

GTA

Council approves teardown of vacant public housing site near High Park to make way for towers

Since its 2022 closure, Swansea Mews has cost \$29 million including on security, shoring, fences and lost income, TCHC says.

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By **Victoria Gibson** Affordable Housing Reporter

Toronto city hall has approved a plan to demolish and rebuild the west-end housing complex of Swansea Mews — nearly four years after a concrete ceiling collapsed onto a tenant, and led to an evacuation of the entire community.

City council on Wednesday rubber-stamped, without debate, both the rental demolition application for the idle site just west of High Park, and zoning changes required to rebuild its townhomes into a denser mixed-income rental development. The new site is set to include one 35-storey tower, plus one 20-storey tower connected to a U-shaped building ranging in height from five to eight storeys.

The plan also includes 654 square metres of retail space and 550 square metres of “community space” at the base of the 35-storey tower.

The decision to proceed with the plan was made despite objection from some neighbours and former tenants of the townhouse community. The former tenants were displaced in 2022, after the ceiling collapse sent one tenant to hospital. In the weeks that followed, officials said they discovered the ceilings had been constructed in a way that risked collapses in other units, as well.

Their former homes are still standing today behind fences and under the watch of security. From May 2022 to early December 2025, Toronto Community Housing Corp. told the Star it has spent more than \$29 million on Swansea Mews since the ceiling collapse, including security at the idle buildings, the immediate emergency response, shoring to hold up ceilings in units, fences around the complex and lost rental income, not including costs on legal and development fees.

“Swansea Public School is already at capacity. Where are the kids going to go to school with this plan?”

Penny Fisher, former Swansea Mews resident

More than 100 displaced households from Swansea Mews, who were relocated to other public housing communities across the city, retain a right to return — meaning they can claim a unit in one of the new buildings once finished.

In a committee hearing last month, former Swansea Mews resident Penny Fisher — whose displacement was chronicled by the Star — implored councillors to reject the proposal in its current form, saying key infrastructure, from transit to spaces in local schools, was insufficient to support the increase in density.

Under the new plan, the number of housing units at Swansea Mews would more than triple, from 154 to 649 homes. The new total is set to include 154 replacement public housing units, 42 moderately affordable units, and 453 market-priced rental units, city documents say.

“Swansea Public School is already at capacity. Where are the kids going to go to school with this plan?”

City staff confirmed area schools are presently at capacity. School boards had recommended signs be posted at the forthcoming construction site, staff told the committee, telling future residents their children may not be accommodated nearby.

While other deputants raised their own concerns — including around impacts on the environment given the land’s proximity to High Park, the quality of the city’s consultation process, and added traffic from the new density — some speakers argued increasing the number of units was making best use of a public asset, and pushed to move forward on the project.

“I want to be very clear about what delay means from a tenant’s perspective. The families of Swansea Mews have already been displaced since 2022. It is easy to call for more process when you’re securely housed.”

Cynthia Black, tenant organizer, Planning and Housing Committee, February 26, 2026

Fisher, the former Swansea Mews tenant, left committee with an appeal: whatever was built, it needed to be kept in good shape, she said. She recounted repair issues that plagued Swansea tenants for years before the crisis.

While officials have said the ceiling collapse that ultimately caused the area’s evacuation was due to a construction fault, not neglected repairs, Fisher said many units had already been sitting empty due to disrepair issues.

“Whatever you plan, it has to be maintained up to standard,” she said.

Correction – March 25, 2026 This article was updated from a previous version that said the more than \$29 million spent since May 2022 on Swansea Mews was inclusive of legal and development fees. In fact, those costs are not included in this estimate.
