

# Market Place



Market Place:  
Food Quarters, Design  
and Urban Renewal in London

By

Susan Parham

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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by Susan Parham

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For my father, Anthony, and in memory of my mother, Joy



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## PREFACE

I first started writing about food and urban design in the late 1980s as I began to bring together my thinking about how food interconnects with the spatiality and political economy of cities. In *The Table In Space: A Planning Perspective* (1990) I set out a range of food and place making concerns from the scale of the shared table outward, and advocated for returning food to its central role in shaping public and private space. Since then I have continued to explore the fascinating and complicated interplay between urban development, design and planning on the one side and sustainable food systems and cultures on the other. This has always been an applied concern: from identifying gastronomic strategies for cities, researching possibilities for more food-centred, convivial green space, and protecting productive landscapes to avoid sprawl. I have looked at gastronomic architecture and townscape and written about the healthy cities design paradox of gastronomically rich ‘fat cities’ where people are thin and long-lived.

This book arose out of these research preoccupations and examines in depth a fast changing area of food and city design. It is focused on primary research into the renewal of food-centred space in areas around moribund food markets in contemporary London. The research findings suggest that what are conceptualised as ‘food quarters’ have emerged, in which new forms of interconnection between physical design and social processes are being modelled, with food at the heart. The book explores how traditional city design and spatiality has informed the making of a richer, healthier, more food-centred everyday life around Borough, Broadway and Exmouth Markets, while producing places that have also become the loci for food led-gentrification. It frames this paradoxical experience within more spatially dominant approaches to urbanism that have produced ‘obesogenic’ environments and closed off convivial food options that would support a more satisfying and sustainable urban life. The book draws some conclusions about the complexities of designing and planning for food-led renewal that might apply more broadly to other places in London and potentially to other cities in future.

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Finally, a very grateful acknowledgement to The Estate of Edward Bawden and the Trustees of the Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford, England for their kind permission to use a reproduction of Bawden's 1967 lithograph, Borough Market, as a splendid element of the cover of this book.

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## **PART 1:**

# **SITUATING THE FOOD QUARTERS**



# CHAPTER ONE

## DESIGNING FOR FOOD

### **Designing for Food**

This book is about designing for food. It explores ways that food production, distribution, and consumption arrangements have been played out in three fast transforming urban sites in London in the period 2005 to 2008. It suggests that what are conceptualised here as ‘food quarters’ emerged during this timeframe, centred on Borough Market, Broadway Market and Exmouth Market, with each place modelling new forms of interconnection between physical design and social processes in which food was at the heart.

Using case study research, focused on these three previously run-down market places within London’s traditional urban fabric, the book explores how compact city design informed the making of everyday life, increased the richness of experience of food and eating, and contributed to urban sustainability in these posited food quarters. It frames this experience within more spatially dominant approaches to city design, which seem to close off convivial food options and choices that would support a more satisfying urban life.

But what is a food quarter? The food quarter as explored and defined in this book is understood to be a ‘fuzzy edged’ food-centred area of an urban settlement, predicated on human scaled, highly mixed, walkable and fine grained urbanism that reflects the European City Model (Clos, 2005). The food quarter thus conceptualised is generally located in traditional urban fabric but its elements are capable of being retrofitted into more sprawling locations and built into new areas too. The market at the centre of the food quarter is not necessarily a farmers’ market – and its operation challenges the easy stereotypes that situate traditional markets and farmers’ markets as a clear cut duality – nor is it only servicing elite consumption needs. It is likely to be supported by a diverse range of food-related land uses including cafes and restaurants and its users may be visiting its market and food businesses as part of a mix of food consumption techniques including online methods.

In physical design terms, the food quarter features a strong design interplay between traditional built fabric and human scaled public spaces (Madanipour, 1996, 2003). Its physical features act as a frame for emergent forms of socio-spatial practice that reflect increased conviviality in everyday life (Maitland, 2007) and support economic and environmental renewal, but may also be marked by food led gentrification (Warde, 1991; Smith, 1996; Atkinson, 2000; Bridge, 2006), while its governance has been mostly 'from below' rather than predominantly the result of top-down regeneration processes.

Research into three such places in London shows that designing for food led renewal has not been a straightforward process. The research identified some paradoxical relationships in the rise of these food quarters, between sustainability, urban design and sociability focused on food on the one side, and food led gentrification and exclusion on the other. It found that relationships between the physical and the social in the three food quarters made a contribution to developing sustainable cities, by supporting and nurturing convivial food spaces and practices.

At the same time, the rise of new kinds of food spaces and practices at each food quarter also supported and underpinned gentrifying tendencies, by providing a setting for some individuals to play out a 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984) that was socially exclusive. The overall conclusion of the book is that although food quarters like the three studied in London can act as gentrifying sites in which to display taste and model distinction, these spaces also suggest consciously designing for food is broadly a good thing for sustainable cities, producing authentic places important for experiencing food led conviviality in everyday life.

This matters because the backdrop to the food quarters' renewal is urban development in which conviviality and sustainability are increasingly compromised (Brotchie and Batty et al, 1995; Frey, 1999; Haughton and Hunter, 2003). Research on the fat city (Parham, 1998; Sui, 2006), the growth of obesogenic environments (Lake and Townshend, 2006, 2008), the argued prevalence of food deserts and food insecurity (Wrigley, 2002; Shaw, 2006), and a crisis of obesity in children (Ebbeling et al 2002; Lobstein, Baur, and Uauy, 2004) reflect how food often interconnects with city form in negative ways, when undertaken within a context of conventional design approaches to urban growth and renewal (Whelan, Wrigley, Warm and Cannings, 2002; Neal, 2006). Yet certain urban experience also offers more positive examples of the intersection of food and cities (Parham, 1990, 1992, 1996, 2005, 2008); places where walkable, compact, food market centred quarters remain - or are being renewed and



reconfigured - despite the dominant model presented by the development of sprawling urban conurbations.

Theorists have used the term ‘fat city’ to describe connections perceived between decisions about spatial form that contribute to sprawl and those that create the conditions for obesity (Sui, 2003; Marvin and Webb, 2007) although causality has been challenged (Eid et al, 2008). By focusing on the way food quarters are developing in London, the notion of fat cities is employed somewhat differently. Drawing on previous research (Parham, 1996, 1998) that predates the more recent, negative use of the term, the book explores the paradox of places that are at once ‘fat’ in the sense of relying on rich seasonal and regional food resources, yet support forms of place-based sociability that challenge dominant obesogenic spatial modes. At the core of this paradox are traditional quarters of the city characterised by highly walkable food-centred spaces, supported by convivial cultural traditions that stress moderation and balance in food consumption and a strongly developed focus on high quality food sourced from the peri-urban region around the city (Parham, 1998). In combination these elements appear to be important in producing healthful spaces and citizens, an apparent contradiction this book explores through the food quarter research.

## **Food and cities in context**

This book investigates just one aspect of a wider set of research preoccupations that have helped to frame and contextualise its primary focus. Since the early 1990s, when this writer began to study the many roles food plays in urban life (Parham, 1990, 1992, 1993) the study of food and cities has moved from the margins to become a much more central concern in a range of academic disciplines: in sociology, geography, political economy, environmental science and related sustainability policy development, and within urban design theory and practice.

Increasingly, there is research interest in the “gastronomic possibilities” of urban space (Parham, 1992, p.1) focusing on how food can offer positive support to making sustainable and convivial places. Moreover, it has become clear that changes in one food sphere have results in others. Supermarket based consumption, for example, has many ripple effects along the food chain by shaping the agriculture that supports it and the food consumption patterns it in part determines (Bowlby, 2000; Eisenhauer, 2001). These consumption patterns in turn have profound effects on the spatiality they help configure (Lang and Heasman, 2004).

From the scale of the shared table outwards, food has transforming roles in both social and design terms, in both the private and public realms. Food affects the way we make and use kitchens, dining rooms, gardens, streets, neighbourhoods, town centres, suburbs and burgeoning urban conurbations. In the meantime, the issues associated with designing for food have become more acute. There are complex sustainability issues associated with the outdoor room of the food street, and the wider public realm of food markets, cafes, so called foodainment places (Finkelstein, 1999), foodscapes (Yasmeen: 2006; Sobal and Wansink, 2007), and the gastronomic townscape (Parham, 1992), of which food quarters are argued here to be an important element.

On the productive city side, relevant concerns relate to green spaces in cities connected with food, including market gardens, allotments, community orchards, street trees, and productive urban peripheries (Parham, 1992; Hinchliffe and Whatmore, 2006). The recent revival of interest in urban farming is symptomatic of an increasing concern for food localism, quality, security and resilience that combats the rise of placeless foodscapes (Morgan, Marsden and Murdoch, 2006).

Meanwhile, at a broader spatial scale, new forms of food production, exchange and consumption are associated with the fast expanding post urban realm developing around cities, which tends to undermine the more traditional food approaches of the sustainable bio-region (Parham, 1996; Sonnino, 2009). All these spatial scales fit within the even wider global context of grossly unequal food relationships between the north and south, exacerbated by a largely unsustainable modern food system (Tansey and Worsley, 1995; Parham, 1996; Patel, 2007). In this way the study of the food quarter should be understood as a small part of a much bigger research field (Bell and Valentine, 1997) while acknowledging the impossibility of bringing all these research concerns about designing for food in an urban context together in one book.

## **Why look at food and design together?**

Within sociology, studying food and eating has been until recent times at best a marginal area of enquiry (Mennell, 1991; Germov and Williams, 1999) and the relative neglect of food-related issues can be explained by a number of factors including its invisibility to sociologists as an apparently routine, everyday activity that is taken for granted (Beardsworth and Keil, 2004, p.2). Equally, this historic lack of interest reflects the fact that sociologists have tended not to see food production and distribution processes at work (ibid). This apparent marginality is also gendered, with

food strongly associated with the mundane world of female domestic labour and thus holding “little intellectual appeal to the male researchers and theorists who have historically dominated the profession” (ibid).

Over the last twenty years though these marginalising perspectives on food studies in sociology have begun to shift, with research on food and eating no longer seen as frivolous (Mennell, 1996) but legitimately focusing on the “meanings, beliefs and social structures giving shape to food practices in western societies” (Lupton, 1996, p.1). The sociology of food and eating has become recognised not just as a valid sub-discipline, but central to the way boundaries between nature and culture are being rethought (Atkins and Bowler, 2001, p.ix). Additionally, food studies have benefited from the overall cultural turn experienced in sociology and sister disciplines in the 1990s (Ashley et al, 2004) and from renewed interest in both everyday life (Zukin, 1992, 1995, 2004; Stevenson 2003) and the body (Featherstone, 1991; Lupton, 1996).

There has been some, albeit limited, focus on the spatial planning and design aspects of food in cities and this is explored in some detail in the next chapter. Sharon Zukin’s (1982, 1992) influential analysis of the parallel, connected, rise of gastronomy and gentrification in New York set the tone for much of the academic debate that followed (Amin and Graham, 1997; Bell, 2007). Zukin (1982) arguing that vernacular tradition and innovation were being combined in both food and architecture to produce gentrified spaces in declining urban areas which drew on a narrow range of design elements to serially reproduce marketable quarters for loft living. Discussion of gentrification - and its connections to food - cannot be avoided when exploring the way food quarters have developed, or in designing for food more generally.

At the same time, the examples presented in this book, and recent theoretical work cited below, demonstrate divergent perspectives on these transformations. For instance, work on spaces of consumption (Bell and Valentine, 1997), and specifically on the spatial and economic role of food market centred areas as potential models for 21<sup>st</sup> century urbanism (Parham, 1992, 2005, 2008; Esperdy, 2002), suggest more positive possibilities. Likewise, work on convivial spatiality (Mayer and Knox, 2006; Hinchcliffe and Whatmore, 2006; Bell, 2007), in part typified through Slow Food and Slow Cities (*città slow*) movements and theorising (Beatley, 2004; Mayer and Knox, 2006) brings a more nuanced analysis to processes of urban change in relation to food, that is discussed later in this chapter and the next.

## **Food and urban sustainability**

Urban sustainability is a critical factor in looking at spatial design for food. This is because how food is grown, transported, bought, cooked and eaten presents issues with central material effects on creating a sustainable urban future. So, for this book, a critical framing element is the sharply increasing level of unsustainability of urban development and the ways this is reflected in food production, distribution and consumption in and around cities (Stren, White and Whitney, 1992; Hough, 1994; Haughton and Hunter, 2003). In particular, the food issues associated with climate change provide a context for the research into specific food places and practices in London (Taylor, Madrick and Collin, 2005).

Theorists of sustainable cities argue that in environmental terms a negative feedback loop has grown up in western post industrial cities whereby over consumption of resources including food is matched by overproduction of waste (Rudlin and Falk, 2001). Linked back to food production and forward to food consumption, this presents a problem for continued global sustainability in a context of massive urbanisation (Hough, 1984, 1995; Patel, 2007). Urban sprawl poses particular difficulties for food in a spatial sense: using up valued natural habitats, “whilst cities also pass on their impacts, making intensive demands on the environmental resources of their hinterland areas” (Haughton and Hunter, 2003, p.12). More compact approaches to urban development have been argued to slow resource use and lower impacts (Barton et al, 2003), and are discussed in later chapters where they offer insights into the design and social functioning of the food quarters.

Sustainability theorists point out that ways of conceptualising urban sustainability need to transcend the limitations of a purely environmental agenda, to bring in and give sufficient weight to social and economic factors (Jarvis, Pratt and Cheng-Chong Wu, 2001; Evans, Joas, Sundback and Theobald, 2005). Thus, the trefoil diagram commonly used to describe how sustainability reflects and interconnects these aspects is not about trading off “social, economic and environmental priorities, but the need to find solutions that marry all three” (Barton et al, 2003, p.5). A holistic approach to sustainability is argued for, in which there should be a triple bottom line, as, for example, in the London Sustainable Development Commission definition of sustainable development (Entec, 2006). The analysis of the food quarters reflects this understanding by encompassing the three interconnected and mutually supporting aspects of sustainability: social, economic and environmental, and applying such a sustainability based analysis to the particular conditions of the food-centred spaces.

Climate change impacts are accentuating the food-related concerns that are explored in this book. At the production end of the modern food system, while industrialised agriculture and its attendant high food miles are thought to be exacerbating climate change, the situation is not straightforward. Recent work suggests that food miles are a poor indicator of the environmental and ethical impacts of food production (Edwards-Jones et al, 2008) and that shifts in food preferences towards a less meat intensive diet may be likely to yield more significant results than lowering food miles in certain circumstances (Weber and Matthews, 2008). At the same time, climate change effects on productivity are sharpening food security and resilience concerns and predominant food distribution and consumption arrangements in urban areas, as largely organised by supermarkets, have a specific and largely negative influence on urban sustainability (Sustainable Development Commission, 2008; UK Cabinet Office, 2008).

Food chains account for a fifth of emissions associated with the climate change effects of households' food consumption in the United Kingdom (Sustainable Development Commission, 2008). Meat and dairy products, glasshouse vegetables, airfreighted produce, heavily processed foods and refrigeration are the main hotspots with disproportionately high levels of greenhouse gas emissions (Sustainable Development Commission, 2008, p.42). Moreover, in terms of social sustainability, these modern consumption arrangements are a key contributor to "obesity and diet-related disease including cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke" (op cit, p.68). There is growing evidence that

"a healthy and seasonal diet, rich in fruit and vegetables, and containing less processed food and meat is also better for the planet, leading to lower greenhouse gas emissions and less impact on ecosystems" (ibid).

All this suggests that ease of access, in a spatial, social and economic sense, to sustainable sources of these foodstuffs is important at individual and systemic levels, yet many urban dwellers do not enjoy such access. Rather, within an increasingly complex geography of social exclusion in cities (Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 1991; Madanipour, Cars and Allen, 1998; Andersen and Van Kempen, 2000; Musterd, Murie and Kesteloot, 2006) adverse health effects associated with the modern food system are played out unevenly among individual city dwellers. These include rising levels of adult and childhood obesity (Sui, 2003; Lopez, 2004; Marvin and Wedd, 2006) alongside increasing levels of stigmatisation (Sobal, in Germov and Williams, 1999).

Likewise, the sustainability effects of these food processes are far from spatially uniform. In the United Kingdom, national sustainability policies, for example, have not been able to check the spatially uneven distribution of food effects caused by dominant trends in urban expansion and renewal (Batchelor and Patterson, 2007; Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009). Climate change mitigation policies, which are aimed to reduce emissions from supermarket operations, have failed to sufficiently take transport issues into account. They would need to include the effects of transporting goods and the impact of planning laws on the use of cars by supermarket customers (Sustainable Development Commission, 2008). Nor have they succeeded in instituting a low carbon economy in relation to food (*ibid*).

Therefore a proposition considered in this book is that the richly food focused, compact, walkable, liveable food quarter may assist in avoiding, or at least mitigating, some of the unsustainable effects of the way food relationships are played out in urban space. In exploring this proposition, the focus is on places that demonstrate vernacular and traditional urban forms, as these broadly support a compact city model (De Roo and Miller, 2000; Jenks, 2000; Clos, 2005). This is because, despite arguments to the contrary (Bruegmann, 2005), the weight of evidence suggests such places demonstrate greater capacity to meet urban sustainability requirements than do urban forms derived from modernist traditions (Barnett, 1987; Holston, 1989; Aldous, 1992; Jenks, Burton, and Williams, 1996; Moughtin, 1996; Barton et al, 2000).

In particular, as explained in Chapter 3, food quarters appear better configured in physical design terms than are low density, car dependent places, to deal with the need for adaptation to the climate change effects that are already apparent in London. Given the fundamental nature of urban sustainability as an organising frame for the research, Chapters 4 to 6 are then structured around groupings of economic, environmental and social research material in relation to each food quarter. In Chapters 7 and 8, these three linked areas of research and analysis are drawn together more fully, to highlight insights that have emerged from the findings, in an integrated way.

## **Food and convivial cities**

A second framing element for this book is the notion of the convivial city (Parham, 1992, 1993; Miles, 1998; Peattie, 1998). The use of the term is derived from Ivan Illich (1973) whose ideas about conviviality are particularly relevant to food. Sharing food together allows for a daily physical and social re-creation of the self that is also fundamental to the

sense of human connection to others, and conviviality has been described as “the very nourishment of civil society itself” (Peattie, 1998, p.250). As Peattie (op cit, after Illich 1980, p.11) argues, conviviality encompasses feasting, drinking and good company and also

“the opposite of industrial productivity ...to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment, and this in contrast with the conditioned response of persons to the demands made upon them by others, and by a man-made environment”.

A central feature of convivial cities is the recognition of sociable pleasure taken in many purposeful activities (ibid). In the case of this book, these are sociable activities focused on food, directly connecting the use of the term to conviviality’s etymological origins. Another way that conviviality links to the research is in the evanescent nature of the social energy that emerges in food-related practices in the food quarters. These create special occasions out of “the mundane materials of life” (ibid, p.247); events as simple as buying food at the market, sharing a coffee, or enjoying a meal together.

Eating and drinking together is at the heart of the notion of conviviality, and this has spatial design implications, which in turn affect the nature of social life and the formation of social groups. Such social groups are established “by eating together conviviality, and by particular forms and settings of conviviality” (Peattie, 1998, p.248). These design dimensions matter because, as argued previously

“the physical design of cities can determine the richness of experiences of food and eating; working for or against the expression of conviviality by the way space is shaped and urban development approached...Proximity to the cafes, restaurants and markets of the centre, and the densities of people the centre attracts, allows for more chance encounters and a diversity of food and conversation. If the process of sharing food and drink excites the intellect, as well as satisfying the cravings of the body, it is little wonder that cafes have often been the sites of polemical debate and political agitation” (Parham, 1992, p.3).

Expressions of conviviality also tend to be everyday in nature, reflecting the quotidian, and thus the book’s preoccupation with the making of everyday life in ways that go beyond instrumental, economic exchange. Much of the expression of this conviviality takes place in everyday “third places” (Oldenburg, 1989; Rosenbaum, 2006) between work and home, of cafes, bars, and coffee shops, which are so prevalent in the three food

quarters. Both the design (about place) and the everyday (about time) facets of conviviality are explored in sections below.

It should also be recognised that conviviality has a strong, and at times ambivalent, relationship to economic activity. Notions of conviviality have been linked to forms of commercialisation and place marketing, with an attendant risk perceived that conviviality becomes increasingly “vestigial and episodic” through this relationship (Banerjee, 2004, p.15). For instance, place marketers may show a “propensity to service conviviality needs in the form of a growing number of third places in invented streets and spaces” (Banerjee, *ibid*) that act to co-opt and mystify their consumers. The intriguing spatial aspects of this argument are explored later in this chapter. Bell (2007), meanwhile, is less than sanguine about the processes of developing conviviality, theorising the use of commercialised hospitality to brand places as destinations, and arguing

“urban regeneration, place promotion and civic boosterism are using food and drink hospitality spaces as public, social sites for the production and reproduction of ways of living in and visiting cities and neighbourhoods” (p.7).

As noted at the start of this introductory chapter, these arguments reflect work that suggests places to eat and drink are connected to the development of new forms of city living that gentrify previously run down urban areas (Zukin, 1991), as well as with ‘gastro-tourism’ (Parham, 1996; Boniface, 2003). Yet these arguments only go some way in explaining the research findings from the three food quarters and similar sites elsewhere. Bell (2007, p.19), for example, points out that the forms of hospitality that are being produced in such hospitable spaces are not confined solely to economic exchange, but create a kind of “hybrid hospitality” that is more authentically convivial than mere commercial transactions would allow (*op cit*).

It is also worth noting that the development of such convivial spaces has not necessarily pushed out existing food-related uses to replace them with more commodified ones. Instead, as in a Manchester case studied by Bell and Binnie (2005), a convivial ecology has been developed in the food quarters that mixes and combines traditional food spaces such as ‘cafs’ and eel and pie shops and newer food-related uses, including slow food inspired market stalls, restaurants and delis. These are sites for what Thrift (2005) calls lighter touch forms of sociality, that allow time for the mundane moments of togetherness that pattern everyday life (Morrill *et al.*, 2005).



The conviviality of food quarters in London also shows interesting parallels to the Slow Food and related Slow Cities (*città slow*) movements emanating from northern Italy. While *città slow* stresses sustainable urbanism and alternative economic strategies for local places based on food “territories” (Knox and Mayer, 2006, p.322), Slow Food promotes conviviality around food, with its proponents organising themselves into local *convivia* (Pink, 2008) focused on “countering the loss of local distinctiveness as it relates to food, conviviality, sense of place, and hospitality” (Knox and Mayer, 2006, p.322).

Slow Cities (*città slow*), meanwhile, has grown from Slow Food to focus in on the spatial expression of these convivial qualities within villages and towns. While ‘official’ Slow City status is conferred only up to a maximum population of fifty thousand people, it is recognised that distinct spatial areas within larger cities could also exhibit similar qualities. Slow Cities makes explicit the linkages between convivial places and sustainability, conceptualising these connections as about economy, environment and equity, and arguing for local economic strategies that reflect the connections between food and place. At least one of the food quarters studied in this book (Borough) has formed direct links to the Slow Food movement, while a design strategy reminiscent of Slow Cities can be argued for in each food quarter, and is discussed later in this chapter.

In London, primary research is yielding positive results about the development of convivial locations that place branding arguments do not entirely explain (Maitland, 2008). Relevant work has focused on the way that emerging tourism areas do not (in contrast to previous mainstream practice) rest upon flagship development providing special attractions. Instead these sites rely on the qualities of place, in particular their conviviality, which attracts visitors to previously ‘undiscovered’ urban areas within a polycentric city form (*ibid*). The three food quarters explored in this book are clearly examples of this process of grounding renewal on the qualities of place, and in these areas tourism has developed not as part of flagship sites but within wider processes of urban regeneration and gentrification (Maitland and Newman, 2004).

For so-called post tourists (Lash and Urry, 1994; Judd, 2008), or new tourists (Poon, 1993), the appeal of such places is founded on conviviality that is relatively unmediated. This can be contrasted with the artful yet repetitive reproduction of planned tourist spaces, and reflects a more sophisticated approach which links to the pleasures of the everyday. As Maitland (2007, p.18) says of his fieldwork subjects:

“For some of them, the exotic may be found in a move away from traditional tourist beats, and the opportunity to experience ‘ordinary

everyday life' rather than an extraordinary attraction or event that constitutes a 'tourism experience' in a tourist bubble".

Maitland's fieldwork results were based in part on primary research in Islington and Southwark (boroughs where two of the three food quarters are also located) and found strong connections between everyday life and a sense of enjoying a convivial event:

"For most interviewees, getting to know the city was a convivial experience—local people and local places to drink coffee or shop were important. The emphasis is on the everyday and an appreciation of the conviviality of the ordinary" (2007, p.23).

Conviviality has also sometimes been connected up with political activity and social activism, particularly at the human scale of the local neighbourhood (Parham, 1992; Peattie, 1998). Again, this is no coincidence. Conviviality tends to occur between people who like being together, often 'bounded' in small groupings. As Peattie (*ibid*, p.251) says, conviviality's "natural habitat...is the bounded terrain of the likeminded". As the food quarters' research findings demonstrated, these places became sites for political expression and action. This was often directly about food as the subject of activity, or because the foodscape of the quarter was found to be a sympathetic environment in which to operate. Banerjee (2004, p.17) also reports from recent US experience of 'bottom-up' conviviality, that not-for-profit groups are emerging to run

"community improvements - from affordable housing to small business development - and thus infusing conviviality and creating third places even in poorer neighborhoods that the conventional market sees as too risky for investment".

The findings from Broadway Market in particular, but also to some extent from both Borough and Exmouth Markets, demonstrated a similar process underway, in which charities and small and medium sized community based organisations and enterprises took the lead in food led renewal. Bell (2007, p.12) points to the emergence of "an ethics of conviviality that revitalizes urban living", based he argues on the potentially productive "ways of relating that are practised in bars, cafés, restaurants, clubs and pubs" (*ibid*). In design terms, what has been most notable in the revitalisation process this book focuses on are ways of relating convivially in the *public space* of the street and market space of the food quarters.

If the research was founded on a purely sociological approach, this book might identify issues about making convivial places, but not

prescribe action. It is notable in cited work on conviviality, however, how many theorists conclude by making proposals for implementing public policies in support of more convivial places. This book similarly goes further than would a purely sociological one, proposing that spatial design for food can make an important contribution to convivial and sustainable cities. The final chapter offers some proposals for ways forward to better design for food in a fast changing urban world suffering from increasingly severe sustainability effects. Proposed action is grounded in the reflection that

“opportunities for conviviality in the city rely upon an extended set of gastronomic possibilities. And these possibilities can be widely conceived in city planning and design. They relate as much to kitchen layout as to market gardening, to the psychology of the cafe as to policy for metropolitan growth (Parham, 1992, p.1).

A conclusion from the research is that such opportunities for conviviality could be enhanced by urban design choices that support gastronomic strategies for cities (Parham, 1992). As Peattie (1998, p.248) notes in this regard, conviviality cannot be forced but

“it can be encouraged by the right rules, the right props, and the right places and spaces. These are in the realm of planning”.

The research findings from this book appear to show that conviviality expressed through a hybrid form of hospitality (Bell, 2007) has developed in the food-centred space of the food quarters, and this may act as a useful frame for both theorising about and making more convivial places in future.

## **Food and everyday life**

This book is a study of everyday life. It explores the interconnectedness of social and physical aspects of the everyday, as they have been played out in particular places through relationships to food. At the same time, food is more than simply a language or a sign of something else: it is a fundamental, material part of urban culture, which is judged to be in itself a legitimate field for study (Simmel, 1903). The book is similarly preoccupied with the interconnection between time, space and everyday life (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991) in that it considers the primary research in the light of the notion that recurrent material practices shape space-time.

Just as De Certeau, Giard and Mayol (1998) describe and analyse spatial practices with reference to food in their study of the Croix-Rousse neighbourhood in Lyon, the socio-spatial practices of place users in the Borough, Broadway and Exmouth Market areas have been closely studied to explore how that shaping of space over time has taken place through food relationships. This is, says Luce Giard (1998, p.xxxv), about “the creative activity of those in the practice of the ordinary” and encompasses the aesthetic experience of the food market, with its capacity for sight, touch and smell. The book’s findings suggest that food has both shaped place and been shaped by it.

The work of Henri Lefebvre has been useful to this writer in bringing an acknowledgement of the role of consumption and a sense of the spatial to the study of everyday life. Lefebvre argues for places where human interaction is not solely predicated on money-based exchange, and the three food quarters reflect Lefebvre’s insights by creating more than just a “simple material product” (1991, p.101). Rather than functioning only as spaces for consumption, they have provided room for meeting social needs (*ibid*). The food quarters may also have helped to expose the mystification operating in much of everyday life, in which apparent food plenitude, represented by increasing consumption, and obfuscating environmental costs and economic inequalities, is mistaken for real human richness (*ibid*). Consumption certainly occurs at the food quarters, but these sites have also worked as what Lefebvre calls “places of simultaneity and encounters, places where exchange would not go through exchange value” (*ibid*).

Meanwhile, Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of the habitus, discussed at length in the next chapter, helps frame the way individual behaviour has supported the food quarters’ day-to-day life. It also opens up areas that are more problematic, especially those relating to gentrification. Mennell (1992) has argued that Bourdieu’s theoretical framework may be too static and fixed a concept to be entirely effective in explaining the dynamism evident in the practices of everyday life in relation to food. More recently, scholars working in a range of sociological areas relating to, for example, health and gastronomy have employed Bourdieu’s theoretical constructs, including the habitus, to negotiate a theoretical path between the fixed and the transformative in relation to food (Lindelof et al, 2010; Gomez, 2011; Wills, 2011).

An approach that reflects both Bourdieu’s strengths, and poststructuralist insights that emphasise “contingency over structure in explaining outcomes” (Fainstein, 2000, p.145), has helped to map the way spatial practices in everyday life shift over time and space. While the food quarters showed

evidence of the playing out of an individual *habitus* that claimed distinction by differentiating and excluding, as found in work on “foodies” by Johnston and Baumann (2010), they also provided a number of examples of identification between very different people, based on shared aims and values in relation to food and sociability. Linking ideas about taste and distinction to the notion of conviviality, Bell (2007, p.19) points out that, in fact

“commensality is not always a disguise for competitions over taste and status; it can also be about social *identification*, the sharing not only of food and drink but of world-views and patterns of living”.

Research in the food quarters demonstrated a range of socio-spatial practices being undertaken in which food played a central or substantial part: practices based in the routine encounters and shared experiences of the small urban spaces (Whyte, 1980; Gehl, 1996) that are of particular interest in enlivening cities. Practices observed include walking, browsing, shopping, eating, talking, making art, doing community politics and tourist visiting. They both reflected the structured patterns of a number of individuals’ *habitus*’, yet some showed examples of dynamism and change. At each food quarter this was especially clear in the development of new forms of socio-spatial practice in relation to food distribution and consumption.

Equally clearly, not everyone was experiencing the food quarters in the same way. While not wishing to overplay, or make rigid demarcations, along the lines of race, class and gender, it was evident that issues in relation to class, in particular, were being played out in the food quarters, often directly expressed through food. At each quarter, the study of socio-spatial practices raised these issues broadly in the context of regeneration and gentrification, and of tradition and modernity, with food an area of sometimes-explicit class contestation. Studying socio-spatial practices in relation to food acted as a way in to understanding each quarter as a regenerating space. And while regeneration is a paradoxical process, giving rise to both positive and negative results in the three food quarters as social spaces, the research findings suggested that positive effects on everyday life predominated.

## **Social space, physical space and food**

Another way of looking at the everyday in relation to food is through the design of place, and the book crosses discipline boundaries in order to make connections between social and physical space, in part through

urban design and morphological analysis. This is because a central concern is whether, and if so, how, the design of physical form may shape the social construction of space in relation to food. So, as well as reflecting theoretical areas that fall within mainstream sociology, the book draws on theory and research methods from urban design, including identification of design elements (Lynch, 1961, 1985; Alexander et al, 1977; Bacon, 1982; Bentley et al., 1985; Broadbent, 1990; Hayward and McGlynn, 1993; Jacobs, 1993; Carmona, 2003; Moughtin, 2003) and master planning analysis (Urban Design Compendium, 2000, 2007). Urban design characteristics and elements of space are described in Chapter 2, and design based methods discussed in Chapter 3, while these form the basis for design findings and analysis of the food quarters in Chapters 4 to 8.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the study of the food quarters has a very distinct spatial design backdrop at the broad level of the city region; one of rapid and largely unsustainable development, expansion and renewal of urban space (Gillham, 2002; Waldheim, 2006; Cohen and Rustin, 2008; Gordon and Travers, 2010; Klemek, 2011). This is, in the main, within a design idiom of separation of land uses, and in a context of relatively low density, car dependent growth (Garreau, 1991; Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2004; Hayden, 2004; Dunham Jones, 2011), in which commodified malls and shopping centres are the predominant foodscapes (Knox, 1992).

Meanwhile, as noted earlier, it is argued that fat city and Slow City inflected design, instead assists in creating ordinary places in keeping with the European City Model (Clos, 2005; Parham, 2006). This in turn presents both a distinct break with post war urban design experience, and a challenge to the dominant modernist mode of city shaping, bringing some of its shortcomings into stark relief. Also as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the food quarter's location is generally found in traditional urban fabric and is based on human-scaled, highly mixed, walkable and fine-grained urbanism, but its elements are capable of retrofitting sprawl and being built into new areas too.

At the same time, developments in the UK suggest that the food quarter itself could be reconfigured to increase its capacity to offer a sustainable approach to city design. The increasing focus on urban agriculture and food growing, for instance, demonstrates interesting potentialities in design terms for reshaping cities (Edwards and Mercer, 2010; Duany, 2011) that could be built into the food quarter's design mix. It does seem evident though that food quarters, including those studied, appear currently to be unique in connecting traditional urban fabric design to an alternative socio-spatiality which reflects pressing sustainability