Architecture 484/584 – Portland - Fall 2012
Instructors: Prof. Howard Davis and Prof. Dr. Hajo Neis
(Students should preference for one of the two instructors, each of which will have primary responsibility for his studio, but the studios will be run jointly and in parallel)
The studio will meet Tuesday 6-9 pm, Wednesday 1-5 pm, and Friday 1-5 pm.

ARCHITECTURE IN OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN/JAPANTOWN: RESOLVING A PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT DILEMMA IN A TRANS-PACIFIC EFFORT

This project will involve two 484/584 studios in Portland and one graduate design studio from Meiji University, Tokyo, led by Professor Masami Kobayashi. We will host the Tokyo students near the beginning of the term, and the Meiji students will work on the project in Tokyo. Meiji University has provided generous support which will help us present our work in Tokyo in December. Each student will be funded with about $500 toward the Tokyo trip, which is tentatively scheduled for December 8-15.

Development in Old Town/Chinatown/Japantown (OT/CT/JT) has been stymied by a series of conflicts among various stakeholders in the area, parts of which have historic-preservation status. For example, developers need a certain building height to make their projects pencil out, but preservationists oppose greatly changing the scale of buildings. Some see the homeless and very-low-income population as a hindrance to development, while others are committed to keeping that population in the neighborhood. Some want to recognize the history of Asians in the neighborhood; others do not have the same commitment in new development.

In this studio, six blocks of OT/CT/JT will be used for carefully-planned case-study investigations to try and resolve these dilemmas, hopefully making a useful contribution to the discussion. With programs for mostly mixed-use buildings, we will undertake a series of design studies that deal directly with the various development dilemmas. For example what are the issues of massing, façade composition, and materials that allow taller buildings to exist comfortably with lower buildings of historic character? How can uses be defined that enhance neighborhood character but also result in a good “bottom line?” Students will work on volumetric studies based on clear criteria, building design and detailed development of building character.

The studio will be organized so that we carry out projects in a rigorous and professional fashion, as helpful as possible to the various OT/CT/JT stakeholders. There is interest in the project from local community groups, local developers, the PDC and the City of Portland. Various representatives of those groups, along with local architects, will be helping. In addition to well-designed and well-presented individual projects, we are anticipating the production of an illustrated report to be made publicly available.

For further information please contact either Howard Davis hdavis@uoregon.edu or Hajo Neis hajoneis@uoregon.edu