

Basic Detail Report



Title Writing-arm Chair

Date 1790-1805

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Chestnut, maple, oak

Description Writing-arm chair in the Windsor style, with a sack-back, a large flat leaf for writing over a drawer at one side, a plank seat, and bamboo-turned legs.

The sack back consists of an arched rail over a horizontal bow that curves forward at each side. Below the arched rail are six swelled spindles of varying height; the swelled spindles are turned with a small bulge near the middle then

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tapered up toward the top. Below the arched rail and spindles is a horizontal rail that forms the right arm and flat scrolled handhold, the center back of the seat, and the support for the large flat writing board, or leaf, at the left side of the writing armchair. The rail is supported by nineteen swelled spindles, with a three-part bamboo-turned post at each side. In addition, the left side of the seat has two semi-circular seat extensions that each support a three-part bamboo-turned post that provides support for the leaf. A shallow drawer is located on the underside of the leaf; the drawer pulls open toward the seat. The chestnut seat is semi-circular and pommel shaped, consisting of a recessed upper surface with a raised ridge at the front center. Below the seat are four three-part bamboo-turned legs. Each side of the seat has a single two-part bamboo turned stretcher connecting the lower legs. A two-part bamboo turned medial stretcher is located between the two stretchers. Condition: The leaf is refinished; the rest of the chair is probably repainted with black paint over a green paint or stain. The black paint is worn on the spindles, seat and legs, revealing the green stain or bare wood below. Design and Construction Details: Chair Frame. The horizontal bow that forms the arms of the writing armchair is constructed of three boards. The first board forms the right arm and curves around to the back. This is joined with a lap joint to the board that forms the left back and side of the bow. This board widens at the front left to form a support for the leaf. The third board that forms the bow is located at the back of the bow; the right side tapers with a cyma curve and the left side is joined to the leaf. The arched rail is tenoned down through both boards that form the horizontal bow. The swelled spindles

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that support the arched rail are tenoned up through the rail and down into the bow. The spindles that support the bow are tenoned up into the bow; the three right-most spindles and the post are tenoned up through the bow. The leaf is constructed of a solid board that is tilted up slightly. It is screwed down to the top left side of the bow with three screws hidden with wooden plugs. A tapered wooden spacer is located beneath the leaf at the end of the bow. The three posts at this side of the armchair are tenoned up into the bow. The spindles are tenoned down into the plank seat. All four posts are tenoned down through the solid plank seat; a small wedge is inserted through the end of each of these tenons. The seat is supported on a tenon at the top of each of the four legs. The side stretchers are tenoned into the lower legs. The medial stretcher is tenoned into the side stretchers. Drawer Construction. The drawer is suspended on two L-shaped runners nailed to the underside of the leaf. A drawer stop consisting of a thin straight piece of wood is also nailed to the underside of the leaf. The drawer is tapered; the left side is taller than the right side. The drawer sides are dovetailed to the front and back of the drawer; there is no hardware. A thin piece of wood is nailed to the top outer edge of the drawer sides, to rest on the drawer runners when the drawer is in place. The chestnut bottom of the drawer slides into a groove on the lower interior edge of the front, sides and back of the drawer.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 41 1/2 x 38 x 34in. (105.4 x 96.5 x 86.4cm)