

# Arthur Avenue North | 04 Unit Conversion

Hamilton



**Property Type:** Existing 2.5-Storey Single-Family Home

## **Project Overview:**

This project embodies a nuanced, code-informed approach to **multi-unit intensification**. The owner's end goal was to convert a traditional single-family house into a legal **fourplex** consisting of one unit per floor: basement, main, second, and attic. However, the Ontario Building Code imposes more stringent requirements—particularly ceiling height and egress—on buildings with three or more dwelling units. This introduced a major constraint at the outset due to substandard basement height.

## **Scope & Strategy:**

Rather than pursuing variances or costly underpinning, our solution was to **phase the approval process**:

- **Phase 1:** Apply for a **legal duplex conversion** focused on the basement and one upper unit. Under Part 9 of the Ontario Building Code, duplexes benefit from more flexible criteria—particularly in relation to basement height (minimum 1.95m or 6'-5").
- **Phase 2:** Once the basement unit is legalized and constructed under the duplex framework, we will initiate a **change of use and occupancy** permit to expand to four legal units across all levels, using the existing second and attic floors.

By separating the process into distinct, permit-compliant phases, we ensured that the project remained within legal bounds while also setting up future intensification without redundant construction or rework.

### **Challenges Solved:**

- Avoided costly underpinning or variance applications by leveraging phased compliance pathways.
- Designed internal layouts, exits, and fire separations to meet both duplex and future fourplex requirements from day one.
- Planned the servicing, HVAC zoning, and metering to align with a four-unit final state—ensuring a smooth Phase 2 transition.

### **Investor Benefits:**

- Immediate rental income unlocked through basement duplex approval while the 4-unit buildout proceeds.
- Increased unit count and rental yield without triggering a Part 3 building classification.
- Protected capital investment by designing for the final vision while managing short-term compliance limitations.

### **Current Status:**

Duplex permit approved. Four-unit layout pre-coordinated and ready for next-phase submission upon completion of Phase 1 construction.