The overall intent was to create a multi-sensory garden that provided a variety of stimuli while operating on a within a simple organizational structure.

One enters the garden from the east adjacent to the parking lot. Located along the path that connects the creek bridge to Hume Hall is a circular gathering space that is 12 feet in diameter. In the center is a tactile map of the garden so that the blind may learn the layout of the paths and location of certain types of plants through grooves and brail. Also, at that location there are four buttons that the user can push to activate a sound that correlates to the zone in which that sound is located (the four zones being: full-sun garden, partial shade perennials and full-sun herbs, the lilac terrace, and the willow-walk. Once pushed the tones will alert the blind to the approximate location and distance from their current position. The tones will also sound intermittently on their own to give the garden a life-force or a “breathing” pattern. (note: the intermittent sounds are overridden when the buttons on the tactile map are depressed)

The path layout is in the shape of two loops that converge in the center to and transversed by an axial path to create a primary gathering space. The axial path is indented to connect the garden to the residence hall. The material for the axial path is wood planks that are tightened differently depending on how close or far someone is to the primary gathering space. This allows those without sight to walk along the path knowing when it will come to an end. This is based upon weather the creaking sound is diminishing or amplifying. (Diminishing sound indicates one is moving closer to the end). The primary paths in the garden are constructed of concrete to provide a smooth surface for safe travel.

In the full sun garden, plants will be mounded in their respective areas while a hand rail etched with brail informs the users what they are smelling and what they are near as they are walking through the garden. The interval at which brail words are placed will be spaced farther apart than in text form to allow the user to walk at a steady pace. These inscriptions in the handrail are general notations that correlate to more detailed description displays located near planting areas of significance. These displays are constructed out of cooper and are 2 foot tall cylinders which sit atop a pole. Etched on each cylinder is a narrative about what the user is near and significant facts about each plant in the immediate area. Next to each plant description will be an impression of if the plant leaf/stalk/bark so that the user can feel that and then find the plant amid the plating beds and swaths and thus draw a correlation. This hand rail method continues through the lilac terrace and to the partial-shade perennial / full-sun herb area.

The willow walk does not utilize the hand rail method, rather it relies on the texture of the path to guide the user. The concrete path will be flanked by soft mushy ground that will indicate to the user when he or she is close to the edge. Also in this area the weeping willow branches are designed to hang directly in the path so that the user must feel his or her way through by parting the tree leaves. Another area where the rail is not used is
behind the partial-shade perennial area where a gently sloping hill ascends from the level of the path allowing the user to climb it while being guided by mosses that are growing on the rocks.

The lilac terrace is intended to provide a robust smell for the user. Also the retaining wall that was used for the terrace was required to allow for the regarding of the area south to achieve a shallow slope to facilitate an easy walk for the users. The retaining wall itself is constructed of highly polished steel that will reflect heat off the surface and give a temperature change to the user just before he or she enters the partial-shade area.

Other elements in the garden include a massing of pampas grass flanking the axial path adjacent to the wetland water body. These tall flowing grasses will rustle in the wind and add sound. There is a red wall that terminates the axial path that is covered with brail and a detailed topographic relief that tells a narrative about the garden and the university. Also included in this garden is a pergola attached to the commons building leading up to the red wall. This pergola will be supporting wisteria which has hanging vines and yields a pleasant aroma. Next to the lilac terrace is a vine espalier that delineates the path from the extents of the Hume Hall grounds. The tones of the garden emanate from sound stalks which are copper tubes that raise 12 feet out of the ground. These sound stalks will have smoke billowing out of the tops for the visual interest of those with sight. The copper was chosen to create material uniformity in the garden. Next to each sound stalk is a local-area tactile map that gives a more detailed description of the particular zone one is in, and can activate the sound stalk tone. The path that connects eastern Hume Hall to the creek bridge is replaced with wood planks to further correspond with the axial relationship between the garden and the residence hall.