

## Strongly in favor of the Daniels proposal at Saint Edward State Park | Letter



**February 8, 2016** - I am very strongly in favor of the Daniels proposal to renovate the seminary building in Saint Edward State Park in Kenmore.

I have been a citizen of Kenmore since 1974 and am a regular user of the trails and other amenities of Saint Edward State Park. I am an avid mountain hiker and find the Saint Edward Park trails a tremendous year-round asset for use when mountain hiking is not possible. One of the great thrills of hiking the Saint Edward Park trails is seeing that beautiful seminary building after coming up the trails from the lake.

It is not even remotely possible that the seminary building can be renovated by any public agency or non-profit type entity – there is just not enough money. It can only be accomplished through the private sector. Today I cannot even go into the building. The public has no access to the building due to its decaying condition; with the rehabilitation, the public will have access.

When McMEnamin's proposed to renovate the seminary, I was ecstatic, because I was aware of the numerous historic preservation activities they had previously accomplished. They were the perfect people to preserve the seminary. But what happened? Those making the decision listened way too much to older, tired voices in the community and nixed the development. So what did McMEnamin's do? They did what could have been done to the seminary building instead to the historic Anderson School in Bothell. That development now is in many ways the proud centerpiece of Bothell's active downtown development.

I am dismayed by the voices of what I would term "old Kenmore" complaining that the proposed development somehow would spoil the serenity of the Park. There will be no reduction in the area of the Park nor will any of the great trails be affected. If anything, they will be enhanced and the public's wild sanctuary will be preserved. Any argument suggesting otherwise is just pure nonsense! Concerning traffic, that is a lame argument with the already greatly increased traffic from Bastyr University.

Mainly, this issue is about the building. Its deterioration is severe and, if the Daniels proposal is treated like the McMenamín proposal, the building will surely fail. What will we tell our grandchildren when they see that we failed to preserve one of the most iconoclastic buildings in the entire region? This, after we had not one, but two chances to avert such a failure. Not to mention the public costs to tear the building down.

To the city of Kenmore and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, I would suggest that you remember the proverb "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." Rarely is there the opportunity to atone for a mistake the proportion of the McMenamín's rejection; the Daniels proposal can save face for a mistaken decision and provide us, the public, with an everlasting beautiful building and wild sanctuary for our use.

Sincerely,

*Charles L. Steele, Kenmore*