

LETTER: Lot size linked to Queensdale heritage

North Shore News

June 9, 2016 04:16 PM



A 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

Dear Editor:

I was surprised at the perspective in the North Shore News re: the heritage proposal, June 3. I was present at the meeting and came away with a different sense.

At present, the district has no way to prevent heritage homes from being torn down. It looks like some municipalities have gotten ahead of this (Shaughnessy, areas in Victoria, Toronto). However, at this time the District of North Vancouver has not taken that step. As such, how I came to understand the meeting is that as a neighbourhood we are faced with one of two choices.

Either protect the heritage home, but in order to do this compromise the integrity of the neighbourhood and allow for a second home with significant square footage and add square footage to the heritage home. Or, protect the neighbourhood and lose the heritage home.

This is hardly a win-win situation. What I would suggest in this situation is the only person coming out ahead is the developer/builder who bought this lot and who will do very well as he will now have two homes to sell in a neighbourhood that is escalating in value. The rest of us are put in a difficult situation. Many at the district meeting spoke to both owning older homes and the love of the character of this neighbourhood.

What was also spoken to several times and was not mentioned in the article is that the Thomson house has already been lost. The home has been spray painted white both inside and out, every tree has been pulled down and the once heritage home is no longer. The new proposal provides the neighbourhood with more of a look-alike heritage home, so it is not clear what we are protecting.

What came out resoundingly from the neighbourhood at the meeting was that as a neighbourhood although we love heritage homes we cannot support the DNV in allowing heritage revitalization agreements, which are a poor compromise. Each speaker discussed "greater good" as the principle for decision making and protecting the neighbourhood overall must be seen as more important than protecting one home at the expense of the entire neighbourhood.

We cannot support this heritage revitalization agreement.

Barb Lawrie
North Vancouver

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