

Granny flats for designers (LBP design, architects, engineers)

JANUARY 2026

The granny flats exemption allows homeowners to build a new, standalone, single-storey dwelling up to 70 square metres without a building consent, provided all exemption conditions are met.

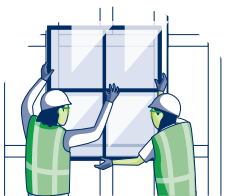
- › Designers must ensure plans and specifications comply with the Building Code and exemption conditions.
- › You are responsible for providing Certificates of Work (CoW) and ensuring documentation is clear and complete.
- › Collaboration with homeowners and builders is essential for compliance.

What designers need to know and do at each stage



1. PLAN AND DESIGN A GRANNY FLAT

- › **Confirm eligibility:** The granny flat must be new, standalone, up to 70 square metres, single-storey, self-contained and meet all other exemption conditions.
- › **Prepare preliminary and final plans:** Submit preliminary plans for project information memorandum (PIM) application. Building work must comply fully with the Building Code – no waivers or modifications are allowed.
- › **Consider site-specific risks:** Address natural hazards, local bylaws and planning requirements in your design.
- › **Provide CoW:** Certify that restricted building work design complies with the Building Code.



2. BUILD A GRANNY FLAT

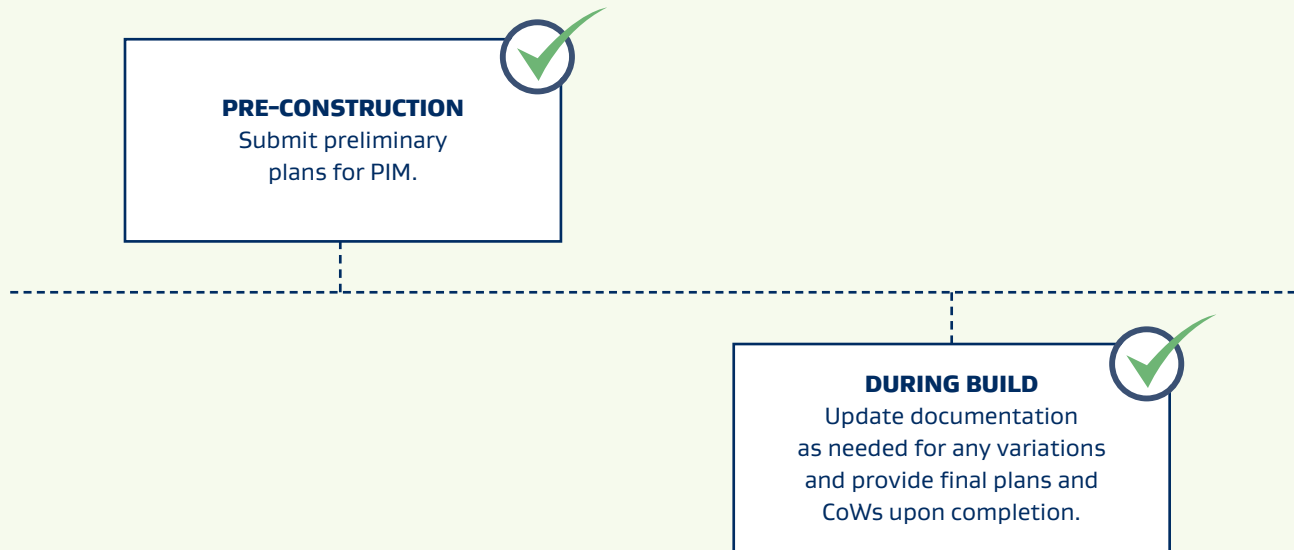
- › **Coordinate with builders and trades:** Ensure all parties understand and follow the plans.
- › **Update documentation:** Revise plans and CoWs if changes occur during the build.



3. COMPLETE A GRANNY FLAT

- › **Provide final plans and CoWs:** Update final plans to reflect any changes during construction. Ensure homeowners have all required documentation for council submission.
- › **Support compliance:** Advise homeowners on record-keeping and future alterations.

Timelines



Tips

- › Incomplete or non-compliant designs can result in enforcement action or disciplinary proceedings.
- › Keep clear records of all design decisions.
- › Work to a high standard so homeowners feel confident their granny flat is safe and complies with the Building Code.
- › Advise homeowners on the importance of compliance, documentation, and future-proofing their build.



For more info, visit building.govt.nz/grannyflats or
Contact us – Building Performance