Taking Buildings Down

The sustainability of ecosystems depends on functions of cyclical change, interconnection, and dynamic equilibrium. For buildings to meet this same description of sustainability they must be functionally interconnected with broader systems and their lifetimes must be cyclical. The end of the life of a building must be as purposeful as its beginning.

How long should a building last?
The lifespan of the average building in the US is about 35 years.

How should an architect plan for the decay or demolition of a building?

TOPICS
Demolition and recycling (material, energy, and waste)
Waste streams (processes and environmental implications)
Alternative models (i.e. “zero waste,” “cradle to cradle”)
Architectural case studies in design for demolition

COURSE STRUCTURE
The seminar will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:20 a.m. and occasionally earlier for a site visit. Students will choose a material or building system to research within the topics above. Readings, research, and research presentations will be supplemented by site visits and guest lectures.

Erin Moore is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Oregon. In her research practice, Moore looks for ways that the processes, media, and craft of architectural design can engage the experience of material and place over time. Moore uses her research practice, FLOAT, as a testing ground for ideas about how to build with explicit intentions for the lives and life spans of materials.