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A Pair of George III Giltwood Armchairs Attributed to John Linnell

REF834

The Earl of Hardwicke's Gilded Armchairs Attributed to John Linnell

English

H: 39 ½ in (100 cm)

W: 26 in (66cm)

D: 28 in (71 cm)

PROVENANCE

Philip Yorke, 2nd Earl of Hardwicke, probably for 4 St James's Square, London

£ 120000

DESCRIPTION

The upholstered back with serpentine top rail. The scrolling arms moulded and carved with husks and applied paterae. The gilt frames carved with fluting and beaded applied moulding over the four out swept legs, carved with stylised acanthus leaves.

These chairs retain the majority of their original gilding.

Philip Yorke, (1720-1790) succeeded as second Earl of Hardwicke in 1764 and represented Reigate and Cambridgeshire in the House of Commons as well as serving as Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire. He married Lady Jemima Campbell, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Breadalbane, granddaughter and Heiress of Henry Grey, 1st Duke of Kent. She succeeded as Marchioness Grey in 1722.

The Earl owned multiple properties, including Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire; Wrest Park, Bedfordshire and a townhouse at no.4 St James's Square, London. Interestingly, at this time, when pieces of furniture were commissioned for country houses, they would have been transported by cart for delivery and therefore would have been secured to batons screwed to the rails. These chairs have no baton holes underneath and therefore are most likely to have been designed specifically for the Earl for his London home at St James's Square.

Sir William Chambers and John Linnell

It is documented that Sir William Chambers wrote to the Earl of Hardwicke in 1767, and visited his London house the same year. Chambers also worked with Yorke at Wrest Park, however it is likely that the pair was designed specifically for the London Town House.

Chambers' relationship with Linnell is not particularly well documented, however, a close connection between the two men can be linked between Linnell's employment of two Swedish cabinet-makers at his Berkeley Square workshop in 1767/8; Georg Haupt and his brother-in-law, Christopher Furlong.

Chambers was indeed familiar with a table produced by the Swedes that came from Linnell's workshop at this time and may have also been responsible for the introduction of the two men to Linnell himself. Furthermore, the Linnell workshop produced some furniture of Kentian inspiration, notably chairs, of a type, which Chambers is known to have admired.