

Sustainable Development in Berlin, Germany

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While studying abroad in Berlin, I was interested in learning about sustainability efforts and green infrastructure of the city. Being a green metropolis, Berlin is a place where green initiatives and ways of living flourish. As a student studying architecture and environmental studies, it was interesting to see how Berliners have developed a common understanding of preserving land and reusing what is already available for developing infrastructure. As someone who thinks architecturally with a common understanding of urban green development, it was very inspiring to see how the Berlin landscape has evolved and rebuilt itself throughout history. From vast green public parks to busy bikers overtaking the streets, Berlin is continually developing greener alternatives and initiatives for a more accessible future.

The re-use of land and space is a common theme amongst Berlin's development and architecture. It provokes thoughtful insight on how to build a vital and robust community. An architectural site I want to highlight is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, also known as the Holocaust Memorial. Architect Peter Eisenman created a memorial of 2,711 concrete columns dedicated to the lives and legacies of the Jewish victims of the Nazi genocide during World War II. Eisenman built this memorial on the former death strip where the Berlin wall once stood. There is an appropriate remembrance of the past — one that pays homage to those affected keeping them in memory, while simultaneously evolving better community standards and moving forward. When I first walked through the columns, I immediately felt lost and isolated. Everything towers over your body and you feel incredibly small. Just this feeling alone carries such a remarkably moving sense of empathy, which is what I believe makes the Holocaust memorial an incredible Architectural creation.

Another architectural site that I want to pay attention to is the community garden at Tempelhof field. Very different in comparison to the Holocaust Memoria, Tempelhof field is part of an adaptive reuse project voted for by Berlin citizens. Once an abandoned airport runway, the space was revitalized for public recreation. The landscape was transformed to

have vegetation, walking paths and its own community garden all built from repurposed materials. When I visited the garden I felt such an overwhelming sense of joy and solace. I found a nice little pocket of shade and sat on a bench to sketch the garden beds. Berlin is teeming with public green space and parks, which gives great opportunity for people to get away from the city atmosphere and have time for respite.