

BEATRIX FARRAND
LANDSCAPE GARDENER
REEF POINT
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

June 17, 1941

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss
Casa Dorinda
Hot Springs Road
Santa Barbara, California

Dearest Two:

Here comes another Bulletin. This time about various odds and ends of things.

yes
1. As you will see from the photograph the new lettering on Quod Severis is distinctly better than the old and more visible, therefore it would seem to me entirely wise to tell good Colesy to take out this stone of the entablature, patch it for the \$20. mentioned and enlarge the letters as shown in the photograph.

Leave shields
sharp
masonry?
?
2. The catty-cornered shields make me a little uneasy at the top of this tablet and I wonder whether you would consider having them stand vertically and perhaps a little closer together than they were originally placed? The modelling is hard to see in the little black lump on one of the photographs but the relief is much higher than it was and Mr. Coles and I both think it will now "carry". You will see also on another photograph the difference between the re-cut letters and the letters in the inscription as it exists. The re-cut letters are the "U"-shaped ones which I believe you did not altogether like, but it seemed to us as though the invisibility of the present lettering even with paint at the bottom of the letters is a very distinct disadvantage. Will you see what you think about it?

much better
3. The ornament for the top of the service gate has been practically settled by Colesy and me. The photograph sent does not quite show how good it is as the fillet below the feathered top has been enlarged, the top itself spread out so that it has more grace and ease.

✓
4. The coloring on the lilac circle perspective was tentatively decided upon and Colesy is to go ahead on this and color the whole unit so that when I next go back in the autumn to see it it should be possible to touch up such color queernesses as may show up when the whole unit is complete. He was told to add considerably more color to the magnolia seeds and to brighten the greens which look rather dull and heavy. The grays of the trellis seem to promise well and his fountain made of mother-of-pearl, and its accompanying pool,

Mrs. Bliss page 2 6/17/41

were really works of art, and quite charming. They would have pleased you greatly.

✓ 5. It seems quite clear that the north vista box is, while not distinctly on the downgrade, still, not improving. One rather large piece on the west side is definitely dead. Some of the rest of the pieces look rather red and shabby. This is merely to say what you and I already know that within a reasonable length of time we must get together on the walls for the north vista as the replacement of the box will be too costly for Harvard to consider and as you and I both agree the masonry will by no means be less good than the box.

6. You will like to know that the Museum Court is being fairly frequently used by readers as well as visitors and when you see it you will not I think be happy about the settee and chairs. They somehow look rather dumpy and not to fit the lines of the general composition. This is only a remark in passing and needs no reply on your part, but some of these days when we are together at Dumbarton I think you will see that the chairs and settee and tables will fit beautifully into the south side of the tennis court, and possibly some much simpler chairs can be made later on for the Court itself.

Designs for simple chairs
Castle
7. There seemed to be some confusion in Bryce's mind as to the position of the path on the Clifton hillside. He seemed to think that both you and he had discussed a path which was to go straight up the hill to your new house, and that the position for this had been practically settled by you and him. On the other hand I thought you and I had spoken of a path skirting the higher slope of the hill which would be in a sense the "return" path from the brook and would give visitors the opportunity of going up the brook-side, through the woods, back to the old road, and then along an easily graded path across the face of the hillside and descend to the stone bridge. Have I dreamed this or have you and I discussed it? Mr. Root seemed quite pleased with the idea of this circular path as he seemed to feel it would mean less confusion if visitors could follow a surrounding trail without doubling back on their tracks. Do please tell me if I am even a little madder than usual?

Bryce mistaken
Tray right
8. A draft of the report for Harvard is being worked over and while it has been tentatively approved by Mr. Thacher, Mr. Root and Bryce, naturally it will not go forth until your eagle eye has found its blanks.

Bliss
The Sweeney situation is a complicated one. There is no doubt whatever that she is doing a really first-rate job as I have told you before. The work at the Catalogue House is well and correctly done and it seems a step in educating children and the public toward recognizing birds and flowers attractively presented which has not to my knowledge been anything like as well done previously. Perhaps I have stepped entirely out of my province in telling her that I knew she was sure of her pay until the end of June. She probably can't finish the Catalogue House work until the end of July.

Now comes the question. As you know Harvard is desperately eager to have the school children and youngsters (Scouts, etc.) taught and escorted around Dumbarton Oaks. Miss Sweeney is the obvious person to do this job and also to be guide. Mr. Thacher told me that he recognizes that a guide would be necessary at least at certain seasons of the year, and in fact that he had had to employ a tyro to take people around the grounds and so spare of his time. There is no question that Harvard wants somebody like Miss Sweeney and realizes that work like hers may be potent in the tax situation.

Some one also has got to look after the valuable collection of prints and the installation which Miss Sweeney has really done extraordinarily well, and in order to show you what her programs are I am sending you her dummies for different months which seem to me extremely good, and the appearance of the whole show was attractive to even the most jaded nature lover.

I am also sending you two or three of her set-ups for the different months showing that the whole scheme is really working better than even your foresight could imagine. The cards are sent you simply to show you the type of information that will be available with the Catalogue House files and will make each card easily accessible and correctly named and described. Will you kindly return these cards and lists when you are finished with them.

Another job on which Miss Sweeney will be needed, and this time by me, is the preparation of a planting record book such as we have started for the different Universities and which are the permanent record of the different planting schemes. For instance at Dumbarton Oaks the plantings grouped along R Street are to be described and why the fine-leaved evergreens have been chosen (as a contrast to the coarser magnolias nearby, and in order to give scale) also the planting around the house, the general groups in the gardens, the planting on the north side of the house, and the different groups of creepers and their approximate positions. This book is going to be of use to Harvard for the future. While it will mean no imposed and unchangeable planting scheme it will at least show Harvard what had been thought out and what had been found to work by the original owners.

Mrs. Bliss page 4 6/17/41

Worcester
been
no!
no
beginning of
225 for Budget
in Dumbarton

The preparation of such a book as this naturally will take a good deal of time and probably more time and strength than I could supply. Miss Sweeney could do this and as it is going to be of great use to me in my work I think I can save enough out of my salary to pay her two months salary at her present rate of going.

I have further spoken to Bryce about the situation and he hopes to be able to save two and perhaps three months out of his budget as he also recognizes the importance of her work. The difficulty is that even if Bryce and I can provide five months salary the other seven months cannot be provided by Harvard on their close sailing budget. Do you suppose the local schools could contribute anything, or can you think of any one to whom I could go to help on it? If we can scare up \$875. between Bryce and me there is still the remaining \$1225. to be covered. My own feeling is that this year is a sort of trial marriage and that if Harvard can escape further District taxation that they will be able to give more to the grounds in the future than this year.

I have discussed the matter with Miss Sweeney, and all of us, Mr. Thacher, Bryce, Miss Sweeney and I, agree that this coming twelve month must be considered in the line of a trial trip. If Miss Sweeney can meet the teachers and pupils and lecture to them as they visit the grounds, and if she can be the visitors' guide who will make garden tours at a stated hour each day, it would to my mind show that the gardens were an essential part of the whole Dumbarton educational scheme and therefore would make a strong plea for exemption from taxation.

Of course the whole idea may not work, but Miss Sweeney is willing to make a try of it. Bryce hopes to make the saving, and I am willing to contribute, Mr. Thacher is enthusiastic to have some one of Miss Sweeney's sort who can do this outdoor guide service, and so I come to you to sit at your feet and ask your advice.

You may think that this is a thinly disguised plea for a subscription on your part. It is rather a request for counsel on what seems to me an essential part of Dumbarton Oaks work which should be made if one can possibly devise means. The mechanism of the scheme would mean that Miss Sweeney would be housed in the basement of the Quarters close to Bryce's room with the Catalogue House files and data in her hands, and that the ^{arrangement} Orangery would from time to time have temporary blackboard ^{arrangement} put in it on which more Catalogue House pictures could be displayed, and where teachers and students would be met by the guide, introduced to Dumbarton Oaks and start their tour, which would take them on a fairly well regulated walk through the gardens, stop at some length at the Catalogue House and bring them back to the starting point.

Mrs. Bliss page 5 6/17/41

It seems as though it had a very real usefulness and one which is thoroughly worth while attempting to put into effect. Do let me hear from you regarding the whole scheme.

It is nice to think of Max away on the Ristigouche doing what he most cares for and actually a free man. Does the news of Robert continue favorable and how do the days go with my dear Two.

Your ever devoted,

Tr, X

