

Statement of Purpose Example for Graduate School

“Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space.” I was 16 when I first read this quote by Mies van der Rohe, and, back then, I thought I really understood what it meant. Thinking of this quote one summer evening, as I walked around my beloved New York City, I was inspired to commit to a future in architecture. At that early stage, I cherished romantic ideals of designing grandiose buildings that would change a city; of adding my name to the list of architectural geniuses who had immortalized their vision of the world in concrete, steel, glass, and stone. It was in college that I became passionately interested in the theoretical design and engineering concepts that form the basis of architecture, while also exploring in greater detail the sociological and economic impact of architecture.

The true breakthrough for me took place in my sophomore year of college, when I was volunteering at The Bowery Mission, a women’s shelter situated in Queens, New York. The shelter was in a poorly ventilated building, with an essentially non-functioning air conditioning system. The little bit of relief for the people who stayed there was a small park nearby, a patch of green between suffocating buildings. One day when I was working the afternoon shift there in the peak of summer, I looked out to see bulldozers in the park. It was being torn up to make room for yet another building. I saw that completed building a year later – a grey block of steel that did not utilize any of the original park space. Witnessing this injustice, while learning every day about how climatology, materials technology, and engineering mechanics intersect with urban planning and architectural design, ignited a passion for sustainable design in me. [BeMo2] How can we, as architects, minimize our harm to communities and eco-systems? How can we design buildings with a view to sustain long-term energy and resource efficiency without sacrificing immediate economic viability? What are the eco-conscious solutions that architects can put forward to address the environmental changes of the 21st century? These were the questions that plagued me then and I have pursued the answers to these questions throughout my academic career so far.

I found the answers to some of these questions in the robust curriculum I pursued at ABC College of Architecture, New York. I took up advanced coursework in Engineering Mechanics, Surveying, Soil Mechanics, Steel Structures, Model Making etc. which helped me hone my technical skills. As my interest in sustainable architecture developed, I became curious about the social and anthropological impact of architecture. I studied Art History, African American Literature, Anthropology, and Cultures of Ancient Greece, which helped me develop a deeper understanding of the socio-ecological impact of architecture and ethical responsibilities of architects. With this strong background of academic exploration, my architectural philosophy continued to evolve. I became interested in cutting-edge design techniques and their application to sustainable design. In my junior year at college, I participated in the New Dimensions of Architecture conference held in New York City, presenting my own paper on “Analyzing the Implications of the Weizman Design Theory for the Sustainable Architecture of the Future”. In fact, it was at this conference that I met Professor Richard Wright, the esteemed architect and professor emeritus at the Architecture department of XYZ University. Talking with him was one of the most enlightening moments

of my life. We discussed our shared passion for ecologically efficient and socially cohesive architectural solutions, and he introduced me to the works of Leonard Nieman, Mary Andrews, and other cutting-edge green architecture firms that are making a real contribution to ecologically sustainable urban planning.

In fact, the possibility of learning from and working directly with Professor Wright is one of my main reasons to seek admission into your M.Arch program. His innovative design theories have a tremendous potential for sustainable architecture solutions. I would love to learn from him and collaborate with him to continue to explore my interest in these topics. I am also deeply interested in the scope of studies afforded by your wide-ranging curriculum that focuses on the latest architectural innovations as well as socio-economic evolutions in architecture. Moreover, for a budding green architect, nothing is more attractive than your quarterly line-up of seminars and conferences that frequently feature the names of the architects at the forefront of design innovation. With my strong academic background in both the technical and socio-economic aspects of architecture, and my focused passion on sustainable architectural solutions for the future, I think I am a perfect candidate for your master's program. This education is exactly what I need to launch me into the next phase of my career, where I hope to gain experience at one of New York's top green architecture firms, working on problems of low-budget housing, eco-friendly factory designs, and organic city planning. Eventually, I hope to specialize in sustainable, low-budget urban planning for socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

It's funny to think how far I've come from my early romanticized ideals of what it meant to be an architect. Those sunset walks around New York city from my teenage years, surrounded by the works of Mies van der Rohe and Rem Koolhaas, inspired in me an awe for the cultural power an architect can wield. It was an early lesson that a building can both represent and transform spaces. Today when I walk around my beloved city, what I see are the innumerable missed architectural opportunities to organically inhabit and improve any given space with sustainable design. And now, when I consider Mies van der Rohe's famous quote, I no longer think of my own petty will or the limited scope of individual genius; I think of the will of an entire generation committed to saving our planet with team-work, collaboration, and true passion, and how grateful I am to be a part of this generation of architects.