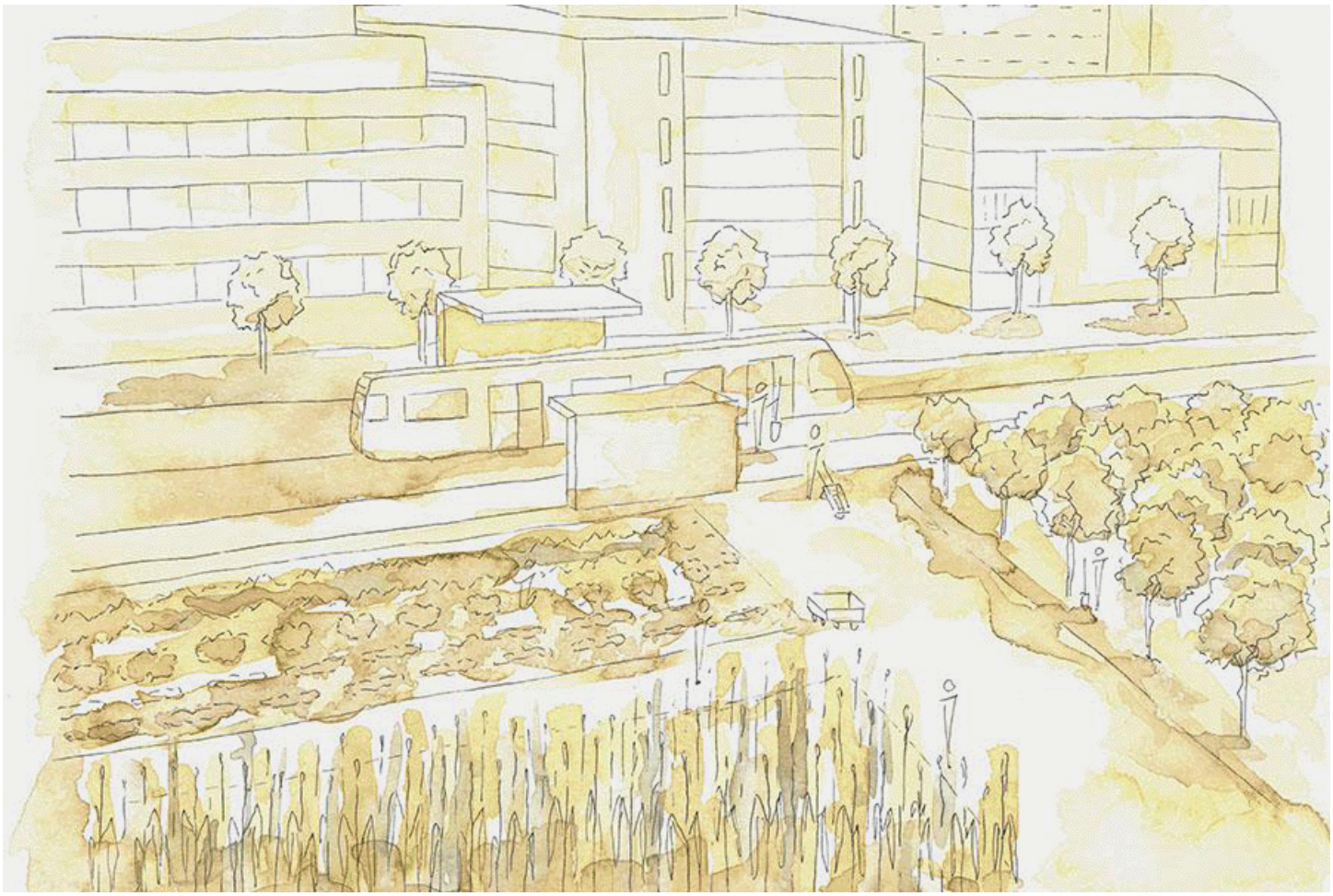
ETH Zurich Department of Architecture
ARCHITECTURE OF TERRITORY
Chair of Architecture
and Territorial Planning
Professor Milica Topalović

Soil, Water, Labour
Fall 2020

Land Consumption

Preserving Land for Urban Agriculture in Zurich

Diana Strässle and Emily Tobler



The potato is a good example of an agricultural product that has disappeared from our fields with the consumption of agricultural land by urban expansion. After their intense presence in Switzerland during the Second World War, potato fields are now a rarity. This change is particularly noticeable in the Glatttal, an area that has been characterized by urbanisation for decades due to large infrastructure projects. At the same time, an uncontrolled shift in thinking appeared: the dream of living surrounded by “nature”. To this day, the city of Zurich has not stopped growing. Only small residual areas with productive use are left. But these are absolutely in danger of disappearing due to the new efforts for inner densification. Different forms of urban agriculture are specifically adapted to local conditions, and they can be protected from further overbuilding in various ways.

This work by Diana Strässle and Emily Tobler was created as part of the design studio Soil, Water, Labour at ETH Zurich in Fall 2020. The PDF is intended for educational purposes only. Its commercial distribution is strictly forbidden.

© 2025, Architecture of Territory

Architecture of Territory
Professor Milica Topalović

Prof. Milica Topalović
ETH Zurich
ONA G41
Neunbrunnenstrasse 50
8093 Zurich
Switzerland
+41 (0)44 633 86 88
www.topalovic.arch.ethz.ch