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The Place of Work

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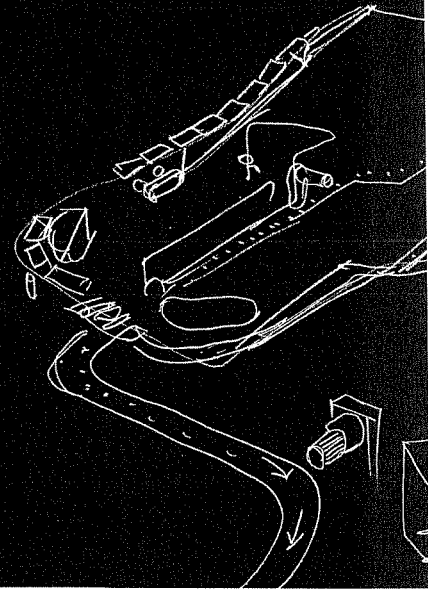
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Is it time to declare manufacturing dead in cities? Maybe not.

In the past forty years, urban manufacturing has declined precipitously as industries have moved out of cities, first to suburban and rural areas, then overseas. The urban landscape is littered with shuttered plants and derelict lands. But the face of manufacturing is changing, and while many companies have left cities for good, others still find their competitive edge there. Often, these firms prosper because they have a geographic or historic advantage, provide goods for a local or regional market at a competitive price, or produce high value-added goods for specialty, niche markets.

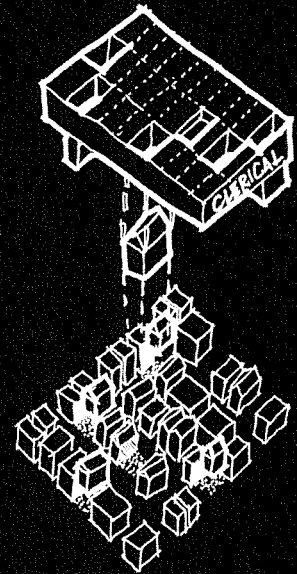
Urban manufacturers are making their way by being small, smart and sensitive to design and market trends. Cities provide a number of conditions that help them be competitive — a diverse and flexible labor force; a network of specialized suppliers and jobbers; financial, marketing and wholesaling services; intellectual and cultural resources; and a large consumer and business market.



What is the place of manufacturing in cities?

For a century, planners have regarded industry as a health and safety threat and shunted it to segregated, marginal districts. Today, many manufacturers are finding a place in diverse urban neighborhoods. These specialized firms can operate in small spaces and use modern processes that meet strict environmental standards. And they depend on being part of a network of related businesses and services, near amenities like shops and restaurants, and close to housing for workers — benefits of an urban location.

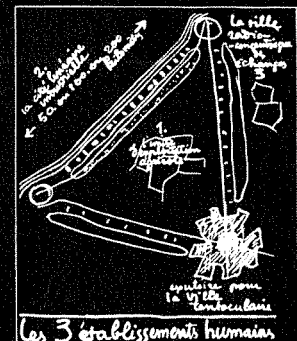
Each of the following articles examines the design and planning issues that a particular industrial setting presents. Robert Lane critiques the destructive urban design practices embedded within planned, in-city manufacturing districts. John A. Loomis suggests that the flexible, easily mixed building types found in traditional manufacturing neighborhoods offer a format for urban reinvestment. Cheryl Parker describes the institutional and economic changes transforming San Francisco's industrial South of Market into a multifaceted working district.

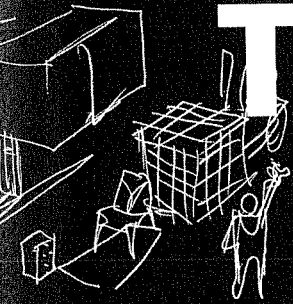


The survival of workplaces speaks to the survival of our cities.

These articles about manufacturing offer a case study of broader, fundamental issues that face urbanism today. How can urban development accommodate a variety of activities — housing, shopping, offices and industry — at a grain and scale that enables healthy mixing and appropriate access while minimizing conflicts among them? How can the design of buildings and spaces address specific functional needs, in this case manufacturing, while enhancing people's visual and spatial experience of the city?

If these articles are particularly provocative, it is because places of production are so often overlooked, by public officials and designers alike. Urban manufacturing is surviving against the odds; the architecture and urban design of working districts should match the resourcefulness and vigor of the people who are keeping them alive.





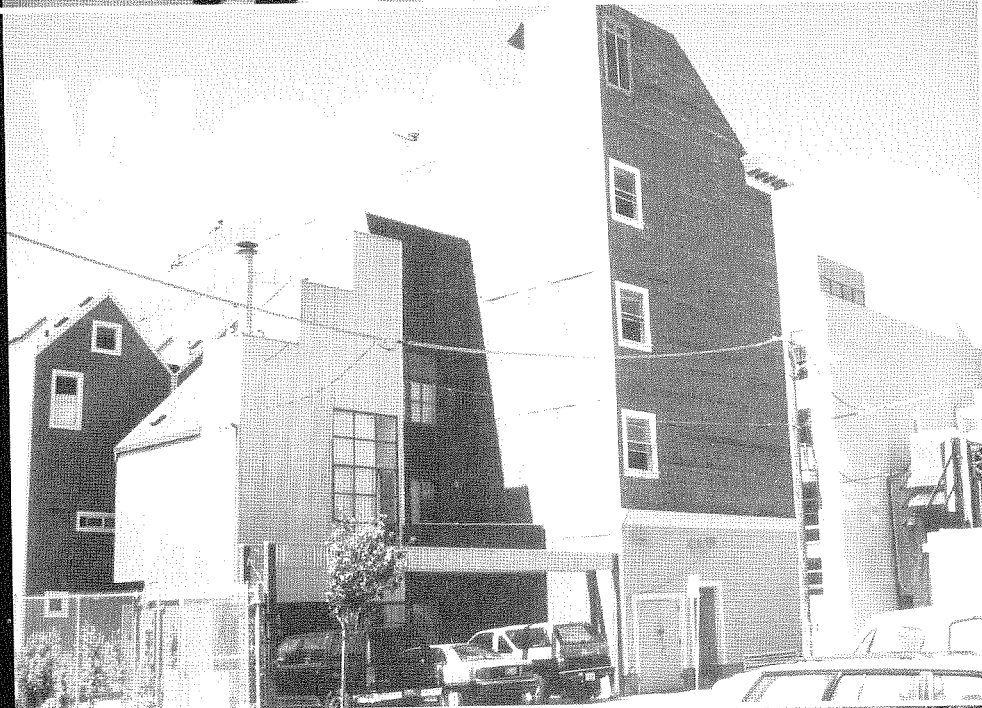
The Plan

Left: Bottling area of a brewery. (Lucien Kroll).
Right: Focus:HOPE Center for Advanced Technologies. (Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates)



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Left and right: Corporate downsizing is pushing workers into self-employment and increasing the popularity of live-work housing. (Cheryl Parker)



Left: Sketch by LeCorbusier depicting the segregation of urban activities. Right: *Hôtel industriel* Le Dorian. Design by KLN Architecture. (© John A. Loomis)

