Graduate students based in Portland are invited to participate in research projects involving urban design, and architectural and urban history in Portland, as part of the new Resilient Urban Morphologies (RUM) research group.

The purpose of RUM is to investigate the idea that the morphology of local urban districts, and the typologies of their buildings, are related to small-scale economic activity, particularly the formation of small, start-up businesses and the ability of people at the “lower end” of the economic ladder to make their way in the economy. As the world becomes more urbanized, and as disparities of wealth continue to increase, questions of the roles of architecture and urban design in urban economic life seem to be important. RUM has undertaken investigations in Guangzhou, London and Portland, and is now seeking to further and strengthen its work in Portland. The intention is to develop academic understandings that may be useful to the development of policy, development initiatives and design.

Projects will include the following:

1. Detailed investigation of Old Town/Chinatown, intended to contribute to present and future efforts toward revitalization of the area. This investigation will be related to similar ones previously undertaken by the research group in London and in Guangzhou, China.

2. Studies of the resilience and longevity of Portland buildings, in Old Town / Chinatown and other neighborhoods, to identify the architectural/typological characteristics of buildings that have stood the test of time. These studies will combine architectural understandings with histories of how buildings were used.

3. Studies of the emergent, local food economy of Portland, including food carts, community-based agriculture initiatives, local food processing, and local food markets. Focus on relationships between geography, architecture and the food economy.

Work will be done by individuals or small workgroups, under the direction of Howard Davis. These are research investigations in which participants will be expected to work professionally, producing results that are publishable or useable in professional contexts. Bi-weekly meetings of the entire research group will allow for the sharing and discussion of ongoing findings. In alternate weeks, individual meetings with Howard Davis will happen by Skype or phone.

Students interested in participating in this research should contact Howard Davis at <hdavis@uoregon.edu>