Sheldon Manor

Sheldon Manor near Chippenham , Wiltshire , England , is Wiltshire 's oldest inhabited manor house and dates back to Saxon times . Its structure is mostly 17th @-@ century and it is a Grade I listed building .

History

The medieval settlement of Sheldon , first mentioned in 803 , no longer exists , having been deserted by 1582 ; a 1976 survey confirmed its remains to lie to the rear of the Manor , which itself stands on the site of an older habitation known as " The Holloway " .

The manor of Sheldon was granted to Sir William de Beauvilain in about 1180 ; on his death , as a Norman , it was forfeit to The Crown as an escheat and then granted to the de Godarville family in 1231 by Henry III . In 1250 it passed to Sir Geoffrey Gascelyn on his marriage to Joan de Godarville . In 1424 the Manor was sold to Sir Walter Hungerford , and after some time was eventually granted to Catherine Parr temporarily until the Hungerford heir achieved majority .

For many years , the property was tenanted until Sir Edward Hungerford sold the Manor in 1684 and in 1711 it was bought by William Norris , whose last survivor died in 1828 . In 1854 it was bought by Sir Gabriel Goldney , whose son lived there until 1911 , followed by the Bailey family .

From 1917 the Manor was owned by the Gibbs family being Major Martin Anthony Gibbs (1916 ? 1994) , a former High Sheriff of Wiltshire , his wife Elsie Margaret Mary (1922 @-@ 2012 , née Hamilton @-@ Dalrymple) and their six children . In 1982 , Mrs Gibbs published a historical and architectural account of the Manor .

The Manor is now within the civil parish of Chippenham Without ; unbroken occupation since 1282 makes Sheldon Manor Wiltshire 's longest continuously inhabited manor house . It was granted Grade I listed building status by the Historic Building and Monuments Commission for England in 1960 .

Architecture and antiques

The earliest parts of the structure are thought to be a window on the west side and the porch , dating back to the late 13th century . Pevsner considered the porch to be " astounding , but much too big for the present house " . Most of the main structure , consisting of two and a half storeys , and of rubble stone and stone @-@ tiled roofs , dates to c . 1659 when it was built for a Mr Forster , although some parts are earlier . Later additions date to post @-@ 1711 and improvements to c . 1911 .

External features

There is a small stone chapel in the grounds , believed to date to about 1450 and built by the Hungerford family for use by themselves and their servants . It has an east window with Perpendicular tracery . After a long period of use as stables , it was restored in the twentieth century . There is also a brick @-@ built storehouse mounted on staddle stones to prevent incursion by rats .

Antiques

The Manor has collections of Nailsea glass , Persian saddlebags , porcelain and oak furniture , including an Elizabethan refectory table and chairs . There are paintings by Tissot , David Teniers and Bassano , vases by William de Morgan and " an unusual collection of glass walking sticks . "

Modern times

The Manor was the first winner of AA / NPI Historic House Awards , for its " architectural integrity and warm welcome " ; its gardens , which are open to the public although the house itself is not , include a notable rose garden , ancient yews , an arboretum and mulberry bushes .

It is a licensed venue for weddings and hosts summer productions of Shakespeare and operas in

its grounds . It is also home to the Cleveland Bay Endeavour , a project to " conserve and promote " the Cleveland Bay horse , an endangered breed .

The owners of the house were described in 1988 by the New York Times as " ... provid [ing] that essential ingredient so many historic buildings lack : a sense of continuity with the past and the feeling that Sheldon Manor is still a living organism , not an ancient relic . "

In 1995 , the Manor was used as the location for Uppercross in the BBC production Persuasion and in 2008 for BBC One 's Bonekickers .