

INSIDE BUSINESS

**Printer Version Of Inside
Business - Hampton
Roads**

JOURNAL

A design dream – the parking garage

Janet Dunphy
Monday July 4, 2005

Have you noticed the proliferation of parking garages on the Southside? It turns out there is a real art to building them, not just a lot of up and down ramps and arrows directing traffic.

Before I tell you what my “expert” said, let’s review some of what’s out there.

As a Landmark Communications employee with a Granby Street business address, I park at MacArthur Center every workday for free (they charge everybody else). This is both good and bad.

Every time I tell my women friends that I walk through the mall daily to get through to my office across Monticello Avenue, their jaws drop. Yes, there is a lot of restraint involved. I see many familiar faces from my building in the mall and it makes me feel good to know we are all doing our part to help the economy.

The MacArthur garage is great. It’s very roomy. I don’t have to worry about hitting a car when I back up. (I drive an Explorer, which is not huge but also is not a compact.) Plus, that nice guy on the third level (I call him “the man voice” from the speaker system) reminds me where I parked and tells me to have a wonderful shopping experience. After all this time, I feel like we are pals.

But there are two bad things about the garage. People speed through there like it’s a raceway because the aisles are so long and straight. Also, someone forgot to cover the walkway just before the doors to the mall. So, I get to park under cover, but I get soaked when I enter the mall. Go figure.

Sanjiv Bhandari of BKBC Architects in California designed the MacArthur Center garage.

The parking garages at Town Center in Virginia Beach are free. So far, there are two. One is integral to the Armada Hoffer Tower and the other is at Dick’s Sporting Goods. Both were designed by CMSS Architects in Virginia Beach.

The Armada Hoffer garage is tight, tight, tight. And make note of where

you parked. Was it the north tower or the south tower?

Here's a tip for rookies: The parking garage elevator goes to the main level of the building. You have to get out to access the elevators for the office floors above.

The Dick's parking garage is great, very roomy. The speed bumps there could certainly work at MacArthur Center.

Stelios Xystros, chief architect of MMM Design Group in Norfolk, and his firm are responsible for two of the area's newest garages, the one at 31st Street in Virginia Beach, which is connected to the new Hilton Hotel, and the one on Boush Street in Norfolk. They also designed the garage that serves the Ted Constant Center at Old Dominion University.

Xystros (pronounced "Zistros") said each garage project is driven by different needs.

"It is specialized, especially as it applies to traffic management and flow in the garage," Xystros said. "There are no two that are alike. Each one brings a unique challenge."

The Boush Street garage is his newest and Xystros calls it "simple." With 640 spaces, it will be screened on two sides by apartments and condominiums that are under construction, so it wasn't necessary to spend extra money on the exterior.

"That's a really nice way of urban planning," Xystros said.

Both the Boush Street and ODU garages have what he calls a "high level of service." For example, the ODU garage has 1,500 spaces and is used primarily for event parking.

"There's a certain geometry that works in a garage," Xystros said. "The wider the base, the higher the level of service." That means it isn't cramped.

"The primary goal at ODU is to get people out as quickly as possible," Xystros said. There isn't a lot of architectural detail. Rather, "The challenge there was to do it inexpensively."

At 31st Street, the challenge was the schedule, he said. The garage is attached by a walkway to the new Hilton Hotel and about 300 of the 1,000 spaces are designated for hotel guests.

Unlike those at Town Center, the 31st Street garage is not free to the general public. However, it is free to hotel guests and a computer sorts the charges out when it's time to pay (or not).

In my test drive, I found that the garage is pretty roomy when it comes to maneuvering. I parked there during an event on a holiday weekend, and suffice it to say, the hotel guests get all the good spaces.

The garage is five stories and takes up a city block. The ground level has 26,000 square feet of retail. The architects had to work with the hotel architects to make sure the materials and architectural expression

matched. The windows, lighting and signage all had to be “symptomatic” of the hotel, Xystros said.

As with all parking garages, the traffic pattern of the surrounding streets helped determine the functional layout of the garage, he said. The city may eventually make 30th and 31st streets one-way, so that also figured into the entrance and exit patterns.

Also, the retail space had to have frontage at the corner of Laskin Road, which turns into 31st Street, and Pacific Avenue.

Overall, the 31st Street garage was “complex,” said Xystros. “There were a whole bunch of different variables.” And so far, people are pleased with the finished product. “One of the greatest compliments is that it doesn’t look like a garage.”

The other day I parked at the Main Street garage in Norfolk for the first time. It’s kind of cramped, too, but at least there’s a reward at the end: Driving down that spiral exit is fun!

IB staff writer Janet Dunphy covers health care, tourism, retail and general business news. She can be reached by calling 222-5356 or e-mail Janet.Dunphy@pilotonline.com. IB Journal is a recurring feature in which staff reporters write about their personal thoughts and opinions.

A service of Richmond.com

All material copyright © 1999 - 2003 Richmond.com and Partners.

INSIDE BUSINESS

**Printer Version Of Inside
Business - Hampton
Roads**

JOURNAL

A design dream – the parking garage

Janet Dunphy
Monday July 4, 2005

Have you noticed the proliferation of parking garages on the Southside? It turns out there is a real art to building them, not just a lot of up and down ramps and arrows directing traffic.

Before I tell you what my “expert” said, let’s review some of what’s out there.

As a Landmark Communications employee with a Granby Street business address, I park at MacArthur Center every workday for free (they charge everybody else). This is both good and bad.

Every time I tell my women friends that I walk through the mall daily to get through to my office across Monticello Avenue, their jaws drop. Yes, there is a lot of restraint involved. I see many familiar faces from my building in the mall and it makes me feel good to know we are all doing our part to help the economy.

The MacArthur garage is great. It’s very roomy. I don’t have to worry about hitting a car when I back up. (I drive an Explorer, which is not huge but also is not a compact.) Plus, that nice guy on the third level (I call him “the man voice” from the speaker system) reminds me where I parked and tells me to have a wonderful shopping experience. After all this time, I feel like we are pals.

But there are two bad things about the garage. People speed through there like it’s a raceway because the aisles are so long and straight. Also, someone forgot to cover the walkway just before the doors to the mall. So, I get to park under cover, but I get soaked when I enter the mall. Go figure.

Sanjiv Bhandari of BKBC Architects in California designed the MacArthur Center garage.

The parking garages at Town Center in Virginia Beach are free. So far, there are two. One is integral to the Armada Hoffer Tower and the other is at Dick’s Sporting Goods. Both were designed by CMSS Architects in Virginia Beach.

The Armada Hoffer garage is tight, tight, tight. And make note of where

you parked. Was it the north tower or the south tower?

Here's a tip for rookies: The parking garage elevator goes to the main level of the building. You have to get out to access the elevators for the office floors above.

The Dick's parking garage is great, very roomy. The speed bumps there could certainly work at MacArthur Center.

Stelios Xystros, chief architect of MMM Design Group in Norfolk, and his firm are responsible for two of the area's newest garages, the one at 31st Street in Virginia Beach, which is connected to the new Hilton Hotel, and the one on Boush Street in Norfolk. They also designed the garage that serves the Ted Constant Center at Old Dominion University.

Xystros (pronounced "Zistros") said each garage project is driven by different needs.

"It is specialized, especially as it applies to traffic management and flow in the garage," Xystros said. "There are no two that are alike. Each one brings a unique challenge."

The Boush Street garage is his newest and Xystros calls it "simple." With 640 spaces, it will be screened on two sides by apartments and condominiums that are under construction, so it wasn't necessary to spend extra money on the exterior.

"That's a really nice way of urban planning," Xystros said.

Both the Boush Street and ODU garages have what he calls a "high level of service." For example, the ODU garage has 1,500 spaces and is used primarily for event parking.

"There's a certain geometry that works in a garage," Xystros said. "The wider the base, the higher the level of service." That means it isn't cramped.

"The primary goal at ODU is to get people out as quickly as possible," Xystros said. There isn't a lot of architectural detail. Rather, "The challenge there was to do it inexpensively."

At 31st Street, the challenge was the schedule, he said. The garage is attached by a walkway to the new Hilton Hotel and about 300 of the 1,000 spaces are designated for hotel guests.

Unlike those at Town Center, the 31st Street garage is not free to the general public. However, it is free to hotel guests and a computer sorts the charges out when it's time to pay (or not).

In my test drive, I found that the garage is pretty roomy when it comes to maneuvering. I parked there during an event on a holiday weekend, and suffice it to say, the hotel guests get all the good spaces.

The garage is five stories and takes up a city block. The ground level has 26,000 square feet of retail. The architects had to work with the hotel architects to make sure the materials and architectural expression

matched. The windows, lighting and signage all had to be "symptomatic" of the hotel, Xystros said.

As with all parking garages, the traffic pattern of the surrounding streets helped determine the functional layout of the garage, he said. The city may eventually make 30th and 31st streets one-way, so that also figured into the entrance and exit patterns.

Also, the retail space had to have frontage at the corner of Laskin Road, which turns into 31st Street, and Pacific Avenue.

Overall, the 31st Street garage was "complex," said Xystros. "There were a whole bunch of different variables." And so far, people are pleased with the finished product. "One of the greatest compliments is that it doesn't look like a garage."

The other day I parked at the Main Street garage in Norfolk for the first time. It's kind of cramped, too, but at least there's a reward at the end: Driving down that spiral exit is fun!

IB staff writer Janet Dunphy covers health care, tourism, retail and general business news. She can be reached by calling 222-5356 or e-mail Janet.Dunphy@pilotonline.com. IB Journal is a recurring feature in which staff reporters write about their personal thoughts and opinions.

A service of Richmond.com

All material copyright © 1999 - 2003 Richmond.com and Partners.

INSIDE BUSINESS

**Printer Version Of Inside
Business - Hampton
Roads**

JOURNAL

A design dream – the parking garage

Janet Dunphy

Monday July 4, 2005

Have you noticed the proliferation of parking garages on the Southside? It turns out there is a real art to building them, not just a lot of up and down ramps and arrows directing traffic.

Before I tell you what my “expert” said, let’s review some of what’s out there.

As a Landmark Communications employee with a Granby Street business address, I park at MacArthur Center every workday for free (they charge everybody else). This is both good and bad.

Every time I tell my women friends that I walk through the mall daily to get through to my office across Monticello Avenue, their jaws drop. Yes, there is a lot of restraint involved. I see many familiar faces from my building in the mall and it makes me feel good to know we are all doing our part to help the economy.

The MacArthur garage is great. It’s very roomy. I don’t have to worry about hitting a car when I back up. (I drive an Explorer, which is not huge but also is not a compact.) Plus, that nice guy on the third level (I call him “the man voice” from the speaker system) reminds me where I parked and tells me to have a wonderful shopping experience. After all this time, I feel like we are pals.

But there are two bad things about the garage. People speed through there like it’s a raceway because the aisles are so long and straight. Also, someone forgot to cover the walkway just before the doors to the mall. So, I get to park under cover, but I get soaked when I enter the mall. Go figure.

Sanjiv Bhandari of BKBC Architects in California designed the MacArthur Center garage.

The parking garages at Town Center in Virginia Beach are free. So far, there are two. One is integral to the Armada Hoffer Tower and the other is at Dick’s Sporting Goods. Both were designed by CMSS Architects in Virginia Beach.

The Armada Hoffer garage is tight, tight, tight. And make note of where

you parked. Was it the north tower or the south tower?

Here's a tip for rookies: The parking garage elevator goes to the main level of the building. You have to get out to access the elevators for the office floors above.

The Dick's parking garage is great, very roomy. The speed bumps there could certainly work at MacArthur Center.

Stelios Xystros, chief architect of MMM Design Group in Norfolk, and his firm are responsible for two of the area's newest garages, the one at 31st Street in Virginia Beach, which is connected to the new Hilton Hotel, and the one on Boush Street in Norfolk. They also designed the garage that serves the Ted Constant Center at Old Dominion University.

Xystros (pronounced "Zistros") said each garage project is driven by different needs.

"It is specialized, especially as it applies to traffic management and flow in the garage," Xystros said. "There are no two that are alike. Each one brings a unique challenge."

The Boush Street garage is his newest and Xystros calls it "simple." With 640 spaces, it will be screened on two sides by apartments and condominiums that are under construction, so it wasn't necessary to spend extra money on the exterior.

"That's a really nice way of urban planning," Xystros said.

Both the Boush Street and ODU garages have what he calls a "high level of service." For example, the ODU garage has 1,500 spaces and is used primarily for event parking.

"There's a certain geometry that works in a garage," Xystros said. "The wider the base, the higher the level of service." That means it isn't cramped.

"The primary goal at ODU is to get people out as quickly as possible," Xystros said. There isn't a lot of architectural detail. Rather, "The challenge there was to do it inexpensively."

At 31st Street, the challenge was the schedule, he said. The garage is attached by a walkway to the new Hilton Hotel and about 300 of the 1,000 spaces are designated for hotel guests.

Unlike those at Town Center, the 31st Street garage is not free to the general public. However, it is free to hotel guests and a computer sorts the charges out when it's time to pay (or not).

In my test drive, I found that the garage is pretty roomy when it comes to maneuvering. I parked there during an event on a holiday weekend, and suffice it to say, the hotel guests get all the good spaces.

The garage is five stories and takes up a city block. The ground level has 26,000 square feet of retail. The architects had to work with the hotel architects to make sure the materials and architectural expression

matched. The windows, lighting and signage all had to be "symptomatic" of the hotel, Xystros said.

As with all parking garages, the traffic pattern of the surrounding streets helped determine the functional layout of the garage, he said. The city may eventually make 30th and 31st streets one-way, so that also figured into the entrance and exit patterns.

Also, the retail space had to have frontage at the corner of Laskin Road, which turns into 31st Street, and Pacific Avenue.

Overall, the 31st Street garage was "complex," said Xystros. "There were a whole bunch of different variables." And so far, people are pleased with the finished product. "One of the greatest compliments is that it doesn't look like a garage."

The other day I parked at the Main Street garage in Norfolk for the first time. It's kind of cramped, too, but at least there's a reward at the end: Driving down that spiral exit is fun!

IB staff writer Janet Dunphy covers health care, tourism, retail and general business news. She can be reached by calling 222-5356 or e-mail Janet.Dunphy@pilotonline.com. IB Journal is a recurring feature in which staff reporters write about their personal thoughts and opinions.

A service of Richmond.com

All material copyright © 1999 - 2003 Richmond.com and Partners.