

WTC's URBAN VEGETAL GARDEN

Call for temporary occupation

from now until 31/12/2018

Lab North is launching a call for applications for a temporary occupancy on the roof of the base of the WTC I&II. The WTC I&II are the first towers of the "Manhattan Plan" developed in the 1960s. Based on a modernist vision of the neighbourhood, the initial idea was to connect all the tower's bases to create a network of public spaces connected exclusively by footbridges. In the end, the bases were only partially built and the footbridges never saw the light of day, so the roofs -once imagined as generous pedestrian spaces- remained empty... However, we believe that these spaces have undeniable qualities and that they can have a second life if the conditions are right.

The objective of the project is to transform this unused open air space into an open and living urban vegetable garden. A direct access from the public space to the roof is being designed. The aim will be to test a variety of innovative urban agricultures while at the same time offering a "semi-public" space to share and to enjoy with the users and inhabitants of the district. The project will host several projects of 50 to 1000m² in order to offer a "park" with a variety of environments and experiences that can be more or less experimental, more or less social, more or less productive.

Context :

The North Quarter is gradually mutating and redefining the modernist utopias of the 60s drawn in the "Manhattan Plan".

This district, very close to the city centre, is a hub of very dense public and private tertiary activities, notably thanks to its national multimodal station and all the office buildings, which bring together a large number of companies and administrations (400,000 employees). Situated between the centre and the new development around the canal, this district can be a real link, without being limited to being just a zone of passage.

The WTC Tower I is occupied by the Lab North project, which works on revitalizing the neighbourhood through a transitional urban planning methodology. An important temporary occupancy program tests new types of occupations and energizes and attracts new uses in the district. About thirty organisations (agencies, associations, start-ups, freelancers, schools of architecture, etc.) are already installed in the tower. Other actors will move in during the coming months, and a cultural and events' agenda will be launched in spring.

In this context, part of the International Architecture Biennial of Rotterdam (IABR), devoted to the development of a prospect for action towards a more sustainable and resilient future, will take place in this building. This event, co-organised by Architecture Workroom Brussels, will occupy the base as well as the tower, and will welcome in June, September and October a diverse audience: actors of the city, architects, experts from Brussels and elsewhere, as well as passers-by, tourists, inhabitants, and anybody who is challenged by this event!

The terrace on the WTC I&II base will become a central space between the activities gathered in the base and those in the upper floors of the building. This terrace will be a strong element, open and visible from the outside, it will be a mark signalling the new dynamics of the North District.

Purpose of the temporary occupancy call

Activating the North District by integrating urban agriculture

Lab North is looking for several applicants who can manage and animate urban agricultural spaces with diverse objectives ranging from market gardening activities, to culinary experiences, to pedagogical spaces. Applicants can build teams to animate their spaces and collaborate with already existing organisations.

The site will be available to several teams as it would consist of several plots from 50m² to 1000m².

Examples of use :

- testing urban farming methods (new and old plants, organic farming, new productivity, hydroponics, permaculture, etc.)
- sharing and learning about producing and consuming food (local inhabitants or workers, schools)
- testing convivial spaces that can combine culinary/event programs with the terrace garden

The place

A 3000sqm roof

The roof of the WTC socle is a large terrace at 13m high, offering a beautiful view on the city centre and the canal. It has different sun and wind exposure zones with parcels to the west and south and shaded areas to the north. This terrace is connected to an interior space in the Tower I of the WTC, which will be used to store equipment but also to welcome the public for events. A direct access from the public space on Avenue Simon Bolivar is also being studied and will attract inhabitants and users in a more direct way, inviting them to discover the green projects installed on the WTC terrace.

Storage and management space indoors

Each occupant will have access to an interior space of a few m² to store one's tools, which will then be secured. A second shared space with all the occupants and managers of the terrace will be used as a meeting place to organize a good cohabitation in this space, and to develop activities, workshops, various events together while respecting the needs and desires of all.

An interior space welcoming the public

The interior space of Tower I is a beautiful, glazed area of 500m² which could be made available for the activities proposed by the applicants. The activities in this area must be linked to the terrace and must offer the opportunity for users and inhabitants of the district to discover a new activity within their neighbourhood. The objective here is to create an environment that is friendly and open to the public several times a week, allowing everyone to meet, to learn and to enjoy the North District.

Access to the public area opposite the North railway station

The Lab North team is currently working on a direct connection between the terrace and the public space. The idea would be to make the terrace directly accessible from the sidewalk, also beyond business hours, to encourage passers-by to come and enjoy the place, to discover it. The idea is to open up the WTC to the neighbourhood to make its inside dynamics more visible, more open, so that everyone can enjoy it and that it benefits the whole North District.

Development proposals for the green terrace

Lab North is open to your proposals for the development of this green terrace, be they innovative, surprising, sustainable and mobile.

You will be in charge of proposing a layout for your plot. The Lab North team will be able to give you some formal, technical and safety advice.

We look forward to seeing your proposals!

Conditions

Only a few rules to follow:

- this terrace will welcome the public, so it has to be thought to be "visitable", without the public being able to damage the plants. Between the vegetable garden and the public garden, the terrace will be designed intelligently for plants and visitors.
- children can visit the terrace during pedagogical sessions, so the facilities must be adapted to their size and cannot be dangerous.
- the materials used for your structure should, as far as possible, be environmentally friendly, they should not release any waste or harmful products
- it should be possible to easily dismantle the project so that it can be transported quickly in December 2018 (ideally transportable by pallet truck).

Once the Lab North team has validated your application, all the accepted applicants will meet to jointly set up the terrace plan. During this meeting, the occupants will have to be willing to slightly adapt their structure to allow each one to find its place and create a beautiful terrace that suits all.

Defrayal / Rent

1€ ex VAT per m²/month.

Water charged to the applicants based on their own consumption.

Material cooperative:

Lab North will organize a large global order for wood based on the needs of the applicants, basic soil, geotextile and pallets or any other element that can be used in large quantities. Lab North will resell it at cost price to the occupants so that they can benefit from advantageous rates. When assembling structures, Lab North accepts that occupants re-use materials or elements previously used elsewhere, as long as they match the project.

Water

Large water access points will be provided by Lab North.

The water consumption will be charged to the applicants, according to their own consumption.

Timeline

The entire space (interior + terrace) will be available until December 31st, 2018. Depending on the project, involvement and willingness of the candidates, Lab North will accompany the relocation of the activities for the year 2019, for example on the WTC III base opposite WTC I and II, or in other areas of the North District.

Key dates to remember

- March 14 : Launch of the call for applications
- 26th March: Closure of the call for applications
- In the following week : Selection results and response to candidates
- 2nd April: Site visit and meeting between the actors to organize the sharing of space and community
- ...and then getting started with the garden!

For more information, you can contact us at = contact@labnorth.be

If you want to apply, please click on the yellow button "apply now" on this page : <http://labnorth.be/en/locations/the-world-trade-center-tower-1/terrace>