

CD-1 (708) Text Amendment: 2538-2550 Birch Street and 1290-1298 West Broadway - Oppose

Date Received	Time Created	Subject	Position	Content	Author Name	Neighborhood	Attachment
2026-07-23	23:11	CD-1 (708) Text Amendment: 2538-2550 Birch Street and 1290-1298 West Broadway	Oppose	My name is Colleen Hardwick. I am a Vancouver resident, and I strongly oppose this amendment. I also come before you with considerable history on this particular file. I was a member of Vancouver City Council when the second rezoning of this property came before us in 2020. In fact, my concerns began before it ever reached Public Hearing. In June 2019, I wrote directly to the General Manager of Planning questioning why this application was being advanced while the Broadway Plan was underway. This property had already been rezoned for a 16-storey rental building. Let me emphasize that. Rental housing had already been approved on this site. The developer came back under the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program seeking dramatically greater height and density — 28 storeys — on the basis that those extraordinary additional development rights were justified by the delivery of substantially more rental housing, including moderate-income rental housing. I questioned the process. I questioned the economics. And I questioned whether the public benefit justified what the City was being asked to give away. After a lengthy Public Hearing, I voted against the rezoning. It passed by the narrowest possible margin: six votes to five. So I have followed this file for more than seven years. I was there when Council was asked to make the original bargain. And that is why what is before you today is so troubling. The extraordinary height and density of this building were justified in the name of rental housing. The project ultimately became 258 secured rental homes — 200 market rental units and 58 moderate-income rental units. The City provided millions of dollars in development levy concessions. BC Housing subsequently provided more than \$156 million in financing to support the construction of rental housing. The Province celebrated the project publicly as 258 new rental homes for Vancouver — housing intended, in part, for middle-income people like nurses, teachers and small-business owners. And now, with the 28-storey building nearly complete, Council is being asked to allow 202 of those rental units to become hotel rooms. If that isn't a bait and switch, what is? First, an already-approved 16-storey rental building becomes a 28-storey building because we are told Vancouver desperately needs more rental housing.	COLLEEN HARDWICK	Kitsilano	

The extraordinary density is granted.
Financial concessions are provided.
Public financing follows.
The building gets built.
The project runs into financial difficulty.
And now, after the development rights have been realized in concrete and steel, most of the rental housing that justified those development rights is proposed to disappear.

Council cannot take back the additional twelve storeys.
You cannot take back the density.
You cannot turn this back into the 16-storey building that had previously been approved.

And that is precisely why the commitments made in exchange for those development rights have to mean something.
Otherwise, what exactly was the bargain Vancouver made?

And this is where precedent matters.
Precedents, once set, are very difficult to reverse.
Bad precedents have a way of producing more bad results.

That was one of my concerns about this project in 2020.

Council was being asked to approve an extraordinary spot rezoning while the comprehensive Broadway planning process was still underway.

Residents warned about the precedent.
Experienced planners warned about the consequences.

Even members of the development industry questioned whether the additional height and density were justified.

Nevertheless, Council approved it.
Once that precedent was established, the argument became: you allowed it there, so why not here?

That is how planning by exception gradually becomes planning by expectation.
But today, you are being asked to establish an even more troubling precedent.

If Council allows an applicant to obtain extraordinary development rights and public financial concessions on the promise of secured rental housing — and then allows most of that rental housing to disappear after the building has been constructed — you are establishing that the public benefit used to justify a rezoning is negotiable after the fact.

Think carefully about where that precedent leads.

What happens the next time a project becomes financially distressed?
What happens when another developer says the rental commitment no longer works?
What happens when another applicant comes back after construction and asks Council to remove the very public benefit that justified extraordinary density in the first place?

The answer will inevitably be:
You allowed it at Birch and Broadway.
There is also a fundamental question of accountability here.

Development involves risk.
When the calculations work, the financial benefit belongs to the developer.

				When they don't work, should Vancouver residents be expected to surrender the public benefits negotiated in exchange for development rights? That cannot become our planning model. Nor should creditor protection become the rationale for rewriting the commitments upon which a rezoning was approved. The building is there. The density is there. The additional twelve storeys are there. The public concessions have been made. The public financing has been advanced. The rental housing should therefore remain. Council made what I believe was a bad decision on this property in 2020. I take no satisfaction whatsoever in coming back six years later and seeing those concerns validated. You cannot reverse that decision. The 28-storey building is already there. But you do not have to compound it by setting another bad precedent today. At some point, Council has to draw a line. Promises made to obtain development rights must mean something. Public benefits must mean something. And the words "secured rental housing" must mean something. This is where you should draw the line. Please reject this amendment and require this project to deliver the rental housing Vancouver was promised.			
2026-07-24	07:48	CD-1 (708) Text Amendment: 2538-2550 Birch Street and 1290-1298 West Broadway	Oppose	Why are we building hotels, instead it should all be rental units. Not just the minimum, fix the housing crisis	Brandon Desjardins	Fairview	
2026-07-26	14:40	CD-1 (708) Text Amendment: 2538-2550 Birch Street and 1290-1298 West Broadway	Oppose	I oppose the further rezoning of this property.	Irma Sewerin	Kitsilano	
				The property has already received many financial and design accommodations to produce housing. There are businesses and individuals who supported the idea of the affordable housing. Would the building have received approval if it was to be used for a different purpose?			

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2026-07-26	23:48	CD-1 (708) Text Amendment: 2538-2550 Birch Street and 1290-1298 West Broadway	Oppose	Vancouver continues to face a severe rental housing shortage. The original rezoning approval increased this building from 16 to 28 floors because it promised 258 long-term rental homes close to rapid transit. Converting 202 of these 258 promised long-term rental units into temporary accommodation does NOT address the rental housing shortage. If the current rezoning is approved, only 56 long-term rental homes would remain, less than 25% of the rental housing originally promised. Removing over 75% of the promised rental homes fundamentally changes the basis upon which the rezoning was approved. The developers received over \$156 million from BC Housing intended to support rental housing. The developer also benefitted from \$3.1 million in DCL concessions from the City. Having benefitted from public financing, the developers should be held to their commitment to deliver the full number of rental homes promised to residents in prior rezoning approval. The 28 storey building now exists. It should be completed as approved to deliver ALL 258 rental units promised. Council should protect Vancouver's scarce rental housing supply by rejecting this amendment and requiring the project to deliver the full number of long-term rental housing that was promised to residents.	Anna Holeton	Fairview	