

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Woodberry Poetry Reading Room in Lamont Library at Harvard
Date: Fri, 30 Jun 2006 15:02:38 -0400
From: Toshiko Mori <Toshiko@tmarch.com> <mailto:Toshiko@tmarch.com>
To: ncline@fas.harvard.edu
CC: sverba@harvard.edu, jeremy_knowles@harvard.edu, sbuffering@harvard.edu,
alan_altshuler@harvard.edu

Dear Nancy Cline,

I urge you to reconsider dismantling of Woodberry Poetry Reading Room designed by Alvar Aalto in 1949. He is one of the master architects of the twentieth century and there are only four projects of his in the United States. Woodberry Poetry Reading Room is an architectural gem which is not only important for architectural legacy for Harvard, but also it is an internationally significant project of the mid twentieth century. It is meant to immerse the students in the reading, studying and listening of poetry and the design is a poetic interpretation of the program by the architect.

It is a rare room completely designed and furnished by an architect, an excellent example of a "total design".

That is why it is a very difficult room to renovate or intervene with a new furniture or a new design. The technology has advanced today so that many of contemporary necessities can be easily concealed without altering the appearance or the use of the room.

Our students learn from their environment and architecture of the University as much as from the books they read. It is the cultural aspect of this room as well as the architecture which is important to preserve. I would like to request that the room to be restored and preserved in its entirety and its future use to be considered with sensitivity of understanding the meaning of this room and its poetics. I am forwarding you a letter from John Stubbs, Vice President of World Monument Fund who is an expert on preservation of significant architecture and interiors worldwide.

Sincerely yours,

Toshiko Mori
Chair, Department of Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
tmori@gsd.harvard.edu