

BEATRIX FARRAND
~~1650 ORLANDO ROAD~~ Reef Point
~~SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA~~ Bar Harbor, Maine.

October 27, 1942.

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

My ever so dear and beloved friend:

You know how closely I follow you as you dismember Casa Dorinda so that it may be prepared for the impersonal use of the Navy. How splendid of you to give it to the country, as it will be literally a haven for those who use it. It has been a real distress to me to have bothered you with my silly portrait and my dear great-great-granny's spice box, and I have several times thought of writing you to throw it overboard and take it back to the Valley Club where they will look after it, and at least take it out of your way, but then it seemed as though it was really more considerate to leave things alone and not to ask you to do "just one more thing". Of course I am straining at the leash but realize that hardly more than five weeks separate us even though thousands of miles now keep us apart, and I look forward to the early days of December with far more eagerness than even you can imagine. It has been too long to be apart even though we are always together.

As this will be a shop letter it seems sensible to dig straight into the meat of the matter.

1. Thank you for approving the suggestion of planting Magnolias in the green garden. This will be further discussed with Mr. Thacher and Bryce so that trees may be planted next spring.

2. Of course I hope to see Mr. Harry Thompson at the brookside on my next visit as he seemed a real human being and to appreciate the possibilities as well as the limitations of the area in scale as well as its attractiveness.

3. The Historic tablet material did not come in the envelope with your letter, but I think I can reconstruct what you mean from familiarity with the design. The two side panels are designed quite as much with the idea of their being "color" and therefore a foil to the central panel, and therefore run fairly continuously, and quite frankly they both of them seem to me successful. They are legible, the spacings are agreeable, and the punctuation and accent seem to me good. Let's hope you will agree also.

As to the central panel, the whole design is made in the form it was submitted to you and as it makes a very good composition in lineage and outline will you let us leave the inscription as it stands with the single exception of adding in the word "were" in the line "were conveyed to"? The finish of the inscription with "Harvard" and the date at the bottom made a good pointed end to the composition and it brought the three lines which should be emphasized into good position with regard to the whole.

I am writing Miss Havey today asking her to add the word "were" to "conveyed to" unless she hears from Mr. Coles that he has already started cutting the stone. If we add the word "its" to the line "and gardens" it may mean redesigning the whole tablet. I will let you know about this as soon as I can get an answer from Miss Havey. This change will undoubtedly mean extra expense in preparation.

You may like to know that Mr. Thacher, the Haveylet and I thought the central tablet looked well when its final dummy and lettering design was in place west of the main east entrance gate. Without any question the big historic inscription is going to look white for a considerable length of time as it must be cut in limestone for the simple reason that limestone is available and sandstone is not, and for the additional reason that Coles says that the Aquia sandstone would be impossible to cut with so complicated an inscription.

4. The urns south of the front door will be raised I hope by the time of my next visit to Dumbarton Oaks.

5. If possible I will try to get the parking space border done during the course of the present winter. It has occurred to me that possibly we might use the present little tiny "milestones" as the ends to the border curbing and also possible that the wall behind the curbing may not be needed. I am now eager to get the box hedge away as quickly as possible as it seems to me more and more to encumber the south view, but it would be a mistake to take the hedge away before the parking space edge is in place.

Unless I have misunderstood your letter we ~~may~~ *are permitted to* go ahead and finish up the terrier seat in wood and with the brace to the hood; the reducing of the monogram on the Forsythia gate; the wall at Melissande; the change in the quatrefoil gate, and the deepening of the Dumbarton Oaks inscription over the Museum door. These various pieces of work will be done according to the estimate figures submitted in my letter of October 12th.

The Haveylet and I are going into the question of the cadransolaire and I hope to give you a figure on this before I go to Washington and if you think this tentative figure at all possible I will bring you some sketches for our happy meeting in early December.

You have purposely not been bothered with certain "housekeeping" details, such as the screening of the work yard from the north side of the Quarters; certain planting changes around Mr. Thacher's house; the details of the placing of the plants in the rooms of Dumbarton Oaks; and the start of the cement and gravel work for the centers of the paths leading down toward the box ellipse.

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Miss Sweeney is fitting into the picture and as she acquires more confidence she will I think depend less on my boosting and ask for such drinking cups or help in transporting her material to and from the Catalogue House, but her sturdy feet now seem to be striking root!

Max is distinctly better and now expects to leave here on the 5th and to stop a few days in Boston for one or two inspections by the medicos, before he leaves on the 28th to join me in Chicago for our westward trek. I expect to stay on here until the 15th and then shall be counting the days until you and I are together again. An itinerary will follow before long as I know you and I like to know each where the other one is.

You and I are fairly acute in knowing how the other one is and your letter seems to me to show the strain and fatigue under which you are struggling. Can you give yourself a chance, or must it go on until the end of the coming month? After I have seen Robert in Washington he will tell me whether or not the house has been found and whether you are coming East before or after Christmas. I do wish you were going to stay on in Santa Barbara for far more reasons than any one sheet of paper can carry.

Yours my ever so dear,
Your faithful

Trix

The Coolidge story of the boy's accident & the father's departure, is heart-tearing - One is thankful in these days for the beauty of sunlight & colour in this grim world - Bless you my dearest dear -