



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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CONSERVATION EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL

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

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: 36.5" (92.5 cm) high x 71" (180.5 cm) wide
x 23" (58.5 cm) deep.

Fiber: identified by microscopy? NO, by visual estimate
fabric 1 (tapestry): wool warp; wool & silk weft.
fabric 2 (outside back): silk warp; silk weft.
fabric 3 (cushion bottom): cotton warp; cotton weft.
fabric 4 (trim): cotton ground warp; silk wrapped on cotton
pattern warp; cotton weft.

Yarn: fabric 1: Z spun, S plied (3) - warp;
Z spun, singles - wool weft;
Z spun, S plied (2) - silk weft.

Yarns per inch: fabric 1: 14-16 warps x c.80 wefts.
fabric 4: 64 warps x 20 wefts.

Fabric structure: fabric 1: weft-faced plain weave with discontinuous
wefts (i.e. tapestry)

Applied decoration: Woven tape trim (fabric 4 above) around edges of
tapestry and perimeter of cushion.

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

Reaction to H₂O *; H₂O & detergent *; perchlorethylene *
pH *
* Not tested during on-site exam.

Infested? NO Fumigated? NO

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CONSTRUCTION:

This settee is upholstered with pieces of tapestry. (Slide 1) On the inside back and arms and on the front edge of the cushion, the tapestry depicts battle scenes. On the top of the cushion, on the front rail, and on the lower edge of the inside back (i.e. where it is covered by the cushion) a verdure (plants and floral motifs) is used. (Slide 2) It is not possible to tell what is depicted in the bits of tapestry used for the arm fronts. The images and the scale of the images in these two tapestries are so disparate that one is inclined to say that the two sets are from different tapestries. On the other hand, the technical data (fiber, yarn, count) are the same for both sets, indicating that they could have been cut from various parts of the same tapestry. 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 tapestry(s) used. It is clear however, that all of the pieces of tapestry used on this settee were originally parts of wall tapestry(s); this is not fabric that was originally woven to be used as upholstery.

The tapestry pieces are used as the showcover for the settee. They are nailed into the frame. To cover the tacking edges, a 7/8" 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 tapestry was examined in detail, the upholstery layers will just be summarized:

Seat (top to bottom):

1. Cushion {tapestry, 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, 3 (front-to-back) by 16? (side-to-side)}
5. Sackcloth (not seen) (There could also be a layer of sackcloth between 3. Padding and 4. Springs.)
6. Webbing (not seen 5 by 16?)
7. Dust cover

Arms (inside to outside):

1. Tapestry
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. Tapestry
2. Padding (skim coat of cotton)
3. Undercover (not seen)
4. Padding (hair? -- not seen)
5. Sackcloth (looks like sized linen?)
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" Date sterilized: (Typed) NOT. "Recovered only. Filling not disturbed." A NYS Dep't of Labor 1 cent stamp is affixed to the label. There is an identical label (with more information legible) on the needlepoint-covered settee in the Den. That settee also has a red damask outside back fabric, but the two red damasks are not identical. The upholstery techniques and materials, as far as can be seen, on the three settees (Dining Room, Den and Gallery) at Coe Hall all appear to be similar.

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 for the outside back and proper right outside arm where the silk damask 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 tapestry showcover however, is only fair. The inside back and inside arms sections are fair to good, while the cushion section is only fair to poor. (See below). Although the pieces used are fragments, each section remains generally intact, with little loss of weft and few splits. The loss is worst along the top edge which receives the most light; within this section, the worst areas are at the proper right and proper left corners, in the top two inches. There is incipient silk weft loss in the beige/gold silk, below the legs of the soldiers (on the inside back).

The tapestry over the front rail is stable but odd. The proper left is a verdure, in colors like those used on the cushion. After about 16" these colors fade out dramatically, until almost no color remains. This could be an old repair.

There are not significant stains visible in the ambient light. There is a moderate amount of overall particulate soil.

The various sections have had some earlier reweaving done. This is most evident in the proper right arm, where a rewoven brown area has turned red and in the proper left arm in the heavy blue outline

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around the figures. In the inside back most of the beige/gold silk that is beginning to fail is also a reweaving.

As noted above, the condition of the cushion tapestry cover is fair to poor. (Slide 5) There is more extensive weft loss in the beige/gold silks, concentrated along the front edge and center of the cushion. There is loss in both original and repair yarns. (The silks described here as "original" may in fact be the first generation of repair, in which case those described as "repair" may be the second repair generation.) There are numerous splits opening in the tapestry on the cushion. Color loss is more severe than on the inside back and inside arms. There is also more overall particulate soiling.

The condition of the trim is fair, overall. The degree of fiber (silk wrapping of pattern warps) and hence of color loss varies depending on exposure to light. Thus, the condition is worst at the top of the back and best at the back edge of the cushion. The trim is clued onto the tapestry (except for the cushion, where it is machine stitched). the trim remains securely glued except for about 4: at the top of the proper left outside back and 2" at the front of the proper right outside arm.

PROPOSED TREATMENT:

1. Vacuum all exposed surfaces with low suction 8 hours
to remove surface soils.
2. Resecure trim at the top of back and proper right 1 hour
arm by gluing (as originally done).
3. Secure areas of missing wefts at top of inside back 3 hours
by sewing.

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

- 4a. Remove damask from outside back and outside arms. 6 hours
Pack for storage as a document.
- 4b. Recover outside back and outside arms with modern 10 "
damask. Coe Hall staff to select and purchase
modern damask.

OR

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

** A combination of steps 4 and 5 could also be done, such as removing the damask from the back, but stabilizing it in situ on the arms.

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| 6a. Remove tapestry cover from cushion. | 4 hours |
| 6b. Test tapestry for wetcleaning; if tests indicate
wetclean, shape, blot and air dry. | 12 " |
| 6c. Stabilize losses at front and back edges by
sewing. | 15 " |
| 6d. Restitch tapestry to cushion. | 8 " |

** Steps 6 a, c and d must all be selected or not selected.
Step 6b is an independent option.

PROGNOSIS:

Good. The only treatment that this settee must have at this point is a thorough vacuuming to remove the accumulated particulate soils. Other steps proposed will further enhance both the stability and appearance of the piece. Readhering the loose trim will prevent the amount that is loose from becoming greater. Stabilizing the areas of missing weft in the back will help keep the existing warps in their proper positions, slowing down further weft loss.

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.

Similarly, removal of the tapestry from the cushion is a fairly invasive step that Coe Hall may not wish to choose. However, removal of the tapestry will permit its stabilization. Losses on this piece of tapestry are severe enough to require more extensive stitching than can be effectively done in situ. The amount of soiling is extensive enough that wetcleaning is merited, if the tests indicate colorfastness. If the tapestry were removed from the cushion for treatment, it would be replaced and restitched to the cushion in a manner as close as possible to the current presentation.

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

signature / title

date