

Continuous
Productive
Urban
Landscape Research

Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)

2nd EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLANNING CONFERENCE

Friday 29 - Saturday 30 October 2010

Urban Performance Group

School of Architecture and Design

Faculty of Arts

University of Brighton

Keynote Speakers

Professor June Komisar

Ryerson University, Toronto

Architect, member of the Toronto Food Policy Council and a co-curator for the exhibit *Carrot City: Designing for Urban Agriculture*.

Dr Joe Nasr

Ryerson University, Toronto

Associate of the Centre for Studies in Food Security, and Co-coordinator of MetroAg, North American Alliance for Urban Agriculture.

Professor Tim Lang,

City University, London

Professor of Food Policy.

Carolyn Steel

Architect, Columnist, Lecturer and Author of *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives*.

INTRODUCTION

Planning for sustainable food production and consumption is an increasingly important issue for policymakers, planners, designers, farmers, suppliers, activists, business and scientists alike. In the wider contexts of global climate change, a world population of 9 billion and growing, competing food production systems and diet-related public health concerns, are there new paradigms for urban and rural planning capable of supporting sustainable and equitable food systems?

This conference will promote cross-disciplinary discussions between active researchers and practitioners in response to this question, and related issues articulated during the first European Sustainable Food Planning Conference held in 2009 in Almere.

A report from the Almere conference may be downloaded from: <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/aesop2>
Working at a range of scales and with a variety of practical and theoretical models, we will review and elaborate definitions of sustainable food systems, and begin to define ways of achieving them.



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Four themes are defined as entry-points into the discussion of 'sustainable food planning':

- (1) Urban Agriculture** **(2) Integrating Health, Environment and Society**
(3) Food in Urban Design and Planning **(4) Urban Food Governance**

Conference themes will enable articulation of the manifold problems associated with, and possible solutions for, food provision in urbanizing societies in developed and developing countries.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

The conference follows the successful format used in Almere – a short intense event allowing ample time for questions and discussion. The conference will be conducted in English and translation facilities will not be available.

Peer reviewed proceedings including context setting essays will be published following the conference by Wageningen Academic Publishers.

The conference fee is £210.

This includes a copy of the proceedings (hardback, mailed directly to delegates), refreshments, lunch on Friday and Saturday, and a buffet dinner on Friday.

Food will be prepared using locally sourced ingredients.

Please note that the conference fee does not include accommodation, but advice on suitable accommodation will be provided at the registration stage.

Unfortunately we are unable to provide reduced student fees or offer travel grants.

CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

End MARCH 2010: Email & web notification of conference and call for abstracts

End MAY 2010: Submission deadline for abstracts

Mid JUNE 2010: Confirmation of acceptance to authors

Mid AUGUST 2010: Draft Papers submitted

End SEPTEMBER 2010: Reviewers comments returned

29 OCTOBER 2010: Final papers (circa 8-10 pages) delivered to conference

29/30 OCTOBER 2010: CONFERENCE (publication post conference)

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Professor Dr. Kevin Morgan, Professor of Governance and Development, City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University (AESOP)

Prof Dr ir J.S.C. Wiskerke, Chair and Professor of Rural Sociology, Wageningen University

Prof Arnold van der Valk, Land Use Planning Group, Wageningen University (AESOP)

Andre Viljoen, School of Architecture & Design, Faculty of Arts, University of Brighton

Katrin Bohn, Bohn & Viljoen Architects

Assisted by Mikey Tomkins, PhD candidate, Faculty of Arts, University of Brighton

Conference web site: <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/aesop2>



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CONFERENCE THEMES & ABSTRACTS

Each theme is elaborated below, and it is for these that we seeking abstracts no longer than 500 words.

These should be emailed to Andre Viljoen < a.viljoen@brighton.ac.uk > by 31 May 2010.

1) Urban agriculture

Convenors: Professor Dr. Han Wiskerke and Dr. Jan-Willem van der Schans (Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University)

Urban agriculture receives more and more attention today, in the developed as well as the developing world. Urban agriculture is the growing of food in and around cities, using urban resources such as vacant plots of urban land, run-off water, volunteer labour, etc. and producing goods and services for the urban market.

Cities all around the world are exploring the possibility of reconnecting food production (agriculture) and urban life, either by helping to re-establish the link between city dwellers and peri-urban farms or by allowing or creating spaces for food production within the city limits. These places may involve private allotment gardens, school gardens or community gardens, but there is also an increased interest in city farms (run by a professional farmer and /or a dedicated group of citizens).

To understand the rising interest in urban food production in the western world, it is vital to study the social and economic context in which these initiatives take place. Although the issue of access to food is important in certain cases (eg. food deserts), it is clear that urban agriculture also addresses other urban problems, such as the deterioration of quality of life, the social exclusion of people with difficult or no access to the labour market, economic marginalisation and environmental degradation. If urban agriculture can provide so many benefits to city life, the question remains why there still are so few examples in practice of food production in cities as a systematic approach to (re-)build greener, more sustainable metropolises.

There is of course the problem of competing claims to space, and food production as such never was, and probably never will be, an activity earning as much revenue per square or cubic meter as other urban activities. There are also practical problems such as contamination of soil, air or water, competition from cheap food produced conventionally, and restrictive government policies in the field of physical planning, nuisance law, food safety and retailing.

The aim of this workshop is to find out how existing initiatives in cities have circumvented these barriers, and to address the real and potential contribution of urban agriculture to contemporary city life. We welcome empirical as well as more conceptual contributions about the following questions:

- Does urban farming represent a substantive alternative to mainstream food production or is its role more symbolic, a way to reconnect urban dwellers with food production?
- Which parties are promoting urban farming and for what reasons? Parties involved may be city government (departments and agencies), but also building societies, real estate developers, and charities.



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- How do urban farms operate in practice, where do they get their inputs, what do they sell as products or services, what is the business model? And how does this model differ from conventional farming or multifunctional farming in rural areas?
- What is the actual (and potential) productive capacity of cities and urban fringes? To what extent have urban farms actually been able to capture ecological benefits, create employment opportunities, combat hunger and poverty, and strengthen community networks?
- How does the network of urban agriculture contribute to the resilience of the metropolitan food system? Is there competition with conventional food production or is there some form of complementarity?
- What typologies of urban agriculture can be developed? Urban agriculture initiatives differ widely in terms of size and shape as well as character and impact. This diversity makes it difficult for policy makers to develop more generic policies for urban food production.
- What are the typical production systems that are used in urban space (as compared to production systems developed for rural areas)? Urban farming systems tend to be small scale, labour-intensive and highly productive. Where does the knowledge to grow food in cities come from? Who develops the technology?


2) Integrating health, environment and society

Convenors: Associate Professor Dr Bettina Bock (Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University) and Martin Caraher (Professor of Food and Health Policy, City University London)

This theme departs from the assumption that food is a topical issue because its relation to human health and wellbeing is considered 'common knowledge' in modern society. There is escalating anxiety about food safety, but also interest in the growing, sourcing and cooking of food. Public interest in healthy food may offer a promising new route of entrance into the discussion of environmental sustainability, but there remain questions about how the 'new food planning' is split along north/south, class and income-related divides, and how it may in fact be a distraction from questioning the dominant industrial food chain.

In this workshop we will investigate how the integration of health and environment can inform a larger critique of industrial food production and how reforms might be made without widening inequalities. Papers of various kinds and direction are welcome. They could report on (academic) research, policy analysis or present new activities and projects by policymakers, activists or other practitioners. We mention a few topics to serve as an inspiration, but this should not be considered an exclusive or prescriptive list:

- The relevance of human health in alternative food movements.
- The extent of alternative food movements' distraction from changes in the dominant food system.
- Human health as a new slogan for the green movement.
- How much debate about agricultural policy is masked by promotion of interest in food as a "domestic pastime".
- Sustainable environment = healthy environment...



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- Unprocessed/natural food as respite from the 'artificiality of urban life'.
- Public interest in health as a way to support local food production.
- Ensuring that local/regional food projects impact on the wider policy issues of food supply.
- How to integrate public health, agricultural and environmental policies?
- Is this all just a new way to appeal to high and middle income groups, while those on low income are left to the dominant food system?
- How alternative is alternative and alternative for whom?
- Alternative food networks - a new social capital for the middle classes?
- Experiences with food policies that aim at an integration of health and environment.
- How to plan urban policy that supports the sustainable production and consumption of healthy food?

3) Food in urban and regional planning and design

Convenors: Professor Dr Arnold van der Valk (Land Use Planning Chair, Wageningen University), Andre Viljoen (Senior Lecturer, University of Brighton), Katrin Bohn (Bohn & Viljoen Architects)

The food system has been a stranger to the planning field for too long according to a paper by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000). Now the situation has changed drastically. Food planning projects are appearing in many countries, often inspired by best practice municipal initiatives such as the *Havana Food System*, the *Toronto Green Belt*, or social enterprise programs like London's *Growing Communities* or Will Allen's *Milwaukee Growing Power*.

Concurrently architects, designers and artists have been exploring issues related to food and food spaces. Although there has been a rise in interest in urban agriculture, vertical farming and "growing your own", the challenges these pose require addressing if they are to have a significant and measurable impact on planning and design and become viable strategies for cities in the future.

What is lacking now is a sound planning and design framework for embedding sustainable food systems in urban and rural areas. The founding AESOP thematic conference in Almere delivered the building blocks for a research programme into such a framework. We now invite scholars and practitioners to add to this with innovative strategies and experience from practice in planning, urban and rural design, architecture, urban agriculture, landscape management and landscape design. We are particularly interested in facilitating dialogues cross the disciplines of planning, architecture and landscape.

Likely themes addressing the planning and design of sustainable food systems include:

- New paradigms and strategies for urban and rural planning and design.
- Definitions of sustainable metropolitan agricultural systems, taking account of urban and rural production and relationships.
- Case studies.
- Strategies for existing and new urban, suburban and rural development.
- Urban and rural land use typologies – multifunctional use addressing, for example, productivity, water, waste and recreation.
- The role of scenario building, visioning and public engagement.



- Urban agriculture as a nomadic (opportunistic) land use, and/or as permanent essential infrastructure.
- Mapping methodologies, identifying opportunities and obstacles.
- Urban and rural social, environmental and economic capacity to support sustainable food strategies.
- Joining up food distribution chains and the management of waste.
- Infrastructure requirements scale and impact.
- Trans-disciplinary language and practice to facilitate understanding between planners and designers.

4) Urban food governance.


Convenors: Professor Dr Kevin Morgan (Professor of Governance and Development, City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University), Dr ing. Petra Derkzen (Assistant Professor, Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University)

With over half the world's population now deemed to be "urbanised", cities are assuming a larger role in political debates about the security and sustainability of the global food system. The *Urban Food Governance* workshop is primarily designed to help us better understand the roles that cities can and should play in fashioning sustainable food systems, as well as what they are already doing in the context of the urban food planning movement, one of the most rapidly growing social movements in the world today.

The multifunctional character of food means that food planning is necessarily a multi-dimensional activity with profound implications for a wide array of other public policies, not least public health, social justice, ecological integrity, transport planning, energy, water, economic development and cultural identities. From an urban governance perspective, the multifunctional character of food presents both problems and opportunities. One of the biggest problems is how city governments overcome the departmental silos into which policy-making is split so as to design and deliver sustainable food strategies that are by definition holistic, integrated and multi-dimensional. On the other hand, one of the biggest opportunities lies in the convening power of food: urban food strategies have the potential to bring people together from very different professional, social and ethnic backgrounds, and such cultural diversity nurtures the cosmopolitan localism that typifies the liveliest and most congenial urban environments.

This workshop will address the theory, policy and practice of urban food governance and it is especially interested in the following questions and issues:

- The scope for/limits to urban food strategies in developed and developing countries.
- To what extent are cities acting as local laboratories for national food policies?
- How are cities striving to overcome the segmented and hierarchical departmental silos that stymie holistic urban food policy-making?
- How are urban planners speaking to/collaborating with other relevant groups in their municipal government?



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- How are city governments relating to/partnering with their local civil societies, for example, by forming Food Policy Councils?
 - Can city governments play a more enabling role to promote social enterprises, for example, through community asset transfers to help the latter to organise community growing schemes or deliver nutritious food to under-served areas?
 - Can transnational networks like ICLEI (*Local Governments for Sustainability*) and *Resilient Cities* (which held its first Congress in Bonn in May 2010) help cities to learn from each other by disseminating good practice?
 - What is the function of procurement strategies in the development of urban food governance?
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