CHASTLETON HOUSE
OXFORDSHIRE

Historic Plain Glazing Conservation

Chastleton House was built between 1607 and 1612 by a prosperous wool merchant, Walter Jones, as an impressive statement of wealth and power. Owned by the same increasingly impoverished family until 1991, the house remained unchanged for nearly 400 years until it was taken into the care of the National Trust in 1991. The National Trust then undertook a programme of conservation, rather than restoration, allowing future visitors to see the house essentially as it was when acquired (rather than being restored to its 'original' state).

With regard to the glazing, the conservation approach meant that every type of glass found in the property, original broad glass, cylinder glass and crown glass, was conserved or repaired as found, like for like, even though some of the glass dated from later repairs. Wherever possible, repairs and replacements had to be made using traditional methods and materials, exactly reproducing the original materials.

Wherever possible, if the glass panes were intact and mechanically held within their framework, the glass was epoxy resin bonded in situ; epoxy resins have a similar refractive index to glass, leaving the repaired cracks barely visible. Where pieces were badly broken and replacement was necessary, each type of glass was carefully (and individually) matched.

Metal and wooden casements were repaired and restored using traditional materials; the lead calmes in leaded glazing were preserved where possible and replaced where necessary using specially produced calmes of matching profile. Windows were pointed in using traditional lime mortar mixed with animal hair and aggregates including soil from the garden, as would have been done when the house was first built.

In conserving the glazing of Chastleton House, Barley Studio were able to bring all of their knowledge and experience, both of historic glazing methods and materials and of conservation philosophy and practice, to the project, using traditional materials and methods to conserve a wide range of glazing types.