

Teardowns

—the practice of purchasing a home on a lot, demolishing it, and building a new, larger house in its place.

“Across the nation a teardown epidemic is wiping out historic neighborhoods one house at a time. As older homes are demolished and replaced with dramatically larger, out-of-scale new structures, the historic character of the existing neighborhood is changed forever. Neighborhood livability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked by towering new structures built up to the property lines. Community economic and social diversity is reduced as new mansions replace affordable homes. House by house, neighborhoods are losing a part of their historic fabric and much of their character.” Richard Moe, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Battles about teardowns are being waged across the country. Without effective advocacy, teardowns will continue unabated and the future of our neighborhoods will most likely be fashioned by the hands of market forces rather than its residents. Through the publication, *Protecting America’s Historic Neighborhoods: Taming the Teardown Trend*, the National Trust outlines the impacts caused by teardowns in four primary ways:

Loss of Historic Houses: Teardowns often destroy older homes that are part of the community’s heritage.

Loss of Community Character: Without proper safeguards, historic neighborhoods will lose the identities that drew residents to put down roots in the first place.

Loss of Livability: Neighborhood livability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked by towering new structures built up to the property lines.

Loss of Diversity: Community economic and social diversity is reduced as new over-scaled houses replace affordable homes. You often lose the ability to have a range of home prices in a community experiencing teardowns.

To find out more about teardowns and what other cities are doing to protect their historic neighborhoods check out “Focus on Teardowns” at the National Trust for Historic Preservation web site http://www.nationaltrust.org/teardowns/resource_guide.html.