

Converting a Garage or Carport 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 of vehicles. It is recommended that the materials and finish of the proposed alteration match the existing dwelling.

What is a habitable room?

The *Residential Design Codes (R-Codes)* is a State planning document that applies development controls over all residential developments in Western Australia, including habitable rooms. The *R-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?

A habitable room is required to comply with the requirements of both the *R-Codes* and the City's Residential Development Local Planning Policy.

Converting a carport or garage to a habitable room on a single house may require a development (planning) application where it does not meet the deemed-to-comply criteria of the *R-Codes*, or the City's Residential Development Local Planning Policy.

Generally, a conversion will require a development (planning) application where:

- It is not complementing the dwelling where visible from the street in respect to scale, roof design, detailing, window size, materials and colours;

- A major opening to a habitable room is proposed to be set back less than 1.5 metres from a side or rear lot boundary;

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

All conversions to grouped dwellings, multiple dwellings, commercial developments or caravan parks will require development approval.

How can I find out if I am in a structure plan area or access 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 Online Maps on the City's website at joondalup.wa.gov.au

How do I make a development (planning) application?

Generally, the following information will be required as part of a development (planning) application to convert a garage to a habitable room:

- Completed and signed Application for Development Approval form;
- Completed and signed MRS Form 1 application form;
- Completed checklist – Development (Planning) Application checklist – Residential;
- Site plan, floor plan and building elevations. Refer to the checklist for information required on the plans;
- A covering letter providing details of the proposed development and written justification addressing any aspects of the development that require the City to undertake a performance assessment against the *R-Codes*, City policy or structure plan; and
- Payment of the development application fee in accordance with the City's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Any application will also need to demonstrate that parking bays are contained within the property boundaries and provided in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard.

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

It is also recommended that you speak to your neighbours that may be impacted by the conversion and have them sign the plans as a way of their consent to its development.

Where can I view the R-Codes, structure plans and local planning policies?

The *R-Codes* are available for viewing at any of the City's Libraries or online at the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage at dplh.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 is required to convert a carport or garage to a habitable room.

How do I make an application for a building permit?

Building permit application forms (certified or uncertified) are available from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS)'s website at commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission

The following information will be required as part of an application for a building permit.

Certified:

- Completed and signed BA1 Application for Building Permit – Certified.
- Completed and signed BA3 Certificate of Design Compliance.
- Completed and signed Certified Building Application Checklist.
- Payment of the building application fee in accordance with the City's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Uncertified:

- Completed and signed BA2 – Application for Building Permit – Uncertified.
- Completed and signed Uncertified Building Application Checklist – Dwelling and Habitable Additions (Class 1a).
- Payment of the building application fee in accordance with the City's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Applications for a building permit are to be submitted with payment of the application fee.

Application forms, building application checklists and information on lodging an application are available on the City's website at joondalup.wa.gov.au

Are there any construction requirements to convert a garage or carport to a habitable room?

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

Some 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 2.4 metres;
- 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. Termite barrier to be installed in accordance with AS 3660.1;
- 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; and
- Power meter box – any existing meter box within the proposed enclosure must be relocated to an external wall.

Further information

Copies of the *R-Codes* are available for viewing at any of the City's Customer Service Centre, Libraries or online via the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage website at dplh.wa.gov.au

For further information, please visit the City's website at joondalup.wa.gov.au; visit the City's Customer Service Centre, contact the City's Building Services on **9400 4961** or Planning Services on **9400 4100** or email info@joondalup.wa.gov.au