Clockwise from left above: Peter Zumthor: first plan sketch for Thermal Baths @ Vals; sequential sections from entry to baths; section drawing of building in slope; early perspective sketch and notes; computer rendering of finished building; early model showing daylighting and ambience.

This class explores critical issues regarding the process by which buildings are designed and the media used to illuminate the design. It will link the type and scale of media with the principles and design considerations which underlay them. We will trace the design and development of one building from concept to completion.

Students will be given the option to either use their current studio project as a basis for exploration or they may use an alternative program approved by the instructor. The in-class program consists of designing a modest meditation retreat and garden for one person. The retreat will be no larger than 500 square feet. The garden will be more open-ended regarding size and use.

Each week, students will be given a sequential set of media exercises. Each exercise will illuminate a specific unfolding sequence of design aimed toward producing profound wholeness in building/garden design. As such, each exercise will identify, in order, critical principles that inform a design and the most helpful media that may be used to transform those intentions into meaningful rooms and spaces. Specific media techniques pertinent to each step will be demonstrated in class and then re-iterated by each student during the course of their design project.

As such, this class will target specific media (words, drawings, models, and computer media) for the best contribution each may make at key moments in the unfolding sequence of design. The idea here is that the order in which things are done, and the type and scale of media used at each point in the process is critical to the making of poetic places.