

Basic Detail Report

Title Side Chair

Date 1795-1810

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Mahogany, maple, red watered moreen wool

Description Mahogany side chair in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style, with a shield-shaped back, an urn in the carved and pierced splat, tapered front legs, and over-the-rails red moreen wool upholstery. The back of the chair is shield-shaped, consisting of a crest rail of three arches at the top over U-shaped sides and bottom; the front of the shield-shaped back is molded with two wide recessed flutes. The pierced and carved splat, inside the shield-shaped back, has an oval at the top, containing a spray of leaves, over a swaged cloth superimposed on an urn, over two C-shaped ribs and a round rosette; below the oval are four curved ribs. 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 slated back slightly. Below the seat, the stiles form the back legs, which are angled back; the back legs also curve sharply toward the center of the chair then flare slightly at the foot. The seat is trapezoidal with a serpentine front seat rail and curved side rails. It is upholstered with over-the-rails red watered moreen wool (replaced) that is held in place with a swaged line of brass nails over a straight line of brass nails on the front and side seat rails. The front legs are tapered and extend from the height of the seat down to the foot. Condition: The top back of the splat has split. The corner blocks are probably replaced.

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Portions of the top edges of the front and back seat rail have been repaired.

Design and Construction Details: The crest rail, consisting of the three arched portions of the top of the shield-shaped back, 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.

Above the seat, the back of each stile is rounded. 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. A shallow strip of wood is nailed down on top of the back seat rail; this has deep incised molding at the top front and back edge. The back seat rail and back of each side seat rail are tenoned into the stiles. The back seat rail is veneered with mahogany. The front serpentine seat rail is constructed of a single piece of wood; the inside surface is sawn to echo the serpentine shape of the rail. The interior back corners of the seat frame have quarter-round corner blocks held in place with glue. The interior front corners of the seat frame have two semi-circular corner blocks also held in place with glue. Upholstery (replaced). The side chair is upholstered with over-the-rails red watered moreen wool that is held in place with a row of swaged brass nails over a row of straight brass nails along the front and side seat rails. Below the wool is a linen undercover, stuffing, sackcloth, and webbing that is tacked to the top of the seat rails. The bottom edges of the moreen are nailed to the underside of the seat rails.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 39 5/8 x 21 1/2 x 20 5/8in. (100.6 x 54.6 x 52.4cm)