

Monticello Joinery Armchair: A Follow-up Research Note

By Mike McNamara

In their recent article on this website, *A Monticello Joinery Chair? An Examination of the Evidence*, Tom Newbern and Jim Melchor thoroughly discuss the details of this walnut armchair.

While reading this article, I focused on the armchair's unusual splat. Its Masonic imagery was discussed in detail in the Newbern-Melchor article. What became apparent to me is the splat of this Masonic armchair is a match for Monticello's west portico (Fig. 1, Chair splat and Fig. 2, Monticello's west portico).



Figure 1



Figure 2

The four negative or open spaces between the five lower elements of the splat, with demilunes at their tops and bottoms giving the illusion of roundness, mimic the four columns of the west portico. The outside edges of the Masonic arch in the splat line up with the outside edges of the exterior pair of openings, just as the outside edges of Monticello's dome line up with the outside edges of the portico's exterior columns. Finally, the rising sun in the splat mimics the demilune window in the west portico's pediment.

These similarities are too compelling to be simple coincidences, thus pointing strongly to a common design source for the chair splat and Monticello's west portico.

Reference

Newbern, Tom and Melchor, Jim, 2019, *A Monticello Joinery Chair? An Examination of the Evidence*: Edenton Historical Commission

www.ehcnc.org