

Storefront Studio returns to Roslyn this spring

by Lyn Derrick

tribune@nkctribune.com

ROSLYN – The partnership between the University of Washington's Storefront Studio and the community of Roslyn extends to an unprecedented third year this spring, accentuating the city's renaissance as a historically significant community with potential for the future.

Storefront Studio is an experiential learning program within the university's architecture department, which is enjoying its eighth successful year.

It invests the “academic capital” of the university with the “social capital” of local communities. The objective is to strengthen connections between community members and their town, while providing a foundation for economic growth.

Led by Professor Jim Nicholls of the University of Washington's College of Architecture and Urban Planning, 14

students will begin meeting with interested community members at their kick-off open house on Saturday, April 1 at 6 pm. The Studio's location is at the N.W.I. Building.

“We're coming back because the interaction between the community and the architecture students has been overwhelmingly positive and productive in both previous years,” said Nicholls.

The difference this time around is – they already have a list of possible projects to tackle, generated by students and the community in the two previous years.

Nicholls says the project line up includes:

1. *N.W.I. Building* – reuse proposals.

2. *Postmaster Sylvia's House* – measured drawings and reuse proposals.

3. *The Visitor Center* – room layout, including displays addressing the community's

history, present and future.

4. *A City Hall Map* – design and fabrication.

5. *A Community Recycling Center* – design and implementation study.

The Studio's location at the N.W.I Building underscores the focus that site is receiving in this year's Roslyn Renaissance effort. The building has about 12,600 square feet of retail space, 3,500 square feet of office space and 1,350 square feet of storage space.

Students and community members will be asked: What is the best way to use this space?

Proposals include enhancing the building's recently opened Visitor Center (in space leased by the Roslyn Downtown Association) and setting up a museum. It's already been used for arts and craft shows as well as other community events.

“We'll look at different ways to maximize the potential for the building,” said Nicholls, “to create economic development opportunities for the community and create a focus for both local employment and visitor activity.

“A big part of our study will respect the history of the building, while creating important visibility into its spaces with easy access to a potential variety of uses – which then can contribute to an active downtown pedestrian street life.

“In the Visitor Center section the students want to help mount an exhibit that tells something about Roslyn's past, but also shows how it is today,

while pointing out possible visions for the future.”

Nicholls said he hoped the community would pay special attention to the second open house to be held during Roslyn's monthly Art Walk, Friday, April 29 – extending into Saturday, April 30. It's a chance to see displays of the student's preliminary work and proposals.

Then on Friday and Saturday, May 13-14, proposed enhancements and improvements will be presented – with the final presentation on Friday, May 27. The book Storefront Studio produces outlining their projects, which includes photos and drawings, is slated for release on June 6.

“They'll be building on the great body of work produced in the first two years,” said Roslyn Downtown Association's Jenny Aurit about Storefront Studio's return and ongoing contribution to Roslyn's renaissance. RDA provides financial support and arranges for the students' local board and lodging while they're in town.

“I'm particularly proud of how our community receives these students with open arms,” she added. “I think that's a big part of why the program is returning for the third time – three times out of the eight years they've been doing this – that says something.”

If you'd like a reminder of the type of work produced in previous years, or as a means of preparing for this year's Storefront Studio sessions, visit www.storefrontstudio.org.