

# Converting a Garage or Carport to a Habitable Room

## Can I convert my garage or carport to a habitable room?

A garage or carport 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 development in Western Australia and defines 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, family room, 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?

Converting a garage or carport to a habitable room on a single house will require a Development (Planning) Application where it does not meet the requirements of the R-Codes, the City's *Residential Development Local Planning Policy* (RDLPP), *Development in Housing Opportunity Area Local Planning Policy* (HOALPP) or structure plan (if applicable).

Generally, a conversion will not require a development (planning) application where:

- It complements the house (where visible from the street) in respect to scale, roof design, detailing, window size, materials and colours.
- Any window with a sill height of less than 1.6m is set back a minimum of 1.5m from a side or rear property boundary.

Additional requirements may apply if:

- A new driveway and/or crossover is being constructed, or an existing one modified. In addition to planning requirements, crossovers are required to be built in accordance with the City's Crossover Guidelines, available at [joondalup.wa.gov.au](http://joondalup.wa.gov.au)
- The property is within a structure plan area.

All conversions to a grouped dwelling, multiple dwellings, commercial developments or caravan parks will require a development (planning) application.

The City provides an online mapping system which can be used to confirm if a local structure plan applies to your property, if it has a dual density code (i.e. located within a HOA), lot sizes, dimensions and recent aerial imagery. Access Online Maps on the City's website at [joondalup.wa.gov.au](http://joondalup.wa.gov.au)

## How do I make a development (planning) application?

Generally, a Development (Planning) Application requires application forms, building plans, a cover letter and application fee. Please refer to the Development (Planning) Application Checklist: Residential (or Development (Planning) Application Checklist: Residential (Housing Opportunity Areas) for higher dual density properties) for the specific requirements and how to lodge an application, available on the City's website [joondalup.wa.gov.au](http://joondalup.wa.gov.au)

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

## Will I need a building permit?

A building permit application is required to convert a garage or carport to a habitable room.

## How do I make an application for a building permit?

Building permit application forms, application checklists and information on lodging an application are available on the City's website at [joondalup.wa.gov.au](http://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 (NCC BCA)* is a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures throughout Australia. The purpose of the NCC 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 2.4m.
- 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. 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.
- Power meter box – any existing meter box within the proposed enclosure must be relocated to an external wall.

### Further information

For further information visit [joondalup.wa.gov.au](http://joondalup.wa.gov.au), via email [info@joondalup.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@joondalup.wa.gov.au) or call **9400 4000**.

Visit the Customer Care desk during office hours

**Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 5.00pm.**