

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

September 11, 1922.

My very dear Mildred:

Apparently there is some sinister effect in your neighborhood which makes me completely lose my head. As a rule I do not scatter my belongings all over the country, and thought I had tried to collect my wits and memory sufficiently on my last visit so that you would not have the nuisance of again following me with trailing objects. I am too sorry, as of all places, your house and Edith's are the two in which I should like to be as considerate and sensible as possible. I don't suppose there is any way of proving how distressed I am, except to try to do better next time in the way of not forgetting quite so much. I suppose it is hopeless, however, for me to try to leave your house without some sort of silly forgetfulness.

I am enclosing to you today blue prints of the terrace plans. Several changes have had to be made. The "Kelleylet" and I have toiled over them fairly steadily and there are several things to tell you about and submit to your approval. The one big change that has been necessary is the widening of the second terrace marked "B" on the plan, from 20 to 32 feet. This has been made necessary for two reasons: 25

garden

1st- The elevation of the rose terrace wall with its pilasters makes it practically necessary to have all the steps run back into terrace "B". If they are brought forward they will necessarily project beyond the face of the wall, and the cheek blocks, or steps themselves, will necessarily splay out against the wall in a sort of fan. This will cut off the base of the pilasters and shorten them far too much for beauty, as in my opinion the more the height of the pilasters can be emphasized the better they are going to look. You will therefore see, on the elevation which is sent you, the two studies we have worked out. The one marked "Revised" inside the brackets is the one that appeals to Mr. Kelly and me, as the shortening of the necking of the columns and the lowering of the bases seems to increase their importance and give them a more elegant line.

The elevation of this rose garden wall now seems to me pretty good and I hope you will like it as well. The thing that frankly puzzles me is, as to how to get the extra 12 ft. in width in terrace "B". You and I are both agreed that the steps must be easy and dignified, and for out of doors one cannot skimp in scale; therefore a tread 14 or 15 inches wide and a riser of not more than 6 or 6½ inches is desirable. A skimpy tread of 12 in. which might serve inside a house looks very inadequate and mean in comparison with the outdoor scale.

The steps from terrace "B" down to the rose garden have necessarily got to have a considerable landing. Therefore the widening of "B" seems necessary from all points of view. The question for you to decide is whether the wall between terrace "B" and the rose garden shall be the stationary point and the widening made in terrace "B" by shortening up terrace "A", or whether the whole scheme ought to be pushed out 12 ft. farther, keeping the terrace wall of "A" stationary.

I honestly feel that the wall of terrace "B" (between it and the rose garden) ought to be the stationary point, and the shortening come on terrace "A". It may, however, not be wise to decide this definitely until we have some correct information from Mr. Berrall as to the exact position of the walk leading North to the tennis court wall. I am telegraphing him today asking him to verify the measurements, as he tells me the former survey is not entirely correct.

The main thing to be decided is - first, that the continuing of terrace "B" is necessary, and second, where that is to be obtained, as it will mean the replacing of the batterboards in either the Eastern or Western section of the garden, according to the decision made.

"e" I wonder how you are going to like the elevation of the sea terrace wall. The revised section honestly seems to me rather pleasant, and the moulded brick capitals and astragals are copied as nearly as possible from one of the best old houses in Annapolis, dating from about the time of the architecture of The Oaks.

The section through the terraces seems to me to come out very satisfactorily as the cuts and fills very nearly balance each other on the center line. The elevations for the wall of terrace "A" seem to require a much simpler treatment than the big wall of terrace "C". The simpler this wall surface is kept the better it is going to look, and as to balustrades for the various walls, a sheet of various brick patterns is also enclosed so that you can mark the ones which appeal to you most and we can work further on those lines. The only thing we have omitted is a pattern that I think you said you did not fancy, the fish scale round tile design which is really Greek in origin and which one sees so constantly used in Federal buildings today.

As the blue prints of the various patterns of brick balustrade are a little puzzling in their present form, it might help you to have two or three of the patterns which you like best laid up dry in brick for you by the masons at present at work on the place. In this way you can get an idea of the silhouette and bulk of the various designs.

I am also sending you two or three of the roughest sort of sketches of the actual garden walk designs and I think that modifications of any of these plans are fairly certain to make a comfortable design. Several, in fact most of them, will work well in two sorts of paving, the main walks to be flagged or paved in stone of some sort and the secondary walks to be of turf. In this way you will have the trunk walks dry and practical and the secondary walks will give you the sort of effect we both like in grass.

The garden plans 1, 2, 3, and 4, are all modifications of the same design in three parts. I think both you and I are agreed that the two controlling lines should be the one of the walk leading down from "B" terrace and the balancing walk on the North side of the garden.

On plan No. 1, long rose beds, approximately 5 or 6 ft. wide and box bordered, edge the two main walks. The North and South sections are developed symmetrically in the familiar Italian and Eighteenth Century English design of the rectangle with the circle in the center. This is a practical design from the point of view of planting, as all the beds are get-atable. The central part is an adapted copy of an Eighteenth Century English design which will give a couple of quite large beds in which good sized bush roses may be grown, and so break up what might be possibly too flat a surface. The designs of course can all be punctuated by large box bushes and clipped holly trees.

Design No. 2 is not symmetrical as to the North and South development, although the two sides are approximately equal in the amount of flower bed space they will contain, and will not look very different as seen from above. I am a little doubtful as to whether the two sides had better be symmetrical or not. In No.2 plan the height of the large plants might come in the four beds in the centers on the North and South design, and the four corners of the central design might well be emphasized with large box plants and possibly a big tree box in the center.

No.3 plan is a variation of No.1, omitting the bordering ~~long~~ rose beds on either side of the two main walks and throwing this space into the same Italianate design, which of course has been used since the days of Babylon. The central design is again an adapted copy of an English rose garden and has some merit.

The 4th design is much the simplest as the central panel would remain plain grass, with a narrow rose border around it, with standards and bushes to give it height and interest, large box bushes on the corners, and practically the same design for the North and South section that No. 3 has.

Wont you please take these designs and see what you think of them. If you would like a part of one adapted to another ~~part~~ it can be easily done. The whole thing is fluid and I want your help in arranging it. The lower garden frankly seems to me somewhat to hinge on the development of the rose garden, which I think we both regard as the important part of the design.

As to the working out of "B" terrace, individually I feel that the only line accented on it should be the walk leading from the bottom of the "A" terrace wall across to the top of the steps leading to the rose garden. The rest of the terrace, it seems to me, should be turf; in this way it will allow us considerable latitude as to the access on the line of the walk leading parallel to the tennis court wall.

Do tear up the designs as much as you will - mark them up and return them to me with your comments. I eagerly await your sharp criticism.

With best regards to that very nice husband of yours, whom I am only sorry to bombard with Latin names and problems in our occasional meetings,

Yours ever affectionately,

Beauy Farnand .

P.S. The sample of stone sent by Harris for the paving was too awful for words. I have telegraphed him to that effect.