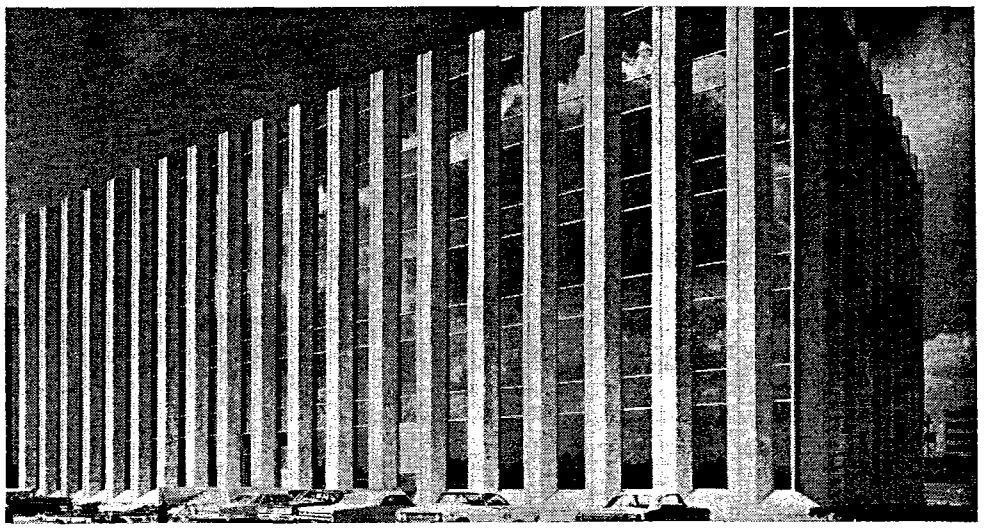
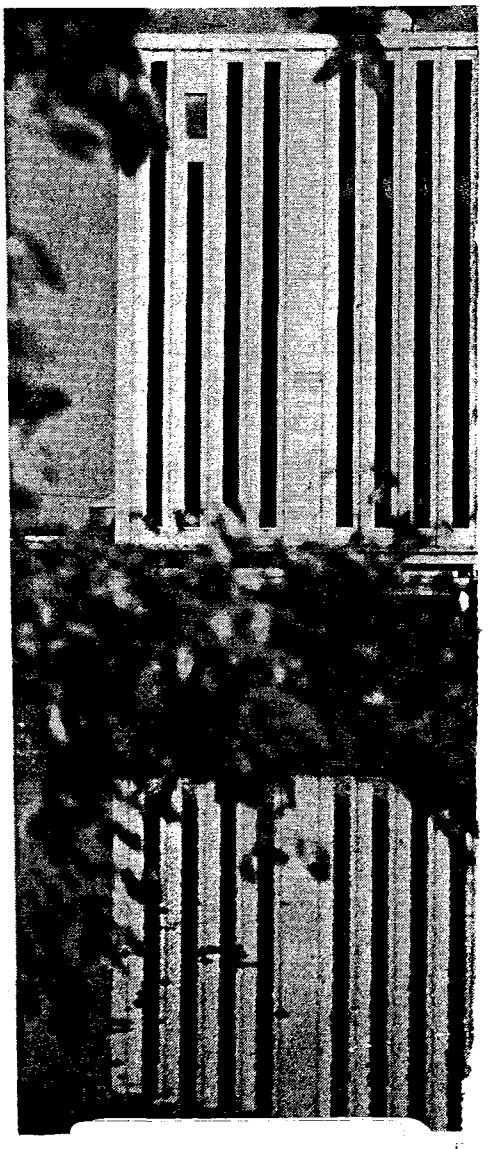
Market for colored glass accelerates



Left. LOF's Vari-Tran/Chrome coated glass in Houston, Tex., Building. Bottom. PPG's Solargray in its Martin, W.Va., titanium dioxide plant. Right. LOF's Vari-Tran/Chrome 114 coated Thermopane in offices of ADS Anker Corp., Oak Brook, Ill.



The architectural trend to more glass in commercial buildings is accelerating the use of colored glass. Over the past decade the market for colored glass in commercial construction has grown at a 10% rate annually. The prospect for the 1970's is for more of the same, and, with new technology by major glass producers like Libbey-Owens-Ford and PPG Industries nearing commercialization, the market penetration of high-priced, high-performance colored glass will probably accelerate.

Finding growing use, too, are tinted films, marketed by 3M Co., to cover glass already in place. Although LOF and PPG are concentrating on the commercial building market for their new products, the target for the tinted films is the small building and home market.

A decade ago glass accounted for about 1% of a new building's cost. Today glass represents about 1.5% of the cost. Most of it is heat control glass. PPG estimates that in 1968 about 90% of all glass used for nondisplay purposes in nonresidential buildings was some type of heat control glass, whether thermal glass or colored glass or a combination of both.

Architects like colored glass mainly for aesthetic reasons. The glass gives the building a uniform appearance. There are no flower pots or filing cabinets dotting the windows. Also, the glass can be color-coordinated with the structural members of the building.

On the other hand, the people with the purse strings have found that the new glass types can save both capital and operating costs of a building. A building's heating and cooling system can account for 30% or more of its total cost. Glazing costs will rarely hit the 2% mark. Thus, glass can be used to lower a building's capital and operating costs.

The prime consideration here is air conditioning. It costs three to six times more to cool a building one degree than to heat it by the same amount. With glass that cuts solar heat entering a building by up to 80%, the savings can be substantial. For example, less cooling equipment is needed, its operation is less costly, and savings in equipment floor space can be turned into rental dollars.

The "use colored glass" movement in commercial buildings during the sixties was a market-oriented one. Most of the glass types were commercial products at the beginning of the decade. Technological advances were minor until 1966 when PPG introduced reflective colored glass. The market for this type of glass started soaring in 1968. LOF brought its line of reflective glass to market the same year.

The 1970's will see new technology for reflective glass that should con-

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