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Conservation of Dowry chest: Treatment report:

Client	Karen Gray/Offaly CoCo
Date:	23rd July 2022
Reference:	OC60122



Description:

Early twentieth century painted dowry chest from Co. Offaly.

Dimensions/mm	
Height	1170
Width	1190
Depth	575

:Condition:
Bottom section -Chest with two over one drawers Panelled frame construction with ash legs and pine rails and panels.. Turned drawer pulls and painted steel escutcheons.
Missing sections of quadrant beading and bracket feet from plinth.
Damage to LH miter joint of quadrant beading.
Evidence of active woodworm infestation with significant damage and loss to all leg ends.
Drawer runners are worn but still functioning.
Drawers lined with wallpaper.
Tool markings from pit saw/hand saw, but also machine markings - bandsaw/circular saw, indicating possible earlier and later components .
Top section, possibly later construction, top opening chest of butt joined and nailed panel construction, with divided interior. Fixed to bottom at front edge with quadrant beading.
Steel clasp and eye catch painted.
Shrinkage in lid has been filled/caulked and further movement has opened the joint.
Missing lip from RH side.
All surfaces are heavily soiled. "crack a l'heure "to all exterior surfaces.

The loss to right hand legs may have been caused by the insect infestation and subsequent damage, exacerbated by contact with a damp floor. It may have been a deliberate alteration made to the chest prior to the insect infestation to level the piece on an uneven floor. Assuming the chest will now be standing on an even surface we can use the replacement of the missing brackets to extend the right hand legs .

Treatment proposal:
Treat whole for insect infestation.
Clean all surfaces
Make repair to damaged miter in beading.
Make new bracket feet and quadrant beading to match
Fix bracket feet and beading and colour to match
Consolidate insect damaged leg ends,Insert extensions and level
Clean all active corrosion from metal parts and service.
Wax polish whole with micro crystalline.

1:Clean all surfaces:

Removed all drawer linings. And vacuum cleaned whole object.

Cleaned all surfaces using vulpex solution.

Rinsed entire surface with de ionised water.

Some blistering in paint surface at points of misalignment on both gables was noted and loose paint flakes came away during cleaning.



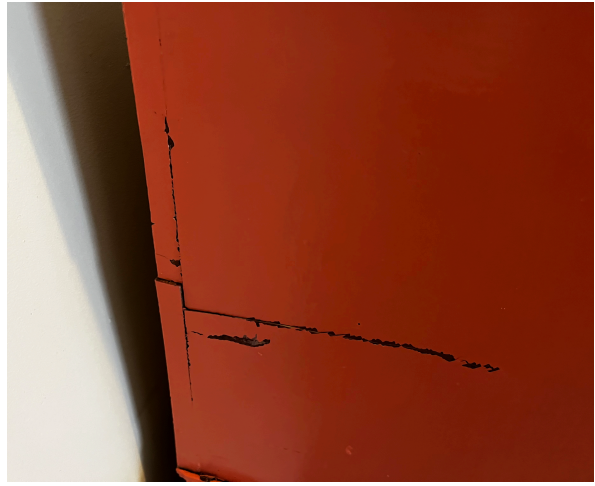
All surfaces cleaned with vulpex solution



Pitsaw/machine markings



Business card found in drawers:
“Flower craft”



Paint flakes and blistering

2:Treat whole for insect infestation:

All surface were treated with water based micro emulsion of permethrin. This process was repeated with the solution being injected into all flight holes for increased penetration.

3: Make repair to damaged miter in beading:

Surfaces were consolidated using paraloid b72.

Micro crystalline wax used as barrier layer before squeezing the damaged area closed and filling areas of loss with epoxy putty.

Loose sections of original quadrant beading were re attached using stainless steel pins.



Damaged area to LH side miter

4: Consolidate insect damaged leg ends, insert extensions and level:

All leg ends were consolidated using paraloid B72 in acetone.

Old nails were removed from all legs.

Barrier layer of micro crystalline wax was applied.

Extensions were made using beech.

Beech leg extensions were supported with pitch pine pieces fixed with stainless steel screws to stable areas of the original legs. These supports were fixed to the extension pieces with epoxy resin.



Constructing supports



Beech extension fixed inside supports



Voids filled with epoxy putty



5: Make new bracket feet and quadrant beading to match:

New bracket feet were made using pitch pine to match existing bracket foot.

An extension was made to back bracket foot in pitch pine and coloured to match.

All were glued to leg extensions and fixed with stainless steel pins.

New section of quadrant beading was made using pitch pine and fixed in place with stainless steel pins.

All new repairs were coloured to match with combination of finishes.

Glue blocks were fixed to support the bracket feet using animal glue and rub jointed.



Extended back LH bracket foot



Both front feet replaced



Corner blocks rub jointed to rear of feet.

6:Clean all active corrosion from metal parts and service to match:

Active corrosion was removed using fine wire brush and scotch brite pads.

All corroded surfaces were treated with tannic acid.

Hinges wer oiled with 3-in-1 oil.

Metal surfaces were given a coat of micro crystalline wax.

7:Wax polish whole with micro crystalline wax:

All surfaces internal and external, painted and bare, were given a coat of micro crystalline wax and buffed to a mid level sheen.

All drawer runners were waxed with beeswax to reduce friction.



Completed.