

Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date 1795-1810

Primary Maker Watson family

Medium Cherry, pine, damask

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Description Cherry side chair in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style, with an

arched crest rail, a pierced urn-back splat, tapered front legs, and a removable

upholstered slip seat. The back of the chair is formed by an arched crest rail,

with squared sides, atop two stiles. Centered below the arch of the crest rail is a

pierced splat with an urn in the top center; the front of the urn is not carved. The

urn rests atop a curved ribbon of wood that crosses through the middle of the

splat. The urn is surrounded by a pointed arch and by curved ribs with carved

volutas on top; the ribs form the outside edges of the splat. The pointed arch

and the curved ribs continue below the curved ribbon of wood to the bottom of

the splat. The splat is joined at the bottom to a tapered splat shoe just above the

back seat rail. Above the seat, each stile curves slightly to conform to the shape

of the upper splat, and is slanted back. Below the seat each stile forms a back

leg which is slanted back and also slanted toward the center back of the chair.

The seat is trapezoidal, with a removable upholstered slip seat (reupholstered).

The slip seat sits just inside the four plain seat rails at the top of the legs. The

front legs are tapered and extend from the height of the seat down to the foot.

Each side and the back of the chair have a plain rectangular stretcher

connecting the legs. A medial stretcher joins the two side stretchers. Condition:

The front of the front stretcher and the lower front legs are lightly scratched and

worn. The frame is refinished. The slip seat is reupholstered and re-stuffed.

Design and Construction Details: Design. Each front edge of the stiles above the

seat, and the top and bottom front edge of the crest rail, have a thin line of

incised bead molding. The top front edge of the splat shoe, the top edges of the

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front and side seat rails, top of the legs, and front exterior edge of the front legs

each have a line of molding consisting of an ovolo flanked by a fillet. Chair

Frame. The crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each stile. Above the

seat, the back of the stiles are rounded; the back of the crest rail is rounded as

well. The splat is tenoned into the crest rail above and into the splat shoe below.

The back seat rail is tenoned and pinned into the stiles. Each side seat rail is

tenoned through the stile in the back; this joint is reinforced with two small

wedges through the back of each tenon. The side and front seat rails are

tenoned into the top of the front legs. A rabbet on the interior top edge of the

front and side seat rails, and the top of each front leg, supports the slip seat.

Each interior back corner of the seat frame has a vertical, triangular corner block

that is held in place with nails. The interior front corner of each seat frame has a

vertical, triangular corner block that is also nailed in place. The interior corners

of all the chair legs are canted. The back and side stretchers are tenoned into the

lower legs. The medial stretcher dovetailed to the side stretchers. Upholstered

Slip Seat. The chair is accompanied by a removable slip seat consisting of tan

damask (replaced) over an undercover, the stuffing (replaced), and webbing

that is tacked to the trapezoidal frame. The damask, as well as remnants of a

black plain weave upholstery fabric, are held in place on the underside of the

slip seat frame with small nails.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 37 3/4 x 21 7/16

x 20 3/4in. (95.9 x 54.5 x 52.7cm)