

New hotel breaks ground in Kenmore's Saint Edward Park

The old seminary building in the park will be preserved
and turned into a lodge, opening in 2020.



Kevin Daniels of Daniels Real Estate helps state park rangers shovel dirt at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. His company is restoring and renovating the seminary building in the park. Katie Metzger/staff photo

To mark a milestone in its restoration and renovation of the seminary building at Saint Edward State Park in Kenmore, Daniels Real Estate LLC held a ceremonial groundbreaking near the site on Dec. 7.

Washington State Parks and Recreation commissioners were in attendance, as well as local elected officials and project partners, from Bastyr University and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation to the city of Kenmore and the Bothell Kenmore Chamber of Commerce.



Kevin Daniels speaks to event attendees at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo

Ken Bounds, chair of the State Parks commission, and Kevin Daniels, president of Daniels Real Estate, acknowledged the many years of work and advocacy that led to the day's celebration. Daniels had to work on many levels, from neighborhood meetings to hearings in Olympia, on his plan to turn the seminary building into a hotel and spa while maintaining its historic character.

"It wasn't a simple journey, and it wasn't an easy task," Daniels said. "You may not realize how tough this was from the beginning, because it's a new idea to do something in the middle of a state park."

Bounds noted that the seminary building was "literally falling apart" and "being terribly underutilized," and State Parks had to make a choice about what to do with it. The agency is responsible for more than 700 historic structures, but is operating with less general fund revenue than it used to.

For years, Washington State Parks explored ways to save the historic Saint Edward Seminary Building. In 2013, Parks looked into public-private partnerships and in 2014, embarked on a public planning process to consider all management options. Daniels and State Parks signed a lease for the seminary and its development as a lodge in January 2017.

Daniels' plan is to preserve the iconic historic building and adapt it for modern use as an 82-room lodge with multiple public amenities. As part of the agreement, Daniels will develop space onsite for an environmental education and research center.

"Our mission is to create places that help communities thrive," Daniels said in a statement. "We are very excited to be working on the preservation and reuse of one of our state's most iconic

buildings in a park setting. The Washington State Parks Commission made sure that our agreement meets the State Parks historic preservation mission. I also want to thank the McDonald family for working with us so we could add this land to the park for all to enjoy.”

At the event, Daniels announced that Columbia Hospitality will be the hotel management company. Columbia also manages The Heathman Hotel in Kirkland, Salish Lodge and Spa in Snoqualmie and other hotels and resorts in California, Montana, Idaho, Arizona and Hawaii.



Golden shovels were available for photo opportunities at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo

“The historic preservation, and the specialness of this project, just sets it head and shoulders above a lot of other things that you get the chance to be involved in,” Yogi Hutsen, executive vice president of Columbia, told the Reporter. “We really believe this will be one of the most special places in the Puget Sound region. This will be the crown jewel of Lake Washington.” The Lodge at Saint Edward project will remodel the seminary and operate under a state-approved, 62-year lease. Daniels thanked the legislators who helped secure the lease.



Kenmore Mayor David Baker expresses his excitement for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park project. Katie Metzger/staff photo

Former 46th Legislative District Rep. Jessyn Farrell (D-Seattle) worked with Rep. Jeff Holy (R-Cheney), who attended the Seminary, to craft a bill to save the Seminary building. Holy and Sen. David Frockt (D-Seattle) were at the groundbreaking.

“We certainly appreciate everything the Legislature has done for us, in passing hopefully the first of its kind legislation, but not the last of its kind,” Daniels said. “I think this is a good model, [this] public private partnership.”

Daniels acquired the lease on the condition they acquire nearly 10 acres of land adjacent to the park and provide it to the state to add to the park. Earlier last week, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission formally accepted the transfer.

The 9.77-acre property includes 600 feet of undisturbed shoreline along Lake Washington and has significant ecological and recreational value. The property had potential for development of private, residential lakefront homes when Daniels approached the owner, offering to purchase the land. The land will add forest habitat and trail continuity at the park.

“State Parks is very excited to be moving forward on the rehabilitation of the Seminary,” said Don Hoch, agency director. “We are confident that the new use will be very popular, especially in the beautiful natural setting at Saint Edward.”

Preservation work on the building has begun. The lodge is anticipated to open in 2020. For more information on the lodge, visit www.thelodgeatstedward.com.



State legislators Jeff Holy and David Frockt pose with Kevin Daniels and Washington State Parks commissioners and staff at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo



Kenmore city staff, including City Manager Rob Karlinsey, Assistant City Manager Nancy Ousley, Police Chief Peter Horvath, smile with Kevin Daniels and Mayor David Baker at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo



Kevin Daniels poses with Bastyr University representatives, including Jeanne Galloway and Harlan Patterson, at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo



Kevin Daniels smiles with members of the Bothell Kenmore Chamber of Commerce at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lodge at Saint Edward Park on Dec. 7. Katie Metzger/staff photo