Loyola Garanzini’s Garden

Water | Orchard | Meditation Garden

Architect and urban planner
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Students designing and presenting the proposal during the charrette on February 21st, 2015 at Loyola University
Charrette Loyola with the students

The design results
EVD Pre-design sketches
EVD Pre-design sketches
Plaza floral Motif

Proposed plaza and spiral core floor design
Designed By Emilia Vidal-Hallett, high school senior

George Maher’s floral detail for the Burrowers Mansion
Loyola Water | Orchard | Meditation Garden
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1. Plaza
2. Rain garden
3. Orchard
4. Golden spiral meditation area
5. Grape vine trellises
6. Lake outlook
7. Barbecue tent
8. Permeable pavers
9. 9.Bird hotel
10. Mural
11. Green wall metal trellises

Landscaping Legend
- Pine tree
- Cherry tree
- Apple tree
- Plum tree
- Pear tree
- Rain garden
- Blue berries
- Raspberries
- Grape vines

Graphic scale

0  20  40
10  30

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Descending to the garden from the back yard porch, visitors of the historic Burrowers Loyola Mansion, designed by architect George Maher will arrive to a gathering plaza. The design of the plaza takes visitors to a center point where they will experience three strong forces to explore the proposed natural water, orchard and meditation garden.

1. The plaza
The Plaza was designed by the team as a gathering place for 20 to 30 people. One important consideration was to respect and complement the historic house design. Flower motifs have been widely used in Catholic buildings under what is called “sacred geometry” which is usually inspired by nature. As part of his design philosophy, the architect George Maher developed what he called Motif-Rhythm theory in an attempt to produce design unity throughout the building and its interior. This involved using a decorative element, often a local flower, a geometric shape, or a combination of the two, which would be repeated throughout the design. Maher wrote that “there must be evolved certain leading forms that will influence the detail of the design; these forms crystallize during the progress of the planning and become the motifs that bind the design together.” The proportions and design of our proposed plaza were inspired on sacred geometric patterns like the Campidoglio plaza in Rome and the our proposed plaza floor design follows Maher’s flower motifs for the mansion. The garden’s hard surfaces will also be permeable pavers to absorb the site stormwater.

2. The rain garden
From the center of the plaza if visitors walk to the right they will find the shade rain garden and home of the designated bird “hotel”, a miniature of the Maher’s house which will be designed and built for birds. For this rain garden students were giving a guide of perennial long rooted plants for sun and shade with flowers of a variety of colors and blooming seasons. The students made great choices as it can me seen in their charrette plan details. The rain garden collects the water of the backyard downspouts which will redirected under the proposed permeable pavement and in to the garden. This garden will be 6 feet away from adjacent buildings to avoid foundation water infiltrations. The garden will be excavated one foot deep and the removed dirt will serve as protecting berms to keep the water contained during heavy storms. The soil is very sandy therefore we are assuming quick water absorption. Students looked into creating a colorful rain garden with a variety of plant heights giving a well designed surrounding landscaping to the “bird hotel” and other potential bird houses. Adjacent to the rain garden and along the next door brick wall we proposed vertical green trellises with an interesting pattern to look at with snow during the winter and with green perennial vines during the summer.
All new surfaces in the garden will be permeable pavers to reduce heat island effect.
Rain garden excavation example
Rain garden flowers

- Black-eyed Susan
- Bee balm
- Columbine
- Downy loosestrife
- Butterfly weed
- Compass plant
- Marsh marigold
- Cardinal flower
3. The Orchard
If visitors are drawn to the left of the garden, they will find a magnificent orchard and seating areas creating smaller “outdoor rooms.” From these rooms, visitors can enjoy their barbecue food or simply eat apples, pears, plums and cherries from the proposed trees and enjoy the proposed mural to be designed by students. This mural proposed along the Sullivan building 5-foot concrete wall along the north side of the site, could also follow the floral theme of George Maher or other nature themes and it could be built with an artist guidance. A circular (10’ diameter) barbecue tent has been allocated at the foot of the back porch and adjacent to the orchard. The orchard will also have several circular concrete benches and will provide desired shade during the summer.

4. Meditation golden spiral
Going back to the plaza or the entry of the garden, the visitor could also decide to walk ahead to see the central floral pattern of the plaza and/or continue through the spiral permeable pavement path. This path has been designed with the Fibonacci’s spiral proportions, which he found in nature in animal shells. As the visitors walks down the path they will find a variety of fruit shrubs such as blue berries, raspberries, june berries and more. These shrubs are low plantings that will not obstruct lake views from the mansion and will provide food for birds which will happily live in this environment and please the ears of its visitors with their singing. Through a gently-sloped permeable pavers ramp the visitor will find at the end of the spiral a cozy tuck-in area a couple of feet below the main garden area. This area (15’ in diameter) will provide again the enjoyment of the floral theme on the floor and a circular concrete bench embedded in the landscaping of fruit shrubs and rain garden ground covers. At this point the visitor can relax back, look at the sky and enjoy the birds singing, eating or just passing by. Feeling inner peace of the spirit, as we can imagine the inner core of an animal shell in nature, is the core of the garden.

5 and 6. Trellises of grape vines and outlooks to the lake
When the intention of the visitors is simply to enjoy the lake, the garden’s main path surrounding the plaza takes them to a board walk over the rain garden and into a very light metal structure covered with grape vines and into the lake outlook areas at the north east and south east corners of the site. These outlooks will also have circular benches and delicious fruit trees. The trellises are intentionally very light to frame the views of the lake as pictures on the endless open sky and lake Michigan ahead.
Fruit trees

Cherries, apple, pear and plum trees
Loyola students would like to design a mural for the 5 foot high Sullivan concrete wall along the proposed orchard.
Fruit shrubs

berry shrubs and grape vines
Golden spiral inspiration

Fibonacci's golden spiral
Green walls and vine trellises
After Rendering by Gabriel Vidal-Hallett
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