



## CONVERT RESIDENCE TO BUSINESS

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Commercial Plan Review process will enable your building and improvement plans to be reviewed for Houston Construction Code compliance prior to issuance of a building permit. The normal plan review process time is approximately eleven (11) to fourteen (14) days.

**Note:** Before submitting your building plans for review to Commercial Plan Review, it is strongly recommended that you verify if there are any deed restrictions in your subdivision. Permits may be revoked for deed restriction violations.

Contact the *Development Services (Planning) Section* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of 1002 Washington Avenue for specific information pertaining to Development Plat Review, parking and landscaping requirements. Additionally, visit the *Taps and Meters (Water & Wastewater) Section* also located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to notify them of the intent to convert the use of the residence for commercial purposes. Obtain any specific forms required and ensure there is available water and wastewater capacity for your project, if needed. When submitting plans for review, include photocopies of the utility letters securely attached to the front of each plan along with required forms, and/or any other required items.

### **WHO NEEDS A PERMIT?**

You do if you are in the corporate city limits of Houston and are planning to erect a building or structure and /or remodeling or adding to an existing building or structure. If you have any questions concerning exemptions, please call (832) 394-8810.

- Obtain a commercial plan review “Prerequisite Checklist (Form CE-1105)” at 1002 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX 77002 or at <http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/plan-review.html>.
- Obtain a copy of the "Example of Standard Commercial Plan Review Process (flow chart)” at 1002 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX 77002 or at <http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/publications.html>.

### **STEP ONE – BEGINNING THE PROCESS**

To obtain a building permit, the information and documentation found on the “Prerequisite Checklist” (Form CE-1105) must be included in the submittal package. To increase the chances of plan approval in the shortest time, the plans should be as complete and detailed as possible.

Submit two (2) sets of non-erasable/legible scaled plan sets with the following. Four (4) plan sets are required for high-pile combustible storage or hazardous material projects.

- **A Survey,**
- **A Plot Plan/Site Plan,** based on the survey clearly identifying the following items:
  - The location of all structures on the site with dimensions to the property lines.
  - Multiple structures on a site must be separately identified with a City assigned address with the use of each identified. Contact the *Permits Section* for address questions at (832) 394-8899.
  - The parking layout must be included, and clearly show compliance with the parking requirements specified in the parking ordinance for the proposed use.
- **Labeled Floor Plans, for the following crafts:**
  - When converting existing residential buildings to commercial use, a certification letter must be provided from a professional engineer registered to practice in Texas. The engineer must specify in the certification letter that the existing building complies with all specified floor loads required for the proposed commercial occupancy, or provide structural plans identifying the upgraded framing elements sealed by the engineer. *Table 1607.1 (Minimum Live Loads)*
- **Health Plans.** Dimensioned equipment details & elevation views. (Food establishments only).
- **Fire Alarm Systems.** When required
- **Electronic Locks.** When installed.
- **Proof of an Asbestos Survey**

## **STEP TWO – OBTAINING A PERMIT**

Once all the information found on the “Prerequisite Checklist” is assembled and securely fastened into two sets of plans (four for Hazmat/High-Pile projects), continue with the following steps to submit the package for plan review:

### **1. Application**

Obtain a Building Permit Application at 1002 Washington Avenue (first floor lobby). Personnel will assist you with the application process.

**Note:** Document from the owner designating agents’ authority to convert the home to a commercial business must be attached to the application.

### **2. Submittal**

Submit the plans, application(s), and route slip to the *Permits Section*. A contact name, email address, and phone number must be provided on the plan route slip that will be attached to the submittal package.

### **3. Receipt**

Upon receipt of the items listed above, the clerk will generate a project number and return a copy of the Numbered Receipt. Only the person whose name appears on the route slip will be allowed to pick up the plans, unless the receipt is provided.

### **4. Review & Report**

Your plans will be assigned to a Senior Plan Analyst who will route the package to all departments who must review the plan. After all departments have reviewed the package, you will be notified when the plans are ready for pick-up. If there are any deficiencies, a comment correction report will accompany the submittal package.

### **5. Plan Review Fee**

Before going to the 3rd floor to pick up the plans, a 25% plan review fee must be paid. After paying the plan review fee, the person who submitted the plans may retrieve them from the plan library desk. Persons other than the one who submitted the plan must provide the Numbered Receipt.

### **6. Resubmittal**

After the designer corrects the plans, resubmit the entire package for re-review and approval. The resubmitted package must include all previously approved sheets and previously reviewed sheets that may have been marked for corrections.

### **7. Permit**

The applicant will be notified when the plans are completely approved by all required departments. The building permit may be purchased by the owner, applicant, or contractor. Other required permits may be purchased by the licensed contractors as applicable.

### **8. Inspections**

The contractors will call for inspections as they complete portions of any work that may be required or that may need to be inspected prior to cover up.

### **9. Certificate of Occupancy**

Once all permits have been purchased and all inspections have been approved, contact the *Utility Release/Occupancy Records Section* at (832) 394-8847 to request the printing of the Certificate of Occupancy. The clerk will notify you when to pick up the Certificate.

**Note:** Additional information may be required depending on the information provided in the submitted documents and site-specific conditions.