

A rare mid-18th century, walnut armchair re-upholstered in an historically-accurate silk damask

Sold



Description

The pine, oak and walnut frame with an added support to the top rail and joints tightened-up. The shaped back with an arched crest. The out-scrolled arms centering a loose-cushioned seat. Re-upholstered in Humphries, Abberton, crimson silk damask (see photographs). Standing on turned legs with original toes. Excellent original colour and patina. English, second quarter of the 18th century

Relatively few chairs of the mid-18th century can be traced to any pattern book, and the endless variations from the published designs are evidence of the cabinet makers' imagination. This is a very unusual and interesting, rare piece, incorporating archaic elements within a more-highly, evolved later design and no other, known, piece of similar design has been recorded. The turned base evokes the latter half of the 17th century, but the low height, shape of the back, and wide seat both developed and became fashionable in the second quarter of the 18th century. The only characteristic common to both period is are the stretchers which were reinstated on chairs in the mid-18th century after a lapse of about fifty years.

It is most likely that this chair was ordered by a London-based gentleman of means who wanted both the latest fashion and to display the piece in harmony with other earlier pieces in his country home. This chair has great presence, and is in excellent condition.

Towards the end of the second quarter of the 18th century, French influence becomes increasingly apparent in the design of English chairs with a lighter and more fanciful fashion in which sinuous lines, subtle curves and delicate carving in low relief usurped the place of baroque solidity. The height of the back is considerably reduced, and the shape of the top was more emphasised, and cupped to receive the neck. The seats become wider and there is a noticeable overall increase in weight and solidity, The wing disappears, and the outscrolled arms project directly from the back reflecting the dignified simplicity of the period.