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Over objections, board OKs sale of old Colman School

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Over the objection of the board's only African-American member, the Seattle **School** Board last night approved the sale of the former **Colman Elementary School** for an Urban League project that will include a black history **museum**.

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Mary Bass, who cast the sole vote against the \$804,000 deal, said the **school** district was on "shaky ground" because of its earlier commitment to sell the property to a group founded by activists who occupied the building for eight years in support of a larger **museum** project.

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"There's too many unclean hands all around. Nobody can say their hands are clean in this deal," Bass said.

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Associate General Counsel Ron English said the district walked away from its 1997 deal with the original African-American Heritage **Museum** group after it fractured into two competing groups and failed to make any payments for two years. The district later declined to accept a payment from one of the groups.

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Kwame Garrett, who was among those who once occupied the building, objected to plans by the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle to reduce the **museum** to "a closet space."


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The Urban League plans to renovate the 93-year-old building near the Interstate 90 lid to include more than 40 apartments, offices and an African-American **museum**. The project, including land purchase, is expected to cost \$15 million to \$16 million.

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The **School** Board last night also approved the sale of the former district headquarters on Lower Queen Anne Hill to SRM Development for \$5 million and the district's North End Annex on Roosevelt Avenue North to the Martin Partnership for \$2.3 million.

*Keith Ervin: 206-464-2105.*

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