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An Exceptional Pair of Carved and Painted Pedestals Designed by Robert Adam for Byram Hall, Yorkshire

REF 812

English, circa 1780

Height: 47 in (119 cm)

Width: 11 in (30 cm)

Depth: 11 in (30 cm)

The moulded capitals over the square tapering columns. The upper section with carved swags of husks tied with ribbons and centred by an oval patera over the astragal moulding. The lower section with an imbricated tablet with a lions mask over intertwining husks and bell flowers with a central patera and terminating in a peltoid shield. The plinth base with ogee moulding.

These remarkable pedestals were specifically designed by Robert Adam for the passage leading from the dining room to the drawing room at Byram Hall in Yorkshire. Robert Adam was commissioned by Sir John Ramsden (1755-1839) 4th Baronet, to refurbish Byram Hall in circa 1780, providing a classical interior.

PROVENANCE

Designed by Robert Adam for Byram Hall, West Yorkshire (demolished)

£ 120000

DESCRIPTION

Byram Hall, West Yorkshire, was an important estate for the Ramsden family for 300 years from 1618.

During this time the Ramsden family were large-scale landowners in South Yorkshire. Sir John Ramsden, (1755-1839) 4th Baronet called for internal alterations to Byram in circa 1780, which were carried out by John Carr and Robert Adam, providing for the interiors an austere classical dress. In 1782, Ramsden also called in the foremost landscape gardener of the time, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who provided an impressive plan to redevelop the grounds. The estate was systematically sold off in the 1920's, at which the house was also dismantled.

The Ramsden family gained great wealth and status through investment in the textile industry in Huddersfield during the eighteenth century. Sir John Ramsden became the 4th Baronet of Ramsden and also had a parliamentary career, serving as a member of the House of Commons. The family were closely involved in the development of Yorkshire, promoting the commissioning of the Huddersfield Cloth Hall, 1766 and the Sir John Ramsden Canal, 1780. The flourishing textile industry in Huddersfield in the second half of the eighteenth century enabled Sir John Ramsden to commission Robert Adam to remodel the interior of Byram.

The extensive collection of Robert Adam's drawings for the redesign of Byram Hall can be found at the John Soane Museum, London and prove he is responsible for the alterations made in circa 1780 in the mail hall, breakfast room, dining room, passage to the drawing room, the drawing room itself and the library. Adam's attribution to the pair of torches can be cemented by the design itself, which reads: "Term and lamp for the passage leading to the Dining room & Drawing room a Byram." Furthermore, when Country Life photographed Byram Hall in 1922, one of the pairs can be seen in the passage referred to in the original design.