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NEWS

## State parks commission extends deadline, a look inside Saint Edward seminary building



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Kenmore has a building with history, heritage and classic elegance - the Saint Edward Seminary.

“It’s one of the iconic buildings in all of the metropolitan Seattle area done by probably the top architect in the first half of that century, John Graham Senior. He did the Bon Marche building, the Nordstrom building; he’s got a bigger legacy than his son [who did the Space Needle],” said Daniels Real Estate firm President Kevin Daniels.

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has unanimously approved extending the submittal deadline for proposals to rehabilitate the building. The action taken by the commission at its Sept. 10 regular meeting sets a new deadline of Sept. 30, 2016, to allow time for Daniels Real Estate, or other interested parties, to present viable proposals for rehabilitating the building. If no viable plan is in place by the deadline, the Commission

could move to vacate the historic seminary. Daniels Real Estate is the only business with a plan. That plan triggered the commission's decision.

However, the building is currently a disaster, but Daniels wants to step in and revive this relic from time past. He recently gave the Reporter a tour of the iconic Kenmore structure.

The building's past is almost as interesting as its architecture. Plans for the building started in the 1920s, but the Great Depression forced developers to scale back their plans. According to Daniels, the building was funded by Bishop Edward John O'Dea's personal inheritance. O'Dea donated the money needed to build the seminary to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.

"This is big time when it comes to architecture. A Romanist revival was in at the time when the church was trying to modernize, if you can believe it, they still wanted that Romanesque building, but wanted it to be modern," Daniels said. "We have to weigh it with the context of what's around us. We have a very cool oasis in the urban setting, right here, and we don't want to do anything that takes away from that experience. We want to do something that adds to it."

As far as the local Seattle Archdiocese, they spared no expense on the seminary building.

The bathrooms have Alaskan marble stalls, the lockers had heating, the cornices and crown molding are still the original pieces, along with the original ice-block refrigerators are still in the basement. Each of the art-deco-styled clocks on each floor are magnetically synchronized, ensuring accurate time at any time of day - when they're on - and even the art-deco exit signs match the clocks.

"What you see is what you get. We will bring it back. You have original mahogany, that's solid mahogany, you have pieces and designs and lights that have been preserved for many years," Daniels said. "The whole idea of preservation is to remember where we were and bring it forward, and make it more modern. To the best we can, we will reuse everything."

Even the non-original front door would be taken out and one more fitting of the building's period will be installed if Daniels gets the opportunity.

"This building is a magnificent building and is actually in a lot better shape than projects I've worked on before," said Trevina Wang, project manager at Daniels Real Estate. "I think what we need to do is to keep the original features the building has, we will try to preserve as much as possible; we want to breathe life back into this."

According to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Department website, the building was named after Edward the Confessor, founder of the Westminster Abbey and king of the West Saxons of England from 1043 to 1066 C.E., and the cornerstone for the building was laid on the Feast of Saint Edward, Oct. 13, 1930.

In 1931, the halls started filling with priests of the Sulpician Order, a teaching arm of the Catholic Church. Less than five years later, the seminary became a major hub for college-level teaching of Catholic priests and, in 1939, the first class of 12 men were ordained.

By the 1950s, other area seminaries were opening and Saint Edward was beginning to empty of its denizens. By 1978, there was no need for the archdiocese to keep the building, so it sold the buildings and the surrounding 316 acres to the State of Washington to use as a park.

As the seminaries enrollees climbed, additions were made, including the Carole Ann Wald Swimming Pool in 1969. The pool was opened to the public until it was closed in 2009 due to lack of funding.

Every detail of the 1920s and '30s has been frozen in time and preserved by the building being on the National Register of Historic Places, which the citizens helped it attain in 2006.

"There's a lot of stories to be told and I think our success on our other projects has been to bring the public into that, let them understand, let them contribute, and then tell that story," Daniels said. "Not only for us, but for people who are here 50 or 100 years after us."

The main dining hall has been used for wedding receptions and the grotto for ceremonies of many kinds, but - by and large - the building has been left to decay with time. A few years back, the basement suffered major water damage and it has never been fixed.

"We need to do some seismic work, some upgrading of all the mechanical, electrical and plumbing of the building in order to make the building functional again, and hopefully have the next 50 to 100 years of functionality," Wang said. "The common challenges we face is trying to incorporate a lot of the sustainable features into a historic building, because it's a historic building first. We intend to put in as many sustainable features for this building as we feasibly can, however we are retaining all of the historic features the building has; trying to make them work together."

According to Daniels, the school could cost up to \$60 million to not only fix the building to be useable, but also to renovate it for the new use. The largest portion of the budget Daniels and Wang believe would go into simply upgrading the plumbing, electrical and other

infrastructure items. The amount of money is out of the price range Washington State Parks Department.

The plan, currently a rough concept, is to keep the spirit of the original seminary design and modernize it for use as a publicly open lodge, similar to what is found at Yellowstone, Yosemite and Rainier National Parks.

The restaurant in the main dining hall would be open to guests, along with a bar in the old library. Citizens of Kenmore would be able to walk the same squared tiles as the priests in training in years past.

More than being a place for park-goers to refresh themselves after a long walk or run in the woods, the renovations would provide greater security for park goers as there would be security on hand for those who use the lodge, whether staying the night or visiting the park for the day.

“When people walk into a lodge, like if you’re at Paradise at Rainier, when you walk in, you get a certain feeling about the era it was built in. This was built in ‘27 to ‘30, and used until the ‘70s, so what stories can you tell?” Daniels said. “We’ll do a lot of research in the archives; I already have Father Ryan doing that right now.”

According to Daniels, the Reverend Father Ryan was trained at the Saint Edward Seminary and was the vicar to the archbishop in position when the seminary was sold in the ‘70s.

While the history of the Saint Edward Seminary building is deeply ingrained with the local Seattle area, the building’s future is still largely up in the air.