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Sleeper Constable sketch back on the auction block
with \$2m-\$3m estimate

Recently sold for £3,500, the work has been authenticated as a study for
the Tate's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*

By Martin Bailey. Web only

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John Constable, study for *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*

A sketch which recently sold for £3,500 and was later identified as a work by John Constable is coming up to auction again at Sotheby's, New York on 29 January with an estimate of \$2m-\$3m. The painting has been authenticated as a study for the artist's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831, which belongs to the Tate. When the oil sketch came up for sale at South Kensington in July 2013, Christie's catalogued it as by a "follower of John Constable" and estimated it at £500-£800. The unnamed buyer later confirmed that the work had been heavily retouched in the late 19th or early 20th century, depriving it of its lively, sketchy quality, but it has now been cleaned.

The painting was examined by Anne Lyles, a specialist on Constable, who dated it to 1829-30. She determined that the oil sketch is by the artist's hand and was among the preparatory works for the final painting, which Tate bought in 2013 for £23m. Lyles describes the study as "one of the most exciting and important additions to the master's oeuvre to have emerged in recent decades".

The 2013 seller of the newly discovered oil sketch was the family of Viscount Hambleden, whose ancestors probably acquired it by the early 20th century. It was among several hundred items they sold at Christie's South Kensington. These included another sleeper lot, *The Embarkation of St Paula*, which was originally catalogued as "after Claude Lorrain" and estimated at £15,000-£25,000. Shortly before the sale, Christie's suspected that it might be more important, and it was withdrawn and later sold as an authenticated work by Claude, going for just over £5m at King Street in December 2013.