A Stewardship Initiative for the

BELLINGHAM NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
## Table of Contents

**Introduction – Purpose and Goal of project**

**Market Overview**
- City of Bellingham
- Armory Neighborhood

**Site Characterization**
- The Neighborhood
- Parking
- History/Historical Registration
- Zoning and Development
- Environmental Remediation
- Structure

**Information Required**
- Guidelines for Submittal
- Solicitation Process

**Miscellaneous**
- About Western Washington University
- About Western Washington University Foundation
Since its inception in 1893, Western Washington University (“WWU”) has exercised strong stewardship of the buildings and grounds entrusted to it by the people of the State of Washington. Consistent with that stewardship is the goal to ensure that historical structures under its care are maintained in a manner that will enable future generations to have the benefit of these facilities. In pursuit of that goal, WWU through the Western Washington University Foundation (“WWU Foundation”) is seeking a partner to develop the Bellingham National Guard Armory (“Armory”) for the benefit of the community and to preserve the historic architectural aspects of the structure for the future. WWU and WWU Foundation envision a public/private partnership with WWU Foundation providing exclusive use of the site for a specified number of years. The private partner will develop the site for use by commercial/public entities that can provide a steady funding stream to pay for the costs entailed in the development and operation of the site. The structure of a commercial transaction is negotiable for all options for ownership and partnership being duly considered. WWU will be actively involved in the formulation of the project and selection of the developer to ensure that the future use of the Armory is consistent with the University’s goals, values and is of benefit to the community.
CITY OF BELLINGHAM

The City of Bellingham (population 81,000) is located approximately 90 miles north of Seattle and 50 miles south of Vancouver, BC, Canada in Whatcom County, a metro area with a population of just over 200,000 people and adjacent to the lower BC metro area of over 3,000,000 people. Bellingham is the commercial, cultural, entertainment, and recreation center for the metro area. Bordered by the Puget Sound waters of Bellingham Bay, marked by dramatic hills and dotted by three lakes, Bellingham is a phenomenally beautiful place in which to live and work. Bellingham is acclaimed for its small-city flavor, easy access to outdoor opportunities in the San Juan Islands and North Cascades Mountains, its deep commitment to environmental sustainability and innovation, its diverse and strong local economy, and its overall quality of life. See [http://www.bellingham.org/](http://www.bellingham.org/)

Employment Sectors

Rather than relying on a few key industries, the county's economy is a healthy balance of longstanding employment in oil and aluminum refining, fishing and farming as well as emerging technologies and diverse small businesses. The five largest industry sectors in Bellingham’s Urban Growth Area are Retail Trade (16%), Health Care & Social Assistance (16%), Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation and Food Services (11%), Manufacturing (9%) and Educational Services (8%). The Education Services Sector is especially vibrant with four institutions of higher education (WWU, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and the Northwest Indian College.)

While the top 20 employers account for one (1) out of every four (4) jobs, it is important to note that nearly 60% of businesses are comprised of companies with a workforce of four (4) or fewer employees. As of 2012, the total non-farm workforce for the metro area consists of 82,270 jobs, 30% of which are in office-demanding sectors. The workforce has grown by an average of 1.4% annually in the trailing 10 years for all non-farm industry sectors and 1.2% for office-demanding sectors. The metro area currently consists of 5,700,000 square feet of office space and has absorbed 75,000 – 100,000 square feet annually over the past 10 years.

International Influence

Bellingham's proximity to lower British Columbia’s metro area (population 3,000,000) is a major economic driver both in terms of Canadian consumer expenditures and Canadian companies’ desire to have operations on the U.S. side of the border.

Higher Education

Bellingham is home to WWU, the third largest public university in the state and the region’s second largest employer. Additional higher education institutions include the Northwest Indian College, Whatcom Community College, and the Bellingham Technical College.

Demographics

The large student population (WWU: 15,000 students) strongly influences the household characteristics in Bellingham. The City’s residents are well-educated compared to regional and state averages. Almost 40% of City residents had attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 31% statewide. Of Bellingham's 35,000 households, 53% are of non-family status, and 54% are renters. Comparatively, only 28% of the metro households outside the City are of non-family status and only 2% are renters.

Transportation Linkages

The Armory is located just a few minutes from Interstate 5 (“I-5”) and is close to Downtown Bellingham, WWU, and the historic Fairhaven District. The armory is located on State Street, which provides close access to Boulevard Avenue that is the main arterial connection between city centers of Bellingham and Fairhaven. State Street itself is 38 feet wide, allows for vehicle parking on both sides of the street, and is lined with residential and commercial structures. Bellingham offers a thriving local airport with four (4) commercial airlines serving ten (10) non-stop flight destinations, including Las Vegas, Palm Springs, Phoenix, San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, Honolulu, and Maui. Its commercial air terminal is in the second phase of a $38.5 million expansion, attracting more than 1,000,000 passengers in 2011. The airport also provides corporate and general aviation facilities. Bellingham also offers regular Amtrak service and is the southern terminus and only mainland terminal for the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system.
ARMORY NEIGHBORHOOD

Location
The Armory is located in the Sehome Neighborhood of the City of Bellingham on North State Street approximately one mile south of the downtown area, one mile from the center of the waterfront redevelopment area and 1.7 miles north of the Fairhaven urban area. The Armory is located adjacent to the Pine Street pedestrian corridor, which serves as a direct pathway from WWU to the Bellingham waterfront.

Demographics
The neighborhood in the vicinity of the Armory is composed primarily of single-family and multi-family residences. Approximately 90% of the neighborhood is developed and the population density is among the highest in the City. Given the proximity to WWU and downtown, the neighborhood is home to many students and young working adults as well as upper income families. The neighborhood households mirror that of Bellingham with roughly 54% as renters.

Services
Despite its ideal location close to WWU and downtown Bellingham, local neighborhood services are almost non-existent. (There is one upscale restaurant on North State Street.)
THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The eclectic character of the neighborhood around the Armory grew out of the early mining, logging, speculation and institutional interests and marks the human activities that have occurred over the last 150+ years. The distinctive character of the neighborhood is defined by its setting, views of natural features, and numerous historic buildings. The neighborhood offers excellent views of the city and the Canadian mountain range to the north, Bellingham Bay to the west and Mount Baker to the east. Most residential areas have mature landscaping and there are several tree-lined arterials in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has evolved over time and presently has a diverse collection of building types, styles, ages and sizes. The neighborhood’s variety of historic houses range from high style Victorian-era mansions to middle-class Craftsman-style bungalows and modest cottages of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many historically significant religious, commercial, and multifamily apartment buildings remain in the neighborhood. Residential buildings are a mix of single- and multi-family forms, most over 50 years of age, and as such, many are eligible for listing in the Local, State and / or National Historic Registers. Four buildings are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the 1890 Donovan House (1201 N. Garden Street); the 1895 Morse House (1014 N. Garden Street); the 1915 YWCA Building (1026 N. Forest Street); and the 1903 Hotel Laube (1226 North State Street). The Sehome Hill National Historic District was listed in the National Register in 2001 and includes 153 contributing properties within its boundaries. The Montague House (1030 N. Garden Street) is listed on the Washington State Heritage Register and the First Church of Christ Scientists (1027 N. Forest Street) is listed on the Local Bellingham Historic Register. In addition, the neighborhood has a commercial presence with the popular Cliff House restaurant and a vibrant VFW club located within short walking distance of the armory. Sehome’s density is due in part to small platted 55’ x 125’ lots and the zoning of much of the neighborhood as high-density multi-unit housing as well as the conversion of many large older houses near WWU into rental houses and apartments. Many single-family housing forms remain in multi-family zoned areas and have been rented as apartments.

PARKING

Parking adjacent to the armory itself is limited to stalls. However, removal of the armory maintenance facility, which is located adjacent to the south side of the armory, creates a lot that is 128 ft. by 52 ft. for additional on-site parking. That parcel is a candidate for a potential parking structure, one which could be capped with additional development opportunities. Limited street parking is available on both sides of State Street, but would have to be accepted by the surrounding neighborhood.

HISTORY/HISTORICAL REGISTRATION

Built in 1910, the heavy masonry walls, crenellated parapet and rounded towers distinguish the building as a site for military training. Both National Guard and Army Reserve used the facility until 1953. During the period 1953-1989, the main-floor was used as a roller rink. Water damage forced closure of the roller rink in 1989. Many local residents still recall very fond memories of afternoons/evenings spent at the Rolladium. In 1972, WWU acquired the property from the National Guard for $1.00. In addition to allowing the rink to remain until 1989, the University used the structure to house the Theatre Arts Department Prop & Scene Shop (1973 – 2008), Costume Shop (early 90s – 2005), and surplus storage (1972 – present). In May 2006, the Armory was included in Washington Trust for Historic Preservation Watch List – for Most Endangered Historic Properties. Federal Registration is pending for the armory building only; the adjacent maintenance facility is not included.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT

The immediate area around the Armory is a relatively steep hillside area facing Bellingham Bay. The area is zoned multi-family but retains a number of single-family houses, many of which are historically significant. Alternative zoning options are under consideration by the City of Bellingham. Several newer multifamily dwellings have been built along State Street and Boulevard, some of which were constructed under the guidance of the City’s Multi-family Design Guidelines. The exceptional views of Bellingham Bay and convenient access to the South Bay Trail, WWU and the downtown core have attracted more investment and.
families into the area. A number of existing single-family dwellings have been restored or rehabilitated. See http://www.cob.org/services/planning/comprehensive/index.aspx for further information on the Bellingham comprehensive plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

In 2010, the Armory’s outside envelope was restored and the interior mold, mildew, lead dust, and asbestos was substantially mitigated in order to preserve the structure for potential redevelopment and repurposing. In addition, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and a Limited Hazardous Building Material Screening were conducted on the site in June of 2014.

STRUCTURE

The site is approximately 125’ x 470’ or 58,750 square feet and is located on the SW corner of N. State St. and E. Pine St. in Bellingham, WA. The site contains two buildings, the Armory Building and the Armory Maintenance Garage. The current parcel is co-joined from two original parcels. The northern parcel is approximately 125’x200’ and holds the actual Armory Building. The southern parcel is approximately 125’x 270’ and holds the Armory Maintenance Garage.

Armory Building

The Armory Building was constructed in 1910 for the Washington State National Guard. The building has approximately 59,660 square feet under roof. The 3-story masonry structure is faced with Chuckanut Quarry sandstone, which is in remarkably good state of preservation. The interior is wood construction with a heavy-beam, wood truss roof. Currently, there is no active water or sewer service in the building. However, municipal water utilities are available to the site. The building has power and is currently being maintained with temporary heating equipment to prevent mold and mildew. The building will require complete renovation of its power and water distribution as well as installation of HVAC. The basement was used by the University’s Theatre Arts Department for stage-prop storage and scene construction until 2008. Main floor was previously used for National Guard drills until 1953 and as a roller-rink from 1953-1989. It is currently used for University storage of office furnishings and miscellaneous properties. The second floor serves as a balcony surrounding the main floor with auxiliary rooms on the perimeter. It was used for University general storage until 2010 when it was emptied and remediated.

Structural Remediation

Wilson Engineering conducted a formal study in 2013 to determine what structurally related measures and associated costs would be required to re-purpose the building. The following conclusions are extracted from that report.

The structure is generally in excellent condition for a building of its type and age. The structure includes a single wythe of brick on the interior of the sandstone masonry. Tests of brick shear capacity were carried out in two locations. These locations are exposed to the greatest weathering, and should have had the most deterioration of mortar. The hydraulic jack used for the tests was unable to move the bricks even after exerting over 15,000 lbs. of applied force.

The building can be brought up to Building Code for structural purposes in a relatively straightforward manner using the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) so long as it does not include an area used for Assembly purposes (300 occupants or more). Were it to be used for Assembly, it would have to be brought up to full International Building Code (IBC) requirements.

Wilson Engineering estimated the cost to upgrade the structure to IEBC requirements would be approximately $541k and to upgrade it to IBC requirements would take approximately $1,005K.

The Armory Maintenance Garage

The Armory Maintenance Garage was built in 1950 and has approximately 6630 s.f. under roof. It is a concrete block, slab on grade construction with power but no water or sewer service. It is currently being used by the University for storage. It has no architectural significance.
Responses to this RFI must include the following:

**Firm Information:**
A brief history and legal description of your organization and project team. Include contact information for the project lead and bios for each project team member.

**Expression of Development Objectives:**
Educate us as to the type, quality, size and style of development activity envisioned.

Specifically: What uses for the site would you contemplate including in the development? What is your preferred market timing for the uses you want to accommodate? Does your development plan include use of the historic architectural aspects of the Armory Building? What specific changes would you need in zoning to make your proposal viable?

**Project Experience:** Describe this organization’s ability to successfully complete projects of similar scale and complexity to those of the Armory. Special emphasis should be placed on your firm’s experience with:

1. The public sector, particularly in a public / private partnership capacity.
2. Repurposing historic structures.
3. References: Include at least three (3) project partner references that can speak to your firm’s experience with this type of project.

**Guidelines for Submittal**
The selection process for the initial phase of the Armory will consist of two stages:

**Stage One - RFI:**
1. Responses to this RFI are due no later than December 15, 2014. RFI responses will inform the content of the subsequent RFP. Selected firms that respond to this RFI will be invited to respond to the RFP.
2. 10 pages maximum in a pdf format (cover page and resumes will not count toward 10-page maximum)
3. Electronic submissions will be accepted and should be emailed to: steve.swan@wwu.edu.
4. Deadline: Submission must be received by the WWU Foundation December 15, 2014. Please direct any questions you have about information contained in this RFI to: Steve Swan, VP for University Relations and Community Development.
5. Criteria for the RFP will be developed based on responses to the RFI. Examples of possible criteria include:
   - Compatibility of project with Western goals and values.
   - Compatibility of project with Bellingham and Sehome Neighborhood master plans.
   - Economic viability of the project.
   - Appropriate use and preservation of the significant historical physical characteristics of the Armory.
   - Project impact on the neighborhood to include building height and parking.

**Stage Two - RFP:**
Upon completion of Stage One and the evaluation of qualifications, it is the WWU Foundation’s intention to issue a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to qualified firms. RFP responses will be reviewed and ranked by the University and its partners. RFP respondents should be prepared to present development concepts through a public open house following the response deadline. Recommendations will be made to the Western Washington Foundation Board of Directors. The Board will have final decision-making authority. Once the Board selects the preferred candidate(s), the Foundation will enter into exclusive negotiations with preferred candidates.
ABOUT WWU

Founded in 1893, WWU is a highly ranked regional public university providing excellence in higher education. It is located in Bellingham, Washington; a vibrant city situated about 90 miles north of Seattle and 50 miles south of Vancouver. WWU serves the people of the State of Washington, the nation, and the world by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university that develops the potential of learners and the well-being of communities. Please see additional information at http://www.wwu.edu.

ABOUT WWU FOUNDATION

The WWU Foundation exists to generate private support for the benefit of WWU. The thousands of alumni, parents and friends of the university who annually make gifts to Western provide the margin of difference that has made WWU one of the top universities in the west. With their support, educational opportunities are created. Please see additional information at http://www.foundation.wwu.edu.
North entrance off Pine Street
A Stewardship Initiative for the Bellingham National Guard Armory

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Western Washington University