Food and the garden city:
Learning from historic experience and influencing contemporary planning practice

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Introduction

The theme of food has long been central to the garden city, and today is rightly subject to renewed interest as we seek ways to make sustainable places – especially in the context of worsening climate change and the needs of the urban 21st century for more integrated settlement forms and practices. Using morphological as well as other historical and contemporary sources, this article explores the planning and urban design past and current interplay of garden cities and food. It considers their contemporary resonances in food terms as part of a successful settlement mix and argue such insights are required for sustainable urbanism in future – in both developed and developing urban contexts.

Food featured strongly and very holistically in Ebenezer Howard's ideas about the garden city – ideas themselves deeply influenced by utopian, land reform, co-operative living and economic perspectives on reshaping capitalism and its spatial expressions. Focusing in on how these ideas played out in the first garden city of Letchworth, the article sets out the case that this fascinating intellectual and practical town-making background provides both a rich food heritage for planners and urbanists, and an important context for considering the contribution of food to planning settlements globally today. A point that emerges strongly from rereading Howard with food in mind is how extraordinarily integrated his food vision was for urban settlement from town centre to peripheral farms and how he saw the constellation of garden cities he proposed as able to deal very positively with food – spatially, socially and economically - at a range of locations and scales. It suggests that many of Howard's food ideas were prescient ones. Design and planning approaches which use transect and other space shaping techniques to integrate food into sustainable urban planning today owe a considerable debt to his garden city vision and its actual practice.

The article is divided into four sub-sections after this introduction. It first deals briefly with some critical framing considerations about food and planning; it then sketches out the context of planned settlements; explores the food implications of the 'original' Letchworth Garden City masterplan; and finally offers a compact review and analysis of 'what worked and what didn't' in food terms with some thoughts for the future about the integration of food into settlement planning more broadly in response to the garden city model. Based on the range of evidence presented, the article concludes that understanding more about past and present interconnections between food and garden cities can play a positive part in today's planning policy and practice.

The thrust of the argument is that garden city insights about food – spaceshaping, planning, governance and economic related – offer significant benefits to settlement resilience. Particularly given the massive scale of current and expected urbanisation, food again needs to be properly integrated into urban planning and design, and such insights should in turn have a positive impact on the contemporary development of food-focused new and retrofitted settlement space in the urban 21st century. That overarching argument is informed by a number of primary and secondary research areas below, starting with a brief review of some of the framing considerations that have a bearing on this food and planning topic.

Some framing considerations about food and planning

Food has moved from the margins of consideration as a planning topic to the centre of concerns about placemaking and planning in the 21st century (Parham, 2013a, 2015). Its importance in urbanism terms is recognized as encompassing food's role along the food chain from production through distribution, retailing and consumption to waste and clean up; exploring how this influences a series of 'loci' in settlement space; and looking to reflect this effectively in planning policies and practices (Parham, 1992, 2015). Recent insights include a reassessment of planning ideas drawn from landscape appraisal, including the pioneering work of Patrick Geddes whose 'landscape section' led the way in thinking about the interplay of landscape

and built form (Talen, 2008). Theoretical planning work to explore the food implications of different urban landscapes and townscapes has sought to reassert the importance of food and explore its spatial character, by way of conceptualising 'gastronomic maps' that encompassed the planning and design of food production, distribution, retailing, cooking, eating and waste within a range of urban planning environments (Parham, 1990). More recently there has been design-based work focused on retrofitting food-centred productive space, including transect based approaches (Talen, 2002) and specifically by way of food-focused transects for agrarian urbanism (Duany, 2011) and food retrofitting (Parham, 1992, 2016). Other more architecturally focused interventions include so-called 'Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes' (Viljoen and Howe, 2012). It is argued these are indebted to Geddes' insights (Sadoux, Hardy and Parham, 2015).

In recent work by this author the importance of Howard's ideas about food was explored in urbanism and planning terms (Parham, 2015, 2020). It was argued that they are due a thorough reappraisal given their congruence with more sustainable planning of a rapidly expanding urban world and the importance of food space for environmental resilience and social and economic equity. In framing this article's enquiry, it is worth noting that the interplay of the garden city's food planning and spatiality has not existed in some kind of spatial bubble. Rather, garden city settlements (and the term is used broadly here to cover town, village and suburban variations) have been subject to the same broad structural forces impinging on food production, retailing and consumption, as have other urban settlements (Parham, 2015: 52-59).

From around the middle of the 20th century, predominantly in an interplay with dominant modernist spatial planning regimes, spatial expressions have included the decline of food growing space in domestic gardens and allotments with a major (although not complete) domestic shift to gardens as food consumption space; the loss of peri-urban agriculture and horticultural production aligned to the presumption of primacy for urban development; massive changes to retailing and the distribution landscape, mainly through the business practices of cartelized food firms, allied to the imposition of an increasingly coarse land use grain and large spatial scale of retail consumption and the squeezing out of small shops and markets. How far the governance and management model of the garden city, and it's very unique cultural heritage and identity, may have protected or mitigated to an extent from some of the worst effects of these changes in food planning terms is the subject of the next section.

The planned settlement context

Howard's ideas about what a garden city could do in food terms were strongly connected to a rich tradition of utopian thinking, including the ideas of Charles Fourier who wrote about the importance of food to social life through his gastrosophy arguments (Parham, 2018), and whose proposed *phalanstère* settlements with their socialised food aspects were widely influential although unbuilt. Howard offered his garden city constellation as part of a radical prescription for developing co-operative living and governance ideas in which food was very much to the fore (Hall and Ward, 1998). On the food production side Howard's thinking was shaped by land reform ideas and proposed an economic and spatial localisation of the food system including by way of an agricultural greenbelt. In consumption terms Howard also owed a debt to both the co-operative ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement and to the American material feminist whose ideas for radical change in both the spatial design and social relations of food included socialised cooking and eating arrangements (Hayden, 1982). Howard's approach seemed highly practical and holistic, encompassing food production, consumption, dining, kitchens and waste in an integrated economic and spatial way that would now be seen as notably sustainable and convivial. In reality the garden city of Letchworth did attract people who wanted to live in a manner that became associated with the physical and moral hygiene of vegetarianism, and the desire to live an ethical and simple craft-based life with an abstinent approach to food and drink (Ward, 2005).

In a substantial section of *A Peaceful Path To Real Reform* (1898) Howard explained how food played a critical role in developing a virtuous local circle – economically, environmentally, socially and spatially – between food producers, distributors, retailers and consumers. On the growing side this meant an agricultural greenbelt of rural farms and peri-urban dairies, orchards, allotments and smallholdings on the urban edges. Within the city it offered substantial space for home vegetable growing in the town's abundant private gardens. Not only would the garden city provide a ready market for locally produced food, but food waste would be returned to enrich the soil in the city's productive green belt. Additionally, fruit trees could be planted, or a dairy set up to improve land that was not yet in use for building (Miller, 2002). The garden

city's unique co-operative governance and management model meanwhile meant that rents from peri-urban farms would help fund public infrastructure and services. "Every farmer now has a market close to his door. There are 30,000 townspeople to be fed… and this is a market which the rent he contributes will help to build up" (Howard, 1902: 12). Howard was realistic; he did not suggest that each settlement within the numerous garden cities he envisaged would be entirely self-sufficient but that residents and workers would benefit from a fresher, cheaper local food supply – with food often moved by electric rail or canal.

On the food consumption side too – retailing, dining and kitchen planning – Howard was equally prescient and radical. As well as his proposed Crystal Palace shopping structure, Howard was also intensely interested in cooperative living and in Letchworth (and later in Welwyn Garden City) helped create long-term examples of affordable socialised flats and houses with shared communal kitchens and dining spaces. Communal living schemes at Homesgarth, begun in 1909-10, and Meadow Way Green, begun in 1914 and extended in 1924, both incorporated these features (Borden, 1999). Howard instigated (and later he and his wife were residents at) the development of Homesgarth's thirty-two kitchenless flats, which were designed along the lines of a college quadrangle, serviced by a central kitchen and included a communal dining room. At the Meadow Way Green co-operative cottages, meanwhile, tenants had their own social space but were required to eat their lunch in the communal dining room and to take turns in managing the communal kitchen services. Aspects of the wider food and drink sector developed in the town also reflected a strong social purpose, including the alcohol-free Skittles Inn, designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, the designers of the Letchworth masterplan.

Letchworth also had (and retains) strong connections to vegetarian traditions. Raymond Unwin, the garden city's first masterplanner and architect, was a vegetarian, as was C.B. Purdom, who became an early historian of the garden cities, while the picture of a typical garden city resident included vegetarianism, according to Charles Lee's article in the TCPA Journal in 1951 (Twigg, 1981). This was reflected in specific places in Letchworth, including schools such as the vegetarian theosophical school, now known as St Christopher's, which was founded in Letchworth in 1915. These cultural leanings were also demonstrated in residents' social practices including adoption of rational dress, dining at Letchworth's food reform restaurant and imbibing nonalcoholic drinks at the Skittles Inn within the teetotal town.

The 'original' LGC plan

Over the more than a century since they were produced, much has been made of the diagrammatic representations of the garden city produced by Howard and included in his 1902 re-issue of *A Peaceful Path* (now called *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*). One of these diagrams famously shows the garden city settlement as a circular form, with concentric rings of different kinds of food related (among other) land uses, centered on a town garden surrounded by a 'Crystal Palace' for 'that class of shopping which requires the joy of deliberation and selection' (Howard, 1902: 4) with retailing "provided in a manner similar to the public market halls which existed for food and other everyday products in most cities and large towns." (Ward, 2016: 57). The Crystal Palace functioned as both a kind of winter garden and a precursor to the shopping mall.

Within the urban fabric are housing areas configured with sufficient private garden space for substantial individual and grouped vegetable gardens. The diagram shows the garden city is also surrounded by a productive peri-urban and rural landscape in which allotments, orchards, dairying, fruit farms, cow pastures, and smallholdings give way to large farms and forested areas further out, with these latter interspersed with agricultural colleges, and 'homes for inebriates' among others. This was not just a hotch-potch though: Howard was informed by agricultural theories in his placement of productive land uses. Another of Howard's illustrations shows a slice from the circular settlement diagram, allowing more detail about food space including on the configuration of allotments and dairying at the urban edge (placed alongside industrial land uses, some with a food focus, such as jam factories).

A further diagram demonstrates what Howard intended for each 32,000-person garden city (one of which he named 'Rurisville') as part of a much larger configuration of garden settlements. It identifies the series of circular settlement representations as satellites linked by electric rail and canal to each other and to a somewhat larger town of 58,000 residents at their centre. It was perhaps understandable that despite Howard marking his diagrams with the words 'N-B. A diagram only. Plan must depend on site selected', for at least

some of those attracted to his ideas, these illustrations were treated as a basis for shaping real places: as examples of circular plans for garden settlements from Japan and Israel among others demonstrate. Today the diagrammatic garden city remains a potent image as referenced by the vaguely circular depiction of 'Uxcester Garden City' on the cover of Urbed's winning entry to the 2014 Wolfson Prize (Urbed, 2014).

Any morphological tracing of garden city plans themselves demonstrates that there is a considerable gap in spatial design terms between the idealised diagrammatic representations produced by Howard, and the actual plans for the establishment of Letchworth as a garden city at the beginning of the 20th century. Like many town plans, the design was developed in creative tension with the peculiarities, constraints and opportunities presented by the site's landscape, connectivity and regional context. In fact, what can be seen through morphological study of the iterations of Letchworth's town plan are a series of masterplanning documents in which the plan evolved with both structured and less planned-in elements.

The key point is that it would be an oversimplification to argue there was one definitive plan that determined all future development of the town's food spaces. Rather, the planning out of Letchworth's spatial character, including in relation to food, developed over time, as morphological analysis of its town plans makes clear. This combination of a masterplanned urban design framework, in which core areas and infrastructure such as the train station, main streets and neighbourhoods were drawn in, while areas earmarked for future development were more minimally represented visually in the plan, was a pragmatic design approach. Given that the town would take a number of decades to be built out it allowed capacity for planning the fine grain of specific new neighbourhoods to be undertaken when it came time to design them. Both Unwin and Parker, who designed various of these configurations of houses and area layouts, included generous private gardens for vegetable and fruit production as well as very localised food gardens shared by small numbers of dwellings.

In one of the best known of Parker and Unwin's plans from 1904 the town centre's street and block structure – including grand avenues, park space, vistas, landmarks and main roads - are all clearly marked. In an overall shape, which is more rectilinear than circular, the street structure is essentially a permeable grid, although for its central section it is turned through 45 degrees to create a series of roads that radiate diagonally outward to the rest of the town. Important elements of garden city infrastructure and services, such as the main avenue, goods yard and rail sidings, central square, sites for a public hall and museum, schools, places of worship, hotels, open spaces and post office – are either drawn in, or sites for these are shown on an accompanying key to the plan, and their proposed locations marked by letters on the plan itself. As the plan moves from the centre, area layouts are shown more nominally, with main roads and blocks drawn in for a number of as yet undeveloped neighbourhoods. What is shown is the topography of the underlying landscape, with these contour lines reflecting the site specificity which Howard had always emphasized as critical for the actual place design.

It is also notable that food space as configured in Howard's diagrams is not evident in the same way in the plans themselves. These are more conventional for the period although certain land uses do connect back to the diagrams. By 1910, a 'Plan of The Town Area of the Letchworth Estate', for example, illustrates both the fairly modest amount of urban development since the 1904 plan and also shows that although there is no Crystal Place there is an indication of shopping streets and buildings in the town centre near the train station. The first co-operative housing building, Homesgarth comprised some thirty-two flats with its shared kitchen and dining arrangements, was underway from about 1909-10. The masterplan also shows edge of town dairying and other farms, and smallholdings to the south east.

A somewhat later plan of 'The Town Area of the Letchworth Estate of First Garden City Ltd Plan of Present Development, Spring 1925' produced by the Estate Office shows considerable filling in of blocks in the town centre, and in some neighbourhoods beyond, especially to the north east, and, to an extent, the south west. On the edges of town can be seen small holdings and farms including a fruit farm just to the north in the city's peri-urban area, as well as allotment gardens to the then southern edge of the developed space. A leaflet about Letchworth's shops (undated) shows some food related shops along Station Road, Leys Avenue and Eastcheap in the town centre. 'The Food Reform Restaurant and Simple Life Hotel' which was the first vegetarian store in Letchworth had opened in 1907 at 9 Leys Avenue. Housden's 'City Stores and Café' was opened in September 1906 as did the first butcher's shop (C. F. Ansell's) and by the 1920s there were some seven butchers shops in Letchworth. For a few years there was an open-air food market close to the train

station at the corner of Leys Avenue and Station Road but the site was replaced by a bank by the mid 1920s. By 1929 a plan of 'present development' from the Estate Office showed further build-out but similar food-focused land uses as in 1925. Somewhat later The Arcadia Confiserie operated from the 1930s to the 1950s in The Arcade which ran between Leys Avenue and Station Road, then becoming a bakery.

Moving forward to the post-war era, Letchworth's town plans from 1946 and 1952 demonstrate that building had restarted, and that the food space of various kinds was still in evidence, although some farming land uses on the northern and southern edges had given way to new housing areas. New allotments were shown to the north-western edge while some existing allotment areas to the south east remained, as did some smallholdings nearby. The nature of some new development reflected modernist spatial design assumptions then dominant, as represented in housing estates including the Grange and somewhat later the Jackman Estate. These departed from the strong street grid and block structure that provided substantial private garden-based opportunities for food growing elsewhere in the town. No major new housing areas were developed after this although there was a certain amount of individual site infilling and some modest loss of private garden space. Although it might be argued that by implication this further constrained food growing space, given broader social trends noted earlier of the widespread cultural shift away from domestic productivity in any case, it may have been that this has a fairly minimal effect on vegetable growing numbers and scope in the town.

In the recent past, a small-scale housing scheme developed in the early 2000s in response to the 'Tomorrow's Garden City Housing Competition' offered a kind of hybrid spatial model in food terms, with green architectural features in the dwellings themselves, but again with little private or shared food growing space. Currently, new mixed use but predominantly housing based development is planned for the northern edge of the town and its relevant urban design guidance uses a 'character area' approach which is sympathetic to the more traditional Letchworth configuration of a permeable street grid and substantial private garden space in relatively low density housing areas (Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, 2013b).

Learning from what worked and what didn't – thoughts for the future

Letchworth's food experience demonstrates much that has been effective, as well as some less successful elements in its evolving planning and design interconnections with food over the more than one hundred years since it was established. Overall, the original garden city model remains extremely influential and widely supported by residents as 2013's 'Town Debate' about whether to support new development on the edge of town made clear (Parham, 2013b).

As explored here, from the start there was a gap between Howard's original highly-integrated food vision, some of its diagrammatic spatial representations, and the messier reality for food as town building proceeded on site. Howard's own words, the primary record offered by the town's plans and other secondary accounts all illustrate this quite clearly. Yet, as noted here, many of the areas of slippage in food terms have also been about broader structural forces impinging on food culture and spatial practices in Letchworth as they have done elsewhere over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st.

Letchworth, though, did rather better than many other places historically in retaining food as a key urban element from private gardens to productive edges. The city plans from just after the turn of the 20th century up until the post-war period from the late 1940s confirm that food was an important element in spatial design in the garden city for reasons which are strongly associated with its co-operative purpose. Garden city principles asset out in Howard's work (1898, 1902) and reworked by the Town and Country Planning Association (undated) were reflected in practice in town planning, design, land ownership through land value capture, and in governance terms, as well as in relation to its residents' cultural leanings. All these elements still inform Letchworth's approach to food today.

The 'garden' aspect of the garden city should not be overlooked in any analysis. This has remained central to the garden city ethos and Letchworth residents' sense of identity but has been subject to change in relation to food practices. On the food production side just as pre-war it was ubiquitous to grow vegetables in home gardens, and many working and artisan class residents took up allotments in Letchworth, in the post war period these practices declined (Johnson, 1996). Wider shifts in the economics of food production also meant commercial market gardening and dairying on the city's edges waned as it did elsewhere in the United

Kingdom. For domestic garden space it would be reasonable to surmise given evidence from garden history of the 20th century that Letchworth like other urban places was largely subject to the switch from the home garden as productive space to a place of leisure and consumption for many people (Parham, 2015" 53). Especially in the post-World War Two period, broader trends referenced in the article's framing section were at play. Letchworth saw increasing consumption primacy, with fewer home growers and allotment holders in the town. There were also fewer growers and a less localised food production focus through greenbelt-based farms, dairies, commercial market gardens and orchards in evidence. These changes in and around Letchworth were aligned to the development of a bigger foodshed within an increasingly delocalized food system regionally, nationally, and internationally. In food consumption terms, by the latter part of the 20th century, this was also reflected and reinforced by the growing dominance of larger-scale supermarket-based retailing in its town centre and on its edges.

The co-operative nature of the garden city remains important to its capacity to support food-focused land uses. Fundamental to this is the fact that the garden city governors hold substantial town assets in trust for the town. The income derived for the community from these land and buildings has helped support the governance and management structure of the town, as well as allowing a significantly higher level of planning control over the nature of development than in most other places. This has been reflected in the way that food was and is embedded in spatial design and services from the level of domestic space outward, including historically its kitchenless co-operative housing for which Letchworth remains a pioneer. It is also clear that Letchworth residents continued to grow food, run allotments and community gardens and support farms and orchards on the edges of the city to some extent despite the overall picture of decline. The third sector is actively engaged in food related activities in the town. One input comes from Transition Town Letchworth which runs a "support and social group for local people growing their own produce" (Letchworth.com: undated). The group also operates a monthly growers market stall from May to October which sells "local amateur growers' produce...In addition to fruit and veg, we also accept home produced eggs, jams, chutney and honey. Seedlings are also welcome and we accept home baking if it contains a home grown ingredient." (ibid)

Likewise, the town's governing organisation, the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation takes a very active interest in supporting and developing a range of food spaces across the town and clearly sees food as an important part of the garden city vision and ethos. It runs a number of allotment areas (as does the local authority, North Hertfordshire District Council) and these can be rented for a modest annual fee for fruit and vegetable growing (Letchworth.com: undated). The Heritage Foundation also owns the small working show farm, Standalone Farm, on the northern outskirts of Letchworth in the Greenway that circles the town. This has an educational purpose - bringing families and children in touch with food production. At least one commercial orchard is still also operating in the Greenway around Letchworth's edge and the Heritage Foundation has also announced the creation of a new community orchard (Norton Grange Orchard) in fields to the edge of the city, with 450 trees to be planted. "The Orchard – which had the backing of nearby residents – will be divided into two areas. The smaller Community Orchard will consist of traditional local Hertfordshire varieties of apple, pear, plum and gage, with the community able to pick the fruit for themselves. The larger Commercial Orchard will be planted with apple varieties suitable for producing apple juice and cider on a commercial basis" (Greenway.org.uk: undated). The Foundation has also developed two community gardens in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society. One of these is the Wynd Community Garden Project in the town centre, while a "further garden will be created at Standalone Farm which will take its inspiration from the International Garden City movement and will feature a series of small gardens, which will explore Letchworth's influence across the world" (Letchworth.com: undated).

The Foundation is also active on the food front at a more strategic level, a design competition was initiated by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation in association with the Royal Institute of British Architects, to produce ideas and then in a subsequent stage, masterplan a new area of the town – and food is a prominent element in the design brief in both the winning and many other entries (Letchworth.com: undated). The Foundation is also involved in a Hertfordshire Knowledge Exchange Partnership with the University of Hertfordshire which is allowing a doctoral scholar to undertake in-depth, applied research into Letchworth's food economy – looking for approaches which are based on garden city principles.

Today the town centre's food shops include lower-end-of-the-market supermarkets and frozen food outlets, a fruit and vegetable stall, some bakeries, a selection of fast food shops, a few pubs and an increasing range of

cafes and restaurants. The Heritage Foundation is making significant efforts to grow the range and diversity of the town's food offer, and recognises further potential to improve the spatial design and quality of foodscapes, especially given issues of inequality and deprivation for some residents of the town. There is a strong theme of community-based food activities in the town such as the Best Before café (https://bestbeforecafe.co.uk) which in part responds to these imperatives.

Letchworth is also the site for a range of research on food. Recently Letchworth has taken part as a 'follower city' in an international research project, the Edible Cities Network (EdiCitNet for short, https://www.edicitnet.com/) which explores nature-based solutions to food and cities issues. The emphasis is on social inclusion and environmental aspects of food led urban sustainability and some food-centred research publications from that involvement are currently being produced. Academics working through Letchworth's International Garden Cities Institute and the University of Hertfordshire Urbanism Units are also working with other scholars to develop major research project proposals, most recently related to retrofitting for food within a garden city context. It is hoped that the garden city's exceptional food patrimony can be further animated through careful planning and design interventions across a range of sites to support urban resilience within garden city principles.

The thrust of this article is that Letchworth's experience suggests three main things. First, a food centred vision was embedded in Ebenezer Howard's writing and diagrammatic work and was thus critical to its inception. Second, conscious planning and design for food has had a considerable influence on practical garden city development especially in its early days through the city's early masterplanners and architects, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. Third, despite some slippages since then, in large part related to external structural forces impinging on the garden city food system, this constitutes a source of inspiration for the future. These garden city planning and urban design insights about food should be closely examined as part of the broader resurgence of interest in the interconnection between food and settlement forms and practices. It seems clear that there are very useful implications for planning, designing and retrofitting other settlements in future whether by convivial green space, transect or analogous continuous productive urban landscape approaches.

As the Town and Country Planning Association has noted in its guidance for garden city principles for the future, food opportunities should be at the heart of new garden cities: "for residents to grow their own food, including generous allotments' while there is equally a requirement for 'access to strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods" (TCPA, 2012: 5). Food's role in a garden city context also has increasing traction in public policy terms as demonstrated in the previously noted winning entry in the 2014 Wolfson Prize which argued that a food growing strategy and resources should be a key part of the proposed garden city's green infrastructure (Urbed, 2014). Most recently the TCPA has released a guide to Edible Garden Cities (TCPA, 2020) co-written by this author which explores the practical issues and opportunities in making new garden cities food-centred as envisaged by Howard and is urgently required to build resilience and address climate change.

Despite some contestation, it seems reasonably clear that there is a need to localize the modern food system with strong implications for making and retrofitting space all along the food chain. This appears to be an area where garden city principles and applied experience at Letchworth are particularly valuable. Letchworth's spatial design, its governance and management model and its co-operative culture all mean it has been uniquely well-suited to plan consciously for food and reflect that in its placemaking. The article demonstrates that the garden city has traditionally offered excellent opportunities for domestic food growing in large private gardens, substantial food growing capacity through community garden and allotment provision, and localised agricultural belt opportunities, as well as a food-centred town centre. This is not simply a low-density solution to foodspace but a more nuanced approach that allows for localised food space at a range of densities around walkability radii and employs a transect-like land use mix which supports sustainable urbanism. As noted in the framing section of the article, the garden city has very good potential to be further configured in a food-focused way to produce convivial green space. The new area of Letchworth now being designed and planned offers an opportunity to put a food centred approach into practice on garden city principles lines. More broadly, as new garden city inspired settlements are planned in the United Kingdom and internationally, the lessons from Letchworth should inform the way the food system is foregrounded for resilient placemaking.

There may be a tendency to see any examination of food and garden cities as being solely about enhancing food productivity given the garden emphasis of the garden city but Howard was also extremely interested in shaping technological change in ways that supported a more convivial and civilized life including moving food around by the then new electric power. These perspectives can be brought to bear on developing a range of food space in any newly developed garden city including through new forms of food retailing and distribution. Online retailing methods and other technologically driven food planning arrangements are currently an area of rapid change and development, not all of it equitable, inclusive or sustainable in nature, so reflecting on the garden city's co-operative, social purpose in food terms should have interesting things to offer in shaping this process. Additionally, the current COVID-19 situation has sharpened interest in rapid retrofitting to make streets work for people and food so garden city lessons and opportunities are particularly pertinent to applied schemes.

Finally, in relation to the lived experience that came from Howard's vision, it is worth remembering that while early residents were sometimes ridiculed as cranks and do-gooders, the social movements that focused on food in Letchworth in the early 20th century represented a vanguard of ideas which were once radical but are now extremely influential. These include meat reduction and avoidance, including vegetarianism and veganism; advocacy of ethical food chains, with a focus on high quality, small scale artisan food production; reconnecting to local food growing; a stress on food's environmental values and the need for food resilience including localizing food systems and minimising food waste; and food-centred placemaking to support all of the above elements. Better awareness of food and the garden city adds an important dimension to the depth of planning and urban design discourse and practice in relation to food planning for any new garden cities and perhaps for other settlements too.

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