

"PIGEON HOLE PARKING—DOLLARS AND SENSE" *

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GOOD afternoon. Your invitation to be here with you is appreciated. I trust you will find Pigeon Hole parking of interest and perhaps of practical value to you in applications for your community or your clients. Civil engineering and Pigeon Hole parking have a compatible sense of meaning in that they both are concerned with construction in the public interest. Necessity has again mothered a child—automation and cybernetics are brought to life to accomplish an economically sound solution of an acute problem is evidenced by the daily discussion of it in the press of the nation . . . Pigeon Hole is a form of automation. For the present we prefer not to make it automatic but rather to have a mechanical operation reduced to the simplest elements plus a degree of human, operational control.

The resolute march of the motorcar into urban centers continues to compound the irresolute efforts of municipal and private interests to meet the problem. Many minds and much money have been devoted to the development of mechanical means to make an economically attractive garaging operation available. Out of the welter of devices, there is one that is proving itself functionally and financially satisfactory. In the past four years 32 Pigeon Hole facilities have sprung up, 11 are now building and many more are in the plan stage. Our system meets the following basic requirements:

1. **LOW FIRST COST**—at approximately \$1,200 to \$1,300 per car space for the basic unit, erected, ready to operate, these units can be placed profitably wherever the stacking of cars is indicated because of high demand and high land costs. Firewalls, decorative trim, offices and unusual foundation conditions may run the completed unit price somewhat higher but still well within the limits set in economic analyses and based upon existing parking rates in open parking lots.

2. **LOW OPERATING COSTS**—the mechanical devices employed are reduced to the simplest possible denominator: a portable hydraulic hoist moves between the storage racks horizontally, one to handle each approximate 100 cars; a lift platform rises vertically as the hoist moves laterally;

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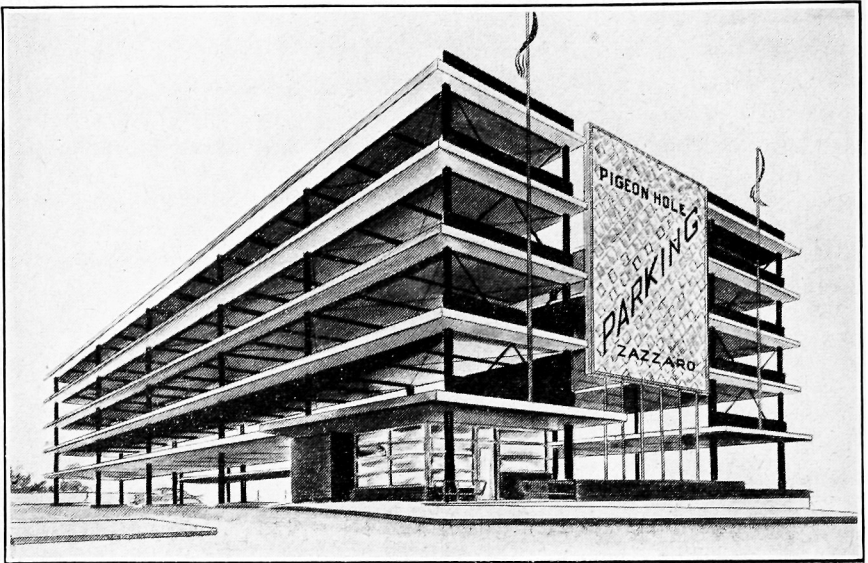
on this platform is a hydraulically and cable operated dolly which runs out under the vehicle to be received or relinquished, lifts it four inches and returns to the platform or deposits it in the selected pigeonhole. The car is left resting on its wheels when stored. The receiving or relinquishing operation is performed in less than a minute. There is no human occupancy of the structure and the hoist operator is stationed on the platform at his control levers. Quoting from a survey made by a highly regarded consulting firm for a large realty company in Manhattan, Garage Realty Company reports, "Pigeon Hole materially reduces the payroll expense, sometimes as much as 50%." Garage costs are primarily labor costs. The savings are apparent plus the fact that in no other way can such high-speed handling be effected and with complete safety for the car and contents. Insurance charges, taxes on a bare structure and service and supplies all are substantially reduced.

3. OPERATIONAL FLUIDITY—because of the speed in receipt or delivery of a car customer relations are excellent. The entire ground floor is available as an incoming reservoir. On discharge, the car is delivered at the Exit Bay by the time the patron has paid his charges. He steps in and drives away with no one having touched the car since leaving it. It has had semi-protected storage in all but the top level which is open. It has been "preferred" parking and patrons acclaim it so. From the operators standpoint, personnel can work easily and efficiently. Short time parking and high turnover are encouraged with greatly increased revenue. In two of our more active units, turnover exceeds three per day per stall with a staff of 7; 1 cashier, 3 attendants and 3 hoist operators. We have handled 1000 cars in 12 hours in a 252 car garage.

4. DEMOUNTABLE FEATURE—Pigeon Hole garages are generally fabricated steel, open-deck buildings erected on a ground level concrete slab, lock bolted together. Being modular they can be adapted to almost any size plot—we can put 90 cars on a 25' x 100' lot. Stalls are about 7½' wide with 7' in the overhead making for better utilization of the cubic area. Exterior treatments can make the units match or surpass adjoining architecture. Pigeon Hole will produce maximum revenue from land where the end use may be other than for a garage. It may be demounted and re-erected, salvaging all but the slab.

Many municipal attempts to solve downtown parking problems have failed because the economics did not work out on single purpose, permanent type garages requiring high initial and high operating costs. Or, unfortunately, they have required subsidy by merchant groups who do so in desperation or the diversion of parking meter revenues from the General Fund or Traffic Department. Pigeon Hole garages can be large or small. There is a growing school of thought which, logically it seems, argues more and

smaller units can better serve the needs of the parker and the retail merchants by more advantageous location. Smaller sites can be more readily obtained and frequently for less money than the assembling and condemnation of large blocks. Large garages only induce more traffic into already congested areas. Getting cars off the street is NOT the problem, getting them *back* is. High turnover must be encouraged by providing reasonable rates for short intervals—2 or 3 hours. This can be effectively controlled



by accelerating the rate after the third or fourth hour. The all-day parker must be turned away from the business core of the city but present rates encourage his staying. In Pigeon Hole, with the attendants on the job and the devices available to handle one car every few seconds, high turnover is no problem and accomplishes what every operator wants, what the retail trades need and the public must learn to accept to its long range advantage. The welfare of the city is at stake.

Pigeon Hole is a new tool. Private capital may go a long way toward solving the parking problem that the municipality was about forced to assume. Obsolete building codes which were designed when no such device was contemplated must be modernized. Co-operation in the condemnation and acquisition of desirable sites for use by private interests and possible tax exemptions are ways forward-looking cities can help private enterprise help them. Or they can, through their Parking Authority or Parking Agency, attack it themselves but *without* the need of subsidies that are inherent in obsolete type operations.

Mechanical parking is a trend—not a gadget. Many parking problems are not actually possible of solution but most of them can be helped. Mechanical parking makes Sense and Means Dollars. And quoting Bill Zeckendorf of Webb & Knapp, “the only real solution is a vertical solution. And a vertical solution means a mechanical solution.” Pigeon Hole is the modern way. Now let me show you a short film .

Thank you gentlemen for your interest. I’m a few minutes over, so after this session I shall be available here to answer questions if you wish. Good afternoon and good luck.