

*Coe Hall at Planting Fields Arboretum*

June 2, 1986

MEMO:

To: Planting Fields Foundation Files  
From: Lorraine Gilligan  
Re: Restoration of Louis XVIth Reception Room

In restoring the Reception Room it was decided to restore only three of six chairs and the settee received from Countess Vitetti. Because of the size of the room and the photographically documented information that a writing desk and pair of needlepoint arm chairs were in the room, I decided not to place all six side chairs into the room. I also felt that these extra side chairs should be spared any restorations or reupholstering efforts in order to provide a more accurate appearance to future staff. In working with Peter Arkell, the furniture restoration consultant recommended by Mrs. Florence Montgomery, we decided to strengthen and stabilize the chair frames and to preserve as much of the 1920's finishes as possible. Mr. Arkell then transported the furniture to Plaza Interiors in Manhattan and instructed George Rohleder to preserve as much of the cake (form) as possible. Mr. Rohleder discarded rotting sections of the cake with cotton batting and in reinforcing the existing cakes softened the line of the chair seat and shield back. After the upholstery work was completed, a 1938 issue of Country Life magazine was sent to me showing a picture of the Reception Room in that decade. Not only did we realize that it was during this latter phase that the room was painted a "soothing green", but the furniture had also been reupholstered. What we had actually preserved in terms of cakes and somewhat in finishes was the 1930's interpretation. In studying the 1920's pictures of the furniture, the seat backs had small quarter moon indentations on either side of the projecting seat back. As these quarter moon motifs are no longer visible in the 1930's version, I suggest that the 1920's forms were discarded or readapted for this latter version.

I suggest that in the future perhaps the upholsterer should attempt to recreate the cake forms from the 1920's rather than recycle the existing material to achieve a more accurate appearance and sharpness in the upholstery line.



# The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10028 212-TR 9-5500

November 12, 1985

Ms. Lorraine Gilligan  
Curator  
Planting Fields Foundation  
P.O. Box 58  
Oyster Bay, New York  
11771

Dear Ms. Gilligan,

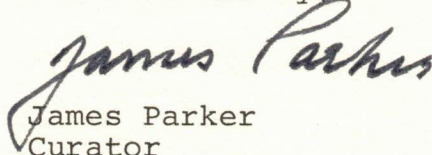
I have your letter of October 31 inquiring about a set of six side chairs and a settee, originally sold to Mr. W.R. Coe by Jacques Seligmann in 1922 and recently returned to the Coe estate on Long Island, Planting Fields (which I visited two summers ago).

I see no stylistic reason why this set should not be Italian-made and late 18th century in date (I enclose xeroxes of Italian furniture showing some similarities in form and carving).

Of course, firm opinions in these matters can only be based on close inspection, but I might just add that Jacques Seligmann was a highly regarded Parisian dealer in 1922 (this museum purchased a good deal of French furniture from him in the 1920's and 30's), and that Fould-Springer is also a respectable provenance.

Hoping to have been of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

  
James Parker  
Curator

European Sculpture  
and Decorative Arts

JP:rah