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Baden's Kurpark (spa park) was created at the end of the 19th century during the heyday of spas. It is now a well-manicured and popular open space. Photo: Pierre Marmy



Here is an example of "urban repair". Traffic congestion is still an issue at Schulhausplatz, but a spacious underground arcade that was completed in 2018 now intersects the junction, connecting the suburbs with the town centre. Photo: Pierre Marmy



Urban chic in an industrial district. Opened in 2003, Trafoplatz is a popular rendezvous point and event space on the old Brown, Boveri & Compagnie site. Photo Pierre Marmy

The town of Baden is nestled in the Limmat Valley near the Jura foothills. Photo: Gaëtan Bally



Theaterplatz – a new public space on the edge of the town centre. What used to be a car park is now an open space where people can enjoy the view over the River Limmat. Photo: Gaëtan Bally



Cars, buses and people used to have to fight their way through here. Weite Gasse is now a pedestrian-friendly street. Photo: Pierre Marmy



From car-friendly to pedestrian-friendly

Some 50,000 cars cross the Schulhausplatz intersection every day in the Aargau town of Baden. No one envies Baden for it. Nevertheless, the Swiss Heritage Society (SHS) has awarded the town this year's prestigious Wakker Prize for architectural development and preservation. The reason? "Baden has chosen not to surrender to the traffic," said the SHS. The town has been tireless in its efforts to improve its public spaces. Its centre is now free of traffic, with pedestrian-friendly streets and squares that make it a pleasant place to live. Historic parks and gardens are carefully maintained, and new public spaces have been created in urban development areas. The once car-friendly town of Baden has, in other words, been given back to the people.

(MUL)

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