

Kenilworth Ave South | 04

Unit Conversion

Hamilton



Property Type: Single-Family Home

Project Overview:

Our client approached us with the goal of transforming a single-family home into a legal 4-unit investment property. However, the existing basement ceiling height fell below the Ontario Building Code requirement of 6'-11" for buildings with 3 or more units—posing a major obstacle to immediate full conversion.

Scope & Strategy:

Rather than pursuing costly underpinning or risking non-compliance, we proposed a **phased approval strategy**:

- **Phase 1:** Legalize the property as a duplex by focusing on converting the basement into a secondary unit. This allows compliance with the OBC's more flexible requirements for 2-unit dwellings.
- **Phase 2 (Future):** Once the duplex is stabilized and permits are in place, plan for a vertical addition or structural changes that will allow for a legal 4-unit conversion—complete with required upgrades to life safety systems and ceiling heights.

Our approach laid the foundation (literally and legally) for long-term scalability, minimizing upfront costs while keeping future expansion on track.

Challenges Solved:

- Avoided triggering full compliance requirements for 4+ units prematurely.
- Designed around low basement ceiling height without the need for underpinning.
- Future-proofed zoning, fire separation, and servicing layout to accommodate 4 units with minimal rework.

Investor Benefits:

- Reduced initial capital outlay by phasing the build strategically.
- Created immediate rental income through legal duplex status.
- Positioned property for future 4-unit conversion to maximize value and cash flow.

Current Status:

Phase 1 duplex conversion permit completed. Zoning and OBC strategy pre-approved for smooth transition to Phase 2.