

Hampshire Antique Restoration

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01489 893632

OBJECT: late 18th century carved and gilded looking glass frame

OBJECT NUMBER:

OWNER: Confidential

DATE RECEIVED: : 29/11/2008

DATE EXAMINED: : 30/11/2008

CONSERVATOR(S): David Burton

H:

W:

D:

DESCRIPTION:

A late 18th century Gilded carved pine looking glass frame, the design a combination of flowers and classical ribbons, with a stylised squash at the centre of the lower member. These devices appear to entwine a concave and beaded rectangular frame with break corners, but each of the 4 sections is carved from the solid (consistent with European pine – by eye).



CONDITION:

The main central carved motif is absent;¹ there are several small losses (flower petals and leaf tips) a large section of ribbon is missing from the PL side.² The mirror plate was removed prior to photography to allow clearer documentation and for safe stowage for the duration of the conservation treatment.

¹ Missing central motif

² Losses to the carved detail

PROPOSED TREATMENT:

The numerous small fractures around the larger losses will need consolidation. Careful observation of the remaining areas of carving provides evidence suggesting a focal point for the garlands on either side of the central losses. This when combined with research undertaken on comparable looking glasses this suggests the missing area was a classical urn. Once a design has been fully developed new timber will form the basis of the restoration, after carving it will be water gilded in the traditional manner.

ESTIMATED COST:

ACCEPTED BY:
(SIGNATURE)

DATE:

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OBJECT: late 18th century carved and gilded looking glass frame

OBJECT NUMBER:

OWNER: Mrs. Susan Waring

DATE COMPLETED: 27/02/2009

DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT:

1. Consolidation and preparation

The small fractures around the frame were marked and re-glued using hot hide glue³. The broken surfaces were cleaned using de-ionised water suspended in Laponite to remove water soluble deposits.

After several drafts a design that correctly fitted the void and that was in keeping with known designs of the period was drawn up, being careful not to extrapolate more than the very minimum from the available evidence.⁴ This pencil drawing was then photographed and digitally manipulated to produce a visual impression of how the frame would look with the suggested replacement.⁵

Around a dozen practice carvings were produced to internalise and attempt to reproduce subtle the nuances produced by the original artisan. Lime wood was glued into place using hot hide glue to replace the losses, and where possible carved in situ.⁶ The main Classical Urn feature was dry fitted to the extant carved pine and removed for the duration of the production of the carving. The shape was then established⁷ before the details were defined⁸ and the final detailing could take place.⁹

The finished carving was glued into place with hot hide glue¹⁰ to allow final fitting in situ¹¹. Eight to sixteen coats of gesso were then applied over a glue size¹² before ragging back and finally re-cutting the gesso to define the details prior to water gilding.¹³ A bole that matched the visible existing areas of original bole was applied and cut back using abrasives before being burnished with a horse hair and lint cloth.¹⁴

The prepared areas were then water gilded and double gilded over the main urn and other high spots.¹⁵

After gentle burnishing using a horse hair and lint fabric that new gilding was toned in using shellac and earth

³ Consolidation

⁴ Drawing

⁵ Digital prototyping

⁶ Carving the ribbon

⁷ Roughing out the shape

⁸ Defining the details

⁹ Final detailing

¹⁰ The finished urn

¹¹ Glued into place

¹² Eight to sixteen coats of gesso

¹³ Prior to gesso smoothing and re-cutting

¹⁴ Bole

¹⁵ Gilded

pigments.¹⁶ The shellac was adulterated with fumed silica to reduce the gloss of the finish. The earth pigments were stippled on with a dry brush once the polish had reached a whistling tack.

Rotten stone was applied with a dry brush where necessary to complete the appearance of a dry dusty surface.

Finally the mirror was attached to a sheet of MDF to allow safe transportation to the clients home before re-installation.¹⁷

CONSERVATOR:
SIGNATURE:

DATE:

¹⁶ Toned
¹⁷ Final