

June 1
May 26, 1938

My dearest dear:

Now as to the "shop" part of the letter.

Orion and Boötes

By all means let us follow your inspired idea to cut out the figures and put neat aluminum painted panels inside what you kindly call "the pretty borders." We might carry out still some sort of starry design but I question whether much polychroming will be needed as I think the change of weight and surface will be all that will be needed.

Lilac Circle

Splendid that you will let me go ahead on the low wall, (a curb rather than a wall), Probably the existing seat made for the place will do although it may be necessary to have new ends put on the seat as the two arm ends seem to me rather feeble. Whether the curb-wall ends with little "milestone" posts or posts and chains remains to be seen on the ground, so to speak.

Unicorn Lady

We will delightedly see that the lady is moved down to the two trees among the rhododendrons at the west end of the park. There is just one thing to bear in mind about this also inspired choice of placing and that is the possibility of the figure being injured by possible mischievous boys, but I think she had better take her chances rather than keep her, so to speak, in camphor in the bowling green. The base for the figure is to be the black lava rock which will be on its way from California before very long. This I think we decided upon as possibly the most harmonious in color and texture.

Forsythia Arch

By all means let us put Dumbarton Oaks on the arch. I only wonder whether Dumbarton Oaks should be on the north side, as you suggest, and Dumbarton Oaks Park on the south side. Do you lean them to read as a foretaste of what you are to find on the other side of the gate or as to what there actually is on the inscribed side of the gate? This is not clear in my stupid mind. And by all means let us carry the arch "wings" far enough away so that they won't impinge too much on eye or mind where they join what you call the "unfortunate fence." Also you are quite right that the gate should be wood and iron. If possible we will see how the design works out.

and what the question of upkeep is.

Designing

This brings me to the question of the costs of designing. I find that Coles' per diem fee is \$20. This makes him rather more expensive than even the expensive Miss Havey, and I wonder whether for some of the designing such as the forsythia gate and the seat for the "terrior" we might not do well to have the Havey let do some of her perhaps more imaginative work. Let me know about this as the Havey let sends me better sketches to work from than does the good but somewhat lumbering Coles. I do not want however to push you into the Havey extravagance if you hold back from it.

It is of course agreed that the forsythia arch and its inscription must be ready for at least as soon as your return from Europe, and I should hope to get them finished this autumn so that they would have a winter's wear on them, or at least a few months ageing before you see them.

New Position of Forsythia Seat

Cheers that you think the new position for the old forsythia seat may work well. It seems to me that it will come in quite fitly with the Unicorn Lady and the path you suggest from the northside of the path towards the unforgotten quadrupeds. Let us stake this out together.

Star Lantern

Again here it seems to me that a boost from the Havey in thumbnail sizes will help us and I agree with you that one lantern is better than two and that possibly the Gemini and Corona constellations could be used in or on the stucco panel. I will get Coles to photograph the bracket he has made for the salon corner dummy so that if we want to tackle this we will have a starting point.

Swinging Seat for the "Terrior"

Of course this should be finished but if you have no absolutely positive conviction as to the curleycue one I would like to try the double chair idea with distinctly the idea in mind that it must be comfortable and also additionally cushioned. This also must be comfortable for two. The one on the beech terrace was specifically and only meant for one person, as it was meant to be a reading or repose swinging sofa for a solitary with the accompanying sitter in a chair. The balance of the beech terrace seat might be better adjusted perhaps if we hung it by four chains, but of course it would not swing so readily. The "terrior" must however be a swinging seat and I quite agree with you that it must be well balanced so that it does not drop sitters out head or feet first.

Finalities Frieze

Good that you will go ahead and decide it. I am sure the "quod severis" model is the right thing in the little boss.

Lead Soldiers and Terra Cotta Vases

As you of course know the bases for the bases are already designed.

It is possible that the vases might be used in several different places:

- (1) The "terrior."
- (2) The north side of E near the new seats
- (3) On the terrace under the drawing room.
- (4) As a part of the development west of the music room
- (5) Somewhere towards the north end of the copse either in connection with the Gouvert fountain or the fountain at the bowling green.

The militaires frankly stump me. It is possible that they could later go in the development west of the music room as they seem to me rather too "interior" in scale for the north side of the music room or the orangerie and too fine in detail for the lilac circle. I have no really intelligent ideas about them.

Catalogue House Map

I quite agree that a chart in perspective is the thing to do for this wall and if you have a book in your library called Li Giardini di Roma by Falda I suggest that you look at one of the garden perspectives and turn it over to one of your draughtsmen to translate into a perspective chart for that wall. Possibly a P.W.A. artist would do well.

Iron Work Colors

Davis remarked to me casually the other day that if we painted the iron work we would do away with the pitting effect which we had so carefully made in order to give the iron work the aged and worn effect. Will you put this in the back of your mind and see whether the color seems to you more important than to keep the pitting we so carefully achieved. It might be we could get a light, thin stain which could be removed frequently and would not fill the pores of the pitting.

Gray's Memorial

It really I think will be better for both Bryce and the N.G.A. not to give them any perspective of the Gray memorial by the stream. Bryce told me he could gety well describe the memorial to the chapter, and my own feeling is that undoubtedly it will work out slightly different from any perspective which we now make just as the lightning-struck house had to declare itself on the ground rather than by a drawing. I beg that in the inscription you will omit my name as it seems to me to divert attention from Gray, and the very namelessness of my going into the group as one of his grateful fellow workers seems to me more significant than adding the actual name. Bryce I think also feels the same way about this, and individually I much prefer the anonymous gift.

Music Room Wall

To me the bench is still like Mohamet's grave. I saw no dummy of it the last time I was at Oakdom and wonder whether the last dummy which seems to you best might be photographed and sent to me. I quite agree that this is needed soon. In the meantime would you think well of moving the long pink marble bench over to the music room side so that when the Crown Prince and Crown Princess are at Dumbarton there would be at least a piece of furniture on the west side of the wall and the space on the drawing room terrace now filled by the pink bench could be filled by some pots of flowers. On the office side why not the simple backless bench like the ones on the landing between the C and d

terraces and a wispy lump at either side of it? We will also have to find a position for the bird bath on the east side of the little office garden, and by all means let us still keep on the track of the sundial, the dipping-well, and the weather-vane. It seems to me this gives us quite enough to set our teeth in for the coming few weeks.

The thing that is topmost in mind of course is the new wing, and the suggestion of a passageway uniting the music room to two possible small wings on Thirty-second Street seems to me a most illuminating one and I hope something may be worked out on these lines.

You do not know how conscious I was of appearing apparently to block the talk the other day by my dumb, wordless inability to express myself about the feeling of the new gallery being, in a way, an adjunct and a secondary building rather than a main part of the structure of the house.

It will to my mind be rather unhappy if the service road is to be as near the existing road as only eight feet as it will be practically impossible to screen one from the other, or at least give an illusion of screening, and moreover there are one or two really fine pieces of box and trees that seemed to Bryce and me to be directly in line of the possibly shifted road.

I am writing to Davis asking him to send me a copy of the blue-print showing the tree positions and the position of the service road and music room so that I can mull over these and keep step with you and your thoughts, if indeed you want me step for stepping with you. I should feel much less viciously with regard to the wings on Thirty-second Street and enclosing the court on the west of the music room if these wings were to be something really actionable rather than mere decoration, as the scheme promised to be.

I shall be keenly eager to see whatever print or design it may seem convenient to send me as Dumbarton is as much a part of my heart as Reef Point. Reef Point itself is enchanting. The azaleas, the primroses, the daffodils, and the young maple leaves "the size of a mouse's ear" are all succeeding each other fascinatingly.

I have not bothered poor Ernest as I was sure his days here would be tied up with legal worries and as I only know him well through you and Juliet and know how much, in his place, I should like to be protected, I let him alone.

It now seems likely that I shall go off Californiawards towards the end of next week, and once out there and the work finished, Max and I have a vague idea of going northward by motor possibly up the Redwood Highway to Crater Lake, with a digression for him for some fishing, and perhaps a rejoining at Yellowstone Park. Doesn't it sound nice?

This goes to you with the unceasing devotion of your