

artsOLUTION

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AN IMPORTANT EARLY GEORGE III PADOUKWOOD SERPENTINE COMMODE

REF1101

An Important Early George III Padoukwood Serpentine Commode

Attributed to John Cobb, St Martins Lane, London

English, circa 1760

Designed in the French manner with fine gilt-metal mounts; the top veneered in four segments and with a broad rosewood crossbanding and a moulded edge, the front with three drawers oak-lined and outlined with narrow mouldings, the bottom one forming part of the shaped apron, with serpentine ends

projecting and moulded corners and slender slightly splayed feet; the gilt-metal mounts including gadrooned carrying handles at each side with berried leaf plates, matching handles to the drawers, flame escutcheons also enclosed by berried leaves and with acanthus leaf and scroll feet.

The commode is in kingwood and padouk wood veneer on a carcase of oak, mahogany and pinewood. The inside of the pinewood back-board has a variety of pencil jottings, some writing and a plan for what may have been intended as the design for small drawers for a secretaire.

Height: 35 ½ in (90cm) Width: 49 ½ in (126cm) Depth: 26 ¼ in (67cm)

PROVENANCE

William Abernathy Drummond, Hawthornden Castle, Mid Lothian Scotland

By descent to;

Sir James Williams Drummond, Hawthornden Castle, Mid Lothian Scotland

Sold Sotheby's London 1971, Lot 165

£ 140000

DESCRIPTION

Designed in the French manner with fine gilt-metal mounts; the top veneered in four segments and with a broad rosewood crossbanding and a moulded edge, the front with three drawers oak-lined and outlined with narrow mouldings, the bottom one forming part of the shaped apron, with serpentine ends projecting and moulded corners and slender slightly splayed feet; the gilt-metal mounts including gadrooned carrying handles at each side with berried leaf plates, matching handles to the drawers, flame escutcheons also enclosed by berried leaves and with acanthus leaf and scroll feet.

An almost identical commode was supplied to James West of Alscot Park, Warwickshire in 1766 by John Cobb who described it as an extra fine wood commode chest of drawers with large handsome wrought furniture, good brass locks, etc. - £16'.

It is illustrated on page 112 of Cabinet Makers and Furniture Designers by Hugh Honour

A similar commode exists at Harewood House and another, decorated with oriental lacquer and English Japan is illustrated, plate 93 of Chinoiserie by Hugh Honour.

John Cobb is one of the greatest of English cabinet makers. His sense of design and the quality of craftsmanship from his workshops was excelled by none of his contemporaries. An interesting feature in the commode above is the design of the lower drawer to form the apron rather than the usual English construction of the apron being part of the carcass. This feature of Cobb's, which considerably adds to the elegance of furniture of this type, was fully understood by the greatest French cabinet makers of the mid-18th Century but is hardly known in English furniture design. John Cobb first appears in partnership with William Vile in the London Directory of 1750. When Vile retired in 1765, Cobb continued the business on his own account. It is probably that this is one of the earlier pieces which he produced after Vile's retirement.