



My name is Rebecca Brassard, I'm a resident of Vancouver and a member of the Balfour Tenants' Collective speaking in opposition to the proposed CD-1 rezoning of 906-982 West 18th Avenue and 907-969 West 19th Avenue. Although I haven't lived in the Balfour complex for long, I have been a renter in enough places around Vancouver to know that this is a community that's worth fighting to protect from the onslaught of demovictions that is ongoing in Vancouver. In the short time I've lived here, I've gotten to know more of my neighbours than all of the previous places I've lived combined. It is the exact model of housing I've been looking for in this increasingly atomized and unaffordable city.

As a precondition to living here, however, many of us have had to sign lease agreements with added clauses that prevent us from fighting the redevelopment of this complex or from demanding to be included in the TRPP for the financial losses we will suffer as a result of eviction if this rezoning is approved in its current iteration.

For the tenants who moved in after the rezoning application was submitted, our leases included some of the following provisions:

- A clause stating that we will "not do anything, or take any action or make any effort whatsoever" to extend the tenancy or claim compensation from Wesgroup
- that we are prohibited from collaborating with other tenants, not just of other units, but with any tenants living on Wesgroup properties
- that we are prohibited from posting any signs in any windows of our homes, or on the premises or on any other properties belonging to Wesgroup
- that we are prohibited from sharing any information about the terms of our lease with any other person (including but not limited to other tenants on Wesgroup properties)
- that, in breach of any of these terms, Wesgroup claims they would be entitled to an order of possession and other damages and that their tenants are prohibited to "plead, argue or advance any claim which alleges, for any reason whatsoever" that wesgroup would not be entitled to these remedies

In other words, in order to access housing, we've had to waive our rights to associate together, to speak freely, and to demand better from the city and from developers like Wesgroup without the threat of eviction looming over us.

Despite these risks, the Balfour Tenants' Collective has come together to make the following demands:

- That all tenants living in the complex at the time of eviction be included in the TRPP
- That all tenants be entitled to top-up rents for the interim construction period up to CMHC average rent for new market rentals.
- That all tenants be guaranteed a Right to Return to the same unit size and type in the new development.
- That all moving "out and in" expenses be completely covered.
- That all tenants be guaranteed a Right to Remain in an interim unit if it minimizes disruptions and stress for the tenant.

I hope that council will support the amendments that we have proposed and stand with the Balfour Tenants' Collective in protecting the right to affordable housing.

July 5th 2022

Dear Mayor Stewart and Members of the Vancouver City Council,

I have been forced to ask someone to voice my concerns in regards to the proposed CD-1 rezoning of 906-982 West 18th Avenue and 907-969 West 19th Avenue on my behalf due to the imminent threat of eviction by Wesgroup. An addendum to my lease says that I will be evicted for fighting for any compensation, or even organizing with other tenants.

I graduated in May of 2020, right into the Covid-19 pandemic. I lost my job, and was unable to find work. Any money I had saved up quickly ran out, and I was forced to leave the home I had started to build with my partner and move out of province and back in with my family. Yet, I am one of the lucky ones I was only out of Vancouver for 5 months. I was lucky to find a job that allowed me to move back, and my partner was lucky enough to follow a month later. But still we could not afford to rent something on our own and so we moved into a house with several others.

I have accepted that I will need to have roommates to be able to afford anything in this city. My current rent is \$2100, and that is even after being split between a few people. Nevertheless, at the time, the relief I felt at finding this place was indescribable. Finally, I felt that I could bring my head above water. That I might be able to build up my savings again and start my life. But instead, I find myself drowning in worry and stress. How much longer do I have here? How much can I save up before I am forced to leave? And the largest question: Where will my family go once this place is gone? Being a new tenant, I am not eligible for *anything* under the TRPP. The Government of Canada says that my rent and other household related expenses should be no more than 35% of my monthly gross income. The average one-bedroom rental cost in Vancouver is currently over \$2'300 - this is 100% of my monthly gross income.

This will be my second 'demoviction'. The house I lived in before my current place in Balfour was intended for demolition- that was until the landlord decided he would rather sell. We were forced to fight to get our damage deposit back since the damages we had reported to him during our time living there were never fixed with the upcoming demolition cited as an excuse. After all the hassle we got less than half back. That house is still being rented to this day, I really hope tthat they finally fixed the gas leak from the furnace.

If you have listened closely, you will notice that I do not use the word 'home'. I feel as though I don't have one. I have never been in one place long enough to place roots, to become part of a community, to make a place that will truly be considered mine. Meeting people in the Balfour complex started to change that. There is a vibrant, thriving community of people that live here, that are happy here - and all of that is going to be taken away unless you do something.

We are not asking for much. We are asking that you do not approve the demolition until appropriate amendments have been passed to provide for the community that is being displaced. I learned recently that Wesgroup kept 9 units vacant during a housing crisis. If they can afford to let those 9 units sit empty for nearly a year, they can afford to compensate us for the stress, anxiety, fear, and unfairness they are putting us through.

We, the Balfour Tenants Collective, are demanding the following to be added to the current proposal being brought forward to Council:

1. a) THAT the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy and Guidelines be extended to all currently tenanted households, regardless of move-in date and terms of lease.
2. b) THAT Appendix B of the report, section 2.14.c.ii, be amended to add c) or provided with a rent top up option as per the policy before issuing a demolition permit.
3. c) THAT Appendix G of the report, section titled "Project Summary" be amended to read "The proposal includes a public park dedication at the southeast corner of the site and consists of 208 total residential units including 58 strata-titled townhouses; 51 strata-titled residential units; and 99 secured rental units, including 34 units at below-market rates."

Thank you for your time.

Hi, I am a member of the Balfour Tenants Collective speaking through our lovely friends at the Vancouver Tenants Union. This is the only way I felt safe speaking to council because I fear facing eviction sooner due to an addendum to our lease which forbids speaking against Wesgroup or organizing with other tenants.

I am a young adult who graduated into the pandemic was unable to find work for many months. I am still underemployed and can only afford this under market rate apartment with the help of my partner and our two roommates. When we are evicted, finding home we can afford in Vancouver for ourselves, and our special needs pets seems an almost impossible task.

Through my work volunteering to support homeless and housing insecure folks in Vancouver I know that what passes for affordable housing can mean more than I make. As it stands, I will receive no compensation for being evicted, no support finding a new home, no right of return to the new development. I am speaking here this evening to advocate for myself, my family, my neighbors who deserve so much more than they have been offered, and for all those in Vancouver struggling though this housing crisis.

The truth is, everyone deserves to have a home. Approving a plan that reduces the number of affordable units and evicts tenants with no support for relocation is the opposite of what Vancouver needs. At a minimum all tenants must be included in the tenant relocation plan. An eviction is an eviction. The plan must be expanded to include a rent top up as in the Broadway plan, five years is a ridiculously long time to allow tenants to be housing insecure and unable to make rent. Finally, all tenants must be allowed right of return to same sized units for the same rent. Returning to a one bedroom at the same rent as the three bedrooms I will be evicted from is not a solution. Recall that this unit is only affordable in the first place because the rent is split between multiple roommates.

What we at the Balfour Tenants Collective are asking for is not unreasonable. We are being kicked out of our homes and our community is being destroyed. We are simply asking you counselors to not approve the demolition until appropriate amendments have been passed to provide for the people being displaced. If Wesgroup can afford to let 9 units sit empty for almost a year they can afford to fairly compensate their tenants.

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Thank you.