

## Errors in the siting of car parks

Car park construction as the inevitable key to urban problems in Europe

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Before talking about mistakes one has to know what is correct - we do know, to some extent today. The overall effect of car parks is much more than simply the storage of cars. Car parks have repercussions on the economy, traffic policy, ecology and town planning - to mention only the most important factors. Mistakes in the assessment of car parks spring from a false understanding of the separation of functions. Car parks are not just buildings, they are key integral components of the surrounding city fabric and the adjacent street area.

Multi-storey car parks are substitution buildings in the sense that they make it possible to avoid street-level car parks, but also complementary buildings in the context of maintaining purchasing power and jobs in densely populated areas. Costs ensuing from the overall transport system and control costs can be considerably reduced by car park buildings.

The financing of garages is often taken in isolation from their real overall effects. This error frequently causes rejection of plans to build them. This shows a lack of concern about traffic and the environment. If multi-storey apartment blocks are taken for granted then multi-storey parking must also be taken for granted as a result. Building regulations have often compounded this error by permitting individual garages instead of collective garages for residential areas.

A further key mistake in the assessment of the importance of garages is that people in many countries have failed to perceive that the building of car parks and the organisation of parking space is the central pillar of any future organisation of the traffic situation.

A fourth mistake is the failure to assess properly, or to assess at all, the ecological effects of multi-storey car parks, by thinking only of the concentration of exhaust fumes in garage buildings while forgetting the extent to which such buildings can save drivers cruising round looking for parking spaces, help to avoid accidents and contribute to improving the town planning situation.

Finally there is a further mistake to be found in the fact that today bad garage architecture serves as a reason for rejecting garage buildings, while it is forgotten that, if a garage is seen as a substitution building, a medium-sized multi-storey car park can improve the outward appearance of 2-4 kilometres of road. The extensive effect of such car parks is overlooked.

We know that the provision of space for parking exerts a determining influence on structural shifts, the choice of mode of transport and travelling times, and ignoring this knowledge can produce developmental errors with considerable repercussions.