



University of the
West of England

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Future of the Food Axis

- **Format:**

Written paper / Presentation in-person

- **Author(s) Name:**

Kate Nicholson/ Simon Baker

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Group Ginger Architects/ University of Sheffield

- **Abstract (300 words):**

This paper considers the evolving relationship between our two most basic human needs; to eat and to dwell. The phenomena of cooking released us from the constant need to feed and thus allowed us the time to develop culture, agriculture and ultimately civilization. The Food axis, a term coined by Elizabeth Collins Cromley, is the principal structure about which food related spaces are arranged from acquisition to disposal. Throughout the history of the home, the food axis has undertaken periodic redefinition in response to the social, economic and political context of the time. This study projects the future of the food axis.

At the beginning of the 21st century the supermarket reigned supreme and the rise of convenience resulted in a deepening disconnection between people and their food sources. This detachment has contributed to the deterioration of health with the rise of

obesity and sedentary lifestyle while allowing the individual to disregard their impact on the environment through participation in unsustainable food practices and waste.

Can collective action transform waste and waste space into a valuable resource, adding to the quality of life for the neighbourhood, establishing a sense of community/ shared activity and contributing to health benefits, food knowledge and general well-being? It is estimated that 7.3 million tonnes of food waste is generated every year by households in the UK. Our evolving relationship with food and a renewed environmental awareness and responsibility to waste will inform the new public health paradigm.

This paper will trace a history of the home, looking specifically at back to back housing in Leeds and Public Health Initiatives to propose a new neighbourhood utility. The proposition re-appropriates the obsolete sites of previous communal wash and latrine facilities to address current needs including waste disposal, energy and food production. The new model can be utilised as a strategy to reuse leftover urban space through the setting up of an enabling infrastructure that is taken over by local residents.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Kate Nicholson

Kate Nicholson has continued to develop her exploration into food, health and the city through both written investigation and research by design throughout her architectural education.

Kate completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Central Lancashire with Bronze medal nomination for RIBAs Presidents Medals Student Awards. The proposal addressed the growing disconnection between people and food and its detrimental effect on the health and well-being of the urban dweller by reclaiming the city centre for production and reinvigorating Preston's historic market.

Kate Nicholson joined Group Ginger after receiving her Master's in Architecture from the University of Sheffield. At master's level, Kate's thesis investigated the evolution of the British home and the pivotal role of food in shaping its design. Her research considered the impact of the complex contextual conditions and social, historical transformations of the twentieth century on the food axis. An interdisciplinary approach to this research has allowed for the identification of key characteristics from each time as well as indicating the developing trends across the century.

Simon Baker

Simon Baker founded Group Ginger Architects to establish an architecture practice offering an accessible and engaging design studio which focuses on place, identity and distinction. To Ginger Up is to excite or enthuse. Group Ginger seeks to highlight the possible and to draw attention to situations in a positive, opportunistic and celebratory manner.

Simon graduated from the Architectural Association and has worked as a director in practice with Piers Gough and Terry Farrell. He has extensive architectural and urban design experience and has a particular interest in temporary activity to stimulate place. He believes projects should reflect their location, respond to history and originate from a narrative specific to the client, use of the building, the user, and the wider community.

Simon is a Built Environment Expert for Design Council CABE; a design review panelist for Yorkshire and Humber and is a trustee of the Architecture Centre for the Leeds City Region. In his fourth year at Sheffield School of Architecture, Simon runs the core module at master's level, Employability and Enterprise, and a research by design diploma studio. The studio targets a City in Flux with the aim to change the perception of an area's potential by responding to the needs and wellbeing of future occupants to establish new community relevance.