This studio will involve the design of buildings that support the goal of the city becoming, once again, a place of production rather than only consumption. Each student will design a project either in southeast Portland (the Lents neighborhood) or Guangzhou, China (formerly Canton), a major industrial city about two hours from Hong Kong. The projects will together provide a medium for the exploration of how building typology and design may help provide a medium for small-scale, local economic activity.

Urban sustainability needs to work toward the development of new social and economic structures that foster human initiative and maintain economic resources within cities and urban districts. Local food systems are a part of this, but so are local systems of manufacture and the production of goods.

Portland’s artisan economy is well established and well known, but needs to make a jump in scale of production while maintaining its local and crafted character. And although China has a burgeoning industrial economy, tens of millions of urban migrants and lower-income people are looking for ways to enter the formal economy with businesses of their own. Although the cities of Portland and Guangzhou are very different, the issues they face are complementary ones within a globalizing world.

The project in Portland will be an “urban grange,” or Center for Urban Agriculture, near the center of the Lents neighborhood of southeast Portland. The project will include a food-processing facility and associated spaces, a public forum for “grange” meetings, and an indoor/outdoor exhibit/educational space.

This project will parallel a project being offered in Brook Muller’s Eugene studio that will focus on larger ecological processes within several square blocks of this area. Our project will be a particular building near the Lents town center at SE Foster and 92nd. We will interact with Brook’s studio on site visits and occasional pinups and discussions in Portland.

The project in Guangzhou will be a district center for micro-enterprise, in Geshan village (an “urban village” surrounded by the city) or around Yide Road, near the historic city center. The project will include a shared production facility for the manufacture of goods, individual living/working spaces, a forum/meeting room for the local community, and an exhibit/educational space.

Background project information and exact choice of Guangzhou site will be provided through a research trip that Howard Davis and a number of students are taking to Guangzhou in September, to investigate how buildings and urban form can support small-scale economic enterprise.

Each building will be about 30,000 square feet. Detailed programs for each building will be provided during the first week of studio. Students will have a choice of program, but we will try to have half the studio working on each program.

The studio will emphasize the following issues:

- development of new building types for local urban production
- integration with the urban landscape/urban district
- clear development of building design, emphasizing the creative translation of building program/activity into building organization and section
- the role of structure, daylight, and construction/materials in the human experience of the building
- an expressive and informative final presentation

There will be weekly pinups dealing with specific issues, and ample time for one-on-one desk crits with the instructor.

Please direct questions about the studio to Howard Davis <hdavis@uoregon.edu>.