



Rare and Probably Unique Pair of George II Windsor Armchairs of the Highest Quality

Inventory Number :170-102

Size: Price Upon Request Larger: 24 1/2 ins wide, 23 3/4 ins deep and 45 3/4 ins high; seat 17 ins high
Smaller: 23 1/2 ins wide, 20 1/4 ins deep and 45 1/2 ins high; seat 18 1/2 ins high

With substantial elm seats, walnut crest rails and the balance in ash, these comb-back chairs were made in the Thames Valley, or possibly London as early as 1740 and are part of a group of only five known examples.

Beside this pair, the other three examples known are:

1. A fine example published in three separate books (all titled English Country Furniture between 1992 and 2000 by David Knell a dealer, restorer and author who illustrated his example on the cover of the 1993 book. This example, by repute, had surfaced at a 1980's Sotheby's Billingshurst sale.
2. Another fine example owned by the great collector John Parry, purchased from the dealer R. G. Cave & Sons, Ltd., London, 1999 and subsequently was sold at John Parry's sale at Christie's in 2010 for the then remarkable sum of \$48,500 (£32,450).
3. A third example appeared at an East Anglian auction in 2017 and subsequently was handled by the local antiques trade.

There is little but superlatives to write about these chairs, from the quality of the timber to the superb and innovative early design which the observer immediately experiences. This pair, however, add a further level of interest. Others have mentioned that the maker took a whimsical approach to the back splat, with the piercings representing a smiling face when seen upright and a sad face upside down.

With this pair, I believe we have a specially commissioned set for both a male and female user, with the larger, presumably the male chair having slightly more decorative elements.

In addition one can see the hand of artisan/craftsman in the work. It is clear to us that all of the known chairs, despite the variations in size, were produced in the same workshop as the back-slats are identical in size, indicating the use of a template. The chairs reveal much about the process of the craftsman who made the

chairs that we don't normally find on other fine pieces. For instance the superbly figured and extremely thick seat to one chair has an almost undetectable drill hole to the underside showing how the saddle seat was stabilized on the bench as the workman adzed the contours to the seat. Also the arms to one chair have a decorative groove to the inner and outer surfaces, a quite normal element, but in this case the craftsman used a different chisel to finish the groove at a 45 angle. Nothing particularly special, but an indication of the extraordinary care and pride that went into the design and construction of these pieces.

Given the extraordinary quality and rarity of these exceptional chairs they have received a two year program of conservation under the advice of leading specialists.

We are very proud to offer these chairs and invite you to examine them in New York by appointment.

Thames Valley or London, c. 1740-1760

Provenance: Collection of Nelson Doubleday

For more information please contact us

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