

BEATRIX FARRAND  
~~1300 ORLANDO ROAD~~ Reef Point  
~~SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA~~ Bar Harbor, Maine.

October 12, 1942.

Dearest and only Mildred:

This is not going to attempt to be a letter, it merely is a statement of what was done at Oakdom during four very fructuous days.

As you know, the Museum tablet design was re-made and it seemed to Mr. Thacher, Miss Havey and me as though it would "work". Certainly the spacing and size of the letters is better and "smoother" than any of the other trials made. Mr. Thacher suggested one small alteration which was made in widening out the tightness of a certain word, and as the tablet was none too wide to take some of the long lines, Coles was able to eliminate the little fillet at each side of the tablet which gave us over one and a half inches additional width.

The Historical tablet also was tried several times in full size finished drawing and Mr. Thacher, Miss Havey and I looked it over carefully and thanks to your approval the stone is I trust now ordered and Coles and a helper will start work as soon as it comes. The central tablet and the two side "information" tablets are to be made of limestone and are to be applied outside and without disturbing the present openwork brick, so that if at any time the tablet is to be placed in another position it can be extracted without damaging either itself or the present wall.

The deepening of the letters over the Dumbarton Oaks Museum door is also ordered.

Now as to the various small items we discussed:.

1. The Melissande wall in rather an earthy-brown stucco following the curving of the back of the pretty seat and curving around the existing wooden steps will cost \$120.
2. The reduction of the size of the iron-work monogram over the Forsythia gate, keeping the original design made by Mr. Laughlin, but slimming it to a more graceful line, will cost \$65.
3. The addition of one or two scrolls and a "black-out" panel over the south gate of the Fountain Terrace will cost between \$25. and \$30.
4. A brace on the Terrior lead roof placed on its east side and anchored into the Bamboo clump will cost \$25.00.
5. The finish of the mechanism on Finalities and the record drawings will cost between \$12. and \$15.

( I have taken the responsibility of ordering these drawings made)



Mrs. Bliss 10/12/42 -2

For some unknown reason Coles never ordered the metal for the back and seat of the Terrior swinging seat. As it seems a pity not to use the teak frame, Miss Havey and I wondered if you would agree to allowing us to put wooden slats into the seat and back which could later be replaced with metal ones if the wooden ones had worn out by the end of the war? We also felt that instead of having the seat made to swing that it would be more sensible if we added wooden legs to the existing seat and allow it to take its place under the roof where it belongs. There was some question in both Bryce's mind and mine as to whether the swinging seat in this position would be quite wise, as the gardens are now visited by far more of the "public", and whether a swinging seat in this position might not be less useful and perhaps more easily injured than a bench sitting on its own four feet. Let me know what you think of this as we are preparing an estimate including the wooden legs which will be forwarded to you as soon as it is ready.

If you want to consider any of these different estimates the work can be finished before the end of the year and can go on at the same time as the tablet letter cutting. On the other hand, there is no absolute need for any one of the items with the exception of the mechanism for the Finalities.

By the way, don't let us forget that you and I must come to some sort of agreement as to the design for the inscription for the Finalities tablet, as this should be on file with the mechanism drawings.

The Harvard enterprises, the north vista and herbaceous border - were both re-dummed and both passed Mr. Thacher's keen eye and were changed as regards the north vista in one or two rather important details. We found that we could widen the north unit some two or three feet and also lengthen it by five or six feet, and we all agreed that the proportion of this widened unit would more nearly reproduce the present hedged proportions than the original studies which, when re-dummed appeared rather narrow and skimpy. Mr. Coles got a guess estimate on the cost of the north vista walls, simply as a matter of record for Harvard. We estimate that the construction as designed will be approximately half brick (the upper two terraces) and half stone (the lower northern unit), <sup>and cost</sup> between \$9,000. and \$10,000. not including an iron gate which if made simply, more or less on the lines of the Forsythia gate, would cost an additional \$500. or \$600.

On the herbaceous border walls, made of stone and stucco on the brick with a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inch bluestone capping, the guess estimate amounts to between \$6000. and \$7500. The reason brick is suggested instead of fireproof tile or concrete block, is that wires for training creepers will have to be used. Both Bryce and Coles thought that the stucco would be likely to chip and the wall not be sufficiently solid if made of anything other than brick or stone.



Mrs. Bliss 10/12/42 -3

Robert will doubtless write you of the situation with regard to Dumbarton Oaks Park. Mr. Harry Thompson, who replaces Mr. Kline the former landscape architect, is a far more understanding individual than any we have had to deal with from the Capital Parks office. He at once saw how dreadful and unattractive the brook had been allowed to come and he promised, and told me he had already started - to do some of the cleaning up and would welcome suggestions from us, and would try his best to make the Park carry out your wishes and to follow the design originally made for the streamside.

You will like to know that in spite of heavy rains there had been no further sand wash from the Naval Observatory Circle as this has been completely s odded and apparently no further silt coming down the brook. Mr. Thompson, the District Engineer, Mr. Thacher, Bryce and I went over the line of the proposed stream sewer which is to come from Wisconsin Avenue and we agreed on a certain line which both Bryce and Mr. Thacher thought would do no ultimate damage to the attractive part of the stream, and that where the line comes down over the steep bank west of the stream that there would be a scar as the result of cutting some rather poor material which was hurled in to the bottom of the old dump and which could easily be replaced. Naturally the actual process of putting in the sewer is not going to add either attraction or tidiness to the brook but it is eventually going to be of real service as it will take both the overflow water from the Naval Observatory and Wisconsin Avenue. The main line of the sewer is, as you know, to follow the present road on the north side of the brook, and in one or two places we asked for slight changes in the line in order to escape certain good trees, and at the Lovers Lane end of the line a complete alteration was made so that the sewer is to discharge at the north end of the Lovers Lane culvert and so entirely off Dumbarton Oaks Park. The suggestion was made by Mr. Thompson and was heartily approved by us and agreed to by the engineer.

A few notes follow which will not appear in any literary form.

The big black oak in the Green Garden shows signs of illness. Two fairly big branches will have to be cut this winter so that it brings the question of the new trees into the immediate foreground. It seemed to me as though the idea of replacing the oaks with more of their own sort was perhaps not entirely wise, and I wonder what you would think of what seems to me rather a good idea, to plant next spring two young and strong evergreen Magnolias, which in time to come would make the Green Garden a place of great beauty in winter as well as in summer? The idea appeals both to Bryce and me and I rather think Mr. Thacher will also agree.

The Quarters looked very attractive. The Magnolias on the south side of the two wings are growing beautifully, and it was their form and lustrous foliage that made me think of them as possibilities for the Green Garden.

Mrs. Bliss 10/12/42 -4

You will be relieved to know that Miss Sweeney seems to have settled herself into a steady and apparently very contented stride. She is doing a really good piece of work and if visitors increase as they undoubtedly will, the only question is whether she will have to buy another pair of legs!

Naturally the place looks not as it did in your day but it is apparently doing its job and was certainly lovely, and although the East lawn was somewhat moth-eaten as the result of ~~too~~ much crabgrass, Bryce promises its usual greenness for the winter and next spring.

The Chrysanthemum borders are likely to be spectacular as both the herbaceous border and the Fountain terrace were full of fine plants, well-trained and well-grown, so that the effect for the Open Day at the end of this week is likely to be such as you would be proud of.

Miss Havey and I have been carefully over the Historic tablet inscription and we send you the wording so that if there be any error your keen eye will find it. We have gone over the various lists from your very first ones and have collated them all. I hope we have made no mistakes.

Yours ever and always,

*Beatrice Farrand*

As Mrs. Farrand has had to go out before this letter was typed she has asked me to sign it for her.

*Sahelle Stover*