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New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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M~E~M~O~R~A~N~D~U~M

To: Gwendolyn L. Smith,
Asst. Curator - Coe Hall
Fr: Mary Zaremski, R&C Tech.
Re: Conservation Exam/Treatment
Da: November 13, 2012

Attached for your files is a copy of a partial furniture conservation report for: COE.1955.002.131, a sofa.

Please note this is a partial conservation report as the furniture treatment is complete, but the upholstery (textile conservator's responsibility) is not.

Please contact our conservatore David Bayne if you have any questions.

Thank you.



David A. Paterson
Governor

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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Carol Ash
Commissioner

Furniture Conservation Examination Report and Treatment Proposal

Accession Number: COE.1955.002.131

Furniture Type: Sofa

Location: Coe Hall

Style/Date/Maker: Frame -- 18th century, English; needlework cover -- 17th or 18th century, English; upholstery -- early 20th century

Conservator: David Bayne Deborah Trupin

Measurements: H: 39 1/2" (100.2 cm) X W: 71 1/2" (181.5 cm) X D: 27" (68.5 cm)

Wood ID: Primary Wood (by eye): walnut
Secondary Wood (by eye): not visible

Description: A camel-back shaped sofa with flared arms, scalloped front seat rail and cabriole legs with vegetal carving. The sofa is upholstered with small springs in the seat deck and covered with pieces of 17th- or 18th-century needlework. The seat cushion is covered with the same needlework. The outside arms and back are covered with red damask fabrics.



Sofa on-site, July 1996



Sofa, rear view, on-site, July 1996

- **Summary**

This sofa is similar in form and upholstery techniques to two others from Coe Hall. The needlework show cover fabric and the frame may be of approximately the same age, but it is unknown if they have always been together (i.e. if this is the original cover for this sofa). Both the upholstery and the show cover are in need of stabilization. The goal of the treatment is to stabilize the sofa so that it may be returned to display at Coe Hall. Following normal practice, the furniture lab will be collaborating with the textile lab on the upholstery.

- **Historical Background**

The sofa was examined on-site in July 1996. The conditions and damages noted below were recorded then. A copy of the condition report and treatment proposal of 1996 is attached to this report. The treatments proposed then were not done.

That report records the label on the dustcover: (Printed) "Remade and Renovated by Joseph Giannola/ 245 East 59th Street/ New York City. / This article must not be sold; it is the property of and must be returned to:/ (in blue ink, script) Mrs. Harriman (?) / Date sterilized: (Typed) NOT. "Recovered only. Filling not disturbed." A NYS Dep't of Labor 1 cent stamp is affixed to the label.

The 1996 report notes that this label is essentially identical to that on the sofa in the dining room (COE.2003.1, treated 2005 – 06). That report also notes that the trim used on this sofa is nearly identical to that on the sofa in the gallery (COE.1999.1, treated 2000 – 2002).

The label raises the question of whether or not the show cover is original. It would be interesting to know more about when this sofa and the other needlework- and tapestry-covered sofas at Coe Hall entered the collections and what their provenance is.

The needlework is very soiled; soiling is worst on the seat cushion. There are a number of cases from webbing clothes moths adhered to the cushion, although no sign of active infestation. The soiling gives the cushion a grayish appearance and rough feel. There are no visible stains, but some stiffness in the front of the cushion may be from an invisible stain.

Show cover – outside back and proper right outside arm – red damask, large pattern:

Construction:

Fiber: silk warp and weft (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: 0-twist warp; Z-spun, S-ply (2) weft

Yarn count: c. 200 warps x 100 wefts per inch

Weave structure: satin weave damask

Application: Complete details of application are not visible. The fabric is applied with the warps running vertically. An open seam in the proper right outside arm reveals selvages with green and white stripes. There are two vertical seams in the outside back, presumably joining fabric widths.

The damask show cover is most likely tacked to the curve of the outside arm, the outside of the side arm support, the outside or bottom of the side seat rail, the top back of the crest rail, the back of the back stiles, and the bottom of the back seat rail. The trim is applied over the damask show cover, separating it from the needlework show cover.

Condition Poor. The damask show cover is weak, with splitting in many areas. The worst of the splits are at the front of the proper right arm and across the top and bottom of the outside back. Some of the fabric around the splits is so weak that it is shredding. Seams in the proper right outside arm have opened. The damask pieces are sagging away from the frame. The fabric is soiled, with a grimy feel. The outside back is significantly faded.

Show cover –proper left outside arm – red damask, small pattern:

Construction:

Fiber: silk warp and cotton (? or silk?) weft (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: 0-twist warp; Z-spun, S-ply (2) weft

Yarn count: c. 200 warps x 100 wefts per inch

Weave structure: satin weave damask

Application: Complete details of application are not visible. The fabric is applied with the warps running vertically. It is in four pieces, with a horizontal and vertical seam. The seams are almost, but not quite, centered. The pattern is not matched in the seaming.

This damask show cover is most likely tacked to the curve of the outside arm, the outside of the side arm support, and the outside or bottom of the side seat rail. It is tacked, at about 2" intervals, to the lower curve of the arm. The trim is applied over the damask show cover, separating it from the needlework show cover.

Condition Good. This damask show cover is in much better condition than that used for the outside back and proper right outside arm. This could mean that this fabric is a replacement or it could simply mean that this side of the sofa has been more protected from light. The fabric is intact, with only a bit of fraying near the seams. The fabric is soiled, with a grimy feel. The fabric is slightly stretched and under pressure from the filling below it.

Present Condition / Before Treatment

- **Structure:**

Presently the frame is covered and an in-depth exam for age, former repairs and authenticity will be deferred until at least the dust cover is removed. It is assumed that it is an 18th-century, English-made frame.

Overall the sofa feels stable and relatively tight. Both the back and the arms are secure.

The proper right front leg is slightly loose. The proper left front leg has been crudely repaired with modern PVA-type glue that has run down the back of the leg.

The proper right rear leg is loose because the joint with the rear rail is broken; a piece of the rail is suspended by the upholstery.

The proper left rear leg is tight and good.

- **Surface:**

The surface of the exposed wood looks typical for an 18th-century piece, with some wear and scuff mark. The carving is in good shape without major losses. The surface is dirty and dull and appears to have layers of varnishes, waxes, and oils. The color reflects its age and patina.

- **Upholstery:**

Show cover – cushion top and sides, front seat rail, inside back, inside and front arms—needlework:

Construction:

Fiber: linen warp and weft (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: Z-spun singles, warp and weft

Yarn count: 24 warp x 24 weft per inch – spaced with c. 1/8" between pairs of warps and wefts

Weave structure: plain weave

Applied decoration: Overall embroidery in tent stitch (also called gros point and petit point)

Fiber: wool and silk (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: Z-spun, S-ply (2?) – wool, used 3 ends together
0-twist – silk

Application: On the body of the sofa the show cover is tacked around the perimeter of the inside back, inside arms, and front seat rail; the exact details of application are not visible. The trim is applied over the edges of the needlework.

Condition: Fair. The 17th-century needlework is mostly intact, but very worn and fragile. There are many areas of partial and/or incipient loss of the yarns on the top of the fabric. Most of these areas are in the dark yarns. The "petit point" at the center of the inside back has several significant splits. At least one of these also has loss of ground fabric and embroidery yarns. There is a small loss of both embroidery and ground fabric to either side of the center of the front seat rail. There are losses in the tops of each arm scroll. There do not appear to be losses in the seat cushion needlework, but it seems that there are many repairs in the cushion. There may be many repairs in the needlework on the body of the sofa as well; at least one repair is visible in the inside back, near the proper right. There is a stitching repair (running stitch in white thread) in the top proper left arm.

Trim:

Construction:

Fiber: silk (or cotton) warp, silk supplementary (pile warp), and cotton weft (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: Z-spun, S-ply (2) warp and weft (wefts used in groups of c. 10); 0-twist supplementary warp

Yarn count: c. 100 warps x 14 wefts per inch; trim is 1" wide

Weave structure: plain weave with supplementary pile warp patterning

Application: The trim is glued to the sofa's show cover around the perimeter of the seat rails, the arm fronts, the top of the arm scroll, and perimeter of the outside back.

Condition: Fair. The trim is still securely attached to the sofa. It is stiff from the glue used to attach it. It, like the rest of the sofa, is soiled with a grimy feel. Some of the pile patterning is worn or faded; this is worst at the top crest rail, which must have received the most light exposure.

Seat Upholstery (layers described from bottom to top):

Note that only those layers that are visible are described. The rest will be described in an Upholstery Addendum, prepared during treatment.

Dust cover:

Construction:

Fiber: cotton warp and weft (visual estimate)

Yarn construction: Z-spun singles, warp and weft

Yarn count: 40 warps x 40 wefts/inch

Weave structure: plain weave, glazed or sized

Application: The dust cover is tacked to the bottom of the seat rails at about 1" intervals.

Condition: Fair. The dust cover fabric is mostly intact, but has a few torn areas, most notably at the back proper right leg and the front proper left leg, and a many incipient tears, particularly around the tacks. It is stretched and distorted from pressure from the de-compressed springs. It is quite soiled, with a grimy, stiff feel from the soils.

Webbing:

Construction: The webbing can just be glimpsed through the tears in the dustcover. It is a jute (visible estimate) webbing, with red stripes. No further construction details can be determined now.

Application: The webbing is tacked to the bottom of the front rails.

Condition: Not enough of the webbing is visible to determine much about its condition. The sagging shape of the seat bottom shows that the webbing is stretched and distorted from the decompressed springs.

Seat Filling 1 (Springs): The springs can be felt between the webbing and the seat deck fabric. They feel quite small, more like those typically used in a back than a seat. No other details about the seat filling are available now.

Seat Filling 1 Cover (Spring) Cover: This fabric can be felt through the tear in the dust cover. No other details about the springs are available now.

Seat Filling 2: This filling can be felt below the deck fabric. It feels like cotton batting, the material expected in this sort of upholstery from this time. Cotton batting is visible just below the show fabric on the outside back and outside arms. No other details about the seat filling 2 are available now.

Deck fabric:

Construction:

Fiber: wool (?) warp and weft (visual identification)

Yarn construction: Z-spun, S-ply (2 or 3) warp; weft not visible

Yarn count: 40 warp x 16 weft ends per inch

Weave structure: warp-faced plain weave

Application: The details of the application are not visible, but the fabric is most likely tacked to the top of the back and side seat rails. At the front, it is hand slip-stitched to a different fabric that is used as the deck fabric on the front rail (see below)

Condition: Good/fair. The deck fabric is intact, with no losses. It is quite soiled, with accumulations of gritty soils, lint, and insect frass. There are a number of webbing clothes moth larval cases stuck to the deck fabric, but no sign of active infestation. There is a white liquid stain at the back, near the center. The fabric is stretched and distorted from use and from a lack of support from the layers below.

Front rail deck fabric:

Construction: Note that this is the same fabric used for the cushion side and back borders.

Fiber: wool (?) warp and weft (visual identification)

Yarn construction: Z-spun, S-ply (2 or 3) warp; weft not visible

Yarn count: 26 warp x 8 weft ends per inch

Weave structure: warp-predominant plain weave

Application: The fabric is hand slip-stitched to the main deck fabric and the needlework show fabric on the front of the front rail.

Condition: Good/fair. The front rail deck fabric is intact, with no losses. It is quite soiled, with accumulations of gritty soils, lint, and insect frass. There are a number of webbing clothes moth larval cases stuck to the front rail deck fabric, but no sign of active infestation.

Cushion (layers described from bottom to top):

Note that only those layers that are visible are described. The rest will be described in an Upholstery Addendum, prepared during treatment.

Outside bottom fabric:

Construction:

Fiber: cotton (?) warp and weft (visual identification)

Yarn construction: Z-spun singles warp and weft

Yarn count: 96 warp x 96 weft ends per inch

Weave structure: 2/1 twill weave; warp and weft not yet determined, 1 is light green color, one is dark blue/black

Application: The fabric is mostly machine-sewn to the border fabrics. It is hand slip-stitched to the bottom of the back border fabric; this is where the cushion would have been inserted into the cushion cover.

Condition: Good. The outside bottom cushion fabric is intact, with no losses. It is somewhat soiled, with accumulations of lint and insect frass. There are a number of webbing clothes moth larval cases stuck to the front rail deck fabric, but no sign of active infestation. The fabric is rippled and creased from a combination of tension at the seams, use, and lack of support from the seat structure on which it rests.

Back and side border fabric:

Construction: Note that this is the same fabric used on the front rail.

Fiber: wool (?) warp and weft (visual identification)

Yarn construction: Z-spun, S-ply (2 or 3) warp; weft not visible

Yarn count: 26 warp x 8 weft ends per inch

Weave structure: warp-predominant plain weave

Application: The fabric is machine-sewn to the outside bottom fabric on the bottom edge and hand slip-stitched to the trim and/or the needlework show fabric on the top.

Condition: Good. The back and side border fabric is intact, with no losses. It is soiled, with accumulations of lint.

Cushion under cover: Nothing is visible through the needlework show cover, border, or outside bottom fabrics, but it is expected that beneath these fabrics is a sturdy cotton cushion (under) cover. This is what was found on the other sofas (COE.1999.1 and COE.2003.1) from Coe Hall that have been treated at Peebles Island.

Cushion filling: As with the cushion under cover, none of the cushion filling is visible. From its shape, weight, and feel, as well as by comparison with the other sofas (COE.1999.1 and COE.2003.1) from Coe Hall that have been treated at Peebles Island, the cushion filling is believed to be feathers/down.

Show cover – see details above. The needlework show cover is used on the top, front border, and front 8" of the side borders of the cushion.

Trim – see details above. The trim is used around the perimeter of the top and along the bottom edge of the front border and front 8" of the side borders of the cushion (i.e. the trim is used at the edges of the needle work show cover). The trim is secured to the needlework show cover with a fine, hand slip-stitch.

Back/Arm Upholstery (layers described from outside to inside):

Note that only those layers that are visible are described. The rest will be described in an Upholstery Addendum, prepared during treatment.

Trim – see details above

Show cover – see details above

Back/Arms Filling 1:

Construction: cotton (batting)

Application: The batting is visible through the splits in the proper right outside arm and outside back show cover. The details of the application are not visible, but the filling is most likely tacked to the outsides of the rails or stiles.

Condition: Fair. The visible batting is yellowed and soiled. It is somewhat lumpy and sagging, especially in the outside back. It has pulled away from the crest rail at the proper left corner, exposing the rail and the inside back under cover.

Webbing: Although not yet seen or felt, it is expected that there is webbing in the back and probably in the arms. The presumed webbing should be tacked to the inside frames of the back and arms.

Base cloth: A jute (visible estimate) base cloth can be seen through a split in the proper right outside arm show cover. A similar base cloth is expected on the proper left arm and the back. The base cloth should be tacked to the inside of the arm and back frames.

Back/Arms Filling 2: This filling can be felt behind the show covers on the inside arms and back. It feels like curled hair, the material expected in this sort of upholstery from this time. No other details about this layer are available now.

Under cover

Construction:

Fiber: cotton warp and weft (visual identification)

Yarn construction: Z-spun singles, warp and weft

Yarn count: 48 warp x 48 weft ends per inch

Weave structure: plain weave

Application: The under cover is only visible at the outside back proper left crest rail, where the cotton batting (Back/Arm Filling 1) has pulled away and through a loss in the inside back show cover. It is expected that it is used below the inside arm, inside back, and cushion show cover pieces. The details of the application are not visible, but the fabric is most likely tacked to the outsides of the rails and stiles.

Condition: Not enough of the under cover fabric can be seen to determine its condition.

Back/Arms Filling 3: This filling can be seen through a loss in the show cover on the inside back. It is a cotton batting, a thinner layer than that used for Back/Arms Filling 1. It is most likely used between the under cover and the show cover on the inside arms, inside back, and seat cushion.

- **Hardware:**

None.

- **Other Materials:**

None.

COE.1955.002.131 **Sofa**

Treatment Proposal:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Document photographically and in writing before, during, and after treatment. | 8 hours |
| 2. Remove dust cover and outside arms and back show covers.
Option: Leave proper left outside arm show cover in place.
Vacuum fabrics and pack for storage. | 8 hours |
| 3. Vacuum show cover fabrics, seat deck, and all surfaces of cushion. | 6 hours |
| 4. Repair rear rail using hot hide glue and replace missing pieces as necessary. | 15 hours |
| 5. Clean dried glue off proper left front leg. Clean dirt and waxes off the varnished surfaces after testing with the mineral spirits emulsion | 20 hours |
| 6. Stabilize springs from below; prepare and install support for springs. | 20 hours |
| 7. Prepare and install support for cushion. | 4 hours |
| 8. Evaluate sofa for further treatment of show cover, test needle work fabrics for wet or contact (damp) cleaning, prepare additional treatment proposal, review with site curator. | 6 hours |
| 9. Obtain and apply new outside back and outside arm show covers. | 12 hours |

TOTAL: 99 hours

Prognosis:

Good. Photographic and written documentation will be done in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice of the American Institute for Conservation.

Removal of the dust cover is necessary to permit work on the damaged seat rail and springs. Removal of the outside arm and back show covers is proposed because of the poor condition of the damask used for the outside proper right and outside back show covers. The condition of these fabrics is too poor for a treatment that would be aesthetically and structurally satisfying. The removed fabrics will be vacuumed to remove damaging particulate soils and packed for storage in archival-quality materials.

Depending on the course of treatment taken, it would be reasonable to leave the proper left outside arm fabric in place. Doing so would preserve evidence of the history of the sofa *in situ*. This decision should be made when the decision is made about further treatment for the show cover. (See more discussion below)

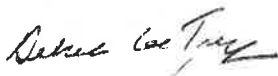
Vacuuming the fabrics remaining on the sofa will remove particulate soils and insect debris. This will improve the appearance of the sofa and remove soils that can accelerate degradation.

Efforts to stabilize the frame are expected to be successful. A better idea of the problems and the solutions will be possible after the dust cover is removed.

The springs will be supported by compressing them with polypropylene cable ties. The compressed springs will be supported by an inert, solid support. The details of the support system will be determined once the dust cover is removed. It is anticipated that the webbing can be left *in situ*. The support system will reduce the strain of the springs on the sofa frame and help to support the cushion and restore the appropriate profile to the seat. A separate inert support for the cushion will be prepared; this will rest on the top of the seat rails, to reduce pressure on the springs and further restore the shape of the seat.

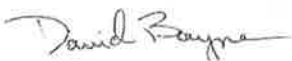
The needlework fabrics will be tested for possible wet or contact (damp) cleaning. Some sort of cleaning with water is desirable, if effective and safe, to improve the appearance of the needlework covers. During the treatment up to this point, the safety and desirability of removing some or all of the needlework show covers will be evaluated. On the one hand, removing the pieces from the sofa would permit more extensive treatment, which could be desirable for supporting losses and tears. On the other hand, this sort of treatment is very invasive, making significant changes to the sofa's upholstery and having a number of risks and challenges. The decision can be made more wisely once the sofa and its structure and condition are better understood. The site curator will be consulted as the decision is made and an additional treatment proposal will be prepared for signature.

Regardless of the decision about further treatment of the needlework fabrics, a new fabric for the outside back and outside arm(s) will be purchased. The fabric will be chosen to be as close to the current one as possible. If the show cover on the outside proper left arm is replaced, the curator will be consulted about whether this should be the same fabric as used on the rest of the sofa, or a slightly different one, as it is now. Similarly, the curator will be consulted about the construction of a replacement outside proper left arm show cover. These replacement show cover fabrics will be secured to the sofa using as few metal fasteners as possible. The details of the attachment methods will depend on how much additional treatment is done on the needlework show covers.



Deborah Lee Trupin
Textile Conservator

December 3, 2009



David Bayne
Furniture Conservator

December 3, 2009

Frame Treatment Performed

Date	Personnel	Hours	Techniques and Materials
10/17/ 2012	DB	3.25	The proper left rear leg was loose partly because it was not attached to the rear rail. The tenon had broken and the wood had split. The detached pieces were held with upholstery tacks. The tacks holding the smaller piece were removed. The webbing attached to the rail had retracted the rail into the interior of the sofa. Two straps of webbing were removed at the rail end. The black-white linen webbing was not disturbed.



Note in the above picture the smaller piece in the foreground and that the rail has been partially brought back into the place and is setting on the knee block. The rail is still about 1/2" out of position. The edge of the break should line up with the inside edge of the mortise.

10/18 DB 4.5

A stiff caul was made that was long enough to span the break. Then by using clamps the broken rail could be pulled into position the rest of the way and clamped to the broken piece. Unfortunately it would not stay in that position because of the tension of the webbing. The broken tenon that

Release:

I have read the above condition report, treatment proposal and prognosis and agree in concept with the suggested treatment.

Site: _____

Date: _____

Curator: _____

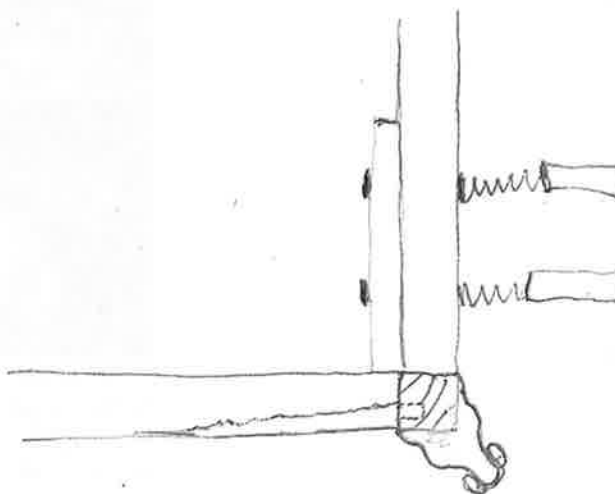
Date: _____

COE.1955.002.131 -- Sofa

Frame Treatment Performed

<i>Date</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Techniques and Materials</i>
			originally held it in place appeared to be partially rotten and could be not be restored to sufficient strength.

To hold the rail in the correct position a long block was glued to the side rail. See below.



The proper right rear leg – plan view without the back. The crack and the broken rear rail are indicated. On the right, the new glue block is shown clamped in position, pushing against the front surface of the rear rail.

COE.1955.002.131 -- Sofa

Frame Treatment Performed

<i>Date</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Techniques and Materials</i>
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The clamps on the right are clamping the glue block to the inside surface of the right rail. The clamps on the left pull the rail into position and clamp the broken piece in rail.

10/22	DB	1.5	Photos and documentation
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The break after the clamps were removed.

COE.1955.002.131 -- Sofa

Frame Treatment Performed

<i>Date</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Techniques and Materials</i>
10/23	DB	1.5	Documentation
		.5	The above attempts keep the leg from going front to back but do not hold it from left to right. The only practical solution seems to be a metal plate attached to screws to the rail and the top block of the leg. The lab was searched for such a plate.
10/24	DB	1	Plate was attached with five screws and engraved with "2012 PI"

