough for an unwanted bell, his fury at the Carrs knew no bounds “Lett a stop be putt to this turrett, it is Just as I conjectured a vy Expensive Joke Ornament, and much too great for such a Building”. Fortunately, he was too late and the tower was finished giving a most distinctive Burlingtonian flavour to the stables. Then Daniel, possibly with an eye on his brother's activities, which we will later describe, decided that the old manor house was unsuitable after all. Thereupon he ordered Carr to produce a replacement but, long before the new mansion was finished, his attention had wandered to other estates. After again asking for advice from Poplewell who recommended the purchase of the Lupsett estate, Daniel, in typical fashion, bought Goldsborough in 1762. Attention was diverted to the new estate, worked ceased on Plumpton Hall and the mystery, mentioned in guide books, of the half-finished mansion and the curiously isolated stables in the great park, is explained.

But our brief forbids dilation on Carr's work in the '60s and so we must leave Goldsborough and return to Harewood. Initially, Carr's work for Edwin Lascelles, commencing in 1753, was appar-

1. R B Wragg, John Carr: Gothic Revivalist. *Studies in Architectural History*, ed W A Singleton, II, 15.

ently of a bread and butter nature—general advice, designs for gateways, a barn, a garden house and a portico for the old mansion house of the Gascoignes. Possibly the advertisement given by the York Standhouse was the cause of increasing popularity, but by September, 1754, Carr was excusing himself for not producing drawings on account of his visiting Lincolnshire and the Marquis of Rockingham. Obviously he was busy; his letters were short and to the point, all of which help to show that already he was very much the professional man.

Lascelles, having been in virtual control of the estate even before his father's death, is likely to have had early ideas as to the improvement and potential of the very attractive property. The church provided a readymade Gothic feature, and by diverting the turnpike to the north and demolishing the surrounding cottages, Lascelles not only increased the size of the park, but acquired an eye catcher, splendid in its isolation. The cottages were rebuilt in the village but not in one go as implied by Jewell in his history of Harewood (1819). The buildings went up one by one: some in the 1750s, some in the 1760s and some even in the 1790s.

The "new" village, stone-built with flagged roofs, has a satisfying unforced coherence and includes amusing toy town houses for the doctor and the steward, arcaded terrace blocks—formerly the Lascelles ribbon factory, but now used as cottages—a school and an inn. The accounts do not indicate, apart from fees paid specifically to Carr for the inn, who was the designer. But, as Carr was remunerated for his architectural services during the relevant period and as the work is in his style, there is no satisfactory reason for questioning the attribution of the village to Carr by Jewell.

A close friendship developed between the Carrs and the Steward. Even if the accounts and correspondence are vague as to the construction of the village then, at least, the letters between the men provide good indication as to the general employment of the Carrs. Both John and Robert were very much in evidence in the giving of advice on materials, construction and labour in a similar manner to that offered at Plumpton. For example, they advised against the digging of a foundation before the stone footings had been prepared, otherwise the excavation, filling with water, would tumble in "so says Messrs Carr". In 1756 they were consulted over raising the dam head. Both objected to the inadequacy of the proposals and they submitted a method of construction which was adopted. Their advice on costs was sought though, when given, was subject to the usual queries from the keen and impatient Lascelles. On one occasion when there was some difficulty in settling prices, Lascelles remarked, "I should think that people so well versed as

Messieurs Carrs in building, would be able readily to give a satisfactory answer to every question". A back handed compliment indeed!

However, these are incidentals, An interesting development occurred in 1755. Edwin Lascelles, out of the blue, commissioned young Chambers,¹ later Sir William (1723-96), to produce designs for him. The possibilities are fascinating. First, we have had the contact of Carr with Burlington at Kirby Hall, then apparently, with Paine and now with the man who was to head the architectural profession in the second half of the century.

Chambers had received some patronage from Frederick, Prince of Wales, at Kew in 1749, and although he returned from his travels abroad six years later, poor and with little practical experience, he had taken good care to let the people who mattered know of the originality of his architectural studies overseas in Italy and France. Lascelles, who fancied himself as something of a Francophile, with an inclination to drop "un mot français", was obviously impressed by the reputation of the bright young man. The first results apparently were designs for a quadrangle of stables and on 3rd April 1755, work was started. However, the responsibility for construction was not in the hands of Chambers but in those of the more experienced Carrs. John acted as architect, supplying drawings to Lascelles' requirements and adding a colonnade of his own design in 1757, whilst his father gave more continuous attention as a sort of visiting director of works, attending 197 days at 7/6d a day between April 1755 and January 1758.² Still stranger, the design was not at all similar to those submitted by Chambers which are now on exhibition in the stables; neither did it conform in the main details with anything done by Carr before or after. Whether or not Carr was required to incorporate Chamber's designing with something of his own—or that of his irascible client—is a matter for speculation. Certainly we feel that the centrepiece of the composition, the entrance gateway, owes more to Chambers than to Carr.³ However, that as may be, at least the two men must have been acquainted.

There is a story that Carr recommended Chambers to Lord Bute as a tutor in architecture to the future George III, thus paving the way for Chamber's subsequent eminence. The story, in a sense an indirect testimonial to the Yorkshireman's early rise to status,

1 Harris, J. *Sir William Chambers* (1970).

2 Ledger for New House and Stables. Cost of stables, £4500. Leeds City Library.

3 Even so, a recently discovered engraving of the stables by W Lindley, Carr's assistant, credits Carr with being the architect. Gott Collection, vol x, folio 7. City Art Gallery. Wakefield.

See also R. B. Wragg, *The Architect of Harewood Stables, 1755-8*, Rep York Georgian Soc 1978/9, 65-73.

is related to Gwilt.¹ The anecdote has been queried: Kitson² disposed of what he called a picturesque story by pointing to the statement in Mulvany's "Life of Gandon" (1846) that it was John Gwynn who recommended Chambers and, further, that as Carr was described about this time in the York Freeman's Rolls as Stonecutter, the likelihood of his being consulted on the education of the heir to the throne would appear to have been extremely remote.

But Kitson could easily have been mistaken. Obviously, he was unaware that the originator of Gwilt's version, Hardwick, had been a pupil of Chambers. And the derogatory appellation, stonecutter, meant nothing: Carr, as we have previously noted, was already a successful architect, designer of the York Grandstand, and well acquainted with the nobility. Bute's wife, being a Yorkshirewoman, doubtless would have been aware of Carr, and as Carr's sphere of operations extended to London, there is every possibility of the Earl having asked the successful architect for an opinion. Also, Carr was then in the almost unique position of having seen possibly the earliest of Chamber's designs,³ those for the Harewood stables. What then could have been more reasonable than a recommendation from Carr? There is no good reason for discounting the story.

Of course, Harewood House is the largest and most important mansion attributed to Carr. It marked the start of the second phase of Carr's development for it was here that the architect became aware of and assimilated at first hand the neo-classicism of Robert Adam.

Carr is early credited with the design of the house in Vol V of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1771), Adam being quoted as the designer of the State Rooms. However, Kitson and Bolton both queried Carr's contribution inferring that the Yorkshireman had been brought in at a late stage and had simply amended Adam's original layout. This is rather an over-simplification. Neither writer had complete access to the mass of documents which are now available for interpretation and neither could have been aware of the close association which Carr enjoyed, or endured, with Lascelles from as early as 1753. But it would seem that when Lascelles started constructing the stables in April 1755, he had already considered and even made a start on the building of a new mansion to replace the old manor house in the valley, *three* years before Adam had begun to practise in England.

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1. Chambers, W. *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* with an introduction by J Gwilt (1825).
 2. RIBA Jnl, Jan 22, 1910, 249.
 3. That is the earliest after Chamber's return to England in 1755.

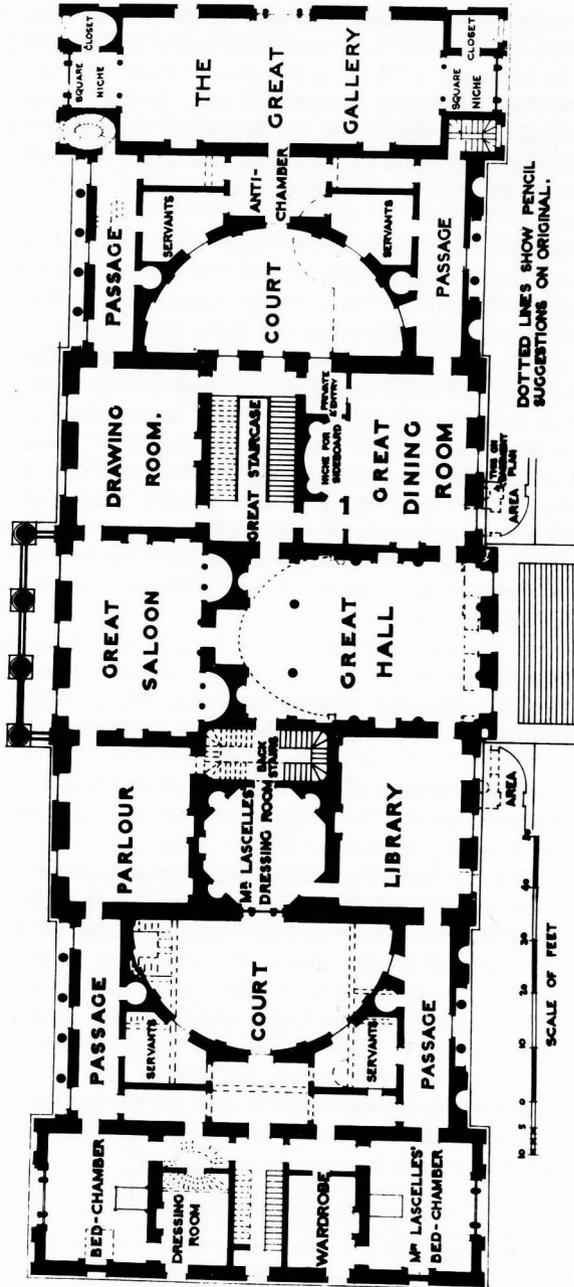


Fig. 5. Harewood House: The plan as modified by Robert Adam (redrawn from the original in the Soane Museum).

THE DATES ON THE PLAN ARE THOSE OF ADAMS' DRAWINGS OF THE INTERIORS.

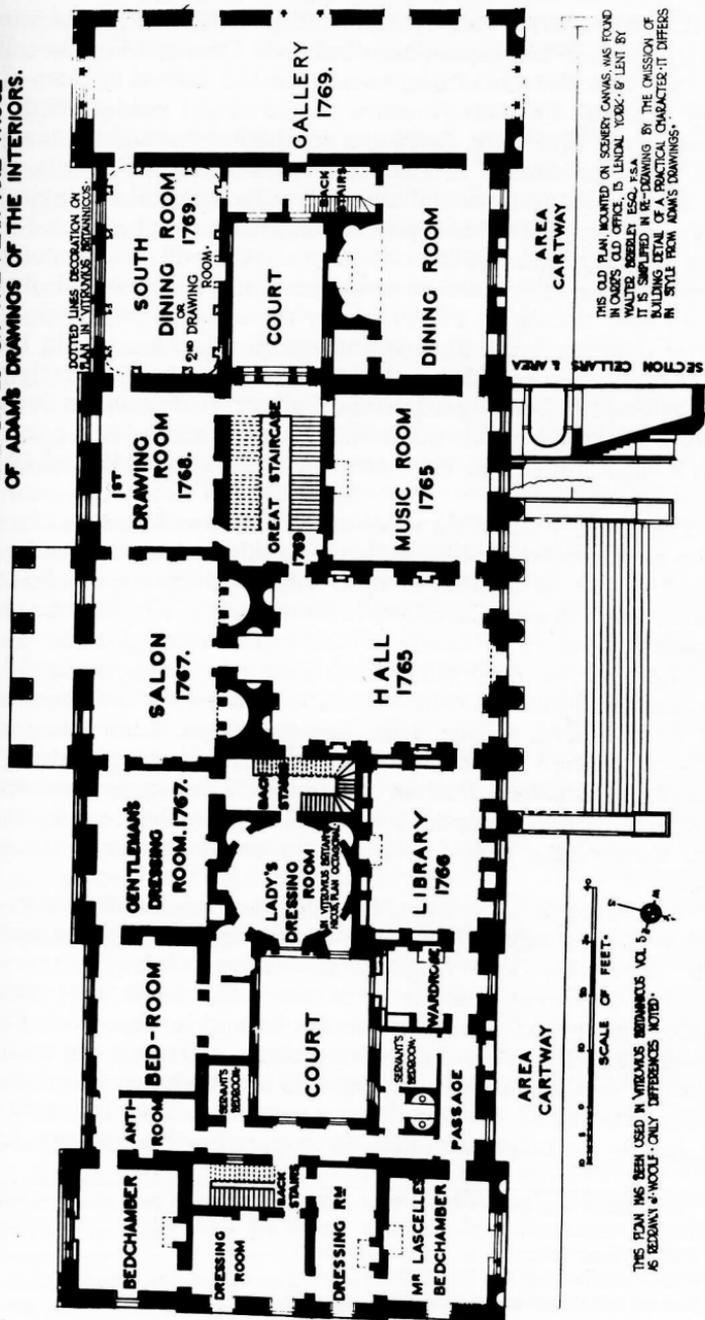


Fig. 6. Harewood House: The plan as essentially completed by Carr. (NB The plan was redrawn from one in Carr's old office, Lendal, York. A similar plan drawn by Carr but with an octagonal instead of a circular Lady's Dressing Room is in Leeds City Library, Sheepscar Lane and formed the basis for that illustrated in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, V).

It was on 26th April 1755 that Popplewell, the steward, mentioned in a letter "a New House Top of the Hill". And later in the same year in correspondence between Carr and Popplewell we hear how Lascelles, standing on a scaffold,¹ hinted to Carr of the shape of a plan by a Mr Jones, a person as yet unidentified. Sufficient to say that Carr, feeling a competitor breathing down his neck, fell over himself in anxiety in presenting the merits of his own design. Naturally he did not wish to be accused of plagiarism: "...you will be pleased to represent mine as a rough sketch I made about a month ago not intending to show it till I had made my improvements upon it the Dimensions of the rooms are all figured and an easy access to every Room, the Area of my Plan is not greater than Mr Jones dimensions you gave me nor so big I think and I am pretty sure I have as little waste Room consequently must have as Good Rooms, I get into the Gallery, Bedchamber Dressing Room without going thro any other Room which seldom can be in such a large house and have two spacious Back Stairs of 10 feet Diamr..."

Presumably Lascelles was not entirely convinced for, in spite of the apparent start of operations, he allowed himself to be persuaded to wait for another design. John Hall Stevenson of Skelton Castle told his friend Chambers in November 1755, "I beg you will prepare a plan for a house of thirty thousand pounds for Mr Lascelles...he has had plans from Every body in England".² In due course Chambers complied with a vast plan³ reminiscent of that for Blenheim Palace. Lascelles must have been taken aback for he submitted the drawings to a Burlington supporter, Lord Leicester of Holkham Hall for an opinion. Leicester's comment on the design with its pompous French Italian neo-classical elevations, could hardly have been favourable for no more was heard of the scheme.

According to Stevenson, Lascelles had obtained "plans from Everybody in England" but the architects were not named and their identities are conjectural. Correspondence, stewards accounts and even Lascelles' private cash book are curiously uninformative. According to Dorothy Stroud in *Capability Brown*, Brown himself may have submitted plans. Certainly the architect-gardener was consulted over proposed landscaping at Harewood in 1758, a year before the foundations were dug, Yet his contribution can hardly be taken seriously as apparently he was not further

1. The scaffold was blown down in a storm, Feb 1756. Could this calamity have stopped actual building operations, or had the scaffold been erected simply to give the keen Lascelles an idea of location?

2. RIBA Letters CHA 2/3 Nov, 1755

3. Now on exhibition in the stables, Harewood.

employed until 1772. A more interesting fact appears in Popplewell's cash book (1749-63) where there is a payment on 1st September 1757, to "Mr Brettingham on Acct of New House £10.0.0". As Brettingham (1699-1769)¹ was the executive architect of Holkham Hall owned by Lord Leicester, one wonders whether it was really he, rather than the nobleman, who in a fit of professional pique had advised against Chamber's plan. And could there be some connection between Brettingham and Carr? It seems likely: Lascelles wrote to Popplewell in March 1758 "...let Mr Carr Junr know that if he proposed it this Spring to visit *Lord Leicesters* and make London on his return I wish he would do it before I left Town for I think many things might as well (be) settled here (i.e. London) if not better than in the Country". Could it be that Lascelles, obsessed with the Palladian grandeur of Holkham, was hoping for something similar at Harewood? A comparison between the plans of Holkham and Harewood shows that although the latter is attenuated into a long rectangle it has some relationship with the central core of the Norfolk mansion. That the seed of Harewood may have been sown at Holkham is an interesting thought.

However, at this stage, there is no further evidence of the participation of architects other than Carr. The latter continued to work on preliminary schemes. In a letter dated 9th January 1758, Robert Carr, quietly proud of John, wrote to Popplewell, "My Son has a mind to make another plan, before he comes, and by going home he will set the lad to it..." Then John, writing sometime in 1758, "I am now with my Father in calculating the expense of your house and proposed being with you about Tuesday or Wednesday next as we hope by that time to have finished. If you have an opportunity of mentioning this to Mr Lascelles, perhaps it may not be amiss lest he should think us negligent..." The construction of a building thus appeared imminent. William Rigge, who invariably supplied slate to Carr's jobs, wrote, "I shall be Extremely glad to Serve Mr Lascelles with slate for his New Hall..." The date was April, 1758. Thereafter, a reading of the Steward's papers gives the clear impression that John, at first with his father and then alone, proceeded to organise and develop the building of the mansion until Adam was brought in to decorate the State Rooms.

How then does Robert Adam come into the picture as was so strongly argued by Kitson and Bolton.

Adam had arrived back in this country in January 1758, and within months achieved the unexpected—a commission from Edwin Lascelles. On 17 June 1758, Adam wrote to his brother

1 Brettingham, who published designs of Holkham Hall under his own name without reference to the designer, William Kent, became a successful architect of the orthodox Palladian School often under the patronage of Lord Leicester.

James¹ "Lascelles house is now well advanced. I have made some alterations to it, but as the plan did not admit of a great many that has prevented the fronts from being changed likewise. The portico I make projecting and bold dressings round the windows the pavilion fronts are quite different and the collonnades, with columns also and look well, statues etc adorn the whole, and enriched freize and being done for a large scale, it is magnificent... I have thrown in large semi-circular back courts with columns between the house and wings..." James replied,² "It affords me the greatest pleasure to thin, that you have got Lascelle's plan improved to your mind and that you have tickled it up so as to dazzle the eyes of the Squire".

The description by Robert tallies with his Harewood drawings, now in the Soane Museum, but the wording seems to suggest that Adam was altering and improving an earlier design. In fact, the titling on the Soane drawings, "A New Design for Gawthorpe House" also supports the existence of an earlier scheme, presumably the one by Carr.

The enthusiasm of Adam's earlier correspondence changed to despair "...not one scrap from Lascelles so I begin to suspect him...I hope he'll pay me for the plan at any rate..."³ Mention of a £700 fee which the Adams were anticipating perhaps had so startled the tight-fisted Lascelles that the latter paid off Adam and returned to the more reasonably priced Carr whose employment continued until completion of the house. Payment for £200 to a "Mr A" in the agent's book, 16 September, 1758 may refer to Adam.⁴

Carr's original sketch proposals are unlikely to have been altered fundamentally by Robert Adam, if the latter's correspondence can be taken as a guide. However, comparison between Adam's proposals and Carr's final design, illustrated in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, gives some idea of the extent of possible Adam influence. Elevationally, Carr's work is better considered, less fussy, less contrived and more appropriate to the countryside setting than that of Adam. The entrance elevation, quietly dignified, with hipped roofs on both centre block and pavilions and the wide hexastyle pedimented centre—surely taken from Nostell

1. Scottish Record Office. Penicuik Muniments, GD 18/4848.

2. Ibid GD/18/4849.

3. Ibid. GD 18/4852.

4. An unexecuted design in the Adam Collection, Soane Museum, for finishing the top of the Harewood church steeple "in the Gothick taste", though not signed by Adam, might possibly indicate his incidental employment in 1759. However, it has been suggested that John Carr or a local man could have been the designer.

5. Its quality is apparent in Thomas Malton's water colour perspective of the north front, hanging in the mansion. Barry's nineteenth-century alterations now obscure Carr's design.

Priory—has a slightly reactionary appearance. But this is hardly surprising considering Carr's awareness of works by Burlington, Morris, Robinson, Paine and Brettingham. However the detailing of links and pavilions can perhaps be claimed as having Adam sympathies though equally it can be argued that the pavilions are simply a development of part of the elevation to Burlington's Assembly Rooms, in York, well-known to Carr. The *south* elevation has a temple front, the projection of which, together with tabernacle framing of the centre windows, a device not seen in Carr's earlier work, can perhaps be ascribed to Adam. But the unexpected change of treatment of links and pavilions from those of the north elevation is completely typical of the undogmatic Carr. If little remains of the proposals of Adam then, at least, we can suggest that the latter acted as a catalyst to Carr's detailing: the heavy string courses and quoins expressive of Carr's early work became history; henceforth the detail is finer.

Adam's plan—similar overall to Carr's final layout but articulated in classic fashion with central house block clearly separated from the outlying pavilions—could simply have been a rationalisation of the Yorkshireman's scheme (fig. 5). Its principal features were two large, semi-circular formal courts in the links contrasting with the small asymmetrical light wells of Carr's final plan. But Lascelles apparently was not entirely impressed with the novelty or the purity of Adam's aesthetic articulation. He was keen to get his moneysworth—a point, incidentally, well illustrated in one of his many asides to long-suffering Popplewell—"I have no doubt of your having vouchers for every article but as I have often told it was a maxim of my Fathers that little regard should be pay'd to them, unless it cou'd be proved you had yr pennyworth for yr penny..." Compromising with the practical—or the aesthetic depending on the viewpoint—he had Carr draw up plans with a semi-circular court on the west and a small rectangular court on the east, packed round with accommodation.

Essentially, it seems that this intermediate plan was the one on which construction was started—though not before the Squire had imperiously scribbled alterations in ink across one of Carr's carefully drawn submissions. Then in 1762, Lascelles had a second thought. The accounts of the bricklayer and mason show that a certain amount of work in both courts was taken down and rebuilt; the result—*both* links filled in with accommodation apart from two small rectangular courts. Lascelles had, at last, achieved his moneysworth (fig. 6).

1. Distributed between Harewood stables; Leeds City Library (Sheepscar Lane); and Brierley, Leckenby, Keighley and Groom, Architects of York.
R B Wragg. *The Bridges of John Carr*. York Georgian Soc Rep 1956-57.

But we have gone too far and must retrace our steps. The earliest definite reference to a start being made on construction occurs in the disbursements: "New House...began 6th Day of Jan 1759". Two days later, Carr discussed with Popplewell the purchase of timbering for the excavations which had already been commenced. On the 22nd, after working on the dimensioned drawings and finding it necessary to extend the building by 1'6", Carr asked Popplewell to excavate beyond the stakes which "we put down...to prevent Mr Lascelles finding fault". He also reported delightedly great improvements in the plan, approved the previous day by Lascelles. Later the same month (24 January), Carr was still making alterations to the plan "for the execution" and preparing to brief his father, who was to act as surveyor of works, with the method "for proceeding with the cellars". The foundation stone was ceremoniously laid on 23rd March by Edwin Lascelles, and by July the cellars were being arched over. Then, in early December, Popplewell received sad news from a relative of John Carr:

"Sir, My cousin desired I would acquaint you with the death of his father and at the same time invite you to his funeral, which will be to Morrow in the Afternoon; if opportunity will permitt shoud be very glad if you would come. I am sir your most Obt servt Jos Carr
Friday morning
P.S. My cousin expects you will be a bearer

And so the partnership of Carr and Son came to an end. The unfortunate demise of Robert certainly closed a chapter but also marked a beginning for John Carr. Succeeding to the Surveyorship of Bridges of the West Riding in place of his father, the way was left clear for him to develop another career: that of bridgemaster, a tale narrated elsewhere¹. The York Standhouse and now the Harewood plum commission clinched his acceptance in social circles as an architect: it marked the start of a professional career leading to a fortune, said to be £150,000. It also seems an appropriate point to conclude this dissertation. Carr had operated under the influence of the Burlingtonians, soon he would be swayed by another directing force. His contact with Adam up to this moment had at the most been of a cursory nature. But with the re-employment of the virtuoso by Lascelles for the decoration of the State Rooms at Harewood and the resulting proliferation of Adam drawings from 1764 onwards, executive architect Carr became particularly aware of the Scotsman's novel and elegant neo-classicism. His subsequent works in the '60s, '70s and '80s reveal the debt which he owed to Adam. But a consideration of these belongs to the second phase of his professional life and a later story.

1. R. B. Wragg. *The Bridges of John Carr*, Hunter Archaeol Soc, 1979, 315-334.