1101a Newfoundland Food Institute

Tod Williams and Billie Tsien with Andrew Benner

The focus of our studio will be the food culture of St. John's, Newfoundland, an area that has undergone profound changes over its history. For over 400 years, the cod fisheries in Newfoundland were among the richest in the world. In more recent times, overfishing by huge factory ships and the use of draggers scraping the seabed, destroying everything in their path, led to a terrible depletion of fish and devastation to maritime ecosystems in the area. Cod fishing was banned in 1992, resulting in 42,000 residents losing their livelihood and putting the historic culture of Newfoundland in crisis. The collapse of oil prices in 2016 precipitated a new round of crisis, driving unemployment in the region to 14.4 percent.

Our project will seek to address this complex web of issues with a new institute, a 45,000 square foot program composed of three parts – a food bank, a culinary school and a research program for training in food analytics. The food bank will provide services for those suffering from food insecurity in the present crisis. The culinary school will build on the very strong food culture in St. John's, where a new generation of local chefs are reinterpreting local food and traditional recipes. At the same time, food analytics – an emergent industry making food preparation and distribution efficient, sustainable and profitable through internet connectivity and mobile sensor devices - offers possibilities for job growth and could connect St. John's to economies beyond its immediate environs. The ambition of the institute is to find a synergy between teaching skills with local consequence – cooking – and global impact – food analytics – to ease economic instability in the region. The food bank will benefit from the expertise of both branches of the institute.

Our site will be on St. John's harbor, the historic center for the city and the region. We will ask you to consider how the new institute can contribute to the architectural character of the city and enrich the public space on the waterfront. Our trip will take us to St. John's to learn about the place and its local food culture. We will also visit Fogo Island to look at the work of Todd Saunders and speak with Zita Cobb, who founded the Fogo Island Inn as a model social business with all operating profits reinvested in the local community.

Newfoundland Food Institute Program
Dormitory for 80 students: 20,000 s.f.
80 beds
Shared bathrooms (20 stalls, 10 showers)
Social Space
2 kitchen/classrooms (@ 400 s.f. each): 800 s.f.
1 working kitchen: 400 s.f.
Café (also used for student meals), open to the public: 800 s.f.
2 Food Analytics work spaces (@ 1500 s.f. each): 3,000 s.f.
one used for teaching
one used for offices and labs
Food bank: 1500 s.f.
Event space for public events and recreation: 3,000 s.f.
Services: loading, refuse, back of house: 300 s.f.
Additional space for circulation, mechanical, structure
Approx. 40-45% of net: 10,000 s.f.

**Total square footage: 38 - 45,000 s.f., not including outdoor space**