



SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

Exploring Affordable Housing on Campus - Vision and Background

A Strategic Vision Guided by Vestry

The Vestry has identified affordable housing as a missional initiative worthy of consideration for Saint Mark's to explore further. The continued rise in the cost of buying and renting homes in Seattle has exacerbated a housing crisis. Growth in the private market housing sector does not address the needs of those with lower incomes. More housing is needed that will remain affordable to lower-income households for the long term.

St. Nicholas Site

The St. Nicholas site includes the original St. Nicholas building, the "new" wing currently occupied by Gage, and the real estate itself. The Cathedral faces extraordinary financial challenges with the St. Nicholas building that revenue from the current tenant leases will not solve, including extensive maintenance, a new roof, and seismic and mechanical upgrades that will cost millions, plus substantial costs are necessary to remodel and modernize the building to ensure accessibility and energy efficiency. As Saint Mark's seeks the highest and best use of the St. Nicholas property, there is an opportunity to respond to the needs of a growing Seattle community through affordable housing.

Formation of Affordable Housing Exploratory (AHE) Committee

In September 2022, the Vestry charged the staff and Vestry leadership to explore and, if feasible, pursue an affordable housing project on the St. Nicholas site. This led to the formation of the AHE Committee. The first stage of the AHE Committee's work was to test the proposition that affordable housing was the highest and best mission-related use of the St. Nicholas site. In this early phase, members spoke with more than 20 organizations that were actively engaged in various aspects of affordable housing and then reached a conclusion that affordable housing was a strong mission fit and seemed likely to be feasible. The Vestry concurred in this assessment, and the AHE Committee shifted to a more formal pre-development feasibility analysis, guided by a highly skilled development consultant, Tory Laughlin Taylor.

Exploring Affordable Housing on Campus

The AHE Committee envisions multigenerational affordable housing at a variety of lower income levels on the St. Nicholas site. This central location on Capitol Hill brings opportunities for future residents to access strong schools, green space, public transit services and proximity to commercial services.

Guiding Criteria

The AHE Committee developed and the Vestry approved criteria to guide development of the project, subject to reasonable adjustment as needed. The vision of the development project would:

- Meet community need, fulfill the Cathedral's mission objectives, and be supported by the congregation.
- Fit architecturally with campus, incorporate elements of the original St. Nicholas site, and be climate impact neutral or better.
- Ensure that Saint Mark's, to the greatest extent feasible, retains control of the property permanently, meets the Cathedral's mission objectives long-term, and incurs limited financial and liability risk.
- Include a "third" place that provides opportunity for residents, parishioners, and community members to interact as part of daily life.

Connections to Mutual Ministry Goals

The mutual ministry goals of Restorative Justice and Systemic Change, Intergenerational and Innovative Community and Creation Care and Carbon Reduction are informing this process.

- *Restorative Justice and Systemic Change:* It is a foundational human need to have a secure and safe place to call home.
- *Intergenerational and Innovative Community:* Communities thrive with the opportunity and space for all ages to gather and interact.
- *Creation Care and Carbon Reduction:* Caring for and stewarding campus buildings and property to minimize carbon impact is a commitment Saint Mark's takes seriously.

Key Steps Ahead in Pre-Development Phase

The AHE Committee is working in collaboration with a development consultant, Tory Laughlin Taylor, and an architect, atelierjones, in a pre-development phase to:

- Understand how much and what type of housing can be accommodated on the site.
- Determine whether the original building on the St. Nicholas site should undergo historic rehabilitation, be preserved in part, or be demolished.¹
- Complete initial exploration and feasibility, engage parishioners and the broader community, have conversations with the City and with potential funding sources, engage legal representation, and define the priorities that should guide selection of an appropriate development partner to realize Saint Mark's vision for the project.
- Identify potential funding sources to offset pre-development costs. Saint Mark's has received a \$35,000 grant from Enterprise Community Partners and a \$100,000 grant from Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies.

There is still significant assessment and inquiry ahead. No decisions have been made. If you have questions, please email affordablehousing@saintmarks.org. Learn more at www.saintmarks.org/affordablehousing.

¹ The St. Nicholas site and original building are designated by the City of Seattle as an historic landmark, but we anticipate having the flexibility to retain, modify, or remove the St. Nicholas building(s) in furtherance of an affordable housing project despite the landmark designation. If the building were removed, we would likely preserve or replicate some architectural elements and aesthetics.