**Team Four’s Avian Sanctuary**

March 1, 2015

Our team’s design is based on the student’s desire to anchor the concept around a habitat which supports birds and other complimentary biotic elements, allowing the region’s resident and migrating birds to thrive.

Broadly-and-conceptually-considered, our student group further refined this design concept to reflect the avian elements of freedom, letting go, inspiration and connection, with a desire for this space to bring visitors closer to these sentiments.

With a large, blank canvas, the group sought to break down the predicted use of the site based on several overlays of site conditions and based on Father Garanzini’s stated goals for a future garden, incorporating his considerations of how it might someday be used and developed.

There are three zones defined by this avian sanctuary: an active area flowing into a more meditative zone, flowing into a very natural and habitat-friendly bird sanctuary by Lake Michigan.

Our active zone is the 1/3 of the site closest to the historical building structure, on the site’s western area where a permeable brick-paver patio and grill are placed for cookouts and summer / fall gatherings. A separate spill-over area, made of crushed limestone screens, or Adobe Pathway Mix, is compacted for a sturdy gathering space which will also house ornamental containers to brighten and enrich the space. Many vegetables for grilling and cooking / arranging summer salads can be grown in these containers, mixed with decorative annuals. This patio space is framed from unappealing sightlines from the south by a vertical green wall and by an arbor running along a north-south axis. Benches would be placed under this arbor for seating and relaxation under the arbor’s grape and hops-grown vines, overhead.

The mid-section of this Avian Sanctuary is the most dramatic and alluring for visitors, who will be drawn out from the patio by the modern and spare wooden boardwalk (made of the same smooth and elegant wood as the Boardwalk at the Lurie Garden in downtown Millennium Park) which travels over a natural wetland feature, housing native lilies, fish and amphibians.

Finally, our Avian Sanctuary leads visitors along a highly-relaxed and simple layout pathway loop where views of Lake Michigan draw visitor’s attention, and highly-naturalized plantings of dune and woodland arrangements offset views and where pockets of elevated trees-and-shrubs create special privacy. Decorative birdhouses are scattered throughout a Midwestern native prairie planting of low-growing wildflowers and grasses in this zone’s central section.

We feel confident our Avian Sanctuary will not only delight and draw-in visitors, but will support a fascinating list of biotic life, supported and buoyed by a garden designed and built for our region’s beautiful and vulnerable wildlife.