



Heiner-Metzger Plaza, Neu-Ulm



Activities for all generations

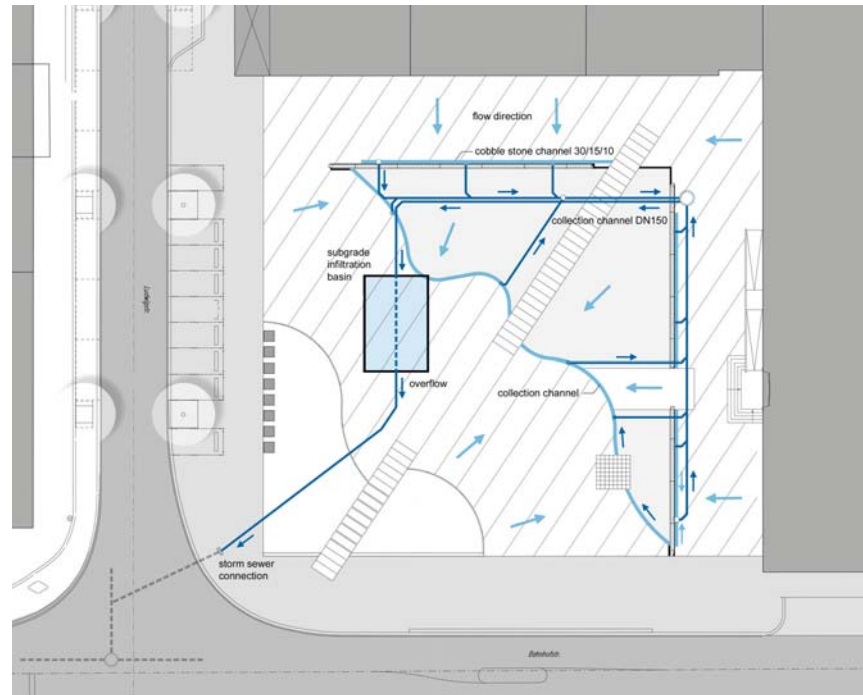
The water feature is a space sculpture which maintains transparency through the fine stainless steel meshes. Set with changing water flows, the screens alternate between being transparent and forming a soft visual barrier. They are also a sound set, pushing back the noise of the city.

Models were built, sketches were drafted and redrafted, and discussions were held with unforgettable intensity.

Atelier Dreizeitl took all this input and synthesized it into a final design based on use zones. An internal corner has a compacted gravel floor and is sheltered by trees. This is an active play area with a funky climbing wall, resilient table football and outdoor chess. An edging wall provides abundant seating. The external corner, bounded by the two roads, is an ensemble of water screens. These are a highly visible identity marker, subtly and transparently shielding the plaza from traffic with suggestive views cut through. They define an inner space, which is active and fun with changing water patterns and intensities. The gurgling noise of the water creates a 'soundscape'. Through another physical sense, the inclusiveness and fun atmosphere of the plaza is reinforced. Seating blocks were designed by students and sited together in the 5 centimetre shallow water screed.

Stormwater run-off from the plaza is collected, filtered and then infiltrated in constructed layers of gravel under the paving. Instead of using environmentally and financially expensive potable water, ground water is used to supplement the circulation systems of the water features. A cycle of responsibility is established between the site and ground water.

Local industries were drawn into the tide of enthusiasm and donated construction materials. The good press reviews felt like a reward for everyone especially after all the hard work that went into the project. Inclusion and acceptance by the local youth is the ultimate safeguard against vandalism. So far the new Heiner-Metzger Plaza is proving the worth of a community inclusive planning process.



Collection, filtration and infiltration of stormwater

