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State to study uses for Saint Edward Seminary

By JOURNAL STAFF



Courtesy Daniels Real Estate

The state will look at what to do with the 85-year-old seminary in Kenmore, and results are due July 31.

The state has approved doing a feasibility study on new uses for Saint Edward Seminary in Kenmore.

The state Department of Commerce study will look at public and nonprofit options for the 85-year-old seminary. Results will be submitted to Washington's Parks and Recreation Commission, the Governor's office and the Legislature by July 31.

The legislation gives the parks commission authority to enter into a 62-year ground lease with a private entity to reuse the seminary if the study can't find a feasible public or nonprofit use.

Daniels Real Estate has proposed reusing the seminary for a lodge-like conference center and hotel. Kevin Daniels applauded the feasibility study in a statement, saying it is "an overdue acknowledgment that the state has a legal obligation to preserve this national landmark."

Daniels' project would be similar to facilities at Yellowstone and Mount Rainier national parks, with space for community and business meetings, a gym and spa for guests and the public, and a cafe and restaurant. The plan assumes the existing gym will remain and the former pool building would not be changed until a new use is determined.

A parking lot between the buildings would be moved underground to make way for a garden or urban farm.

Daniels' plan includes swapping nearly 10 acres of undeveloped waterfront land for three buildings at the seminary.

In a press release, Daniels estimated the cost of his project would be up to \$45 million, with no taxpayer contribution.

His project team is Ron Wright & Associates, Lydig Construction, Artifacts Inc., Coughlin Porter Lundeen, and EA Engineering, Science and Technology.

Daniels Real Estate has a long history of preservation. The firm turned the Sears, Roebuck & Co. Building in Sodo into Starbucks Center and renovated Seattle's Union Station.

Daniels said the seminary must be preserved for future generations, either through his plan or as a public project.

"If recent attention results in state funding to fully renovate, fully reopen and fully reuse Saint Edward Seminary, then I would fully support any such proposal," Daniels said in a statement.

His project is similar to a plan the state had when it acquired the seminary in 1976, but there was no funding and the seminary fell into disrepair.

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