



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Bureau of Historic Sites — Peebles Island, PO Box 219, Waterford, New York 12188 518-237-8643

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**CONSERVATION EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL**

Item: Settee, upholstered in needlepoint. Located in Den  
Maker/Artist/School/Date: needlepoint, 17/18th c. English;  
frame later(?)  
Examiner: Deborah Trupin Date of Exam: 7/23/96

*DEBORAH TRUPIN*  
*1/98*  
*DEN*  
*ROOM 103*

**NOTE:** This settee was examined on-site at Coe Hall. The report that follows addresses primarily the tapestry showcover and secondarily the upholstery materials.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Dimensions: 39.5" (100 cm) high (at center back)  
x 68" (173 cm) wide x 26" (66 cm) deep.

Fiber: identified by microscopy? NO, by visual estimate  
needlepoint: wool and silk.  
ground fabric: linen warp and weft.  
outside back and arms: silk warp; silk weft.  
trim: cotton ground warp; silk supplementary pattern warp;  
cotton weft.

Yarn: needlepoint: Z spun, singles, - wool, used 2 ends per stitch  
0 spun, singles - silk, used 1 end per stitch  
ground fabric: Z spun, singles - warp and weft.  
trim: Z spun, S ply (2) used 2 ends together - warp.

Yarns per inch: ground fabric: 24 x 16  
trim: 36 x 12

Fabric structure: ground fabric: 1/1 plain weave, with warps and  
wefts paired and spaced (i.e. 2 ends are  
close together, followed by a space).

Applied decoration: "Gros" and "petit" point embroidery (tent  
stitch); woven tape trim around edges of  
needlepoint and perimeter of cushion.

Other materials: Wood settee frame; various upholstery materials (see  
below).

Reaction to H<sub>2</sub>O \*; H<sub>2</sub>O & detergent \*; perchlorethylene \*  
pH \*  
\* Not tested during on-site exam.

Infested? NO Fumigated? NO

Coe Hall -- Settee upholstered in needlepoint -- Located in Den

**CONSTRUCTION:**

This settee is upholstered with pieces of needlepoint. (Slide 1) Most of the needlepoint consists of floral and vegetal motifs, but there is a framed scene of a couple sitting under a tree at the center of the inside back. (Slide 2) All of the needlepoint pieces used on the settee appear to have come from the same piece of work, but it is not clear if this was originally made to be used on a settee, or, if it was, if this is its first use on a settee. It may be possible to come closer to a decision about this during the course of conservation treatment. Similarly, it is hoped that more detailed study will be able to give a more secure provenance and date to the needlepoint used.

The needlepoint pieces are used as the showcover for the settee. They are nailed into the frame. To cover the tacking edges, a 1" wide woven tape is glued over these edges. The outside back and outside arms of the settee are covered with a red silk damask.

Because only the needlepoint was examined in detail, the upholstery layers will just be summarized:

**Seat (top to bottom):**

1. Cushion {needlepoint, undercover (not seen), filling that feels like down or feathers}, trimmed with the same tape as the rest of the settee.
2. Deck {cotton (vis. est.) rep fabric -- resembles a tapestry texture.}
3. Padding {hair or cotton (not seen)}
4. Springs (shallow, not counted)
5. Sackcloth (not seen) (There could also be a layer of sackcloth between 3. Padding and 4. Springs.)
6. Webbing {not counted, but where dustcover is free at front proper left corner, 1 row (front-to-back) of modern, jute webbing and 1 row (front-to-back) of older (linen?, herringbone) webbing can be seen.}
7. Dust cover

**Arms (inside to outside):**

1. Needlepoint
2. Padding (skim coat of cotton)
3. Undercover (not seen)
4. Padding (hair? -- not seen)
5. Sackcloth (not seen)
6. Padding (skim coat of cotton)
7. Silk damask

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Back (inside to outside):

1. Needlepoint
2. Padding (skim coat of cotton)
3. Undercover (not seen)
4. Padding (hair? -- not seen)
5. Sackcloth (not seen)
6. Padding (skim coat of cotton)
7. Silk damask

There is a very interesting 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.

This label is essentially identical to that on the settee in the  
dining room, although the label here contains the owner's name.  
The settee in the dining room also has a red damask outside back  
fabric, but the two red damasks are not identical. The trim used on  
this settee is nearly identical to that used on the settee in the  
gallery. The upholstery materials and techniques are very similar  
(as far as can be seen) on all three settees.

#### CONDITION/PREVIOUS TREATMENT:

Overall the condition of the settee is good. The shape of the  
upholstery remains good and all upholstery layers remain secure,  
except on the outside back and outside proper right arm, where the  
silk fabric has split and the cotton skimcoat is popping out.  
(Slides 3 and 4) There is a very slight sagging of the springs and a  
corresponding depression of the fabric surface of the deck.

Condition of the needlepoint showcover however, is only fair. The  
needlepoint's condition varies from section to section. Condition is  
best at the inside arms, less good on the cushion and worst on the  
inside back. There are no significant losses to needlepoint and no  
tears in the ground fabric on the inside arms.

The cushion has no tears in the ground fabric, with only scattered  
areas of missing needlepoint. (Slide 5) There is considerable  
evidence of earlier restoration, especially in the light blue -- near  
the center bright ends of yarn hang loose.

The inside back has several tears with some loss: at the top of the  
urn in the center panel, at the head of the man (Slide 6), at the  
head of the woman, and at the vase to the proper right of the woman.  
(Slide 7) There is also a loss of silk needlepoint yarns at the top  
of the inside back, especially at the proper left center.

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The trim is in fair condition. It is securely attached all over, with varying degrees of color/fiber loss in the supplementary warps. Most of the supplementary warps (non-pile) have lost all of their silk, and hence, all of their color.

There are no significant stains visible in the ambient light. There is a moderate amount of overall particulate soil; soil is worst on horizontal surfaces, such as the cushion. Color loss in the needlepoint varies from location to location, but overall, the needlepoint yarns appear fairly vibrant.

In addition to the earlier needlepoint restorations/repairs noted above, Bill Clark, site volunteer, "rebuilt" the proper left arm when the settee was returned to Coe Hall. There are also some sewing repairs to the needlepoint in the inside proper left arm. (Slide 8)

**PROPOSED TREATMENT:**

- |                                                                          |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Vacuum all exposed surfaces with low suction to remove surface soils. | 8 hours |
| 2. Stabilize four areas of loss in inside back by patching/sewing.       | 8 hour  |

**\*\*ADDITIONAL STEPS ARE OPTIONS; PLEASE INITIAL THOSE DESIRED\*\***

- |                                                                                                                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 3a. Remove damask from outside back and outside arms. Pack for storage as a document.                              | 6 hours |
| 3b. Recover outside back and outside arms with modern damask. Coe Hall staff to select and purchase modern damask. | 10 "    |

**OR**

- |                                                                      |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4. Stabilize damask by stitching sheer polyester fabric over damask. | 14 hours* |
| * 14 hours = 4 hours/arm and 6 hours/back.                           |           |

**\*\* A combination of steps 3 and 4 could also be done, such as removing the damask from the back, but stabilizing it in situ on the arms.**

**PROGNOSIS:**

Good. A thorough vacuuming will remove the accumulated particulate soils. Stabilizing the areas of tear and loss in the inside back will prevent these losses from enlarging. The work will be done in situ, which will be a little difficult, but which will maintain the integrity of the piece.

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Because the silk damask is in such poor condition, it is strongly recommended that it be treated. There are arguments in favor of both options. Removing the damask and preserving it in storage enhances the preservation of the damask itself, but separates it from the settee. Stabilizing it in place is a less visually appealing treatment and does not offer the damask as much protection as storage, but this option does keep the original fabric with the piece. There are conservation precedents for either choice.

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

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signature / title

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date