

Main Street East | 07 Unit Conversion

Hamilton



Property Type: Existing Mixed-Use Building (Gutted)

Project Overview:

This underutilized street-facing commercial building was purchased in a fully gutted state, with an investor goal to transform it into a profitable 7-unit asset. The challenge? Retain the commercial component fronting the main street (as per zoning and city mandate), while legally converting the rear and upper levels into 6 self-contained residential units.

Scope & Strategy:

We developed a compliant mixed-use layout with clear separation between the commercial unit and residential spaces—each with independent services, exits, and fire separations. The existing building shell allowed flexibility in design, but came with constraints around envelope upgrades, accessibility, and code-compliant tenant separation.

Key design moves included:

- Strategically locating mechanical shafts and electrical services to avoid conflict between uses.
- Maintaining accessibility and fire safety for the commercial space without compromising residential privacy.
- Coordinating with planners and fire prevention early due to the building's change-of-use complexity.

Challenges Solved:

- Navigated legal non-conforming conditions for the commercial frontage while fully upgrading the residential side.
- Maximized residential unit count under zoning limits for mixed-use buildings.
- Ensured future flexibility for either long-term rental or resale by designing for modularity and separate metering.

Investor Benefits:

- Significant increase in property income potential through 6 residential leases + 1 commercial tenant.
- Legal compliance for all units ensures easier financing, insurance, and future resale.
- Added long-term asset flexibility with a fully upgraded building shell and systems.

Current Status:

Drawings and zoning review completed. Building permit application submitted for full interior build-out and change of use.