

CONDITION REPORT AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL

OBJECT: A mid 18th Century South German Fauteuil

OBJECT NUMBER: ????-08-F

OWNER: Edward James Foundation

DATE RECEIVED: 14/01/2008

CONSERVATOR: David Burton

DATE EXAMINED: 14/01/2008

DIMENSIONS

H:

W:

D:

DESCRIPTION:

A mid 18th century South German walnut commode Fauteuil chair in rococo style. The chair has more recently been converted for use as a regular chair by the removal of the commode pan and the associated surrounding supporting frame.



The chair is carved in a restrained rococo style with stylised acanthus decoration in relief forming the main decorative features. The chair has a classic cartouche back, open arms and a serpentine deep front apron. The deep front and rear aprons are designed to conceal the pot (now missing); the chair is supported by cabriole legs and stylised acanthus feet.

The upholstery has been recently replaced with a modern wool damask equivalent.

The chair is joined by mortice and tenon joints secured with pegs driven through from the outside and trimmed flush after fitting. The fact that the rear stiles are dominant (they contain the cresting rail) suggest a European manufacture, although the restrained execution of the decoration leads to a likely northern French or southern German origin.

The quality of the carving suggests that this piece is likely to be of provincial manufacture.

CONDITION:

There are previously added oak corner blocks – applied for added strength and secured using modern steel

screws into the frame, and the chair has had several repairs in the past.

The fracture visible where the PR leg is detached shows several previous repairs. Dowels have been inserted to strengthen the non original loose tenon on the PR seat rail. The tenon that was present on the PR of the front rail has been removed and replaced by a loose tenon at some stage. This joint has been glued together with modern adhesives. An IR spectroscopy examination of some fragments of this adhesive suggest a combination of Casein and PVA type adhesives has been used.

The PL apron tenon has been lost to common furniture beetle damage and has been replaced by a loose tenon which is now shattered, also glued in with the adhesive mixture previously mentioned.

The PL seat rail tenon is a replacement fabricated from a section of oak applied to the rail and secured with cut nails, probably of a 19th century origin.

An iron strap repair is visible on both front legs (picture 2) and this is secured to the rails with nails.

PROPOSED TREATMENT:

The PR seat rail tenon is basically sound, and needs to be cheeked with walnut to bring it to the correct dimension. The PR leg will have the broken away inside section glued back into place, and the degraded edges trimmed back to sound timber for strength. The missing areas are to be filled with walnut oriented correctly and spliced in to fit the voids. The structural integrity will be improved by removing a previously inserted nail and drilling out the hole to take a riven walnut peg running counter to the grain of the leg.

The PL apron tenon will have a new loose tenon inserted into sound timber beyond the furniture beetle damage. The missing timber from the top of the PL leg will be spliced in and trimmed to fit.

New riven walnut draw pins will be made and fitted to the existing tapered holes upon re-assembly.

ESTIMATED COST:

ACCEPTED BY:
(SIGNATURE)

DATE:

Hampshire Antique Restoration

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TREATMENT REPORT

OBJECT: A mid 18th Century South German Fauteuil

OBJECT NUMBER: ????-08-F

OWNER: Edward James Foundation

DATE COMPLETED: 29/01/2008

DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT:

1. Disassemble and remove old glue residue



The loose and damaged parts were carefully removed and all screws and shards of timber were set aside and labelled. A jig was made to support the remaining frame whilst restoration was in progress.

FTIR spectroscopy was carried out using fragments of glue from the previous repairs and this was shown to be a mixture of casein and PVA adhesives.

De-ionised water suspended in Laponite was used to remove the old hide glue and the casein and PVA as it was applied over the existing hide glue.

2. Repairs to PR front leg



The broken away inside section was found to register well in its original position and glued back into place using hide glue. The hole present after the removal of a previously inserted nail was enlarged to accommodate a riven walnut peg.

3. Splices to PR front leg



The cross grain peg was trimmed back and sealed with shellac and the small voids stopped with beeswax. After minimal trimming of the mating surfaces walnut splices were glued into the lost areas with hide glue and levelled in to the existing surface.

4. Splices to PR front apron tenon



A large part of the PR apron tenon was lost due to common furniture beetle damage; a new section was carved from walnut and glued into place with hide glue. Bamboo was used as a cross grain dowel to strengthen the glue line.

The front gate was then reassembled using replacement cleaved walnut draw-pegs wherever the original was damaged or lost.

5. Reassembly



The front gate was then glued into place using hide glue and replacement walnut pegs where necessary. The pegs were trimmed flush and sealed with shellac. Gaps and remaining small losses were then filled with stopping wax before the surface of the whole chair was waxed using proprietary beeswax.



CONSERVATOR: David Burton

DATE: 29/01/2008

SIGNATURE: