

A REGENCY FREE-STANDING ARCHITECT'S
TABLE ATTRIBUTED TO GILLOWS

Dimensions: H: 37 in / 94 cm | W: 42.5 in / 108 cm | D: 25.5 in / 65 cm

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Constructed from San Domingo mahogany, the free-standing writing table supported on four elegant turned, reeded and tapering legs with brass castors, all sides finished with recessed panelling, the mahogany top fitted with a double ratchet tilting mechanism and two book rests, a pair of faux-drawers with pierced brass handles and Bramah lock concealing a secretaire fall-front leather lined writing surface accompanied by a fitted pen tray and pair of inkwells, the tilting writing surface sliding back to reveal six hinged compartments, each lid inlaid with boxwood stringing and an oval cartouche bearing the letters of the alphabet, the back compartments with removable trays and secret drawers.
English, circa 1815

The present table can be attributed to the Gillow workshops with reasonable certainty. Several

documented Gillows pieces incorporate a secretaire drawer of identical design, as seen on the desk supplied in 1778 and now at Constable Burton. The interior compartments are equally inlaid with lettered cartouches and conceal secret compartments, which Gillows called "private drawers." Tables with this drawer arrangement were called 'of new construction' by Gillows, and, as it was Richard Gillow's own invention, he prevented any other craftsmen of copying the plans for its construction. An almost identical table was made by Gillow, supplied to Sir John Shaw Stewart in 1801.

Literature:

Gillow & Co

Gillows of London and Lancaster was perhaps the greatest English furniture-making firm, thriving from the 18th century until it merged in 1900. Founded by Robert Gillow in 1730, his business earned a stellar reputation for exquisite craftsmanship and cutting-edge designs, particularly in crafting mahogany furniture. They expanded their influence by setting up showrooms in both Lancaster and London, attracting a diverse clientele that included the State, landed gentry, and the emerging middle class. Robert's legacy was carried on by his sons, Richard and Robert. Over the course of the 19th century, Gillows became England's biggest furniture manufacturer, leaving an enduring legacy with a staggering 20,000 preserved designs and a global footprint in royal collections and museums.