Portland’s Skidmore/Oldtown National Historic Landmark District: Working with the Ankeny-Burnside Development Framework Plan, 2007-8

Introduction:
The design studio will explore multiple aspects of urban design, compatible new developments and rehabilitation of extant historic structures as part of a complex mixed-use program already established by the Ankeny-Burnside Development Framework Plan (AB-DFP): http://www.pdc.us/pubs/inv_detail.asp?id=700&ty=18. The AB-DFP was development by the City of Portland; Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Portland Development Commission. The Studio will be of interest to architecture, urban planning, interior architecture and historic preservation students.

Background:
The Skidmore/Oldtown Historic District (S/OT-NHL) was considered the “Heart and Soul” of Portland since it served as the location of the communities early commercial district. It was contained the largest collection of cast iron facades west of Chicago. There are 101 properties in the district. S/OT-NHL is one of only two such designated districts in the state with Jacksonville in southern Oregon serving as the other such significant area. Prior to and subsequent from its historic listing over 30 years ago the district has suffered many ills of urban decay and loss of integrity due to the demolition of buildings for surface parking and the influx of essential social service organizations, the highest concentration in the city. The adjacent area is also home to the Japan/Chinatown National Register District once recorded to be the largest ethnic areas in the state. The NHL nomination for the district was recently revised and will assist in understanding the significance and character of the area: http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=43328&a=134690

Studio Direction:
• The Studio will explore the five urban design program concepts in the AB-DFP that serve as the basis for further development and evaluation
• We will look at four specific sites in the district for development and rehabilitation that are seen as catalyst or “opportunity sites”
• The class will work within the current zoning and height limitations while also utilizing the recently developed historic district design guidelines for new development and adaptive reuse of extant buildings.
• The mixed-use program includes retail, institutional, commercial, residential and in a few cases, parking, both multiple story and hydraulic “boutique” parking structures.
• The new developments on half-blocks, 100 X 200 feet, will also involve utilizing underdeveloped historic or potential historic structures in a mixed use scenario.

Historic Preservation:
• It is anticipated that Historic Preservation students will also be involved (for limited research credits hours) to research the feasibility of upgrading current non-contributing structures to contributing by demonstrating that there is sufficient documentation, in consultation with the SHPO, to justify such a direction to gain state and federal investment credits and benefits.
• A significant inventory of cast iron façade pieces has recently been cataloged for use in new developments and/or rehabilitation, the use of these components will be highly recommended since that is one of the elements of the AB-DFP.
• The research and information gathered by the HP students (HP 606 Research) will be made available to the design studio for their use in the design of new structures.

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Professor Kunowski has been in the practice of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and historic preservation for over 30 years. Prof. Kunowski is in private practice in Portland and is also an Associate with Zaik Associates, Architects and Planners and Dewberry + Davis, Engineering & Architecture. He recently served as chair of the Portland Chapter of the AIA/Historic Resources Committee. He has also served on the AAA Board of Visitors from 1997 to 2003 and it’s Chair in 2000. Prof. Kunowski has worked for several architectural offices and for the State Historic Preservation Office, State Parks and the City of Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation.