

DRIVING BUSINESS ~ The Art of Parking ~ Can a garage be a piece of art?

Parking Garages may not be the first words that come to mind when you are describing art forms. These rather box-like, cement and sometimes, rather boring structures, are not the sort of buildings that the average person conjures up as works of art. But as in most things, change can be a good thing. Urban designers are now creating buildings in some curious and bold ways that reflect a new sense of style and use. Let's explore some new ways to provide parking around the country.

Spending time at the beginning of a garage development project defining the goals to be met, can take designers down all sorts of avenues to create a structure that reflects the right sets of outcomes. Designs may conceal that the structure is for parking or it may go out of its way to display parked vehicles. Designs may also be environmentally friendly with deliberate choices that take advantage of natural elements. Parking garages that serve a particular business such as a library or a museum may be designed to complement the facility that it serves. For example, in Kansas City, Missouri, the exterior of the library's parking garage looks like a giant bookshelf stocked with 9 foot wide and 25 foot tall books.

Architectural aspects are not the only items that adorn many parking garages. The Ballet Valet Parking Garage in Miami Florida has been nicknamed the "Chia Pet Parking Garage" because of the plants growing out of its six levels and rooftop. Parking garages around the United States and the world are now being designed with natural elements that let in natural light and ventilation for climate control. Many garages complement the landscape around them, whether built into a hillside or even underground. Through use of murals, light, slick steel, and curved aluminum, parking garages are quickly becoming tourist attractions. Further, more parking garages are being built for "mixed-use" meaning they are designed to incorporate street level retail shopping, restaurants, and even rooftop hotels.

A Civic Center parking garage built in Santa Monica, California 2007 was the world's first LEED certified parking garage. The garage's exterior is illuminated with blue, red, and green lighted panels. Solar panels on the roof power the garage and provide shade. This kaleidoscope of color is an eye popping remarkable artistic design that has little resemblance to the classical parking decks of the last 50 years.

The Michigan Theater in Detroit has been retrofitted into a parking garage. Though the building was once a majestic playhouse, it now provides an atmosphere unique among parking garages with its cathedral ceilings and gilded walls. A parking garage in Fullerton, California was the result of a green remodel of an outdated parking facility. Its features include living walls comprised of bamboo and vines that cover 3 sides of the structure to reduce the building's carbon footprint. The list of "outside of the box" garages seems to be growing.

Parking garages have more functionality than just parking. Take for example; the architectural masterpiece of a parking garage is 1111 Lincoln in Miami, Florida. It has become a top tourist attraction and is used for everything from wine tastings to wedding receptions. These new designs are quickly becoming destinations in their own right giving rise to economic revitalization in around their footprint.



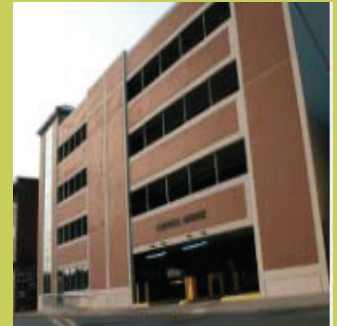
Close to home in downtown Roanoke, garage designs reflect a little less adventure than in some of these wow factor examples, but, there are surprising elements in the city's garage system that show off design elements that may surprise.

Designed in 1976, a mainstay of PARK Roanoke's downtown parking system is the iconic Church Avenue Garage located at 121 Church Avenue with its Guggenheim-like, double spiral ramp. This particular style has been popular with garage designers over the years and there are similar structures all over America in cities such as Dallas, Fresno, Allentown, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Washington DC. The Center in the Square Garage located at 11 Campbell Avenue was designed and built in the 1980's with an architectural influence similar to that of the Church Avenue Garage. Designed in 1982, Elmwood Park Garage located at 201 Tazewell Avenue, was built with a solid brick exterior to complement the downtown building skyline.

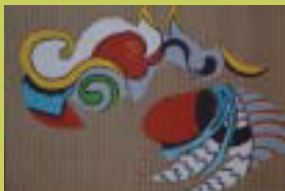
Gainsboro Garage located at 25 Shenandoah Avenue was designed in 2000 with numerous elements such as planter beds, iron railings, awnings, and painting schemes meant to complement the adjacent iconic N&W buildings and the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

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Built in 1991, Tower Garage at 10 Jefferson is uniquely situated by the Wells Fargo Tower Office Building and reflects influences of Art Deco and Post Modernism. Market Garage at 25 Church Avenue was renovated in 2010 with a brick and concrete exterior that projects a more residential feel to the structure. A key architectural component in this redo was its use of louvers on the north and eastern faces of the building. Architects from medieval times to modern day have used louvers as a truly timeless functional design element. The newest parking facility in the City's system is the Campbell Garage at 335 Campbell Avenue; this structure was built out of brick and pre-cast concrete while using green construction principles. This garage complements the nearby public safety buildings in the West Church Corridor and fits well into the urban landscape in this western end of downtown.



While not all of these garages can lay claim to be works of art, many now serve the public as convenient venues to display art. The Market Garage was recently featured in several publications highlighting the Bicycle Themed Wall Mural that was created by Hollins' University art students on the first level of parking. The Center in the Square Garage displays large, colorful wall murals which were sponsored by the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge through Roanoke Youth Art Connections. Artist Ed Dolinger worked with city youth to create this energetic and colorful mural.



Parking garages are as essential to economic development as they are to revitalization of a community or strengthening entertainment, retail, dining, or tourism products. On your next walk downtown, take a moment to notice PARK Roanoke's garages as well as their artistic architectural elements. For questions or more information, please call PARK Roanoke at (540) 343-0585, email us at parking@roanokeva.gov, or visit us online at www.roanokeva.gov/PARKRoanoke.

Invitation from Google to get City of Roanoke businesses online

The City of Roanoke, in a partnership with Google, has announced a yearlong initiative to get Roanoke's businesses online through Google's Get Your Business Online program. Get Your Business Online provides small business owners with a custom domain name, web hosting and access to educational resources -- all free for one year. Since its debut in July 2011, the program has helped over 135,000 businesses successfully get online and start growing. Interested business owners can visit www.gybo.com for further information on the program.

It's easy, quick and free...it only takes about an hour! Here's all you need to do:

1. Go to GYBO.com and create an account with Google, and their partner Intuit -- that just means choosing a username and password.
2. Choose a design—Intuit's done the hard part by creating the designs. You just need to pick the one you like best.
3. Upload a photo or two -- don't worry, you can change the photo later.
4. Write a brief description of what your business does, your hours, and how your customers can contact you.
5. Choose a domain name for your business -- something simple like joescoffee.com works best.

You can always make improvements by signing back in to your Intuit account later. What's important is getting your site up and running so customers can find you.

