Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date 1850-1860

Primary Maker Union Chair Co.

Medium Wood, cane, gold and brown paint

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Description Painted side chair in the Empire, or late neoclassical, style, with an arched crest rail, a solid, vase-shaped splat, curved legs in the klismos style, and a trapezoidal cane seat. The back of the chair is formed by an arched crest rail atop two stiles. The crest rail is veneered and has raised molding at the front edge; the lower edge is shaped with a horizontal section in the center flanked by an upward curve and a small scroll. Centered below the crest rail is a solid, vase-shaped splat, also veneered, which attaches at the bottom to the back seat rail. Above the seat, each stile has a semi-circular projecting curve. Above the seat, each stile curves back, then extends up to the crest rail which is slanted back slightly. Below the seat, each stile forms a back leg that curves in slightly then back. Each side seat rail has a curved top edge, and is bowed down slightly in the center. The front seat rail is serpentine, consisting of a projecting curve in the center, flanked by a recessed curve and a rounded corner. The cane seat is woven around small holes in the interior edge of each seat rail. Each front leg is raked slightly, and is shaped in a cyma curve, or S-curve, consisting of a forward curving knee, over a backward curve, then a forward pointing foot. The front stretcher, which joins the two front legs, is rectangular and bowed back in the center. Each side of the chair has two plain turned stretchers. The back of the chair has two plain, turned stretchers; one joins the lower legs and one is located immediately beneath the back seat rail. Painted Decoration. The crest rail has a stenciled design of gold or yellow leaves and a flower on brown or bronze branches. The splat has a stenciled design of a large yellow flower on a stem, surrounded by smaller yellow flowers, and green and brown leaves.

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Condition: The veneer on the splat is uneven. The painted decoration, with the exception of the gold has faded. The chair has many small nicks and points of wear on the back of the crest rail, the front seat rail, and the lower front legs.

Design and Construction Details: The crest rail is supported on tenons at the top of each stile and on a long, narrow rectangular tenon at the top of the splat. The crest rail and splat are veneered. The front top and side edges of the crest rail have applied, semi-circular projecting molding. The bottom of the splat has a rectangular tenon that extends down into the back seat rail. The back seat rail is tenoned into each stile. Below the back seat rail is a plain, turned support that is tenoned into each stile. The side seat rails have an L-shaped cut out in the back, to accommodate the stiles, and are tenoned into the back seat rail; they are supported in the front on a tenon at the top of the front legs. The front seat rail is tenoned into the side seat rails. The stretchers are tenoned into the lower legs.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 32 7/16 x 18 1/2 x 20 1/2in. (82.4 x 47 x 52.1cm)