



Eastside

Old seminary to become new hotel: Deal OK'd for St. Edward State Park in Kenmore



Originally published January 9, 2017 at 10:42 am Updated January 9, 2017 at 7:45 pm



1 of 2 The former seminary at St. Edward State Park in Kenmore will become a hotel and restaurant under a deal approved Monday by the Washington State Parks Commission. (Dean Rutz/The Seattle Times)

One state parks commissioner called the deal with Seattle developer Kevin Daniels “an outstanding proposal” that will restore the crumbling seminary building in Kenmore to federal historic standards.



By [Lynn Thompson](#) 

Seattle Times staff reporter

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously Monday to approve [plans to restore the historic seminary building](#) at Saint Edward State Park in Kenmore for use as a lodge-style hotel.

Commissioner Mark Brown of Lacey called the deal with Seattle developer Kevin Daniels “an outstanding proposal” that will restore the [badly deteriorated 1930s seminary building](#), a Romanesque Revival landmark that is on the National Register of Historic Places.

“I want to save the seminary building. It’s not just a building; it’s the heart of Saint Edward State Park,” Brown said.

The decision was a disappointment to some neighbors and other frequent users who wanted the 316-acre park on the shores of Lake Washington in Kenmore to remain a peaceful refuge in an increasingly urbanized region.

“The public is losing a tranquil place,” said Ann Hurst, a Kenmore resident who nominated the building for the historic register. A [petition to oppose commercial development in the park](#) drew about 3,000 signatures.

The city of Kenmore must still sign off on Daniels’ development plans and will likely

make a final decision in spring.

The commission's approval of the hotel plan came after about two years of study, public comment and meetings around the state. The agreement authorizes a 62-year lease with [Daniels Real Estate](#), which specializes in historic renovations, and covers 5.5 acres of the park, including the seminary building and immediately surrounding grounds.

Commission Chair Steve Milner, of Chelan, said restoration of the seminary building into a lodge, restaurant, spa and conference facilities, will attract new visitors and serve as a gateway to other parks and recreation opportunities in the state.

The commission approved amendments to the lease that give parks' officials the right to approve any significant additions or alterations to the seminary building once the restoration is completed. It also approved parking fees for restaurant customers, not just overnight guests.

Under the agreement, Daniels will purchase and deed to state parks a 10-acre piece of undeveloped Lake Washington waterfront immediately north of the park.

Commissioners said the additional property will add to the recreation experience available at Saint Edward.

Commissioners praised Daniels for his willingness to take on what's likely to be a \$45 million restoration project and to agree to a lease that would retain state ownership of the building in perpetuity.

State Parks purchased the seminary and grounds from the Seattle Archdiocese for \$7 million in 1977. In 2014, following deep cuts to its budget, the Parks Commission concluded that it didn't have the estimated \$14 million to \$16 million needed just to address deferred maintenance and bring the seminary building up to seismic and safety codes.

The city of Kenmore will hold a public hearing on Daniels' proposal and the site plan for the property at 1 p.m. Feb. 14 at Kenmore City Hall. The city also extended the appeal period on the Final Environmental Impact Statement until Jan. 20 [because Parks delayed its final decision](#) from Thursday to Monday.