

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1815-1830

Primary Maker Laura Dibble

Medium Maple, ash, rush

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Description Black, painted armchair in the Empire, or late neoclassical, style,

with a rectangular crest rail, turned spindles, legs, and stretchers, and a rush

seat. The back of the chair is formed by a horizontal, rectangular crest rail at the

top between two stiles. The crest rail is bowed back in the center; the top edge

of the crest rail is set down about one inch below the top of each stile. Below the

crest rail are four slender, baluster-and-ring turned spindles, which attach at the

bottom to a stay rail. The plain, turned stay rail is bowed back in the center.

Above the seat, each cylindrical stile angles backward. Below the seat, each stile

forms a cylindrical leg that slants backward slightly. Each arm is bowed outward

in the center, and extends three quarters of the depth of the seat. Each arm is

supported at the front by a conical arm support that is joined to the side seat

rail. Centered below each arm are two slender, baluster-and-ring turned

spindles, then a curved rail that joins the arm support and the stile. The

trapezoidal rush seat is supported at the front on a block at the top of each of

the front legs. Each front leg is tapered slightly, with a recessed ring at the top

and the ankle. A double-baluster turned stretcher joins the two front legs. Each

side of the chair has two plain, turned stretchers. The back of the chair has one

plain, turned stretcher. Painted Decoration. The armchair frame is painted black

overall with gilded decoration. An abstract gilt design is stenciled on the crest

rail (now flaking off). The front of each spindle and the front stretcher are

painted with three leaves on each turned baluster. Gold bands circle the stiles,

spindles, arms, arm supports, front legs, and side stretchers. Condition: The

black and gold paint on the chair frame is flaking, but most notably on the crest

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rail and front legs. The black and gold paint is well worn off the top of each arm

and the top of the front stretcher. The joint at the back of each arm has been

reinforced with a nail through the stile. The block at the top of each front leg has

been reinforced with a nail down through the block and tenon. The rush at the

front left corner of the seat is missing; the rush is probably replaced. Design and

Construction Details: The crest rail and stay rail are tenoned into the stiles. The

spindles are tenoned into the crest rail above and the stay rail below. The back

of each arm is tenoned into the stile. The front of each arm is supported on a

tenon at the top of the arm support. The bottom of each arm support is screwed

into the side seat rail and extends down about 1 ½ inches past the side seat rail.

The rail below each arm is tenoned into the arm support and stile; the spindles

are tenoned into the arm above and the rail below. The seat rails are tenoned

into the stiles at the back, and into a quarter-round block at the top of each front

leg. The seat rails are probably bladelike with a rounded outer edge and a

tapered inner edge. Each block rests on a tenon at the top of the front leg. Each

stretcher is tenoned into the lower legs.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 34 7/16 x 20 3/4

x 18 7/16in. (87.5 x 52.7 x 46.8cm)