

Hotel Ritz
15 Place Vendôme
Paris (1er) France

August 16, 1949

Mr. Robert Patterson
Landscape Architect
Bar Harbor, Maine

Dear Mr. Patterson:

Many thanks for your letter of July 28, which I only received on August 5 at sea; having been travelling about with no mail following me your letter was delivered on board the night of the 4th, hence this delay in answering you.

Between my return from ~~Reef~~ Point and departure from Washington on the 29, I worked relentlessly in straightening out the various projects I have at heart for the Dumbarton Oaks gardens which I shall now take up seriatim:

1. North vista platform. Kearney had arranged this so that it was more easy to visualise. Frankly I am not too happy about it, the proportions seem to me a little awkward, as a solution to that particular problem of grading, and the opening in the north wall itself does still seem narrow! However, it is not too late to change that and the best that can be done is to get just the right finials and arrange a very clever planting. It seems to me that the finials for the north end, especially for the centre piers, are about right and that the type of finial projected for the inner piers at the iron gate is good. Miss Havey ought to be able to draw up a really good design for these and I hope when the gardens open next spring that they will already be looking weathered and mellow! The local iron workers who made the finials between the fountains and arbor terraces years ago did quite well and they know the sort of thing we like, perhaps they will be the best ones to do this work. Who is going to make the chains, and have you in mind chains similar to those or heavier than those of the Lovers' Lane pool? The chains of the bowling

green are perfect but I suppose would be ruinously expensive under present conditions. Had you thought of making the north vista platform of exposed aggregate cement with flags for borders or square cobbles, or flat cement introduced as a design, or what? I suppose the benches would be ~~be~~trained and scooped teak wood on grey stone support, or what?

2. Cool house transformation. Mrs. Ferrand writes that she feels the cool house is too small, even for a start of what the Dumbarton Oaks ~~Garden~~ Centre ought to become. However, as I see no other suitable place, and as building is out of the question for a few years, and as for every reason - Harvard psychology, founders' age, economic conditions, etc. - I think it would be better to start, get the centre running and able to prove its usefulness, ~~so that~~ later a more spacious and suitable centre can be constructed. Steinbraker's estimates and specifications seem to me a good start but \$12,500 is no mean sum and does not include book shelves, desks, chairs, fixtures, reading lamps, ventilation, etc., etc.; I don't quite know where the money would come from to do it all. However, if Mr. Tacher approves the plan and the heating arrangements can be made satisfactory, we should favour going ahead with this reconversion and getting the work organised and under way for next season. Will you please ask Steinbraker to send you a copy of my blue print so that when you go to Washington you could talk over details with him. He advises a lead-coated copper roof, which he says can be supported by the existing armature thereby reducing the expense considerably and creating an impression of a lead roof identical to the lead roof over the potting shed. He was told, as was Miss ~~Carter~~, to await Mr. Tacher's return, ~~or that of both~~, before deciding on the exact spot for the gasoline pump. I still suggest that two toilets be installed in the east end of the garage part of the building and that possibly the open space under the extension of Mr. Thacher's new room could be well adapted to the rest room for garden visitors. Everything pertaining to the use of the surroundings of Mr. Thacher's house should, I think, have his approval.

3. Talks with Kearney resulted in the following: Why not ~~separate~~ the old frameyard, too large for present needs and distant? Mount the frames on a little

brick base along the south front of the green house, convert the "Puppies" into cold frames, using one end *for* of a propagating house, adjusting the heat from the green houses, convert the old frameyard into a nursery and leave for possible future use a little frame house there with its benches and stove.

4. Please ask Miss Havey to show you the sketch of the ~~back~~ stuccoed panels in the Ducerceau arbor with the lead lotus and bullrushes removed. I much prefer it so; I think Mr. Thacher will also, and perhaps were it decided to delete the panel treatment, Kearney's men could do the work. What do you think?
5. Miss Havey has been told to go ahead and complete the terraced seat and Kearney understands what to do regarding the ground, the bamboo, the pebbling, etc., but I have said the hemlocks must not be moved without your approval as I don't know to what place you would transplant them, and some replacement would be required in any case. Miss Havey is also going to finish the finalities tablet and we are awaiting more estimates than received so far to decide upon the material to be used on the Mélisande steps. This unit can be made perfectly charming, but the casting would make a cement rendering too expensive (I had hoped that the unit could be treated like the columns of the Lovers' Lane pool). Perhaps exposed aggregate concrete, or Dorica, can be used: I hope the latter. Miss Havey has drawn up what I think is a particularly attractive treatment for the arbor terrace itself. This, of course, must await Mr. Thacher's approval. In any event I shall have a flat sun dial put in the centre of the terrace, but since it seems necessary to the Director to ~~spread~~ *suppress* flower borders in that little terrace and a sword is a difficulty and expense, I believe some such treatment as that proposed might work out perfectly and with great charm.
6. The pruning and cutting of a vista through the trees north of the North Vista platform, as well as through that in Dumbarton Oaks park, so that we could see straight through from the north bay of the house across the valley to Clifton Hill, ought to be done while the trees are still in leaf, I suppose. Kearney knows the men who work for the City Park, and Planning Commission, and perhaps could persuade them to prune in co-operation with our line *of vision*.
7. Would you please lay out a programme for the garden work and its maintenance, including an approximate budget for new plants, labour saving devices and care of trees (this latter will be costly in the autumn of 1949 because of

previous neglect, but it must be done thoroughly to get the garden back into proper shape, after which the maintenance of the trees can be reduced). Also I would like to know what sum you think should be allotted to a Research Fellow in landscape gardening. Would you kindly talk over this matter with Mrs. Ferrand, and have you or has she a promising Fellow in mind?

You realise, I am sure, that all matters pertaining to the Garden Centre, its annual cost, its maintenance and its programme of activities must be approved by the Director.

We are greatly hoping that a way may be found for us to see Mr. Thatcher before he sails, as he now hopes, on September 7. He has had a difficult summer because of illness and various personal problems and is now in Austria and his time until sailing very much occupied. Nevertheless, we hope for one day with him to go over these various problems and show him our blue prints so that when he talks with you in the autumn he will be familiar with it all. It would be a disadvantage, as well as a disappointment, to have nothing decided before our return the last week in November.

I hope this haltingly dictated and far too long letter will be intelligible and am sorry that we cannot have long wireless talks throughout the rest of the summer.

With many kind messages, in which my husband joins, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,