

Conversion of Common Areas into Residential Dwelling Units

What are the Regulations?

Limited to existing strata-titled apartment buildings in RM zones built before 2000. Refer to Section 120.21(3) of the District of West Vancouver [Zoning Bylaw](#).

Frequently Asked Questions?

1. **How do I determine if a strata conversion of a common area to a dwelling unit is possible?** Refer to the District of West Vancouver Zoning Bylaw No. 4662, 2010. Work with Registered Professionals to discuss your plans and a code consultant to identify life safety issues.
2. **Do I need Registered Professionals (Architect and Professional Engineers) for this project?** Yes.
3. **When is a Development Permit Exemption required?** For any changes to the exterior of a building.
4. **Can a Development Permit Exemption be processed concurrently with a Building Permit application?** Yes
5. **Will the new dwelling unit require sprinklers?** Consult a Registered Professional (code consultant) to determine requirements for fire sprinklers and include the analysis in a code report.
6. **Can a common area or guest suite be sold “as-is” for a new owner to renovate?** No, the unit cannot be sold until it can be confirmed that a code compliant unit can be created, and the unit is legally stratified.
7. **How do I calculate the construction value of the Building Permit application?** The building permit fee is based on the construction value of the project. Refer to the [link](#).

Development Permit Exemption Submission Requirement

1. Completed [Development Application Form](#)
2. Application fee
3. Title Search (dated within 30 days of submission) including encumbrances/covenants (if applicable)
4. Strata Approval Letter
5. Detailed written description of the project work including how it is consistent with the applicable [Official Community Plan Development Permit Guidelines](#) (e.g. Ambleside Apartment Area Guidelines BF-B4) and the existing aesthetic of the building.
6. Site plan (minimum scale: 1/8" = 1'-0") with zoning summary table including the following information:
 - a) Lot or site area and lot width
 - b) Permitted and proposed site coverage, floor area and setbacks
 - c) Number and breakdown of parking spaces (to confirm conformance with Zoning Bylaw parking requirements)
7. Architectural drawings per the building permit submission requirements

For more information and to make an application call 604-925-7055 or email planningdepartment@westvancouver.ca.

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Building Permit Submission Requirement

Refer to our website for application forms, documents, and learn about the application process [Building Permits - Multi-Family](#). Additional information may be requested at the building permit review stage.

1. Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permit [Application Form](#)
2. Registered Owners [Authorization Letter](#)
3. Title Search
4. Strata Approval Letter
5. Detailed written description of the scope of work
6. Technical code report prepared by a code consultant. The report should include but not limited to:
 - a) Introduction, applicable building code and design coordination, fire safety during construction, construction and fire resistance classification summary, fire protection rating of closures, sound transmission, spatial separation and exposure protection, automatic sprinkler provisions (if applicable), life safety issues, fire alarm systems, lighting and emergency power, occupant load and exit capacity, egress and exit systems, parking requirements, accessible design, and code compliance drawings
 - a) Code implications of a new residential unit in an existing, unsprinklered building
 - b) Residential occupancies not permitted to have direct access to the lobby that is used as an exit
7. DWV [Alternative Solutions](#) Application Form (if applicable)

It is expected that the technical code report makes clear statements with regards to:

 - a) Scope and area of application, specify code deviation, intent of the relevant code requirements, relevant objective and functional statements, and identify proposed mitigating features
 - b) Technical analysis, testing, evidence, and supporting documentation
 - c) Commitments with regards to field review and qualifications of the proponent
 - d) Code compliance drawings
8. Letters of Assurance
 - a) Registered coordinating professional to submit Schedule A
 - b) Registered professional of record (architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, etc.) to submit Schedule B and DWV [Declaration of Insurance](#) required for each registered professional of record
9. Stamped and sealed drawings (scale: 1/4" = 1'-0", except as noted; maximum drawing size: 24" x 36"). Ensure PDF security settings allow for printing, stamping, extracting, inserting, and adding notations
10. Site plan (minimum scale: 1/8" = 1'-0") with zoning summary table including the following information:
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11. Architectural drawings to include but not limited to:
 - a) Floor plan of the entire floor level with the unit identified
 - b) Drawings to demonstrate appropriate fire separations, closures, and ASTC/STC ratings. Include specifications (ULC, cUL, or approved Canadian Testing Agency) of rated wall assemblies and STC/ASTC ratings, not outlined in BCBC
 - c) Location of exits and paths of travel, location of emergency lighting and exit signage, detectors, location of intercom and annunciator
 - d) If applicable,
 - i. New lobby: include construction details (wall and slab assemblies) and dimensions
 - ii. Accessible washroom: include floor plans, interior elevations, construction details, dimensions, and specify compliance to Article 3.8.3.1. or CSA B651
 - iii. Stair and ramp construction details and dimensions
12. Architectural floor plans for a new suite must indicate all work to be carried out, including the following:
 - a) Proposed floor plans of the entire unit including the balconies. Clearly identify new walls, walls to be removed, and dimensions
 - b) Sufficient construction details to enable building code review, reference adjacent suite occupancies, proposed construction assemblies (e.g., wall, ceiling, floor, roof, etc.), locate required fire separations, door swings/ windows (include sizes), smoke alarms, detectors etc.
 - c) Spatial separation calculations for changes to the exterior elevations (if applicable)
 - d) Elevation and cross section drawings for any proposed changes to the exterior of the building indicating proposed material and colour (if applicable)
13. Structural drawings to address BCBC Division B Part 4 (if applicable). DWV Schedule A – [Climatic Data](#) of the hourly wind pressures, seismic data, ground snow load (elevation, Ss, Sr) must be noted on the structural drawings if exterior work is proposed
14. Mechanical drawings to include but not limited to:
 - a) Plumbing design to include isometric drawings of DWV and domestic water pipe, size of pipe, location and type of pipe, and whether the pipe to be used is combustible or non-combustible. Note that AVV's are not permitted in High Buildings
 - b) HVAC design
15. Electrical drawings to include but not limited to emergency lighting, detectors, etc.
16. Fire sprinkler system drawings may be necessary based on the scope of work
17. Energy Efficiency 10.2.2.2. Application to Existing Buildings applies. Submit a report sealed by a Registered Professional
18. Land Development requirements may apply. To be determined based on the scope of work and existing infrastructure. Land Development inquiries 604-925-7040 or landdevelopment@westvancouver.ca
19. Development Cost Charge Bylaw No. 3801 & the GVS&DD Bylaw 254 and South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Bylaw No. 143-2021 for a new residential dwelling unit may apply

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Strata Conversion

Any proposal involving the conversion of a previously occupied building to strata title ownership must receive approval from the District, in accordance with the Strata Property Act.

Council has delegated its approval authority to the Director of Planning & Development Services for strata conversions in respect of [Section 120.21 \(3\) of the Zoning Bylaw](#) if the proposed development:

- a) conforms to the Zoning Bylaw, or
- b) requires a variance to the Zoning Bylaw limited to required parking

A strata conversion application will be required once it can be determined that a code compliant unit can be created. At that time, the following will be required:

1. Strata meeting minutes which demonstrate support for the conversion of common area into a dwelling unit in accordance with the voting rights established by the *Strata Property Act*
2. Strata Plan prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor
3. Application fee

Notice of consideration of the application is required to be given to owners and occupants of all parcels of land within 50 metres of the subject building.