

A very rare George III Neo Classical Sugar or Spice Box made in
London in 1775 by Edward Darveil

Sold



Description

The Box has a rectangular form with an unusual openwork base, below a raised band of acanthus spears. The four sides are beautifully decorated with applied Neo Classical bluebell garlands tied with ribbons, with Neo Classical medallions below. The hinged cover has a bluebell and bead edge and is divided into panels centred by a raying flower head. The panels each contain blue bell garlands, again, tied with ribbons and interspersed with flower heads in ovals. The box is in excellent condition and is fully marked on the underside and also with an additional makers mark on the front panel. As you will appreciate, sugar and spice was very expensive at this date and warranted such a container. As intimated, it is a very unusual to see a piece standing on a pierced, openwork, foot and the quality of production is very fine, as the silversmith has taken the trouble to attach the side decoration via a sophisticated collection of pins, seen on the interior, which is a sign of a very good silversmith. This design originally attributed to Sir William Chambers is based on drawings carried out by Chambers' pupil, John Yenn (1750-1821) which are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The design was first used by Chambers in the 1760's after the 4th Duke of Marlborough employed the celebrated architect to undertake extensive alterations to Blenheim Palace, and Marlborough House in London. The Duke also ordered a silver dinner service from Parker and Wakelin in this very design attributed to Chambers. Stylistic similarities, as well as the use of heavy swags, can be seen in Chambers' model for a state coach for George III (also in the V & A). Similarly, the bluebell festoons and paterae relate to Chambers' work on the East Gate at Blenheim. Some pieces from the Marlborough Service still survive at Blenheim Palace and other known examples are a Tureen in the Leeds City Art Gallery. Edward Darvil specialised in the production of such boxes, of very fine quality, and innovative fashionable designs. He had workshops at 64 Watling Street when this piece was made, however examples of his work are very rare. Height: 3.75 inches. Length: 3.45 inches. Width: 2.85 inches. Weight: 10oz.