



LOCAL ARCHITECTS EXPLORE SUSTAINABILITY IN MONTH-LONG FOOD CHALLENGE

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Like many architects around the world, award-winning Gastown architects, Iredale Group Architecture, have been incorporating sustainability into the built environment for several decades. However, for the month of August, they're incorporating it into every aspect of their personal diet to help bring a new level of conscientiousness to the issue and to their work.

By now everyone has heard of the 100-mile diet, the goal of which is to consume food and beverages that are grown, produced and packaged all within a 100-mile radius of your home. As such, Iredale Group Architecture determined that the diet could be undertaken to help the architects and staff to think innovatively about embedding sustainability into every design decision; to inspire staff and to make the issue of sustainability highly personal. "It's easy to write a piece of narrative for our website that says we care about the environment, it's a lot more impactful to consider energy consumption and preservation every time we reach for an apple or a cup of tea", Katheleen Dixon, Marketing Director, Iredale Group Architecture.

"We've just started the challenge and there is a lot of debate within the office, proponents believe that the 100 Mile Diet is beneficial to help diversify local economies and communities and will help with the overall environmental footprint as food travels far fewer distances. Opponents feel that growing crops or maintaining livestock in climates that haven't traditionally supported such crops will expend far more energy than having the same produce shipped in from other parts of the world" says Stefan Walsh, project manager and LEED professional at Iredale.

Despite the differing of opinions, Denis Gautier, Designer and BIM Technician at Iredale says "The goal is to bring these questions into our consciousness. I don't know that we'll advocate or oppose the theory of the 100 mile diet in the end, but I like that we're asking questions about our food sources and our communities. I know that everyone in the office is feeling excited, inspired, and empowered by the 'diet' and that will translate into our working relationships and into our design product."

Throughout the month of August, Iredale will be hosting several discussions and in-house events with local thought leaders like Saul Good Ltd., Sole Foods, and Spud.ca. Dixon concludes, "Vancouver is a great place to undertake a challenge such as this, because there are so many great resources. We have set up garden tours and mystery box challenges for staff to help keep us focused and motivated, as well as a design charrette for a Vancouver community at the diet's conclusion so that we can identify and embed the best sustainability ideas into a real workable environment."

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