Designing Garanzini's Garden
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Father Garanzini steps to the window to greet the dawn over Lake Michigan and his eye catches a glint of water much closer, the twitch of a bird’s wing, the bob of a bloom listing with dew, and enveloping each notation is one unifying truss: a cross, delicate yet clearly visible, at eye-level providing a simple walk but from above, a charter. This was the vision of Group 5.

Our group began by reviewing different methods to make Garanzini's Garden as sustainable as possible while meeting the criteria that it be a formal space. Each individual drew their own vision and the resulting conceptual design is a fusion of the combined sketches.

The formal layout would feature native plants, providing a serene setting due to the uniformity and approachable flora. For example, the evergreen hedge framing the garden could be a compact Inkberry rather than the conventional Boxwood, and the plants on the interior could be collected native Hydrangea and Butterflybush Honeysuckle. The north and south sides of the garden would be framed with an Allee of upright deciduous trees to screen the neighboring high rises and provide additional intimacy in the garden. Consider trees underplanted with a mixture of shade tolerant shrubs and herbaceous plants to further soften the neighboring building while providing multi-season interest and habitat for native flora and fauna.

The garden is segmented into smaller parcels by the main path that ties into Loyola’s Catholic mission by framing the space with a cross. The main path is a permeable brick paver, and the end points of the cross and the circle in the center are all permeable crushed granite. The change in material serves to distinguish the different spaces. In the center of the cross is a water feature; the sound of moving water will attract birds as will its surrounding plantings.

The nooks at the north and south end of the cross provide spaces for intimate reflection, while the Lookout Point at the eastern end is framed by seat walls to allow slightly larger groups to enjoy vistas of Lake Michigan.

The Patio in the northwest corner of the garden is large enough to accommodate gatherings of 20-30 people for dining with adequate space for service and mingling. The patio would be constructed of a permeable paver, and the lawn immediately to the east of the patio would be a standard turf to accommodate additional guests.

The Formal Garden in the southwest corner is centered on Father Garanzini’s office, providing the focal point out of his window noted earlier, while at the same time being low enough not to obstruct the view of the lake. The two lawn panels to the east of the Formal Garden will be seeded with no-mow turf to reduce maintenance, while also allowing for occasional foot traffic.

The herb and vegetable garden in the northeast quadrant of the garden takes advantage of the best lighting conditions. The vision of Group 5 is the hope that all visitors will receive a moment’s peace in a small corner of splendor. “The LOrd will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.” (Isaiah 58: 11)