



Phase 3: A Spiritual Retreat in Nature

Starts Monday 22 September
Due Friday 10 October (jury)

Framework for the Project

Living in big cities has brought an unbalanced relationship between man and nature. Crowded buildings, busy people, traffic, noise, pollution, constitute the artificial environment we live in. Our urban habitat has become a very complex artifact. We often feel anxious or depressed, even overwhelmed by preoccupations that we cannot handle, immersed in the tensions of urban everyday's life. We constantly carry on its pressure without even realizing how much it impacts on our quality of life.

How many times have we dreamt of escaping from the city to reach in the countryside a place to recover ourselves? Even if we have the fortune to live in well planned neighbourhoods, where fragments of nature have been introduced in parks, streets, squares and gardens, the dominant urban scenery and its rituals make us feel unsatisfied and jaded. There is some inner natural impulse that makes us immediately think of natural places to enjoy. Pure air, sun, breeze, silence, broad space, vegetation, wilderness ... We feel that we need to be there. Just the simple thought of it gives us an instant of peace and spiritual confort.

Our liking for open natural spaces are often satisfied by short drives in the countryside, and some outdoor activities, either alone or in company with friends and family. But are these experiences trully fullfilling or are they just nice amusements to cut through our everlasting routines?. Our body has received the healthy benefits offered by the natural elements; we have also enjoyed to be free from ordinary responsibilities and tasks, and we are happy for those good moments shared with our affections.

But our spirit is not totally satisfied. We long for a more intense spiritual retreat in nature. Solitude, contemplation, relax, and the chance to broaden our state of mind by letting time flow encompassed by the natural cycles of the journey.

Rituals of our everyday's life, like sleeping and awakening, our morning ablutions, our meals; the mere act of walking outdoors with no pressure, nor defined itinerary; the stimulating effect of sensorial calls coming from nature, and even some opportunities for you to be with others, sharing selected moments, all these acts of life will change in this special retreat. After a few days, perhaps just a weekend, you will be renovated and calm, having assumed or confirmed that cultivating an intimate relationship with nature is transcendent in our lives. The creation of place like this, where the interaction of architecture and nature can offer the opportunity to experience this dimension of life is the challeng for our next Project.

Assignments for Wed 24 and Friday 26 September will be given orally.

Field trip: all day (8:30am-6pm) Friday 26 September (site, directions, logistics and the rest will be discussed on Wed 24 Sept)

Readings

ACS 7 symposium theme (<http://www.acsforum.org/symposium2015/theme.htm>)

Benedikt, Michael. *For an Architecture of Reality* (New York: Lumen Books, 1987)

Bermudez, Julio. "Designing Architectural Experiences," in L.Kalisperis & B.Kolarevic (Eds.):
Proceedings of ACADIA 1995. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1995, pp.139-149

Bermudez, Julio Choosing Being ('Other' page of Studio webpage)

Pallasmaa, Juhani *The Eyes of the Skin* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley, 2005)

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *Encounters* (Rakennustieto Publishing, 2008)

Frampton, Kenneth. "Toward a Critical Regionalism," in *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983)

Rasmussen S.E. *Experiencing Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 1962)

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WORK for Wednesday 24 September

You are at the beginning of a Project of a very unique place: a retreat in nature

You have not visited the site yet

Nobody has given you a brief with rooms and dimensions already fixed. In fact nobody will. This is the first challenge.

You just know the six rituals that are going to be performed there:

1. Awakening
2. Cleansing
3. Meals
4. Prayer / Meditation
5. Being together
6. Going to sleep

Those are all rituals from everyday's life, that you usually do in very conventional rooms. These rooms are solutions that have been created once and we repeat them uncritically

Now we ask you to abandon the idea of a bedroom with a bed, a night table and so on... and go back to the very essence of each ritual

Forget in this first moment about architecture. It will emerge later, as a result. It will flow out from what you are doing now

Concentrate on each ritual. **YOU**, with your body, your mind and your soul, are the performers of the ritual. You are invited to imagine how it is. Sensations. Search for Images of yourself intensely enjoying each experience, as a child would do with his fantasies.

Some rituals will catch you more than others. It is normal, do not get anxious. Even in that case, find some sensations that might give character to that magic place you imagine to be in. Holistic sensations. Remember. Experience with your whole body and senses.

As references of what you are conceiving write some key words on the line of each ritual. Just to make a register of its birth. You might also add some graphic representations about it.

Remember: let your inner desires of place flow out from your insight

Use the tools of the three questions to help you in this exploration:

- **Where does it occur?** Be architectonically ambiguous, as much of you can. Build this place up with sensations first. Sensations that might drive you to a broader consciousness of the links between your body, mind and spirit
- **What do you do?**
- **How do you do it?**

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School of Architecture and Planning
Fall 2014 - Walton Critic Studio (Arpl 401, 601, 603, 701)

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view from the Range View Cabin site

Eliana,

We look forward to your visit and have been enjoying the initial warm-up exercises with the students in preparation for your arrival. In the pages that follow, we have included information regarding the selected site for the final studio project (spiritual retreat), which we will visit on Friday, 26 September. We welcome your thoughts, feedback and suggestions regarding the site selection and can discuss the site in more detail when you arrive.

The site is on the site of an existing, small, rustic cabin (Range View Cabin) located along the Appalachian Trail in northwestern Virginia. The cabin is in Shenandoah National Park, and accessible by a short (1.5 kilometer) hike from Skyline Drive. It is a beautiful, rural setting within a protected national park, with views of some of the valley and ridge to the south and east.

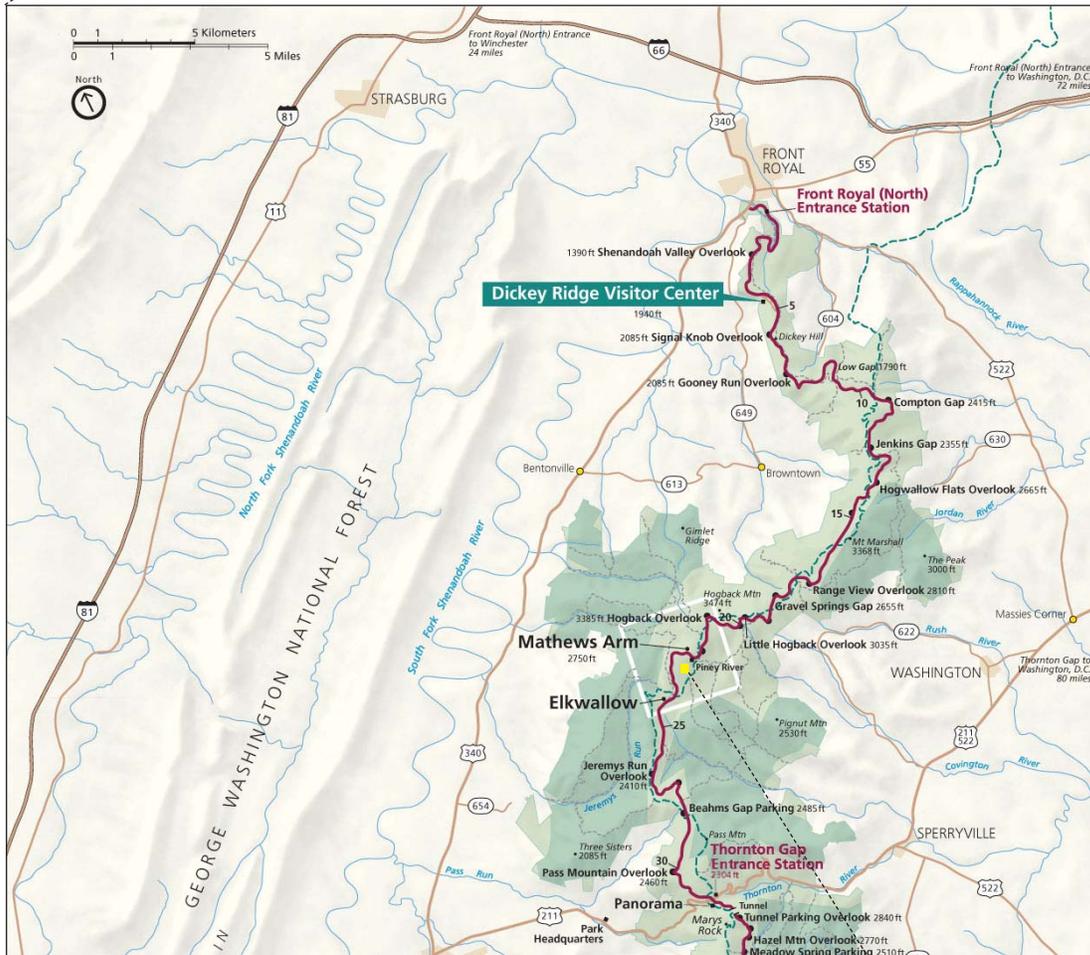


other views along Skyline Drive

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proposed site

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Shenandoah National Park

Park Emergency Number (800) 732-0911

01/10

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Mathews Arm and Elkwallow Area Road and Trail Map

Park Information recording: (540) 999-3500
www.nps.gov/shen

Overall Run Falls - 6.5 miles round trip from amphitheater parking lot to a viewpoint of the 93' waterfall; moderately difficult. Take the Traces Trail from amphitheater parking lot to Tuscarora Trail to Overall Run Trail.

Knob Mountain - 5 mile circuit along a stream. Take Knob Mountain Trail near wastewater treatment plant to left on the Cutoff Trail, then left on the Elkwallow Trail.

Little Devils Stairs -

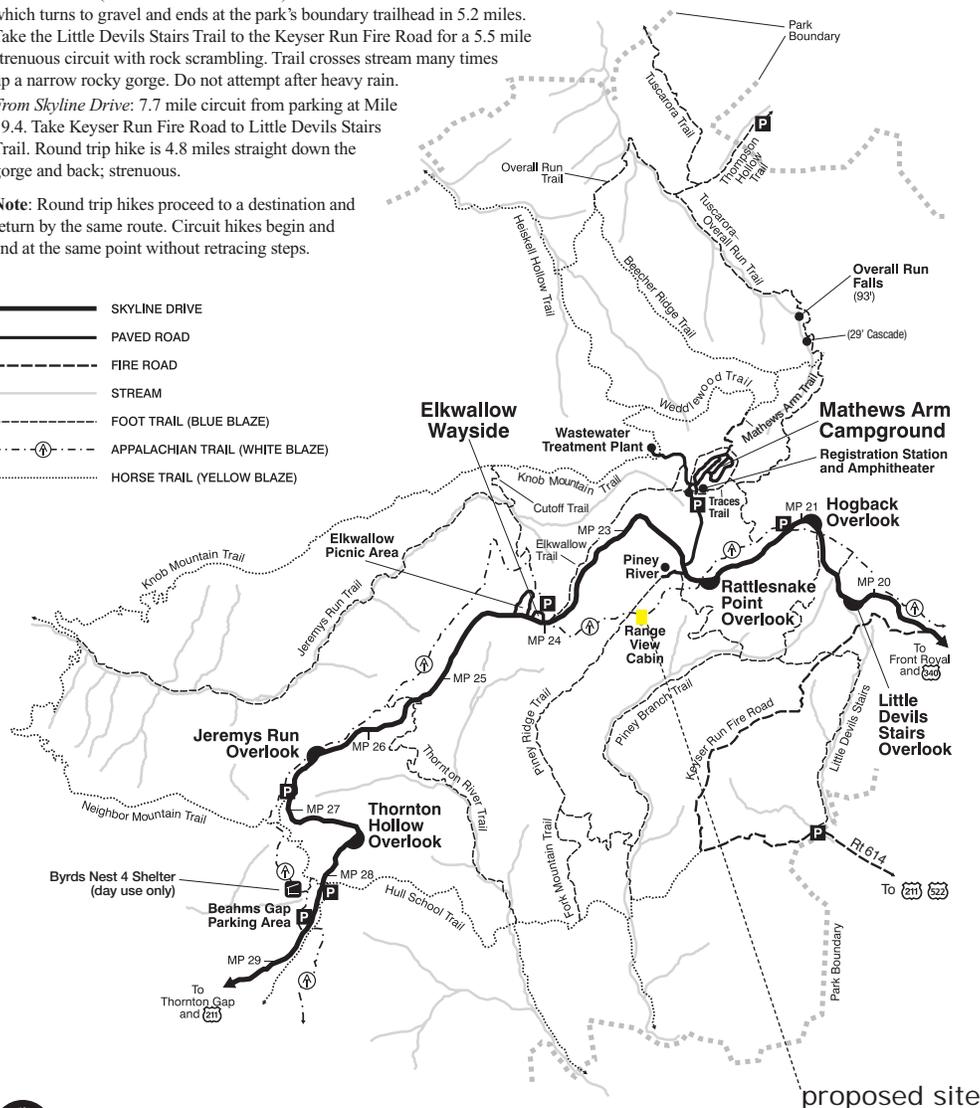
From the Boundary: From Sperryville, follow US 211 E/522 N for 2 miles, turn left on Rt. 622 (Gid Brown Hollow Road). After 2 miles turn left on Rt. 614 which turns to gravel and ends at the park's boundary trailhead in 5.2 miles. Take the Little Devils Stairs Trail to the Keyser Run Fire Road for a 5.5 mile strenuous circuit with rock scrambling. Trail crosses stream many times up a narrow rocky gorge. Do not attempt after heavy rain.

From Skyline Drive: 7.7 mile circuit from parking at Mile 19.4. Take Keyser Run Fire Road to Little Devils Stairs Trail. Round trip hike is 4.8 miles straight down the gorge and back; strenuous.

Note: Round trip hikes proceed to a destination and return by the same route. Circuit hikes begin and end at the same point without retracing steps.



- SKYLINE DRIVE
- PAVED ROAD
- - - FIRE ROAD
- STREAM
- - - FOOT TRAIL (BLUE BLAZE)
- - - APPALACHIAN TRAIL (WHITE BLAZE)
- - - HORSE TRAIL (YELLOW BLAZE)



The Range View Cabin is located in the Mathews Arm and Elkwallow Area of Shenandoah National Park. The stone and wood cabin was built for hikers along the Appalachian Trail by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) in 1932. The cabin can be rented by up to 8 hikers for the night and is known for its views to the south and east from its location on Piney Ridge.

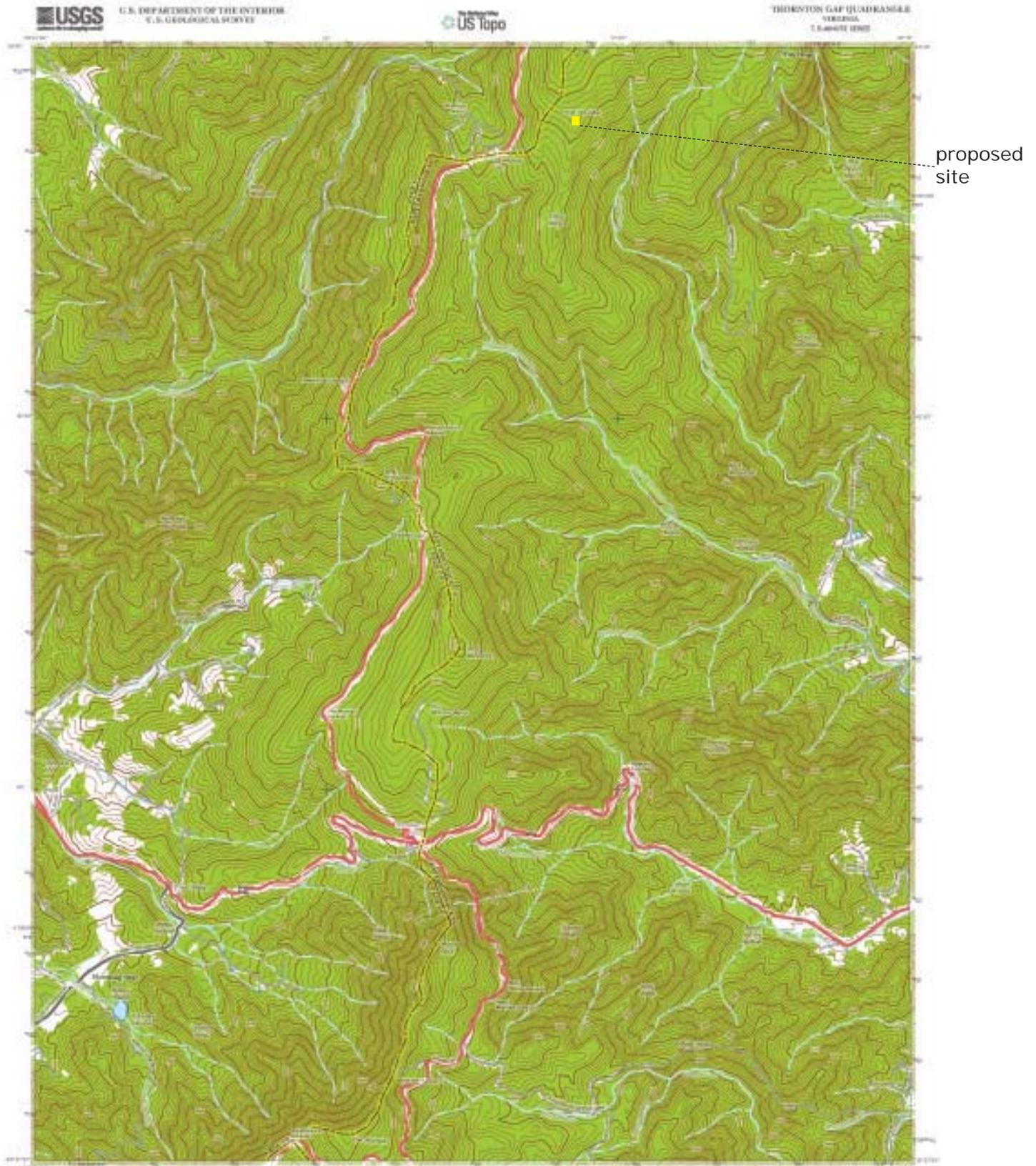


Leave No Trace Preservation through education: building awareness, appreciation, and most of all, respect for our public recreation places.

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Range View Cabin

Here are some additional resources (websites):

Shenandoah National Park

<http://www.goshenandoah.com/?gclid=CNjBotaD1cACFSgV7AodOBIAxQ>

Range View Cabin Information

http://www.patc.net/PublicView/Custom/PATC_Cabins/Individual_Cabins/range_view.aspx

Brief Cabin History

http://www.patc.net/PublicView/Custom/More_about_PAT/Range_View_Cabin.aspx

Flickr Page

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/9944705@N05/sets/72157629550572288/>

Interesting Time Lapse

<http://vimeo.com/38732753>

Preliminary itinerary for site visit:

9:30am - depart CUA

10:30am - arrive at winery (TBD)

11:15am - depart winery

12:15pm - arrive at trailhead to site

12:45pm - lunch at site / site documentation

2:45pm - depart site

3:30pm - additional wineries (TBD)

late evening - return to CUA



Crescent Rock (near Range View Cabin)

PROGRAM SECOND WEEK (WALTON CRITIC)

1. **TIME and LIGHT:** The Students explore different alternatives to organize in a day timeline the sequence of the rituals to be performed in the retreat, considering daylight, movement and usual habits for each one
2. **TOPOGRAPHY:** They explore the alternatives to place each ritual in topography, considering the potentials offered by height and depth; light and shade, of being in contact either with earth, rocks, bushes and herbs, water, mud, trees, branches and leaves... All senses must be considered into this potential qualities for sensorial stimuli that will drive to spiritual experiences. A section and sketches shall be used to represent this stage of work
3. **AREA and ORGANISM:** the main spaces for all the rituals shall be pre dimensioned, to learn about the area that each one will occupy and to have a comparative reference between them. This will allow to start the organization of the whole in a plan 1:500 and 1:200 (m). Plans and sketches shall be produced.

For Friday 3 October

Design works should deal with the

- the main spaces for all the rituals which now need to be pre-dimensioned, referred to the area that each one will occupy and in relation to one another.

This will allow you to start the organization of the whole project in a plan **1/32"** scale first (if your project is very spread out, may be it should be 1/64" scale but it's a bit too small) and then **1/16" scale**. Rough plans with main and secondary spaces (at said scales) as well as sketches are expected for tomorrow (sections have been already produced ... If not, you need to have them as well). Your site plan should consider/represent the movement of the sun.

As you develop the plan, please, write up a rough program to clarify your project.

For Monday 6 October

At least two schemes drawing at 1/64 (general relation to site and approach) and 1/32" for overall massing and spatial relationships. In addition to drawings, we expect rough working models. We expect people to react to three site conditions (relatively flat, very steep, and sloped).

PROGRAM THIRD WEEK (WALTON VISIT)

Requirements for Friday 10 October Review.

MASTER PLAN: Scale 1/64" (1:1000 in metric). Draw a general lay out of the project, locating and connecting all the main spaces, including the point where the journey starts, the road to the main building of the retreat, the episodes or mark points that give meaning and qualify this road, the building itself, with its main ritual spaces, and the surrounding outdoor places selected to enlarge the experiences of the retreat in nature, with their own paths.

RESUME: write some short statements to explain the concept and the guidelines that support the concept of your general lay out

SECTION: Scale 1/32" (1:500 in metric). Draw some sections of the main ritual spaces of the project, expressing their main features concerning relations to topography, sun orientation, special natural elements selected to be part of the project and connections to the context

PLAN: Scale 1/16" (1:200 in metric), Draw the plan of the architectural conception of the retreat, as an organism that includes the main ritual spaces with their secondary spaces, the connections and the outdoor spaces integrated to the project

SKETCHES: Draw one or two sketches of each of the main spaces conceived in your project

WORKING MODEL Scale 1/16" (1:200 in metric)

RESUME: Write the program that supports your project, listing the spaces (main, secondary and connections) and the calculation of their dimensions

NOTE: you may use any of the previous work you've done so far to support or advance the above requirements.