

# north shore news

## Coach houses help West Vancouver win back its charm

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### Dear Editor:

I recently drove down to Tacoma, Wash. for my daughter's sports tournament, stopping at a mall on the way.

Upon returning, I visited the "new" Park Royal. It was exactly like the big U.S.A. mall. Any local shops are all but closed and replaced by large corporate brands. The icing on the cake was the funky dollar store replaced by a Rolex dealer. It didn't seem very "West Van" anymore.

Driving through the seaside town of Ambleside and Dundarave I see all the little quaint cottages torn down and replaced by pillared marble palaces.

What happened to the soul of our town?

I understand we can't regulate taste, but when an entire neighborhood is annihilated in a few years and replaced by large, seemingly soulless dwellings - that have no relationship to the surroundings, to the history, to the people that have slowly developed a community feeling (in architecture and landscape) - it has to slow down.

This is how I became interested in laneway housing or coach housing. I applaud the local council and staff for seeing the reality that in order to keep things the same - as much as possible - we have to change.

We need smaller forms of housing that can support young families or we will have no population to work or spend in the local stores, restaurants etc. Even our police and fireman need to live in a reasonable commuting distance or new recruits will simply apply where they can live affordably.

If, at the end of a decade, we have only 6,000-square-foot homes or condos, our "community" will be devoid of that middleincome earner, and any local vendors left will suffer and leave. To entice local vendors back we need housing in their budget. It's all tied together, why open a store where you can't afford to live?

Our children - the next generation - are very focused on environmental issues. I believe they will turn away from this period of excess. Desirable homes for them will be just big enough, with cool design and creative use of space rather than square footage being the driver. The homes with a grand foyer and 300-square-foot bathroom will be gathering spiderwebs, along with hydro bills.

So I guess, if you want them all to hit the road, carry on.

**Kim Little**

**West Vancouver**

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