

Building Permit Requirements for Creating an Additional Residential Unit

A building permit is required to create an additional residential unit within an existing dwelling or an accessory structure. This guide explains the most common requirements for submitting a building permit application for an Additional Residential Unit (ARU) and is based on the 2012 Ontario Building Code Part 9 and Part 11 if the dwelling has been in existence for more than 5 years.

When applying for a building permit the following must be submitted:

1. [Application Form for a permit to Construct or Demolish](#) (15 business day review period)
2. Permit fees paid for at permit submission, current rates can be found on the [Building Permits page on the City of Cambridge website](#)
 - A \$250 rebate fee (refundable upon final sign-off) is payable in addition to the building permit fee.
3. [Schedule 1: Designer Information form](#) completed by:
 - A qualified designer, minimum “House” required if creating one additional residential unit (2 units total), “Small Buildings” required if creating two additional residential units (3 units total). The designer declaration is required on all drawings.
 - The registered homeowner, or
 - Architect or Engineer (form not required when all drawings are stamped),
4. Site plan or Survey (drawn to scale)
 - Show the required parking spaces and all dimensions
 - Show the location of existing/proposed buildings and all setbacks (if applicable)
 - Show the minimum 3’-0” wide unobstructed pathway from the street to the ARU entrance, show all obstructions (i.e. window wells, air conditioners, etc.) and their dimensions.
5. Construction drawings (single line drawings not acceptable, drawn to scale):
 - Existing floor plans (all floors):
 - Window/door sizes & locations, room names, stair location, wall locations & construction, etc (for all floors).
 - Proposed floor plans:
 - New wall construction, fire separations (new and existing), new windows and doors, room names, plumbing locations for kitchen, bathrooms & laundry, ceiling heights (overall, under beams and ducts), egress/exits, etc.
 - Show accessory structure framing, plumbing, heating, etc. (if applicable)
 - Elevations (applicable if adding egress windows/doors with glazing)

All building permit applications are applied for through our online services website at <https://permits.cambridge.ca/>. Account registration is required in order to login and submit an application.

General Zoning Requirements for Additional Units

Contact our planning department with any questions about the below at 519-623-1340 ext. 4602. The [City of Cambridge Zoning By-law](#) is also available for review on the City of Cambridge website.

Principal Dwelling means a single detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling unit and rowhouse/townhouse unit.

Attached additional residential unit (ARU), means an additional residential unit (ARU) that is attached to the principal dwelling

Detached additional residential unit (ARU), means an additional residential unit (ARU) that is located within a detached building on a lot containing a principal dwelling

Requirements:

Attached Additional Residential Units (ARUs) are subject to the following requirements:

- 1 or 2 attached ARUs per lot are permitted, with no more than three total including the principal dwelling.
- One parking space per ARU - which may be a tandem parking space between the established building line and street line.
 - no second driveway or additional street access may be created to accommodate the parking spaces.
- Maximum distance between the entrance of the ARU and the street is 45 metres
- Where municipal services are available all residential units must be connected. Where municipal services are not available, proof must be provided to demonstrate that private services have capacity to accommodate the additional dwelling unit(s), satisfactory to the City of Cambridge.
- Minimum setback between interior lot line and entrance to ARU is 1.2 metres
- Unobstructed path of travel between the ARU entrance and street of 0.9 metres wide, and 2.1 metres in height, with the exception of entrance steps or landings with a maximum depth of 1.1 metres and height of 0.6 metres.

Detached Additional Residential Units (ARUs) are subject to the following requirements:

- Maximum 1 detached ARU per parcel of land containing a principal dwelling, provided there is no more than 1 ARU in the principal dwelling (ie. the principal dwelling contains only 2 units)
- One parking space per ARU - which may be a tandem parking space between the established building line and street line
 - no second driveway or street access may be created to accommodate the parking spaces.
- Minimum separation distance from the principal dwelling is 3.0 metres
- Maximum building height of the detached structure is 4.5 metres
- Only a single storey is permitted in the detached ARU
 - A basement is permitted

- Maximum lot coverage of the detached structure is 10%
- Maximum distance between the entrance of the ARU and the street is 45 metres
- Where municipal services are available, all dwelling units must be connected. Where municipal services are not available, proof must be provided to demonstrate that private services have capacity to accommodate the additional dwelling unit(s), satisfactory to the City of Cambridge.
- Minimum setback between interior lot line and entrance to ARU is 1.2 metres
- Minimum exterior side yard setback of the detached structure shall be that which is required by the zone for the principal dwelling
- Minimum rear lot line setback for the detached structure shall be 1.2 metres, except where the lot has a second frontage on a laneway, the minimum laneway lot line setback shall be 3.0 metres.
- Unobstructed path of travel between ARU entrance and street of 0.9 metres wide, and 2.1 metres in height, with the exception of entrance steps or landings with a maximum depth of 1.1 metres and height of 0.6 metres.

Development Charges and Additional Residential Units

Development charges are applicable and payable to the local school boards at current rates when a Detached Additional Residential Unit is created or an Attached Additional Residential Units is added to a new home within one year of occupancy. Development charges may also be required when the ARU permit also includes an addition larger than the existing home.

[Information on development charges can be found on the City of Cambridge website.](#)

Other Requirements

An Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) permit is required when electrical work is being completed.

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) requires permits for some types of projects located within the regulation limit. [Visit the GRCA website for more information on permits and to see if your property is located within the regulation limit.](#)

Additional Residential Units are not permitted in some types of condominiums. Please check with Planning Services to determine if permitted.

Building Design Requirements

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CONDITION	
	A Less than 5 years since occupancy	B 5 years or more since occupancy
FLOOR FIRE SEPARATION (continuous)		
Permitted Floor Fire Resistance Rating (FRR)	30 min - for all common spaces AND when interconnected smoke alarms are not provided between both suites	
	15 min - when interconnected smoke alarms are provided between both suites	
Permitted Floor Sound Rating (STC)	Not required	
WALL FIRE SEPARATION (continuous)		
Permitted Wall Fire Resistance Rating (FRR)	30 min	
Permitted Door Fire Protection Rating (FPR) (Note: door requires a self-closing device)	20 min	
Permitted Wall Sound Rating (STC)	Not required	
SUPPORTING STRUCTURE		
Permitted Fire Resistance Rating (FRR) for load bearing walls, beams, and columns	Same as Floor FRR	
HVAC SYSTEMS		
Duct type Smoke Detector	Must be installed in return air duct system and will completely turn off fuel and electrical supply to the heating system upon activation if existing furnace serves both dwelling units	
SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS (general requirements only, additional requirements may apply)		
Interconnection between dwelling units	May be required based on Floor FRR (see above)	
Required locations and general requirements	Smoke alarms are required on every floor level, in every bedroom, in hallways serving a bedroom, and in all common areas. All smoke alarms within a dwelling unit shall be interconnected and have a visual signaling component (strobe light). Carbon Monoxide alarms to be installed in hallways serving a bedroom.	
MINIMUM WINDOW AREA		
Living and Dining Rooms	10% of area served	5% of area served
Bedrooms and other Finished Rooms (except kitchens and washrooms with electrical lighting)	5% of area served	2.5% of area served
CEILING HEIGHT (Minimum)		
All Rooms	6'-11" over entire floor 6'-5" under beam/duct	6'-5" over all required room areas and any location normally used as a mean of egress

- All penetrations through fire separations are required to be fire stopped with an approved fire stop device. Existing penetrations are acceptable in existing fire separations.

Building Design Requirements

DOOR SIZES (Minimum)	Minimum Width	Minimum Height
Additional Residential Unit Entrance or Utility Room	32"	78" or to match existing ceiling height
Bedroom or Rooms not mentioned elsewhere	30"	
Bathroom, Washroom, and Walk-in closets	24"	

- Any doors between units must have a minimum 20 minute fire protection rating with a self-closing device.

ROOM SIZES - Separate Spaces	Min. ft ²	ROOM SIZES - Combined	Min. ft ²
Living Room	145	Living Room (> 1 bedroom)	145
Dining Room	75	Living Room (1 bedroom)	118
Kitchen (> 1 bedroom)	45	Dining Room	35
Kitchen (1 Bedroom only)	40	Kitchen (> 1 bedroom)	45
Master Bedroom (with closet)	95	Kitchen (1 bedroom)	40
Master Bedroom (without closet)	105	Bedrooms	45
Other Bedroom (with closet)	65		
Other Bedroom (without closet)	75	ROOM SIZES - Bachelor	Min.ft ²
Bathroom	Sufficient space for fixtures	Living, Dining, Bedroom and Kitchen	145

- Combined areas are where one room contains multiple room functions (i.e. open concept, studio apartment, etc.)
- Each unit shall have access to common laundry facilities or have connections within each unit for the connection of laundry appliances

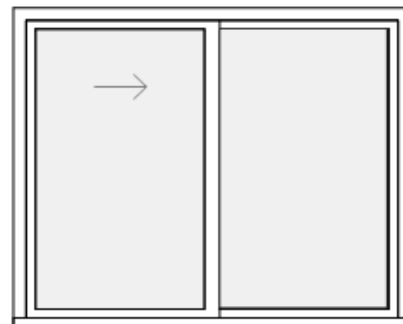
Note: These design tips do not cover all of the requirements for Secondary Suites. The person taking responsibility for the design should refer to the 2012 Ontario Building Code for a detailed listing of all requirements. The most current Building Code is available at [e-Laws - Ontario Building Code](#).

Calculating Window Area:

Window area required as per the Building Specific Design Requirements must be calculated by taking the rough opening size of the window and subtracting any non-glazing components

Accurate area calculations or manufacturer specifications must be provided with your building permit application.

Note: Shaded area represents glazing area



- Exiting to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. If an exit is shared by both units, a larger egress window is required and interconnected smoke alarms are required in every bedroom and common space throughout the entire house.
- An egress window is required in basement units containing a bedroom except for walk-out basement conditions, where direct access to exterior is provided.
- If window specifications aren't available multiply the rough opening size by 0.85 to determine the glazing area.

Fire Separations in Furnace Rooms:

Due to the difficulty of installing a continuous fire separation on the ceilings of furnace rooms serving two dwelling units, Table 11.4.3.4.A of the Ontario Building Code allows the fire separation to be waived where the spaces are sprinklered.

Where a continuous horizontal fire separation is not achievable, sprinklering of the furnace room ceiling is acceptable. The installation of sprinklers may not be feasible where a water service into a home may not be adequately sized without updating the entirety of the system. The walls around the furnace room are to be constructed as vertical fire separations.

Installation of a sprinkler head(s) in furnace room location

A single sprinkler loop installed by a qualified sprinkler installer may be installed in the furnace room when a continuous fire separation cannot be achieved due to obstructions.

System Components:

- Piping materials include: copper (Type L) & cross-linked polyethylene pipe fittings (PEX) certified to CAN/CSA-B137.5
- Listed residential sprinklers shall be used (manufacturer spec. sheets must be retained on-site)

Design Requirements:

- Only residential full flow through installations are permitted
- An adequate water supply shall be confirmed for the demand (min. ¾" diameter service)
- No isolation valves permitted on any portion of the sprinkler service line upstream of the sprinkler head
- Warning sign min. 200mm x 200mm (8"x8") shall be installed adjacent to the main shut off valve indicating that the domestic service is also used for a fire sprinkler system and must not be left closed
- A *floor drain* is strongly recommended to be located in the vicinity of the sprinkler head