

# Second Oak Bay house to leave by barge

By Ab Kent

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For the second time in less than a year, an Oak Bay house doomed to demolition will be shipped up-island by barge to a new location.

Victoria resident John Mathers, the man who bought a heritage home at 2425 Oak Bay Ave. for \$1 last year, has teamed with house and antique restorer Charles Baird to save a 78-year-old waterfront home at 2551 Beach Drive.

Mayor Susan Brice, who sprang the news to an appreciative council Monday night, said it was like *deja vu*.

The gracious, two-storey Alexander

residence overlooking Esplanade and Willows Beach will have a single-storey addition amputated for re-attachment later. Raised from its granite foundation, then slid down a slope, the house will be hauled by trailer over the beach and on to a barge for the voyage up-island.

It will take its place on a hilltop across a picturesque valley from — you guessed it — the house Mathers moved last spring.

Baird said he heard about the house just a few days ago and has been busy arranging for the epic move involving local authorities, the movers, tug boats, fisheries officers, lawyers and the highways ministry.

He and Mathers already owned the land adjoining Mathers' farm in the Cedar area south of Nanaimo, intending to preserve its picturebook building site from disfigurement by an ugly house.

The Alexander family, which lived in the Beach Drive house for many years, wants to develop its previously subdivided four-lot site and could not relocate the house in conformity with zoning.

The owner could see no alternative to demolition until Baird and Barton came along, and was willing to give them the house, but accepted \$1 to make the deal legal.

Baird said he expects the services,

relocation and reconstruction of cut rockwork, which will be numbered and dismantled stone by stone, to cost about \$55,000, less than one-quarter the cost of building a similar size new house.

Mathers said the house he moved last year from the end of Oak Bay Avenue has nearly been restored to its condition in the first decade of the century and painted original black and white.

The move is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. March 12 after Willows Beach is dug out temporarily to accommodate the barge and ramps.