

Carport or Garage conversion to a habitable room

Can I convert my Carport or Garage to a habitable room?

A carport or garage may be converted to a habitable room if there is sufficient space elsewhere on the property to provide parking in a complying location. It is recommended that the materials and finish of the proposed alteration match with that of the existing dwelling.

What is a habitable room?

The Residential Design Codes define a 'habitable room' as:

'A room used for normal domestic activities that includes:

- A bedroom, living room, lounge room, music room, sitting room, television room, kitchen, dining room, sewing room, study, playroom, sunroom, gymnasium, fully enclosed swimming pool or patio; but excludes
- A bathroom, laundry, water closet, food storage, pantry, walk-in-wardrobe, corridor, hallway, lobby, photographic darkroom, clothes drying room, verandah and unenclosed swimming pool/or patio and other spaces of a specialised nature occupied neither frequently nor for extended periods.'

Will I need a development (planning) application?

Generally, a conversion will require development approval where it is:

- Visible from the street and not of a material or finish that matches the main dwelling
- Proposed to contain an opening to a habitable room and setback less than 1.5m from a side or rear lot boundary.

A development application will be required for all garage and carport conversions on grouped dwelling properties.

Should your dwelling be located within a structure plan area, additional requirements may apply.

How can I find out if I am in a structure plan area or information on my property?

The City provides an online mapping system which can be used to confirm if a local structure plan applies to your property, lot sizes, dimensions and recent aerial imagery. Access Intramaps on the City's website at joondalup.wa.gov.au

How do I make an application for development approval?

If your proposal does not meet the above requirements or any other requirements of the Residential Design Codes, and/or the development provisions of a local structure plan or the City's *Residential Development Local Planning Policy*, you may lodge a development application to seek that the City exercise its discretion. It is strongly recommended that you submit comments and signed plans from the owner(s) and occupier(s) of adjoining property(ies) if your proposed development has the potential to impact on that (those) property(ies).

Any application for development approval will need to demonstrate the location of residential parking bays wholly contained within the property boundaries, provided in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.

Application forms and development application checklists are available on the City's website at joondalup.wa.gov.au

Where can I view the Residential Design Codes, structure plans and local planning policies?

The Residential Design Codes are available for viewing at any of the City's libraries or online at planning.wa.gov.au

Structure Plans and Local Planning Policies are available online at joondalup.wa.gov.au These documents are available in alternative formats upon request.

Will I need a building permit?

A building permit application will be required for a carport or garage conversion.

Are there any construction requirements for conversion of a carport or garage to a habitable room?

The National Construction Code – Building Code of Australia (NCC BCA) is a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures throughout Australia. The goal of the NCC BCA is to achieve acceptable standards of structural sufficiency, safety, health and amenity for the benefit of the community.

Such provisions include the following:

- The walls of the new addition must maintain a continuous cavity with the existing dwelling
- The floor to ceiling height must be a minimum of 2.4m
- Noting that generally, carport floors are constructed without a waterproof membrane or termite barrier, the building permit application must indicate how the proposed works will prevent the ingress of moisture into the new room. The existing slab may need to be drilled to install a termite barrier
- Natural light and ventilation must be maintained to all existing rooms
- Hard wired smoke detectors must be installed to protect all existing and proposed bedrooms of the house
- Applications may also require engineering details
- Power Meter box – Any existing meter box within the proposed enclosure must be relocated to an external wall.

How do I make an application for building permit?

Building permit application forms (certified or uncertified) are available from the Building Commission's website buildingcommission.wa.gov.au

Certified building permit applications must be accompanied with a Certificate of Design Compliance.

Please refer to the City's Uncertified Building Application Checklist – Dwelling and Habitable Additions (Class 1a) for information required to be provided with the Building Permit Application (BA2 form).

What fees will apply?

Please refer to Building Services Schedule of Fees and Planning Services Schedule of Fees available online or provided upon request from one of the City's Customer Services Centre.

Further information

For further information please contact the City's Building Services on **9400 4961** or Planning Services on **9400 4100** or email info@joondalup.wa.gov.au