

New Complex To Recreate Artists' Old Lifestyle

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The idea is as old as medieval villages, or the Santa Fe Plaza.

Before the modern, car-worshipping, commuter society, people lived close together and created their crafts and other wares in downstairs shops or studios.

Now three developers want to recreate that lifestyle — and perhaps transform Santa Fe — in a 35-unit apartment and studio complex on Second Street.

"When you build live-work communities, you're creating something that meets the needs of artists and other small businessmen, but more importantly, you're changing the face of the community and solving traffic congestion and other problems," said Jonathan Rose of New York.

Rose is majority partner in Second Street Studios. Other partners are Santa Fe developer Wayne Nichols and Peter Calthorpe, a Sausalito, Calif., architect who is pioneering the idea of "pedestrian pockets," or villages formed around squares, businesses and public transportation.

What they are trying to do is provide studio space and revive the notion of "living above the shop," in modern steel buildings with 24-foot-high ceilings. The apartments feature an 800-square-foot shop or studio area downstairs and a 400-square-foot loft with a kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, skylight and balcony. They will rent for \$785 a month.

The project, which should begin leasing in October, is built around a central courtyard in which artists can work or set up exhibits. Besides the 17 apartments, the project includes a dozen 600-square-foot studios that will rent for \$365 a month, two 2,350 retail and office buildings on Second Street and a few large multipurpose units. Each apartment has a large garage door for moving large works in and out.

"We're trying to satisfy what we think is a really neglected need in Santa Fe," Nichols said. "The project is tailored for the artists, for



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Partners Wayne Nichols and Jonathan Rose review plans for Second Street Studios, a 35-unit compound that will offer apartments, studios and retail space to artists and small

the craftsmen, or even the small businessmen or software developers who want to reduce their costs by combining their rent for a dwelling and a shop."

Rose said he and Nichols interviewed local artists and craftsmen before Calthorpe started designing the complex.

"One thing about artists is they aren't 9-to-5ers," Rose said. "Many artists prefer to live with their sculpture. Their artwork is really

part of their life."

Many Santa Fe artists already have been drawn into industrial and commercial areas by the quest for low rents and alternate lifestyles.

"We found that there were hot plates and couches and there were people living in industrial spaces," Nichols said.

The partnership started with about 4½ acres on the former Empire Block factory site. Last year, the trio sold the former Santa

businesses. The developers say their project will resurrect the historic notion of people living and working in the same building.

Fe Window and Door building north of the studio complex to Willem Malten for Cloud Cliff Bakery's new home.

The complex is on the front two acres of the property, and Nichols and Rose said they plan similar studios and apartments for the remaining 2.2 acres at the rear of the property, next to Taos Furniture.

"My fantasy is that this is where somebody can come to town with

his art and an old lady and a pickup truck and have a place where he can get started," Nichols said. "It's the original mini-incubator."

Rose said he's confident that artists will provide a ready market for the compound. He built Plaza de los Artesanos off Cerrillos Road near the Yucca Drive-In about five years ago, and that project is fully leased, Rose said.

Before the partnership could

start work, they had to convince the City Council of the need for mixed-use zoning in industrial and commercial areas. The council earlier this year amended its zoning laws to allow planned residential, studio and commercial projects in industrial and commercial zones. The land on which the project sits is zoned industrial.

Nichols said he sees the Second Street area emerging as a center for artists and mixed uses. He pointed to the natural tendency of like-minded people to support each other's work and said he and Rose have tried to tailor the project to artists' needs and lifestyles.

"We plan to continue working with this concept of live-work community and develop it not just in Santa Fe but all over," Nichols said.

Rose noted that Calthorpe has published a book, "Sustainable Communities," teaches classes incorporating his ideas at the University of California at Berkeley and is involved in community development projects in several cities.

Nichols also said he plans to move his real estate brokerage, The Nichols Agency, into one of the businesses. Communico Inc., the construction firm owned by Nichols and his wife, Susan, is building the complex. Nichols also will provide copying, Fax and secretarial services for residents of the compound out of his agency.

"The hope is eventually to evolve a tenant population in which everybody is providing something for everybody else," Rose said.

"It's the idea that makes Santa Fe what it is," Rose continued. "What we're creating is the traditional square, like the village square. The more elements of a village we can put here the better."