

PRESS RELEASE

HERITAGE VANCOUVER SOCIETY

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

The City's 125th Anniversary Gift to the Citizens of Vancouver "The Demolition of the Historic Legg Mansion (1899)"

The City has received an application that seeks to demolish the **Legg Residence**, one of the city's three remaining grand estate homes from the turn of the 19th century and an extremely important link to the history of both the West End and Vancouver. The house at **1241 Harwood Street** was under construction in July 1899, just 12 years after the arrival of the CPR railway. The Klondike Gold Rush had ushered in a brief wave of prosperity, and the city's wealthier citizens were developing a number of grand residences, such as Gabriola on Davie Street, the Abbott House on Jarvis Street and the Legg Residence on Harwood Street in the desirable West End neighbourhood.

The fact that the Legg Residence has been evaluated as a category "A" resource, the highest rating on the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register, speaks to its historic value for our community.

In May of this year the owner presented a proposal to Council that would have seen the Legg Residence preserved and restored to its "Gold Rush splendour" in exchange for permission to build a 17-storey tower on site. The Heritage Revitalization Agreement would have ensured that the Mansion would be conserved for the enjoyment of future generations. The proposal followed all of the city's own guidelines, had been approved by the city's Heritage Commission and Design Panel and was supported by city staff. Despite this, City Council turned down an opportunity to preserve this important part of Vancouver's history.

Heritage Vancouver is now shocked by the alternate proposal to demolish the A-listed building while still allowing a 17-storey tower to be built on the site. We do not understand why this proposal would be supportable if the previous application — which retained an A-listed heritage resource — is not. Following this direction, rather than approving the proposal to preserve the Legg Residence, would be an enormous setback for the City of Vancouver's Heritage Program and would send a profoundly negative message to other owners contemplating retention of a heritage building. **The demolition of this West End Mansion is absolutely unnecessary and would undermine the credibility of the City of Vancouver's Heritage Program.**

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Photos of the Legg Residence: Visit our Flickr stream
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