



An Exceptional Pair of Regency
“Grecian Hall Chairs” After a
Design by Thomas Sheraton c.1805

Inventory Number :230-134

Size: 19 1/4 ins wide, 15 ins deep and 35 3/4 ins high

[column size="two-third"][/column]

Provenance

Most likely with Phillips of Hitchin in 1984
Jeremy Ltd, London
A Private American collection

Literature

A pair of chairs of this model, probably the present pair, illustrated in
Country Life

, 17th of May 1984 with Phillips of Hitchin

The design for the chairs illustrated in Thomas Sheraton's
Cabinet Dictionary

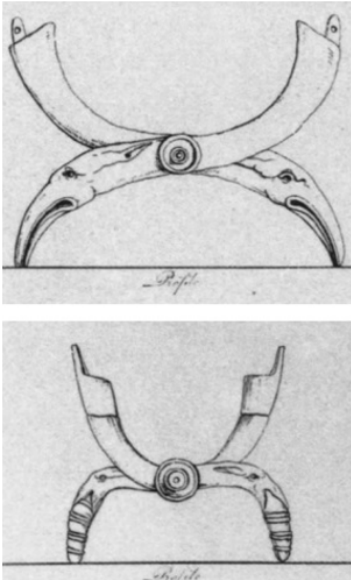
, published in 1803

A pair of chairs of the same model, differing only in the design of the feet, were sold at Christie's New York on
the 16th of April 2002

These exceptional chairs are very much in the taste championed by a small group of connoisseurs whose
figurehead was the Prince Regent, later George IV. The architect and designer Charles Tatham popularised the
“x-frame” or curule style of chair with his publication

Etchings of Ancient Ornamental Architecture

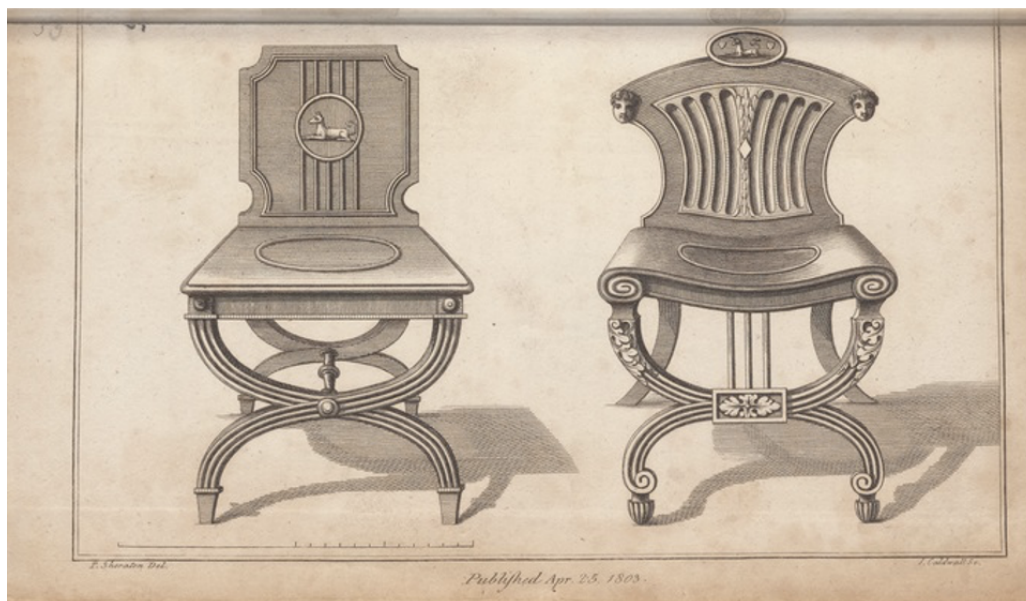
, published in 1799, which included illustrations of ‘Antique Seats executed in Bronze from the Collection in the
Museum at Portici’ (illustrated in a composite image below)



These designs in turn influenced the great furniture designers of the time and it was Thomas Sheraton in his 1803

Cabinet Dictionary

who provided the design from which the present chairs are taken.

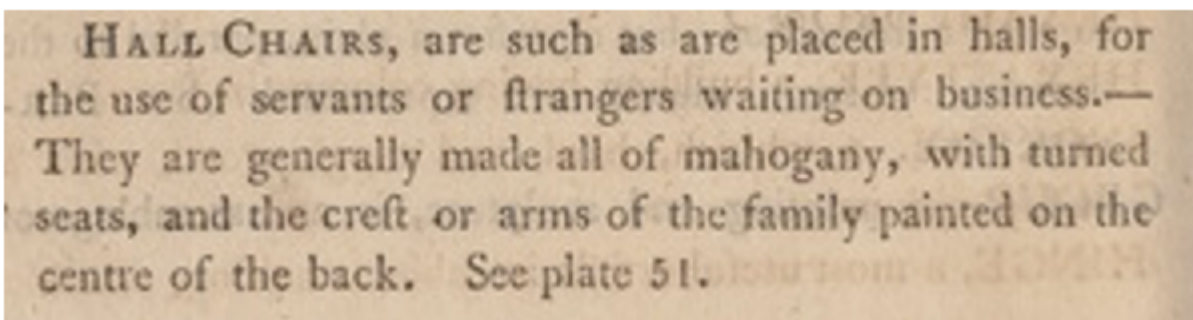


Sheraton's

Cabinet Dictionary

plate 51, later hand altered in some editions to plate 53, with the design for the present chairs on the right

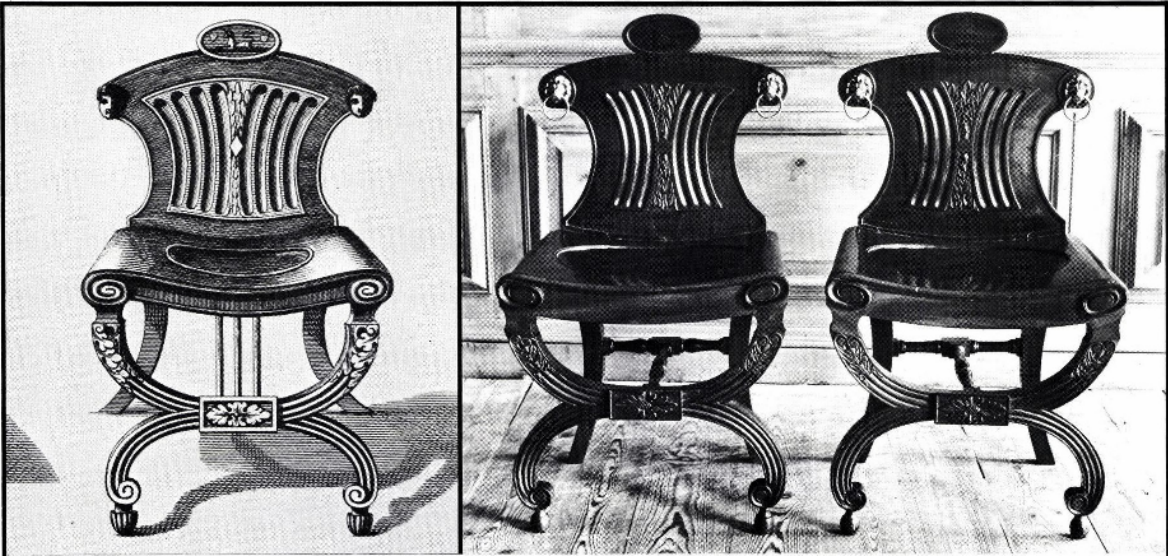
This is a particularly successful design-the combination of carved detail, unusually sinuous lines for the period and fine brass lion's head mounts is an arresting one. Hall chairs were designed, as Sheraton himself states in the same publication, to be as much a statement of wealth and taste as they were as practical pieces as they were only sat upon by visiting tradesmen and servants-higher-bred visitors would have been shown directly in to the drawing room of a house. These chairs would have made the perfect impression, conveying the wealth and fashionable taste of their first owners.



Surviving examples of this model are very rare indeed and it is possible that only two pairs survive. One pair were sold at Christie's New York in 2002. A pair of the same model had previously been illustrated by another great dealer, Jerome Phillips of Phillips of Hitchin Ltd, in an advert in

Country Life

in 1984. It is highly likely that this is the same pair of chairs but it has not been possible to confirm by close comparison of the images whether this is definitely the case. In any event, our pair were supplied to the previous owners by the important dealers Jeremy Ltd of London-one of a small number of dealers who helped to pioneer the taste for regency furniture in the early to mid 20th century in London.



A pair of mahogany hall chairs (right) in the "Grecian" manner, almost identical with that shown (left) on plate 53 of Thomas Sheraton's Cabinet Dictionary of 1802.

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a pair of chairs

of the same model likely to be the same pair, advertised in
Country Life
in 1984

The chairs retain an excellent colour and patination.

Attributing these chairs to a particular maker is difficult given that they are so closely related to a published source that would have been in wide circulation. That having been said, the extremely high quality lion's head mounts are very reminiscent of those used by the makers Marsh and Tatham on a series of well-known pieces such as a desk attributed to the firm which is now at Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire.

<https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/514610>

Research and essay by Christopher Coles.

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