

Getting there: learning from engagement practice on convivial urbanism to develop productive urban landscapes



Associate Professor Susan Parham, University of Hertfordshire

Dr Ferne Edwards, NTDU

Mr Maximilian Manderscheid, BOKU

Our aims

In this paper we reflect on peri-urban food focused initiatives broadly framed around sustainable, convivial urbanism, which have sought to employ highly socially engaged methods for working together on productive urban landscapes.

Notions of what constitutes such landscapes have been informed by range of constructs:

- Convivial green space (Parham, 1992)
- Edible cities (Vitiello, 2011)
- Transect-based agrarian urbanism (Duany, 2011; Isendahl and Smith, 2013)
- Ecological and edible urbanism (Mostafavi and Doherty, 2016), and
- Nature-based solutions (Eggermont et al, 2015; Potschin et al, 2016; Seddon et al, 2020).

Our contentions about productive urban landscapes

Productive urban landscapes approaches share an **applied focus across varied urban space**: from dense city quarters to peri-urban edges

Shared need to develop and reconfigure sustainable productive landscapes and townscapes in diverse spatial settings

All respond to urgent climate change, biodiversity and environmental justice challenges.

We assert that while we may know where we need to go to make and remake productive urban landscapes - how to get there remains an extremely vexed issue despite the rich theoretical framing now available.

The rationale for partnering on productive urban landscapes

In this research presentation we aim to explore how **diverse partners** can construct and shape inclusive programmes that support productive urban landscapes

We focus on ways projects reach a wide audience using design-focused food interventions to peri-urban landscapes to meet everyday food needs and combat food inequality.

We aim to identify what shared characteristics, drivers and barriers within such applied projects can inform sustainable, convivial urbanism.

The productive urban landscape cases

We explore these applied challenges through four primary data-based examples and look at two today:

1. Use of a transition pathway methodology to inform masterplanning in the 'EdiCitNet' project across seven cities including Berlin, Sant Feliu de Llobregat and Šempeter pri Gorici;
2. The Espigoladors gleaning program from Barcelona that redistributes wasted produce from farmers' fields to people in need in the city;
3. An urban design-based food retrofitting project in the new town setting of Hatfield in the United Kingdom; and
4. Food cooperative initiatives connecting citizen consumers with producers in Vienna, Austria.

Case Study: Espigoladors gleaning program in peri-urban Barcelona

- a social enterprise that harvests and redistributes food that would otherwise go to waste, whilst providing educational programs for school children and selling bottled jams and chutneys
- gleaning un-harvested crops from farmers' fields in peri-urban Barcelona to distribute to people in need in the city
- Qs: how to engage volunteers to sustain activities?; how to get fresh produce to people in the city before it rots?



Case Study: Espigoladors gleaning program research process

- 13 interviews with: gleaners (volunteers), farmers, Banco D'Aliments, school program and jam makers
- Meetings with PAA, food gleaning network, researcher in food waste
- User engagements: Attendance at gleaning days. Attended food waste dinners with new organisation established by volunteer



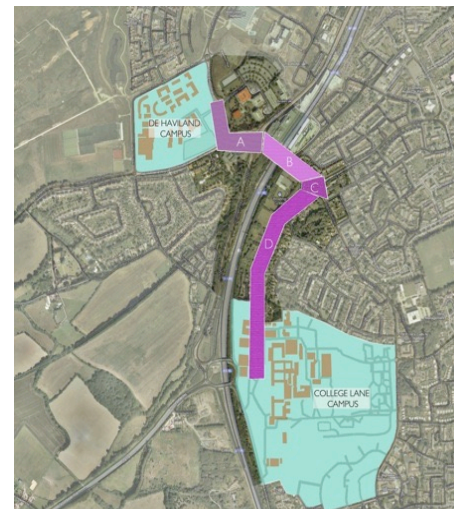
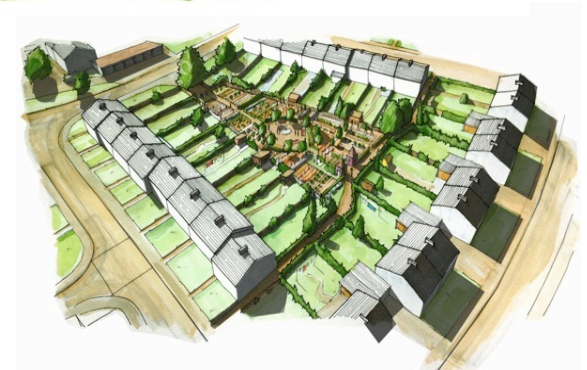
Case Study: Making Space for Food in Hatfield new town on edge of London, UK

- Undertaken over two years to 2016 – with colleague Ben McCabe, implied critique of place shaping effects on food system in planned new town – explored possibilities to reknit food system and town influenced by garden city food model – report and book chapter followed
[https://researchprofiles.herts.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/shrinking-cities-and-food\(53eb85ef-51a8-4817-8f71-9fb4a078fa14\)/export.html](https://researchprofiles.herts.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/shrinking-cities-and-food(53eb85ef-51a8-4817-8f71-9fb4a078fa14)/export.html)
- Qualitative, mixed methods approach started by doing baseline research about existing food conditions
- Consulted community and institutional stakeholders about food needs and ideas including community groups, council, university
- Mapped foodspace in new town, defined sites and developed urban design-based interventions along the food chain in a New Town context – possibly wider lessons



Making Space for Food: research outcomes

- Used convivial green space (Parham, 1992) agricultural transect (Duany, 2011) and sprawl repair (Tachieva, 2010) design approach sympathetic to garden city model
- Specific interventions including reviving mid-block allotment spaces and bringing 'excess' green space related to 'Radburn' influenced layouts into productive use
- Reworking neighbourhood greenspace as food space – such as Pond Croft community garden near Hatfield New Town Centre
- Reworking new town centre market space and village square in Old Hatfield Village as food space, and 'potager' visualization for centre of Mill Green hamlet near Hatfield New Town
- Proposed an inter-campus 'food way' between two sites for University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield New Town and turning business park into productive food space as transitional repair strategy



Illustrations by Ben McCabe

Our conclusions: drawing together lessons from productive urban landscape projects

We conclude that the lessons drawn from these practice-based examples can:

1. Focus on modes of collaborative planning and placemaking (that may be urban design led), which demonstrate how can integrate agriculture and the urban environment in broad range of peri-urban settings;
2. Offer practical community-centred, spatialised placemaking scenarios/proposals as basis for implementation in different places; and
3. Thus underpin 'getting there' in supporting moves towards more sustainable land use planning and placemaking for food-centred urban edge future.