



Conservation of furniture and related objects

Condition and treatment report

WD job no. FU0204	Date received 5/03/2019
Object	
	
Showcase sideboard rosewood vitrine	
Client private	Client accession no. N.A.

Date assessed 08-03-2019	Conservator Shane Orion Wiechnik Arian de Goede
Supervisor/s Norbert Gutowski, Tristram Bainbridge, Paul Tear, Piran Harte	
Treatment start date 5/03/2019	Treatment completion date week 32

Image of object as received



Fig.1 Overview



Fig.2 Frontside view



Fig.3 Bottom view



Fig. 4 Proper right side



Fig. 5 Proper left side



Fig. 6 Back view



Fig.7 Top

Dimensions/mm
W 1380
D 330
H 880

Condition in detail

Primary Materials: Pine with Rosewood veneers (by eye)

Secondary Materials: Brass mounts, Glass, Ebony inlays, Shellac coating (by eye)

Construction:

The Vitrine is constructed with pine substrates. The sides of the cabinet are dovetailed into the top and bottom. Feet are built up blocks of pine glued to the underside of the cabinet. The top of the cabinet is a separate board from the carcass comprised of several pine boards jointed together with breadboard ends. How the ends are attached is undetermined. The top has a rosewood lipping and one remaining corner block. This top board is veneered on the top with rosewood and inlaid with brass and ebony beading. The top is screwed into the carcass with four slotted steel screws.

The back of the cabinet is split into four panels. The munting for the back consists of two perpendicular pine boards cross lapped in the centre and mortise and tenoned into the carcass.

History:

The item was purchased at an auction by the client. It is unknown the origin of the piece.

Overall Condition:

The sides, top, and doors of the cabinet are all warped or bowed to some degree. The bow of the top is preventing the doors from being able to close properly in the cabinet and causing scrapes. The surface coatings are mostly intact, however there are over a hundred losses in the rosewood veneer. Several pieces of the brass and ebony inlays are lost. The shelves show a lot of water rings and decorative damage, and the legs are severely damaged by insects. Two are highly deteriorated causing the cabinet itself to be unstable. The glass is in good condition. Brass on the pieces is showing various degrees of tarnish and grime build up. The escutcheon around the lock is lost.

Condition in Detail

1 – Loose top is slightly sagging in the middle. The veneered top of this object is held on by a number of screws. the middle is not supported and likely due to the nature of the used piece of wood deformed.

2 - Top of the carcass is also sagging slightly in the middle.

3/4 - both sides slightly/severely cupped

5/6 - There are losses to both feet at the front due to severe woodworm infestation, appears now passive

7 - Doors are not flat and do not function, due to confined space.

8 - Some of the hinge screws are becoming loose, they have little material to screw into.

9 - On the apron some corners of the shape are worn and broken.

10 - Moulding missing on the front proper right corner of the loose top.

11 - Decorative surface:

Surface	Loose veneer	Missing veneer	Loose brass	Missing brass
1 Topside	9	4		4
2 Proper right side	23	6	2	2
3 Frontside	43	15	3	7
4 Proper left side	18		8	3
5 Door p. right side	22	9		
6 Door p. left side	30	4		2
7 Brass round corners pieces			2	
8 Brass mounts				1
9 Brass inlay stips				13
Total	145	38	15	34

12 - The finish is overall in a allright condition. Some minor arias are missing, dull, stained, or faded. This type of damage is located on the loose top.

13 - Inside on the back at the height of the top shelf is residue of an adhesive, likely to be from tape.

14 - On the shelves and the bottom are ring marks present, probably from glassware.

15 - Brass is tarnished and the lacquer is worn off in some places, most noticeable on the round corners.

16 - brass mount on the bottom left corner of the right door is proud because it is pushed out but a screw.

Treatment options

The highlighted points are the recommended treatment options. The numbers below correspond with those in the Condition section above.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
1 – Sagging loose top	Leave as is.	forcing the top straight by adding a restraint.	Take apart and flatten. using heat, pressure and moisture
	Doing nothing is an option because the doors do not make contact with the top. Flattening this top would require compromising original material either by removing material to make room for the restraint or through moisture impact on painted surfaces.		
2 – Sagging top	Leave as is.	Flatten in position by adding a partition	Take apart and flatten
	It is recommended to leave the timber as is. It is not a hindrance to the function of the object as the doors do not make contact with the top.		
3 – Cupping right side	Leave bent but stabilise by filling gaps.	Flatten in position.	Take apart and flatten
	Flattening the cupped p.right side should be attempted with the side still attached. Detaching may lead to unwanted damage on the decorated outside. This will involve pressing it into the desired position. This process could be aided with heat and moisture.		
4 – Cupping left side	Leave bent (stabilise by filling gaps).	Flatten in position.	Take apart and flatten
	The cupping of the p.left side causes no structural risk, however stabilising the occurring gaps would be advised.		
5 – Foot (p. back left)		Feet can be built up in wood	Feet can be build up in alternative material
	The feet require additional material for structural integrity. Due to severe loss of material, this can be done using a combination of timber and Bencon® epoxy putty. The epoxy putty will be isolated from original material through the use of animal hide glue and Japanese tissue paper.		
6 – Foot (p. front right)		Feet can be built up in wood	Feet can be build up in alternative material
	A timber consistent with the structure of the cabinet will be satisfactory to support this foot. Damage is not severe enough to require additional material.		
7 – Warped door	position of the door can be altered, adjusting the position of the hing.	Doors can be flattened for a better fit.	
	Adjusting the hinge should be attempted first but will likely not be enough. It appears the doors have been treated before with visible saw cuts and wedges. It may be possible to straighten the door by modifying or removing these wedges. During this procedure the glass will be removed from the doors.		

8 – Hinge screw holes	Replace the screws with wider ones	Fill the gaps with wood.	Fill the gaps with an alternative filler.
	The holes can be plugged with timber and redrilled for the existing screws. This will be stable and not require any loss of original materials or components.		
9 - Apron	Build up using wood	Build up using Milliput®	Build up using Bencon®
	Using Bencon® on top of a barrier layer of tissue paper and animal glue is simple, reversible, and accomplishes a desired result.		
10 – Brass stips	An alternative material can be used as an inlay.	New brass inly stips can be made	New brass inlay strip can be made and given a lac finish like the original.
	This will give the most consistent result.		
11 – Veneers	Glue the loose veneers, using animal glue	Glue the loose veneers Remake the missing pieces.	Glue the loose veneers, Remake the missing pieces, Make them blend in.
	The loose veneers need to be resecured. This will be done with an animal based adhesive. Missing pieces can be replaced using matching timber veneers.		
11.8 Keyhole plate		Find a similar looking one	Make a casting of the counterpart on the other door.
	To make a replica the mount on the other door must be removed and copied. This will give the most consistent result. New mount can be artificially patinated to match aged brass.		
12 – Finish	In the missing gaps shellac could be applied, with a coat of wax on top.	Coat of wax	Coat of Paraloid® b72 with a coat of wax on top.
	A coat of soft wax will give a pleasing result without interfering with the original shellac.		
13 – Residue of glue		Remove mechanically	Removed with the use of a solvent.
	If the adhesive originates from tape, it might be removed using white spirits.		
14 – Ring marks on shelves	Left as a part of the history of the object	colour matching the most severe rings and applying wax	colour match the damage.
	The rings get blend in and this will become more harmonious without spending a considerable amount of time.		
15 – lacquer on brass	Left as a sign of patina	using tinted shellac	A similar looking finish can be made up in a reversible coating

	A coating dissolved in a nonpolar solvent can be applied on top of the lacquered brass without interfering with the original. Laropal A81, Paraloid B48, and similar alternatives will be tested in order to imitate the lost lacquer.		
16 – Cleaning ornalou mountings	Clean in place with solvent and abrasive or gel	Remove and clean with ultrasonic	Remove and clean with solvent and abrasive or gel
	the will be an protective lacquer applied.		
16.5 – Coating on ornalou mountings	Leave tarnish as a sign of patina and apply protective coating	Replace in a restrained manner missing gilding with paints and provide protective coating	Regild
	This will give the most consistent result.		

Time estimate

highlighted are the preferred options.

isuws	option 1	option 2	option 3
1	0:00	4:00	15:00
2	0:00	2:00	19:00
3	2:00	1:00	30:00*
4	2:00	1:00	25:00
5		1:00	1:00
6		1:00	1:00
7	0:30	4:00	
8	0:30	1:00	0:15
9	3:00	0:40	0:40
10	2:50	5:00	8:30
11	15:00	24:00	43:30
11.8	outsource to the metal department.		
12	3:00	1:30*	3:00
13		0:30	0:30
14	0:00	3:00	10:00
15	0:00	3:00	3:00
16	5:00	4:00	6:00
16.5	2:00	3:30	15:00
	documentation & photographs		7:00
total	84:40 hours		

Treatment agreed and carried out

After meeting this the client the treatment options agreed on are as follows:

1. Sagging loose top	There is chosen for an alternative option in which the gaps under the lose to get filled so it wont press down on the top of the	
2. Sagging top	issue should be resolved by the solution named previous.	
3. Cupping right side	aim to reduce cupping by 50 % leaving the side in situe, making use of invasive reinforcement wen enssesay.	cupping side is presses inward reducing the gap from 10 to 3 mm. along the side a crack opened up withs is filled using lime wood with holds this in place.
4. Cupping left side	leave as is	
5 – Foot (p. back left)		filled a gap with Bencon added a block of pine.
6 – Foot (p. front right)		
7 – Warped door		
8 – Hinge screw holes		
9 - Apron		
10 – Brass stips		

11 – Veneers		
11.8 Keyhole plate		
12 – Finish		
13 – Residue of glue		mechanically removed
14 – Ring marks on shelves		coloured in to match the surroundings better.
15 – lacquer on brass		
16 – Cleaning ormalou mountings		
16.5 – Coating on ormalou mountings		a coating of shellac with spirit dye and brass powder

Work Done:

TOP

Lost rosewood veneers were replaced with new rosewood veneers. New rosewood was bleached with two part bleach and toned with watercolours and shellac to match existing veneers. Veneers were glued in with protein glues, and gaps were filled with Liberon stopping waxes

Lost brass inlays were replaced with new brass. Brass was shaped to fit lost areas only. The grooves were cleaned out mechanically, and in some cases with the assistance of laponite in order to remove old dry glue. New brass was glued in with protein glues. In some cases, microfibrils were mixed into the glue to bulk out cavities beneath the brass. Existing loose or detached brass was re-adhered in the same manner.

Small losses of ebony between the brass were filled with Milliput epoxy putty and toned with Primal WS-24 acrylic emulsion and water dyes.

The missing corner was replaced with a new one cut from rosewood. Two pine dowels were added to the construction to increase strength in a weak design. Mexican rosewood was used to replace veneer on top of new corner piece.

The bend in the top piece was left in the wood, and poplar wedges were made to fill out the gap areas between the top and the carcass. Wedges were toned black with water dyes and lightly adhered to the carcass with protein glue.

FRONT

Missing veneers were replaced in the same manner as on the top of the cabinet. Brass Lost brass and ebony were replaced in the same manner. Two points on the decorative shaping of the apron which had broken away were bulked out with Bencon epoxy putty to support new veneers.

Brass corner pieces were removed and cleaned where required. Cleaned areas were sprayed with toned lacquer to blend with original brass.

The brass mounting was removed from the apron and cleaned using an ultrasonic bath, EDTA, and a fibreglass brush. After cleaning, it was lacquered in the same manner as the corner pieces.

SIDES

Missing veneers were replaced in the same manner as above. Lost brass inlays were replaced in the same manner as well. The lost ebony inlay on the upper proper left side was replaced with a new ebony piece.

The proper left piece side, which was significantly more bowed than the other, was clamped flat while timber wedges were glued into the gaps which formed between boards. This filling of the gaps held the side straight once clamps were removed. Wedges inserted to keep the side flat were toned to match interior.

DOORS

The doors were removed from the carcass. The glass was taken out of them while they were worked on. All brass mountings were carefully detached and treated in the same manner as the piece from the front apron. Loose veneers were carefully re-adhered with protein glue and lost veneers were replaced as above.

Warps in the door frames were isolated on both pieces to the most problematic corners of the door. Veneers were removed to gain access to the substrate. The substrate in the corners was soaked in hot water and bent to restraighten. On the proper right door, saw cuts were made in the corner and pine wedges were inserted to keep the door flat.

Veneers were reattached with protein glue. Doors were cleaned and waxed with paste wax. Brass mountings were reattached, glass was returned to the doors, and they were rehung on the carcass.

INTERIOR

Tape residue on the back of the cabinet was carefully scraped away. Rings on shelves from liquids were in-painted with oil colours in order to reduce their appearance. Shelves were cleaned and waxed with microcrystalline wax.

FEET

Losses on feet were replaced with timber and Bencon epoxy putty in order to restabilize the cabinet. Pine supports were adhered with protein glue.

Recommended continuing care

Materials used and suppliers

rosewood ([*Dalbergia nigra*](#))

mexican rosewood

pine

lime

walnut

oak

brass

Bencon®

IMS

shellac

wax

orasol dye

brass powder

hide glue kremer

fish glue Kremer

cold hide glue titebond.

Critical review