

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



Richard Roberts: A Pair of George I Walnut High Back Chairs

England, *circa* 1720

This exceptional pair of chairs relate closely to a set of ten chairs at Hampton Court Palace. The set at Hampton Court are likely part of the original set of eighteen chairs supplied by Richard Roberts, a royal cabinetmaker working for Queen Anne and George I. One of Robert's first commissions was to make a new bed for Queen Anne with accompanying seat furniture including eight stools and an easy chair.

In 1717-18 he issued an invoice that reads, 'For 18 Chairs made of the best Walnutt tree bended backs finely carved and polliht and silk lace Seats for his maties [Majesty's] Dining Room ... £36.0..0.' This original set is notable for its incorporation of the 'bended back,' which was a style influenced by Chinese forms of narrow upright seat backs that curves into the small of the back.

These chairs reflect design influences both from the earlier William & Mary period with the carved back drawing inspiration from patterns by Daniel Marot, designer to the King and Queen at the turn of the 18th century. The presence of the cabriole legs on the chairs reflects an influence of European designs with particular French influence.

Although there are several variations on the model, including a set at Knightshayes Court, Devon and Wightwick Manor, West Midlands, it is rare to find pure examples that are identical in design to the

Hampton Court set. This pair has exceptional colour and patination.

The set of chairs at Hampton Court have replaced seat rails, whereas this pair is in its original state. It is possible that the Hampton Court set would have originally had rushed, caned, or drop-in seats like the current pair.

A rare pair of George I high back walnut side chairs in the manner of Richard Roberts, royal cabinetmaker to George I. The intricately carved back splat in the Berainesque style, with carving also to the cabriole legs and cross stretchers.

Height: 47.24 in (120 cm)

Width: 21.46 in (54.5 cm)

Depth: 21.46 in (54.5 cm)

Stock Number

N01.02

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