

Basic Detail Report



Title Writing-arm Chair

Date 1765-1785

Primary Maker Ebenezer Tracy

Medium Chestnut, maple, oak, pine, brass

Description Red painted writing armchair in the Windsor style, with an extension top, a large flat leaf for writing over a drawer on the left side, a plank seat, and turned posts, legs, and stretchers. The back of the chair consists of an extension top, or a serpentine crest rail, with an arch in the center flanked by a tall rounded ear, above six tall oak spindles that extend down through a horizontal

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bow that curves forward at each side. The horizontal bow has a flat, scrolled

handhold at the right, and is supported by four short spindles and a baluster-

turned post. The left side of the bow widens as it curves forward and is joined to

a large, pine, balloon-shaped writing board, or leaf, that is tilted up toward the

front of the chair. A shallow drawer is suspended beneath the leaf; the drawer

pulls open toward the seat. A wide candleslide is suspended beneath the

drawer; it has a brass knob at the front, that pulls forward toward the front of

the chair. The leaf is supported by five slender spindles and two baluster-turned

posts. The leftmost post is joined at the bottom to a semi-circular seat extension

at the left side of the plank seat. The chestnut seat is semi-circular and pommel-

shaped, consisting of a recessed upper surface with a raised ridge at the front

center. A narrow groove outlines the upper side and back edges of the seat.

Suspended beneath the seat is a drawer with a small brass knob on the front.

Below the seat are four, maple baluster-turned legs that are raked, or slanted

out from top to bottom. Each side of the seat has a single maple stretcher

turned with an ovoid form in the center flanked by a tapered section at the end.

A maple medial stretcher is located between the two stretchers; this stretcher is

slender but also turned with an ovoid form in the center flanked by a tapered

section at the end. Condition: The bottom of the drawer beneath the leaf has

split. The chair and drawers have a later red paint applied over dark green paint.

The red paint is flaking, especially on the spindles, the lower legs and the front

of the drawer beneath the seat. The red paint is also worn on the right handhold

and the leaf. The candleslide has been painted with graining on one side and

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black paint on the other. Design and Construction Details: Chair Frame. The

serpentine crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each of the six tall

spindles; the left and right most tall spindles are also pinned to the crest rail.

These spindles extend down through the horizontal bow. The bow is

constructed of three sections. The rightmost section of the bow fits into a rabbet

on the bottom right side of the taller center section; the right side of the center

section ends in a cyma curve. The rightmost section of the bow is supported on a

through tenon at the top of each of the short spindles and the post. The leftmost

section of the bow fits into a rabbet on the bottom left side of the center section.

The left side of the center section widens to meet the edge of the leaf. The lower

left section of the bow curves around beneath the leaf; this is supported on a

tenon at the top of the spindles and one post. The spindles are tenoned down

into the spindle platform. The posts are tenoned down through the seat; a small

wedge is inserted into the end of each of these tenons. The plank 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. Drawers and Candleslide. Each of the drawers is suspended on L-

shaped drawer runners that are nailed to the underside of the leaf or the seat.

Each drawer has a short drawer stop nailed to the underside of the leaf or seat.

The drawer suspended beneath the leaf is trapezoidal in shape with a carved

wooden pen or pencil tray at the front. The front, sides and back are joined with

dovetails, and the bottom of the drawer is nailed to the bottom of the drawer

sides. Two L-shaped drawer runners are nailed to the underside of this drawer.

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The candleslide consists of a thin board with two cut-outs at the back to

accommodate the posts as it slides closed. At the front, the slide is nailed to a

rabbet on the underside of a strip of wood that forms the front of the slide. The

top surface of the candleslide is painted to imitate the grain of wood. The

drawer suspended beneath the seat is rectangular. The front, sides and back are

joined with dovetails; the bottom of the drawer slides into a groove on the

interior lower front and sides of the drawer. The drawer hangs on the drawer

runners that fit into a groove on the exterior upper sides of the drawer.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 44 1/8 x 35 3/4

x 34 7/16in. (112.1 x 90.8 x 87.5cm)