



19th Century Antique

A mid-19th century Gothic Revival chimney piece, carved in Portland stone. This antique chimney piece rests upon two chamfered foot blocks, the simple, curved profile of the bolection moulded jambs extended through the foot blocks in straight lines. Well proportioned and elegant, the stone has aged well, developing depth and character.

Dimensions

Height 48½in (123.2cm) width 62½in (158.7cm)

Internal height 41½in (105.5cm) width 48¼in (122.5cm)

Reference

N429

Further details

The cornice shelf, carved with egg & dart dentils, is reminiscent of early Renaissance palazzi and hangs above a carved frieze section, centred by a coin carved in low relief. Within the coin is a portrait, in profile, of a young Roman, his helmet pushed back above his face. The coin is upheld by a pair of centaurs which morph into ebullient sprays of acanthus and floral paterae. The helmet the young Roman wears occupies a middle ground between mask and Corinthian helmet. The C-scroll console jambs, carved with heraldic lion heads above concave fluted legs, stand on feathered paw feet.

The jambs carved with lion heads and the feathered claws of an eagle refer to the Griffin, a Greco-Roman mythical creature used widely in the Italian Renaissance as a heraldic emblem. The Griffin denotes military leadership and courage, but also great wealth as they were said to guard great hordes of gold. The lion and eagle were well-established icons in the 15th and 16th Century Renaissance and signify strength for the Medici family.

Notable similar examples can be found at the Palazzo Gondi in Florence, and chimneypieces by Benedetto da Rovezzano and the Palazzo Farnese by Giuliano & Antonio da Sangallo.