

## CONDITION REPORT AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL

**OBJECT:** Early 19<sup>th</sup> century Mahogany work table

**OBJECT NUMBER:** 2278 - 06 - F

**OWNER:** private

**DATE RECEIVED:** 25/09/2007

**CONSERVATOR:** David Burton

**DATE EXAMINED:** 25/09/2007

**DIMENSIONS**

**H:**

**W:**

**D:**

**DESCRIPTION:**

An early 19<sup>th</sup> century mahogany work table.

The table top is constructed from a 19<sup>th</sup> century solid mahogany, as are both leaves. The same plank seems to have been used for both.

The carcass of the top is constructed from Pine, the drawer is a combination of pine and quarter sawn Oak, the sewing box seems to be constructed from pine, but without further investigation, I cannot be certain. The tapering legs are constructed from mahogany as are the x stretchers.



The table top is veneered in mahogany veneer of a type and thickness of gauge compatible with an early 19<sup>th</sup> century material. The iron hinges used are in good condition and seem original. The stringing is either Holly or sycamore, not the expected boxwood as a visible medullary ray is present. The cross banding is rosewood and unusually is not strung along the outside edge as would be expected.

The drawer front veneer is almost definitely from the same source as the table top mahogany veneer as the figure is very similar. The drawer has a central brass lock and escutcheon that have been polished to a lustrous finish.

The legs are not veneered except for the small decorative appliqué at the bottom of the legs, which appear to be rosewood veneer edged with boxwood stringing.

The table top is finished in a shellac based product compatible with a 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, and is rather dull and cloudy in places. There is some discolouration present in old stopping caused by a difference in fading

characteristics between the dyes used in the stopping and the natural dyes in the surrounding timber.

The carcass has a reasonably sound finish and colour, as do the legs. There is some watermarking present to the front and rear.

**CONDITION:**

Constructional Anomalies



The table top is constructed from a 19<sup>th</sup> century solid mahogany, as are both leaves, but the cross banding used on both seems to have been glued to a piece of Oak fillet with the grain running at 90° to the carcass timber.

The stringing used between the main top veneer and the cross banding would traditionally have been repeated along the outside edge of the cross banding, this second string is not present. There is also evidence of a previous

moulding having been present underneath the Oak fillet.

The stringing and cross banding around the corners of the leaves are very awkwardly executed with poor choice of grain alignment and uneven radiuses.

There are new screws present holding the top onto the carcass, and clear evidence the top has been rotated through 180° at some time from mis-aligned screw holes in the substrate.



Saw marks can be seen underneath the carcass suggesting a previous removal of material.



The open tenons securing the legs to the carcass are not only an incorrect technique for a piece of this date and quality, but are very poorly worked as can be seen here.

Evidence of a spoon



bit Auger (drill) having been used to rough out these joints in the carcass can be clearly seen here;

The timber used for the legs is a much later material more commonly found in late Victorian/Edwardian pieces.



Further evidence of alteration can be seen here where the rear PLHS leg has been tenoned in ripping out timber from the rear cross member, providing unequivocal proof of this work having been done at a later date than the carcass was assembled.

This view (looking up into PRHS of the carcass from below) shows a sawn off tenon (there is one present on the PRHS also. Saw marks visible here also suggest that an original part has been removed at a later date in a crude fashion.



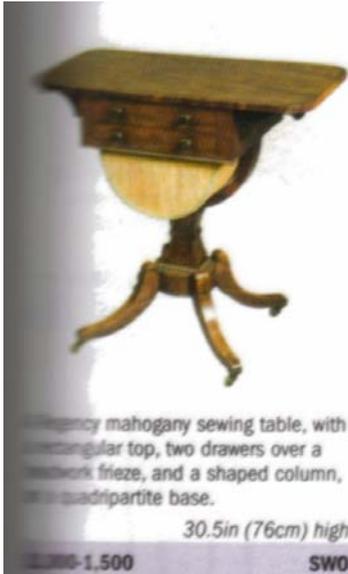
The relative size of the remaining tenon suggests that the removed piece was substantial and most likely structural in application.

Also clear differences could be seen between the fluorescing of the legs and the main structure when the item was viewed under a UV light source.

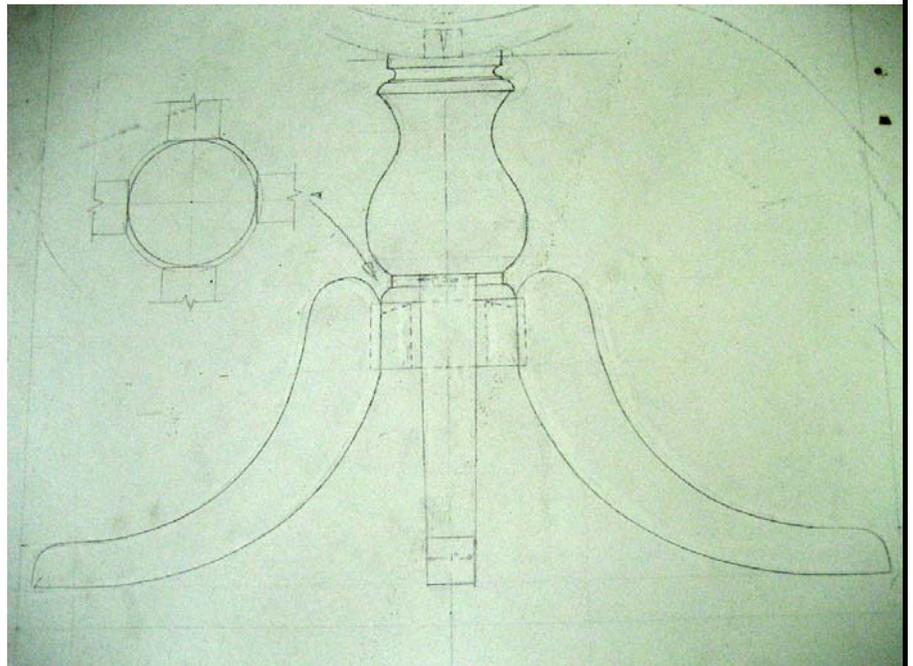
**PROPOSED TREATMENT:**

The evidence gathered all concludes that this small regency work table started out life with a semi-circular support, probably on sabre legs. The materials, tool marks and constructional techniques used seem to suggest the alterations took place most likely in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After research and client approval a base in keeping with the original style will be made to replace the married on legs as shown in the original picture.



After research (left) it was decided to work up a proposal (below) based on an “average” of likely originals.



**ESTIMATED COST:**

**ACCEPTED BY:**  
**(SIGNATURE)**

**DATE:**

## TREATMENT REPORT

**OBJECT:** as above

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**OWNER:** private

**DATE COMPLETED:**

### DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT:

#### 1. Disassembly



The Edwardian legs had been glued into place using hide glue – which was reversed using hot water injected with a syringe. The nail that can be seen in the photograph on the right was not visible until after the PL leg had been removed.

#### 2. Reconstruction



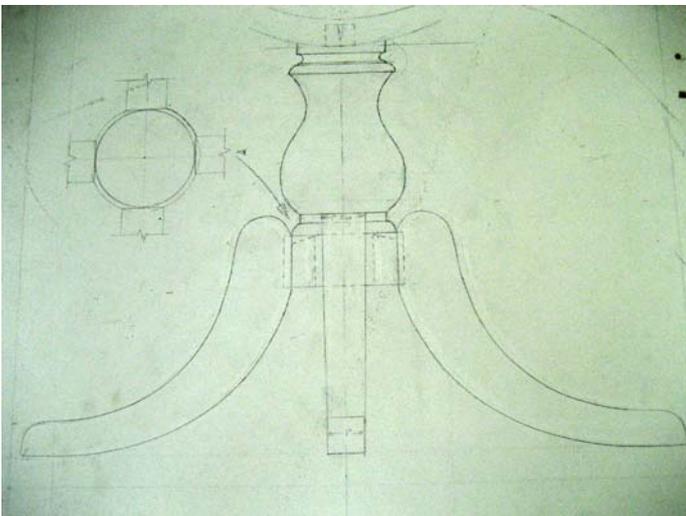
After removal of most remaining hide glue using Laponite pine (for the carcass) and oak (for the trim) was spliced into place to fill the damaged areas left by the auger drill. The splices were carved to fit the existing grooves and glued into place with hide glue.

### 3. Colouring



The splices were coloured in to match the existing timber using Potassium Dichromate and Oxalic acid to attain a similar base colour, then detailed using earth pigments and shellac.

### 4. The Pin board



After agreement with the client work could begin; after research a 1:1 drawing was produced from which to work, templates were made and the legs cut out a prepared.

## 5. The Top



The loose cross banding was re-glued where necessary and removed and re-glued if the substrate was cleaved from the main carcass. The damaged stringing was removed and the graves cleaned using de-ionised water.



New Kingwood cross banding was cut to replace the losses and new sycamore stringing cut to fill the missing areas. The damaged corners had the stringing groove re-cut using a guide to re-establish the radius.



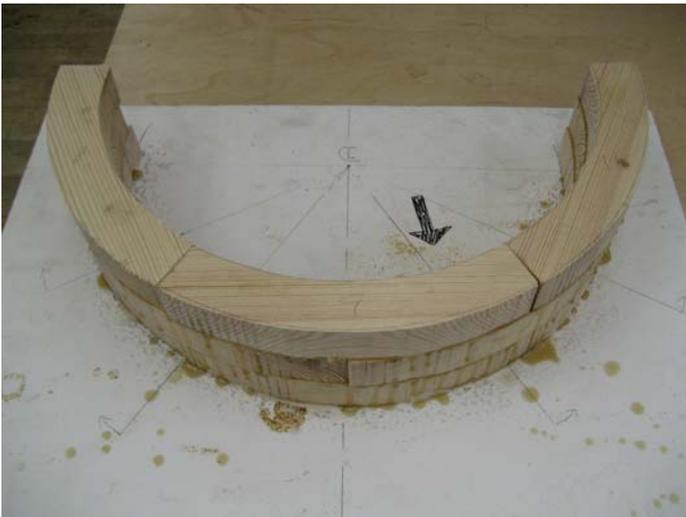
The de-natured polish on the central section was very cloudy, and was cut back using IMS. The new timber was levelled and sanded, the grain raised and cut back before toning in the replaced Kingwood with oxalic acid, shellac and acrylic colours. Once the colouring was complete the central leaf was then coloured using shellac and water stains and then bodied up using rubbed on shellac to fill the grain.

## 6. The Knobs



Three of the knobs had lost timber due to old breaks; the losses were filled with spliced in timber which was glued into place with hide glue before being re-turned on the lathe to match the original profile. After colouring with shellac and acrylics the knobs were re-fitted using pearl glue.

### 7. The hoop



The hoop substrate was built up using pine brickwork glued with hide glue. Upon curing of the glue the excess pine was planed away and the hoop was hammer veneered in mahogany using pearl glue.



The taper was cut onto the legs and these were dry fitted to the column. The spacer was cut from mahogany and the finished hoop fitted into place. The replacement base was then sanded and stained using dichromate of potash, and adjusted for colour using proprietary bleaches and water stains before sealing with shellac. Final colour adjustment and gentle distressing was done using flint and water stains sealed into layers of shellac.

#### 8. Re-assembly



Replacement castors were dry fitted to the legs before the remaining components were glued into place using hot hide glue as an adhesive. Final levelling was accomplished at this stage by adjustment of the dovetail tenon shoulders on the legs.

9. Final waxing



After assembly the whole table was waxed with a proprietary beeswax polish ready for collection by the client.