Place Simon-Goulart and surroundings

Case Study

Three car-free squares
in Saint-Gervais district

Location | Geneva, Switzerland

The quality of the implementation stands out. Excellent example of urban development where the three places have been connected by coherency, guided lighting to direct people to the different areas.

Place de Bel-Air

Background

Three squares in the oldest part of Geneva have been renovated and a state-of-the-art lighting system, primarily using LED's, has been installed. Before renovation, the Place Simon-Goulart was primarily used as a parking area. The Place de Saint-Gervais was a traffic island with two fountains and a tree in its center, surrounded by the flow of traffic. The Place de Bel-Air was and is one of Geneva's main public transportation hubs.

The Place Simon-Goulart was pedestrianized in 2013 and is now a place where the public can meet and relax. The central feature is a dark gray slab that supports a circular white fountain. Evergreen hedges along the Terreaux-du-Temple Street and bordering the square hide the traffic from view, while a large wooden platform invites citizens to relax at the tables and on the long benches. Five elms have been planted in the square, and a small dark gray wall runs along the north-eastern side of the square.

The Place de Saint-Gervais was also pedestrianized when the new tramway line was implemented in 2011, and now resembles a vast platform of black concrete, surrounded by a low wall and with several flights of stairs leading downwards to the Rhône.

The Place de Bel-Air is one of the most important hubs of Geneva's public transportation. It is mainly composed of bridges spanning the river Rhône. It was also redesigned when the tramway was installed with new street furniture. New bus shelters were built on facing sides of the central square offering a clear view of the Tour de l'Ile.

The lighting for the three squares had to complement their modern, open architecture after refurbishment, and also had to adhere to the conditions of the Lighting Master Plan for the City of Geneva (the slogan is 'better lighting for less energy'). It was also to provide visual continuity for the three squares.

The project

The new lighting system was designed so that coherence is maintained between the three squares Simon-Goulart, Saint-Gervais and Bel-Air. It is part of the "Lighting Plan" of Geneva and Philips Lighting was partner in the realization of the project.

Place Simon-Goulart and surroundings

A design competition in the form of parallel study-mandates was organized in 2003 to restore the former pedestrian character to this space. The new square is a vast free space - an area devoted to fun and leisure - as well as a meeting place for all generations. The lighting system is suspended from cables 8m above street level in order to free up the square as much as possible. A "chandelier" composed of three street lights equipped with LED's illuminates the central part of the square. Two suspended LED luminaires add to the lighting. The luminaires are equipped with a warm white color temperature, which gives the square a warm, welcoming feel, and good

Light connects three car-free squares
in Geneva to improve city life.

Low energy and maintenance costs

Improved quality of life

Socializing & Relaxation

asymmetric optical control prevents nuisance to neighboring façades. In addition, the bas-relief by the artist Paul Bianchi and the two stone fountains are illuminated from under the porch roofs. The temple is illuminated to display the building's architecture.

Place de Saint-Gervais

In line with the square's design, lighting is simple and discreet, using conventional light sources with a warm white color temperature. Most luminaires are mounted to the existing walls around the square to avoid clutter in the central area. The majestic lime tree, the equestrian statue and the beginning of the Quai du Seujet are also illuminated. The fountain is illuminated by underwater LED projectors, producing a cold white light color temperature to contrast with the warm lighting of the square.

Place de Bel-Air

The lighting project is designed to blend with the new urban furniture. Luminaires are installed on the triangular poles installed at a height of 9.50 meters. The bus shelters are equipped with lines of fluorescent lamps for pedestrians transiting through the square. The Bel-Air Tower and the statue of Philibert Berthelier are also illuminated.

Three RGB LED pointers have been installed at the top of each triangular pole. Because "Bel Air" is a windy square, the

opportunity was taken to use the strength of the wind to control their light color via a wind speed meter connected to DMX control. On very windy days, the lights at the top of the poles are red/purple. When there is no wind, the lighting is soft blue/white. The LEDs change color with wind strength, making Bel-Air a talking point amongst Geneva's citizens. The color changing effect would not have been possible to obtain from any other light source.

Benefits

Simple, clean design with unique features benefits citizens of Geneva. The purpose behind the renovation of the three squares was primarily to improve the quality of life for the people of Geneva, with opportunities for socializing and relaxation rather than simply to save money.

However, this has been achieved together with remarkably lower power consumptions.

In addition, Geneva's municipality benefits from the lower maintenance costs of the LED installations.

The Geneva installation was a successful entry in the Philips city.people.light competition for 2013 and won the third prize in the prestigious contest.

Place de Saint-Gervais

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