

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1810-1820

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 curves back 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 curved 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. The front and back of the armchair each have a single

plain, turned stretcher joining the legs. Each side of the armchair has two plain,

turned stretchers joining the legs. Painted Decoration. The armchair frame is

painted black overall with gilded decoration. An abstract gilt design of a bird

inside an oval wreath flanked by a geometric design of leaves and arrows is

stenciled on the crest rail (now faded). Gold bands circle the rings on the

spindles and front legs. Thin gold lines are painted on the spindles, stiles, arm

support, and front leg. Condition: The gold paint on the crest rail is faded. The

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black and gold paint is worn off the top of each arm, the inside of the arm

supports, and the top of the front stretcher. The black paint is chipped on the

arm supports, and front legs. The black and gold paint may have been touched

up in a few areas. A second screw has been added to the bottom of the left arm

support. The rush seat 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 through 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): 35 1/8 x 19 3/4

x 19 7/8in. (89.2 x 50.2 x 50.5cm)