



David A. Paterson
Governor

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 Fax: 518-235-4248
www.nysparks.com

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Furniture Conservation Additional Treatment Proposal

Note: The proposal below supplements the Examination Report and Treatment Proposal of December 2/3, 2009. Please refer to that report for details of the sofa's construction and condition. Only the condition information pertinent to the additional treatment proposed is included here.

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 ½" (100.2 cm) X W: 71 ½" (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

Present Condition

- **Upholstery:**

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

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.

Additional Treatment Proposal:

For clarity, the entire proposal of December 2009 is copied below. Step 8 of that proposal has been replaced with additional treatment; additional treatment steps are italicized.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 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. Remove inside back fabric.	4 hours
9. Test needle work fabrics for wet or contact (damp) cleaning, if tests indicate dye/structural stability and soil removal, wet clean or contact (damp) clean inside back fabric.	16 hours
10. Select and prepare lining fabric for inside back fabric. Stitch inside back fabric to lining. Cover edges of fabric with lining fabric.	26 hours
11. Prepare sewing strips of fabric-covered Nomex®, apply sewing strips to back frame where inside back fabric is attached.	12 hours
12. Replace inside back fabric on sofa, securing it by stitching it to the sewing strips.	20 hours
13. Obtain and apply new outside back and outside arm show covers.	12 hours
TOTAL:	159 hours

Prognosis:

Note that this prognosis only addresses the added steps (8 -12) above.

Good. Closer examination of this needlepoint during photography, done after the examination report and treatment proposal were written, revealed that the losses on the inside back were more serious than first realized. The fragility of these areas justifies the rather invasive step of removing the inside back fabric.

Once the inside back fabric has been removed, it can more thoroughly be tested for soil removal and acidity reduction. It is likely that the ground fabric is quite acid. Because of the needlepoint technique, it is most likely that a damp (contact) cleaning will be the most successful approach. Wet cleaning (in a bath) is unlikely as needlepoint fabrics tend to distort diagonally when wet, making it hard to return them to their original shape. Even damp cleaning should reduce soils and acidity. This will remove materials that accelerate the degradation of the fabric and needlepoint.

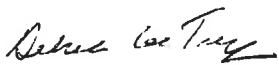
The inside back fabric will be supported by sewing to a washed cotton fabric. The edges of the losses will be secured with additional stitching and the edges will be protected with additional strips the lining fabric.

Fabric-covered Nomex® (a stable polyaramid paper) will be secured to the back frame using small tacks in existing holes. The inside back fabric will then be stitched to these strips. This method permits the fabric to be reattached to the sofa without making additional tack holes in the frame (i.e., it prevents further damage to the frame).

If this treatment is very successful, it may be desirable to repeat these steps for the inside arm fabrics. This question will be addressed after the treatment of the inside back. If necessary a second additional proposal will be prepared.

The following paragraph is copied from the original Examination Report and Treatment Proposal.

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. 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.



February 5, 2010

Deborah Lee Trupin
Textile Conservator

Release:

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

Please indicate if you wish to keep the current proper left outside arm fabric: ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please indicate if you wish that this fabric be the same ____ or different ____ than that used as replacement outside back and proper right arm fabric.

Site: _____

Date: _____

Curator: _____

Date: _____



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