

## North Vancouver District scraps heritage proposal

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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The 1913 Thomson House on Windsor Road. The heritage home's future is now uncertain after district council voted against a heritage revitalization agreement. photo supplied

After intense pushback from the surrounding neighbourhood, District of North Vancouver council has shot down a plan that would have preserved a Carisbrooke heritage home in exchange for subdividing the lot.

The agreement would have resulted in the restoration and permanent protection of the 1913 Thomson House at 360 East Windsor Rd. and allowed the owner to split the 100-foot lot into two and build a 3,100-square foot home on the new lot.

Previously, the homeowner had been planning to build a 9,000-square foot home (including the basement) on the site, but held off when district staff suggested the heritage revitalization agreement.

During a public hearing held in June, neighbours mostly spoke against the plan, largely on the grounds that the 100-foot lot size was critical to the area's character and quality of life. Heritage advocates urged council to proceed.

But the revitalization plan was too controversial to get majority support from district council Monday night.

"The chamber was full. The vast majority of speakers at the public hearing were not in favour of subdividing the lot in order to maintain the Thomson house," said Coun. Lisa Muri. "I think the main thrust of it was the lots in that area are as important as the dwellings in the area. And there had to be other options going forward in regards to the preservation of our heritage."

Muri warned if council agreed to the subdivision, it would trigger a rush of other requests from the 17 other heritage homeowners on 100-foot lots in that neighbourhood.

The heritage plan went down to defeat 4-3 with Couns. Roger Bassam, Robin Hicks, Doug MacKay-Dunn and Muri voting to abandon the proposal.

Couns. Mathew Bond, Jim Hanson and Mayor Richard Walton voted against scrapping the agreement, citing the replacement of the Thomson House with a 9,000-square foot home as a much worse alternative.

"The threat of demolition and loss of this heritage home is real," Bond said,

And while the neighbourhood's concerns were not trivial, Bond said tragedy wouldn't befall the area because of one heritage revitalization agreement.

"I do not agree that many of the wonderful things that people love so much about Queensdale are going to come to an end specifically because one lot is not a 100-foot lot."

While the heritage revitalization agreement is history, the district will look into whether the house can be salvaged and moved to a district-owned plot of land, possibly to be sold off later. The Plan B, however, has some big ifs attached to it. The owner of the Thomson House would have to agree before demolishing the house and council would have to determine the new location and cost before approving a budget, something a few council members bristled at.

"I paid my taxes today. I don't know that that's how North Vancouver district wants to spend its taxes," Hanson said, suggesting the market value of the lot could be as much as \$2 million. "These are very significant allocations of resources and in a community that has so many competing needs for resources and in a community where tax dollars are very scarce. ... They're precious and not to be squandered."

District staff are expected to return to council next week with a report sussing out whether moving the house is a possibility.

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