

Basic Detail Report



Title Armchair

Date 1660-1675

Primary Maker Governor John Winthrop Jr.

Medium Red Oak

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Description Joined red oak armchair in the seventeenth-century style, with a

carved panel in the back, turned arm supports and front legs, and a board seat.

The back of the chair consists of a rail over a raised panel over a rail, all between

two stiles. The top rail is carved with seven recessed arches, or flutes, each

flanked by a recessed circle over a recessed channel; above each flute is an

incised arch. The raised panel is carved with a central seven-petal flower inside a

recessed circle, surrounded by three concentric incised circles. This is

surrounded by eight similar seven-petal flowers, and an additional seven-petal

flower at each corner of the panel. The edges of the panel are recessed; the

transitions from the raised to the recessed edge of the panel are molded. Below

the panel is a rail with a band of horizontal molding consisting of recessed

circles with a semi-circular incised line above and below. Above the seat, each

stile has a molded front and slants backward. Below the seat, each stile forms a

straight back leg. Each arm has a pronounced downward curve in the top edge,

and ends in a scrolled handhold that extends past the top of the front leg. The

underside of each arm has a sharp notch at the back. Above the seat, each front

leg supports the arm, then below the seat extends down to the floor; each is

turned with block, ring and baluster forms, over a block foot. The trapezoidal

seat consists of a single board with square holes cut at the front corners to

accommodate the arm supports and front legs. The board has thumbnail, or

ovolo, molding at each the front side edges, and rests on top of the front and

side seat rails. The seat rails have the same incised molding as the rail below the

back panel, above a cyma, or S-curve, molding. Each side of the chair has a

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single rectangular stretcher with molding connecting the lower legs; the front of

the front and back stretcher are molded while the outer side of each side

stretcher is molded. Condition: The chair is missing an elaborate crest rail; there

are holes in the top of the stiles and present top rail. Iron brackets have been

screwed to the interior corners of the seat to reinforce the joints. Some joints

have had an extra pin or pins added, specifically where the arms meet the stiles,

where the side seat rails meet the stiles, where the lower rail meets the stiles,

and on the stretchers. Nails have been added to the seat, where it meets the left

seat rail and the lower back rail. The side of the front left leg has been repaired,

where the seat rails meet the leg. The chair has an old but not original finish.

Design and Construction Details: The chair is joined with panel-and-frame

construction and has turned front legs. The rails and panel on the back of the

chair slide into grooves on the interior side of each upper stile; the rails are

tenoned and double pinned to the stiles. The back of each arm is tenoned and

pinned to the stile. The front of each arm rests on a tenon at the top of the arm

support; this joint is secured with a wooden pin. The seat is pinned with square

wooden pins to the top of the front and side seat rails; each front corner of the

seat has a square hole to accommodate the arm rest and top of the front leg.

Each side seat rail is tenoned and double pinned into the stile in the back and

into the front leg. The front seat rail is tenoned and double pinned into the front

legs. Each stretcher is tenoned and pinned into the lower legs.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 44 1/4 x 26 3/4

x 19 1/4in. (112.4 x 67.9 x 48.9cm)