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A RARE PAIR OF GEORGE III BLUE AND WHITE PAINTED ARMCHAIRS From Easton Neston House Attributed to John Cobb

REF945

H: 39 ½ in (100 cm)

W: 28 in (71 cm)

D: 22 ½ in (57 cm)

The chairs with fully upholstered backs and seats, covered in eighteenth century silk damask. The serpentine arms, moulded and carved with acanthus leaves and joining the serpentine frames similarly carved with asymmetrical leaves and cabochons and raised on cabriole legs with finely carved overlapping leaves, terminating in scrolled feet. Retaining their original blue and white decoration.

PROVENANCE

Probably commissioned by George, 2nd Earl of Pomfret and his wife Anna Maria Draycott, for the Drawing Room, Easton Neston

A chair from the suite appears in a photograph, Eaton Neston, Entrance Hall, circa 1880

LITERATURE

TGL 1889, part on p.23 and part on p.37, as 'A suite of carved and gilt furniture';

H. Avray Tipping, 'Easton Neston - II, Northamptonshire, The Seat of Sir Thomas Fermor-Hesketh Bt.', *Country Life*, November 14th 1908, p.669, part of the suite shown in the Large Drawing Room, possibly with needlework covers;

F 1910, pp.116, 118 & 120, on the Grand Staircase as 'a pair of mahogany Chippendale settees upholstered in Italian stamped velvet' and 'a pair of mahogany armchairs upholstered en suite', 'two further pairs en suite' and another pair;

EN 1923, p.20, item 1, £1,800, listed under the 'Contents of all other remaining rooms and bedrooms';

AP 1927, p.31, item 1, £1,250, listed under 'Furniture in Various Reception Rooms';

H. Avray Tipping, 'Easton Neston - II, Northamptonshire, The Seat of Sir Thomas Fermor-Hesketh, Bt.', *Country Life*, 27th August 1927, p.298, fig.3, part of the suite shown in The Saloon;

James Lees-Milne, 'Easton Neston, Northamptonshire', *English Country Houses Baroque 1685-1715*, 1970, p.143, fig. 228

DESCRIPTION

This stunning pair of blue and white painted arm chairs were originally made for Easton Neston House in Northamptonshire by Royal cabinet maker John Cobb. The chairs with serpentine rails and out swept arms stand beautifully on cabriole legs, with extraordinary details of carved decoration. Amazingly, the pair retains their original blue and white decoration, a most fashionable colour scheme at the time. This was covered in later gilding but meticulous and careful restoration uncovered the original painted blue and white surface, perfectly preserved beneath the later gilding. Its extraordinary to see the original surface now revealed and in such an amazing condition.

The pair forms part of a larger suite and were probably commissioned shortly after George 2nd Earl Pomfret's marriage to Anna Maria Draycott in 1764, from the London firm of Royal cabinet-makers William Vile and John Cobb (Vile, the senior partner retired in 1764.) Their partnership seems to have started in 1751, at which time there appears to be a close connection with the cabinet-maker William Hallett. Recorded at the 'Master' of William Vile, who was supposedly a journeyman in Hallett's employ, bank records indicate several large payments were made to him during the life of the partnership, possibly indicating that he had retained a financial interest in the firm. It is also interesting to note that, as recorded in her diary, William Hallett was visited by the 1st Countess of Pomfret in 1752.