

## Developer provides sanctuary to landmark church building

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*Developer Kevin Daniels (left) and architect Ron Wright stand in the historic First Methodist Church.*

*They are working to transform the church into a restaurant connected to the \$400 million tower rising next door.*



Seattle real estate developer Kevin Daniels didn't even own the historic church building when he started working with others on ways to preserve the downtown Seattle landmark on Fifth Avenue at Marion Street.

He has come up with a solution: turn it into a restaurant that James Beard Award-winner José Andrés will operate. Andrés is the Spanish chef/owner of Think Food Group whose acclaimed creations include The Bazaar at SLS Hotels in Los Angeles and Miami. The luxury SLS brand will open on the lower floors of Daniels Real Estate's 43-story Fifth + Columbia high-rise that's under construction next to the former church. Office space will be on the top floors of the high-rise.

If there's one developer in the Northwest who could ensure preservation of the 107-year-old sanctuary building, it's Daniels. He was board chair of Historic Seattle 10 years ago when the group worked with other organizations to preserve the building. Three years later, Daniels Real Estate and Stockbridge Capital of San Francisco paid \$32 million for the sanctuary and adjacent parcel where the high-rise is going up. He operated the church as a recital hall.

Daniels and Stockbridge are working with an international team on the \$400 million Fifth + Columbia development. French designers Philippe Starck and Bruno Borriane are designing the SLS Seattle and The Bazaar in collaboration with two Seattle companies: ZGF Architects and Ron Wright & Associates Architects.

Kevin Daniels talked to the Business Journal about the project.

### **How critical is the preservation of the former church building to the success of Fifth + Columbia?**

Our full design team has decades of preservation experience in Seattle and many of them have sat on the city's Landmarks Preservation Board for years, so the proper preservation of the sanctuary building is our No. 1 concern. We believe we have finally arrived at a use that can significantly improve our neighborhood while preserving the sanctuary building.

### **Why not continue to use the sanctuary building as a church or concert hall?**

Because of the change in seismic codes, that isn't economically feasible. Even now, without the tower next door bearing most of the cost of the required repairs and improvements, the building would continue to decline quickly and need to be removed. I'd like to point out that without the patience and commitment of my partner, Stockbridge, the sanctuary building would have been demolished in 2008.

### **How will the tower open into the old church?**

We are still in the process of discussing a couple of ideas with the city landmarks board, but for the sanctuary building to work in any capacity, or for any use, we will need direct connections into the sanctuary on the south wall. We chose these areas so as to minimize the impact on the historic fabric itself because in the building's previous lifetime, these areas contained windows or doors.