

REthink Development: Lofts at Cherokee Studios

Music Scene to Modern and Green

Located in the epicenter of entertainment, the Lofts at Cherokee Studios in Hollywood, Calif., provides a platform for living green while staying true to its musical roots.

By Carina Calhoun





The former 1972 Hollywood recording facility, Cherokee Studios — where famous artists recorded, including Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Michael Jackson and David Bowie, among others — closed in 2007 and recently finished its sustainable transformation into the Lofts at Cherokee Studios. Completed in March 2010, the mixed-use community consists of 12 market-rate lofts — including seven two-story townhomes — and 2,800 square feet of retail space.

With its unique design and eco-friendly function, the urban infill community is constructed to be the first LEED Platinum-certified building in Hollywood, Calif., and

the first LEED Platinum-certified mixed-use or market-rate multifamily building in Southern California, though measures are still pending. And in the Lofts lobby, platinum records honor the studio's past while recognizing the LEED Platinum certification.

Yet, the planning and construction process of this infill development was a tough task to take on. "The entitlement and building department process is very timely, costly and difficult. Building an infill mixed-use building is also expensive," said Steve Edwards, LEED AP, principal of REthink Development Corp. "Infill is the best way to be green, yet the barriers to building a good infill building are large. The city process and governmental incentives should try to help encourage infill rather

▲ **The Lofts at Cherokee Studios, a mixed-use, urban infill development, features recycled and renewable materials and products — such as recycled skateboards as the kitchen back splash tile— and contain low- or no-VOCs.** Photo credit: John Linden

◀ **Boarding West Hollywood and a just a few blocks from Sunset Boulevard, the five-story building includes one underground level of parking, first floor retail and parking with three floors occupied by lofts and a green living rooftop deck.** Photo credit: Tara Wujcik



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— Steve Edwards, LEED AP, principal of REthink Development Corp.

than discourage it. Communities should also encourage rather than discourage.”

Some of the many environmentally efficient essentials throughout the five-story building include an advanced VFR cooling and heating comfort system — which cools and warms floors, ceilings and walls to create a perfectly temperate environment — Energy Star appliances in each unit and compact fluorescent light fixtures. In addition to tankless water heaters and water-efficient fixtures, every unit includes an electric car charger for the eco-

savvy driver. Another element that contributes to the LEED rating includes a green roof, which mitigates stormwater flow and reduces urban temperatures while saving energy.

Combining style with sustainability, the community includes various eco-friendly features to the design plan as well. Perhaps the most innovative and interesting, however, is the owner-controlled operable dynamic double façade system. This allows the occupant to adjust the screens of the building to an open view, providing a reflective and visually

appealing environment while creating shade and enabling ventilation. Performing as an experimental effect, the moving screens create the illusion of the building appearing to move with the passing cars and people.

The sustainable significance of this community balances the modern and expressive design incorporated inside and out. The building's architecture, by Santa Monica, Calif.-based Pugh + Scarpa Architects Inc., was inspired by the series of paintings by the British artist Patrick Hughes, titled “Prospectivity.”

◀ The units range in size from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet, and seven of the lofts are two-story townhomes with Energy Star appliances in each unit.

Photo credit: John Linden

▶ Two of the units are equipped with a double-layered insulated bedroom, which can be used for sound isolation and an optional recording room.

Photo credit: Tara Wujcik

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Photo credit: John Linden





▲ Architect Brooks + Scarpa left no design detail overlooked when it came to going green by including the owner-controlled operable dynamic double façade system with aluminum panels. Photo credit: John Linden

◀ With over half of the units still available, Lofts at Cherokee Studios offers streetscape views through the large windows designed to maximize daylighting and save energy throughout the community. Photo credit: Tara Wujcik



whose paintings appear to be ever changing and physically moving while being viewed. Its unique architectural form brings together function and creativity with high-performance features throughout.

As the exterior offers straight lines and sleek form with large windows, the interior incorporates the same modern aesthetic while still being eco-conscious in the 1,000- to 2,000-square foot floor plans. "We wanted the units to have environmental materials but still have that sleek look, and this was quite hard to find. Most of the green materials didn't have that modern edge. There was a lot of searching around," said Edwards.

Adding green products and

materials to the mix, Cherokee is 40 percent more energy efficient than California's Title 24, the most demanding energy code in the United States. By using non-toxic, zero-VOC paints and formaldehyde-free insulation, cabinets and flooring, the standards for these codes were exceeded. One particular interior element included recycled skateboard material as the kitchen back splash tile.

The measures of building green are a commitment REthink made mandatory when developing this community. "LEED Certification makes the green elements real and tangible instead of just marketing speak, which might be true or not," said Edwards.



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