

Who am I, and what is this?

My name is Toby Appleton, and I'm a licensed and qualified carpenter. Since 2017, I've owned and operated Appleton Builders, a Christchurch-based company that specialises in bathroom renovations.

I've written this guide to give homeowners a clear, straightforward overview of what's involved in a bathroom renovation. Renovations can feel complicated, so the aim here is to share practical information that helps you make confident, informed decisions.

Inside, you'll find:

- A simple explanation of building consents vs consent exemptions, and when each may apply
- Key advice on tapware selection and how to check if you have a low-pressure hot water system
- Guidance on the importance of using qualified tradespeople for a quality finish
- Our step-by-step renovation process, so you'll know what to expect from start to finish
- A selection of real case studies with before-and-after photos, total project costs, and descriptions of the work carried out

This isn't a technical manual or a glossy sales pitch — just a practical resource to help you understand the essentials of planning your bathroom renovation, backed up with real-life examples of bathrooms we've completed.

What is the difference between a Building Consent and a Consent Exemption, and in what situations might they be required?

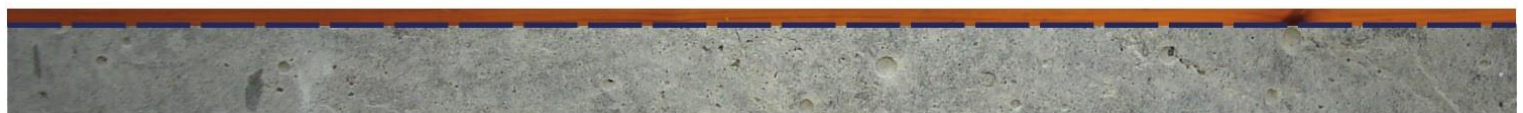
A Building Consent is required for higher risk renovations or building a new house, while a Consent Exemption is a simplified version for minor works with lower risk. Adding an additional plumbing item may require a Building Consent, but in most cases, a Consent Exemption will be granted. Creating a fully tiled shower enclosure almost always requires a Building Consent due to the high-risk waterproofing membrane. Removing or moving load-bearing walls may or may not require a Building Consent depending on the situation. Please note that all prices indicated in this document include supply and installation of all required components of the renovation, but do not include costs associated with obtaining a Building Consent if one is required. We are happy to help you obtain a Building Consent or Exemption if one is required through our regular Draftsman. All costs of this nature would be handled as a separate agreement between yourself and the Draftsman though.

What is the Consequence of not getting a Building Consent or Consent Exemption when one was required?

If you do not obtain a required building consent or exemption, it may not cause immediate problems if the work is done by qualified tradespeople. However, when it is time to sell the property, the lack of consent may affect the sale price or even result in legal action due to guarantees in the sale agreement. It is crucial to obtain the necessary consent if you want to add value to your property.

What is the most important thing to consider, that is often overlooked, when selecting Tapware for my bathroom renovation?

The most crucial consideration when selecting tapware for your bathroom renovation is whether you have low or mains pressure hot water. Most tapware available now is designed for mains pressure, but households with a low-pressure hot water cylinder and older galvanized water piping may only have around 20KPA of pressure. You can



choose low pressure tapware for maximum flow, or mains pressure tapware to prevent excessive water usage. Mains pressure tapware has more options than good quality low pressure tapware. If you opt for low pressure tapware, we recommend the "Greens" brand with "FloBoost" Technology for the shower mixer and "RainBoost" Technology for the shower head. Knowing your hot water system is critical to ensure a successful bathroom renovation with good shower pressure.

How do I know if I have a low-pressure hot water system?

To determine if you have a low-pressure hot water system, check the main sticker on your hot water cylinder for "Mains Pressure" or "Low Pressure" or look for a header tank in the roof space. You can also compare the pressure of the hot water to the cold water by turning on the taps separately. If the hot water pressure is the same as the cold water, you likely have a mains pressure system since the cold water typically comes out under mains pressure.

Why is it important to use qualified and experienced trades people?

Using qualified and experienced tradespeople is essential for a successful bathroom renovation. As builders, we have a good understanding of the building components but not of the specialized trades such as plumbing, tiling, flooring, and electrical work. Therefore, we have a team of reliable and top-quality sub-trades who complete the work relevant to their trade. The difference in the finish between a bathroom completed by a "Jack of all trades" and a competent team of professionals is significant both immediately after completion and years down the track.

What is Appleton Builders complete Step-by-Step Bathroom Renovation Process?

We keep things clear, organised, and transparent from first quote through to the final handover.

1) Confirmation & 10% Deposit

After you've reviewed your detailed Quote & Project Specification, let us know you're happy to proceed. A 10% deposit secures your booking. This is the perfect time to ask any final questions before we lock things in.

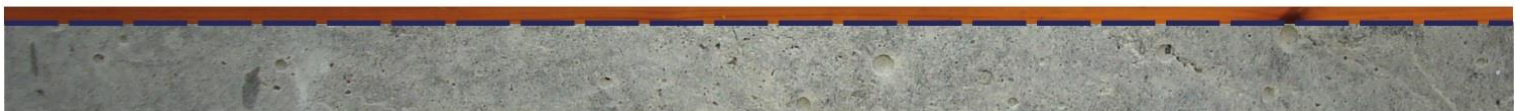
2) Product Selection (How It Works)

Unlike many builders, we don't insist on supplying all of the bathroomware items ourselves. We're flexible — you can choose to supply some or all of the fixtures and fittings if you wish, provided they are of good quality.

During our initial consultation, we work through a checklist together to confirm exactly what items will be needed for your renovation. At this stage, we also decide whether each item will be:

- Supplied new by Appleton Builders
- Supplied directly by you, the homeowner
- Or, in some cases, re-used from your existing bathroom

If we have allowed for an item in our initial quote, it will be listed as a "Provisional Sum". This figure represents a realistic allowance based on the average cost of a good-quality, mid-range product of that type. It is not tied to any specific brand or model, but ensures your initial quote is a fair and accurate "all inclusive" price, based on the agreed scope of work.



Once you accept the initial quote and pay the 10% deposit, the selection process begins. We'll connect you with our preferred suppliers, who will help you choose the actual products you want — whether that's fixtures, tiles, or flooring. We'll then update your quotation with a revised version that reflects your chosen items.

Another important difference between Appleton Builders and many of our competitors is that we don't restrict you to a pre-determined catalogue of products. You are free to select any quality fixtures and fittings that suit your taste and budget, giving you maximum flexibility and control over your bathroom's final look.

3) Booking & Timeframe

With selections confirmed and the revised quote accepted, we schedule your renovation and share a Time Frame Schedule. Because product lead times vary, we confirm start dates after selections—though we're happy to pencil in a provisional start date earlier if you prefer.

4) Waiting Period (Pre-Start)

Before work begins, please organise a spare key. On day one we install a lockbox for secure trade access. We remain available for any questions in the lead-up.

5) Commencement (Day One, 8:00am)

We arrive at 8:00am to set up floor protection, safe access, and site safety measures. Refer to your Time Frame Schedule for key milestones.

6) Renovation Works

We manage the full build: demolition, preparation, plumbing, electrical, lining, waterproofing, tiling or vinyl, fixtures/fittings, painting, and finishing. We coordinate trusted sub-trades and keep you updated throughout so you always know what's happening.

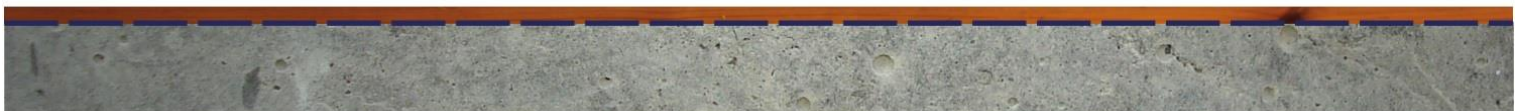
7) Completion & Handover

When everything's finished, we meet with you in the bathroom for a walk-through. Any final tweaks are handled promptly, and we leave the space clean and ready to use.

Real Bathroom Renovation Case Studies

To give you a clear idea of what's involved in a renovation, we've included a selection of real projects completed by us. Each case study includes a written description of the project, before and after photos and the total cost of the renovation. The total cost of the renovation, generally including project management, all trades (builder, plumber, electrician, plasterer, painter, tiler, vinyl layer, etc.), and all fixtures and fittings. Prices usually exclude design and consenting costs. If these are required, we can introduce you to our preferred designer, who works with you under a separate contract. Any items not included in the total (such as homeowner-supplied fittings or consent fees) are specifically mentioned in the project description.

These examples are provided to give you a realistic guide to scope and cost, backed by real-life examples.



Modern Bathroom Upgrade in Spreydon

In this 1980s timber-floor home, the existing bathroom was dated and in poor condition, requiring a full strip-out. We removed all fixtures and fittings, took the walls back to framing, and replaced most of the floor substrate before relining the space to create a solid foundation for the new bathroom.

The finished room features:

- Symphony 1600×900mm acrylic shower system with frameless glass sliding door and Greens tapware
- VCBC 1200mm custom-painted, wall-hung vanity with two drawers and Adesso tapware
- A stainless steel grab rail, installed with reinforced timber blocking for added safety and stability near the shower entry
- Retained and reused existing mirror, mirror light, and heated towel rail, integrated seamlessly into the new design
- Belgotex Geo sheet vinyl flooring, providing a durable, modern finish

This project delivered a fresh, functional bathroom that combines practical safety features with contemporary style — perfectly suited to the homeowner's needs.

Total Cost: \$21,801.14 (incl. GST)

Before:

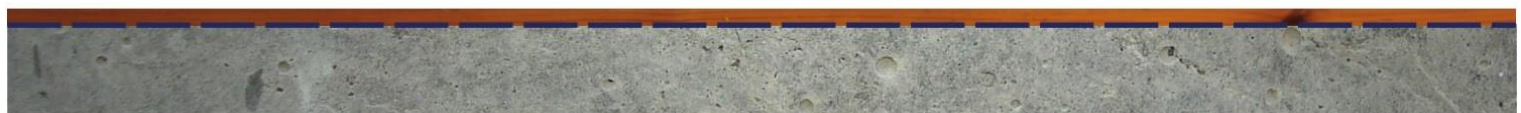


After:



**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz



Family Bathroom & Toilet Conversion in Casebrook

This 1980s timber-floor home originally had a dated vinyl wet room and a separate toilet accessed from the hallway. The bathroom was showing its age, with a deteriorating floor and worn finishes.

We transformed the space by removing the dividing wall between the bathroom and toilet, then closing off the old hallway entry to create one larger, functional room. A new cavity sliding door was installed to improve accessibility and maximise space. The existing single-glazed windows were upgraded to double glazing, supplied by the homeowner and installed by our team.

The completed bathroom now features:

- ClearLite 900×900 acrylic shower with Greens brushed nickel tapware
- Raymor wall-hung vanity with matching brushed nickel fittings
- Tessa mirror cabinet for practical storage
- 5-bar brushed nickel heated towel rail
- Robert Malcolm sheet vinyl flooring for a durable, easy-care finish
- Tornado rimless back-to-wall toilet
- A selection of modern fixtures and fittings to complete the look

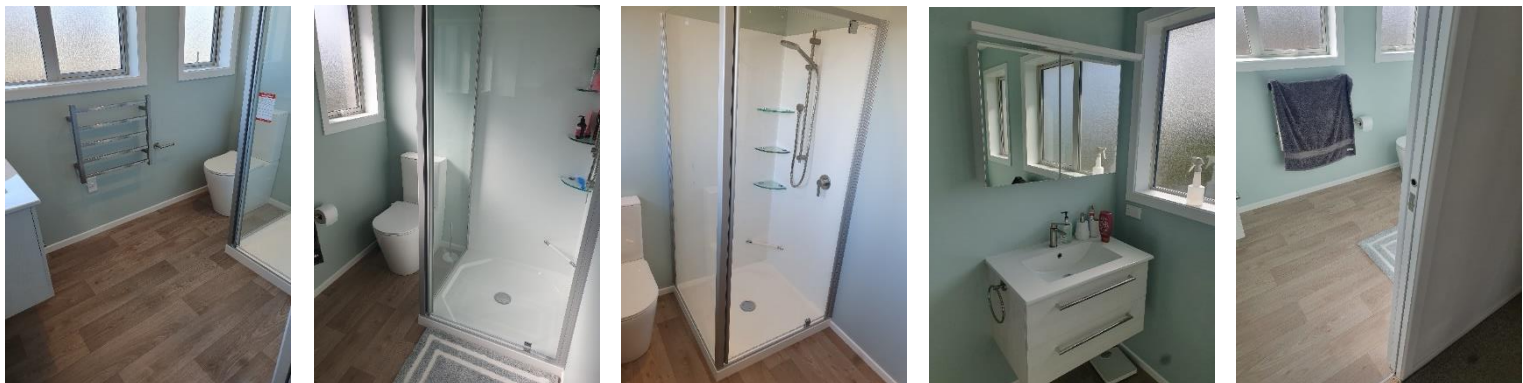
The end result is a fresh, modern bathroom that feels more spacious, with a layout and fittings designed for long-lasting everyday comfort.

Total Cost: \$25,169.43 (incl. GST)

Before:

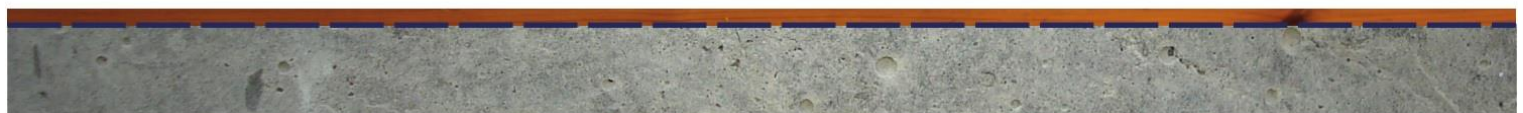


After:



**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz



Contemporary Bathroom Renovation in Halswell

This 2000s-era home, built on a concrete slab foundation, required a complete bathroom upgrade. We stripped the space back to framing, removing all wall and ceiling linings, before relining to create a fresh, solid base for the new fit-out.

The transformation included:

- Replacement of the original drop-in bath with a 1700mm back-to-wall freestanding bath, paired with an Adesso Mode wall-mounted bath spout and mixer
- Removal of the old 900×900 acrylic shower, upgraded to a larger 1200×900 acrylic shower system with frameless glass sliding door and an Adesso Urban three-function column shower
- Installation of a modern 900mm two-drawer wall-hung vanity paired with a 900mm round LED mirror
- New 600mm floor tiles, continued up the walls to 1.2m high for a stylish and durable finish
- A full suite of updated fixtures and fittings to complete the design

The end result is a contemporary, low-maintenance bathroom with high-quality finishes — providing both style and practicality for modern living.

Total Cost: \$29,096.16 (incl. GST)

Before:

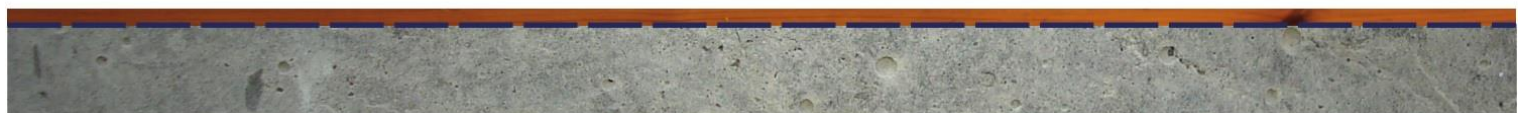


After:



**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz



Wheelchair-Friendly Ensuite Conversion in Hillsborough

This 1930s timber-floor home originally featured a walk-in wardrobe off the master bedroom, which was converted into a wheelchair-accessible ensuite. The project required a complete strip-out, removing all wall, ceiling, and floor linings before rebuilding the space from the ground up.

To achieve accessibility, the floor was reconstructed with a 1:50 fall toward a strip drain at the far end of the room. The ensuite now features fully tiled floors and walls, with an open-plan shower design — no glass or curtain — for easy wheelchair access.

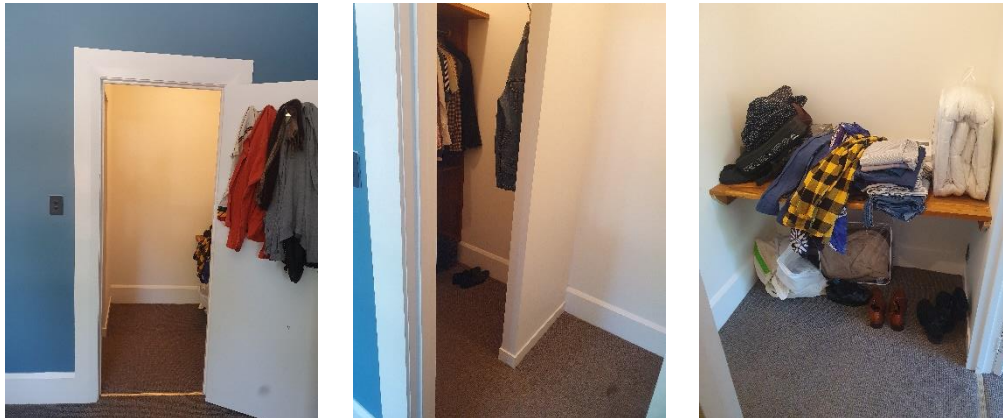
Additional upgrades included:

- Installation of a new small double-glazed opening window, positioned above the toilet for natural light and ventilation
- Elevate 460mm basin with Methven Glide basin mixer, paired with a mirrored storage cabinet
- Raymor Brighton multi-spray slide shower with Methven Glide shower mixer
- Elementi Uno toilet for a modern, compact finish

This project required building consent and design work (handled separately by our recommended designer), but our price included all construction, trades, fixtures, and fittings.

Total Cost: \$36,092.88 (incl. GST)

Before:

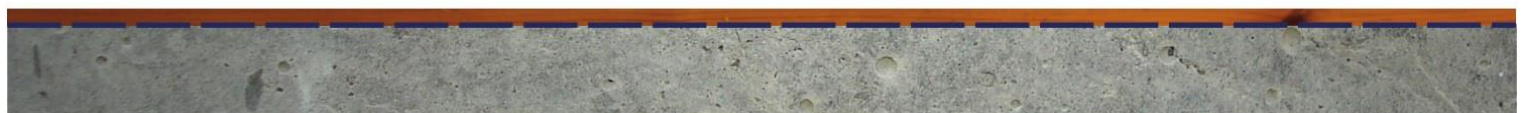


After:



**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz



High-End Ensuite Renovation in Burnside

This ensuite, part of a large family home originally built in the 1920s, had been through multiple extensions and alterations over the decades. Located upstairs on the first floor, the old space was dated and inefficient, with a small acrylic shower, vinyl flooring, a basic floor-mounted vanity, and a standard toilet.

The renovation involved significant reconfiguration of the upstairs layout. Several internal walls were removed and reframed to create a new flow between the master bedroom, walk-in wardrobe, and ensuite. The old separate hinged doors were replaced with two premium cavity sliding doors, complete with soft-closing runners and magnetic privacy latches — one leading from the bedroom into the walk-in wardrobe, and the other providing ensuite access from within the wardrobe.

The ensuite itself was transformed into a luxurious, fully tiled space. Key features include:

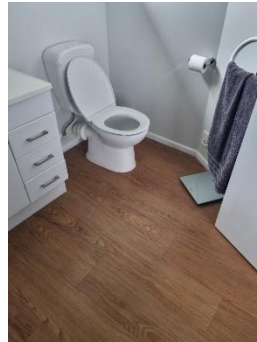
- Custom-formed tiled shower enclosure, designed to work with the room's unusual wall angles
- Frameless custom glass sliding shower door, tailored to fit the space
- Full-width recessed shower shelf, with integrated LED strip lighting for a striking feature
- 1200mm wall-hung vanity with double bowls, offering both style and practicality
- Floor-to-ceiling tiling on all walls, combined with a fully tiled floor for a premium finish
- A modern back-to-wall toilet and high-quality fixtures throughout

This project required building consent due to the fully tiled shower enclosure. The homeowner arranged design and consenting prior to our involvement, while our team supplied all building materials, engaged the sub-trades, and organised the required council inspections. The homeowner provided the vanity, tapware, toilet, tiles, and assorted fixtures, while we completed all construction and project management.

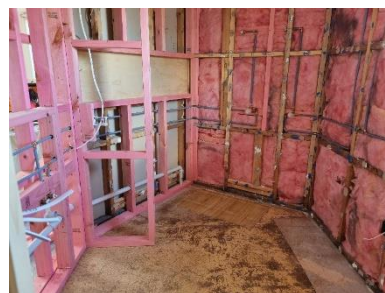
The result is a refined, high-end ensuite that combines luxury finishes with a practical new layout — perfectly suited to a modern master suite.

Total Cost: \$47,487.84 (incl. GST)

Before:

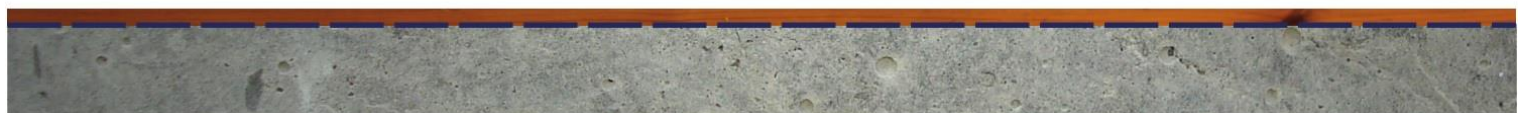


During:

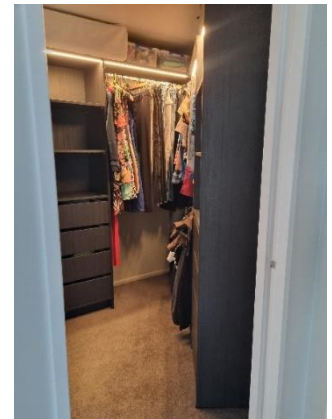
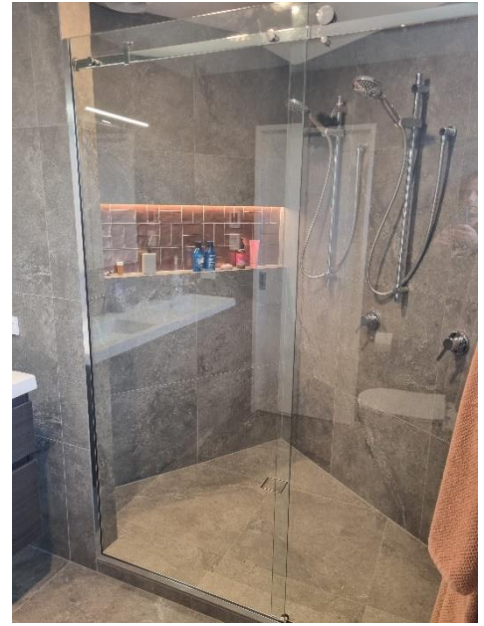


**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz



After:



**Bespoke
construction
projects**

Phone 027 310 7334
Email enquiries@appletonbuilders.co.nz
www.appletonbuilders.co.nz

