

# How did we get here?

The old Providence Heights College property and former Sammamish YMCA is the site for ISD's proposed high school. It borders Bellewood Senior Apartments and Providence Point 55+ community, and is within 100 yards of Marionwood Care Center, Spiritwood Senior Apartments, and Village Concepts Senior Homes. That's **five senior communities** with more than 3,000 residents mingling on the road with high school drivers.

## Litigation

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2008: Churchome of Kirkland buys the 40 acre site consisting of three separate parcels;

2015: Churchome enters into a "first right of refusal" sales agreement with Brixton Homes, who plans to build 141 homes;

2016: The **district** files a Condemnation Lawsuit (**Eminent Domain**) against Churchome to acquire the property and null the agreement;

2017: Local nonprofit Preserve Providence Heights and the Sammamish Historical Society nominate the site for **Landmark Designation** with the City of Issaquah's Landmarks Commission under the city's Municipal Code.

The **commissioners unanimously approve** a motion to designate the site as a local landmark; ISD's Eminent Domain trial is postponed due to the designation; they file a Termination of the Landmark Declaration. Issaquah School **District** files a Termination of Landmark Declaration.

Despite the ruling, the City of Issaquah approves a **demolition permit** request from Churchome, issuing a Determination of Non-Significance stating that the demolition would "*not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.*"

King County Superior Court judge Ken Schubert grants Preserve Providence Heights' motion to vacate the Oct. 24 lawsuit settlement that had been reached between the city of Issaquah and the campus' owner, Churchome. That judgment would have allowed Churchome to immediately proceed with demolition of the campus.

2018: Churchome files a lawsuit against the City in King County in King County Superior Court to vacate the Landmark Decision and begins demolition;

The Issaquah City Council votes to let ISD be the "**Agency of Designation**" for their own environmental reviews on the site;

2019: The City affirms that Churchome has satisfied all necessary conditions under its demolition permit.

With the demolition complete, King County Superior Court rules that the property no longer meets the landmark criteria. The school district's Termination of Landmark lawsuit is approved. The district acquires the property for \$22 million.

**\* Providence Point has *not* been involved in *any* of these lawsuits!**

**Those are *rumors* that continue to be spread either unwittingly, or perhaps... willingly...**

## Development and Environment

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2019 The City of Issaquah's Planning Policy Commission holds meetings to consider the district's recommendation that the three parcels be re-zoned to accommodate a high school and elementary with a 2,000-seat lighted stadium, two ball fields, parking, and four lighted tennis courts. One commissioner states one of the commissioners states "I'd like to say for the record that I hope the school district can learn from this and see that **this is not the way to engage with communities** and this is not the way to try to draw up support in a community that wants to support schools and wants to support children and the way that this came about did not come about very well and for the record I think that it's important to recognize that how we build schools starts with how we build them with our neighbors and that did not happen here."

PPC Commissioners propose a compromise plan to rezone the smaller parcels as parks for community use and requests that the district use the center site for a downsized school. Commissioners vote unanimously **against** the ISD's re-zoning proposal.

2020 The **city changes development code** to require a parking garage structure; ISD's architect reconfigures the site to accommodate it.

City staff develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) determining that there would be no environmental impact of the high school.

The City Council votes to reject the city's own planning commissioners' recommendations, passing Ordinance No. 2895 with a vote of five to two.

The City of Issaquah's Development Commission holds hearings on the design of the school and use of the site to determine if it meets the of the city's building codes. **They request** that the perimeter buffer be increased, and list **52 Conditions for the district** in their final report. Todd Sawain from Bassetti states that they are "not seeking green or LEED certification" and that there is "bark-like texture on the exterior of the buildings to mimic the bark of a tree."

2021 The City of Issaquah releases its **Green Issaquah Project**, which urges developers to preserve existing urban forests.

The City grants ISD a **tree removal variance**, allowing them to cut down and remove 77% of the trees on the site.

Due to concerns with the EIS and in response to **public testimony** from the Washington State Department of Ecology, Trout Unlimited, the Snoqualmie Tribe, Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, Friends of Kokanee salmon, and hundreds of district residents, the district's contractor, Bassetti Architects, holds Environmental Neighborhood Meetings over Zoom.

The City of Sammamish, which owns the road along the site, issues a letter to ISD, stating "Simply put, not all sites can accommodate all programs and facilities; instead of building new facilities on a constrained site, we urge the District to **reduce the program scope** of this project and instead invest in improving existing nearby facilities creating shared amenities to meet the program needs of the broader District" and requests information be sent to them "before construction permits are issued [by Issaquah] to construct the school campus."

The City of Issaquah **grants ISD construction permits** for the site.

## Approval

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2022 The Issaquah City Council approves the district's design for the school, to which Mayor Pauly said: "I have served 20 years on the development commission and worked on many school district projects... There's a huge lost opportunity here. I'm upset that we never talked about what this campus could do to bring our youth forward into the 21st century with something other than a stadium. I heard in the testimony that we were provided for this, somebody called having a stadium at every school 'equity.' That's not. That's equal. 'Equity' is making sure that all of the students in the school have opportunities for what they want to do and not just the sporting community. **We should have been able to look at something that was amazing and imaginary and forward-thinking and instead we got a school from the 1970's.**"

The district runs three levies, one of which is to fund mental health support for our kids. Three weeks later, the district **laid off counselors** to "balance the budget" (King5, May 2, 2022). Prop 2 has \$44 million earmarked for the school; the board reallocates that to other projects.

2023 ISD School Board's president presents to Newcastle City Council with slides that contain "unfortunately project was delayed 3.5 years for litigation after designated historic site [and] additional 2.5 years for permit to be issued by City of Issaquah."

The district is running a **Special Election Bond on February 11**, a likely levy in April, and definitely another in 2025! This follows the defeat of November's bond, in which voters' voices were resoundingly heard: NO to increased taxes with hidden interest, NO to misguided spending, NO to saying one thing and doing another, NO to misrepresenting your actions, and much more. Please join us to defeat these never-ending cycle.

*Above information taken from the following resources:*

Churchome has also gone by Plateau Campus LLC, and The City Church of Kirkland

Planning Policy Commission October 24, 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6TKEW0eTw0>

Re-zoning with Planning Commission and City Council, Ordinance No. 2895

Development Commission, July 15, 2020: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZOy0-J\\_DEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZOy0-J_DEE)

City of Sammamish issues a Letter addressed to Tom Mullins, Director of Capital Projects, April 24, 2021

For more information, please visit our website [ccare98027.com](http://ccare98027.com) or email [ccare98027@gmail.com](mailto:ccare98027@gmail.com)

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