Case studies of micro-business work spaces

Get involved with a real community-oriented project—help with the new UO/MercyCorps NW partnership

What makes a great workspace? How can micro-business be nurtured in Portland by helping make great workspaces? These questions are being posed through a new initiative between the Department of Architecture and MercyCorps Northwest.

The Department of Architecture and MercyCorps Northwest (a Portland NGO conveniently located next door to the White Stag Block) are developing a new partnership intended to help local micro-businesses find, build, and renovate their workspaces. This venture is intended partly to involve students with community-based work, by supporting grassroots economic development with building and architecture.

Students in this seminar will work in teams to visit local businesses, map their workspaces and surroundings, record their stories and identify the issues they face. The material produced will be used in a new website intended to be used as a tool to help with issues of workspace design and location. This will be a focused seminar, with just a few students, with specific work tasks and definable outcomes. There may also be the opportunity for students to be involved with the website development itself.

Documentation will include measured drawings, photographs, and diagrams, along with interviews with business owners themselves. There is the possibility of continuing with the work after the seminar is over, by working directly with owners of micro-businesses who are in need of help and advice with the design or re-design of their workspaces.

Students will work in teams of two with each team responsible for several case studies.

Interested students are invited to communicate with Howard Davis, by email at hdavis@uoregon.edu or phone at 541.221.5691.