

Symposium – 2-4 May 2008

The role of food and agriculture in the design and planning of buildings and cities

General description

This symposium will investigate the opportunities for creative cooperation between shapers of the built environment and actors in urban food and agriculture systems. It brings together, for the first time, individuals from the full range of professions of the built environment who have been recently tackling challenges of the urban food system. The interface between the physical aspects of urban food provision and distribution, and urban design and architecture, will be explored. After an introductory survey as part of a public lecture, this meeting will address a number of issues, grouped into five themes, and include field visits and an exhibition.

Background

“The symbiotic relationship between a productive landscape and the human settlement system is as old as civilization. During the past 200 years, that millennium-old positive relationship deteriorated into a further and further separation of town and landscape.”ⁱ

Food is certainly among our primary needs. Over the millennia, the activity of satisfying this basic requirement has been one of the key ingredients in the formation of human settlements. While in the past, there existed a very close link between the forms and patterns of cities and towns and their food supply systems, since the industrial revolution, this has been largely eroded, particularly in western nations. Recently, this disconnect is starting to be addressed as part of the crisis of urban sustainability. Movements such as urban agriculture, buying locally and “slow food” encourage us to consider ourselves co-producers, not consumers, and in this way to engage in the food supply process. Reconnecting the cities to their food systems is now emerging as one of the core components of more sustainable urban settlements.

As we struggle with the implications of the sustainability agenda, which suggests a move towards increasing densities in urban areas, what are the implications of food production – and food systems more generally – on the built forms and patterns of cities? What are the implications of all these shifts for architecture, planning and the other professions of the built environment? This symposium will address these issues.

The built environment and food and agriculture systems intersect at the point where architects, landscape architects, designers, engineers and planners incorporate farmers’ markets, greenhouses, edible landscapes, living walls, productive green roofs, community gardens, the use of waste or underused land for food production, and other strategies, into their pedagogy and practice. Such examples of the connections between food issues and built and unbuilt form have the potential to transform not only food production, distribution and related issues; they can also become the framework for a new set of basic assumptions about the functions required in the layout of urban spaces and the design of buildings such as schools and housing, where food production or consumption can occur. Food-focussed activities are also emerging as an increasingly important component of community development and regeneration.

The link between the design and planning of the built environment and its food system is a new area of study, reflecting a new awareness of the importance of the food and agriculture sectors in the functioning of cities. The emerging alternative-food movement has barely recognized the possible contributions that designers and the design process can make to the food supply chain; nor has it tapped sufficiently the potential that planners can bring to the reintroduction of food systems into urban space or to the reduction of food miles and carbon footprints.

Furthermore, as the meaning of sustainability widens to embrace net-zero-impact living, buildings or built patterns, the question of net-zero-impact food-supply chains for urban residents becomes directly relevant to the way we design and plan our built environment, so as to “make edible landscapes”.ⁱⁱ

“...architects and designers should pay attention to the city’s multiple functions as a dining room, market and farm.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Program

The following are the proposed details of the six sessions of the symposium. Each session will include several presentations followed by an open discussion. The programme is subject to change.

Friday 2 May 2008

Registration 12-2 pm, 4-7 pm

1st session (2:00pm to 4:00pm)

Keynotes/Food for Talk: What have designers and planners been doing about food and agriculture?

Joe Nasr (moderator/discussant)

Jerome Kaufman: Food in planning: A seven-year odyssey from off the table to on the table

André Viljoen: Designing for urban agriculture: Examples and issues

2nd session (4:15pm to 6:00pm)

Regulations and institutions as influences on food and agriculture

Pamela Robinson (moderator/discussant)

Diana Lee-Smith: On local regulations and urban agriculture: Lessons from East Africa

Lorella Di Cintio: Food and health regulations and their links to design: The food cart as example

Nina-Marie Lister: Placing food: Legislative and policy challenges and opportunities to activate Toronto’s edible landscape

Gary Wilkins and Sonia Dhir: A conservation authority integrates urban agriculture: New partners, new crops, new ways of doing business

Evening (6:30pm to 8:30pm)

Reception and Official opening of the symposium and exhibition

Welcome words by Stal Boctor (Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science – invited), Kendra Schank Smith (Chair, Department of Architectural Science) and Cecilia Rocha (Director, Centre for Studies in Food Security).

Saturday 3 May 2008

3rd session (9:00 am to 10:45am)

Built form as a setting for food and agriculture

David Anselmi (moderator/discussant)

Leila Farah: Physical impact of food on the making of pre-industrial settlements: The case of Montreal under French rule

Joe Lobko: Brownfield redux: Food in the adaptation of the Brick Works and Wychwood Barns in Toronto

Chris Hardwicke: Ravine City / Farm City: Gardening and density in Toronto

Adrian Blackwell: Constructible and mobile food architecture: The Mount Dennis studio

4th session (11:00 am to 12:45 pm)

Processes of planning and designing for food and agriculture

Glenn Miller (moderator/discussant)

Martin Bailkey: Combining agriculture, nature and housing: Madison's Troy Gardens

Lauren Baker: On the development of a food strategy for the Brick Works project

Joongsub Kim: Urban agriculture in the community design studio: The Detroit Studio example

Mark Gorgolewski: Urban agriculture in the design charrette: The Black Creek Urban Farm example

Lunch (12:45pm to 1:45 pm)

5th session (1:45pm to 3:30pm)

Teaching planners and designers about food and agriculture

Daniel Doz (moderator/discussant)

Gerda Wekerle: Reflections from a "foodie hotbed": The experience of York's Faculty of Environmental Studies

Vikram Bhatt and Nik Luka: From international development to a more edible Montréal: Urban agriculture and urban design at McGill

June Komisar: Nurturing an emerging interest in food and agriculture: The Ryerson architecture experience

Domenic Vitiello: From community garden to community food security: Grupo Motivos and Penn Planning

6th session (3:45pm to 5:45pm)

Making connections through food and agriculture

Lorraine Johnson (moderator/discussant)

Nevin Cohen: Food and agriculture as bridge between design and liberal arts

Marc Xuereb and John Lubczynski: Planning for a healthy food system: Collaboration between the public health and planning departments in the region of Waterloo

Marielle Dubbeling: Participatory design of productive public spaces for urban agriculture: The experience of Rosario, Argentina

Bruce Darrell: Linking urban agriculture and built form to carbon cycles, energy use and nutrient flows

Wendy Mendes: Beyond feeding people: Food system planning with multiple outcomes in mind

Concluding remarks by symposium organizers

Evening

Free/Informal networking

Sunday 4 May 2008

Morning: (9:00am to 1:00pm)

Field visit by bus to selected sites in Toronto where designers and planners are working on food-related issues. Sites to be visited include: The BrickWorks (Evergreen), FoodShare, the Green Arts Barn (Wychwood Barn – The Stop Community Food Centre), and Black Creek Urban Farm (City of Toronto and Toronto Region Conservation Authority). The visit would end at Parc Downsview Park, before returning to Ryerson University. Registration ahead of time is required for this tour.

Afternoon: (2:30pm to 4.30pm)

Optional walking tour on “Growing Urban Landscapes”, one of “Jane’s Walks” (www.janeswalk.net). Leaders: James Kuhns (jkuhns@sympatico.ca) and Rhonda Teitel-Payne (rhonda@thestop.org). The walking tour begins at the Green Barn at the northeast corner of Wychwood and Benson (one block south of St. Clair). Those taking part in the morning bus tour will be dropped off near the start of the walking tour before lunch. Details on getting to the Green Arts Barn on one’s own will be provided at registration time. Jane’s Walks are free and open to the public so registration is not required.

Organizers

Joe Nasr – Associate, Centre for Studies in Food Security, Ryerson University – jnasr@ryerson.ca

June Komisar – Assistant Professor, Department of Architectural Science, Ryerson University – jkomisar@ryerson.ca

Mark Gorgolewski – Associate Professor, Department of Architectural Science, Ryerson University – mgorgo@ryerson.ca

Speakers or moderators/discussants

Keynote speakers [for Food for Talk session]:

Jerry Kaufman, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; co-author, APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning (USA)

Andre Viljoen – Lecturer, School of Architecture and Design, Brighton Univ. (UK); partner, Bohn and Viljoen Architects, London; lead editor, *CPULs: Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes*

Other speakers or moderators/discussants – from outside Ontario:

Martin Bailkey – Co-coordinator, North American Urban and Periurban Agriculture Alliance; vice-chair, Dane County Food Council, Madison, WI

Vikram Bhatt – Professor and Director, Minimum Cost Housing Group, School of Architecture, McGill University, Montreal

Nevin Cohen – Assistant Professor, Eugene Lang College, New School for Liberal Arts, New York City

Bruce Darrell – Associate, Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability; Moderator, Food Urbanism blog, Dublin

Marielle Dubbeling – Senior adviser, ETC Urban Agriculture and RUAF-the international network of Resource centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security

Leila Farah – Doctoral candidate, Minimum Cost Housing Group, School of Architecture, McGill University, Montreal

Joongsub Kim – Associate Professor, Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, MI

Nik Luka – Assistant Professor and Urban Design Program Coordinator, School of Architecture and School of Urban Planning, McGill University, Montreal

Domenic Vitiello – Assistant Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Other speakers or moderators/discussants – from within Ontario:

David Anselmi – Vice President for Park Development, Parc Downsview Park

Lauren Baker – Ph.D. candidate, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University; and Food Strategy Consultant, Evergreen Brickworks Project

Adrian Blackwell – Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, the University of Toronto

Sonia Dhir – Watershed Resource Planner, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Lorella Di Cintio – Instructor, School of Interior Design, Ryerson University

Daniel Doz – Dean, Faculty of Communication & Design, Ryerson University

Chris Hardwicke – Associate, Sweeny & Sterling & Finlayson & Co, Toronto

Lorraine Johnson – Author; editor, *Ground: Landscape Architect Quarterly*; Lay Councillor, Ontario Association of Landscape Architects

Diana Lee-Smith – co-founder, Mazingira Institute; former coordinator, African Regional programme, Urban Harvest, Nairobi, Kenya

Nina-Marie Lister – Associate Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

Joe Lobko – Principal, duToit Allsopp Hillier/ duToit Architects, Toronto

John Lubczynski – Principal Planner, Region of Waterloo Community Planning Department

Wendy Mendes – Postdoctoral fellow, Centre for Urban Health Initiatives, University of Toronto; formerly Food Systems Planner, City of Vancouver

Glenn Miller – Director, Education and Research, Canadian Urban Institute, Toronto

Pamela Robinson – Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

Gerda Wekerle – Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University

Gary Wilkins – Humber Watershed Specialist, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Marc Xuereb – Public Health Planner, Region of Waterloo Public Health Department

Partners/Sponsors

The following are the organizations that are partnering to enable this event to happen, including covering some of the associated expenses.

Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Science, Ryerson University (www.feas.ryerson.ca)

Department of Architectural Science, Ryerson University (www.ryerson.ca/arch)

Centre for Studies in Food Security, Ryerson University (www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity)

School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University (www.ryerson.ca/surp/)

North American Urban and Periurban Agriculture Alliance (www.foodsecurity.org/ua_alliance.html)

Parc Downsview Park (www.pdp.ca)

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (www.trca.on.ca)

Additional details

This symposium is the first of a series of activities expected over the next two years linking food and agriculture issues to design and planning. It involves a growing number of university programs and faculty members (see list of speakers above for a partial list of individuals and institutions). Beyond this symposium, these activities are exploring cooperation possibilities in a number of areas: a journal special issue, exhibitions, conferences, collaborative studios, design competitions, student exchanges, and ultimately a book. We are approaching other entities within Ryerson University as well as other institutions based in Toronto (including the University of Toronto, York University, the Toronto Food Policy Council, the Toronto Society of Architects, the Canadian Urban Institute, Canada Green Building Council, and the Design Exchange) and outside Toronto (including the Canadian Centre for Architecture and the University of Brighton) for potential partnership.

A concurrent exhibition of student work from Ryerson University and other universities, and of designs for projects in and outside Toronto, will take place in conjunction with the symposium. This will be the first of a series of exhibitions around the theme of the symposium currently being planned in several cities.

Registration

Attendance at the Food for Talk event on Friday afternoon (session 1) and the Jane's Walk on Sunday afternoon is free and does not require registration.

Registration is required for the remaining sessions of the symposium and the bus tour.

To register, please go to the symposium website – <http://architecturefood.googlepages.com/home> – to download and send the registration form.

For further information, please write to architecturefood@gmail.com.

ⁱ *Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes: Designing Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Cities*, Andre Viljoen, Editor, Architectural Press, 2005.

ⁱⁱ *Making the Edible Landscape: A Study of Urban Agriculture in Montreal*, Editors: Vikram Bhatt and Rune Kongshaug, MCHG, 2005

ⁱⁱⁱ Food and the City, Karen Franck, editor, *Architectural Design*, vol. 75, no 3, May/June 2005, p 5.