

Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date 1775

Primary Maker Eliphalet Chapin

Medium Cherry, green moreen wool, brass nails

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Description Cherry side chair in the Chippendale, or rococo, style, with a

scalloped crest rail, a pierced, vase-shaped splat, cabriole front legs over claw-

and-ball feet, and over-the-rails upholstery. The back of the chair is formed by a

crest rail atop two stiles. The crest rail has a ribbed shell in the center, flanked by

a cyma curve, or S-curve, and a ribbed ear. Centered below the crest rail is a

pierced, vase-shaped splat, with interlocking C-scrolls and smaller carved

scrolls; the front of the splat is carved to add depth to the overlapped shapes.

The splat is joined at the bottom to a tapered splat shoe, just above the back

seat rail. Above the seat, each stile is slanted back. Below the seat, each stile

forms a cylindrical back leg that is slanted toward the center back of the chair.

The seat is trapezoidal, with over-the-rails green moreen wool upholstery

(replaced). The upholstery is secured with a line of brass nails along the bottom

and side edges of the front and side seat rails. Each cabriole front leg extends

from the height of the seat down to a claw-and-ball foot. Two knee brackets are

located at the top of each front leg, where the leg joins the front or side seat rail;

the diagonal edge of each knee bracket is shaped with a cyma curve. Condition:

The chair frame has been disassembled; the joints have been repaired and re-

glued. The leftmost tip of the splat is replaced. The top center of the splat has a

split that extends down through the center and lower sections of the splat. The

top and bottom edges of the seat rails are repaired. The furthest projecting

points of the knees are dented and lightly gouged. The frame is refinished; the

finish has since been touched up. The chair is reupholstered. Design and

Construction Details: The crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each

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stile. Above the seat, the back of each stile is rounded. The splat is tenoned into the crest rail. The lower center section of the back of the crest rail is a separate piece and is glued in place. The splat is tenoned into the back seat rail. The splat shoe is nailed down onto the back seat rail; it has a cut-out to accommodate the bottom of the splat. The lower edge of the front and side seat rails has an elongated horizontal section in the center, flanked by a semi-circular downward curve and a horizontal section where the rail meets the leg. The back seat rail is tenoned and double pinned into the stiles. Each side seat rail is tenoned through the stile; each of these joints is secured with two small wedges of wood inserted into the back of the tenon. The joints at the top of the front legs are covered by the upholstery. The knee brackets are nailed to the underside of the front or side rail and to the sides of the knees. The back interior corners of the seat frame have triangular corner blocks nailed in place; the lower edge of each of these corner blocks is shaped to accommodate the shape of the seat rails. The front interior corners of the seat frame each have a vertical glue block and a triangular corner block nailed in place. Upholstery (replaced). The chair is upholstered with green moreen wool that is held in place over the rails with a row of brass nails along the bottom and side edges of the front and side seat rails (following the original nailing pattern). Additional tacks holding the upholstery in place are located on the underside of the front and side seat rails. Below the green wool is stuffing, sackcloth, canvas webbing, and a wooden frame. Please see attached essay by the Chapin authority, Dr. Thomas P. Kugelman for more information about this piece.

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Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 38 7/16 x 23 1/2

x 21 9/16in. (97.6 x 59.7 x 54.8cm)