

Wellington St | o5 Unit Conversion

St. Thomas



Property Type: Existing 2-Storey 4-Plex

Scope of Work: Interior Alterations to Convert 4 Units into 5 Legal Residential Units

Project Overview:

This project involved the conversion of a vacant 4-unit building into a fully legal 5-unit residential building in St. Thomas. The building was nearly gutted to the studs before our involvement, offering both opportunity and complexity. Our design team was brought in mid-process after the investor parted ways with their original firm—a common scenario where our expertise in navigating code compliance and design clarity brings projects back on track.

Scope & Strategy:

- Converted unused basement area into a new bachelor unit while retaining essential service room functions
- Redesigned the remaining floor layouts (ground and second floors) into functional bachelor-style units, maximizing rentability and privacy
- Created new internal layouts tailored to the stripped-down condition of the building shell
- Ensured each unit met Ontario Building Code (OBC) minimums for natural light, egress, room sizing, and fire separation

Challenges Solved:

- Navigated a grey area of the OBC: while technically an existing building, extensive interior demolition risked reclassifying the project under stricter Part 9 "new construction" rules

- Successfully argued and applied **OBC Part 11** for existing buildings, saving the investor significant time and cost
- Took over from a prior design firm and restored project momentum with a revised design strategy and compliant permit drawings

Investor Benefits:

- Added an entirely new unit without altering the building's exterior or gross floor area
- Enhanced future rent potential by designing flexible bachelor units with defined bedroom spaces
- Avoided triggering site plan approval or change-of-use zoning complications
- Preserved existing shell to control construction cost while increasing building value

Current Status:

Permit approved. Construction completed.