

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER
REEF POINT
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

April 11, 1950
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Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss
1537 28th Street
Washington, D. C.

Dearest Mildred:

You and I are close tied to the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks and their future, which we both would like to feel was safe and as assured as anything can be in this crazy world. The papers and plans which Mr. Thacher would like to have at Dumbarton Oaks are spoken of in these letters. The plans are, as you already know, valuable for their continuity and their defeats as well as their little victories. Perhaps Mr. Thacher may not realize what an undertaking it will be to go through, catalogue and put in workable order, the letters, drawings and sketches. So these letters are going to Mr. Thacher and the carbon copy of the letter to Mr. Williams who is one of the firmest advocates Dumbarton Oaks has among those of my art. Will you see what you think.

All goes well here, and we start for home in three weeks.

Your devoted

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Beatrix Farrand
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April 11, 1950

Mr. John S. Thacher, Director
Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection
Georgetown, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Thacher:

Mr. Patterson tells me you are preparing for the arrival of the Dumbarton Oaks plans and correspondence. There will be a formidable collection. If I am correct, the designer of a place is supposed to be the owner of the drawings and letters, but as you are ready to take over the big files I am glad to give them to Dumbarton Oaks when you tell me the files are ready and you are ready for the correspondence. Of course you know, by instant, that it is rare that a continuous history of a place covering more than 20 years is to be found. Therefore, the papers have considerable professional value, entirely aside from the importance of the place or the ability of the designer. You will of course want to make this material as available and useful to students of Landscape Architecture as the library and the rest of the collections are to students of a more distant time. Taken all in all, letters, drawings, sketches, etc. there must be well over 5000 items, perhaps more nearly 10,000, and these will need careful sorting and cataloguing which we are trying to do with the Gertrude Jekyll collection at Reef Point.

The same post will carry a letter to Mr. Bradford Williams telling him of the proposed transfer to Dumbarton Oaks and that undoubtedly you will wish him to notify the schools of Landscape Architecture that the material is at Dumbarton Oaks and will be available to properly accredited students, as well as the working library and some of the rarer old books on horticulture and design.

There is no doubt in my mind that you will be eager to add the Dumbarton Oak drawings, etc., to the establishment and that you will agree they shall be a part of the garden educational section of the place.

Trusting you will have a pleasant and profitable journey, I am,

Ever yours,

This letter was written by Mrs. Farrand by hand in California and sent here to be typed.

Secretary

*cc Mrs. Bliss
Mr. Patterson*

April 11, 1950

Mr. Bradford Williams,
9 Park Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Williams:

If I am not mistaken, the drawings, etc., pertaining to a piece of work undertaken for a client belong by legal right to the designer. However the legal aspects of the question may be, in the present instance you are being written to because Dumbarton Oaks has for some time wanted to have at Washington, in their possession, all the drawings and correspondence pertaining to this work. It would suit my plans for Reef Point to have the space now occupied by the drawings and letters, but you will perhaps advise me to tell Mr. Thacher, the Director at Dumbarton Oaks, that it is seldom a history of a place, its attempts, failures and successes is continuously carried on for well over 20 years. Therefore, entirely aside from the merits of the design, the history would seem advisable to have carefully catalogued, safely housed and of course made available to students of Landscape Architecture. Would this be your point of view also? If so, a copy of this letter to you will be sent to Mr. Thacher. Naturally his interests are far more closely tied to the Byzantine and mediaeval scholarly part of the Dumbarton Oaks Collections, and he may not realize that cataloguing and making available these documents would be a considerable undertaking which he may not be able to promise to carry out.

If the collection is moved to Dumbarton Oaks would it not be wise for you to notify the Head of the Departments of Landscape Architecture at the various schools that this collection would be in Washington, and catalogued and ready for their use, together with a good working library, and a growing collection of the rarer old books.

Yours ever sincerely,

This letter was written by Mrs. Farrand by hand in California and typed here at Bar Harbor.

Secretary

cc. Mr. Thacher
Mrs. Bliss
Mr. Patterson