

CONDO CORNER



Back to School

After sitting vacant for 20 year, the Bryan school is converted into lofts

By Tracey Gold Bennett
Special to the Examiner

Anyone who has toured an old school may have looked longingly at the vast stretches of windows, large rooms, warm wooden floors and thought what a great place it would be to live.

Now you have the chance.

Originally built in 1909, the old Bryan School is located at 1315 Independence Avenue, S.E. on Capitol Hill. The massive 40,000-square-foot red brick structure sat vacant for 20 years until Abdo Development restored its facade in 2004 and re-fashioned the classrooms into twenty whimsical, yet down-to-earth loft units.

"Jim Abdo is a master of adaptive

reuse" said Ryall Smith, of Coldwell Banker residential brokerage group Grant, Ryall & Andrew. He loved Abdo's use of space and design so much that he was one of the first to buy in the building.

The building, part of the Bryan Square development that features more traditional Capitol Hill townhomes, is a touch of New York on the Hill. In a word — impressive.

Rhona Caracappa and her husband were living in an Abdo building when they got word of the Bryan School Loft project. They were the first to move in.

"We love the convenience, living near Lincoln Park, being able to walk to Eastern Market, having something to do on Saturdays that won't cost anything," she said. The couple recently became parents of a new baby and their unit is on the market for \$1.035 million.

The available unit is 1,965 square feet of luxury. Upon entry, the first thing one notices is the grand scale of this condominium. With 13-foot ceilings and 10-foot tall windows, it seems

more like a house than apartment.

The great room dimensions are 32 by 32 feet, its size achieved by steel beams that do the job of previously load-bearing walls. A brick wall separates the galley-style kitchen from the living room. The kitchen is outfitted with top-of-the-line, stainless steel Viking appliances, including a hooded range and double refrigerator. Granite counters and a wet bar are just some of the special amenities that set the standard for the condo. Richly hued cherry wood floors run throughout the home.

Inside this modern "Tribeca" styled unit, it's obvious that Abdo paid homage to the past. A 100-year-old bathtub with antique fixtures is as much fashionable as it is utilitarian. A separate glass shower is also featured but perhaps the most special part of the bathroom is the glass wall that separates the hallway from the tub area. Abdo created the wall because he wanted residents to be able to have a view from the unit's 10 foot windows while they were bathing.



AT A GLANCE

» Property: Bryan School Lofts, a New York-style condominium housed in a refashioned public school building on Capitol Hill

» Price: \$1.035 million, \$400 condo fee

» Description: A two-bedroom 1965-square-foot unit with video security system, private garage space and outdoor space, 10-foot windows and 13-foot-high ceilings

» Contact: Ryall Smith, Grant, Ryall & Andrew of Coldwell Banker, 202-547-3525