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Survey: Daniels Real Estate

Daniels is developing 800 Columbia, a 30-story tower containing mixed-income housing.

Specialty: Commercial real estate

Management: Kevin Daniels, president

Headquarters: Seattle

Founded: 2007

Projects: Stadium Place Phase III, Seattle; Gridiron, Seattle; 800 Columbia, downtown Seattle; The Mirador, downtown Bellevue; The Mark, downtown Seattle

Kevin Daniels is one of the busiest developers in Seattle. He has played an important role in the resurgence of Pioneer Square, and he is working on projects in Bellevue and on First Hill. He sat down with the DJC to discuss his views on development in Seattle, trends in sustainability and other topics.

Q: What trends in sustainable design do you like and dislike?

A: I see a lot of focus on technology and energy code tightening, but not a lot of creative thinking at the moment. The movement needs more visionaries who push creativity and ingenuity. I think it is important that the finished product is some place that people want to live or work in, and I have concerns about the impact on quality of life with recent energy code changes. I would like to see a broader, more creative and less prescriptive approach to allow the market to meet goals rather than continuing to tighten various energy codes without thinking through all of its impacts.



Q: What in the Seattle market worries you, or is there no end in sight to the boom?

A: It has been the best cycle in my career, but everything must end. Without a stronger job market in Seattle, many of the apartments being built in downtown may struggle to meet their lofty financial projections.

Q: What are the challenges of preserving historic structures in new projects?

A: Even those in sustainability have trouble understanding that sustainability needs to include preserving select buildings for a variety of reasons. The greenest building will always be the one that exists today. Can't and shouldn't save all buildings, but city officials must recognize that their most vital neighborhoods are those with historic assets and revise building codes to incentivize reusing those buildings.

Q: What is your take on all the office development in south downtown?

A: The midtown office market is far and away the largest office submarket in the region. As such it will remain the choice of most office tenants for years to come because of that supply alone. Like in past cycles if everything that is proposed is built, then it will be a tenant's market and those who are late to the market will suffer when the cycle ends.

Q: What does Pioneer Square need to keep the positive momentum rolling?

A: No question its biggest need is for-sale housing, and the city needs to recognize that fact and help modify laws in Olympia to make it happen. A neighborhood that only has transitory housing will not be healthy in the long-term.