

# CAPITOL FILE



# what's old is new again

DEVELOPERS AND DESIGNERS' LATEST FIXATION:  
RECLAIMED BUILDING MATERIALS BY AMY ROSE DOBSON

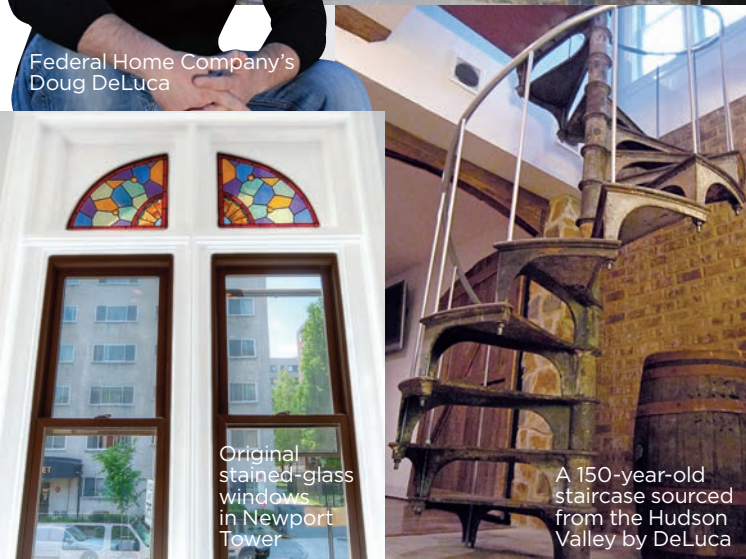
Take a quick survey of Washington's skyline, sprouting dozens of construction cranes, and it's clear that the DC market is on the upswing. Within the industry, a trend we are seeing more of this year is a focus on using and adapting reclaimed building materials. Old fireplaces, original flooring, and hand-carved mantels are all finding second life in some of DC's newest buildings, whether they are used structurally or as a decorative finish.

**AT THE RECENTLY** completed Newport Tower (1120 Rhode Island Ave. NW, 202-670-1360; lock7development.com) in Logan Circle, Lock 7 Development transformed an old mansion into eight luxury condos while retaining as many parts of the grand old residence as possible. "All of the stained glass was sent to a special fabricator in Baltimore to be restored, including replacing broken pieces in the glass," explains Dave Gorman, a lead developer from Lock 7. "The original heart-pine floor was reinstalled and refinished. One hundred and twenty years ago, they used handmade nails to install the flooring, which are large and not very straight. As a result, each one has to be pulled out by hand when you remove the floor. Also, the holes leave voids that need to be filled in order to have a uniform floor."

**FEDERAL HOME** Company is another local construction firm that specializes in working with previously used materials, sometimes sourcing them from other parts of the country. "For a recent project, we traveled to the Hudson Valley to select a 150-year-old staircase that was reconfigured for a farmhouse," explains company cofounder Doug DeLuca. "Another time



A Hudson Valley farmhouse mined by DC's Federal Home Company



Federal Home Company's Doug DeLuca

Original stained-glass windows in Newport Tower

A 150-year-old staircase sourced from the Hudson Valley by DeLuca



Pearl Dive Oyster Palace uses repurposed floor joists in its décor.

we needed six glass doors that were 11 feet high, and we found them in Los Angeles. These forgotten doors live again and bring out the best in the space."

**THE USE OF RECLAIMED** materials extends beyond the residential sector. In Logan Circle, Pearl Dive Oyster Palace (1612 14th St. NW, 202-319-1612; pearl-divedc.com) and BlackJack (1612 14th St. NW, 202-986-5225; black-jackdc.com), two of five Black Restaurant Group concepts, showcase reclaimed materials. According to Allison Cooke, lead designer on the project, from Core, the architecture and design firm responsible for the restaurants' milieu, old floor joists were repurposed as custom tables, and instead of repairing the plaster walls, muralists integrated the disparate patches into their artwork. Previously a showroom for Model T cars, the space is now separated into two dining spaces with distinctive atmospheres.

**IT TAKES MORE WORK** to salvage and repurpose building materials, but items such as old, handcrafted woodwork and stonework are often sturdier and of a higher quality than more readily available modern products, which makes integrating these pieces into a contemporary project worth any potential hassle. As Gorman says, "We've come across mantels in houses that would take weeks to recreate, even using modern technology. The original beams in some of these houses are so large, I can't even imagine how they got them into the building." **CF**