

CarolWightman: I wish to begin by being clear on my position: I most certainly am not against saving heritage buildings, but **feel that the lot size is also a part of the Queensdale (Upper Lonsdale) area's unique heritage.**

We have been presented with a plan to save the Thomson House by subdividing the property and altering the design of the original house. If this plan is not accepted by the City of North Vancouver council, then the developer and current homeowner (Donato D'Amici) has stated that he would sell to another developer with the likely outcome that the Thomson House will be bulldozed and that a new home would be built on the existing lot. I am sure that there must be another avenue that could be taken to preserve the heritage home and satisfy the developer that would not include subdivision or destruction of the green space requirements of the area.

The D'Amici's first proposal

(that was shared with many of the neighbours in the community) incorporated the Thomson House into a new home design. It was often described by the D'Amicis as the family's "dream home" and those plans were well on their way to becoming a reality at the end of the summer

of 2015. **It was not until the district/heritage placed a 90-day holding period on the development plans (to see if the Thomson House could be kept intact) that this project went askew and dynamics in the neighbourhood changed.**

The D'Amicis negotiated with district staff and the heritage advisor and together they came up with this latest plan that was presented to district council on May 30. This revised plan still involves a subdivision of the property, and a new build on the "new" east lot, with a renovation of the Thomson House that includes a second storey addition and fully developed basement suite. This plan makes it evidently clear that "heritage preservation" is in

fact simply a heritage facade. The D'Amicis could have chosen to continue building their "dream home" original plan after the 90 days but instead chose the subdivision option. It is interesting to note that if they had stuck with their original plan the Thomson House would have been incorporated into the design and they would probably be in their new home about now. This is now an incredible money incentive for the D'Amicis. For our neighbourhood it will mean that more developers will be trying to repeat this process. I have lived in my home for over 38 years and in that time have watched many young families buy and move into the area. Because we have a mix of "oldie goldies" and new or renovated houses, there has always been a large spread of prices for homes. There was really not a lot of price difference between a 50-foot lot or 100-foot lot since neither could be subdivided. Allowing

this development to go through will change that lot value, and those of us with heritage homes on 100-foot lots can almost immediately double our house values by subdividing.

Ironical that it could be a "boardroom" decision by our mayor and council that could so dramatically increase the price of a home in this neighbourhood and destroy the park-like settings that the Queensdale area has enjoyed for more than 100 years.

Rendering of the 1913 Thomson House on East Windsor Road (left) and a new home proposed if the lot is subdivided. A public hearing is planned for June 21. IMAGE SUPPLIED

NSN STORY:
Neighbours Rebuff
Heritage Proposal
(June 3)