

Chapter 8

Foodscape and Food Urbanism in Europe: The Urban-Rural Interface



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8.1 Introduction

The central contention of this chapter is that the urban edges and regions surrounding European cities offer a dynamic set of foodscapes with critical urbanism implications. Some of food's most complex interplay with spatiality happens at the urban edge, however that edge is defined, itself a subject of contention. As urban conurbations intrude into traditional agricultural foodspace, and reshape socio-spatial practices in relation to food, maintaining and retrofitting peri-urban (and wider regional) areas towards sustainable urbanism becomes an increasingly challenging and necessary task for conceptualising and undertaking placemaking (Marsden 2013). This is the case for spatial design and for the planning and governance of place, for which it is argued there is a need to build a new food paradigm (Marsden and Morley 2014).

In this chapter primary research examples are drawn from a range of European edge urbanism conditions in food terms, although material from wider regions is also explored where pertinent to the theme. Fieldwork findings are from new town food retrofitting in the United Kingdom (north of London) and the revival of gastronomic landscapes on urban edges in Italy (around Florence) and France (around Montpellier). This primary data is framed and supported by a secondary review of research and applied practice from European peri-urban and rural contexts to delve into designing and planning urban edge food and urbanism territory. The chapter concludes with suggestions for the future to underpin and extend European peri-urban (and to an extent) regional foodscapes as sustainable urbanism.

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8.2 Framing the Chapter

What are the urban edges at issue here? The nature and extent of the peri-urban has been subject to a great deal of consideration in geography and cognate disciplines over the last fifty years. While urban morphologists have traced changing land use over time on the urban edge (Conzen 1960), defining exactly what the urban edge constitutes, or even what it should be called, has proved difficult given its complexity (Qviström 2007; Buxton and Choy 2007). Theorists have asserted the claims of the peri-urban ‘borderlands’ to being distinct in character rather than just in between the city and the countryside (Stilgoe 1998; Bunker 2002; Boume et al. 2003; Houston 2005; Simon et al. 2006; Madsen et al. 2010; Gonçalves et al. 2017). In part, the contested nature of the urban edge reflects the changing nature of urbanism itself as many cities have rapidly grown in spatial extent while others have shrunk (Neill and Schlappa 2016); and the forms that growth has taken have altered physically, socially and economically.

At the same time, theorists caution against treating this peri-urban zone as only requiring analysis of conversion of agricultural land to urban sprawl (Audirac 1999), much as problematising sprawl urbanism remains a legitimate area for research and practice (Frumkin et al. 2004; Phelps et al. 2006; Couch et al. 2007; Hennig et al. 2015; Richardson and Chang-Hee 2017). The conceptual challenges of the fast transforming, dynamic and jumbled urban region has seen it described in a wide range of syllogisms including exurbia, edge cities, superburbia, technoburb and megalopolis (Lapping and Furuseth 1999; Bontje and Burdack 2005; Buxton and Choy 2007).

While the intrusion of the urban is a fascinating aspect of the development of the urban edge and wider regions around cities, in this chapter the predominant focus is on the food side of the equation. Turning to food as part of this spatial and economic zone, theorists argue for recognition of the very place-specific foodspace implications of both the urban edge and rural spaces (Losada et al. 1998; Briquel and Collicard 2005; Trefon 2009; Opitz et al. 2016; Roe et al. 2016). There have been attempts over the long term to conceptualise and respond effectively to the interplay between rural and peri-urban food production and urban consumption, including from the work of Patrick Geddes (Meller 1994; Talen 2002) and the 1920s bioregionalism of the Regional Planning Association of America (Church 2014). Most recently attention has been drawn to such foodspace through alternative food geographies and networks (Maye et al. 2007; Jarosz 2008) and metropolitan regional food policy (Pothukuchi 2009), while more design based approaches are explored later in the chapter.

An era of multifunctional agriculture in rural regions and on the edge of cities at the rural-urban interface (Zasada 2011; Zasada et al. 2011) is matched by a burgeoning interest in urban agriculture (Brown and Jameton 2000). Theories of alternative food geographies and networks, shorter supply chains and localised food systems are helping to conceptualise and reframe how edge food space can be shaped or retrofitted along more sustainable lines than is apparent within

mainstream food production and related arrangements (Parrot et al. 2002; Goodman 2004; Ilbery and Maye 2005; Maye et al. 2007; McClintock 2010; Paül and McKenzie 2013; Kneafsey et al. 2013).

The concept of the foodshed is relevant here. Defined as «*the geographical area from which a population derives its food supply*» (Peters et al. 2009, p. 2), the foodshed is grounded in attempts to give spatial and resilience form to the way city and country interconnect in relation to food (Hedden 1929; Getz 1991; Kloppenburg et al. 1996; Feagan 2007; Horst and Gaolach 2015). There is a range of interesting contemporary place-based work on how sustainable foodsheds operate (and can be supported) in different urban-rural context (Mougeot 1994; Tegegne et al. 2006; Friedmann 2014; Lengnick et al. 2015; Zasada et al. 2017).

Theorists are developing GIS based techniques to understand just how much urban edge agricultural land is actually used for agriculture (Verhoeve et al. 2015). Although such space is not expected to be able to provide for all of a city's food needs (Anglade et al. 2016), it is argued there is plenty of scope for 'recoupling' production and consumption in peri-urban areas, as for example around Paris (Tedesco et al. 2017). Such work can be supported by techniques including landscape plans and audits (Selman 2002; Aalders and Morrice 2012) and natural capital and ecosystems services approaches to creating, maintaining and retrofitting sustainable food systems (Elson et al. 2010; Bommarco et al. 2013).

There is also a theoretical and applied interplay with urban design based approaches with a focus on sustainable urbanism (Farr 2008) and sprawl avoidance or repair (Talen 2002; Dunham-Jones and Williamson 2009; Tachieva 2011). Here the conceptual tradition stemming from regional landscape characterisation and design is critical (Geddes 1915; McHarg 1969; Neuman 2000), including the transect and more latterly the food transect (Duany 2002; Bohl and Plater-Zyberk 2006). As Duany and DPZ (2011, p. 258) have noted, «*The transect is a fractal that allows design to integrate across scales: from regional tiers, to community codes, to architectural standards. At the largest scale, that of the region, the transect geographically allocates urban-to-rural tiers to accept varying degrees of environmental protection and development*».

Using a transect-based approach, some designers seek to shape space from urban to rural according to sustainable urbanism principles, with a central emphasis on food (Duany 2002). The food transect shows how, in each transect defined condition of urban space, a range of food possibilities can be built into place design and use over time, from a limited range of window boxes and roof gardens in the most urban conditions to more widely mixed and spatially extensive food-related land uses at the urban edge (Duany and DPZ 2011). Similarly food as a planning strategy and policy matter that connects to the good governance of place has emerged over the last twenty-five years (Parham 1992, 1993a; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000; Pothukuchi 2009; Morgan 2009; Wiskerke 2009; Donovan et al. 2011). Although, as Vitiello and Brinkley (2014) note, it has a much longer 'hidden' history, this comparatively more recent metropolitan regional planning emphasis suggests that increasingly there is acknowledgement that foodspace

requires active planning in support. Moreover, this is an issue that ties urban and rural together as it did in and around traditional cities to which we now turn.

8.3 Historic and Gastronomic Context

Economic historians have noted the long-term interplay between urban and rural land uses in traditional urbanism, with productive space always sprinkled through and found at the edges of towns in both European and other contexts (Braudel 1988; Björklund 2010). Mok et al. (2014), for example, describe fascinatingly the very long-term interplay between urban and rural land uses in Japanese cities and peri-urban areas. Place was understood as critical to what food was produced, as in the Lea Valley cucumbers of London, or the vegetables of Edo districts in Japan which reflect where they were grown, such as “Nerima-daikon” (radish), “Komatsu-na” (rape), and “Yanaka-shouga” (ginger) (Mok et al. 2014, quoting Yokohari et al. 2010).

More broadly, urban-rural symbiosis has driven urban development through the creation of surpluses, benefitted urban dwellers and agricultural producers, and fashioned very long term food landscapes around many European cities and towns (Kostof 1992, 1991; Parham 2015). These edges have had a particularly critical role to play in ensuring sufficient urban food provisioning can be found within walkable range of the urban centre (Kostof 1992). Peri-urban space has for millennia been used for pasturing animals, dairying, fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, viticulture and cropping among other productive land uses: it has also provided space for food processing and manufacture, storage, sale and consumption (Kostof 1992).

Turning to the modernist era, Ebenezer Howard’s late 19th century model for garden cities reflected this requirement, putting food space and a spatially, economically and environmentally based local food system, at the heart of his proposals for a constellation of garden city settlements (Howard 1898; Hall and Ward 1998; Parham 2016; Parham and Abelman 2018). Food spaces were interwoven through the town but also formed much of the basis for a productive greenbelt that formed a growth boundary around each settlement (Howard 1898; Parham 2015). The post *Second World War* new towns created around Europe and elsewhere tried to build foodspace into a more limited extent (Alexander 2009), such as mid-block allotment gardens often later to fall into disuse and disrepair. In the United Kingdom at least, new towns were arguably less successful in integrating foodscapes into their urbanism than had been the garden cities that preceded and influenced them. More broadly, suburban areas in the 20th century global north continued to support some food production despite a modernist shift to consumption in domestic garden space particularly in the latter half of the century (Gaynor 2006; Parham 2015).

In the global south, meanwhile, direct spatial, economic and ecological food-space connections at the urban edge have remained in place to varying extents (Marsh 1998; Laquian 2005; Redwood 2009). Yet even within such predominantly

traditional urbanism urban edge productivity is under threat (Cheung 2007). In a European context, which is the focus of this chapter, the loss of productive and related land uses making up such foodspace is further along a path of disconnection from ecological and resilience realities. There are some exceptions to this predominant situation of foodspace loss such as a revival in a 19th century tradition of allotments which can be found across a number of European urban edges under different names (Parham 2015). Other examples are notable for their uniqueness, such as the *hortillonages* abutting Amiens which have been given special patrimony status through UNESCO (Jones 1997; Parham 2015). The socio-spatial practices associated with such foodspace in consumption terms, such as the *guinguettes* of peri-urban Paris (Brennan 1984) or the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall on the then edge of London that gave rise to the European ‘Wauxhalls’ (Conlin 2008), are of continued but now largely historical interest.

Gastronomers have decried the loss of connectivity as urban development on the edges of European towns and cities replaced and destroyed productive rural uses at urban edges (Grigson 1978; Parham 1992, 2015). Especially from the latter part of the 20th century onwards, the nature of European cities shifted towards sprawling forms of urban development (Munoz 2003; Catalán et al. 2008; Salvati and Sabbi 2011). These development forms (often referred to by the catch-all term ‘sprawl’) have taken up land previously used for forms of agricultural production and related land uses (Couch et al. 2007; Parham 2015).

From the rural side, a presumption of primacy has emerged by which agricultural producers and other landholders have assumed that urban development is likely to replace their food growing activities (Bunker and Houston 2003; Cook and Harder 2013). Accepting they are farming «*suburbs in waiting*» (Bunker and Holloway 2001, p. 13) and believing they have ‘development rights’ to sell farm land at urban development prices, farmers have sought to benefit financially from what is seen as an inevitable change in land use (Bunker and Houston 1992, p. 24). On the urban growth side of the equation, rising incomes and a spatial range predicated on car access has widened the territory within which city dwellers feel able to settle, sometimes to embark on forms of ‘sustainable’ small-scale farming themselves (Beilin et al. 2015).

8.4 Urban Edges as Foodspace Today

If the urban edge has transformed to predominantly non-productive space in the city’s countryside (Bryant and Johnston 1992) this has not been a simple causative relationship of shift from rural to urban (Murdoch and Marsden 2013; Parham 2015). Rather, complex shifts in the interplay between productive and unproductive space, and transforming socio-spatial practices in relation to food and urbanism, are evident on European cities’ and towns’ urban edges (Brueckner 2001; Boume et al. 2003). A cost-price squeeze in farming has led to both higher levels of productivity and farm restructuring and diversification into non-farm activities as part of

'post productivism' (Bunker and Houston 1992; Tacoli 1998; Lanjouw and Lanjou 2001; Briquel and Collicard 2005; Reardon et al. 2007; Preasthom and Kristensen 2007). Developing land use multifunctionality (Zasada et al. 2011) and other trends including rural gentrification and counter-urbanisation are also in evidence (Butt 2014).

Yet edge of town locations in Europe are often best suited to highly intensive, high-value agriculture, horticulture and viticulture (Opitz et al. 2016) and can contribute to shorter food supply chains (Aubry and Kebir 2013) and well as other resilience benefits. It is at urban edges that new products and markets which underpin farm activities may be developed, and their economic value can sometimes in turn protect these landscapes from urban redevelopment (Parham 1996, 2015, 2012). The resultant sustainability and conviviality benefits related to gastronomy are seen as critical to resilient futures (Miele and Murdoch 2002; Regoli et al. 2011; Parham 2014; De Zeeuw and Dreschsel 2015).

The sustainability implications of relatively unconstrained urban growth are increasingly understood at a theoretical level (Hough 1984; Rees 1992; Beatley 2000; Tjallingi 2000; Wheeler and Beatley 2014). As noted in Parham (2015), concepts and tools such as ecological footprinting, ecosystem services and urban metabolism modelling help conceptualise, measure and respond to the impacts including in relation to food (Allen 2003; Grimm et al. 2008; Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012). These are more and more important as cities absorb food and other resources from areas far beyond their boundaries, and create carbon and other effects which impact widely (Wackernagel and Rees 1996; Giradet 1999; Parham 2015, p. 201). Allen (2003, p. 140) has pointed out the particularly pernicious effects on peri-urban areas of expanding urban footprints.

Attitudinal surveys suggest urbanites value peri-urban areas as multifunctional landscape areas they do not wish to see solely developed for housing (Ivesa and Kendal 2013). Yet, in practice, housing and other urban land uses are replacing farmland at a huge rate, while agriculture is permeated with assumptions that proximity to the places where food is consumed is no longer required. In both cases it is argued that there is a lack of applied acknowledgement of, or sufficient response to, the negative environmental effects of dominant practices in urbanism and in food production (Hough 1984; Flannery 1994; Ilbery et al. 1997; Allen 2003; Chen 2007; Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012). This matters not just in gastronomic landscape terms (Hardy 1993, 1994) but for food resilience, especially given sharpening climate change effects (Aguilar et al. 2003; Paul and Tonts 2005; Torres et al. 2007).

Today the urban edges of European cities and towns are critical sites for the growing phenomenon of gastronomic tourism (Parham 1995; Hjalager and Corigliano 2000; Hjalager and Richards 2004; Urry and Larsen 2011; Sidali et al. 2011; Cánoves and de Morais 2011; Long 2012; Parasecoli and de Abreu e Lima 2012). Sustainable gastronomy may be seen as a tourism product (Scarpato 2002; Hjalager 2002: 21) but its spatial and design dimensions may have been underplayed (Parham 2015). Richards (2015) has argued that there has been a shift from gastronomy as a rather 'themed' aspect of the experience economy to one where

gastronomically focused tourism experiences are co-created by producers and consumers, and finally to a richer situation in which communities are developed around gastronomy. Richards (2015) situates this as a shift from foodies to foodscapes.

Framed in this way the peri-urban can be seen as increasingly important, as it offers a synchronicity between tourists and artisan agriculture and other supposedly niche food land uses (Boniface 2003). Urban edges can be particularly rich territory for gastronomically informed restaurants and other foodspaces such as wineries, mills, farm shops, nurseries, apiaries, markets, artisan product production spaces, wine caves, tasting rooms, and accommodation, sometimes in an *agritourismo*, ecotourism, or slow tourism mode (Ignatov and Smith 2006; Fullagar et al. 2012; Parham 2015, p. 208).

The evolution of such foodspaces reflects both changing socio-spatial food practices and relocalising food efforts occurring in a wide variety of places (reported in Parham 2015, p. 249), bringing together new kinds of producer groupings, trade circuits and shorter supply chains (Renting et al. 2003; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Fort et al. 2007). As part of a gastronomic imaginary, these peri-urban spaces are the subject for cookbooks, television programmes, online accounts, and magazine and newspaper articles about particular chefs' recipes and restaurants; a sign of the 'growing virtual life of the peri-urban in the gastronomic imagination' (Parham 2015, p. 208; Scott and Duncan 2016; Frost et al. 2016).

This material and virtual positioning has attracted criticism in Foucauldian terms as marginalising working class foods (de Jong and Varley 2017), and seen as playing out of conspicuous consumption and tastefulness in Bourdieu's sense of establishing an individual habitus that may travel from home with the individual (Lee et al. 2014). It is also criticised for potentially '*erasing untidy or less appealing contexts such as sprawl housing, autoroutes or distribution landscapes in the vicinity*' (Parham 2015, p. 208). Thus, within overall arguments that localising food systems is required at the urban edge (and the broader region), gastronomic tourism can be situated as reinforcing or at least failing to address inequality. It follows that proposals and practices aimed at re-regionalism of food systems may fail to deal effectively with social and spatial inequalities (Donald et al. 2010; Goodman et al. 2010).

Yet, insofar as this discourse deals with spatial aspects, it tends to assume all food-focused land uses are at the luxury end of the tourism market. It underplays considerable gastronomic landscape and sustainable economy diversity and the benefits that a broad range of different foodspaces underpins. Moreover, a range of peri-urban and wider regional foodspaces that are neither exclusive nor expensive are challenging global commodity chain norms. These are increasingly evident along the food chain, from production through processing and distribution to consumption (Renting et al. 2003). Through such foodscapes, place is seen as a basis for food traditions, authenticity and quality (Bessière 1998; Feagan 2007; Sims 2009).

Part of the basis for asserting the primacy of place comes from its links to food's *terroir* and appellation based methods and places of production. Defined as «*an*

area or terrain, usually rather small, whose soil and micro-climate impart distinctive qualities to food products» (Barham 2003, p. 131) *terroir* is famously reflected in products like wine and cheese but other products (like Breton oysters and *sarrasin* [buckwheat], or the *lardo* and *cannellini* of Tuscany) are also products which come from particular gastronomic landscapes (Roux and Roux 1989; Barkat and Vermignon 2006).

Various forms of geographical identification of specific foods and food products have been developed across a range of European countries (Bessi re 1998: 25). These indicators of local character and quality include geographical indications (GIs) and other place based designations, like *appellation contr lee*, *Appellation d'Origine Contr lee* (AOC), *l'appellation Montagne*, DOCG, *Protected Denomination of Origin* (PDO), and *Protected Geographical Indication* (PGI) (Parham 2015, p. 259). As Meiburger and Weichbold (2010, p. 1626) note: «*Protected status differentiates and reflects the fragility of such agricultural systems and products in the face of food commercialisation*». These in turn support «*small-scale economic health, gastronomic landscape preservation, ecology and regional food tourism*» (Parham 2015, p. 260). Famous examples of this encompass the area in central Northern Italy which *parmigiano reggiano* is produced (de Roest and Menghi 2000, p. 440).

Globally there is an intense fight underway between such place-based approaches and the delocalising thrust of *World Trade Organisation* rules and international trade negotiations including the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP) and the *Trans-Pacific Partnership* (TTP). In this area a sharp difference exists between a European focus on regionality and ethical production contrasting with technocratic and placeless American perspectives (van Otterloo 2005, p. 259). That is not to say there is unanimity within Europe where issues of regional and national food distinctiveness remain in play (Castellanos and Bergstresser 2006). Yet in places where industrialised agriculture has become completely dominant, the notion of retrofitting *terroir* has emerged as a valuable way of reverse engineering agrarian, social, gastronomic and environmental stewardship of place towards more sustainable, localised ends (Paxson 2010, p. 444, in Parham 2015; Gyim thy and Mykletun 2017).

The *Slow Food* movement, founded in Piedmont in 1986, has sought to assert place-based approaches to food, with an emphasis on territorial patrimony, quality and conviviality (Petrini et al. 2005; Mayer and Knox 2006). *Slow Food* has been criticised on the grounds that some individual tourists incorporate its narratives into their elite tourism experience (Chrzan 2006), and that it has arguably been deradicalised as invoked in some American circumstances (Paxson 2005). However, this argued appropriation does not undermine its broader 'in principle' and practice claims as a movement. *Slow Food*, and the related *Citt  Slow* established in 1999, can be argued to exemplify a number of the urbanism points being made in this chapter through a focus on 'practical aesthetics' covering local distinctiveness in cuisine, materials, products, planning and place design (Miele and Murdoch 2002: 318). For example, to join the *Citt  Slow network* (which in 2017 covered 236 cities in 30 countries), cities must meet a range of requirements set out in the association's

Charter, which cover design, planning and governance for food-focused urbanism in towns, on urban edges and in surrounding regions.

8.5 Two Examples from European Applied Research

8.5.1 *Retrofitting for Food in Hatfield, Hertfordshire*

This theory based discussion offer a context for exploring examples from practice in the United Kingdom, France and Italy to consider aspects of the urbanism at play in urban edge and regional foodscapes. The first of these is a recent transect-based food-retrofitting example from primary research by the author in and around the edge of Hatfield, a new town in the county of Hertfordshire, just north of London in the United Kingdom. In ‘edge’ terms, new towns are themselves often located at the perimeters of major cities, as in this case close to London. Social, economic, environmental and spatial difficulties have emerged over time, in part associated with their modernist design, including expensive to maintain and underused green spaces (Alexander 2009).

The town of Hatfield is argued to be undergoing processes of spatial and economic shrinkage but also elements of growth at the same time. Some are experiencing the town as an expanding, economically advantageous space while others are suffering the ongoing shrinkage effects of de-industrialisation (Parham and McCabe 2016; Parham 2016). Initial analysis of conditions in and around Hatfield suggested that the new town offers a number of opportunities for food-centred retrofitting including on its own edges, such as orchards, allotments, gardens, and markets, in keeping with gastronomic strategy (Parham 1992), convivial green space (Parham 1993b) and food transect ideas noted earlier in the chapter.

The researchers sought to understand how foodspace interventions based on sprawl repair techniques could help underpin more sustainable urbanism in the new town in future within a range of different transect ‘continuum’ conditions from town centre through to peri-urban rural space (Dunham-Jones and Williamson 2009; Tachieva 2011; Parham and Abelman 2018). A series of design scenarios were developed for retrofitting existing space that was argued to be dysfunctional or suboptimal in food and urbanism terms. The design approaches made particular reference to European based repair techniques (Vall-Casas et al. 2011). These included the potential to assist those being excluded from affordable, good quality food access and related food resilience benefits, as identified in the town through baseline research (Parham and McCabe 2016; Parham 2016).

To contextualise, the edge of Hatfield New Town has itself undergone a number of design interventions since first being developed in the post war era. Following closure of the large former aerospace industry site located on the north-western edge of Hatfield, a substantial spatial area was remade into a university campus and business park in the international campus-garden-suburb style (Forsyth and Crewe 2010).

This model has been in some ways an economic success story, albeit with largely unacknowledged sustainability externalities caused by its predominantly mono-functional land take, designed-in car dependency, and large-scale, sterile landscape setting. The business park, in particular, contains a large amount of green space but one that only offers this in a very passive form of ‘privately owned public space’ (Schmidt et al. 2011). The manicured, access and use controlled landscapes abutting office buildings, very big car parks and major roads are primarily for viewing from offices. Sign boards clearly state its status as private space, and that all ball games, picnics or other uses are forbidden. The other substantial open space is of greyfield tracts (former aerodrome land) still awaiting back office and large shed type developments. These spaces are used for informal pedestrian cut-throughs to make marginally more walkable the vehicle-oriented superblock road layout. It was argued that despite its economic success, the business park’s townscape related paucity of food options (production and consumption) meant that it constituted a kind of rich food desert.

One of the proposed retrofits responded directly to this problematic food context with proposals for a transitional retrofitting scenario. In work published in 2016 it was proposed that both these landscapes, and the broader greyfield areas, could be planted productively, including with allotments, community gardens and orchards where appropriate (Fig. 8.1) (Parham and McCabe 2016). These would be managed but also offer community access and foraging opportunities. Given the sheer scale of the spaces it was suggested that an ornamental *potager* garden or gardens in the style of Bosmelet in Normandy, where vegetables, fruits and herbs are both ornamental and picked for use, might be considered as part of the forageable landscape design.

This retrofitting proposal was offered as a short-to-medium term intervention, prior to the more desirable outcome of a complete remaking of the business park as sustainable, walkable, food-centred urbanism fully embracing sprawl repair principles as they apply to edge of town and urban boundary areas (Tachieva 2011). Other edge space food retrofitting scenarios proposed included for orchards near housing areas at the perimeter of the new town and a *potager* garden in a local hamlet, Mill Green, on Hatfield’s fringe (Fig. 8.2).

8.5.2 Rural-Urban Edge, Montpellier and Florence

The second example is earlier research on gastronomic landscapes in the vicinity of Montpellier and Florence with a focus on the revival of small-scale viticulture, high value wine making and renewal of farm buildings by urban professionals using their city derived incomes to finance these activities (Parham 1995). Although completed in the 1990s, more recent research about the area around Pisa has reinforced some conclusions emerging from the original work (Orsini 2011, 2013) so it is argued to be worth briefly touching on salient aspects here.



Fig. 8.1 Business park food retrofit *Source* Parham and McCabe (2016), illustration by Ben McCabe

In both Montpellier and Florence the urban edge had been an important food and wine production area, that had shaped the urban region over hundreds of years. In Italy this landscape stability of landed estates, *fattoria* and effectively indentured peasantry was somewhat formalised through the (very exploitative) *mezzadria* system (Roden 1989; Casanova and Memoli 2010). In both Italy and France, change away from traditional agriculture since the 1950s saw the landscapes around Florence and Montpellier subject to considerable alteration and disruption, and vineyards, olive orchards and farm buildings were abandoned. In the late 20th century the precarious incomes of upland farmers were further undermined by deregulatory farming regimes (Shucksmith and Ronningen 2011; Orsini 2013) yet have demonstrated considerable broader sustainability value (O'Rourke et al. 2016).

In both peri-urban Florence and Montpellier over the last few decades high quality edge-of-town food and drink production has been revived, in part by urban 'hobby' farmers with strong gastronomic sensibilities (Parham 2015). Thus, around Montpellier, university academics (for example) bought abandoned vineyards and brought these back into wine production. Similarly urban professionals in Florence purchased derelict *fattorias* and olive orchards near the urban edge, and started niche olive oil production, processing and related *agritourismo* and marketing (Parham 1995). As Orsini (2013) notes in relation to an analogous area around Pisa,



Fig. 8.2 Mill Green potager *Source* Parham and McCabe (2016), illustration by Ben McCabe

this approach is not just an instrumental economic one, but reflects a view of upland farms and farming as part of the region's cultural heritage. In both case studies *«food production and processing activities have helped revitalise the economic capacity of city peripheries as places of agricultural innovation, while maintaining or renewing natural environments and food spaces such as hillside terraces and abandoned wine caves»* (Parham 2015, p. 210).

In this example the urbanism of the urban edge has been renewed through food-focused production, tourism and promotional activity. In a positive spatial, social and economic feedback loop, increasing the landscape quality of the edge through value adding food production and tourism has, in turn, made the peri-urban area more economically viable as foodspace. As noted previously, *«strong links have been developed between built and cultural heritage; between food production and gastronomic tourism; and from artisan producer to central city food market places»* (Parham 2015, p. 210, quoting Parham 1995). In conclusion in relation to urbanism aspects of these peri-urban foodscapes, both the Montpellier and Florence examples melded farm and non-farm land uses and activity on urban edges to support regional economies and undercut sprawl. In both places, this *«symbiotic urbanism relationship between urban and rural has played a key part in food-led revitalisation, innovation and conviviality on the urban edge»* (Parham 2015).

8.6 The Chapter in Review

This chapter has focused on aspects of food urbanism in Europe in the context of the design and planning of urban-rural spaces, interfaces and linkages. It has posited that urbanism in relation to food is particularly complicated on the transforming edges of cities. The predominant conditions of sprawling growth of urban areas and transformations to food production and other food-related land uses, offer both threats and in some cases opportunities to retrofit in more food conscious design and planning. Examples shown in the chapter demonstrate a rich social and economic interplay between urban and peri-urban land uses.

The chapter has been structured to review existing place-making research and offer case studies of applied primary source research to delve into how such food-related urbanism is being represented in a series of peri-urban foodscapes. Techniques referenced in this chapter have been used to both identify food and urbanism issues in edge space, and then apply design and other interventions based on well-founded urbanism principles. These have been posited as ways to help improve food's sustainability and conviviality outcomes at the urban edge.

A number of tools and techniques, including to audit landscapes, establish ecological footprints, model urban metabolisms and support sustainable foodsheds are now available to help in identifying, measuring and understanding urban edge foodscapes. It has been argued that sustainable design approaches, including retrofitting techniques based on transects and reverse engineering *terroir*, among others, can help in developing interventions to repair foodscapes under threat from issues such as sprawl on the one hand and environmentally damaging agricultural norms on the other. Although the focus in the chapter has predominantly been on urban design it is understood that some forms of gastronomic tourism, initiatives like Slow Food and Slow Cities, and strategic and land use planning policy, can all also help underpin more positive food-centred peri-urban and rural-urban interfaces.

In conclusion, the gastronomic landscapes (Hardy 1993, 1994) of the urban edge of European cities offer critical sites for creating, maintaining and retrieving sustainable food-focused urbanism in future. The chapter demonstrates that there are serious issues at play but there is also very considerable scope to reconfigure food's relationship to urbanism in peri-urban and rural-urban areas in ways which are of benefit to us all.

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