Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date about 1795-1805

Primary Maker John I. Wells

Medium Cherry, pine, maple

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Description Cherry side chair in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style, each with an arched crest rail, a pierced splat containing an urn, tapered front legs, and a removable upholstered slip seat. The back of each chair is formed by an arched crest rail that is squared at each end, atop two stiles. Centered below the arch of the crest rail is a flat, pierced splat. The splat consists of a circle with a small urn at the interior top, and interlacing curves and small scrolls. The splat is joined at the bottom to a tapered splat shoe, just above the back seat rail. Above the seat, each stile is slanted back, and curves to echo the shape of the upper splat. Below the seat, each stile forms a back leg that is slanted toward the center back of the chair. The seat of each chair is trapezoidal, with a removable slip seat (slip seat .2 is 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. Both sides and the back of the chair each have a plain rectangular stretcher connecting the legs. A medial stretcher connects the two side stretchers. Condition: The lower portion of the front legs and the medial stretcher on each chair are lightly scratched and worn. The chair frame is refinished. Slip seat .2 is reupholstered. Design and Construction Details: Chair Frame. The crest rail is supported on a tenon at the top of each stile. Above the seat, the back of each stile is rounded. The splat is tenoned into the crest rail above and into the splat shoe below. The splat shoe and the back seat rail are formed from the same solid piece of wood. The back seat rail is tenoned into the stiles. Each side seat rail is tenoned through the stile in the back; each of these joints is reinforced with two small wedges through the back

of each tenon. The front and side 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 on the top of each front leg, supports the slip seat. Each interior back corner of each seat frame has a vertical, quarter-round corner block that is glued in place. The interior front corners of each seat frame have a vertical glue block and a vertical corner block that is glued in place (the block on the left is also screwed in place). Each side and back stretcher is tenoned into the lower portion of the legs. The medial stretcher is dovetailed to the side stretchers. Upholstered Slip Seat. Chair is accompanied by a removable slip seat, generally consisting of upholstery over an undercover, the original grass and horsehair stuffing, linen sackcloth, and webbing that is tacked to the maple frame. Slip seat .2 is reupholstered, but it retains the original stuffing, sackcloth, and webbing.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 38 11/16 x 20 1 /4 x 18 5/8in. (98.3 x 51.4 x 47.3cm)