

Basic Detail Report

Title Side Chair

Date about 1783

Primary Maker Eliphalet Chapin

Medium Cherry, pine, red moreen wool

Description Cherry side chair in the Chippendale, or rococo, style, with a cross slat-back, straight front legs, and a removable slip seat. The back of the chair is formed by a pierced crest rail atop two stiles. The crest rail undulates, and it is pierced with quatrefoil and tapered shapes in the Gothic style. Below the crest rail, two slats join the stiles; the slats have the same Gothic-style pierced openings as the crest rail. Above the seat, each stile is slanted back. Below the seat, each stile forms a back leg that is slanted toward the center back of the chair. The seat is trapezoidal, with a removable slip seat upholstered with red moreen wool. The slip seat sits just inside the four seat rails at the top of the legs. The straight front legs extend from the height of the seat down to a plain foot. The back and each side of the chair have a plain, rectangular stretcher connecting the legs. A rectangular medial stretcher joins the two side stretchers.

Condition: The right third of the upper slat is replaced. The rear corner blocks are replaced. The frame has been refinished and the slip seat has been covered.

Design and Construction Details: Design: The top edges of the front and side seat rails, the top of the legs, and the front exterior edge of the front legs each have a line of molding consisting of an ovolo flanked by a fillet. The strip of wood applied over the back seat rail has bead molding on the top front and back edge.

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Chair Frame. The crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each stile. Above the seat, the back of each stile is rounded. Each slat is tenoned into the stiles. A strip of wood is applied to the top of the back seat rail. The back seat rail is tenoned and pinned into the stiles. Each side seat rail is tenoned through the stile; this joint is secured with a wooden pin through the stile and two small wedges inserted into the back of each tenon. Each side seat rail is tenoned and pinned into the top of the front legs. The front seat rail is tenoned into the top of the front legs. The interior top edge of the front and side seat rails, and the top of each front leg, have a rabbet to support the upholstered slip seat. The interior back corners of the seat frame have vertical quarter-round corner blocks held in place with glue and nails (replaced). The interior front corners of the seat frame each have a vertical, semi-circular glue block and a semi-circular corner block glued and nailed in place. The interior corner of each leg is canted. Each side stretcher and the back stretcher are tenoned and pinned into the lower portion of the legs. The medial stretcher is dovetailed into the side stretchers.

Upholstered Slip Seat. The side chair is accompanied by the original removable, upholstered slip seat; this is encased in a red moreen wool slip case. The original slip seat consists of a linen undercover, over stuffing, linen sackcloth, canvas webbing, and a trapezoidal wooden frame. The linen undercover is held in place with nails through the underside of the 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): 37 5/8 x 21 3/8

x 19 1/2in. (95.6 x 54.3 x 49.5cm)