

Basic Detail Report



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Title Desk and Bookcase

Date 1809

Primary Maker Aaron Chapin

Medium Cherry primary wood, eastern white pine and tulip poplar secondary wood, green baize, brass hardware

Description Cherry desk and bookcase in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style.

The desk and bookcase consists of bookcase in the upper case, over a desk with a secretary drawer over a cabinet in the lower case. The bookcase has a flat top above shallow cornice molding and a plain frieze. Each bookcase door has six panes of glass. The bookcase fits inside the mid-molding of the desk. The bookcase is not as deep as the desk, leaving an eight-inch-deep flat surface between the mid-molding and the top front edge of the desk. The drawer arrangement of the desk consists of a secretary drawer with a fall front flanked by two drawers, stacked one over one; the front of the secretary drawer pivots downward on hinges to form a writing surface for the desk. Below this are two square, paneled cabinet doors. The front and side skirts each have a single downward curve in the center which then curves up at the edges to meet the flared, French feet. The bookcase has an overall red stain. The interior arrangement of the bookcase consists of four full-width, fixed shelves. The interior arrangement of the secretary drawer consists of two drawers in a line, over five narrow pigeonholes in a line flanked by two drawers, over three wider pigeonholes in a line. In the line of three pigeonholes, the side pigeonholes are taller than the one in the center. The writing surface of the desk is lined with

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green baize (replaced). The interior arrangement of the cabinet at the bottom of the desk consists of one adjustable full-width shelf. Hardware includes a brass lock escutcheon on each bookcase door; the escutcheon on the left door is blind. The interior right side of the left door has a latch at the top and at the bottom. The four drawers flanking the secretary drawer each have a round brass knob. The secretary drawer has a round brass lock escutcheon at the top center edge; this is flanked by two round escutcheons with ring pulls. The fall front is supported by a brass quadrant at each side and two hinges on the bottom edge. Each interior desk drawer has a small round brass knob. Each cabinet door has a brass lock escutcheon; the escutcheon on the left door is blind. There is one working key for the bookcase. Condition: At least one board in the backboard of the bookcase is replaced; all of the boards have been renailed. Shelf supports for two additional shelves have been added to each interior side of the bookcase; those shelves are missing. One shelf support is missing from the inside of the cabinet at the bottom of the desk. The left center pane of glass on the right bookcase door has a small, meandering crack at the top. The green baize and hardware are replaced. The red wash is original. Design and Construction Details: Case Construction. The top pediment molding is nailed to the top of the bookcase, while the lower pediment molding is nailed to the sides. The bookcase backboard consists of five horizontally-oriented boards that are nailed into rabbets in the case sides. Each bookcase door consists of a frame with mortise-and-tenon joints at the corners and molding between each pane of glass. The right bookcase door has a thin strip of molding applied to the inside

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edge; this molding consists of an astragal flanked by a fillet. The bookcase shelves fit into grooves in the sides of the case. The top and bottom front edges of each shelf have incised molding. The desk backboard consists of five vertically-oriented boards of alternating widths, which are nailed into rabbets in the case sides. The cabinet doors are made of panel-and-frame construction; the outer edges of each door have a line of incised molding. The shelf inside the cabinet has incised molding at the top and bottom front edges. The shelf sits on one of three shelf supports that are nailed to the sides of the case (one is missing). The French feet are constructed of facing applied to corner blocks. The front and side skirts are attached to the case with glue blocks. Drawer Construction. The drawer dividers are tenoned into the case sides. Vertical partitions are tenoned into the top of the case above and into the drawer divider below; a full-depth panel of wood is located behind each vertical partition. Each drawer front has a line of incised molding at the edge. The drawer sides are flat on top. The drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the front and sides of each drawer and are nailed at the back. The secretary drawer does not come out of the desk; this is because two blocks of wood are screwed to the bottom of the drawer to hold it in.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 96 3/4 x 52 1/4 x 20in. (245.7 x 132.7 x 50.8cm)