

RYALS GARDEN COMMITTEE REPORT: 1 DECEMBER, 2020
UPDATE ON THE CONCEPTUAL REDESIGN OF THE GARDEN CLOSE

In 2016 the vestry charged the Campus Utilization Task Force to evaluate church facilities and their use. Among their findings they determined that the Garden Close (courtyard) was not living up to its envisioned potential. The Task Force found that the space was uncomfortably sunny and hot in the warmer months, and that it was not a welcoming space for individuals and small groups to gather for conversation, contemplation or prayer. The Task Force recommended that some or all of the brick hardscape be replaced with natural material, that more shade be provided, that smaller and more welcoming areas be provided for seating, and that an annual budget be provided for upkeep.

In 2018 the vestry appointed the Ryals Garden Committee to redesign the Garden Close. Starting with the recommendations of the Campus Utilization Task Force, the Ryals Garden Committee met with representatives of ten church ministries, committees and staff, and compiled a set of priorities (see below) for redesign of the Garden Close. These priorities became the “scope of work” for a Request for Proposals which was sent last spring to selected design firms. In August the vestry approved entering into a contract with the Sears Design Group for preparation of a master plan for redesign of the Garden Close. That conceptual plan was approved by the vestry at its meeting on 23 November. A copy of the plan follows the list of priorities.

PRIORITIES

Scope of Services, Constraints & Requirements:

Top 5 priorities for Garden Close redesign

- Reduce amount of hardscape and soften hard surfaces
- Re-imagine labyrinth component within Garden Close
- Provide comfortable furniture to include both flexible and permanent seating and tables throughout the space
- Incorporate shade to create a more comfortable and inviting space
- Create multiple spaces for small (2 - 15) gatherings, while maintaining standing space for large (20 - 100) gatherings

Additional priorities:

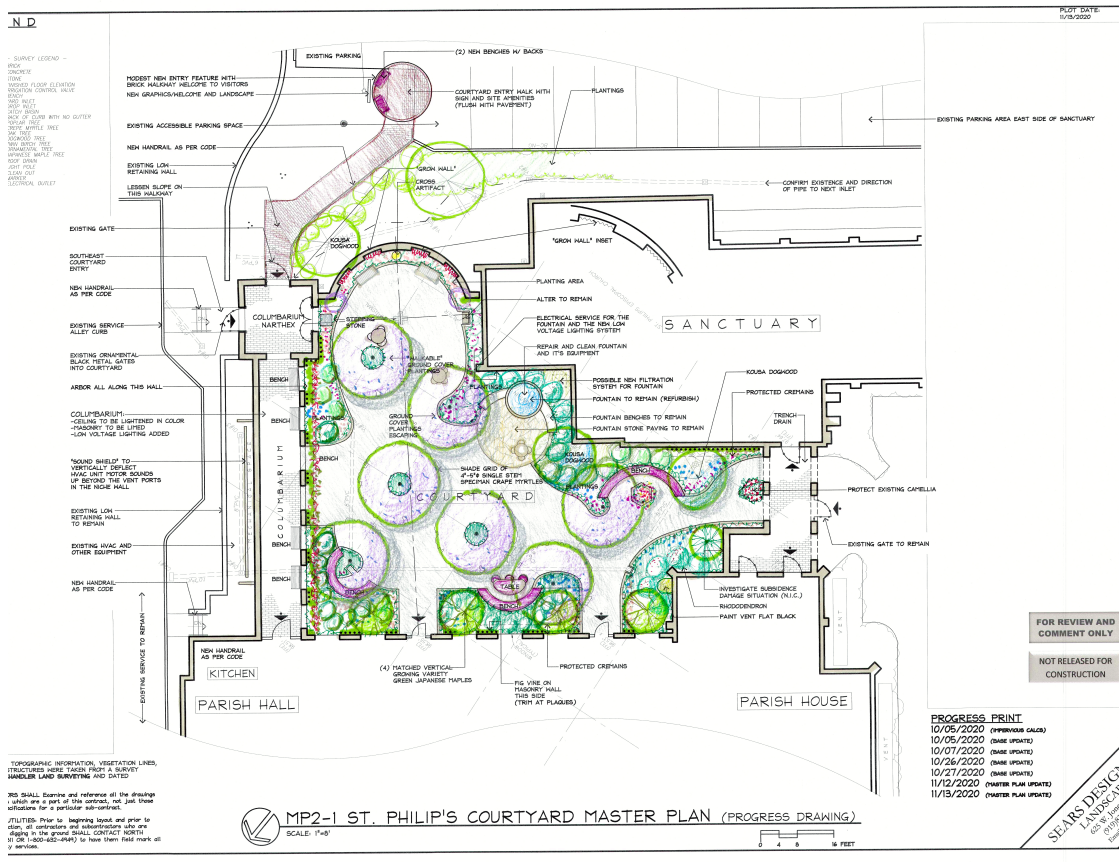
- Provide a design which incorporates 4 - season color, maintains desirable feature plants and uses eco-friendly plants where feasible
- Maintain/enhance fountain and seating

- Enhance access, movement to & from, and view between parish hall and Garden Close
- Ensure there is space for play and gathering for children and youth
- Improve the connectivity between columbarium & Garden Close through lighting, seating and color
- Incorporate lighting into design for evening accent and events
- Add audio for services and/or event use
- Enhance/create a welcoming entry from east parking lot

Constraints and requirements:

- Cremins (in ground) and wall plaques remain in place
- Camellia bush to remain
- large planter can be moved but must remain in Garden Close
- Remove font in labyrinth
- Altar in labyrinth remains
- Fountain remains
- Provide irrigation
- Provide spigot (s)

THE MASTER PLAN FOR REDESIGN OF THE GARDEN CLOSE



Major elements

- A. Hardscape and hard surfaces: Brick pavers will be replaced with a lighter shade of paver (see photo example). Creeping fig vines will be planted at the base of most brick walls. These will eventually partially or fully cover much of the brick surfaces. The “niche” wall in the columbarium will be limed (lightened) and illuminated (LED) from above in order to relieve the outside appearance of a dark, empty space (see current picture). The south wall will be faced with a metal arbor to support flowering vines which add color and soften the sharp edges of the openings.





B. Labyrinth: The west walls/columns of the labyrinth space will be removed to provide a larger and more flexible space for group activities and services. A new, smaller, labyrinth will be installed in this space. The east wall of the labyrinth space will include a planter for fig vines, seasonal plants and three camellias, with “living walls above.



“GROW WALL or LIVING WALL” is a panel or panels of living plants mounted on a flat wall for decorative impact. They can be arranged in an abstract design, or created in any pattern or image you like. The structural panels are affixed to the wall with sturdy brackets. The plants are planted in small cells, then watered and maintained as any potted plant. They typically last for six months before either being changed for the season with new plants or taken down.



- C. Shade: All of the existing trees (6) will be removed and replaced with a mix of trees (13), including crape myrtles, dogwoods and Japanese maples. The crape myrtles are single stem which grow to a height of 25' to 30'. They will be limbed up to about 7' to 8', with an umbrella shaped canopy between 15' to 20' wide at maturity.

MUSKOGEE CRAPEMYRTLE

Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei 'Muskogee' Muskogee Crape Myrtle



Lagerstroemia 'Muskogee' is somebody's fantasy of a flowering tree. Marvelous long lasting blooms, through the of summer, dance atop a robust structure of rippling multi colored trunks. Sizzling fall color consummates the season. Muskogee Lavender Crape Myrtle transplants easily, establishes quickly, and is virtually indestructible. It is often used very effectively near brick veneers that incorporate random blues into the color mix.

Hardiness: 6b to 10

Foliage: Glossy bright green

Fall Color: Orange and reddish

Flower: Lavender

Bark: Exfoliating light gray and tan

Winter Interest: Exfoliating colors on the trunk and branches

Texture: Medium

Shape: Single stem trunk with a rounded head

Mature Size: 25-30' tall by 15-20' wide

Growth Rate: Fast

Adaptability: *Lagerstroemia* 'Muskogee' prefers a moist, well-drained, acid soil, but it is drought tolerant; urban tolerant; heat tolerant

- D. Seating: Multiple permanent spaces provide seating for 2 - 8 persons, which can be expanded through use of folding cafe style chairs(and tables).



E. Parking lot entrance: Trees and shrubs will enhance the walkway. A sign will be installed at the top of the walk.

F. Lighting and audio: LED accent lighting will be installed for beautification and safety. An audio system will be installed to enable parishioners to hear interment and other services, and for appropriate background music.

The Sears Design Group will now finalize details which will enable the preparation of cost estimates for the various elements of the plan. A recommended schedule for staging and implementation of the Master Plan will also be prepared. This schedule and cost estimates will ultimately be used as the basis for seeking vestry approval for implementation of specific improvements.

Funds for plan implementation are to be secured from the Ryals Capital Reserve, which currently totals approximately \$95,000. Additions to this reserve occur annually through interest on the Ryals endowment.

Of course this is just a plan. Significant unanticipated factors, such as unacceptable costs, may require changes as we move forward. The Committee is pleased to present this plan and encourages your questions and comments. You may forward these through Dan Pearson.

Committee members:

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