



PRECEDENT STUDY

FOR FOODSHARE

Sprout

CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION	04
02 OBJECTIVES	07
03 EXISTING CONDITIONS	08
04 PRECEDENT STUDY	10
01 Walk to Front Door	10
02 Outdoor Classroom	16
03 Lunch Spot	26
04 Use of Small Bits of Land	36
05 PERSPECTIVE IMAGES	38
01 Walk to Front Door	38
02 Outdoor Classroom	40
03 Lunch Spot	42
06 APPENDIX	44

01 INTRODUCTION

Foodshare supports a range of urban agriculture projects connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to that basic human right to the city and our connection to food through nutrition, cuisine and green thumbs. Foodshare's role in making that connection between the city and food is important not only for supporting Foodshare as an organization but for inspiring people throughout the city to integrate food into all parts of their lives. Providing that interface for people to engage with, and demonstrating the place of food in even the most constrained environments is, therefore, a key role for the Foodshare headquarters.

Sprout was invited to work with Foodshare to identify opportunities on the property of their new office to support Foodshare programming and demonstrate how sustainable food systems can fit into small urban yards, balconies, street boulevards among other slivers of spare open space. This document provides a curated collection of ideas for the property that recognize the narrow and fragmented open spaces that are available and connects those spaces through complementary ideas tied to enjoying all stages of food from tilling to growing to harvest to food prep to enjoying over lunch with friends.





02 OBJECTIVES

Create a landscape and entrance that is accessible and welcoming and that speaks to the strengths and values of Foodshare: Agriculture, Education & Inclusiveness.

This document is not a landscape plan. Rather it provides a foundation for collaboration. By exploring landscape ideas, and abstracted precedents, and applying them to the site, this document should open up a range of flexible concepts that can be combined and recombined in multiple ways. The document is split into subject areas that are tied to open spaces on the site. Each subject has multiple opportunities that provide a range of uses of space and allow a tight spacing of program elements.

This document does not provide a definitive design for the property – that would be premature. The up-front perspective images are neither necessary nor complete, but offer a glimpse into ways the site could be re-oriented towards people and food. What this document provides is a clear set of ideas to build around. For a perspective on how these ideas can be integrated together refer to the perspective images at the rear of the document.

Objectives:

1. Demonstrating Agriculture Initiatives,
2. Create space to experiment with ideas for urban agriculture,
3. Provide space to relax,
4. Create a clear and welcoming entry point
5. Demonstrate effective use of fragmented parcels of open space

SITE PLAN



-  Fragmented Spaces
-  Proposed Lunch Spot
-  Approach to Entrance
-  Outdoor Classroom

03 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing site contains a large footprint industrial-commercial building that dominates the center of the site. Space of soft landscape features are found along the southeast and southwest sides of the building where we find suburban style lawn and canopy trees along strips of parking. The rear of the property has no landscape space to consider and is heavily used eliminating. Recent changes to the front of the building has removed large areas of soft landscape to accommodate additional parking spaces reflecting a the increased connection between this building and region-wide employment and business requirements.

Small patches of property and relative traffic within the parking lots mean that a cohesive plan from the property is difficult. However, it also means that in order to develop any kind of aesthetic, these fragments must be addressed.





Figures 1 - 4:
Existing
conditions
along Industry
Rd. Boulevard.



04 PRECEDENT STUDY

This study consists of four components: the approach to the entrance, an outdoor classroom, a lunch spot and possible uses for a fragmented landscape. Each component is further subdivided into sections containing ideas that will help materialise opportunities. The sections are supported by images to help convey the solution and intention.

01. Approach to Entrance

The walk to the front door of the building is a path through a parking lot - undefined and lacking in ceremony. Defining that path, strategies for calming traffic through the site and using the space over the asphalt as a growing space are suggested methods for creating a unique and effective entrance.

a. Traffic Calming

Cutting across a parking lot presents obvious safety concerns for visitors to Foodshare, one of the first things to be done is calming the traffic in the area to create a safe pedestrian space. Some methods of calming traffic include:

i. Coloured Asphalt

Painted asphalt is not always a durable solution however various approaches with different costs/durabilities exist that can create a relatively low cost and high visibility signal that prioritizes pedestrians and welcomes visitors.

ii. Inset Concrete or Stone

More expensive than painting the asphalt but also a more durable solution. Inset concrete can provide an attractive signal of pedestrian space.

Figure 5: inset coloured asphalt design



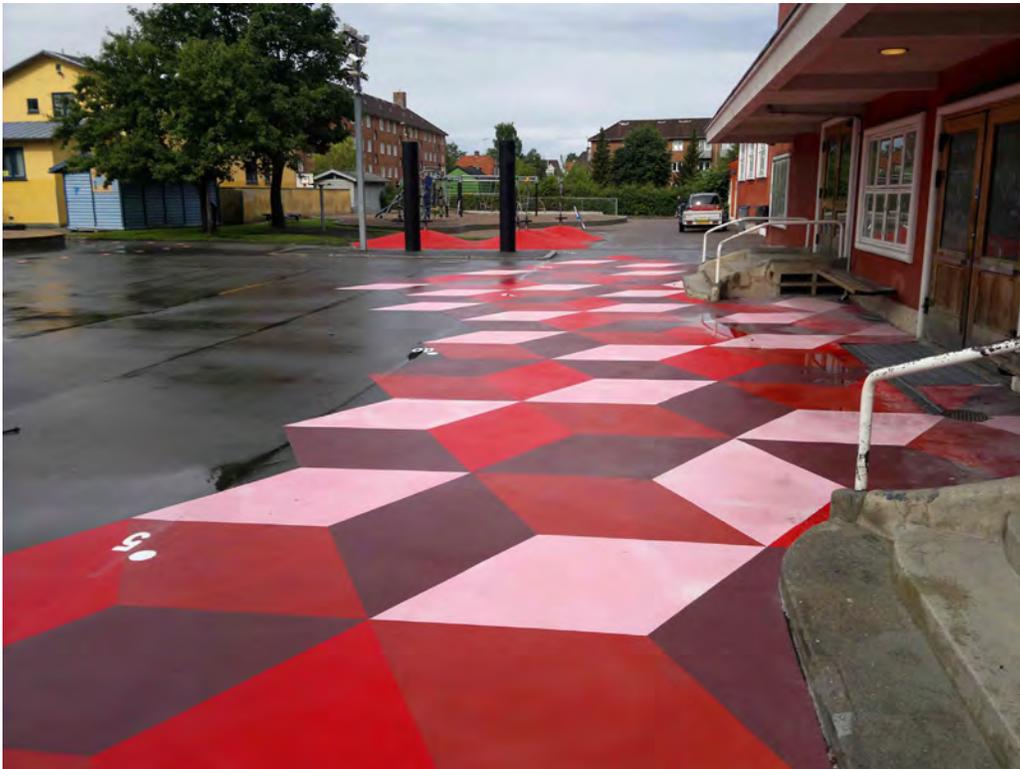


Figure 6: Painted asphalt is affordable but not always long lasting.



Figure 7: Inset concrete pavers

iii. Speed Bumps and Raised Walkways

Raised walkways work like a wide speed bump. Less jarring but just as noticeable as the speed bump, by raising the pedestrian it provides a clear emphasis on the priority of the pedestrians in that space.



Figure 8: Raised walkway prioritizes pedestrians and signals to drivers to slow down



Figure 9: A walkway across the parking lot and planting strips introduced to soften parking space.

b. Growing Spaces over the Asphalt

For anyone approaching Foodshare, it is the front door where there will be most responsive to the Foodshare message. Giving plants priority even where asphalt is normally dominant, it sends a message.

i. Cut into Asphalt

Creating space for green within the parking lot can create a dramatic message. While this may be seen as a headache for maneuverability and snowplowing, the use of grasspave rather than lawn for these spaces can make them more functional.



Figure 10: Grasspave

ii. Pots

A straight-forward and understandable solution to creating planting space where there is little room to maneuver. Other techniques such as green walls have taken the headlines, but pots are accessible, practical and can provide a more versatile medium for artistic expression through the combination of plantings and pots.

iii. Hanging Bags

A flexible and low cost strategy for bringing planting space into tight spaces. Also flexible for storage through the winter.

iv. Green Wall

The green wall could range from a vine planted wall or a very expensive growing system. Green walls are not adapted to food producing species but do serve a function in reducing urban heat island effects.



Figure 11: Potted plants



Figure 12: Hanging bags



Figure 14:

Sample green wall system

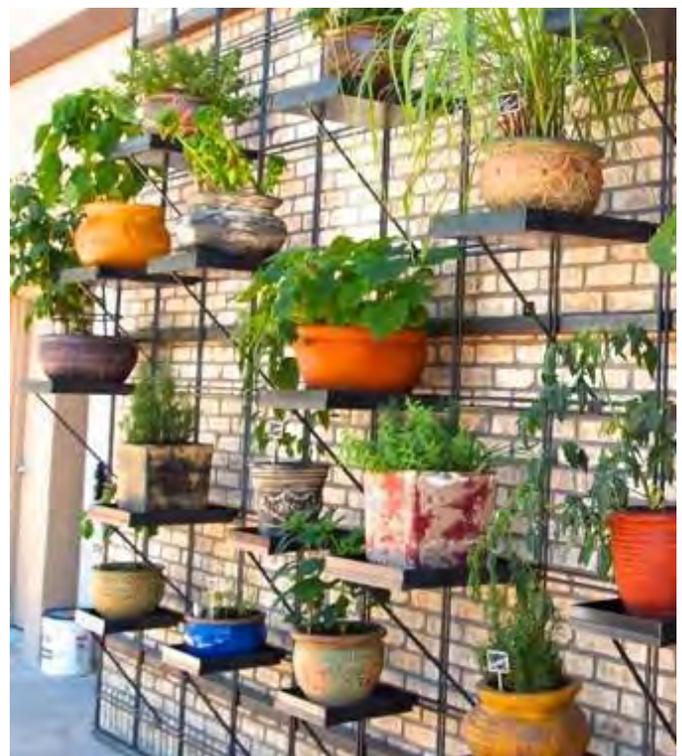


Figure 13: Wall system for potted plants

02. Outdoor Classroom

Given that there is a day care centre nearby, one of the larger strips of land could be used as an outdoor classroom. This will also be a good opportunity for Foodshare to demonstrate urban agriculture to students of all ages.

a. Shade Structure

The most important element of an outdoor classroom would be a structure to provide shade. This can be either natural (in the form of trees) or artificial as explained below.

i. Trees

The existing trees in the boulevard are already providing useful shade. In the area in front of the Foodshare front door, these trees should be assessed on a continual basis, especially in light of the recent parking lot expansion. The 'Crimson King' Norway Maple (purple leaf maple) tree in the southeast end of the boulevard is growing quickly and with some pruning of the bottom limbs could soon become a shade tree capable of providing adequate shade for small classes and workshops. A slow pruning program would be the easiest and most cost effective approach to providing shade in this area. In general, care should be taken if landscape features are installed near the existing trees to avoid severing too many roots during construction. An arborist should be included in any project with work done on site around trees.



Figure 15: Under-canopy classroom

ii. Shade Structures

Additional shade structures can be useful to provide immediate and adjustable shade and to provide shade for certain kind of crops when needed. Typical garden shades include the ubiquitous wooden trellis. Alternatives in metal, or more expensive composite materials that are more varied in form are similarly effective but more costly.



Figure 16: Shade structure for outdoor classrooms and shade gardens alike

b. Orientation and Fit

Another important choice for an outdoor classroom is deciding between a flexible or fixed layout.

i. Circle and Benches and Chairs

The classic learning circle provides an ideal format for discussion and also strongly signals the opportunity for use where more informal layouts may be overlooked. Installing benches that provide a consistent structure to this classroom space which can be important as a reminder of the potential for the space and for encouraging a more formal environment if desired.

Alternatively using flexible furniture can be a great way to make room for a variety of events and can also allow individual events to be flexible between stages.



Figure 17: Concrete circle seating



Figure 18: Wood Seating over concrete block

ii. Screens

Screens are an important element to maintain an intimate sense of enclosure and to reduce impact from traffic noise on discussions. The lack of room on the site means that installing proper footings for screens would split up the space where the property line runs down the middle of the street boulevard. An alternative that may be acceptable to the city is to use weighted screens that are not fixed by foundations and can be moved should the city require access to the boulevard. Any plans that make use of the city owned boulevard should be clearly discussed with the city in advance to ensure coordination. If not discussed there is a high risk the city would remove unapproved elements.



Figure 19: Screen out the distractions

Figure 20:
Re-purposed
windows and
planter box
screen



c. Supplies

As with any other classroom, this one will also need supplies like blackboards and tables. In addition to that, providing lightweight movable planters and cold frame counters will definitely provide the students with opportunities for experiential learning.

i. Blackboard

A blackboard on near the class could provide a useful tool for workshops while also creating a focus for building a learning space.

ii. Tables and Space for Tables

Workshops at Foodshare or events at Foodshare could take any number of directions. Creating space for workshops to support a range of events requires flexible spaces. Outdoor tables provide an immediate opportunity for hosting small workshops, but a level space for tables provides the flexibility to bring out tables and chairs.



Figure 20: Blackboards



Figure 22: Moveable planter with desk for workshops

iii. Coldframe

The cold frame is a critical garden infrastructure for early season seedlings. Using a raised bed with a cold frame can be explored here to expand the year - providing facilities for workshops even early in the season. The repurposing of discarded kitchen cabinets as green house could provide a useful and surprising structure in this context.



Figure 22, 23: Repurposed cabinets for cold frames





Figure 24: Raised planters for garden workshops



Figure 25: Planters with screens to remove distractions and reduce salt accumulation in planter soil.



Figure 26: Moveable planters

iv. Planters

Planters for workshops could be a useful addition to the classroom. While planters elsewhere on this site may be used to act as a weight for screens and benches, light moveable planters that can be used for workshops or re-oriented to create space for a range of events could be beneficial in this location.

v. Free Little Library

Providing a little free library devoted to supporting local food systems could be a refreshing application of this idea.

Figure 27: Free Little Libraries



03. Lunch Spot

The open patches of grass in front of the building provide the greatest opportunity to provide people with a space for relaxation. The space is narrow and burdened by proximity to parked cars, however, proper design could create a space that is comfortable, safe and which simultaneously showcases different approaches to urban agriculture

a. Barriers

Creating a safe barrier from cars will be necessary to provide a comfortable seating space. Landscape structures can provide definition to the area and help and encourage use and programming of the space.

i. Separation from the automobile

The lack of curbs between the parking spaces and the patch of grass makes the lunch spot a potentially unsafe one. Curbs and structural bollards can provide that security from adjacent traffic. Structures like wooden horizontal bars and peace poles can be a colourful but low-key alternative to curbs. Peace poles (colourful sticks with messages of, usually, peace on it) could also be used here. Instead of peace messages, messages declaring Foodshare's strengths and values could be displayed on these poles.



Figure 28: Bollards



Figure 29, 30:: Variations on bollards - peace poles



Figure 31:
Barriers





Figure 32:: Screen and planters from wooden pallets

Figure 33:
Trellis with
planter



ii. Screen

Balancing enclosed spaces without cutting off views is a key to making lunch spots and relaxation areas that work. A range of options exist: Screens made from pallet that also serve as vegetable gardens would be a great way of integrating urban agriculture into lunch spots. Note that any features installed on the city-owned boulevard must be done with the approval of the city. The need for temporary structures that do not require excavation for concrete footings will likely limit the options.

iii. Vegetation

In addition to the above two, curbs and screens made out of vegetation such as hedges or naturalized plantings could also be an option.

b. Furniture

Creating a safe barrier from cars will be necessary to provide a comfortable seating space. Landscape structures can provide definition to the area and help and encourage use and programming of the space.

i. Materials

The shipping Pallet is a great material to build these integrated units. Other options include timber, gabions, repurposed materials from the Restore including discarded planter boxes, windows, doors, and even cabinetry.



Figure 34:: Bench with screen and planter

ii. Orientation

Seating and planting can be integrated in different ways. Benches with small inbuilt planters and large planter boxes with a bench attached to it are couple of the options. The latter can also be reimagined with trellises instead of planter boxes.

i. Seating spaces integrated with planters

Seating in the lunch spot can go beyond regular benches and picnic tables. Ideas that integrate benches and planters can be used to tie this space together with the goal of demonstrating urban agriculture in small fragmented spaces.



Figure 35, 36: Variations on planter with bench





Figure 37: Planted table with benches



ii. Tables

Instead of conventional picnic tables, planted tables which could take the form of a picnic table, coffee table or even a counter table are recommended for the lunch spot.

iii. Counters & Service Space

Keeping in mind, Foodshare's daily lunch, creating small scale operational facilities to encourage outdoor use would be an encouraging option for staff and visitors and highlight the social dimension of a more sustainable way of living.

Figure 38:
Planted counter

04. Use of Small Bits of Land

a. Pollarding and Espalier Trees

Fruit trees may be maintained in small locations by way of aggressive pruning techniques. Espalier pruning trains a tree along south facing walls to create micro-climates with the capacity to grow produce in northerly regions. Pollarding is another aggressive pruning practice that limits the size of a tree by pruning back new growth to an established pollarded node. Pollarding is not the same as heading and must be planned and executed carefully to ensure the health of the tree.

b. Test Plots

The fragmented islands found throughout parking lots around the world provide an opportunity for use but also present risks in doing so. These sites may often become contaminated with salts, heavy metals and other pollutants from the surrounding asphalt. Test plots in these sites with careful measurements of contaminants, and careful documenting of cleaning, planting and monitoring techniques could provide a useful resource.



Figure 39: Planted table with benches



c. Pollinator Gardens

The pollinator garden has become an important landscape structure as people grapple with the on-going decimation of pollinator populations. Even small patches of naturalized wildflowers and nesting spaces can be useful for both honey bees and native bees alike. These naturalized spaces can look unkempt by some standards and beautiful by others. Fragmented spaces can be leveraged to provide for the diverse nesting

Figure 40:
Habitat for
pollinators

Figure 40: Odds and ends



04 PERSPECTIVE IMAGES

01. Walk to the Front Door

02. Outdoor Classroom

03. Lunch Spot

05 APPENDIX

