

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2014 11:47 AM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: FW: Public Hearing ~ Heritage in South Hill, Vancouver
Attachments: DSC00378.JPG

From: Cindy Heinrichs s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2014 11:45 AM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: Re: Public Hearing ~ Heritage in South Hill, Vancouver

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I want to start off by saying that I'm delighted with the progress this council has made over the past year in terms of preserving heritage in Vancouver. I live in South Hill where there are very few heritage houses left. One of those few stands at the corner of Prince Albert and 47th Avenue (6306 Prince Albert). The S. B. Bennett House, sometimes known as the Pope House, was built around 1912. Last year it was purchased by a developer and many in the neighbourhood feared it would be demolished, but it looks now like it will be preserved in large part as a result of this council passing the Heritage Designation By-Law and the Heritage Revitalization Agreement By-Law.

But it will be saved at a cost, which is why I'm writing to you today. A proposal has been made by the city to compensate the developer who bought the property for retaining the Pope House. The problem I have is the degree of compensation that is being offered. Where we now have one house on what will be split into two lots, the proposal is to move the Pope House south, away from the corner, and to construct an addition at the rear of it to provide a secondary suite. At the back of that lot will be a laneway house. That's three homes, three potential rental properties. On the north lot it is proposed a new house will be built with a basement suite and another laneway house. That makes a total of six potential rental properties where there was one! Not only does this plan push the Pope House away from the corner, obscuring it from view, and eradicate the garden completely—a forest of rhododendrons and a gorgeous magnolia tree in the front and a lovely English garden in the back—but it means that these two lots will be so jammed full of houses—the stairs of the Pope House will actually extend into the north lot because the house won't fit onto the south lot—that there will be little or no green space left at all.

I realize that people at City Hall worked hard to make this deal with this developer, to compensate him in order to get him to agree to not demolish this house, but this isn't compensation. This is overcompensation. I understand that he bought this property to make money. But how much money should he reasonably expect to make on it if the cost to the neighbourhood is this house being squished like a sardine onto this interior lot where no one can see it and with no garden to speak of?

At the very least the Pope House should be on the corner, not on the south lot. Better, the plan to allow four structures should be revisited. I ask that you review this proposal and, as council recently did with the Avalon Dairy Property, find a solution that is fair, not only to the developer, but to everyone who loves this house. And many people do. Within hours of posting on Caroline Adderson's Vancouver Vanishes Facebook page that it was on the market dozens of people responded that it was their favourite house in the neighbourhood. People described how, growing up, they would purposely walk by the Pope House, especially in spring when the garden began to bloom, and old Mr. Gartiner was out tending it. Some wrote about how, despite the fact that they haven't lived in the area for decades, when they come into town they still make a point of driving by this house. Some, like me, have been walking by it for decades, wishing we could live in it or at least see what it looks like inside.

If you aren't already familiar with it and you can spare the time, please go take a look. I think it's the only way you can see what these plans, which are on a board out front, will mean to the place. (Attached is a photo of the signage.)

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I do appreciate it. I hope you can help.

Sincerely,
Cindy Heinrichs