

Basic Detail Report

Title Slant-front Desk

Date 1780-1800

Primary Maker Ruth Parker

Medium Mahogany veneer and primary wood, eastern white pine, cherry and maple secondary wood, brass hardware

Description Mahogany veneered slant-front desk in the Chippendale, or rococo, style. The desk arrangement consists of a slant front above four graduated drawers. The top drawer is slightly narrower than the others and is flanked by a loper, or thin board that pulls out to form a support for the slant front when open. Base molding is located at the bottom of the front and sides of the case. Each ogee bracket foot projects boldly beyond the front and sides of the case; each foot has a small pad. Each knee bracket return has two deep scrolls that curve inward. The interior arrangement of the desk consists of three stacked drawers in the center flanked by four pigeonholes over two drawers in a line. A row of complex molding is applied below the pigeonholes and drawers. The top drawer has a recessed, carved shell consisting of fourteen projecting rays. At the top of each pigeonhole is a valance with a lower edge shaped with a cyma curve, or S-curve, and a reverse cyma curve. Alternating vertical partitions between the pigeonholes each have a front edge shaped with a sharply-curved C-scroll at the top that tapers outward at the bottom. Hardware on the desk includes an oval brass lock escutcheon at the top center edge of the slant front. The slant front pivots open on a pair of hinges at the bottom edge. Each exterior drawer has a

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small, shield-shaped, brass lock escutcheon flanked by a ring-and-bail pull. Each

interior drawer has a small brass knob. Condition: The bottom right exterior

drawer runner is detached. There is blue stain on portions of the underside of

some of the drawers and on the top of the drawer dividers. Design and

Construction Details: Case Construction. The top and bottom are dovetailed to

the case sides. The backboards are horizontally oriented and are nailed into

rabbets in the case sides. The base molding is nailed to the front and sides of the

case. Each ogee bracket foot is constructed of molded ogee facing applied to

shaped supports; a corner block and triangular glue blocks provide additional

support for each foot. The back of each rear foot does not have molded ogee

facing; the back is supported by a plain bracket with a curved edge. Drawer

Construction. Each drawer divider is veneered and is joined to the case with a

sliding dovetail; these dovetails are concealed by a facing strip on the front edge

of each side of the case. The vertical partitions between the top exterior drawer

and the lopers each slide into grooves in the rail above and the drawer divider

below. The top drawer and the lopers are supported on each side by a board

that fits into a sliding dovetail in the case side; a drawer guide separates each

loper from the top drawer. The drawer runners for the second and third drawers

fit into sliding dovetails in the case sides. The drawer runners for the bottom

drawer are glued to the sides and bottom of the case. Small, vertical blocks are

nailed to the back corners of the case to serve as drawer stops. Each exterior

drawer front and each loper is outlined by cock beading. The drawer sides are

rounded on top. Each drawer bottom fits into grooves in the front and sides of

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the drawer and is nailed at the back. Each bottom extends past the back of the drawer to form a drawer stop. The bottom of each interior drawer slides into canted grooves on the lower portion of the drawer sides.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 34 3/8 x 44 x 21 9/16in. (87.3 x 111.8 x 54.8cm)