A rare Elizabeth I oak and inlaid 'Nonsuch' chest, Southwark, circa 1580

Sold



REF: 4380

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Height: 54 cm (21.3")

Width: 106.7 cm (42")

Depth: 54.5 cm (21.5")

Description

Of typical boarded dove-tailed construction, the front with two reserves designed with fanciful towers, within parquetry-inlaid surround, further bands of decoration to sides framing iron bale handles, the end-cleated lid with two reserves of inlaid inner framing, inlay now lacking but with good patina, impressive rear board and ornate internal strap hinges, internal lidded till over two small drawer apertures, one retaining the charmingly decorated original drawer

This type of inlay is regionally associated with London, particularly around Southwark, from the second half of the 16th century, and was very possibly executed by immigrant German joiners and inlayers. The architectural decoration is popularly assumed to represent Henry VIII's celebrated Nonsuch Palace, Surrey, particularly with reference to the fanciful towers. However, it is more likely to have been derived from 16th-century printed designs, for example those published by Hans Vredeman de Vries, (1527 - 1604)

Literature: Similar examples illustrated, Percy Macquoid, The Age of Oak (1925), see pp. 120 - 127, colour plate VIII, figs. 103 - 105; Victor Chinnery, Oak Furniture: The British Tradition (1995), p.356, fig. 3:358; Margaret Jourdain, English Decoration and Furniture of the Early Renaissance 1500 - 1650 (1924), p. 267, figs. 374 & 375; Oliver Bracket, English Furniture p. 92, fig. 26, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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