AGRICULTURE IN THE URBAN CONTEXT:
A Learning Center for Urban Agriculture

Abstract

The use of land over time has evolved from food provision to an overwhelming development of urban jungles. This paradoxical displacement of land use for shelter over food, is the basis for analysis in this thesis. Metaphors of agriculture and architecture are thus used to address the notion of food security against urbanization. The thesis aims to counter the perception of this polarity. It investigates architecture’s role in developing and inspiring agriculture in the urban landscape. Vice versa, how agriculture can be used as an architectural feature in the city environment.

The chosen vehicle is a learning center for urban agriculture – an info-educational research facility for urban agriculture serving the mass public, agricultural researchers and students. The proposed site, Bukit Timah core of the Singapore Botanic Gardens, fringes both an urban city environment along a major traffic route and natural green.

The programmatic brief of education, public extension / outreach, research and development, and agriculture coordination services reinforces the objective of motivating knowledge gain on urban agriculture. The building provides for formal educational courses, research and information, business development and agriculture-supportive features e.g., retail, market place, cafeteria. Movement through the complex is envisioned as a sequential learning experience on the different types and methods of urban agriculture, and its role and effects on our surroundings. Visitors are hence constantly aware of the aesthetic visual and spatial qualities of agriculture.