

Parking Re-thought: Modular and Well-mixed – Quartiers-Hub as Driver of Diverse Residential Districts

Intelligent mobility solutions will determine the quality of life in the metropolises of the future. In this context, focus is increasingly shifting towards stationary traffic. If we want to revitalise urban space, we have to re-think parking. Architect Marcel Heller of Heller Designstudio has developed a visionary approach to the flexible use of parking space on behalf of WÖHR Autoparksysteme. At a workshop of the MUNICH NEXT LEVEL innovation network, the architect presented the modular Quartiers-Hub to the public for the first time. Based on a space-saving automatic system, this neighbourhood hub turns the parking garage, from once repelling parking facility, into an attractive neighbourhood centre. Heller sees Munich as the ideal city for a pilot project.



To this day, parking has usually been an annoying and unpleasant issue for cities as most people primarily associate it with long searches for suitable roadside slots – which in turn block urban open spaces and thus represent a major detriment to urban space. And if stationary traffic is to disappear from the urban landscape in future, it becomes inevitable to think about how we want to integrate stationary vehicles into everyday urban life in future. Heller is convinced that there are better solutions than space-guzzling on-street parking bays or resource-intensive underground garages with long underground passages.

Integrating Parking Space, Revitalising Neighbourhoods – a Visionary Approach to Two Central Urban Development Challenges

Even if owning a car will play an ever smaller role in tomorrow’s big cities – car sharing, eScooters and eBikes will continue to require space. Space is a scarce resource in metropolises though. Competition for circulation areas will furthermore intensify in future. If cities want to remain fit for the future, they consequently must re-think parking.



“We combine utilisation forms and thus create added value for everyone”.

Parking space can be much more than a mere, one-dimensionally usable area. Marcel Heller, architect and founder of Heller Designstudio, is sure of this fact: “What if we thought of parking as part of life – and created an intuitive, integrative parking space with added value? How about a building that intercepts individual traffic at the entrance to the residential quarter and offers uses that people like to fall back on before or after parking?”, Heller asked at the beginning of his development.

For his vision to become reality, the right technology first had to be identified. Heller found the solution with an automatic parking system from WÖHR that can be integrated into buildings modularly and above ground. “Here, cars and bicycles no longer have to be stored in stuffy underground garages. Users can pick up and drop off their vehicles amidst a busy area using an app. This also comprises a safety aspect, especially for women”, emphasises Heller.

Space-saving, Modularly Adaptable and Resource-friendly

Ferhan Niepelt of WÖHR Autoparksysteme underlines the advantages of this technical innovation: since vehicles are automatically transported by a lift system, there is no need for ramps, roads and paths. Accordingly, about 60% less parking space is needed. “We can use this space for sensible utilisations that add value to the district”, adds Niepelt.

“Since no traffic planner today can really answer the question of how much parking space we will need in 20 years and what it should look like, the structure’s agility is an important factor”, comments Niepelt. A new openness could prevent many bad investments.

In terms of sustainability, Niepelt points out a third advantage as well: “The material used for the parking systems matches the resource-saving approach of the circular economy. By using recyclable materials, cities and municipalities can set out on the path to a circular economy”, states Niepelt.

The modular system is thus designed in accordance with the cradle-to-cradle principle, using recyclable metal, conserves natural resources by avoiding concrete and, with the fully automatic parking system, offers space-saving and at the same time cost-effective motor vehicle accommodation.

Parking as Anchor – Hub as Harbour

Commissioned by WÖHR Autoparksysteme, Heller's concept of a modular neighbourhood hub is an innovative and trendsetting design that integrates a variety of use scenarios: “We have designed a fully automatic parking garage with additively integrated services. The residents of a neighbourhood should find everything they need for everyday life here. While a parcel station and a bicycle workshop have already been integrated into parking garages in many cases, Heller's neighbourhood hub – thanks to its conceptual design – can be tailored to people's needs much more extensively. From day-care centre, fitness studio, all the way to youth centre and skate park, there could also be many offers for children and young people in particular. In Heller's opinion, cultural spaces, such as art studios, cinema halls or band rehearsal rooms could also be very well integrated structurally. Outer boulder walls and a green façade are a matter of course for Heller, and communal areas and urban gardening on the roof are absolutely desirable when establishing a high-quality neighbourhood. Ideally, the Quartiers-Hub will also integrate office and retail modules – uses that support the idea of sharing are particularly suitable, according to planners.

Colourful Life: Compact and Green – Even on the Outskirts

With the concept of the Quartiers-Hub, the conceptual design by Heller Designstudio shows that integrative parking concepts can solve challenges that new development areas face in particular: Especially in peri-urban locations, it is difficult to create urban centres that also enable viable concepts for the ground level zones through sufficient pedestrian frequency. The neighbourhood hub is therefore particularly attractive when newly developing urban districts, but as an element, it can be integrated into various urban development contexts.

An innovative and versatile parking situation is created that allows parked vehicles to disappear from the neighbourhood in a space-saving way in any case, and real added value for residents and visitors is created. A forward-looking concept that offers great potential for a rapidly growing and changing

metropolis like Munich, solving the eternal parking issue and revitalise newly emerging neighbourhoods.

Early Participation in Munich

Such a novel and holistic approach needs a lot of exchange in the development phase. That is why it is important to Marcel Heller and his team to openly discuss the concept with users at this early stage and to also question what has been developed so far.

The Munich innovation network MUNICH NEXT LEVEL has set itself the task of bringing together Munich residents with different interests and backgrounds in order to give new impetus to urban development issues, to ask questions and collect constructive criticism. A first virtual workshop with stakeholders from the fields of civil society, administration, politics, science, business and culture has already been held to exclusively learn about the previously unpublished concept of the Quartiers-Hub and to discuss it in an innovative digital format and a participative setting.

The lively and constructive discussion focused on the topics of architecture and materiality, technical and legal aspects, as well as on neighbourhood development issues. The reactions and impulses from the plenary session showed that especially the flexible, modular aspect of the neighbourhood hub is central to its integration into the urban space.



Pilot Project in Munich?

According to Ferhan Niepelt, Munich – with its current urban development projects – is an ideal place for launching a pilot project. In his opinion, the numerous new residential areas to be developed on the city's outskirts meet many suitable general conditions. "Where there has been nothing but wasteland and farmland up to now, people want attractive neighbourhood centres with a diverse infrastructure, small shops, leisure facilities and cultural experiences. We know from the past how difficult it is to create urban centres on greenfield sites that are accepted by people", comments Niepelt.

Niepelt is also convinced that the Quartiers-Hub can be the key to the solution: "Why not build the centre around the transportation in particular hub, where cargo bikes, eBikes, own bikes, rental scooters, eCars and private cars are located? This way, we create a space in a residential quarter that provides the necessary diversity and frequency for numerous other uses, from the lovingly run manufactory, the neighbourhood café all the way to the artists' gallery with shared workshop", illustrates Ferhan Niepelt.

WÖHR Autoparksysteme has already had the pleasure of realising a pioneering project in Munich in the past that attracted nationwide attention. The country's first fully automated underground car park for residents was opened with WÖHR + BAUER in Donnersberger Straße in 2006. A successful project that was declared an "award-worthy place" by the Federal President's "Land der Ideen" campaign. The Quartiers-Hub offers the possibility of regarding mobility in a more holistic way, making it easier to do without a car through numerous sharing offers. The workshop participants agreed that the country needs ideas like these.

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