# Converting a Duplex or Multifamily Residence to a Single-Family Residence

Often, citizens wish to convert buildings used for duplexes or multifamily dwellings to a single-family residence in order to help reduce water bills, tax assessments or other financial impacts.  The City has a procedure in place to accommodate this.  It is important to note, however, that once this has been done, an owner may not legally re-convert the structure back to a duplex or multi-family residence unless additional procedures are undertaken that indicate code compliance. Procedures for converting buildings used for duplexes or multifamily dwellings to a single-family residence are as follows:

1.  Obtain Zoning approval! Current districts that prohibit single family residences are: POP, BP, C-2, CP, M-1, M-1-R, M-2, D-1 & D-2- (TCA, PUBLIC, CB, MIXED, LTD IND) Currently, the City of Portsmouth zoning Ordinance states that a single family residence is allowed only one kitchen.

2.  Obtain a building permit! A permit must be issued for the conversion.  The permit will allow the building owner to take the steps necessary to modify the building into a single-family residence.  Such modifications may include the alteration of entrances, passageways inside the structure, removal of a kitchen as required, etc. Permit fees are based on the dollar value of the alteration.

    • Additional permits may need to be issued for plumbing and electrical modifications in order to bring the structure into code compliance. This may include removal of multiple electrical services, removal of cooking appliance circuitry, and removal of multiple water service meters.

3.  Obtain all final inspections for all permits issued!  Correct all discrepancies noted, if any, and get final approval.

4.  Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy! This may be issued once all inspections have been approved.

5.  Obtain an inspection from the City Assessors office!  This will allow the duplex or multi-family residence to be replaced on City records by a single-family residence.