John Yeon Foundation and Urban Study Center, Portland

Introduction
The John Yeon Foundation and Urban Study Center is dedicated to the memory and work of one of Portland’s most accomplished and respected modern architects: John Yeon. It is intended that this institution will complement the existing John Yeon Center for Architecture and the John Yeon Preserve for Landscape Studies at the Shire located on the banks of the Columbia River. His Visitors’ Information Center in the heart of downtown is rightly acknowledged as an important urban landmark, yet Yeon is best known for his residential work, interior exhibition design and consummate landscape interventions. His principles that inform this work suggests that the city and its urban landscape can benefit from his more general insights about the nature of design and its ameliorative power. One of the primary objectives of the Yeon Urban Study Center is to disseminate information about John Yeon’s legacy and more generally to make the public aware of important design issues related to the architecture, the interior architecture and the landscape architecture of the Northwest.

Program:
The foundation will have a major exhibition space, meeting rooms and other related facilities for the public and private residential quarters for students of architecture, interior architecture and landscape architecture. You are to assume that at least 12 student residences are to be accommodated with necessary bathroom, storage etc. There should space for a library of
generous proportions along with a communal dining facility and kitchen. One or two seminar rooms along with a large meeting room are required. There should be space within the library for a John Yeon archive and permanent exhibition of his work that will feature architectural models, drawings and photographs. A rotating architectural exhibition space is a key element of the program and will present an inviting venue for the public to view 20th century and contemporary architecture of the Northwest and beyond. It is intended that the Urban Study Center will be part of a growing cultural hub along with art galleries, the nearby AIA offices and the University of Oregon’s White Stag building.

Site:
The site for the John Yeon Center is to be strategically located at the cleavage between Northwest and Southwest Portland on Burnside Avenue. The challenging wedge shaped site near Powell’s bookstore will require considerable skill on the part of designers to accommodate the program elements and the larger objectives of the center to have a significant urban presence. More information will be provided at the start of the class in the Winter Term when a field trip will be organized to visit the site and buildings by John Yeon.

Some issues we will be confronting during the quarter are:
- urban context and site response including aspect and prospect, adjacency to important landmarks, views, access, etc..
- materials and structure giving special attention to Yeon’s use of materials and intelligent use of contemporary innovations in building construction.
- the facade, its compositional relationship to tectonic and symbolic issues of representation in a dense urban context where at least three sides of the building will be prominently on display.
- light and its modulation on the interior
- interior design and special focus on the nature of exhibition spaces