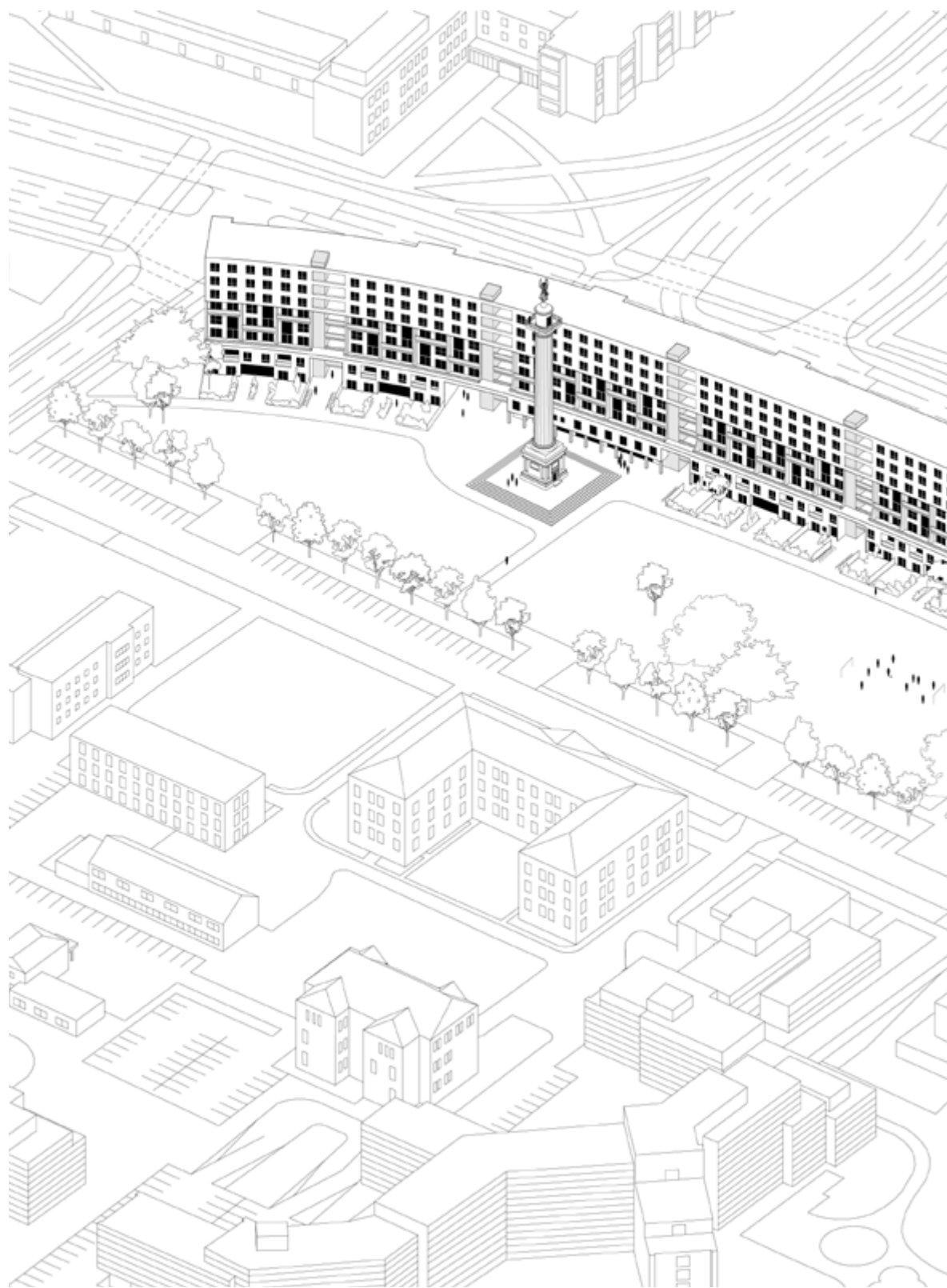


GROSSFORM WATERLOO

Large scale housing in Hanover, Germany



An architectural line drawing of a city street scene. The drawing is in black lines on a white background. It shows a perspective view of a street with several buildings of varying heights and styles. In the foreground, there are trees and a sidewalk. The drawing is detailed, showing windows, doors, and architectural features. The overall style is clean and technical.

**DIPLOMA PROJECT AT THE OSLO SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN**

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INTENTION

The point of departure for this project was my time living in the Olympic Village in Munich in 2018. The Olympic Village is a large scale housing development constructed in 1970's by Architects Heinle, Wischer und Partner. Even though receiving criticism in the early years, denouncing it as a concrete jungle, nowadays it is one of Munich's most popular neighborhoods with an exceptional level of identification and resident satisfaction.

In the context of constantly increasing rents and a severe shortage of affordable housing in many German and European cities, I wanted to investigate the potentials of large-scale housing developments. Which aspects are unique to this typology and how do they contribute to the success of a neighborhood? What role do identity and identification play? A key actor in this investigation for me was Oswald M. Ungers. In 1966, he published the pamphlet *Großformen im Wohnungsbau* in which he describes the theory of big continuous structures as a strategy to deal with the problem of quantity and quality in housing developments.

SITE

The project is located on the Waterlooplatz (Waterloo Square) in the city of Hanover, the capital of the federal state of Lower Saxony in northern Germany. When the square was laid out in the 19th century, it served as a military parade square and had a prominent position within the urban fabric. Its axis, starting at the southern end of the square with a 43-meter tall victory column was aligned with the royal castle in the north and the Market Church in the center of the city. But throughout time and especially after the destruction and rebuild of the city after the second world war the square lost not only importance but primarily its connection to the rest of the city. The implementation of the City Ring, a four to six-lane highway around the city center and five feeder roads connecting it with the suburbs detached the square from the historic center. One of these feeder roads passes by the Waterlooplatz in long stretched curve and dissolves the old symmetry of the square and dictates its present shape.

Today the Waterlooplatz is a vast, almost empty grass plane without a specific use. Only the column remained and reminds of its past importance. The square is surrounded by offices, ministries, police facilities, and schools, and except for the few who work there, it is rarely used or even noticed by people. For the last few years, awareness has been growing about this unused plot in the middle of the city. A few containers were set up for a kindergarten and a homeless shelter, both temporary installations, allowed until 2026. After this, the future of the Waterlooplatz is undetermined.



PROGRAM

The intention of this project is to create a high density, self-sufficient neighborhood within a part of the city which is historically not a residential area. The project is an island in the city defined by its programmatic contrast to the surrounding. It aims to spark a sense of identification for a place which was unclaimed before. The building tries to do this through strong form, a legible idea and a coherent architectural language. The 360 meter long building does not try to appear small. But a sense of belonging and identification is sought in ideas of bigness and uniformity.

In contrast to the overall form, the interior organisation of the building offers great variation. To generate a diverse offering of residential types, the building provides a mix of different apartments. Townhouses, duplex apartments, and collective living spaces create distinct conditions for many kinds of living situations. Additional programs are a supermarket, gym, cafe, restaurant, and a kiosk. These public parts of the program are located both on the northern tip of the building and around the victory column which acts as a point of reference and marks the heart of the project.

The binding element around which the neighborhood develops is the park. The Waterlooplatz which was a boundless place before becomes a defined space and creates informal meeting places that continue into the building through the vertical circulation. The long bent of the building contains the park like an open hand and ties it to the balconies and private gardens without closing it off for the public.

