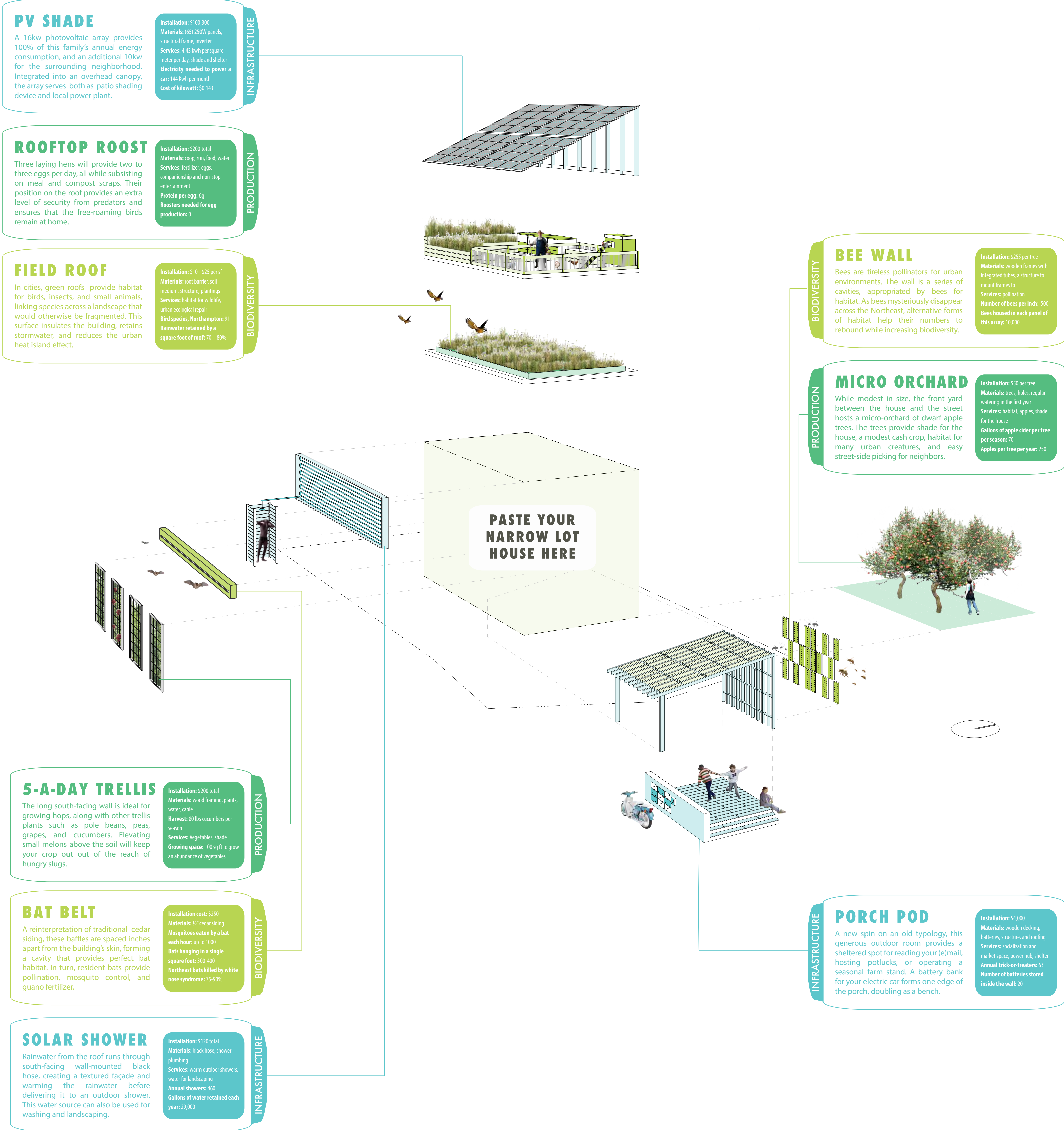




the Productive [Narrow] Lot

In the face of climate change and resource scarcity, humans are seeking new ways to produce energy, food and materials, to repair our ecosystem, and to nurture community ties. A paradigm shift— from parasitic residence to productive urban occupation—demands that new programs be applied onto the current town fabric by appropriating underused spaces and by reimagining architectural building surfaces. From the scale of the neighborhood to the scale of the detail, productive architectural accretions could position the single-family house as a catalyst for change. Thus, this design proposal looks not to the house, but rather to the lot, as the site of greatest transformative potential.

THE ARK STUDIO

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When architects design houses, they typically work on behalf of the clients or end users: developing solutions for program synergies, energy efficiency, thermal comfort, social connection, and aesthetic delight.

While this approach ensures that humans will thrive in such a domicile, it fails to engage in the holistic visioning required to strategically position architecture as a change agent in addressing climate change.

As Americans look for ways to repair the disconnect between farm and table, between humans and non-humans, between buildings and the natural world, the Productive (Narrow) Lot explores a more inclusive and interconnected, yet radical design approach.

This project proposes a “kit of parts” that transforms ordinary architectural elements into a productive tectonic language.

With simple insertions and accretions – design interventions that can be deployed over time and as needed – the architecture of a conventional house can be put to work for more productive ends.

The Productive (Narrow) Lot proposal layers three new categories of design thinking onto the envelope of a typical single-family urban residence:

BIODIVERSITY: Design features that provide enhanced animal habitat and ecological services, improve soil and water conditions, or help to minimize the negative effects of climate change.

PRODUCTION: Surfaces that are reconsidered as spaces for animal husbandry, food cultivation, or the generation of new resources, such as fuel.

INFRASTRUCTURE: New systems that help to produce, protect, or preserve limited resources and energy reserves.

This menu of options can be mixed and matched in a variety of synergistic combinations. They can be assembled on any type of dwelling, irregardless of vintage or aesthetics. The productive potential implicit in many Narrow Lots can, in aggregate, scale up to create greater beneficial impact on their environment than their modest footprints suggest. It seems appropriately American, somehow, that a new vision for a productive future city could in fact begin at home.