

A fine, George III, mahogany, reading, writing, architects, or artists table in the manner of Thomas Chippendale

Sold



Description

The hinged, adjustable top in one piece with cleated sides and an ogee moulded edge. The detachable book rest has been removed. The brass hinges which adjust the top are original as is the fretwork bracket that holds it in place. The brass ratchet mechanism is original and raises the top to create storage for plans. The original brass knob in the frieze operates the release mechanism.

The sides are fitted with mahogany, retractable candlestick supports retaining their original brass handles. The frieze is fitted with a single drawer with elaborate, handle, escutcheon, working lock and key which are all original. The interior fitted is with a red leather slide. Standing on square legs with later metal brackets giving extra support. On original brass castors. Exceptional original colour and patina.

English, circa 1750.

Closed height 80 ½ cm., 31 ¾ in., Open height 132 cm., 50 in.
Length 81 cm., 32 in, Depth 57 ½ cm

During the early part of the 18th century specialized tables evolved to satisfy the needs of draughtsmen, architects and amateur artists. In 1785 Benjamin Goodison supplied George III with a mahogany writing and reading table 'with racks and stays to fix the top at different heights'. In some reading tables, 'the double rising top', can be raised to a considerable height which was considered 'so healthy for those who stand to read, write or draw'. It is more likely that this table was conceived as a reading and writing table as there is only a single drawer which has no fitted compartments for paints and brushes. There are no mark inside the drawer to indicate that paints have ever been stored inside it.

This is a particularly fine example of these tables which were made in small quantities for wealthy customers. The design for the lower section of the George III mahogany breakfront library bookcase shown below appears, without the addition of the central frieze drawer as plate LXII in the 1st Edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet Makers Director* and as plate XC in the 3rd Edition (1763).

Interestingly, in 1767 Chippendale provided 'a very neat mahogany drawing table of very fine wood, the top made to rise' at a cost of £8 8s for the library at Nostell, the whereabouts of which are unknown. Further research is being undertaken on this.