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Votre parking
du Centre-Ville



Mont-Blanc

MOLARD

Mont-Blanc

ACCES

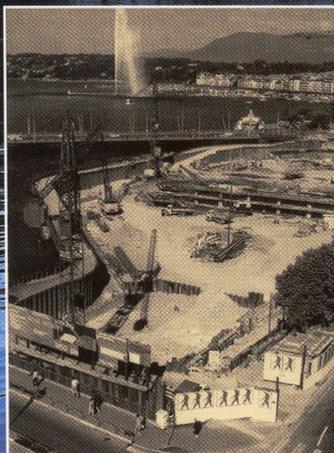
«A pedestrian is
a car driver who has found
a parking space.»

Pierre Dac

NO PARKING = NO BUSINESS

During the 1960s, parking in and driving to Geneva's city centre became extremely difficult, at certain times and on certain days, even impossible.

The catchment area of the city was holding 120 to 130'000 cars which is about 4 cars for every 10 inhabitants while roadside parking reached saturation point. Moreover, all studies that have been carried out, showed that the client was keen to retain the freedom and comfort



offered by his/her own vehicle, particularly if he/she was able to park close to shops and businesses. Car parks in the suburbs and public transportations could not efficiently solve the problem therefore the almost inevitable proposition then

was to build a car park with 1'550 spaces in the very heart of the city. A group of businessmen aware of the fact that for the sake of the city center's health and economic development, this project was absolutely necessary. It was obvious to them

that, without any parking spaces there would not be any business so they decided to sponsor the project. But where should this car park be built? The best solution was to build it underneath the lake, surface spaces being inexistant.

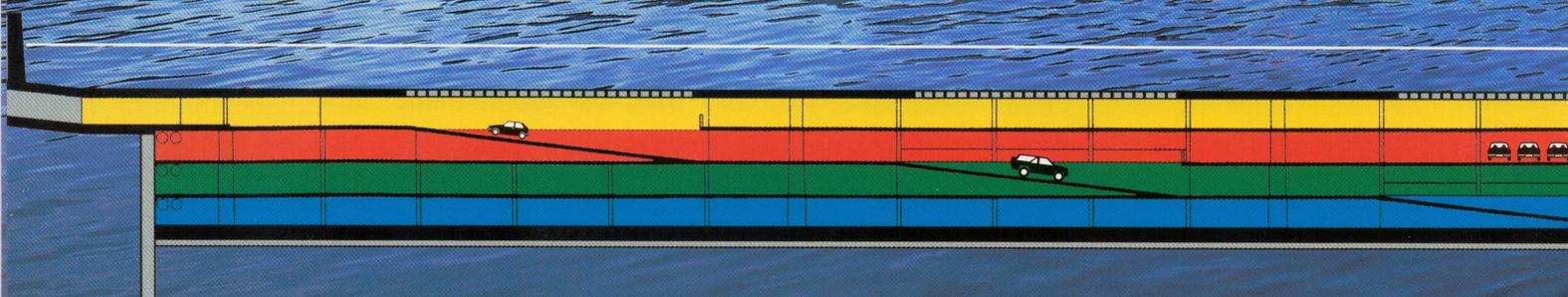


A UNIQUE CONCEPT

Building a 1'550-space car park underneath a lake required imagination, as well as courage and tenacity not only to withstand criticism, mockery and oppositions but also to convince the Authorities that

this construction was essential. The interest in the project, the commitment by sponsors at every level, and the breathtaking innovative aspect of a building underneath the lake encouraged the Authorities to

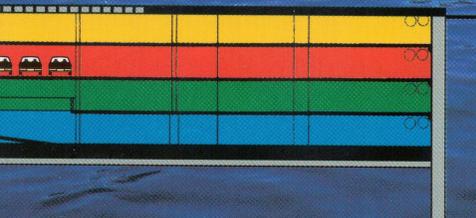
take the decision of setting up an agreement which essentially handed over the site for 65 years, after which it would all revert back to the State. The construction was undertaken with strictness and competence by the SA Conrad Zschokke, a public works company. It started in July 1969 and ended in less than



three months which enabled the opening ceremony of Parking du Mont-Blanc to be on May 24th 1972, six months earlier than expected due date. Its construction also enabled the lake's quays to be attractively laid out and provided side walks very well appreciated by tourists

and locals. As a commercial enterprise, the Parking du Mont-Blanc should seduce its potential customers in order to make them use its facilities rather than to search endlessly for a surface parking place. It was a unique concept to build a car park underneath a lake. The Parking du Mont-Blanc's concept

also includes easy access to its 4 stories by straight access ramps placed in the centre of the building which avoids the difficulties normally associated with multi-storey parking and twisted access ramps. Each level is colour-coded, first floor yellow, second green, third red and fourth blue.



EASY ACCESS FROM BOTH LAKE BANKS

Accessing to the car park is easily accomplished for vehicles coming from either the Right Bank (airport, railway station, Palexpo, motorway

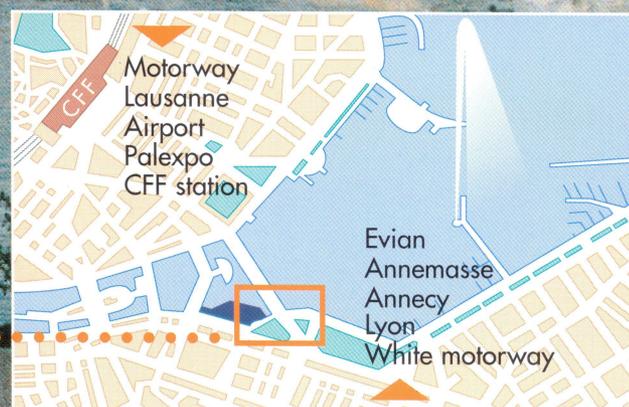
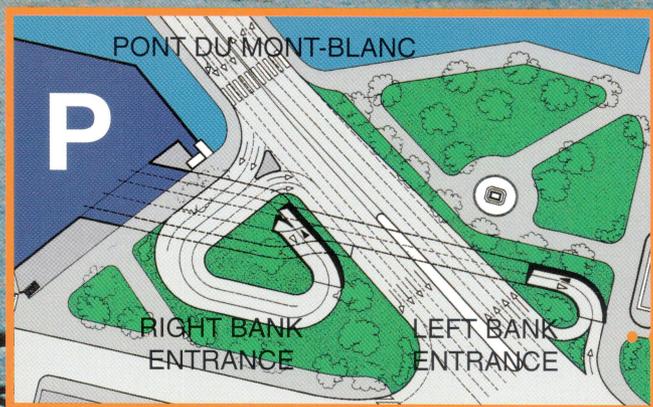
Lausanne-Geneva) via the Mont-Blanc bridge and the Général Guisan road or from the Left Bank (Evian, Thonon, and Annemasse-



Anancy-Lyon-Carouge motorway) via the Floral Clock (Horloge-Fleurie) / English Garden (Jardin Anglais) direction. Depending on weather conditions, both access lanes are kept «frost-free» using a

heating system integrated in the road surface. Constantly keen of satisfying its customers as well as being at the forefront of progress, the Parking du Mont-Blanc will be equipped with automatic pay

machines which will accept Swiss banknotes and coins, French banknotes, credit cards, seasoner cards and prepaid cards. This equipment is already prepared for the future integration of Euro currency.



Particular attention has been paid to practical features, to the car drivers' comfort as well as their security.

■ For easier accessibility, each space (12.3x5m) is angled at 20° to the central alleyway which is 7m wide and one-way only. ■ To encourage free movement of traffic and prevent accidents, a green light indicates empty spaces. ■ Extra-wide spaces close to the entrance to each level are reserved for disabled drivers.

■ Communication through mobile cellular phones is excellent throughout the car park. ■ In collaboration with Geneva's public transportations, parking tickets taken at car entrances and then validated in a special machine entitles people to use trains and trolley buses for a

whole hour free of charge. ■ A taxiphone, also in the pedestrian halls provides direct connection with taxis which pick up its passengers inside the car park. ■ Public information is displayed on special panels (there are separate advertising hoardings) as well as broadcasted through loud-speakers and intercom systems with a



top quality sound. ■ Fresh air is sucked into the building through air vents on the Quai Général Guisan and ejected via the access ramps which act as pipelines. This ensures that every 6 minutes there is a complete change of air on all stories. ■ 2 areas marked by luminous

strips and "day-light" lighting are especially reserved for women drivers. A close eye is kept on these spaces between 6pm and 8am. ■ The sound system as well as the fact that lighting remains the same in daytime or nighttime holds a feeling of security. ■ Professional secu-

rity guards accompanied by dogs continually (24 hours) patrol each storey. ■ An experienced operator is manned 24 hours a day in the control room which is connected to the video cameras' network and to the intercom system placed in all key points.

SOME FIGURES

Capacity :	1'550 parking spaces on 4 levels
Ground area:	10'000 m ²
Amount of earthmoving	130'000 m ³
Interior space	100,000 m ³
Dimensions	68 x 185 x 11 m
Undercover area	4 x 10'000 m ² (or 40'000 m ²)
Parking allowance	11.50 m ²
Headroom	2 x 2.20 m
Concrete used:	13'000 m ³
Weight of reinforcement	3'400 t.
Weight of concrete	36'000 t.
Total weight	40'000 t.
Thickness of roofing slabs	55 cm
Thickness of intermediate slabs	25 cm
Thickness of base slabs	85 cm
Thickness of diaphragm walls	87 cm
Height of diaphragm walls	15.5 m
Maximum load-bearing capacity :	
Roof	2.6t/m ² (max 4t/m ²)
Intermediate slabs	200 kg/m ²
Ventilation, at maximum	10 changeovers per hour
Fire protection :	
Detection	192 Cerberus detectors
Sprinkler system	2'456 heads (1 every 12m ²)
Extinguishers	72 "Euro P6"
Construction Costs :	
Total price, 1972	33.000.000 francs
Price per m ² undercover	850 francs
Price per m ³	330 francs
Price per parking space	21.200 francs
Traffic Volume :	
Average No.incoming vehicles per working day	5'000
Max. outgoing vehicles per hour	1'200 (approx.)



GOOD PARKING = GOOD BUSINESS

Opponents to the Parking du Mont-Blanc were claiming that it would be a source of air and sound pollution and adding traffic to the Mont-Blanc bridge (the most used road in Switzerland with an average of

70'000 vehicles per hour) as well as to the Quai Général Guisan. On the contrary however, since it was opened, tests and analyses have constantly shown that even when

traffic is at its greatest, the air quality inside the car park is cleaner than of the neighbouring roads and that traffic on Mont-Blanc bridge has actually diminished. Today, typical daily traffic at the car park between Monday and Saturday is around 5'000 vehicles. One should take in consideration that, accor-



ding to a study carried out by the Zurich offices of IMR, one parking space generates a commercial turnover of some 76 Swiss Francs a day, per vehicle (i.e. more than 210'000 Swiss Francs per year); this shows the importance of a car park such as the Mont-Blanc. It also demonstrates its ability to maintain and promote the city centre, ensuring its economical development

and creating easier accessibility. In the long term, there is no questioning that the Mont-Blanc site will be expanded. The project is under consideration and provides an extension between the Bergues bridge and the Machine bridge and would be linked to the existing building by a tunnel. 4 levels provide 685 additional spaces and

pedestrian access would be from the Quai Besançon-Hugues. This extension could quickly start. The realisation of such a desirable project however does not rely only on its sponsors but also on a political willingness by local Authorities and particularly by those responsible for traffic.





In the 1950s, the City Centre was already suffering from the competition of outskirts' shopping centres, where accessibility and parking were much easier. The City Centre Authorities had to take action. But how ? By making accessibility and PARKING easier for car drivers being Geneva's shoppers and tourists. This was possible to be realised with the construction of a car park at the image of such an important city as Geneva. It had, of course, to meet all sorts of criteria: 1'500 spaces, pedestrian exits directly to the City Centre (Molard and Fusterie), accessibility for vehicles coming as well from Switzerland as from France, respect for the environment, compliance with the standards on all technical aspects, practicality, pollution and so on, but essentially finding the necessary space !

The «under-lake» solution, seen by some as rash, by others as utopian, was the chosen one. To put everyone's mind at rest, two highly skilled civil engineers from Zurich, Messrs Thurliman and Schnyter were commissioned for the project.

It was in 1955 as I remember, that the first application for a planning permission was sent to the head of the Public Works Department, the Councillor of State Jean Dutoit. However, it was not until 1969, 14 years later, that was embedded the first sheet pile, marking the start of work ! 14 years of coming up with suggestions and discussions marked the most difficult and, it should be mentioned, frustrating time in the history of the Parking du Mont-Blanc. On the other hand, the period of time the construction was undertaken has left nothing but good memories. In only 34 months, while it was forecasted to be 42, the builder's yard was transformed under the excellent supervision of Mr Claude Cuche, now Director of the Zschokke company. The people of Geneva very quickly accepted the car park. Its car-occupancy rate soon exceeded our expectations and today it is full too often. This led us to dream about expanding it. Increases in turnover for downtown shops has been noticed everywhere and yet in spite of this, there are still a small number of people opposed to car parks. They keep on believing that multi-storey car parks are «hoovering up vehicles». In reality the car park is a magnet for car drivers CUSTOMERS, customers that would otherwise be shopping on the outskirts.

The crisis encountered by the downtown shopping area and its consequences on unemployment has opened the Authorities' eyes and forced them to admit that the opponents to car parks are not the ones who will revitalise the most attractive shopping areas in the region, downtown City Centre, and nor will they help in filling the coffers of State. To conclude, the philosophy of a system divided between public and private transportation was made clear to us when, in 1975, people voted and rejected the ideas of giving priority to public transportation because they chose the complementarity of both of them. The moral of all this is that in a democracy people are always right.

Jean de Toledo
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