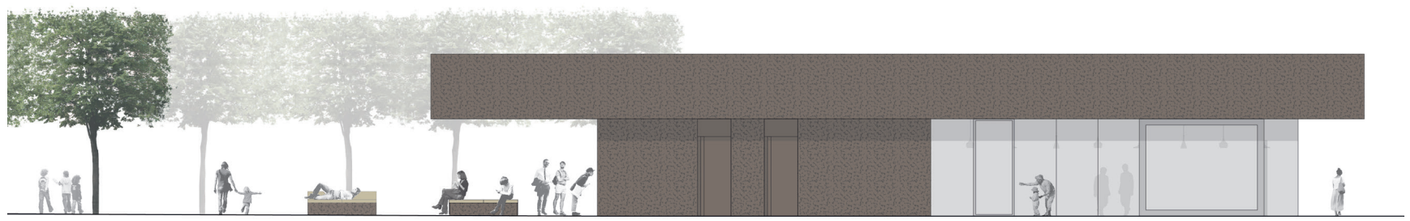
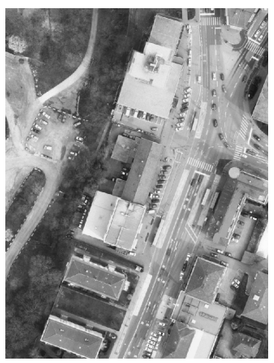
PLACE / PASSERELLE / GALERIE

LA SALLAZ, LAUSANNE CH



Previous state

The La Sallaz public space development project required an in-depth study in several fields, including public space design, urban planning, architecture, landscaping, and engineering. The objective was to create a new type of shared public space of approximately 2 hectares. In particular, various mobility issues were addressed involving pedestrians and public transport.
The new Place de La Sallaz project and its ancillary works, a pedestrian footbridge and covered gallery, are a prime example of the creation of new public spaces at a city section scale. They are part of a wider scale urban renewal process, focused on densification and usability improvements, and initiated by the inauguration in 2008 of the new Lausanne metro.
The La Sallaz plateau used to be a dense network of 9 car and bus lanes, difficult for pedestrians to access. Now, taking advantage of this new public transport connection, it has been transformed to a new type of mixed-use urban development, a true neighbourhood centre, seeking to return this public space, held hostage by automobiles, back to its inhabitants, users, and pedestrians.



Area before intervention, 2001

Area after intervention, 2016

Aim of the intervention

The new square and public transport interface reinforces its status as a neighbourhood centre, hub of trade and commerce, through the creation of a public space continuum dedicated to pedestrians and buses.
This shared space features a continuous design on the ground, from one side of the square to the other, on which programmed pavilions and street furniture are also used for night lighting.
This new ground surface alternates light/concrete and dark/asphalt strips, which transversely connect the area's two urban façades. A metaphor for the flows and exchanges between businesses, the metro and the bus terminals, it sets the stage for users' movements.
To complete this development, nearly 100 linden trees bring back the native olfactory essence already present historically. Planted linearly in the geometry of the buildings surrounding this public space, they are cut into curtains and give a strong green presence to the square's linear space. Providing a high permeability for pedestrian flows at the ground level, they offer a new identity to this urban space, for far too long suffocated by car traffic.