

# **PARKING** *Review*

Issue 299 | March 2017

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## **CHOOSE YOUR LOOK**

**HUBER shows how car parks can  
take many different forms**

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# Putting steel in the frame

Steel-framed car parks can be built in a wide range of formats and looks, says HUBER's **Markus Lauble**

Creating a car park in a factory and assembling it on site is a process that has been around for many years, but projects led by HUBER offer proof that prefabrication does not mean creating identikit buildings.

HUBER is a German construction company specialising in car park design and build based on the use of a steel-frame building system. The company believes key benefits of using steel frames is that they shorten delivery times and ensure consistent quality. Prefabrication ensures better quality control, which will extend the longevity of the building, suggests HUBER's managing director, Markus Lauble. "Our ISO 9001 Quality Management System certification serves as a baseline of industry quality and performance. It is enhanced by regular training in quality and health & safety."

However, the fact that they are factory-built does not mean that all car parks need to look the same, says the company. This is evident by looking at the variety of sites it has completed across Europe. Its portfolio includes a number of high-profile sites in the UK, including car parks at Tesco's headquarters in Welwyn Garden City and the Rose Lane public car park in Norwich.

"We leave room for individual ideas and focus on the user-friendly and attractive appearance of new multi-storey car parks," says Lauble. "We can offer tailor-made solutions that are not only economically interesting but also feature the latest energy management, intelligent park guidance systems and park management technology."

Getting a new car park right starts at the planning and design stage. "Ensuring efficiency and longevity of contemporary multi-storey car parks are based on expert planning right off the bat," he says. "The steel-framed approach is ideal for an individual conceptual building design."

HUBER seeks to work with clients to create car parks that work for specific sites and uses. The flexibility of steel structures mean that the company can create a wide range of formats: full-storey construction with long ramps or ramp towers; split-level systems; and ramped vertical circulation module (VCM) systems. The format selected needs to be one that feels safe and easy to use, says Lauble: "Car park users place great emphasis on comfort and security."

Design criteria that should be taken into account as early as the building application stage include understanding the demand for parking space, which will enable the structure's dimensions to accommodate potential future requirements.

Once the scale, shape and form of the car park are fully understood,

consideration should be given to supply and utility lines and infrastructure access. Designing and manufacturing a car park that can be delivered to a site on a just-in-time basis is an efficient and sustainable approach.

"System builders can maintain short construction times through prefabrication. Just-in-time delivery in tight construction areas is very attractive," says Lauble. "Steel-frame construction with wide spans and open column-free levels is economic, and also creates easy to navigate and bright environments that make drivers feel comfortable."

HUBER works with its clients to create memorable and attractive façades to give each site a specific character. "Clients place great emphasis on cost-effectiveness, acceptance and image," says Lauble.

Just as the internal format of the car parks HUBER builds vary from site to site, a wide range of materials can be used for façades. In recent years it has created buildings that feature: glass louvers; expanded metal mesh; perforated metal panels; wood panels; and Eternit fibre-cement façades. The company will also use specialist materials to perform special functions such as noise reduction and fire protection.

Energy efficiency and sustainability are important to achieve in the final product, says HUBER. "Stairwells with glass façades are brighter than enclosed towers," says Lauble. "Roofs protect a building and increase the lifespan of the driving surfaces. Creating photovoltaic plants on roofs can ensure the car park's energy supply."

Taking an innovative approach to the layout of a car park can pay off in a number of ways. "For example, an open construction with a maximum of 1.5 underground levels does away with mechanical ventilation systems," suggests Lauble. "At HUBER we believe that sophisticated concepts save costs in the long run."

**Parqex: Stand P70**

## Checklist: Comfortable car parks

- Parking bay width
- Brightness
- Ventilation
- Elevators
- Payment systems
- Parking guidance systems
- Detection systems that display the availability of vacant spots

## Checklist: Secure car parks

- CCTV
- Alarms
- Sophisticated traffic routing
- Special parking bay and footpath marking
- Homogenous illumination by LED technology
- Bright and open stair cases



Hoofddorp P&R, The Netherlands