

# Helena van Vliet Architect, LLC

## Restorative Biophilic Design



April/May, 2016

### The Garden of Urban

***“We cannot continue to believe that the landscape is sacred and the city is profane. They must both be considered sacred.”~Paul Murrain (British Urbanist, Sr. Design Director, the Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment)***

There is a blooming meadow outside your office window. Hollyhocks, lavender, daisies and thyme. Rich summer green. Birds singing. Insects humming. Wind rustling in a leafy trellis. Jasmine, rose, and meadowsweet. The spicy aroma of sage.

Fresh.

Someone must just have mowed a lawn.

Bee hives. Butterflies dancing in groups of three, four, five. Heavy traffic at the birdfeeders. Nearby, the sound of fresh flowing water. Sensation of coolness. A pleasant breeze.

It's summer.

As darkness falls, an abundance of little brown bats swarming...

### **Welcome to the city!**

The city of the future.

Humanity has finally made the necessary shift to shape its environment to suit its actual survival needs.

*Top photo: Brooklyn Grange Urban Farm. (Photo: Les Loups)*



Chicago City Hall (Photo credit: Roof Meadow)

We have finally made our well-being a priority. We have finally made community a priority. We have remembered our birthright to joy.

As a result: there is less stress. Crime is down. People feel better able to cope. The goal is a shared one: to take care of the garden.

The garden of Urban.



Project "Edible School Yard" NYC, Work Architecture



University of Pennsylvania Fagin Hall Green Roof (Photo: Roof Meadow) Musee Du Quai Branly, Paris

## Growing Life

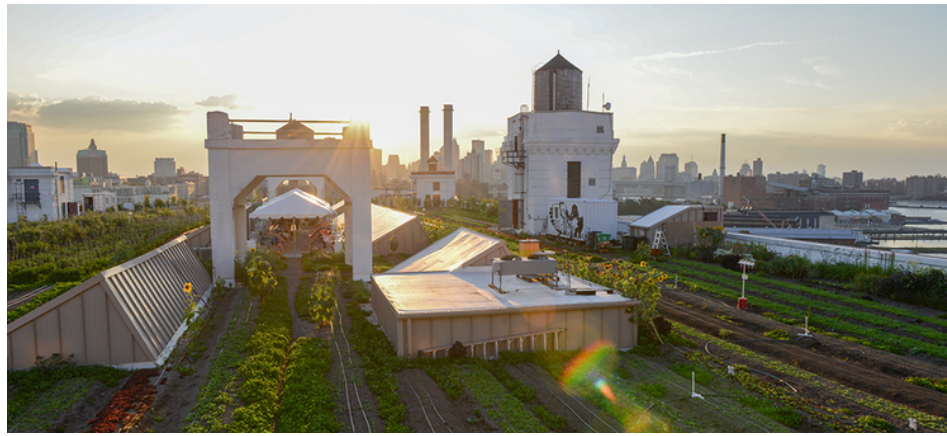
Since the majority of populations live in urban centers now, it's here that the primary shift had to occur. We finally decided to build environments, which bring us joy, which make us feel well, happy, and therefore healthy.



Celebrating community. Like [Greensgrow Farms](#) in Philadelphia, where since 1997 the idea of unused and abandoned land has been rethought to create farms that convert veggie waste composts into fertilizer, shipping containers into a garden shop and rain gutters into planters. All for the good of the local community.

Greensgrow's mission: By 2020, people in Philadelphia and communities all across America will see urban agriculture as a useful tool in creating and sustaining regional food economies.

Places like the [Brooklyn Grange](#), rooftop farm, which sprang to life in 2010, have proven, that urban agriculture can exist to produce healthy vegetables for the community while improving the local ecosystem at the same time.



Urban centers can be regenerative places. Rejuvenating. Restorative places. Biophilic. Nature-full. Joy-full.

Not merely sustaining life, but growing life.



*Interior 158 Cecil Street, Singapore*



*Park Royal Pickering, Singapore*



*Refuge & Prospect : Bryant Park, New York City*

## Hardwired

The recipe it turns out has always been a simple one. We have known it since time immemorial. It's been in our DNA all along. Lodged in our nervous system, our very brains.

Hardwired.

All we had to do is remember. And trust the memory of Nature's elements that made us who and what we are. We are designed to thrive in a specific habitat: a bio-diverse, abundant nature-full habitat.

It feels like home.

Because it is.



*Highline NYC*



*Stephen Ritz, The Green Bronx Machine.*

It's what we crave because we know instinctively that we must have it to survive.

We must breathe Nature, smell Nature, feel it, hear it, touch it, live it, eat it to be whole.

We must be immersed in it.



*Acros Building, Fukuoka Japan*



*Brooklyn Grange Urban Farm. [CLICK TO LEARN MORE.](#)*



*Harvest at the Brooklyn Grange, Farm on a Roof*



"The Nature Of Cities" video follows the journey of Professor Timothy Beatley as he explores urban projects around the world, representing the new green movement that hopes to move our urban environments beyond sustainability to a regenerative way of living.

[Click to watch: The Nature of Cities](#)

**Please join us to welcome Tim Beatley, as well as several other leaders in Biophilic Design in Philadelphia:**

# BIOPHILIC CITIES NETWORK & BIOPHILLY MEET AND GREET

**WHEN:** Wed. 5.18.16, 6:30-9pm  
**WHERE:** Courtyard of the Morris House Hotel  
225 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

*Light Fare and Cash Bar*  
*\$25 suggested donation, \$10 for students*

Brief Presentations and a Community Discussion about the role of nature in shaping the life and future of Philadelphia. Evidence is mounting that contact with nature is not optional, but essential to human health and flourishing. We need nature even more in urban settings. A Biophilic City is a Resilient and Sustainable City.

But how well is Philly doing, and what future steps can and must be taken to ensure that Philly residents get the daily (or hourly) doses of nature that they need? Hear first hand about the important new vision of biophilic cities and the global movement to bring them about, and from local leaders who are working to make a natureful life a reality in Philadelphia.

Learn about the new local organization BioPhilly, working to advance these ideas, and how you might become involved.

### PANELISTS/PRESENTERS

Helena van Vliet, BioPhilly  
Stephen Kellert, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies  
Bill Browning, Terrapin Bright Green  
Tim Beatley, Biophilic Cities Network and University of Virginia  
Stella Tarnay, Biophilic DC  
Joan S. Blaustein, Director, Urban Forestry and Ecosystem Management Division, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

RSVP to Elizabeth Calabrese at [calabresearchitects@gmail.com](mailto:calabresearchitects@gmail.com)  
For more information about Biophilic Cities visit [www.biophiliccities.org](http://www.biophiliccities.org)

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BiophilicCities  
Interface  
Helena van Vliet LLC

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## Nature in the News

The Case for Setting Aside Half the Planet

How A Great Teacher Cultivates Veggies (And Kids) In The Bronx

With Spring, the Rare Spotted Salamander Emerges





Chicago City Hall (Photo credit: Roof Meadow)

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Learn more about **Building Places that Re-Connect with the Natural World**. For Land Planning, Architecture and Collaborative Design, please [email me](#) or call me at: 610-299-7530 for more information.

Now contributing to: **Human Spaces: Spaces designed with the human in mind.**

Stay connected to nature. Sign up for [news updates here](#).



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**Helena van Vliet** <helena@helenavanvliet.com>  
To: Anoki Casey <anokinet@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 2:39 PM

ditto

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<https://www.biophilily.org>

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Helena van Vliet Architect, LLC" <helena@helenavanvliet.com>  
**Subject:** **The Garden of Urban.**  
**Date:** April 28, 2016 at 4:02:52 PM EDT  
**To:** [helena@helenavanvliet.com](mailto:helena@helenavanvliet.com)

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