Simple flexible construction and ample open floor plates are characteristic of the many “big box” buildings left over from retail development in suburbia. What architectural promise can we find in these structures and how can they be renovated for public use? This double studio will explore the adaptive reuse of a “marina style” supermarket (the former Albertsons in Springfield). Smaller than the Big Boxes built today, this little/big box was built using a simple economical structural glue lam structure and building systems that make it inherently adaptable. In this studio we will work within the logic of our little box building to identify opportunities for strategic interventions and interior development to make a safe and evocative place for kids to learn and grow.

Our client is a Boys and Girls Club an organization that provides after school and enrichment programs for little kids (early school age) to big kids (teen populations). Founded in 1860 by social philanthropists, the original purpose of the Boys and Girls Club of America was to get young boys off the street and provide them with a safe environment, and access to resources and support networks. Today, the Boys and Girls Club of America is a national, non-profit organization, which provides after school and enrichment programs for low-income and at-risk children and youth. In this studio you will focus on the needs of a diverse population of at-risk youth and on the efforts of the Boys and Girls Club to create opportunity, provide security, and shape character.

Open to Interior Architecture and Architecture Students.

Special Objectives

- to engage the program with a focus on critical program goals -- not just square footage requirements.
- To use design to respond to varied kid scale(s), kid activities and kid sensibilities.
- to develop strategies for integrating natural light, interior elements and building systems to create a more engaging and sustainable little box.

Methods of Working

- a starter program, site visits to similar facilities, and readings will form a basis for teams to build a compelling program for the boys and girls club.
- This comprehensive adaptive reuse of the building will require students to integrate indoor outdoor connections, structural and skin issues and targeted strategic interventions in the building will be allowed.
- Diagrams, physical models and perspective sketches will be used extensively throughout the term.