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## REPORT

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On December 20, 2021, Graham Arader asked me for my written opinion on the identity and authenticity of a New York Marlborough leg side chair, furniture inventory number 17.

### **Side chair**

New York City, 1770-90

“XVIII” chiseled into the inside of the rear rail.

Mahogany; white pine corner blocks, cherry slip seat.

37-3/4 x 22-1/4 x 20-3/4

The design of this side chair, which derives from plate 12 of Thomas Chippendale’s 1762 edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-makers Directory*, was executed in multiple sets of chairs made and used in New York. Other regions of the American Colonies seem not to have made versions of it. Three different chairs with the same splat and crest rail design, representing three different sets of chairs, are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Other examples are owned in many New York museums and historical houses. This particular chair is similar to a pair at the New-York Historical Society (acc. no. 1944.193) sold by Israel Sack, Inc., to Mrs. J. Insley Blair, although the pair does not have molded front legs.

This chair has particularly well-executed carved ears above attractively molded rear stiles. The Marlborough front legs are molded on the front faces only, consistent with the general practice of decorating the most visible parts of furniture. The molding features double-dot-and-dash beading in the center.

The number chiseled into the rear rail indicates that the set from which it comes was large, numbering at least 18 chairs. The cherry slip seat appears to be original to the set of chairs from which this example comes, but without a visible slip seat number, the slip seat may have originated with another chair from the set. A small nail, or “sprig,” hole in the underside of each seat rail near the front legs was left from decorative knee brackets, now missing. Slightly different bracket stiles, presumably original, remain on chairs from different sets. The seat rail on the left side of the chair split vertically along the grain near where tenons into the rear stile.

The split has been reglued carefully; none of the visible wood of the rail is affected, and the joint is structurally sound.