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Robotic parking

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The automated garage allows for more vehicles in less space.

As unique as the thatch roof at Four Green Fields Irish Pub in Hyde Park may be, owner Colin Breen is adding something more unique next door.

A fully automated robotic parking garage with the capacity to handle more cars in a smaller space.

You never enter the garage, your car is picked up by an elevator and placed onto a shelf high above, safe from dings, break-ins and accidents.

"We can put in double the amount of spaces in a lot less area, and end up with less cost," Breen said.

Robotic Parking in Clearwater has been contracted to build the garage.

Engineer Gerhard Haag said he has as many as six similar robotic parking garages in development nationwide.

Two are already operating in New York City and Washington, D.C.

"The robots basically take over and store the car automatically," Haag said. "When the driver wants to retrieve the car after his meeting or visit, he gives the attendant a ticket and the car will be returned driving forward."

The garage will be constructed next to Four Green Fields at Platt and Plant streets in what appears to be a small parcel of land. It will accommodate 180 cars and still leave ample room for Breen to build a 150-room hotel.

"It's a curiosity to get people here the first time," Breen said. "Then you have to give them something to come back again."

The garage is expected to be completed by the end of 2006.

City administrators who approved the project said it could be a tourist attraction of its own.

Europe already has hundreds of robotic parking garages. Three fourths of all parking garages in Tokyo are robotic.

Industry experts say as overcrowding becomes more of an issue in the Bay area more robotic parking garages will be seen.



Four Green Fields owner Colin Breen expects the robotic parking garage to attract customers for its novelty.



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