

Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date 1795-1810

Primary Maker Eliakim H. Williams

Medium Mahogany, maple, black striped horsehair

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Description Mahogany side chair in the Federal, or early neoclassical style, with a shield-shaped back, tapered front legs, and remnants of the original over-the-rails upholstery. The back of the chair is shield-shaped, consisting of an arched crest rail with squared ends, at the top of U-shaped sides that curve down to a point at the bottom. The pierced and carved splat, inside the shield-shaped back, has vertical, carved, leaves at the center top, over a pierced tri-part urn, a vertical rib, and a semi-circular lunette at the bottom. This is flanked by a rib, with carved leaves at the top, which then curves down to join the semi-circular lunette. At each side of the shield-shaped back the stiles continue down to form the back legs. Above the seat, the stiles and back of the chair are slanted back slightly. Below the seat, the stiles are angled back and toward the center back of the chair. The seat is trapezoidal with a serpentine front seat rail and curved side rails. It is upholstered with over-the-rails striped horsehair upholstery (now missing from all but the left side) that was secured with brass nails (now missing) at the front and side seat rails. The front legs are tapered and extend from the height of the seat down to the foot. Each side and the back of the chair have a single plain, rectangular stretcher connecting the legs. A medial stretcher (replaced) connects the two side seat rails. Condition: The majority of the original horsehair upholstery cover is missing; only remnants of the left side remain. The original linen undercover is visible and stained red in a few areas. The front right side of the crest rail has split and been repaired. The uppermost triangular corners of the stay rail are repaired or replaced. The medial stretcher is replaced. Number Note: The accession number is painted in red at the top of

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the back right leg. Design and Construction Details: Design. The front edges of the shield-shaped back, and each side of the support for this back is outlined in incised bead molding. There is a very small carved rondel at the top outer edge of the back support. The front of the front legs are molded with two wide flutes flanked with incised bead molding. Frame Construction. The crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each stile. Each stile forms a portion of the side of the shield-shaped back, and extends down to form the support for the back as well as the back leg. A stay rail, which forms the lower center section of the shield-shaped back, is tenoned into the stiles. The splat is tenoned up into the crest rail and down into the stay rail. The back of the crest-rail and shield-shaped back are rounded. The back edges of each support for the back are chamfered and partially rounded. The back seat rail is tenoned and pinned to the stiles; the seat rail is unusually thick. The back seat rail is partially veneered; the top edge was left exposed to form a surface to tack the upholstery to (and is now exposed since the upholstery cover is missing). The side seat rails are tenoned into the stiles in the back and into the top of each front leg. The front serpentine seat rail is constructed of a single piece of wood; the inside surface is sawn to echo the shape of the rail. The interior front corners of the seat frame have diagonal braces probably dovetailed into the front and side seat rails. The back seat rail and each side seat rail are tenoned and pinned into the lower legs. The medial stretcher is dovetailed and nailed to the side stretchers. Upholstery (original). The side chair is upholstered with remnants of a over-the-rails striped black horsehair cover that was held in place with brass nails along the front and

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side seat rails. Below the horsehair is the original linen undercover, stuffing, sackcloth, and webbing that is tacked to the top of the seat rails. The bottom edges of the horsehair are nailed to the underside of the seat rails.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 39 3/8 x 21 3/4 x 19in. (100 x 55.2 x 48.3cm)