

City's heritage register to grow

BY BRENT RICHTER, NORTH SHORE NEWS FEBRUARY 24, 2013 9:27 AM



The District of North Vancouver recognized David Pike and Gillian Welsh for the maintenance and restoration of their home at 740 East Ninth St., a heritage-listed residential structure.

Photograph by: NEWS photos, Mike Wakefield

DOZENS more homes may soon be added to the City of North Vancouver's heritage register, much to the dismay of some homeowners.

The city is poised to add another 66 properties deemed to have "significant architectural, historical and cultural heritage merit" to the 2013 register, **bringing the total to 315** since the last update in the 1990s.

Once added to the register, the homes are given either an A or B listing. **A-listed properties are more closely scrutinized by the city and any major changes or demolitions must be voted on council.** B listers are simply encouraged to retain or restore distinctive features of their buildings. Council discussed the updated register but stopped short of fully enacting it Monday night.

But homeowners who face being added to the list, whether they want to or not, often **fear diminishing property value or losing the freedom to renovate their homes as they wish.**

"If I were to list my home, I believe I would have to drop the price to entice a prospective buyer to even consider a B-listed home," said Nick Pearson, whose 28th Street home is set to be added to the B list.

Beyond that, maintaining heritage homes to the standards the city encourages or imposes for them is more costly for the homeowner but the **city offers no compensation in the form of tax breaks or grants,** Pearson added.

But, having a house on the heritage register isn't the kiss of death for resale, according to one real estate agent who attended Monday's meeting.

"My experience as a Realtor specializing in these homes is that they consistently sell for a higher price than homes that are not in the inventory," said Grant Gardiner, a Prudential Sussex real estate agent.

Gardiner noted that while property values in North Vancouver were down by three per cent in 2012, the selling price of heritage register homes went up by two per cent.

Council and staff emphasized that being added to the register is not the bureaucratic nightmare many who wrote or came to speak to council fear. The city cannot stop a renovation or demolition of a home unless it has been officially designated for heritage protection, a separate process that requires an individual public hearing as well as a compensation scheme for the owner.

Coun. Pam Bookham characterized the heritage register as more of an educational tool the city could use to encourage protection of the tenuous links the city has with its past.

"... council would like to be aware if you have plans that might affect that heritage value so that we might have a discussion that would at least ensure that both the owner and the community are aware this change is being proposed. And if there is an alternative solution that allows the preservation of the heritage while respecting, always, the rights and entitlements of the homeowner to secure the full value of the property, that's what we're trying to do," she said.

While local governments have the power to designate homes with heritage protection against the owner's will, that has never happened in the City of North Vancouver with any of the city's 36 designated homes.

"Up to now . . . we have not done any kind of involuntary designation," said Mayor Darrell Mussatto. "We've always been able to work with the owners up to now to obtain that type of designation, and I expect that to continue. I personally will not support any involuntary designation of a building."

Most of the homes on the list are smaller, working-class family homes built between 1900 and 1950.

After listening to the pros and cons of the city's heritage conservation procedure bylaw, council held off on updating the list, pending more details from city to staff to come at a later meeting.

The discussion came as the city proclaimed Heritage Week and bestowed two awards to local property owners who had done exemplary work retaining or restoring 100-year-old plus homes and businesses to their original looks.

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HERITAGE WEEK

THE City and District of North Vancouver are marking Heritage Week in B.C. by honouring some of their communities' keenest heritage preservers.

The city presented its Small Scale Heritage Improvement Award to Audrey Brown for her work in keeping her home at 336 East Ninth St. close to its original 100-year-old appearance. For Commercial Heritage Conservation, the city bestowed an award on Brad and Sarah Hodson for their restoration of

277-279 East Eighth St., known as the Commercial Block.

In the District, David Pike and Gillian Welsh earned a Maintenance and Restoration of a Heritage Register Residential Structure for their home at 740 East Ninth St. while the Maintenance and Renovations award went to Cathy and Victor Groot for their home at 3647 Sunnycrest Dr.

The District of West Vancouver no longer hands out heritage awards during heritage week and no longer operates with a heritage advisory group.

However, former councillor Carolanne Reynolds continues to promote heritage awareness in West Vancouver during Heritage Week and this year organized a Heritage Fayre at Park Royal on Sunday.

Brent Richter

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the City of North Vancouver gave Audrey Brown a Small Scale Heritage Improvement Award for keeping her 336 East Ninth St. home close to its original appearance. video The Heritage of My Home.

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