

2026 GUIDE

A beautiful granny flat, designed around the people you love.

The rules changed on 15 January 2026 — making it easier than ever to add a private, self-contained sanctuary to your property. This is your plain-English guide to what's possible in Auckland: what it is, what it costs, and what the new rules really mean for your family.

Not a cabin. Not a kitset. Not off-the-shelf.

We design and build bespoke garden sanctuaries — tailored to your site, your family, and the way you actually live.

1 What is a granny flat in NZ?

It's a small, self-contained second home built on the same property as your main house — with its own kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living space. Somewhere a loved one can have independence, privacy and comfort, while still being a short walk from the people who matter.

Councils and legislation use more formal names — **minor dwelling** (Auckland Unitary Plan), **small standalone dwelling** (Building Act), **Detached Minor Residential Unit / DMRU** (planning law) — but at **Auckland Granny Flat** we think of them as **private little sanctuaries**.

2 Why do we call it a granny flat?

The name traces back to the Victorian-era **dower house** — a smaller home on a country estate where a widowed mother ("the dowager") would live once the next generation took over the main house. By the 19th century, these were affectionately nicknamed "granny flats."

The name stuck because, for generations, the most common use was housing an elderly parent close to family. Today they're just as often built for adult kids saving for a deposit, a quiet home studio, or guests who stay a while — but the heart of it is still the same: **keeping the people you love close**.

3 What are the new granny flat rules for NZ in 2026?

From **15 January 2026**, the Small Standalone Dwellings Amendment Act and the NES-DMRU let you build a granny flat up to **70m²** **without a building consent and without a resource consent** — as long as the build meets the standards.

You'll still need a **PIM** from council before work begins, work done or supervised by **Licensed Building Practitioners**, full **Building Code** compliance, council notifications, and any **development contributions** the council levies. We handle every step of that for you.

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What size granny flat can I build without consent in NZ?

Up to **70 square metres** — enough for a genuine one- or two-bedroom home with a real kitchen, full bathroom, and a living area that doesn't feel like a cabin. To qualify, it must be **single storey**, no taller than **4m**, sit **2m+** from boundaries, use lightweight framing, be built or supervised by Licensed Building Practitioners, and connect properly to services.

Auckland note: the Unitary Plan still caps minor dwellings at **65m²** in most residential zones — so a full 70m² can still trigger resource consent in some zones. We design around your site and zone before you commit to a size.

5

How much does it cost to build a granny flat in NZ?

For 2026, expect roughly **\$3,500 – \$6,000+ per m²** depending on finish: **mid-range** ~\$3,500–\$4,500/m², **high-end / bespoke** ~\$4,500–\$6,000+/m².

We don't compete on the cheapest cabin-style spec — we design beautifully crafted homes you'll be proud of for decades, run to a **transparent fixed-price contract** with no surprises and no creeping costs.

6

Can you put a toilet in a sleepout in NZ?

Not under the consent-free sleepout rules. A Schedule 1 sleepout (up to 30m², no consent required) must **not** contain bathroom or kitchen facilities — no toilets, showers or basins.

Add a toilet and you'll either need a **building consent**, or — better — step up to a **full granny flat** under the new 2026 exemption, which gives you toilet, shower, kitchen and up to 70m² of beautifully crafted living, without a building consent.

One sanctuary, many lives.

A granny flat isn't just for grandparents. Today it's **Mum or Dad** close to family but with their own front door; tomorrow it's an **adult kid** saving for their first home; later it's a **quiet studio**, a **home office**, a **guest retreat**, or a **long-term rental** that pays you back. We design every build to grow with the life you're actually living.

Ready to create a private little paradise?

Tell us a little about your property and we'll be in touch for a no-obligation site assessment. We'll walk through what's possible on your land, what it'll cost, and what your sanctuary could look like.

Over **3 decades** of building experience · **Bespoke** design, never off-the-shelf · **End-to-end** project handling

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