



## Manuelle Gautrand Architecture turns a 1970s landmark into an alluring destination in harmony with the city

27 Mar 2023 • News • By Allie Shiell

In Annecy, the Galleries Lafayette department store is a piece of architectural heritage within an otherwise relatively homogenous town. Initially designed in the 1970s in the automobile era, the building was constructed with little awareness of its urban surroundings or a pedestrian realm. Manuelle Gautrand Architecture began working on a significant restructuring and extension of the Galleries Lafayette in 2011. The recently unveiled result is a visually vibrant and alluring destination providing improved services and integration with the cultural and social context.

Existing building:

A bold and ambitious project for its time, the original building design features a perfectly circular double ring of car parking. The two parking levels sit on regularly spaced piles and provide direct access to the shopping floors. Pedestrians previously entered the store beneath the car park, with little attempt at making the entrance inviting or friendly to users. The relationship to the surrounding context was also uncertain, with the circular form of the car parks set back from the streets and having little relationship or dialogue with surrounding buildings.



#### Building transformation:

Manuelle Gautrand Architecture reorganized some of the existing areas to modernize them but also created a large extension to accommodate approximately 40 shops and restaurants, thus expanding the floor space and offerings of the department store.

The two-story car park is preserved with its curving geometry unifying the project and maintaining the iconic landmark appearance the building is known for. In addition, the architects used the space beneath to install the Nouvelles Galeries entrance to the mall and most of the public spaces and facilities.





Forming a constellation of circular volumes, five satellite volumes were constructed around existing volumes on the west, south, and southeast facades. The new satellites blend new and old, forming a whole and making the two indistinguishable.

Between each cluster of satellites is a public entrance into the mall, enhanced by the curves that draw together in conch-like arrangements that welcome the public. These form little public squares, vibrant, light-filled, planted spaces positioned at three cardinal points: due west, due south, and due east, indicating the principal axes of the central volume of Galeries Lafayette.

Further, the offset of the upper and lower satellites also enables the creation of accessible roof terraces, while the spaces below benefit from solar shading.







The outer facades of the new circular forms are fully glazed with glass pleats that echo the concrete pleating of the car park enclosure. The kinetic, vertical rhythm lends a dynamic element to the curving forms.



Glass was selected to ensure transparency and light. Inset between the upper and lower concrete slabs, the glazed elements offer a chiseled sequence of folds that alternate between transparent and opaque. The envelopes encasing the large glazing panels are in a neutral and luminous shade of grey anodized aluminum. Dramatizing the appearance of display windows, the glass also avoids rear or blank elevation, providing animated, vibrant facades that give passers-by a glimpse into stores and their internal activities.





Luminous day and night, the Nouvelles Galeries now more fully embraces the neighborhood and nurtures its place and contact with the people of Annecy.

Environmental strategy:

A green project from the outset, the architects note that aside from a few square meters of partitions, there was virtually no demolition involved in the project. Furthermore, porous surfaces on the site are enlarged, rainwater is gathered and used for watering green roofs, and additional planting is added to numerous external areas. As a result, the project ultimately achieved BREEAM Excellent certification.

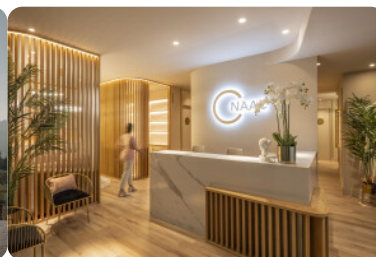
## Most Popular



1 Detail: Rammed Earth Walls of Casa Ballena, Los Cabos



2 Mexican equestrian clubhouse provides haven for horses and horse lovers alike



3 Wooden lattice and monochromatic colours dictate this beauty clinic by In Out Studio in Spain



4 Selenite Dreams by BUREAU explores the essence of plaster and its transformation within space



5 David Templer Architects

## Image Gallery