Any undertaking as substantial as the construction and subsequent operation of a building naturally consumes considerable natural resources; the question is, "how can we, in our privileged position as architects, create buildings which place decidedly less strain on our environment, whilst improving the quality of the city?"

Seminar Description
Designing an energy efficient building is often a challenge in itself. Numerous hurdles need to be cleared; many of them having apparently little to do with 'architecture'. Individual ecologically sensitive buildings and environmentally responsible occupiers may lead to a much reduced environmental impact, yet this is highly localized and could be perceived as being of negligible benefit to the environment or indeed the city unless the subservient infrastructure evolves in a manner which actively promotes a manner of living which makes the best possible use of resources, whilst also contributing towards a greater standard of living for the community as a whole.

The seminar, 'Beyond the Building as Object', is to be run in parallel to the studio, entitled 'Conditioning the Urban Fabric'. The seminar is intended to encourage participants to reassess the context of our architectural endeavors and reconsider the city as a place of unfulfilled potential. It follows that for us to be able to create a 'sustainable architecture' then we obviously need to properly understand the complex layers at work in the contemporary city.

The infrastructure of a city is often highly inflexible and by nature, highly resistant to change. Idealized models hardly ever exist; instead we often find that our cities are served by outdated systems, which are almost always running in an inefficient manner. Solutions or improvements are not necessarily design related; instead other more powerful forces are often at play.

The seminar will be used to challenge certain preconceptions about the city, question how we perceive / experience the city and seek to unearth and perhaps reconfigure a more relevant context for our work for, where environmental, social and economic issues are not restricted by the city, but offer clues as to how the city and contemporary architectural design may evolve. In this context and through using 'urban agriculture' as a vehicle for studies seminar participants will be asked to identify how the built environment may change from being a major consumer of resources to a net 'supplier' and how our cities need to be adapted in order to make this happen.

Methodology
For a chosen city each participant will be encouraged to study a singular element of the current city infrastructure (water, waste, transport, education, power, etc) and identify how it may be refined or adapted in response to contemporary needs; in particular in support of an 'urban agriculture'.

This seminar will take a workshop format with participants (individual or maximum 2 person groups) encouraged to research and present their findings at regular intervals in sketch and written form. It is intended that the contributions from the respective participants / groups will each form a single 'chapter' of a booklet which carefully describes the necessary context for an 'urban agriculture'.

The seminar does not foresee the development of an architectural proposal; rather determine how the forces which are at play in the city shape the context of any architectural proposition, defining both opportunities and restrictions alike.

Objectives
- To look at the existing infrastructure of the city
- To identify the various processes at work in the city
- To define and understand the potential of urban agriculture
- To identify relevant comparative models
- To identify which processes (economic, environmental and social) are essential to a thriving urban agriculture
- To identify the interrelationships between such processes and the city
- To recognize how local conditions may inform a site specific proposal
- To identify how the city may need to be reconfigured (short term / long term) in order that it promotes an urban agriculture
- To identify 'windows of opportunity', locations in the urban fabric for architectural interventions
Schedule
The seminar will be split into three (three-week) periods followed by a week of editing prior to submission / final presentation:

1. Investigations and Definitions
   - unearthing infrastructure / what is urban agriculture? / discovering comparable models
2. Research and Development
   - individual studies based upon chosen element of infrastructure
3. Rethinking the City
   - how is the city to change or to be changed to support the potential of urban agriculture?
4. Drawing Conclusions
   - document preparation