

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1725-1740

Primary Maker Chester family

Medium Maple, ash, rush

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Description Maple armchair in the William and Mary, or early baroque, style, with

a carved and pierced crest rail, a banister-back, turned banisters, front legs, and

stretchers, and a rush seat. The back of the chair is formed by a pierced and

carved crest rail atop two stiles. The crest rail is arched at the top, with three

pierced openings and projecting carved scrolls. Below the crest rail are four

baluster-and-reel turned banisters, which attach at the bottom to the stay rail.

The banisters are turned and split; the rounded side of each banister faces the

front of the chair. The lower edge of the stay rail is shaped with a horizontal

section flanked by an upward curve with a chamfered edge, ending in a circular

scroll near each stile. Each stile has a molded front, consisting of a projecting

semi-circle flanked by a bead, that extends up onto the sides and top of the crest

rail and down to the back seat rail. Above the seat, each stile angles backward.

Below the seat, each stile forms a straight back leg with a backward-slanting

foot. Each arm slopes downward and has a scrolled handhold that extends well

past the top of the front leg. The top surface of each arm and handhold has a

raised ridge. Each front leg is turned with a baluster over three blocks, each

separated by ovoid turnings, over a Spanish foot. Above the seat, each front leg

supports the arm. The chair has a trapezoidal rush seat. Each side of the chair

has a turned stretcher below the arm and above the rush seat, that joins the

upper portion of the front leg to the rear stile. The front and sides of the chair

each have one stretcher that is turned with a double-baluster form. The back

stretcher is rectangular. Painted Decoration (later addition): The armchair has a

very faint painted decoration in dark red or brown over an opaque black paint.

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The decoration includes stylized leaves on the crest rail and banisters, and stars and geometric shapes on the stiles and the stay rail. The painted decoration on the front legs and the front stretcher consists of bands that circle the turnings.

Condition: The rush seat is damaged, and a portion of the rush is missing to the right of the middle of the front seat rail. There are a few scattered insect holes on the back legs. The painted decoration is a later addition. It is faded, and the black paint is worn or flaking on the hand rests, the front stretcher, and the corners of the front legs. Design and Construction Details: The crest rail is supported by a tenon at the top of each stile, and by wooden pins through the crest rail. Each banister is constructed of a split spindle, and each is tenoned into the crest rail at the top and into the stay rail below. The stay rail is tenoned into the back stiles. The back of each arm is tenoned and pinned into the stile. Each front leg is tenoned and pinned into the arm above. Each seat rail is bladelike, with a rounded outer edge and a tapered inner edge. The seat rails and stretchers have round tenons that extend into the front or back legs.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 25 3/4 x 54 1/2 x 23 3/4in. (65.4 x 138.4 x 60.3cm)