

AUTOMATED CAR PARKS: STRESS-FREE PARKING IN STYLE

PARKING & TRAFFIC CONSULTANTS

If you have been keeping up with the latest in parking technology, you will know that it is possible! Automated car parks have been around for years in Europe, but the uptake in Australia is slow. During a recent trip to the UK, our roving correspondent Kelvin Worthington investigated some stylish applications of this technology.

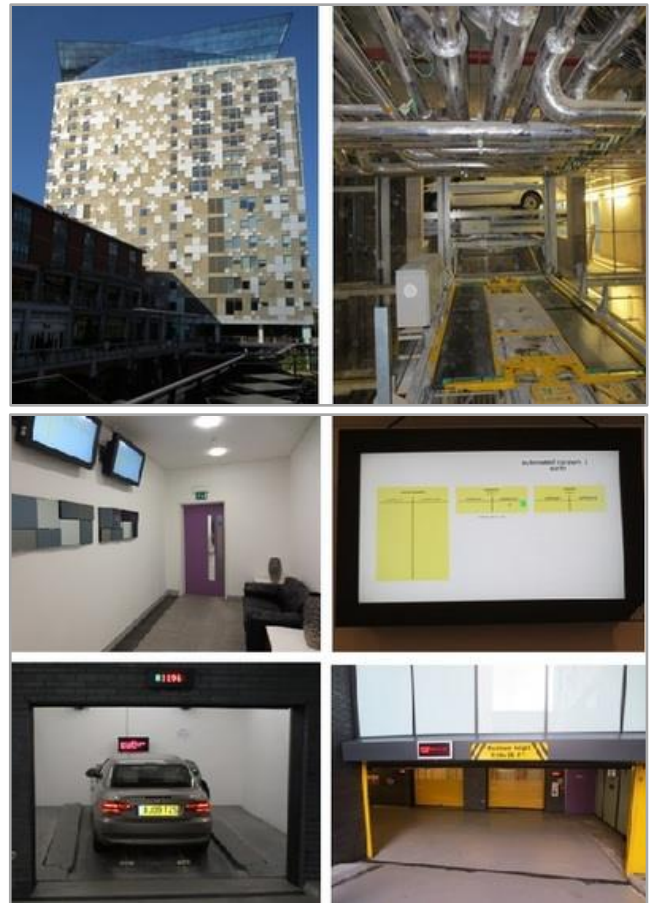
There are so many advantages of automated parking systems like these – efficient and stress-free for the driver, virtually eliminating the possibility of a car park bungle, while increasing the capacity to footprint ratio by multiple factors.

Mixed Use – The Cube, Birmingham

The Cube is a high-end residential and retail complex located on Birmingham's fashionable canal waterfront. This stunning building is complemented by an equally amazing automated car park which comprises 339 spaces and four (yes 4!) car lifts.

To park, residents and tenants drive into one of the four 'garages', swiping their key fob as they leave. The car park lift then takes the vehicle underground to the car park. Half way down, the platform rotates through 180 degrees so that the vehicle is now facing the right way for when the car is retrieved. The system then parks the vehicle in its designated position in the car park.

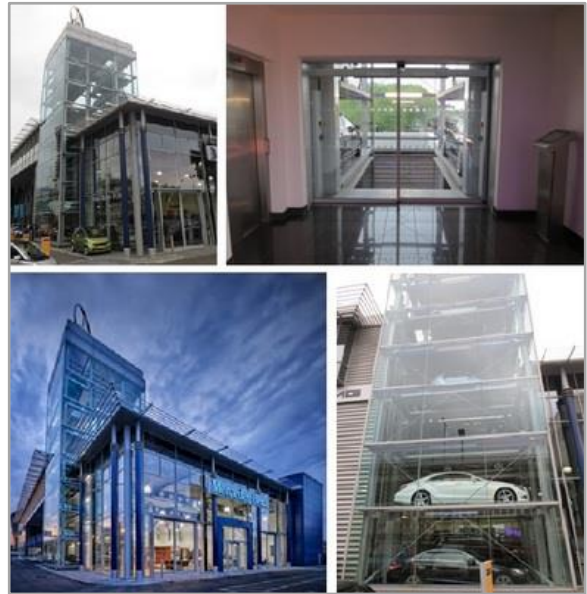
When a resident or tenant requires their vehicle, they can either 'order' it from their unit or go to the waiting area and order it from there. Screens in the waiting area keep residents / tenants informed on the progress of their vehicle. Average retrieval time is 2.5 minutes. If a resident / tenant orders their vehicle from their unit and does not collect it within a given time period, the system re-parks the vehicle so that the lifts are not tied up with un-collected vehicles.



Commercial – Mercedes-Benz Brentford

Located on the Great West Road (look for it on the left as you travel into London along the M4) this Mercedes-Benz dealership has a 16 space system which is used to store vehicles and also transport them to and from the upper floor showroom. Encased in glass the system makes a stunning architectural statement as well as providing a practical way of moving and storing vehicles.

According to Mercedes-Benz logistics manager Maciej Kisielewski, the system has proved to be very reliable and is a real focal point in the community, helping to promote the Mercedes-Benz brand as technologically forward-thinking. (Thanks to Mercedes-Benz Brentford for access).



Residential – The Icon Building, London

Located on the north bank of the Thames, this waterfront residential development has a 19 space automated garage. Residents drive into the holding garage and swipe their key fob on the reader as they leave the garage and walk into the building lobby. The car lift then takes the vehicle down to the underground garage where it is automatically placed in one of the 19 spaces. Retrieval is via another swipe of the key fob at the reader located in the building lobby. A turntable (just visible in the photograph below) ensures that the vehicle is facing the correct way to exit the car park.



Feedback from the building concierge is that average vehicle retrieval time is no more than three minutes and that the system is very reliable.

Our thanks to Wohr Australia and Wohr UK for arranging visits to three of its installations.

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