

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1796

Primary Maker Lemuel Adams

Medium Mahogany, chestnut, red morocco leather

Basic Detail Report

Description Mahogany armchair in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style, with

a shield-shaped back, an urn in the splat, tapered front legs, and over-the-rails

upholstery. The back of the chair is shield-shaped, consisting of an arched crest

rail with squared ends, at the top of U-shaped sides that curve down to a point

at the bottom. The front of the shield is molded with two wide recessed flutes,

flanked by incised bead molding. The splat, inside the shield-shaped back,

consists of two curved ribs at the sides and top, each terminating at the top in a

carved rosette, over an urn with seven raised reeds at the bottom. Below this is a

conical panel, a fluted trapezoidal panel, and three curved ribs. At each side of

the shield-shaped back, stiles extend down to form the back legs. Above the

seat, the stiles and the back of the chair are slanted back slightly. Below the seat

the stiles are angled back. Each arm slants down slightly and extends from the

stile forward about half of the depth of the chair. The arm is supported at the

front by a curved arm support that extends down and forward to the side rail,

just behind the front leg. The front of the arm and arm support are molded with

two wide recessed flutes, flanked by incised bead molding. The seat is

trapezoidal, with a serpentine front and side seat rails that curve outward. It is

partially upholstered, with a linen undercover tacked to the front and side seat

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

the foot. The front of each front leg is inlaid with a carrot, or tapered light wood

inlay over a small bead, flanked by a thin line, over a wide horizontal band of

light wood inlay at the ankle. The back and each side of the chair have a plain

rectangular stretcher connecting the lower legs. A medial stretcher joins the two

Basic Detail Report

side stretchers. Condition: Portions of the stay rail are missing, in the center,

where the splat joins the stay rail. The armchair is partially reupholstered; the

linen undercover and probably the sackcloth are replaced, and the red morocco

leather is not nailed to the chair. Some nail holes have been repaired along the

front and side seat rails. The lower outer edges of each arm rest are well worn.

The front lower portion of each front foot is repaired or replaced. The interior

corner of the back right foot is repaired. Portions of the top of each front leg

have been repaired, some sections of the top of the front right leg are missing.

The diagonal brace at each interior front seat corner is replaced. Design and

Construction Details: The crest rail 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 the crest rail and each stile is rounded. The 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. The

back of each arm is screwed into the stile from the back; the screw is hidden

with wood filler. The front of the arms are each supported on a tenon at the top

of the arm support. These in turn are screwed into the side seat rail; the screws

are inserted through the outside of the arm support and hidden behind round

wooden plugs. The back seat rail and the back of each side seat rail are tenoned

into the stiles. The back of the back seat rail is veneered with mahogany. The

front seat rail and each side seat rail are constructed of a single piece of wood

with a flat interior surface. The interior back corners of the seat frame have no

Basic Detail Report

corner blocks. The interior front corners of the seat frame each have a diagonal brace (replaced) that is probably dovetailed to the front and side seat rails. The back stretcher and each side stretcher is tenoned into the lower legs. The medial stretcher is tenoned into the side stretchers. Upholstery. The side chair has been partially reupholstered and is accompanied by a piece of red morocco leather that could be used to cover the seat (the brass nails are missing). At present, the seat is covered with a linen undercover (replaced), canvas, horsehair stuffing and linen sackcloth. The linen undercover and canvas are tacked to the outside of the seat rails. The sackcloth is tacked directly to the top of the seat rails.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 40 1/8 x 24 x 20 9/16in. (101.9 x 61 x 52.2cm)