



1111 Lincoln Drive, Miami

“Our car parks reveal to us their social purpose”

Architect **Mark Potter** believes the car park is undergoing a renaissance

Car park owners and operators around the world are waking up to a new potential in the estates they control. From Miami to Bordeaux, from Peckham to Blackpool, new approaches to the design and use of this building type are giving our cities a new lease of life.

In September this year London Fashion Week spurned Somerset House in favour of the Brewer Street car park off Oxford Street. The £28bn British fashion industry had found an unexpected building type in which to demonstrate its wares to the world.

Meanwhile in Miami the ground-breaking design of the new car park at 1111 Lincoln Drive by Herzog and de Meuron includes a “cultural plane where people can produce

culture”. It affords views out over the city and gives ground floor uses including clothing and book stores as well as yoga and event spaces.

In central London an underused car park in Peckham now boasts an event space on the roof, Frank’s Café and The Multi Story Orchestra.

This year we will see the completion in Bordeaux of the Euralantique car park by architects Brisac Gonzales. Like 1111 Lincoln Drive, this building is a “layer cake” with ground floor stores and rooftop apartments. It consists of 19 apartments, 450 parking spaces and 1400 sq metres of retail space.

Brisac Gonzales says: “The retail and housing will introduce different activities after parking hours.”

At the Talbot Gateway car park in Blackpool, Muse Developments working with Potter and Holmes Architects have transformed an ageing council car park and a disused bus station into a landmark corner

site in the wider regeneration area and provided a secure 650-space car park with retail units below. It also includes within its new cladding a permanent light show, designed by SVA Associates, which the public can control by texting from their phones!

At a gateway site to the city of Norwich on Mountergate Huber Car Park Systems and Potter and Holmes have collaborated in the design of a gateway building which, like Blackpool, sits at an arrival point to the city and presents an important contemporary first impression.

These examples demonstrate that three new roles emerging for the multi-storey car park as a building type: the car park as ‘land provider’ the car park as ‘street marker’; and the car park as ‘refuge and retreat’.

Mark Potter is a director of Potter and Holmes Architects which specialise in multi-storey car park design
www.potterandholmes.com



Talbot Way, Blackpool



Brewer Street, London



Euralantique, Bordeaux



The Peckham Car Park, London



St Petersfield, Tameside

The car park as the 'land provider'

Car parks are often enablers for wider urban regeneration. The Mountergate project in Norwich is designed to release the land taken by surface parking to enable 200 houses and flats to be built. The St Petersfield Regeneration area for Tameside Borough Council has created a 240-space car park in order to release four new sites for development.

Nigel Williams is managing director of consultancy Parking Matters, a specialist parking advisors on the Tameside project. He says: "In urban regeneration schemes building a new multi-storey car park can free up land for more intensive and valuable uses than car parking. The leading transport economist John Siraut has calculated that there are 30 million off-street parking spaces in the UK which take up around 30,000 hectares of land which would provide enough room for 375,000 urgently needed homes at present average build densities.

"In certain circumstances the multi-storey car park can also be the 'pilot' project that is sold or let as an investment to finance the on-going costs of the wider urban regeneration projects the car park is there to serve."

Another aspect of the "land provider" theme is the use of spare capacity in existing car parks. Nigel Williams explains: "In many city centres there are now too many parking spaces. The alternative, temporary uses pioneered at sites like Brewer Street and Peckham are therefore likely to become a recurrent feature."

The car park as a "stage" acknowledges these buildings as flexible large spans spaces that have periods in their life when they are underused.

In some cases the underuse is permanent, so we are likely to see more schemes such as CitiPark's installation of solar arrays on the roof levels of the its Clarence Dock Car Park in Leeds.



ST PETERSFIELD REGENERATION, TAMESIDE
The new multi-storey car park designed by Potter and Holmes Architects at St Petersfield Development for Tameside Borough Council releases four development sites that were previously surface parking.

The car park as the 'street maker'



The new lift serving Q-Park Oxford Street



IAN WESTCOTT/Q-PARK

A new narrative is emerging in major urban developments, where the car park is expected to perform as well as any other major urban building.

The car park is expected to be the equal of a shopping centre, office building or hospital as part of the architectural landscape. It must celebrate its type by celebrating its scale and elevational opportunities.

Car parks can provide a major positive impact on the street scene and context. There are two emerging themes here. One is the car park as the iconic building that creates a key corner or street scene – such as Blackpool's Talbot Way and Miami's 1111 Lincoln Drive. Judging by the designed, the

upcoming Mountergate car park in Norwich will be an iconic presence during both the day and night.

The other trend is the car park that combines with other uses to create a new density of activity at the heart of the city – Euratlantique will be a pioneer in this field.

Multi-storey car parks can also increase levels accessibility in town centres. Q-Park Oxford Street is the most used site in the company's Westminster group of car parks. When refurbishing the car park, which lies beneath Cavendish Square, Q-Park created a lift that provides wheelchair user for the first time.

The car park now offers safe indoor parking spaces for the disabled within a few

hundred metres of Oxford Street.

Multi-storey car parks are, in many cases, both the first and last impression has a visitor of a town or city. In the past that impression has often not been good! A new generation of car parks that can be described as "New Hubs For City Life". They are holding their own with the more glamorous companions in the street scene, the retail units, hotels and cinemas that they serve. In some cases the car parks proving to be more interesting and intriguing.

Car parks should no longer as a burden on the part of designers, but as places of opportunity to contribute to healthy and creative urban life.



Day-time...



...and night-time views of the new Mountergate car park Norwich

POTTER AND HOLMES

The car park as a 'refuge and a retreat'

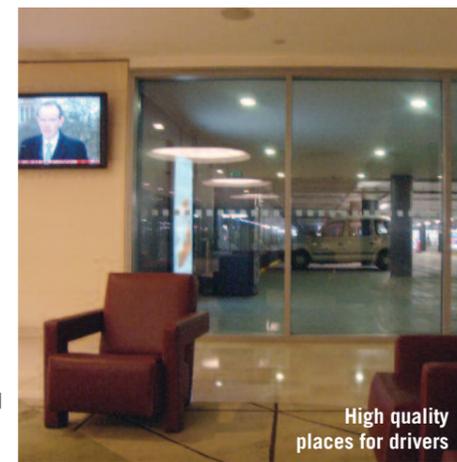
A new generation of multi-storey car parks is now emerging where they are seen as safer environments than the streets that surround them.

Ticket-only entry and secure perimeters to the buildings as well as bright finishes and lighting have enabled the public to view the building type as a place of safety rather than intimidation.

Along with the new levels of comfort and safety compared to street parking comes the certainty of being able to take your time in a comfortable, covered, environment to organise your arrival and departure.

Modern car parks can provide well designed, accessible spaces and lifts that deliver customers to street level, shopping street, appointment or social event without hassle or stress. Of greatest importance is that well designed and managed car parks give their customers time to gather themselves.

What is emerging is that car parks are no longer places where people could not get out of them fast enough! Q-Park's car parks have set the benchmark for high standard of interior environments, both here and in continental Europe. The encouraging signs are that this is a standard that other owners and operators seek to emulate



High quality places for drivers