

Dartford High St, Kent

Thomas Girtin

Sold



Description

Thomas Girtin (1775-1802)
Dartford High Street, Kent

Inscribed on reverse of wash mount: by Turner/View of the Street at Dartford Kent
Pen and grey ink and watercolour over pencil on laid paper
42.8 by 55 cm., 16 ¾ by 21 ½ in.

Provenance:
Basil Dighton of Savile Row, London, 1923;
Private Collection, USA

Literature:
Supplement to 'Country Life', 6th October 1923, ill.

This important, recently rediscovered, drawing is based on a sketch by John Henderson dated 26th July 1794 which is in the British Museum (1878, 1228.167) and dates from circa 1795. John Henderson (1764-1843) was a collector and amateur artist and an early patron of both Girtin and Turner. He often commissioned both artists to copy his own work. Henderson is recorded as being in Kent in the summer of 1794. An etching of boats at Dover was published on 28th August 1794 with a copy being in the British Museum.

Also in the British Museum is an initial copy of Henderson's drawing, by Girtin, in pen and ink (see Thomas Girtin and David Loshak, *The Art of Thomas Girtin*, 1954, no. 113) which was given to the museum by John Henderson Junior. This copy, which may have been traced, was used as the basis for the present drawing. Henderson's original drawing does not include any figures which are Girtin's invention.

Henderson's original and either the present drawing or Girtin's pen and ink copy were known to Turner's biographer Walter Thornbury who wrote: 'There is, for instance, a view of the chief street at Dartford (1794), copied by Mr Girtin after an existing sketch by Mr Henderson; executed, I suppose, as a sort of drawing lesson' (see Walter Thornbury, *The Life of J.M.W. Turner RA*, 1862, p. 98). The present drawing has an inscription on the reverse of the mount attributing it to Turner which is clearly incorrect.

We are grateful to Susan Morris for confirming the attribution to Girtin.