

New Americans' Pavilion: Green Building Strategies to Support Refugee Food Sovereignty in Syracuse, NY

David R. Shanks, RA, Assistant Professor, Syracuse University School of Architecture

ABSTRACT

This presentation highlights the green building methods used in the New Americans' Pavilion at Salt City Harvest Farm (SCHF) near Syracuse, NY, and the impact that these strategies have had on environmental and social justice for refugees in the local community. In the past two decades, Syracuse has welcomed more than ten thousand refugees with diverse origins ranging from Somalia to Bhutan to Cambodia. Many refugees arrive in Syracuse with diminished social networks, limited economic opportunities, and scarce access to fresh food. SCHF has provided refugees with farmland and agricultural training programs since 2014 to help them grow the food from their home cuisines that they want to eat. The New Americans' Pavilion at SCHF contains passively cooled space for refugee farmers to wash and pack the produce they grow on the farm, as well as an off-the-grid, solar-powered cold storage enclosure to keep produce fresh before they bring it to market. The pavilion also includes flexible spaces for teaching, learning, gathering, and dining, which makes it an important social hub in the refugee diaspora. The New Americans' Pavilion was designed and constructed over a two-year period by a team comprising faculty and students of architecture, community volunteers, and Salt City Harvest Farm staff. The design and construction project serves as a demonstration of the agency of architects, students, and community groups to collaborate using green building methods to have a positive impact on social justice in their communities.

BIOGRAPHY

David Shanks is an Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture at Syracuse University. He is co-founder of the architecture and design practice ASDF, which was named Best New Practice in the northeast by The Architect's Newspaper in 2021. His design work has been exhibited at the Boston Society of Architects, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Biennale di Pisa, among other locations, and he has been a resident of the Cape Cod Modern House Trust and the MacDowell Colony. David is a registered architect in the State of New York.