

How to turn your granny flat into a money-spinner

By [Jacqui Savage](#)

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Does your home have a teen pad, granny flat or garden cottage? If so, you could be sitting on a great source of extra income! Garden flatlets in some areas can earn good monthly rental income. Here are tips on how to get in on the action.



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Maximise accessibility and independence

One of the most common concerns we see from tenants looking at garden cottage-type rentals is how much privacy and independence they'll have. The more self-contained the unit, the more popular it's likely to be, particularly if you're hoping to secure long-term tenants.

For owners, that means priority number one when preparing your granny flat for rental should be finding a way for your tenant to come and go independently. Think separate entrance, dedicated parking, and a discreet alarm system that can be activated without relying on the main house.

If you can, adding a separate prepaid electricity meter is also a great idea. The more self-sufficient you make your rental property, the easier it will be for you and your future tenants to manage.

Create a liveable layout

A good layout is essential for any successful rental, and clever planning can definitely increase the amount tenants are willing to pay for your separate entrance flatlet.

Comfort and liveability is very important, even if the space is very small. Short term rentals can sometimes get away with nothing more than a bed, kitchenette and separate bathroom, but long-term rentals need a little more thought.

Priorities should include a usable kitchen, a convenient space for a TV, and reasonable amounts of bedroom, bathroom and kitchen storage.

Flatlets with separate bedrooms tend to achieve higher rentals than bachelor layouts, so building a strategic wall here and there might be a good idea. Showers are also far more popular than baths, take up less bathroom space, and save water at the same time!

Don't forget, any major alterations could require planning permission – check in with your local municipality before doing any renovation.

Polish your design and décor

We've all been told not to judge a book by its cover, but when it comes to rental properties, looks count for a lot. The good news is coughing up a bit of cash for quality fittings and finishes not only increases your potential rental returns, it can also decrease your maintenance costs.

Things like granite kitchen tops, high-quality laminates and modern vinyl floors are hard-wearing, attractive, and very low maintenance. Just remember to choose classic styles that appeal to a wide range of tastes and won't go out of fashion in a matter of months.

As for general décor, furnishings don't add much value to long-term rentals, but are essential if you're targeting the short-term market. Regardless of whether or not you furnish your flatlet, neutral, soft and modern palettes are always the way to go.

The idea is to create a neutral backdrop for your tenant's personal belongings. I generally recommend opting for light wall and floor colours to make rooms feel brighter and more spacious. If you go for an all-white palette, just try to add a few warmer touches to make the space feel more welcoming.

Find a great rental agent

A talented rental agent is any landlord's secret weapon, and can make all the difference when setting up a granny flat to let.

Don't wait until you've done a full renovation and are about to hit the market. Find a rental agent as early as possible and leverage their experience to focus your energy in the right spot. Tenant preferences and priorities vary depending on market segment and neighbourhood, so having the inside scoop can save you a lot of time and effort.

Enjoy a more flexible future

A well-designed separate entrance flatlet isn't just a valuable income-earner. It can also add significant value and appeal to your property, and offer a range of lifestyle options that may be very useful in the future.

We're seeing a lot of grandparents moving in with their children after retirement these days, because of the lack of suitable retirement properties in South Africa, and our increasingly high cost of living. Having a granny flat available can be a real life-saver in these situations – particularly since it can generate income until granny or grandad moves in."

Add value to your home

The benefits of a garden cottage don't end with the grandparents, however. A separate entrance flatlet can also be a wonderful first step towards independence for teenagers and university students, a valuable work-from-home office, and a real value-add when you eventually sell.

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