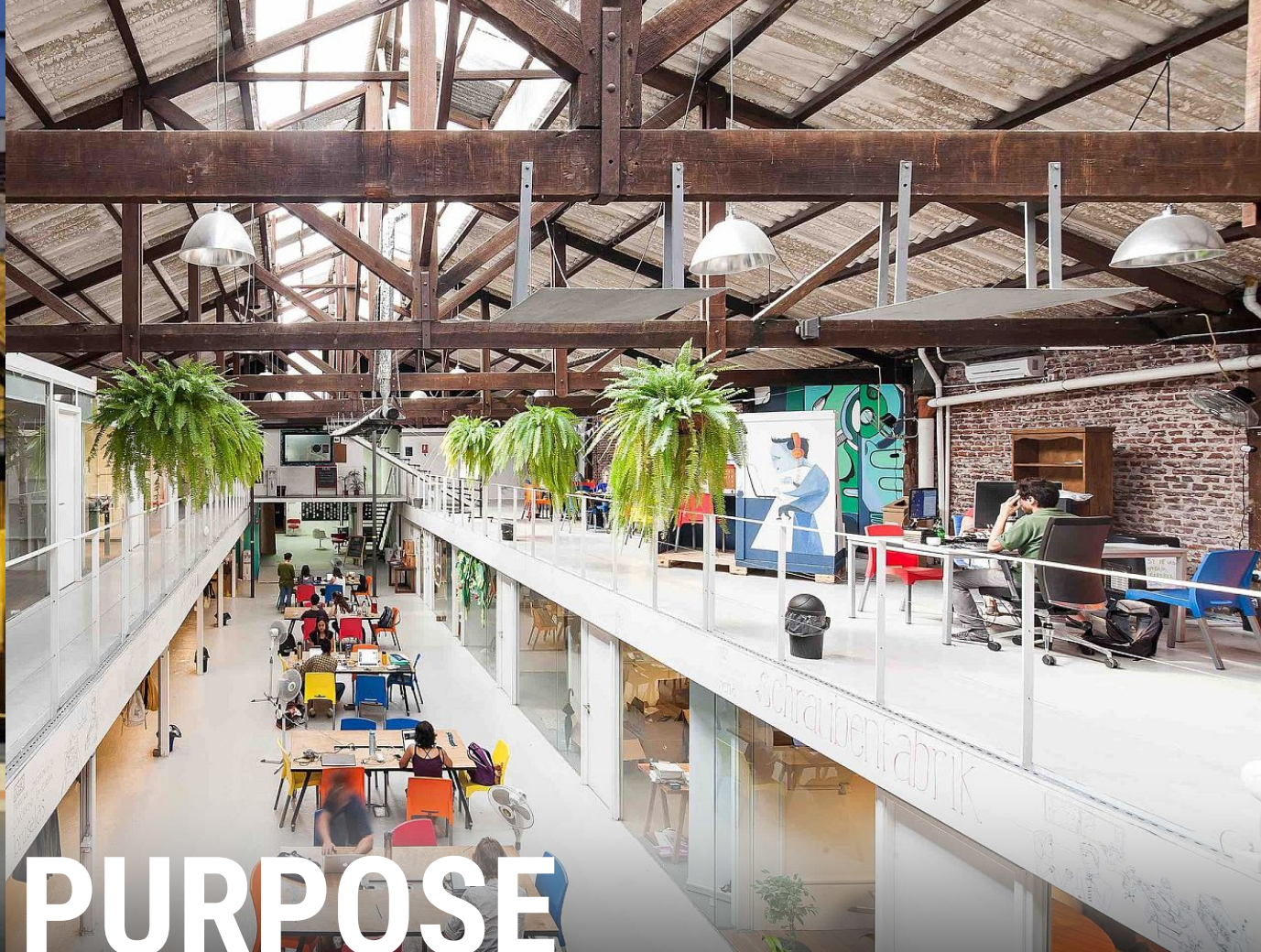


Old Buildings New Life

Revival through adaptive reuse





A RESTORATION OF PURPOSE

In a world where single-use-products are becoming a thing of the past, buildings are following suit. Adaptive reuse is growing in popularity. Vacant buildings need a new purpose and developers are shifting their attention to existing structures in prime real estate locations. With many businesses pivoting towards e-commerce, it seems that everywhere you look a multitude of buildings are no longer serving their initial purpose - sitting empty waiting to be revitalized or reimaged. So how do you teach an old building new tricks? You embrace the evolution of consumer behavior and redevelop these locations into destinations that consumers gravitate toward. By creating mixed-use destinations that marry residential, cultural, institutional, and commercial into a one-stop-shop for consumers, the future of real estate will be defined by the imagination.



As technology evolves, we are bound to see a decreasing need for certain buildings. Demolishing these structures because they no longer serve their initial purpose is arbitrary. Historic preservation is itself a practice of sustainability that benefits communities and the environment. Moreover, restoration projects also achieve sustainability from a cultural perspective. The buildings are given a new purpose while the design respects its past and its emotional ties with community members. We are seeing historic train stations and libraries converted into local museums. Abandoned churches have been transformed into childcare facilities, and theaters have been fashioned into concert halls for local talent. We have even seen run-down warehouses restored into trendy, rustic venues. These are best-in-class examples of how adaptive reuse can be successful when experience and consumer behavior are a priority during the restoration process.



It's no secret that traditional shopping malls have been suffering for quite some time. What was once a destination for previous generations has become a desolate shell. With online shopping at its height, it is increasingly difficult for a shopping center solely comprised of retail outlets to thrive. Developers are finding that mixed-use properties are better positioned for long term success. Entertainment options, restaurants, and even healthcare or residential opportunities provide the experience that consumers crave but aren't unable to get through e-commerce. Their location in high-traffic areas makes them particularly appealing for this kind of adaptive reuse. These developments will establish that the "shopping malls" of the future are not just about shopping – they will be positioned as integrated lifestyle hubs.



EXPERIENCE OVER EXCESS

A shifting mindset has consumers that prefer spending their money on experiences over material items. An increasing number of shoppers favor local, artisanal boutiques over department stores. “Drinks with friends” has shifted from high end bars with expensive cocktails to breweries housed in abandoned warehouses where beer is brewed in house and trivia nights or board games are offered for guests to enjoy while socializing. Minimalism has moved to the forefront for many businesses as consumers have indicated they do not see the value of excess; they seek a simpler experience that gives them a deeper sense of connection. Creating this atmosphere for businesses requires a design solution that marries a modest atmosphere with touchpoints that allows the consumer an emotional connection to the brand.



KEEPING CHARACTER

Successful adaptive reuse projects find ways to develop a space for a new purpose while preserving traces of the building's history. The power of design allows an avenue that respects and honors the character of the original architecture while ensuring the incorporation of new materials which provide the proper structural support to meet even the toughest planning regulations. To strike a balance between old and new, details should convey the spirit of the old structure while infusing design elements that create a buzz in the community.



REFINED BY NATURE

Beautification projects are also a focus and priority. These projects which can include establishing community green spaces, turning under-utilized side streets into pop-up social spaces, planting trees to aid in stormwater runoff and creating parks from unused parcels of lands are all part of a larger trend to rejuvenate abandoned concrete jungles into more vibrant, exciting places.

Breathing new life into an old structure can do more than just give a building a whole new purpose – the economic investment can reinvigorate a community.

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