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Real Estate Buzz: A breath of fresh air for Columbia Street: Daniels' The Mark will have big living wall

By NAT LEVY
Real Estate Reporter

Daniels Real Estate wants to make its mark on downtown Seattle with a 43-story office and hotel tower at Fifth and Columbia. So this week Daniels and Stockbridge Capital Group announced the tower's name: The Mark.

Two historic buildings will share the block with the new tower, showing how the past can influence the future, said Kevin Daniels of Daniels Real Estate.

The Mark is under construction and set to open in April 2017.

An SLS Hotel will be on the fifth through 15th floors, topped by 528,000 square feet of office space. The third and fourth floors will have a spa, salon and gym for hotel guests and office tenants. On the 16th floor will be meeting rooms, conference facilities, a game room, library, quiet rooms and a private club for office tenants.

The building will have 13-foot, six-inch tall floors and nine-foot, six-inch tall windows.

Daniels estimated the total cost at around \$400 million. The developer is using EB-5 money for the construction loan.



The Mark is set to open in April 2017. The 43-story tower will have an SLS Hotel topped by 528,000 square feet of office space. The living wall along Columbia will be the largest in Seattle.

The Rainier Club and First United Methodist Church will remain on the site. The church will become a restaurant connected to the hotel. Jose Andres, a well-known Spanish chef, will run the restaurant.

Today the lower levels of the church house the construction office and marketing center, but eventually they will become about 10,000 square feet of ballroom space.

Excavation is almost done, with about 15 feet to go, which should take three weeks. Six stories of underground parking will fill the hole, and Daniels said people will see steel rising by November. Topping out is set for September 2016.

Daniels said delays are not unusual during excavation because of surprises once you start digging. Crews had to dig at an angle to next to the Rainier Club, and it was impossible to know what the foundation would look like.

“We knew what was on the plans, but nobody was still around who was there when they built that,” Daniels said.

Daniels said digging near the Rainier Club was risky, but hasn't caused any problems.

Another risk came from nearby Columbia Center. Daniels and his team anticipated that building's tiebacks might infringe on The Mark's site and planned to stay about four feet away from where they thought the tiebacks were. They still hit every one of the tiebacks, Daniels said, which cost time and money.

“Besides that, and I hate to say knock on wood, it has been a simple project so far,” Daniels said. “The team out there is magnificent; they know what they are doing.”

ZGF Architects is designing the project, and JTM Construction is the general contractor. Philippe Starck is designing the hotel. Other team members are: Ron Wright, historic architect; Dakota Design, hotel consulting; Arup, structural engineer; Coughlin Porter Lundeen, civil and structural engineer; DBM Contractors, shoring; J.R. Hayes & Sons, excavation; Bush, Roed & Hitchings, survey; Deeny Construction, utilities; Conco, concrete; Canron Western Constructors, structural steel supply; The Erection Co., steel erection; Harmon Inc., curtainwall; Kone, elevators; Auburn Mechanical, plumbing; Hermanson, HVAC; and Cochran Electric, electrical.

Daniels likes to use innovative glass in his projects, as he did at Stadium Place, where windows let in some rays and reflect others to regulate temperature and energy use. Daniels said The Mark will have the same glass as One World Trade Center in New York City.

The Mark team is targeting LEED gold.

Daniels said the tower's living wall along Columbia Street will be the largest in Seattle. People will smell the plants and notice a difference in temperature as they walk by.

“We don't have the area to make a big public open space, so we have to get creative, and I think (the living wall) is one of the things I am most proud of,” Daniels said.

April 2017 is going to be a busy time for Daniels. That's when the company plans to open both The Mark and Gridiron, a seven-story addition to a 112-year-old warehouse near CenturyLink

Field. When complete, Gridiron will be 11 stories with 105 condos, 12 of which will be affordable for-sale housing.

Daniels is still going through final approvals, and wants to start construction by late summer, right around the beginning of the Seattle Seahawks' season. Gridiron will have 85 parking spaces and two retail spaces, one that makes sense as a bar and another that could be a large restaurant, Daniels said.