

By 1815 the house was reported on (see below) as being completely in ruins... Quite why such a substantial house should have deteriorated so rapidly – it was, after all, only just over two hundred years old – is unclear, but neglect and wood-rot must have contributed. Demolition of the Cobb Mansion started in 1817. Some of the dressed Ashlar stone taken down was recycled and used for the front wall of the Baptist Chapel at Bodicote, the building of which was started in 1817.

Brewer's description of the Cobb Mansion in his book *A Topographical and Historical Description of the County of Oxford* published c.1815, said that '*Near a spot of ground, denominated by the Green, stands the ancient mansion of the Cobb family, its venerable walls pressing forwards to the last stages of decay and clothed with luxuriant ivy. Each mouldering fragment acquires additional effect from the contrast presented by a neat and flourishing residence which has been constructed close to the ruin [could this have been The Rookery sited only a few yards from the Cobb Mansion?]. The rooms of this mansion were lofty and spacious; and the attached grounds though small were pleasing. The Cobb family lived here for nearly two centuries [1582-1762] in the exercise of genuine English hospitality*'.

I am sure that the ornamental south face of the house must have been its original front. The picture labelled '*View taken from the garden*' (see p.202) shows an elaborately decorated five-bay Tudor house shaped in a hollow E. The bays to the left and right of the centre bay were topped by hipped gables, with flat tops surmounted by coping stones topped with finials. The elaborately carved Dutch gable to the centre bay had a cartouche that looked as if it were designed to contain the family's armorial bearings. Broughton Castle, also a Tudor mansion, has the Fiennes family coat of arms displayed in a similar shaped cartouche over the centre bay of the front elevation. Why would one build such an elaborate facade if it were not designed to be seen and admired? The picture labelled '*Front view*' shows a very plain, almost nondescript, frontage which despite its Tudor ancestry is almost Georgian in its simplicity.

Reproduced on pp.202-203 are the two extant, unsigned but competently executed, watercolours of the Cobb Mansion. The rear elevation has a contemporary note in pencil stating '*View taken from the garden of Sir George Cobb's house at Adderbury, Oxfordshire 1801*'. The other view depicts a plain elevation labelled '*Front view of Sir George Cobb's House, Adderbury 1801 taken down 1817*'.