



Castlehyde is regarded as one of the finest examples of Georgian Country House style. It was originally built to the designs of Davis Ducat circa 1750, in the intervening period it was altered and extended by various owners. It was subsequently enlarged and remodelled by Abraham Hargreave Architect in c1801 for John Hyde. Douglas Hyde, the President of Ireland (1938-45) spent much of his early childhood years at Castlehyde. It is a prime example of and valuable reminder of the way of life for the elite society in Ireland in the nineteenth century.

The importance of the restoration of Castlehyde is paramount to the Architectural Heritage of Ireland. Situated on the banks of the river Blackwater, this protected structure and grounds are situated in a Special Area of Conservation.

Castlehyde House & Estate

To gain access to the garden one would have to climb the magnificent wrought iron staircase to reach the garden at upper level. The existence of an outdoor bridge, which was once the connection between the interior and exterior, extends out to the views beyond.

Castlehyde is a south facing, seven-bay, three storey over half-basement building. It comprises of a central entrance and three-bay central breakfront. It has been recently reported that the building itself has been constructed in two stages (Kissane, 2001), between c.1740-1760. Whilst Castle Hyde is characteristic in form of late eighteenth century country houses built in the classical style, it is distinguished by the ornate limestone dressings such as the Ionic style pilasters and tripartite window to the wings. The house is largely built of local sandstone with dressed limestone to quoins, parapets, windows and its staircases. Portland stone has been used in the oval staircase and the large picture window to the east drawing room.

The symmetrical proportions of the façade are articulated by the finely cut limestone quoins, which also add decorative interest to the front elevation. The ornate raised entrance constitutes the focal point of the house; the door surround and heraldic motifs are particularly finely carved.



The well-proportioned façade has a piano nobile level raised above the basement, which was a favourite device of eighteenth century Irish architecture. Its preservation captures the quality of craftsmanship with elaborate features seen in the fenestration and fine plasterwork believed to be the work of the Osbourne Brothers.

The arrangement of fenestration at first floor level resembles that of the Palladian or Venetian style. There is no consistency to the style of the windows at ground floor level. The windows of the pavilions are bow fronted and have plain surrounds. All three round-headed windows are recessed in a blind aedicule. Four ionic pilasters divide the bays which reveal the plainness of their composition.

There are four bays to the side of the elevation. The large hall hosts fluted Corinthian columns; frieze of transitional plasterwork plaster panelling on the walls which is also apparent in the drawing room. The corridors and pavilions date to the turn of the nineteenth century. Limestone ionic pilasters divide the bays of long wide corridors which evoke that of a gallery space.

