

EDITORIAL: These old houses

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There's a debate frequently playing out on the North Shore, pitting [the retention of heritage \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/heritage-homes-preserved-in-west-vancouver-1.2262093\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/heritage-homes-preserved-in-west-vancouver-1.2262093) against the [desires of the neighbourhood. \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/revitalization-plan-decried-by-neighbours-1.2286416\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/revitalization-plan-decried-by-neighbours-1.2286416)

Heritage homes are notoriously expensive to maintain. Very few owners and developers will be willing to save them for the love of heritage alone, especially when the market is crying out for more pink stucco boxes built to the maximum allowable setback.

But there's a predictable pushback from the community if saving the home through a heritage revitalization agreement means subdivision, a coach house or some other incentive. We saw it recently with West Vancouver's Vinson House and Sykes Residence and again this week at the public hearing for a project that would save Carisbrooke's 1913 Thomson House by subdividing the lot and allowing a new home to be built.

But the level of vitriol levelled at the Thomson House proposal was more in line with what we'd expect when council is considering a recovery house, a high-density tower or a port terminal. One new home on a smaller lot is probably more innocuous than the opposition maintains.

While we might like to fantasize our neighbourhoods will stay just the way we like them until the end of time, this isn't realistic, especially when there are developers' bulldozers fuelled up and idling in the driveway.

We'd encourage our residents and councils to take the long view – really long. These old houses are our physical link to past and they're irreplaceable. Even after we're gone from this earth, the neighbourhood will remain.

The point of preserving heritage isn't for our benefit, but for the benefit of those yet to come.

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.

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