



PHOTO COURTESY OF REMAX

This 1,400-square-foot A-frame in Tsawwassen was built in 1962 and is in great condition, though it will likely need a new roof.

OPINION

The greenest house? A recycled one

'We'd like to save it': Tsawwassen A-frame on the market for \$1 — but it will have to be moved

They say there's nothing greener, from an environmental perspective, than a house that is already built.

It's a salient adage in this part of the world, where old houses are flattened and hauled away to the dump with alarming regularity, where our still-young architecture is shamelessly bulldozed in the name of more square footage and big-ticket real estate returns.

So it's often a refreshing surprise when someone decides to preserve and restore an older home, choosing heritage details and solid old-growth construction over ubiquitous big box pickup sticks design.

And it's even more admirable when someone offers to sell their house — for a song — in exchange for its relocation.

And so, on occasion, we hear of a nice old house that is carefully uprooted and hoisted onto a slow-moving trailer that lumbers through the streets late at night, caution lights flashing and overhead wires carefully lifted to allow it to pass.

Often, the destination is a vacation property, or a vacant lot in the suburbs, and if the buyer is obliged to invest thousands of dollars in the relocation, depending on the size of the structure and the route to its new home, it's still a bargain.



Shelley Fralic

You could say, then, that there's also nothing greener, from an environmental perspective, than a house that is recycled.

Warren and Katherine Flandez of Tsawwassen were thinking the same thing.

When they decamped from their small Yaletown condo last July, they were thrilled to find a nice lot near the water in Beach Grove, and even more thrilled to move into the charming two-storey, bright blue 1,400-square-foot A-frame on the property.

It was funky and airy and well-built, with post-and-beam ceilings, wood walls and floors and modern updated fixtures. With two bedrooms up, including a balcony, and a roomy bath, living and dining rooms and kitchen on the main floor, the A-frame was a perfect fit for the couple and their two dogs.

And, says Warren, they have loved living in it, so close to the

ocean and in such a friendly community.

"Living here, it feels like a vacation, like we're living in a beach cabin."

But the time has come to build their dream home, a modern house designed by Warren's architect father. And this much they know for sure: They don't want to leave that spot.

Unfortunately, as much as the couple loves the A-frame, there just isn't room to keep it.

So, instead of bulldozing it, which would be standard practice, perfectly legal and so very Metro Vancouverish, they are hoping to give it away.

Well, OK, sell it. For \$1.

"It's really cute," says Warren. "We would move it ourselves, but all of our funds are going into the new home."

The A-frame was built in 1962, and is still in great condition, although it will likely need a new roof in the near future. Warren says the man who built it stopped by with some original photos, and he and Katherine have come to realize the house is something of a fixture in Beach Grove.

"I think (giving it away) is the best way. We could flatten the house tomorrow, but it's part of the Tsawwassen charm, so we'd like to save it. That's what we'd really like to do."

Warren says it will be up to the buyer to work out the logistics and costs of moving the about-to-be homeless A-frame, but they don't intend to start building their new house until this fall, so there is time to sort out the details.

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