Basic Detail Report



Title Side Chair

Date 1795-1810

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Mahogany, chestnut , various light wood inlay, brass nails, horsehair upholstery

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Description Mahogany side chair with a shield-shaped back, an urn in the splat, tapered front legs, and over-the-rails black horsehair upholstery in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style. 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 a band of 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 five raised reeds, or lobes, at the bottom. Below this is a conical panel, a fluted trapezoidal panel, 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; the stiles also curve sharply toward the center of the chair then flare slightly at the foot. The seat is trapezoidal, with a serpentine front and side seat rails that curve outward. It is upholstered with over-the-rails black horsehair (replaced) that is held in place with a straight line of brass nails on the front and side seat rails; each front corner also has a short vertical line of brass nails. 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, flanked by a thin line, over a wide horizontal band of light wood inlay at the ankle. Condition: The back corner blocks are replaced. The chair is reupholstered. The frame is refinished. 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 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 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 is constructed of a single solid piece of wood with a flat interior surface. The side seat rails each have rectangular blocks glued or nailed to the interior back end of the rail. The interior back corners of the seat frame each have triangular corner blocks (replaced) screwed into the seat rails. The interior front corners have two semi-circular blocks (original) held in place with glue. Upholstery (replaced). The side chair is upholstered with over-the-rails black horsehair with an octagonal pattern woven into the fabric. The horsehair is held in place with a straight row of brass nails at the bottom edge of the front and side seat rails; a short vertical line of brass nails is located at each front seat corner. Below the wool is an undercover, stuffing, sackcloth, and webbing that is tacked to the top of the seat rails. The bottom edges of the horsehair are nailed to the underside of the seat rails.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 38 3/4 x 21 x 19 7/8in. (98.4 x 53.3 x 50.5cm)