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Kerr
DESIGN · BUILD

Your Guide to Transforming a
Single-Family Home
into a
Multi-Unit Conversion



The City of Vancouver has introduced Multiple Conversion Dwellings (MCDs) as an innovative solution to address the housing crisis while preserving the character and heritage of its neighborhoods.

This guide offers comprehensive insights into the design and construction processes involved in converting single-family homes into MCDs, illustrating the opportunities for homeowners to contribute to the city's housing needs and benefit financially.

What Are Multiple Conversion Dwellings (MCDs)?

MCDs allow homeowners in specific Vancouver neighborhoods to transform their properties into multiple residential units, typically up to six, depending on the property size. This development is particularly appealing as it permits stratification—creating individual strata units that can be sold independently. Introduced in 2017, MCDs aim to alleviate housing shortages while maintaining neighborhood aesthetics. Importantly, converting to an MCD enables homeowners to significantly upgrade their living spaces and financially benefit from creating additional housing units.

Introduction to Multiple Conversion Dwellings

Designing a Multiple Conversion Dwelling

Designing a Multiple Conversion Dwelling (MCD) in Vancouver requires a nuanced understanding of the city's architectural heritage, modern living needs, and stringent regulatory environment. It requires a specialized approach that integrates these aspects into the design phase, ensuring that each MCD not only meets the city's housing objectives but also enriches the community's aesthetic and cultural landscape.

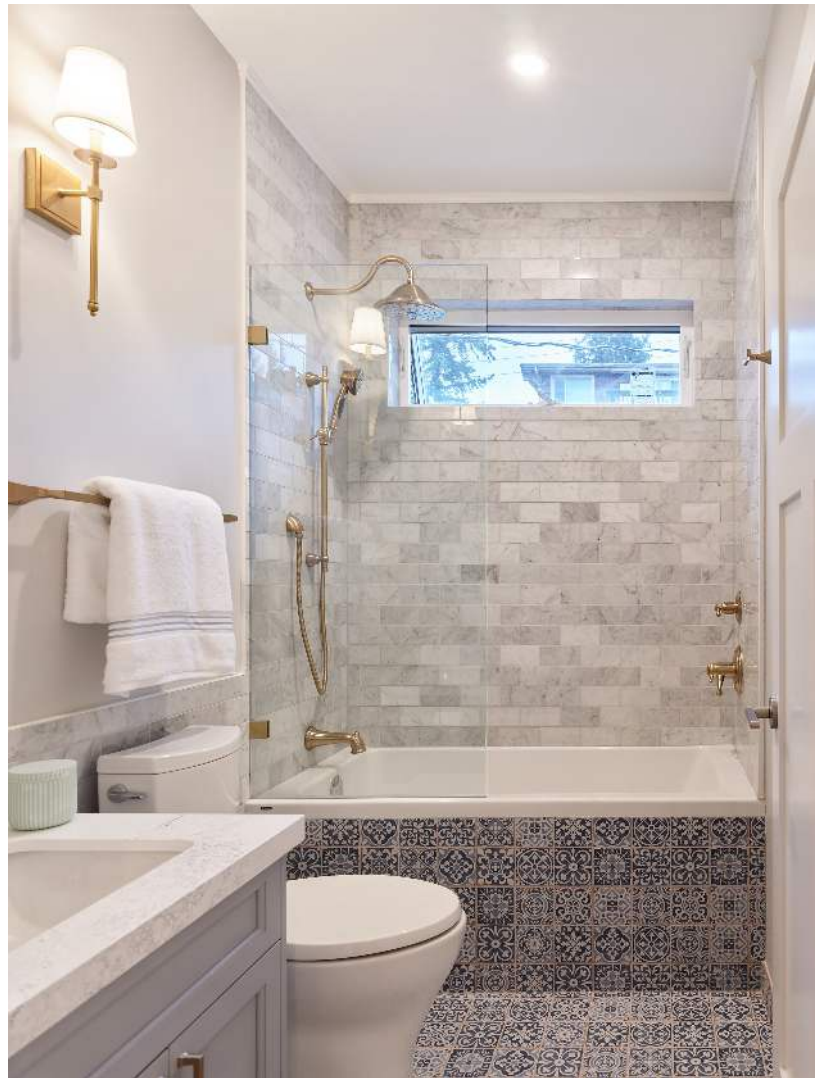
The best design process is distinguished by a deep commitment to client collaboration, innovation, and adherence to Vancouver's architectural guidelines.

Initial Consultation and Concept Development

The journey should begin with a detailed consultation with the chosen design team so that they understand the homeowner's vision, the property's unique attributes, and any specific family or investment goals. This stage is crucial for aligning expectations and laying the groundwork for a successful conversion.

Site Analysis and Zoning Compliance

An exhaustive site analysis follows, evaluating the property's existing conditions against Vancouver's zoning bylaws



Bringing to today's standards



Retaining heritage

specific to MCDs. This involves assessing the property's size, heritage value, and neighborhood context to determine the maximum allowable units, density bonuses, and any restrictions.

Innovative Design Solutions

Based on this analysis, the design team sits down and gets to work to come up with innovative solutions that maximize space, enhance functionality, and respect the property's original character. This includes:

Spatial Planning: Efficiently allocating space to create comfortable, livable units that appeal to modern renters or buyers, while ensuring privacy and accessibility for each unit.

Heritage Preservation: Integrating design elements that highlight the property's historical features, ensuring that renovations enhance rather than detract from the original architecture.

Light and Ventilation: Designing for ample natural light and effective ventilation, critical for creating healthy and enjoyable living spaces.

Outdoor and Common Areas: Thoughtfully designing outdoor and common areas to provide shared spaces for relaxation and community building, enriching the living experience for all residents.

Advanced 3D Modeling and Visualization

Once this phase is complete, the design team can use advanced 3D modeling and visualization tools, such as flythrough and walkthrough video renderings, to allow the client to virtually explore the proposed designs, make informed decisions, and see their vision come to life before construction begins.



Modern elegance meets functionality

Regulatory Compliance and Permitting

An essential part of the design process is navigating the complex web of building codes, fire safety regulations, and heritage preservation guidelines. The design must comply with the necessary standards and obtain all required permits, facilitating a smooth transition to the construction phase.

Personalized Interior Design

Beyond the home design, personalized interior design services can help to ensure that each unit's interior matches the homeowner's style preferences and modern living standards. These run from material selections to fixture choices and ensure a cohesive and attractive interior aesthetic.



A spa-like experience

Building a Multiple Conversion Dwelling

Transforming a single-family home into a Multiple Conversion Dwelling (MCD) in Vancouver is a meticulous process that marries traditional craftsmanship with modern construction methodologies. At Kerr Design Build, our construction approach is designed to ensure that each MCD not only meets the rigorous standards set by the city but also exceeds the expectations of homeowners and future residents in terms of quality, sustainability, and livability.

Our construction process is characterized by precision, innovation, and a commitment to preserving the character of Vancouver's neighborhoods. Here's how we bring your MCD from design to reality:

Preserving Exterior Charm

Heritage Respect: We prioritize the preservation of the home's original facade, employing restoration techniques that breathe new life into historical elements while ensuring the MCD fits seamlessly within the neighborhood.

Material Selection: Choosing materials that complement the home's era and the neighborhood's character is crucial. We use sustainable, high-quality materials that mimic original textures and colors, ensuring durability and aesthetic appeal.

Comprehensive Service Upgrades

Constructing an MCD involves extensive upgrades to the property's essential services to accommodate multiple independent units, focusing on safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

Electrical Systems

Independent Metering: Each unit is equipped with separate metering to ensure fairness and ease of management for utility expenses.

Safety and Capacity: We upgrade the electrical system to handle increased demand while adhering to the highest safety standards, including modern circuit breakers and efficient lighting solutions.

Heating and Cooling

Independent HVAC Systems: Offering control over heating and cooling in each unit enhances comfort and energy efficiency. Our systems are chosen for their reliability, eco-friendliness, and ease of maintenance.

Innovative Solutions: We explore innovative heating and cooling solutions, such as geothermal or solar, to reduce the environmental footprint and operational costs.

Plumbing and Water Systems

Efficient Water Use: Separate water supply lines for each unit, along with high-efficiency fixtures, reduce water use and lower utility bills.



Adhering to Vancouver's architectural guidelines

Reliable Waste Management: Modern plumbing techniques ensure efficient waste removal, preventing issues common in older homes and contributing to the overall health of the community.

Structural and Space Optimization

Our construction strategy emphasizes the intelligent use of space and structural integrity:

Creative Expansions: Whether adding levels or extending footprints, we ensure each addition enhances the living experience while respecting the property's original architecture.

Adaptive Reuse: Spaces like attics or basements are transformed into vibrant living areas, maximizing the property's potential without compromising its structural health.

Embracing Sustainable Construction Practices

Sustainability is not just a buzzword for us; it's a principle that guides every aspect of our construction process:

Eco-friendly Materials: From recycled insulation to sustainably sourced wood, we choose materials that minimize environmental impact.

Energy Efficiency: Incorporating energy-efficient windows, LED lighting, and smart home technologies reduces the carbon footprint of each unit.

Water Conservation: Low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting systems are examples of how we integrate water-saving features into our projects.



Modern and beautiful

Our integrated approach ensures a streamlined process from design through construction, resulting in an MCD that is not only a beautiful addition to the neighborhood but also a sustainable, comfortable, and efficient home for its residents.

A Word on Financing

While Kerr Design Build is not involved with the financing of projects, here are some common methods of financing.

Home Equity Loans or Lines of Credit

Homeowners with substantial equity in their property may qualify for a home equity loan or a home equity line of credit (HELOC). These options allow homeowners to borrow against the value of their home, providing a lump sum or a flexible line of credit to finance the project. Interest rates for these loans are typically lower than other financing methods because the loan is secured by your home.

Government Loans and Grants

BC Housing has launched the Secondary Suite Incentive Program that will support homeowners in creating affordable housing. This program offers up to 50% of renovation costs, to a maximum of \$40,000, as a forgivable loan for homeowners who create a new secondary suite on their property to be rented out below market rates. For the loan to be forgiven, the unit must be rented at below-market rates for at least five years. .

Construction Loans

A construction loan is a short-term loan used to finance the building or renovation of a home. These loans are typically converted into a permanent mortgage after the construction is completed. They can be more complex and involve detailed plans and timelines, but they're specifically designed for construction projects.

Refinancing

Refinancing involves taking out a new mortgage on your property with a new term, interest rate, and monthly payment. This can free up cash by extending the loan's term or lowering interest rates. Some homeowners opt for a cash-out refinance, which allows them to take out a new mortgage for more than they owe and use the difference to fund their project.



Flawless design and unique character

Personal Loans

Unsecured personal loans can be an option for homeowners who may not have enough equity in their property or who prefer not to use their home as collateral. These loans typically have higher interest rates than home equity loans or refinancing options.

Savings or Investments

For homeowners who have them, using savings or liquidating investments can be a straightforward way to finance a project without taking on debt. However, this approach requires having a significant amount of liquid assets available.

Developer or Investor Partnerships

In some cases, homeowners might partner with developers or investors to finance the conversion. This can involve giving up a portion of the property's equity but can significantly reduce the financial burden on the homeowner.



To find out more about converting your home to an MCD, book a consultation by calling us at 604-263-0343 or visiting <https://kerrdesign.build/schedule-consultation/>



Elton Donald, partner, and
Doug Kerr, partner and founder

Quality is Built, Trust is Earned

Expect exceptional design and outstanding craftsmanship from our experienced team of professional designers and builders.

Our success is based on the relationships and trust we build with our clients like you. Through open communication and delivering what we promise, from the initial design concept to the last finishing touches, we coordinate fully and manage everything to ensure your dream home project is completed on time and within budget.

With over 30 years of experience producing award-winning renovations and homes, we pride ourselves on constantly innovating to offer our clients the best value, best practices and their dream home done.



1676 W. 75 Av.
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G2
604-263-0343
info@kerrdesign.build
www.kerrdesign.build