

## The Lodge at Saint Edward State Park, One of Many Projects Transforming the City of Kenmore

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*Image courtesy of Daniels Real Estate*

By [Jack Stubbs](#)

“What I like about Kenmore is that it’s an aspirational kind of community; people are really excited about what’s happening in the city and the Seminary project goes along with that. People are really proud that this kind of investment is coming here, and there’s a lot of respect for other historic resources, too,” said Nancy Ousley, assistant city manager with the city of Kenmore.

Kenmore, a city on the northern edge of Lake Washington and roughly 13 miles north of Seattle, is a city in transition: significant investment in public city infrastructure, as

well as a number of in-the-works mixed-use developments, continue to shape the downtown core and surrounding areas of the changing city.

One such development is The Lodge at Saint Edward Park project for which Daniels Real Estate was selected by the Washington State Parks Commission to lead the restoration and adaptive reuse. Daniels Real Estate is working on the adaptive reuse project with architect Ron Wright & Associates and plans to repurpose the deteriorated interior of the Seminary into a park lodge, which will ultimately include between 80 and 100 guest rooms, a conference center, meeting rooms, a wellness spa and a restaurant and café.

The development, located at 14445 Juanita Drive NE in the 316-acre Saint Edward State Park, is expected to open in 2020 and will ultimately add 9.8 acres onto the existing park through a 62-year lease. As part of the revitalization process, one of the challenges was how to preserve and restore the Romanesque Revival architecture and Art Deco interiors of the building—which is a national landmark—to current federal standards. “When we discuss challenges, I think the largest challenge was taking a building that was designed in the 1930s and making it acceptable for current-day life-safety standards, which means integrating new building systems, but also maintaining the historic integrity of the building,” Ron Wright of Ron Wright & Associates said.

The opening of the revitalized seminary in 2020 will mark the latest chapter for the project, and the team is currently waiting to receive approval on their construction permits from the National Parks Service, which is expected by the end of August 2018.

The hope is that the ongoing transformation of the project will capitalize on the long-standing historic of the structure itself, which has long served as a valuable asset in the Kenmore community, according to Kevin Daniels, president of Daniels Real Estate. “From the standpoint of Kenmore, this structure was already a key component of the Kenmore community; so bringing it back to where the public can actually access the building for the first time since the building was built was a key component of the project,” he said.

As a seminary, the building was not originally open to the public, and when it was purchased by the state in 1976, it remained shuttered for nearly 40 years. Initially, the project was intended to be an addition of the adjacent Bastyr University, but eventually the undertaking took on a life of its own, according to Daniels. “Originally, the project

was going to be an extension of Bastyr University...when that didn't work out, we had opened the door to a lot of public input to a lot of the concerns, which included the [prospect of] selling the park to private developers, and we had to adapt accordingly," he said. Daniels Real Estate released initial renderings of the Lodge at Saint Edwards in November 2017 and since conducted extensive public outreach to inform the proposal for the project.

Throughout the revitalization process, the hope was that the project would accomplish a two-part aim of both successfully restoring a historic community asset and creating a new focal point for the surrounding community, according to Daniels. "There were the normal concerns, both from those who live next to the project and from those who have a strong understanding of what it means to preserve the building," he said.

From the perspective of the surrounding Kenmore community, some initial skepticism about the viability of the undertaking eventually gave way to optimism about what the project could ultimately provide, according to Ousley. "The Seminary Building is such a historic resource, and it was in very precarious shape for a long time. Even though there had been some critics of doing much of anything with the building, there was quite a groundswell of Kenmore residents and business people who spoke up that wanted to see a good outcome," she said. As part of various community benefits, the project will include community and environmental education space and recreation opportunities; provide potential employment opportunities for students at Bastyr University and the local community; and generate payment from hotel guests for the State Parks Commission, which will go towards the continued maintenance of the St. Edwards State Park.

And just as the project will look to transform the seminary itself, the hope is that it will contribute to changes in the surrounding community, a city has been making strides over the last several years to reshape its downtown core. "We want to give residents a reason to stay here, which will push them further into the community and provide more reasons for business to continue populating downtown Kenmore," he said. "[The city] has taken steps over the last six years to try and transform their downtown and have a neighborhood. They're probably a bit behind Bothell—who's doing this on a larger scale—but they're making strong progress."

In terms of the evolution of the city of Kenmore, the city has been redoubling its efforts to create a sense of community since its inception roughly two decades ago, according to Ousley. "As far as what's been going on in Kenmore, we're a younger city, [about] 20 years old. From the beginning, the city has had very clear ambitions about downtown redevelopment and having a sense of place in the downtown area and building community," she said.

One of the main in-the-works projects is the Downtown Kenmore Redevelopment Project—which Mainstream Property Group is developing and DAHLIN Group is designing—that looks to transform 9.6 acres in the city bounded by 68th Ave. NE and NE 81st St.

The four-phase project, still in its preliminary planning stages, will include a one-story, 20,000 square foot commercial building; a mixed-use building adjacent to the LINQ Lofts & Flats that will include roughly 4,200 square feet of retail/commercial space and 19 residential units; and a restaurant/office building comprising 5,000 square feet of restaurant space and 3,000 square feet of office space.

From 1999 to 2005, the city of Kenmore purchase and assembled the various parcels for development, and in August 2015, the City Council approved a development agreement and site plan with Mainstream Property Group to redevelop the parcels. Construction on the project is scheduled to begin towards the end of 2018.

Another project that has recently contributed to changes in downtown Kenmore is the Hangar at Town Green—designed by Graham Baba Architects and HEWITT landscape architects—a 24,000 square foot project that opened in August 2017 that serves as a recreational gathering space for residents of the city.

Other public projects include the Kenmore City Hall—a project completed in 2010 that was one of the city's first projects developed with LEED certification standards that is meant to reflect the wider community's interest in sustainable development—and the new 10,000 square foot Kenmore Library designed by Weinstein AU Architects and Urban Designers, which opened in 2011.

Another in-the-works project is the LakePoint development, which is a proposal led by Weidner and Associates for a mixed-use development that will be developed in

stages across 45 acres on the edge of Lake Washington, a Master Planned project that has been undergoing review since 1998. Weidner plans to invest as much as \$1 billion in the project, which will ultimately potentially include a small waterfront amphitheater, restaurants, retail and residential units. As part of the outreach for the project, a Lakepoint Citizen Task Force met for several years and worked with the developer to participate in the implementation of the project proposal.

A couple of examples among many, projects like Lakepoint and the Lodge at Saint Edward Park are indicative of Kenmore's attempts to bridge the gap between public and private entities, thinks Ousley. "Various public developments kind of set the table for privately-sponsored redevelopment projects," she said.

In the wider context, the city of Kenmore continues to grow, with the city's population sitting around 23,000. "As far as demographics, what we know is that we're growing every year; we're just under 23,000 in population. Kenmore has also always had a pretty strong educational attainment as far as the people who live here go, and that number is increasing," she said.

Ousley thinks that one of the advantages of Kenmore is its location, which allows for a wide variety of occupational opportunities for its residents that serve to connect Kenmore with the wider region. "A lot of people come here because of the location; you don't have to pay a toll to get to different employment centers; one adult might be working in aerospace north of here; another might be working in tech in Redmond or Kirkland," she said.

In the wider regional context, however, the growth and development efforts occurring in Kenmore is not unique to that city alone, with other surrounding cities in Snohomish County also striving to create their own identities, according to Wright. "I think that there's a micro-region involved here, but Kenmore isn't doing this in isolation. Bothell is also experiencing growth, and that city is almost a micro-region with Canyon Park and a smaller tech industry that has moved away from [Seattle's] downtown core, which almost creates a more unique live-work environment," he said.