

July 13, 2006

Sidney Verba, Director of the Harvard University Library
Ms. Nancy Cline, Harvard College Library
The Harvard University Libraries
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Mr. Verba & Ms. Cline:

When Google chose the Harvard University Libraries for 'info-teching', it was another stamp of your rank in academia. No accident that Harvard, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and Stanford University were selected to share their library wealth. Nancy M. Cline's knowledge in library science are not in question, on the contrary, her librarian stature is outstanding; however the architectural plans for the study room design by Alvar Aalto might well call for an additional type of audition.

If the late Buckminster Fuller were here (his age 111 on July 12th), he would be writing this letter. Bucky Fuller, the Charles Eliot Norton Poetry Chair (1961-2) had a penchant for history and for his beloved Harvard. Many recall how Bucky enjoyed the Harvard Procession March, walking with friends - President Derek Bok and Robert D. Storey.

Were this a situation about a room designed by Leonardo da Vinci, Louis Tiffany, or Frank Lloyd Wright, I suspect the matter might be moot. To historians concerned with chronicle-integrity, the Alvar Aalto architectural legacy is no less important.

A suggestion has been made to have Toshiko Mori, chair of the architecture department, Graduate School of Design be included as part of the process, and we echo that direction. The recent New York Times article is alarming, and with the Harvard presidential brouhaha, now passed, might one remark that the current library plans might be worse, for when implemented it will be forever. As Schwartz urged, plan the poetry room "for restoration and not a renovation", once completed, the scar cannot be reversed.

Frank Lloyd Wright said, "Except to an intellectual or an ignoramus, imitation is for fools; learn instead the principles that makes them so, and own your own effect." Please reconsider the planning for the poetry room design, and if it is a question of money, I suspect that many would help undertake the funding to make this one right.

Future generations will thank the Harvard libraries for their insight as saviors, and not destroyers.

Thank you for the attention and consideration.

Respectfully and faithfully yours,

Thomas T. K. Zung
Architectural partner of Buckminster Fuller

Alvar Aalto Harvard