

When it comes to home value, Ocala has always been an appealing place for those looking to making their relocation dollars stretch as far as possible. But a housing market that for decades was comprised of simple ranch homes is now as rich and as varied as any number of design shows on HGTV. While still incredibly affordable when compared to other home markets nationwide, Ocala now has living options for all kinds of tastes—from stunning options in exclusive gated communities and innovative loft condominiums in the trendy downtown district to amenity-laden homes in one of the area’s most popular active-adult neighborhoods. Here are some highlights of the newest models on the market now.

‘A COMBINATION OF INDUSTRIAL & CONTEMPORARY’

One of the most unique projects in Ocala in recent years was the conversion of the old telephone building into trendy downtown lofts.

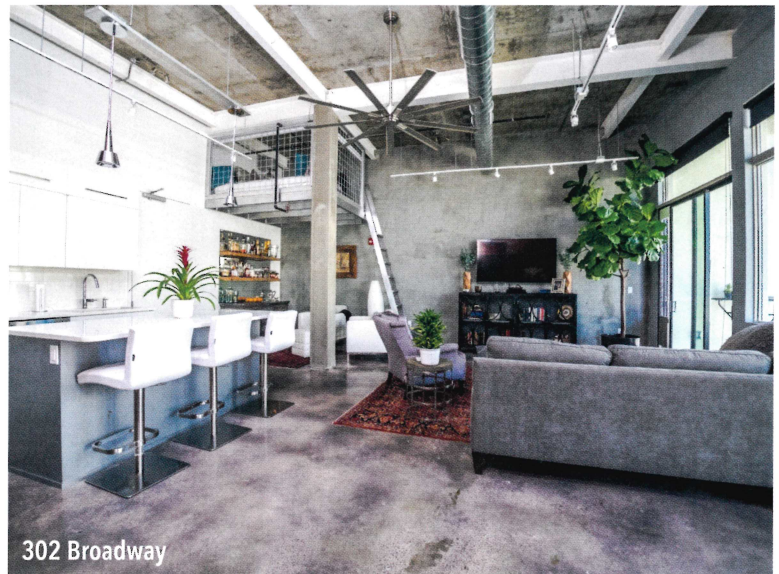
Repurposing the **302 BROADWAY** building took a lot of mind and matter. With all building systems needing replacement except for the bones, razing the building was considered, but ultimately redeveloping the four-story structure prevailed.

“The building’s great bones made the building primed for redevelopment,” explains project developer Holland Drake. “Being a former utility building, its structural elements are stouter than the typical multi-residential unit buildings. These structural elements were perfect to construct residential condos featuring industrial interior design.”

Something like an old cigar factory in Charleston converted into residential condos was inspiration to Sandy McBride and Holland Drake to repurpose the former Florida Telephone Corp. building, originally constructed in 1964. The big picture was how this project would spark Ocala’s Downtown revitalization, like that of larger cities where rundown industrial/warehouse districts have been converted to bustling urban cores.

When work began, the building was stripped down to the floor decks, roof deck, and the structural elements holding those decks in the air. Once the demolition and asbestos abatement phase was over, the structure looked like a parking garage.

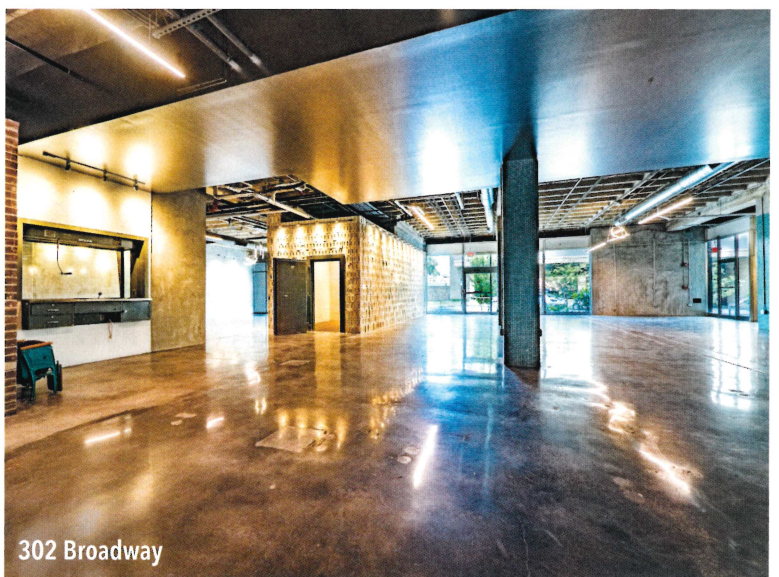
But a great deal of thought went into the conversion of the building. For instance, there were three phases of structural engineering. Many fantastic



302 Broadway



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