Hampshire Antique Restoration
www.hampshire-antique-restoration.co.uk
01489 893632

CONDITION REPORT AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL

OBJECT: Early 19th century Gilded Convex Mirror	**OBJECT NUMBER**: 2322 - 08 - F
OWNER: Confidential	**DATE RECEIVED**: 11/06/2008
CONSERVATOR: David Burton	**DATE EXAMINED:** 16/06/2008

DIMENSIONS **H:** **W:** **D:**

DESCRIPTION:

An early 19th century Regency Convex mirror.

The main frame and attached decorative components are constructed from pine. The main mirror frame has 4 joints around the circumference and both the top and bottom carved elements are attached to a section of timber screwed into the rear of the main frame.

The convex mirror is surrounded by a reeded ebony slip frame and is held in place by a pine planked back fixed into place with clout nails and covered with a paper backing.

CONDITION:

The upper carved decorative element is loose and has 2 breaks to the scrolled carvings that are nailed into place on either side of the central torch. One break has allowed a section to completely detach from the piece, the other is held in situ with an old adhesive repair. The top section carved to simulate the flames of the torch is also detached at the nailed join.

Two sections of the applied reed and ribbon carved feature that form the outer edge of the frame are detached and also have gesso and gilding losses. Additional areas of the applied feature are cleaved and have losses to the gesso ground.

The lower applied section is loose and the husk detail at the very bottom is loose and held into place by a badly nailed repair. There are various losses to the gilding particularly the leaf tips on this lower acanthus leaf carving. Bronze powders have been used to hide previous gilding losses in the past; these have now discoloured leaving unsightly areas of finish on the gilding.

The reeded ebony slip frame has various shrinkage splits around its circumference and the mirror plate is loose within the frame.

The rear panel that holds in the mirror plate is loose and much of the paper backing has disintegrated.

PROPOSED TREATMENT:

The discoloured bronze powders from previous restoration will be removed using a suitable solvent; this will reveal the full extent of the gilding losses.

Further disassembly will be necessary to determine if any more structural work is required, allowing a more secure re-installation of the mirror plate.

The mirror needs further disassembly to fully develop the treatment proposal, with the 20th century nails used to re-attach the carved elements replaced with bamboo dowels to reduce the damage caused to the wooden carcass by oxidation of the steel nails. The broken decorative elements will be glued back into place and the detached elements re-attached using bamboo dowels to replace the mild steel originals.

After careful cleaning of the remaining gilding the loose and cleaved gesso will be consolidated using the injection technique and a suitable consolidant before building up the gesso in the lost areas using an acrylic gesso. New water gilding will then be applied in the lost areas in the traditional manner, and toned to match the existing gilding.

Finally a supportive cord will be attached using the existing added brackets to spread the weight when the mirror is re-hung

ESTIMATED COST:

ACCEPTED BY: **DATE:**

(SIGNATURE)

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TREATMENT REPORT

OBJECT: Early 19th century Gilded Convex Mirror	**OBJECT NUMBER**: 2322 - 08 - F
OWNER: Confidential	**DATE COMPLETED:**01/07/2008

DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT:

1. Disassembly

The nails securing the applied decorative elements and the rear panel were carefully extracted with pincers and softening blocks. The mirror was now fully inspected to ascertain the full extent of the deterioration and previous repair work. The securing nails were labelled and put aside, the exposed and failed glue joints were swabbed clean with deionised water before an application of “laponite” allowed the removal of water soluble accretions and old hide glue from the surface. Any small gesso fragments were also handled in this way to allow subsequent replacement.

2. Cleaning

After testing inconspicuous areas to ascertain compatibility it was decided to use cotton swabs saturated in either acetone (for the water gilded areas) or deionised water (for the oil gilded areas) to remove surface accretions and soiling. Around 100 individual buds were used to allow careful control over the amount of debris removed from this sometimes very friable surface.

3. Removal of bronze powders

The top of these two pictures show the before and after of the removing the unsightly discoloured bronze powders from the surface using acetone on a swab. It was noticed the gilding was in fact in the best condition under these previously treated areas as the shellac polish used as a vehicle and adherent for the bronze powders seemed to have protected the surface.

4. Repairs to carvings

The lost elements were glued back into place using fish glue and hot hide glue. The cleaved and attached areas were injected with fish glue using a syringe to reach difficult areas. Where necessary custom cramps were devised to apply force in the correct direction.

The losses had the ground cleaned before treatment with rabbit skin glue size was applied. The areas were then filled with an acrylic gesso applied with a gilders gesso tool. Each layer was sanded and inspected before levelling with a gilders scraper.

Test patches of various coloured boles were gilded and three shades of bole were chosen to match the existing visible bole on the mirror.

5. The Bole

The bole was applied over the rebuilt areas after the acrylic gesso was treated to a coat of rabbit skin size. The three colours allowed subtle shading to take place, and application was carefully restricted to the newly filled areas at first.

Each successive coat of bole was cut back using silicon carbide paper and the bole was built up to around 5 layers before a pre-gilding burnish. The latter coats were allowed to spread slightly to allow a graduation in the join facilitating a more suitable edge around the damage.

6. The Re-Assembly

The top carvings were re-attached using bamboo dowels inserted at 45° the axis and drilled into the existing extant nail holes. The cracks in the supporting members were glued using hot hide glue and cramped into place ready for re-assembly.

The newly boled areas of the attached carvings were water gilded to use as a test area for the subsequent toning and blending of all new gilding that was to be applied.

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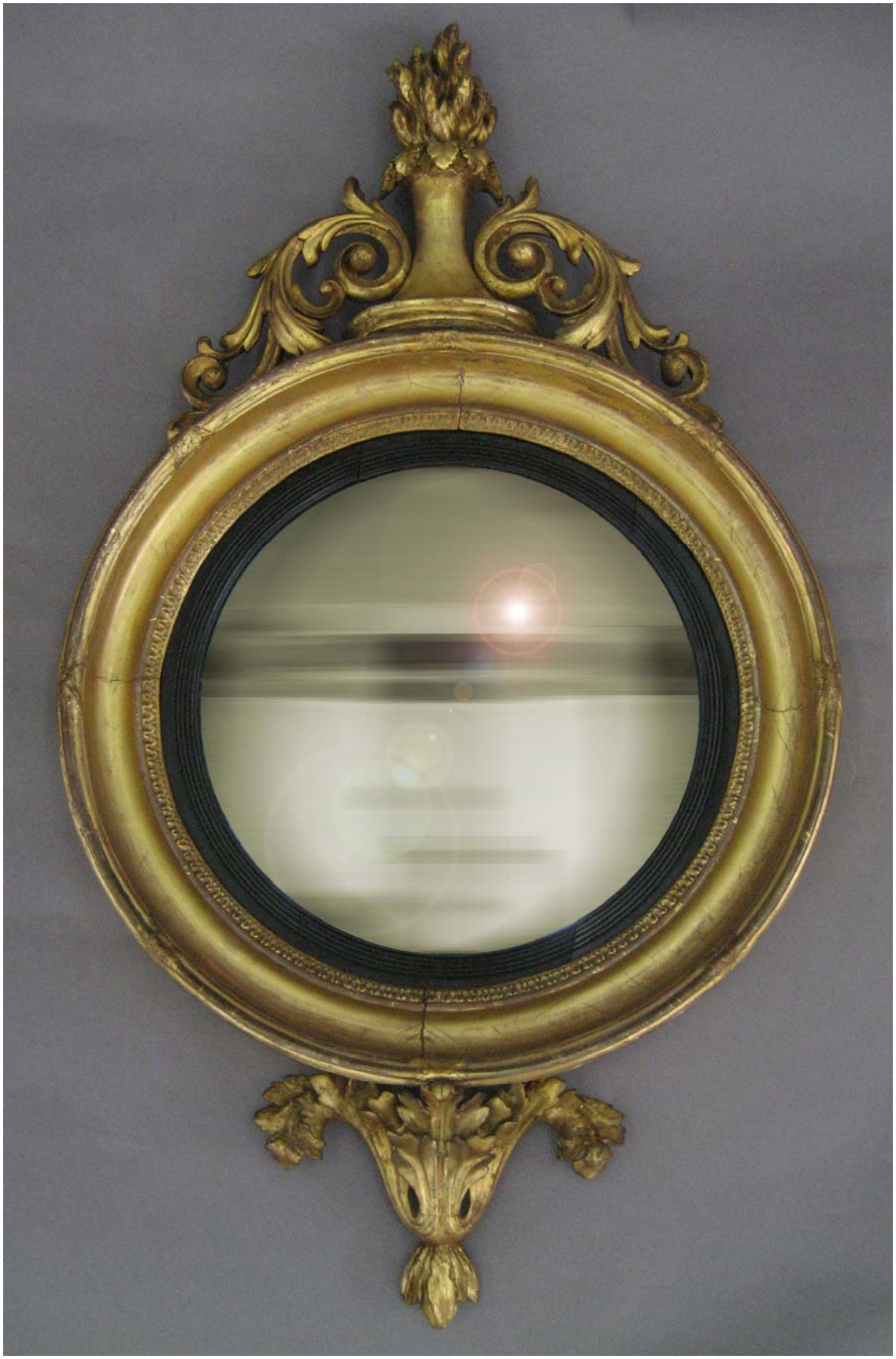
6. Re-Gilding

The re-built and re-boled areas where water gilded where necessary, with the highlights double gilded to increase longevity of the restoration. The main central top column and palm leaves were over-gilded due to previous abrasion damage.

The new gilding was burnished where applicable and distressed using de-ionised water on a cotton bud. Finally the replaced gilding was toned in using shellac and earth pigments, and final dryness was simulated using rottenstone powder held in place by hydrogen bonding.

The mirror plate was re-fitted after cleaning with IMS and de-ionised water, and the ebony slip frame was cleaned with white spirit before being waxed with proprietary beeswax. The backboard was refitted using replacement brass pins carefully driven into the existing securing pin holes.

7. The Finished Mirror



The finished mirror shown after careful final cleaning and application of micro-crystalline wax to serve as a moisture/contaminant barrier.