

Basic Detail Report

Title Desk and Bookcase

Date 1760-1790

Primary Maker Hubbard family

Medium Cherry primary wood, pine secondary wood, brass hardware

Description Cherry desk and bookcase with a swan's neck pediment in the Queen Anne, or late baroque, style. The desk and bookcase consists of a bookcase in the upper case, over a slant-front desk in the lower case. The swan's neck pediment has a conforming roof, or bonnet top, which is open at the center front. At the top of the desk and bookcase, there are three turned finials. The center finial consists of an abstract flame over a cylindrical base; this sits on a curved plinth. Each side finial consists of a slender cone, over a turned ball, over a cylindrical base; the side finials have no plinth. The top of each bookcase door is shaped with a cyma curve, or S-curve. The bookcase fits inside the mid-molding at the top of the desk. The desk arrangement consists of a slant front above four graduated drawers. The top drawer is slightly narrower than the others and is flanked by a loper, or thin board that pulls out to form a support for the slant front when open. The desk sits inside base molding at the top of a separate frame. The front skirt of the frame has a single drop half-circle in the center; this is flanked by a smaller half circle, a flat arch, and a cyma curve with a small horizontal separating the two parts of the curve. The side skirts each consist of a flat arch in the center flanked by a cyma curve with a small horizontal separating the two parts of the curve. Each cabriole leg is slender and

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has a very small pad foot. The interior arrangement of the bookcase includes two full-width shelves; the first shelf is approximately one-quarter of the way down the case, and the second shelf is approximately two-thirds of the way down. Below the lower shelf is a vertical partition, about one third of the width of the bookcase away from the right side of the case. A shelf is located to the left of the partition, below the lower full-width shelf. The interior desk arrangement consists of seven pigeonholes in a line over seven drawers, also in a line. Each pigeonhole has a valance at the top, with a lower edge shaped with a cyma curve and a reverse cyma curve. The center valance is the front of a very shallow drawer. The two drawers and pigeonholes on each end are deeper than the five center drawers by just under three inches; this makes the ends project out beyond the center. The vertical partition on the inside edge of the end pigeonholes has a curl. The drawers within the slant front sit above molding; the molding below the left-most drawer is the front of another shallow drawer. Hardware includes a brass knob at center left on the right bookcase door, and a brass latch on the lower right interior corner of the left bookcase door. Each interior desk drawer and each loper also have a small brass knob. The slant front has a brass lock escutcheon at the top center edge. Each exterior drawer has a brass lock escutcheon in the center flanked by a brass escutcheon with a bail pull. Condition: The top back of the bonnet roof has been removed and restored. The finials and the base of the center finial have been repaired. Much of the interior of the desk has been replaced or reinforced; the drawer runners have been reattached with glue and screws, and some have been augmented with

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extra strips of wood. The back interior corners of the desk have been reinforced with a strip of wood; this strip also supports the drawer runners. The cross frame in the base has cracked and has been repaired. Corner braces have been added to the underside of the frame. The bottom sides of the exterior desk drawers are replaced. The stops on the lopers are replaced. The interior of the leftmost interior desk drawer and the interior bottom of the top exterior desk drawer are stained. The finish of the desk and bookcase has been restored. The hardware appears to be original. The locking mechanism is missing from the top and bottom exterior desk drawers. Design and Construction Details: Case

Construction. The bonnet roof (portions replaced or restored) completely covers the top of the pediment, with the exception of a small opening at the front to accommodate the center finial. The bonnet roof is supported by vertical boards inside the pediment. The back of the bonnet top is cut straight across the top and meets the bonnet roof at a right angle. The backboards of the upper and lower cases are nailed into rabbets in the case sides. The sides of the bookcase extend past the back of the desk; a piece of wood with a shaped lower edge is nailed to the top back edge of the desk sides, possibly to accommodate a chair rail or paneling. The desk fits into a frame that is formed with mortise-and-tenon construction; the leg posts form the cabriole legs. The frame has corner braces (later addition), as well as cross braces that connect the opposite corners.

Drawer Construction. Each drawer divider on the front of the desk is attached to the case with a visible half-lap tenon. The verticle partitions between the top drawer and lopers are visibly dovetailed to the rail above and to the drawer

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divider below. The drawer runners are nailed to the case sides (now reinforced with glue and screws). The exterior drawer fronts are lip-molded with ovolo, or thumbnail, molding on all sides. The drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the front and sides of each drawer and are nailed at the back. The dovetails at the back of each drawer extend to become drawer stops. The bottom of the lowest dovetail at the back of each drawer is omitted; this leaves a gap where the drawer bottom is visible beneath the lowest pin, also called a Suffield notch. A medial brace or divider has been added with screws to the interior of the bottom drawer. The dovetail pins are small, and the kerf marks on the back of each drawer front are long.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 91 1/2 x 37 1/2 x 23in. (232.4 x 95.3 x 58.4cm)