

Additional Residential Unit Building Permit Guide



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1. Introduction

The following guide has been developed to assist homeowners in obtaining a building permit to allow the development of an Additional Residential Unit within the City of Owen Sound. This guide should not be relied on in place of professional expertise. If you are unfamiliar with building construction procedures, the assistance of a qualified building contractor or architect can save you both time and money. This guide provides specific information related to application preparation and the issuance of a building permit. You should also discuss the additional residential unit in your home or accessory structure with the Owen Sound Planning division for all applicable zoning questions.

2. Building Code and Additional Residential Units

The Ontario Building Code provides minimum construction standards to ensure public health and safety, fire protection, and the structural integrity of buildings in Ontario. All new and existing legal Additional Residential Units must comply with the Ontario Building Code. Within the City of Owen Sound, the Building Division enforces and reviews applications with respect to the Building Code. In order to begin construction of your Additional Residential Unit, you will need to provide the Building Division with a complete application including all required information and drawings.

If you have hired a professional designer or contractor to prepare your building designs, they should be knowledgeable of Building Code requirements and will likely have experience obtaining a building permit within the City of Owen Sound. However, it is important to note that the homeowner is ultimately responsible for ensuring all building requirements are met and permitting processes are followed.



3. When do you need a building permit?

A building permit provides official permission from the City to begin the construction or demolition of your project. Once you have received a building permit, it means the City has reviewed your application package and is comfortable that your proposed works are consistent with the Building Code and other applicable regulations such as the local zoning by-law. The creation of an Additional Residential Unit requires a building permit as it is a material alteration of the existing home, or construction or alteration of an accessory structure.

<https://www.owensound.ca/en/living/building-permits.aspx>

4. Obtaining Building Permits

Whether you are seeking to ensure your existing Additional Residential Unit is legal or if you are constructing a new Additional Residential Unit, you will require building permits to complete any required works. Of note, work commenced without obtaining proper building permits is a violation of the Building Code Act and may require modification to works done if it does not meet the requirements of the Building Code, removal of finishes to ensure compliance, and or fines

In accordance with the City's by-laws related to fees associated with new development (i.e. development charges and impost fees) are not charged for creation of an Additional Residential Unit in most instances. Building permit fees still apply accordingly, and the homeowner and contractor need to ensure the water supply and sewer connections are sufficient for all units on the property.

In support of a building permit application, the following drawings are typically required. Consult the building permit application for more detail on information and drawing requirements.

Site Plan is a drawing of the property illustrating the location of all structures on the property and their dimensions and relationships to the property lines. The Site Plan submission should include:

- ✓ Drawing scale & North arrow
- ✓ Lot lines, setbacks, and dimensions
- ✓ Existing and proposed construction and dimensions
- ✓ Proposed location of any underground services such as plumbing, natural gas or electricity
- ✓ Existing and proposed changes to existing grade showing drainage paths

Elevations of additions and detached ARUs show the exterior walls of each side of the building and are identified by the direction the wall faces (i.e. north, east, etc.). Elevation drawings should identify:

- ✓ Drawing scale
- ✓ Extent of new and existing construction
- ✓ Vertical and horizontal dimensions of walls, windows, doors and grade level
- ✓ Exterior cladding (i.e. siding materials), finishes, and flashings
- ✓ Roof shape, slope, overhang dimensions and finishing material

Floor Plans are drawings illustrating the arrangement of the house as viewed from above. One Floor Plan is required for each floor of the house impacted by the proposed construction. Floor Plans should include:

- ✓ Drawing scale
- ✓ Use of rooms and spaces (e.g. bedroom, laundry room, kitchen, etc.) with dimensions
- ✓ Extent of new construction including new construction within existing building areas
- ✓ Size, type, and location of exterior and interior walls and partitions
- ✓ Dimensions and location of all openings and stairs
- ✓ Heating system details and calculations
- ✓ Fire separation details & smoke/carbon monoxide detectors locations
- ✓ Location of plumbing fixtures, connections to detached ARUs

Section Drawings illustrate a cross sectional view of the home and shows existing and proposed construction. Section Drawings should include:

- ✓ Drawing scale
- ✓ Details of footings, foundations, walls, floors, and the roof
- ✓ Attic and crawl space ventilation
- ✓ Fire separation details

Mechanical Drawings and Energy Efficiency Design summary provide information regarding the heating capacity and calculations of the proposed furnace and any cooling systems. Required for ARUs in new additions and accessory structures. Drawings should illustrate the design and layout of the duct system, any required fire dampers, and in duct smoke detector for shared forced air systems.

Once you have submitted an acceptable application including a completed application form and all relevant construction drawings, the Building Division will review the material and either issue a building permit or request additional information or clarification. A building inspector will then inspect your project during key stages of construction to ensure the work complies with the Building Code and the plans originally submitted. It is important to complete the inspections at the required stages during your construction process as failure to meet certain standards may result in the need to redo components of your project. Remember, a building inspector must be able to see the work that requires inspection. An inspector requires a minimum of 48 hours notice to book an inspection.

The City does not conduct pre-purchase inspections. Pre-manufactured structures built in other municipalities will need to have been built with a permit and full inspections in the municipality where it being constructed and obtain a permit for the foundations and services where installed. If you have questions or concerns about a planned or existing Additional Residential Unit, you can contact the City's Building Division.

5. Building Code Requirements

The Building Code provides two different scenarios depending on when your home was constructed. Part 9 of the Building Code applies to new construction, including new dwellings, additions, and when an Additional Residential Unit is added to an accessory structure. If your home is greater than five years old, acceptable alternative design standards are provided within Part 11 of the Building Code for Additional Dwelling Units within your home. The following tables outline some of the requirements of the Building Code as they relate to Additional Residential Units. All relevant sections of the Building Code apply and in the case of a discrepancy between the tables below and the original text of the Building Code, the Building Code shall apply.

Minimum Room Size Requirements

Building Code Requirement	Minimum Room Size
Total Living Space	13.5 m ² (145 sq. ft.)
Living Room combined with a kitchen and a dining area (intended for not more than two persons)	11.0 m ² (118 sq. ft.)
Dining Room	7.0 m ² (75 sq. ft.)
Dining Room if combined with other spaces	3.25 m ² (35 sq. ft.)
Kitchen Area	4.2 m ² (45 sq. ft.)
Primary Bedroom	9.8 m ² (105 sq. ft.) without closet or 7.0m ² (75 sq. ft.) fitted with closet
Additional Bedrooms	7.0 m ² (75 sq. ft.) without closet or 6.0m ² (65 sq. ft.) fitted with closet
Bathroom	Sufficient space to accommodate a toilet, sink, and bathtub or shower stall.

Minimum Required Ceiling Height

Building Code Requirement	Houses less than 5 years old	Houses greater than 5 years old
Living Room	2.3 m (7'-7") over at least 75% of the required floor area with a clear height of 2.1 m (6'-11') at any point	Minimum 1950 mm (6'-5") over the required floor area or minimum room height not less than 2030 mm (6'-8") over at least 50% of the required floor area
Living Room combined with a kitchen and a dining area		
Dining Room		
Dining Room if combined with other spaces		
Kitchen Area		
Bedrooms	Clear height of 2.1 m (6'-11") at any point	

Minimum Window Requirements

Building Code Requirement	Houses less than 5 years old	Houses greater than 5 years old
Living Room	10% of area served	5% of area served
Dining Room	10% of area served	5% of area served
Kitchen Area	No window required	No window required
Primary Bedroom	5% of area served*	5% of area served*
Additional Bedrooms	5% of area served*	5% of area served*

*Note: see *Egress Requirements* below

Smoke Alarms and Fire Protection

Building Code Requirement	Houses less than 5 years old	Houses greater than 5 years old
Smoke Alarms	Interconnected smoke alarms with strobes in bedrooms and combination smoke/carbon monoxide/strobe alarms in common areas	Independent battery-operated smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are required
Fire Protection	<p>45 minute minimum horizontal and vertical (i.e. wall and ceiling) separation required between units including the supporting construction</p> <p>Dampers and fire stopping required where ducts pass through unit separation</p> <p>20 minute minimum fire rated doors between the units with closers.</p> <p>Sound attenuation required between units.</p> <p>Central vacuum systems cannot serve more than one suite</p>	<p>30 minute minimum horizontal and vertical (i.e. wall and ceiling) separation required between units</p> <p>Dampers and fire stopping not required where unaltered</p> <p>20 minute minimum fire rated doors between the units with closers.</p> <p>No additional sound attenuation</p> <p>Central vacuum systems cannot serve more than one suite</p>

Heating System Requirements

Building Code Requirement	Houses less than 5 years old	Houses greater than 5 years old
Heating System	Principal and Additional Residential Unit require separate heating systems	Existing system may service both units; a smoke detector must be installed in the supply or return air duct which would turn off the fuel supply and electrical power to the heating system when triggered

Egress Requirements

Building Code Requirement	Houses less than 5 years old	Houses greater than 5 years old
Safe Building Egress	Unless a door at the same floor level provides access directly to the exterior, there must be a minimum of one window for egress that is: -operable from the inside without tools, - provides an individual, unobstructed open portion having a minimum area of 0.35 sq.m (3.8sq.ft) and no dimension less than 380mm (15”) and does not require additional support to keep it open. (only operable portion of slider can be used for these dimensions)	Existing window sizes are acceptable if there is direct access to the exterior by means of a door.

Laundry Fixture Requirements

The Building Code requires that laundry facilities or a space for laundry facilities shall be provided in every dwelling unit or grouped elsewhere in the building in a location conveniently accessible to occupants of every dwelling. This can be a shared common laundry in the same building, separate laundry in the primary dwelling and ARU, or laundry facilities provided in a detached ARU.

Municipal Services

All ARUs must be connected through the primary dwelling to municipal services including potable water, sanitary and storm sewers, electrical service, and natural gas if applicable. Where water pipes are run underground they must be protected from frost. ARUs are not permitted to be connected to wells or septic systems where municipal services are available.

6. Zoning Requirements

The Comprehensive Zoning By-law has requirements for the use of properties and buildings within the City of Owen Sound. Additional Residential Units are permitted on Residential lots in combination with Single Detached Dwellings, Semi-Detached Dwellings or Row Houses. Requirements for Additional Residential Units are listed in Section 5.27 and must also meet the zoning requirements of the lot as per Section 6 Residential Zones, including setbacks and lot coverage. The City of Owen Sound Comprehensive Zoning By-law permits a primary dwelling to have one (1) ARU in the main building and one (1) ARU in a detached accessory structure. (www.owensound.ca/en/city-hall/zoning-by-law.aspx)

Where a Dwelling has been converted to a Duplex or Triplex previously no ARUs are permitted within the primary dwelling, but a ARU in an accessory structure may be permitted provided it meets zoning, parking and municipal connection requirements.

You can find the zoning of your lot in the Owen Sound GIS map by typing in your address in the search bar in the top left corner and looking for the bold white zone type within the bolded boundary around you and your neighbouring lots. <https://www.owensound.ca/zoning-maps/>

7. Electrical Safety and Inspections

In Ontario electrical safety compliance inspections are conducted by the Electrical Safety Authority. Your electrical contractor should be familiar with the electrical permitting and inspection process.

For more information, contact the Electrical Safety Authority directly at:

By phone: 1-877-ESA-SAFE (372-7233)

On the web: www.esasafe.com

8. Building Permit Application Checklist

In order to ensure the most efficient application review process, it is important to submit a complete and accurate application package including the following items:

- ✓ Completed Building Permit Application available on the Building Division's website (https://www.owensound.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/Building-Permit-Application_SEPTEMBER-2019_fillable.pdf)
- ✓ Site Plan if the Application includes an addition or accessory structure. (<https://www.owensound.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Documents/Planning/Sample-Site-Plan.pdf>)
- ✓ One copy of all required drawings and details including heating systems, heat loss/gain calculations, and all fire separations in hard copy or digital PDF.

9. Tiny Homes and ARUs Built Off-site

A Tiny Home or other structures built off-site can be used as the one (1) Accessory Residential Unit detached from the primary dwelling and must still meet zoning and building code requirements. A Tiny Home or other building that is not built on site will have to be built as a year round Park Mobile Home by a CSA Z240.2.1 or CSA A277-08 registered manufacturer, or by a Tarion registered builder with a regular building permit in the municipality it is constructed and a second building permit in the City of Owen Sound for the foundations, services and installation in addition to any permits required by ESA.

10. Contact Information

For information regarding building permit applications and zoning by-law interpretation please contact the Building Department Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at :

Owen Sound City Hall

808 2nd Avenue East, Owen Sound ON N4K 2H4

Telephone: 519-376-4440 x1231

Email: building@owensound.ca

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