FACADE TYPES

CASE STUDY
It’s time to give car park design a facelift...

Most people consider car parks a necessary evil – ugly multi-storey concrete blocks that we have to use but that make us all feel slightly uneasy as we navigate our way through dingy, antisocial spaces. But it doesn’t have to be this way. Over the past 18 months we have worked on three landmark car park projects, that are rewriting the rule book - our use of striking facades is transforming the face of car park design and creating unexpected, light filled spaces that people can really enjoy.
Giving car parks context

Fundamental to the success of these car park projects has been our research of the local area and our understanding of the space these buildings will occupy, their context. By really getting to grips with the local history, heritage, architecture and landscape we have been able to come up with eye-catching designs that make a real impact – for the right reasons – and actually enhance the architectural story of the town.
Crown Car Park

Ipswich’s Crowning Glory
We recently completed the Crown Car Park in Ipswich. The design was inspired by the town’s historic arts and crafts context, with colours evocative of the Suffolk countryside. The building is clad in golden perforated metal panels – a nod to the town’s link to Saxon gold - with shapes inspired by the symmetrical patterns of surrounding historic buildings. These perforations not only add visual interest, they also allow light and air into the building, creating spaces that eliminate that sense of unease associated with the dark corners and stairwells of many existing car parks.

There is no denying that the facade is a bold statement but with context and referencing to the local area it sits comfortably in its place. The continuous golden cladding gives people a similar impression of the building no matter how they approach it. And because the panels form large diamond shapes on all sides, the building is in all essence wearing a crown, neatly marrying up the building’s name ‘Crown car park’ with its form. This landmark building has integrity and a real identity, it is a car park that can actually be enjoyed by all those coming to the town.
Sittingbourne

A Kent Colourwash
Colour is not something often associated with car parks but we’ve used it extensively both inside and out for our car park design in the Kent town of Sittingbourne. Our aim is to reflect the spectacular light and landscapes of the local area. Indeed, one of our most revered artists, J M W Turner described the nearby Kent coastline as having: ‘dawn clouds to the east and glorious sunsets to the west….the loveliest skies in Europe.’

Through the intelligent use of colour, we’ve taken our inspiration from Turner’s description, with the three levels of the car park representing the sky, the sea and the land. The building is then clad in colour coated metal, with varying perforations that create a simple and elegant pattern reminiscent of the clouds in the sky. The intention is that the façade will reveal a rich mixture of colour and texture as people pass by. On a more practical note, the façade will also allow for light to penetrate into the car park as well as provide safety and security at higher levels.

To really ground the building and give it that all important sense of belonging, we incorporated a gabion system on the ground floor using locally quarried stone. A final reference to the natural surroundings that have been the driving force behind this design.
Monarch Quay

A Royal Wave at Monarch Quay
When it comes to local heritage, few areas come with a greater reputation than that of the iconic Mersey River waterfront in Liverpool. The site at King’s Dock is steeped in the history of Liverpool’s rich maritime heritage. And we wanted to evoke that sense of history by mirroring the architectural elements of existing maritime buildings and of the dynamic waterscape.

Our design clads the eastern waterfront edge of the building with an innovative network of suspended aluminium panels, creating a kinetic frontage that will ripple in the wind, reflecting the movement of the water below. The western elevation will also echo the flow of the river, clad in an aluminium panel, with perforations that create a wave pattern across the entire building.

Responding to techniques used on the surrounding industrial buildings, the corners are rounded to soften the boundaries, while the ground floor is framed in a corten steel panel which will weather to a rust colour reminiscent of the worn brick and metals of the dockside.

This building will shimmer in the light, respect its architectural neighbours and stand proud in its waterfront location – easy to forget then that this is in fact a car park.