Pair of shoes

Place of origin: Great Britain (made)
Date: ca. 1800 (made)
Artist/Maker: Unknown
Materials and Techniques: Leather, with stencilled decoration
Credit Line: Given by Mrs H. P. Mitchell
Museum number: T.115&a-1933
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description
This style of heeled shoe, made of pastel coloured kid leather with painted or stencilled patterns, with an exaggerated pointed toe, was popular in the latter years of the 18th century. It was much simpler than previous women's styles which had tended to be made of leather, have a pronounced heel. They had often been made of fabric. In 1801 the Lady's Magazine which illustrated just such spotted kid shoes.

Descriptive line
Pair of pink kid women's shoes with stencilled spot motif

Physical description
Pair of pink women's shoes with pointed toe and stencilled decoration.

Dimensions
Height: 7.5 cm, Width: 7 cm, Length: 26 cm

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Historical context note
Shoes of this type can be dated to the 1790s because of their low heels and pointed toes. Previously, the majority of women's shoes had much higher heels, fastened with buckles, and were often made of fabric.

Both shoes are the cut in exactly the same shape, a practice that had been constant since the introduction of heels in about 1600. With a return to flat shoes from the 1790s, the most important technical innovation was the re-introduction of rights and lefts which were a mirror image of each other. Women were slower to adopt them than men. (Swann)

Bibliography
Giorgio Riello, A Foot in the Past. Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century, CUP/Passold, 2006 - social, economic and material culture history, which offers the best overview of the nature of the trade and analyses the implications of changing demand.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O166239/pair-of-shoes-unknown/