

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1785-1805

Primary Maker John Warner Barber

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Medium Maple, oak, ash, black, blue and yellow paint, upholstery fabric, linen,
iron nails

Description Black painted armchair in the Windsor style, with a high back, an upholstered plank seat, and turned posts and legs. The back of the chair includes a bowed crest rail atop seven tall spindles; the crest rail is serpentine, consisting of a shaped upper edge with an arch in the center flanked by a high scrolled, or peaked, ear. Below the crest rail is a rail that curves forward to form the flat handholds. The rail contains the seven tall spindles and is supported at each arm by an additional short spindle and a post turned with a baluster form. All the spindles are swelled below the rail. The back of the armchair is slanted back; the spindles and posts are joined to the seat in a semi-circular arrangement. The plank seat is shield-shaped and has a saddled, or recessed, surface with a projecting ridge at the front, and a flat area at the back where the spindles and posts join the seat. The sides and back of the plank are severely chamfered, or cut at an angle. Below the seat are four turned maple legs that are raked, or slanted out from top to bottom; each is turned with a baluster form over a tapered ankle and foot. Each side of the chair has a single stretcher with an ovoid form in the center. Between the stretcher is a single medial stretcher, also with an ovoid form in the center. Painted Decoration (later addition). The chair is painted black with alternating bands of blue and yellow paint at the top and center of the spindles. An additional yellow band of paint circles a turning on the post and the front legs. Upholstery (later addition). There is a shield-shaped upholstered area in the center of the plank seat, consisting of striped

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fabric over a linen undercover and stuffing. The upholstered area is outlined

with tape, which is nailed directly to the seat. Condition: At one time, a

meandering floral paper appliqué was located on the front of the crest rail; only

the outline of the appliqué is visible now. The upholstery is a later addition. The

plank seat has split from front to back, slightly left of center; a board is nailed to

the underside of the plank seat to repair this split. The armchair has later black,

yellow and blue painted decoration. The black paint is flaking and worn on the

handholds, front of the plank seat, and the lower legs; the black paint is applied

over yellow paint. Design and Construction Details: The crest rail is supported on

a tenon at the top of each of the tall spindles; the center and each side spindle is

also pinned to the crest rail. These spindles extend through the rail. The rail is

supported on a through tenon at the top of each short spindle and post. The

spindles are tenoned down into the spindle platform. The posts are tenoned

through the spindle platform. The plank seat is supported by a tenon at the top

of each leg. A shield-shaped board is nailed to the underside of the plank seat.

The side stretchers are tenoned into the lower legs. The medial stretcher is

tenoned into each of the side stretchers.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 39 1/4 x 20 7/8

x 19 1/8in. (99.7 x 53 x 48.6cm)