

An unprecedented return engagement

UW Dept. of Architecture's Storefront Studio back in Roslyn

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A visitor center and a gateway beautification project will be added to Roslyn's city landscape when the University of Washington's Storefront Studio program returns for an unprecedented return engage in the spring of 2010.

"It was a very positive experience for my students, me and the community," said Department of Architecture professor, Jim Nicholls about Storefront Studio's first engagement in Roslyn earlier this year.

At that time Nicholls and a team of 12 undergraduate architecture students held several open house weekends inviting community members to drop in to their temporary Roslyn 'storefront' and talk about the city's unique history as well as share their ideas for its future.

Out of those interactions came a list of proposed projects for heightening Roslyn's street character, increasing opportunities for community interaction, defining pathways and sites of historical significance and adding additional lodging.

That first storefront experience was really about ideas. Ideas like bringing back the historic corner stairs in front of the Northwest Improvement Company building, cre-

ating a community garden behind the old Roslyn School, and laying down, in paint, symbolic train tracks defining the Coal Mines Trail as it runs down city streets.

That's what Storefront Studio does; leave behind a catalog of professionally designed ideas they hope will inspire a community.

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THESE TRACKS TO ROSLYN'S FUTURE – created by University of Washington Storefront Studio students last summer identify the Coal Mines Trail as it runs down city streets. The partnership between Roslyn and Storefront Studio created a learning environment for students and a well-defined path to the future for Roslyn.

Photo courtesy of Storefront Studio

STOREFRONT STUDIO...

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But this time, in a departure from the program's six-year history and many previous projects, the inspiration worked both ways. Nicholls, equally inspired by Roslyn, approached the Downtown Association recently about a return engagement with the intent of seeing some of these projects take shape.

Nicholls' idea is to build a more long-term relationship between Storefront Studio and Roslyn, beginning with the program's return next spring.

At a meeting with Roslyn Downtown Association (RDA) and mayor Jeri Porter on Oct. 17, Nicholls said he would like to hear what, among the proposed plans, the community would like to see come to fruition.

Thoughts and impressions were tossed around at that meeting, and with community members, resulting in RDA voting to move ahead with plans for the visitor center and gateway beautification projects.

Those two projects are designed to let visitors know they've arrived in Roslyn and

to begin to tell the history of the community.

"Just let us know what you need," mayor Porter told Nicholls at the October meeting, voicing her support for the continuing partnership between Roslyn and Storefront Studio.

"This has been a really positive experience," said RDA president, Jennifer Basterrechea. "Storefront Studio became a really nice catalyst for open dialogue with different groups in Roslyn."

Nicholls sees that continuing. He sees Storefront Studio as neutral territory where all groups in the community can share ideas and work toward projects. "I see this going on for years," he said.

"This community has the potential to be a really good learning environment for the university," he added, stating he hoped to bring other departments into the mix.

So in the spring, Storefront Studio will return with a whole new batch of students who will hold weekend open houses as the program did earlier this year.

"These new students won't



STOREFRONT STUDIO will return to Roslyn for a second engagement in spring 2010 with this proposed Visitor Center as one of the projects university students plan to see completed by the end of the summer.

Photo illustration courtesy of Storefront Studio

know Roslyn," said Nicholls. "We need community people to come in again, and tell them why they love it."

The community will see students setting up shop, at a different location in the downtown sometime in mid-March. By June, with community input, project development plans should be finalized and ready for city review and approval. The goal is to have the visitor center and

gateway beautification projects completed by the end of the summer.

Basterrechea said funds from the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program* would help pay for the projects. Also, RDA has applied for Hotel/Motel tax funding and will pursue appropriate grants.

A visual catalog of what could be in store for Roslyn, with the implementation of

these and other projects designed by Storefront Studio, can be seen in the program's accompanying book, *Roslyn, WA storefront studio, spring 2009*. (Copies are available from RDA, 509-649-3650.) In the book, Nicholls thanks Roslyn and RDA for their support.

"The entire town has supported our work throughout the process," Nicholls stated. "They have given us constant encouragement, praise and criticism when it was due. We do sincerely appreciate the support and admire the love

demonstrated by the community of Roslyn."

* Through the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program businesses designate RDA as the recipient of their donation and in the following tax year, they receive 75 percent of approved contributions as a B & O tax credit. It's a way to keep local dollars working for the local community, and provides a significant tax saving for businesses. Businesses can take advantage of this opportunity now, as the end of the year approaches, and be eligible for the tax credit in the new year. More information available from RDA, 509-649-3650.