

*Punch*List

Jim Abdo gets real
with redevelopment.



MATTHEW HOUSTON

Old bricks, new mortar

IT'S NO SECRET THAT LOFTS, with their industrial edge and historic, exposed brick, are still as trendy as the latest razor-thin, video-streaming iPod. But how do you create that lofty edge in an urban area bereft of historic warehouses?

If you're Jim Abdo, you recycle.

Abdo is removing thousands of bricks

from his Children's Museum project in D.C. and trucking them to Arlington for use in two loft projects. They first get a refreshing acid-wash in Abdo's Northeast D.C. warehouse.

The 130- and 140-year-old bricks will wrap interior columns and adorn support walls in all 87 units in the Wooster and Mercer Lofts, between Rosslyn and Court House. Most of the bricks came from interior

walls and additions at the Children's Museum building on H Street Northeast. It's an expensive exercise, although Abdo hasn't tallied up the additional costs. The bricks will add an element of historic detail to an otherwise "crisp and clean loft space" featuring 10- to 22-foot high ceilings, Abdo says.

"You can do what you can to try to mimic 130-, 140-year-old brick," says Abdo. "But unless you use the real thing, it just isn't the same."