Kia Houkura te Kotahitanga

To prosper together through housing

for one whānau in Ruatāhuna

By Te Irirakau Tawa, Joanne Donovan, Tepora Emery

He mihi - acknowledgements

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā rau Rangatira mā, tēnā kautau katoa.

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Kia Houkura

Executive Summary

Kia Houkura te Kotahitanga (Kia Houkura) is a kaupapa Māori research project within the Functional Affordable, Accessible, Buildable Homes (FAAB) research project. Funded by the Building Better Homes Towns and Cities National Science Challenge (New Zealand), and lead by Cresa Ltd, FAAB investigated how smaller (45-702m2) home designs can be more functional, accessible, affordable and buildable.

In keeping with this goal, Kia Houkura investigated the housing needs of one whānau Māori living in Ruatāhuna – with a special focus on kaumātua, young mama and hauā (people with disabilities). The research took place against a status quo approach to housing for Māori communities in New Zealand, where significant challenges continually arise.

Housing models developed for non-Māori ways of living, or to satisfy market drivers, often fall short in addressing the cultural, social, and economic realities of Māori ways of life. As such, the implementation of these models can lead to a shortage of culturally appropriate living environments, and to Māori being disproportionately represented among people who experience housing insecurity.

With the aim of addressing this problem Kia Houkura, through this project report, outlines factors that may enable smaller (owner occupied) Māori homes to function for and support, a range of people within one whānau, over time. Built into this research brief, is an exploration and better understanding of the concept of home, within a Māori context. The report aims to contribute to, and promote, strategies that are appropriate for Māori housing solutions emphasizing social flexibility and intergenerational use, to better meet the needs of Māori communities.

Key Findings

Kia Houkura te Kotahitanga found that:

Cultural Incongruity: Existing housing policies, community planning and status quo housing models often do not align with Māori cultural practices or world views, which prioritize

collective living, intergenerational and widened family support systems, and close identification with ancestral places.

Concept of home: The concept of ‘home’ in a Māori context is a place of care or support that often extends to the wider family and to future generations. Home is also a place with links to external spaces around the home and to external community as well. The central built environment, therefore, often serves as a dynamic hub; extending the concept of home to include areas such as additional food preparation zones, sleeping areas, and gardens. The extension of home into the local environment and community, includes activities such as food distribution and kaumātua care.

Expandable, and adaptable: Māori homes often operate in a more socially “breathable” way. This means they may be occupied, or modified, in ways that allow the home to expand to accommodate more people or adapt to new needs as they arise. Interior spaces tend to be more fluid/multifunctional in purpose. Overall, less space is given over to individual privacy and more space is focused toward collective or multi-purpose use, than in non-Māori models.

Recommendations

Māori Values-led Housing Designs: Develop housing models that accommodate Māori values and needs. Such designs can include communal areas for whanau, more flexible floorplans that allow for multipurpose use and small buildings that can be expanded and adapted and have links to external spaces, whenua and community networks.

Intergenerational Housing Models: Promote housing models that can be easily adapted to serve more people over time. This could include systems that allow for shared and community networked use of resources and communal land use.

Flexible, Responsive Housing Policies: Implement policies that:

- Recognise Māori communal influences and drivers.
- Offer self-build development opportunities, systems that give access to knowledge and resources and systems that enable community-led development.
- Engage Māori community participation in planning and development processes and proactively train new designers in mātauranga Māori so that community solutions are appropriate for Māori and more embedded in a Māori world view.

Conclusion

Addressing Māori housing needs requires a paradigm shift from conventional approaches to those that embrace social flexibility and intergenerational use. By incorporating cultural values and fostering community involvement, a Māori focused housing strategy can provide sustainable, secure, and culturally affirming homes for Māori families. This report underscores the urgency of adopting these solutions to promote equity and well-being within Māori communities.

FAAB Small Homes Research

The FAAB Small Homes Research Programme, that Kia Houkura te Kotahitanga is part of, addresses a critical gap in research, as identified by Affordable Housing for Generations (the National Science Challenge). It scopes out ways to expand the recognized spectrum of housing in New Zealand toward developing solutions for functional, accessible, and affordable smaller homes (approximately 45-70m2). The intention is to provide household, and whanau, with a range of smaller housing options that may be adapted to their needs and are capable of evolving alongside shifting capacities and requirements over time. The FAAB Small Homes Research Programme examines concepts of home and ways to imbue a sense of home, to investigate and promote affordable, accessible solutions within the small home sector.

Research methods: exploring characteristics of housing that works for whānau Māori, Kaumatua and young māmā

Kia Houkura te Kotahitanga is dedicated to kaumatua and whānau Māori, including young māmā and people with disabilities. The research therefore, contextualises and seeks to address these needs, within the aims of the FAAB Homes research programme.

The FAAB Small Homes design initiative aims to create homes that foster a sense of connection and imbue designs with the essence of home. As such, the research for this project included participants from one whānau Māori in Ruatāhuna – Ngai Tūhoe central Bay of Plenty. The research participants, who are related to the primary researcher Te Irirakau Tawa, took part in a co-design process that explored the characteristics of their home that are of high value to them. Subsequently, a redesign of their current home, to better accommodate these 'high value' characteristics was undertaken and the designs were presented back to the whānau for their feedback.

This report presents the 'old and new' concept floor plans of the current whānau homes. In concert with these, the report also presents:

- An examination of the new and old floor plans against the concepts of home expressed by the research participants and
- Their thoughts on how new designs could function for older kaumātua and pakeke (older whānau members); tamariki mokopuna (children and grandchildren) and, last but not least, hauā or whānau members with disabilities.

Research methods; exploring concepts of home for whānau Māori

The report begins by looking at the characteristics of an existing 54m2 home named ‘Hau-te-kura’. This whare has been used by the research participants (and primary researcher’s extended whānau), through several periods of occupancy. The case study focuses on the way in which the house has been adapted to serve the needs of the whānau over generations, through periods of raising young children, sheltering extended whānau and during periods of kuia/kaumatua care.

Through analysing the way Hau-te-kura was extended and developed, the intention is to uncover the attitudes and approaches to ‘home’ that shaped the dwelling over time. Further, the building and the changes made to it, will be interrogated to discover more about the characteristics of a dwelling that fosters a sense of ‘kainga’ or home, ‘kotahitanga’ or unity and ‘hau-te-kura’ or prosperity for this whānau Māori.

The information gathered through this exploration will inform a concept floor plan for a small 70m2 dwelling. Whānau members living in Ruatāhuna will engage with the concept plan and they will be invited to contribute design ideas and critique. The feedback they put forward will inform changes to the original concept design and provided information for alternative design iterations.

Hau-te-kura

The home at the centre of this study, was named ‘Hau-te-kura’ by the primary researcher’s late Kuia – Hokimoana’s whānau, has housed the family on the kainga in Ruatāhuna for the past four decades. The name, meaning "to strive for prosperity," reflects how Nan and her family viewed the home as a foundation for whānau prosperity through shared effort and contribution.

Our exploration begins with a survey of the dwelling's origins, examining its various occupants over time and the contributions or changes each group made, along with their reasons. The collective way resources were pooled for each phase of modification is also noteworthy and will be discussed in detail later in the report.

A survey of occupancy 1982-2022.

Figure 1: Hau-te-kura, Nan Hokimoana bach in Ruatāhuna and surrounding land.

Nan's house was not conceived in its finished state, but it began as one would plant harakeke, starting small and growing it to meet the family's needs.

The original dwelling was a 9m x 6m envelop built around 1982 by Koro, Nan, their children and in-laws. The family pooled financial resources to pay for the materials and contributed the labour. The original house had no internal bathroom facilities and only a basic kitchenette. The bath was located externally, out on the deck. Clean running water was accessed from the Mataatua marae water line and the hot water cylinder was a later addition put in in 1983, roughly a year after the house was built.

Figure 2: Tawa, I. (2023) The floor plan of the first iteration of Hau-te-kura built by Koro and his sons around 1982. Digital sketch

After Koro, his sons and in-laws built the first phase of Hau-te-kura. There were eight further phases of whānau occupation, and at each phase, the home was altered and improved in some way by the whānau. Six of these phases of modification, altered the structure or improved access to or services in the home. [1]

[1] For privacy reasons, “occupants” are used instead of names with approximate year/s of occupation

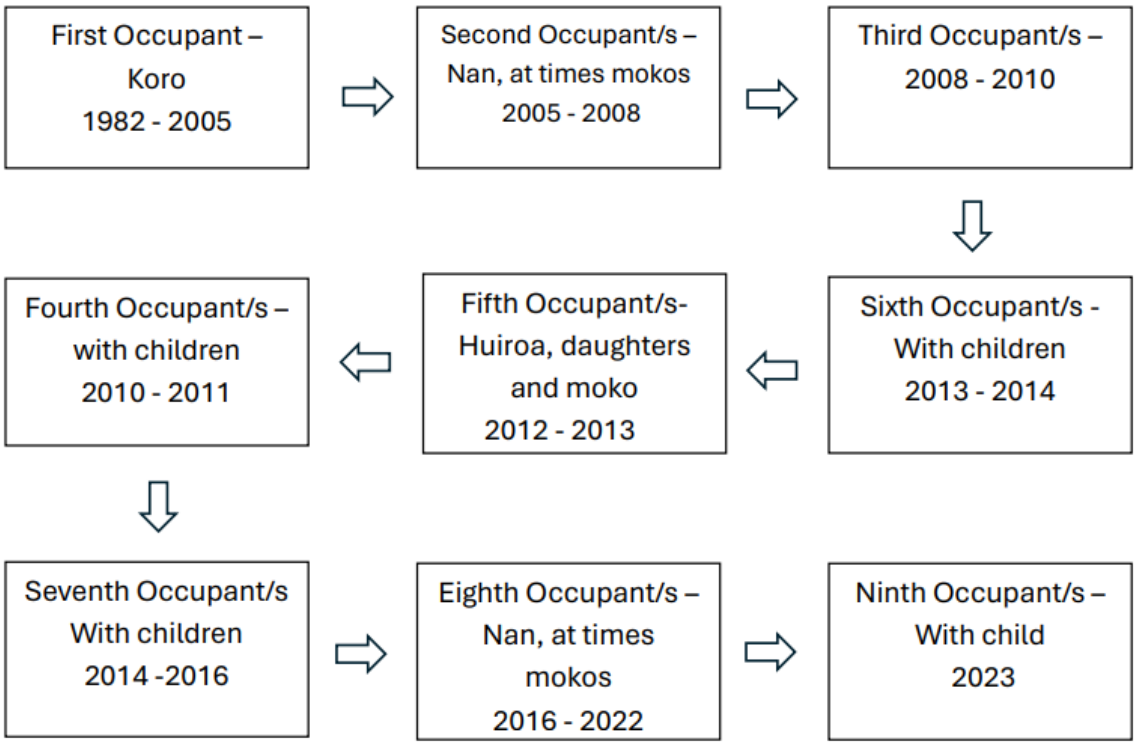

Figure 3: Timeline of occupants at Hau-te-kura

Seven phases of building or modification

What are the characteristics of home in Hau-te-kura? The care of people and whānau are at the centre.

> *All things, no matter how specialized, must be connected to a centre,*
> *(Marsden, 2003, p.59)*

The harakeke plant, or native flax commonly used by Māori for many purposes, is known to represent a Māori concept of whānau. In a Māori world view, the fanlike pattern of the harakeke leaves, protects the *rito* or 'baby' leaf at the centre, this leaf is thought of as a *tamaiti* 'child'. The *āwhi rito* or 'parent' leaves are on either side, and the third or fourth leaves from the centre, are considered the *tipuna* or 'grandparent' leaves. This whakataukī, or Māori proverb, expresses this world view;

> *E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi, ēngari he toa taki tini*

'My strength is not from myself alone, but from the strength of the group'. Hau-te-kura follows the logic of the harakeke metaphor. As such, each addition to the home springs from

a central root, just as each leaf set strengthens and grows the harakeke, so each new addition to Nan's home, strengthened the ‘hau-te-kura’ for the whanau.

The original build envelop therefore, can be conceived of as a zone of potential, a starting point, from which whānau strength and prosperity can develop and flourish. The original build at Hau-te-kura was a simple envelop, with few interior walls placed into the original dwelling. Along the home’s journey, spaces were maintained as ‘open plan’ to accommodate a range of communal activities, meeting, resting and eating together, even though on a relatively small scale. Hau-te-kura is created as a central communal hub, one that is dynamic and viewed with the potential to grow in support of the whānau.

This flexible, collective use of space and the way the home is adapted contrasts with the more closed design present in non-Māori models, that are conceived of as needing a fixed number of bedrooms/bathrooms, and a list of pre-designated task-oriented spaces. In contrast, the way the family developed the building in Ruatāhuna was in the interest of accommodating and caring for more people, knowing that the needs of whānau are likely to change over time. The value and concept of home implicit at Hau-te-kura, was in the service of whānau over generations. From a simple starting point, the dwelling was developed as whānau needs arose and resources allowed.

From the original build, there were seven substantial phases of change at Hau-te-kura. The phases of change were resourced collectively, either through whānau members or through tribal contributions or a combination of the two. Whanau who occupied hau-te-kura made their own contributions that suited their well-being at the time weather it be repairs or substantial modifications.

Hau-te-kura: seven phases of building or modification

Year (approx.)	Work that took place	People involved	Resources
1982	Original envelope with deck and outdoor bath	Koro, sons and in-laws	Whānau pooled resources
2005	A bathroom is added to the living/sleeping room	Contractors	Tribal contribution
2006	Concrete foundation, kitchen and dining room	Sons	Whānau pooled resources

2009	Carport, woodshed and smokehouse	Sons	Whānau pooled resources
2019	Modified Kitchen/Dining room/Water Cylinder	Huiroa and two close whanau helpers	Huiroa Tawa
2021	Modified bedroom living room and interior wall to create comfort and living 'zones'	Nan, Irirākau, Huiroa, and two of Iri's cousins	Whānau pooled resources
2022	New iron roof	Contractors	Tribal contribution

Figure 4: Table of building and modification at Hau-te-kura

The first change to the home was the internal bathroom, which was added to the lounge/sleeping zone, away from the cooking area. Next a concrete slab was put down, and a kitchen/dining extension was added. The new cooking zone increased the size of the footprint by a third, meaning that larger family gatherings were now much easier at Hau-te-kura. The carport woodshed and smokehouse were built next and linked to the kitchen area. This area doubled as a second food preparation area when needed and allowed for hunted food to be processed away from the house and prepared for distribution. Next, the kitchen was modified again, and a larger wood burner/cooker was added. Finally, Nan's mokopuna, researcher Irirākau Tawa, modernised the living spaces in the home, improving storage, adding window treatments and a dividing internal wall, to create opportunities for privacy for her aging kuia in the open plan sleeping space.

Access considerations

During Nan's occupancy of Hau-te-kura after 2016, considerations for her changing needs began to become increasingly necessary. These led to new modifications; the additions made by Irirakau Tawa in 2021 to add to Nan's comfort and privacy as she shared Hau-te-kura with her mokopuna, whanau and manuhiri at times. The addition of a 'wellbeing wall' in the kitchen/dining area was dedicated to information sharing —enabling whānau members to leave notes and communications for each other about Nan's meds, diet and general wellbeing.

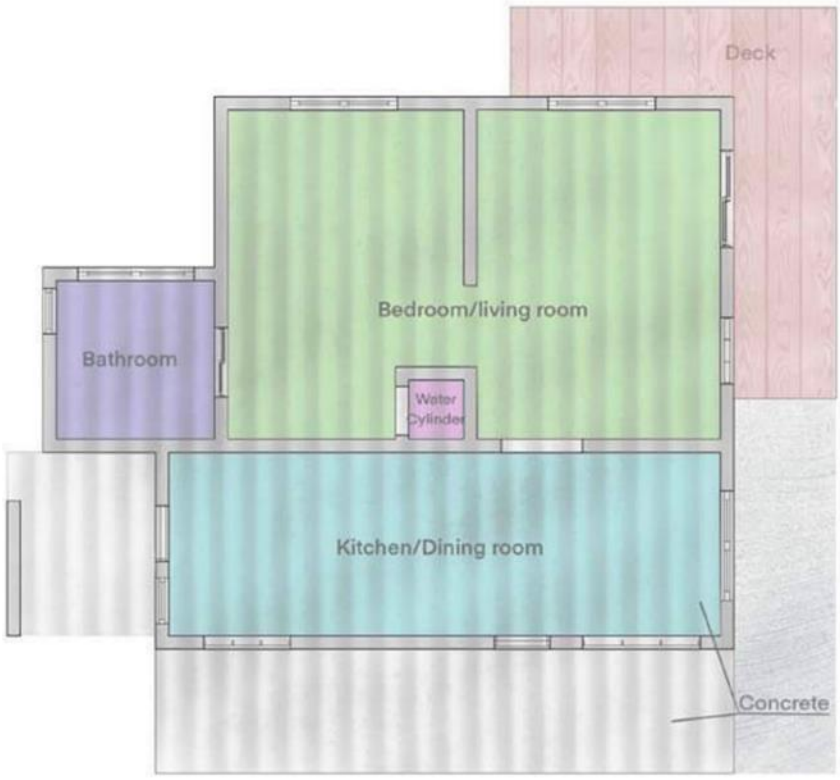

Figure 5: Tawa, I. (2023), Hau-te-kura floor plan after modification. Digital sketch

Analysis of Hau-te-kura

Analysing the original building to inform our designs we considered the characteristics that contributed to the flexible nature of the building; its ability to grow as needs demanded and when resources were available. The simplicity of the original building - a 9m x 6m envelope on one level - meant that the building could be easily extended outward. The deliberate 'open plan' approaches the whānau adhered to through successive phases of modification, meant that sleeping and meeting spaces of the dwelling were treated more fluidly and could, therefore, accommodate change and/or more people as needs arose.

Irirākau Tawa recalls conversations with Nan, where Nan conceived of Hau-te-kura as forming in a comparable way to a Marae, as an open plan, to become a dynamic centre through which family life flowed, was sheltered and protected. These are the considerations taken into account as the basis for a small home design.

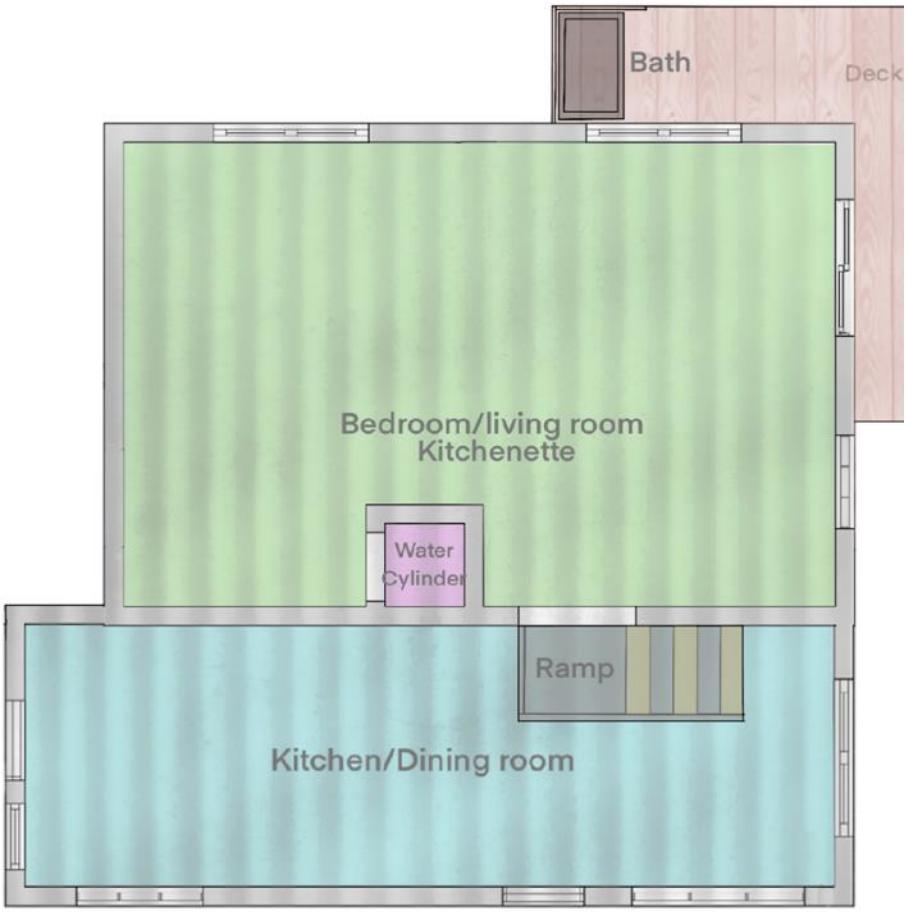

Figure 6: Tawa, I. (2023). The bach modified for better access. Digital sketch

A concept plan based on Hau-te-kura

Based on our observations of how Hau-te-kura was used and expanded, we developed a concept floor plan for a 70m² home to present to whānau members in Ruatāhuna for consultation. This plan incorporates the insights gained from the whānau development of Hau-te-kura over time. Consequently, the concept plan prioritizes communal spaces and accommodates the fluid use of changing occupancy.

To summarise the characteristics, drawn from Hau-te-kura, that have informed the concept plan:

- Simple external envelope, home on one level

- Minimal use of the footprint for bedrooms
- Maximum use of footprint for communal areas
- Sleeping zones extending into the communal spaces
- A higher proportion of the footprint dedicated to the laundry area to provide additional worktop and storage space.
- Open plan bathroom with wheelchair access
- Is modular in conception, can be added to externally using additional pods, or carport/covered areas.

The layout includes spaces that are designed to be flexible, and adaptable. Thus, the concept plan (see below) allocates a larger portion of the footprint to communal areas, with less emphasis on individual bedrooms. It includes two bedrooms, one of which is designed for versatile use. The second bedroom can also serve as storage for bedding and mattresses or as an office space when not used as a sleeping area. As such, the concept plan (see below) dedicates a higher proportion of the footprint to the communal spaces, with less emphasis on individual bedrooms. Two bedrooms are included in the floor plan, but one of these is left open to a range of uses.

Communal spaces are open planned so they can be adapted to whānau gatherings or caregiving stayovers as needed. A bench seat area doubles as a sleeping zone, or seating zone as required, with storage underneath.

The laundry/storage area foresees the potential for whānau members to manage extra bedding or clothing when more people are staying over. Storage is built in to accommodate additional bedding and linen. The bathroom is open plan and placed as far as possible from the kitchen area.

The plan is intended to minimise the sense of individual spaces and fosters a sense of a connective whānau zone through an open integrated use of space. The focus of the home is being ‘breathable’ to accommodate and care for the maximum amount of people.

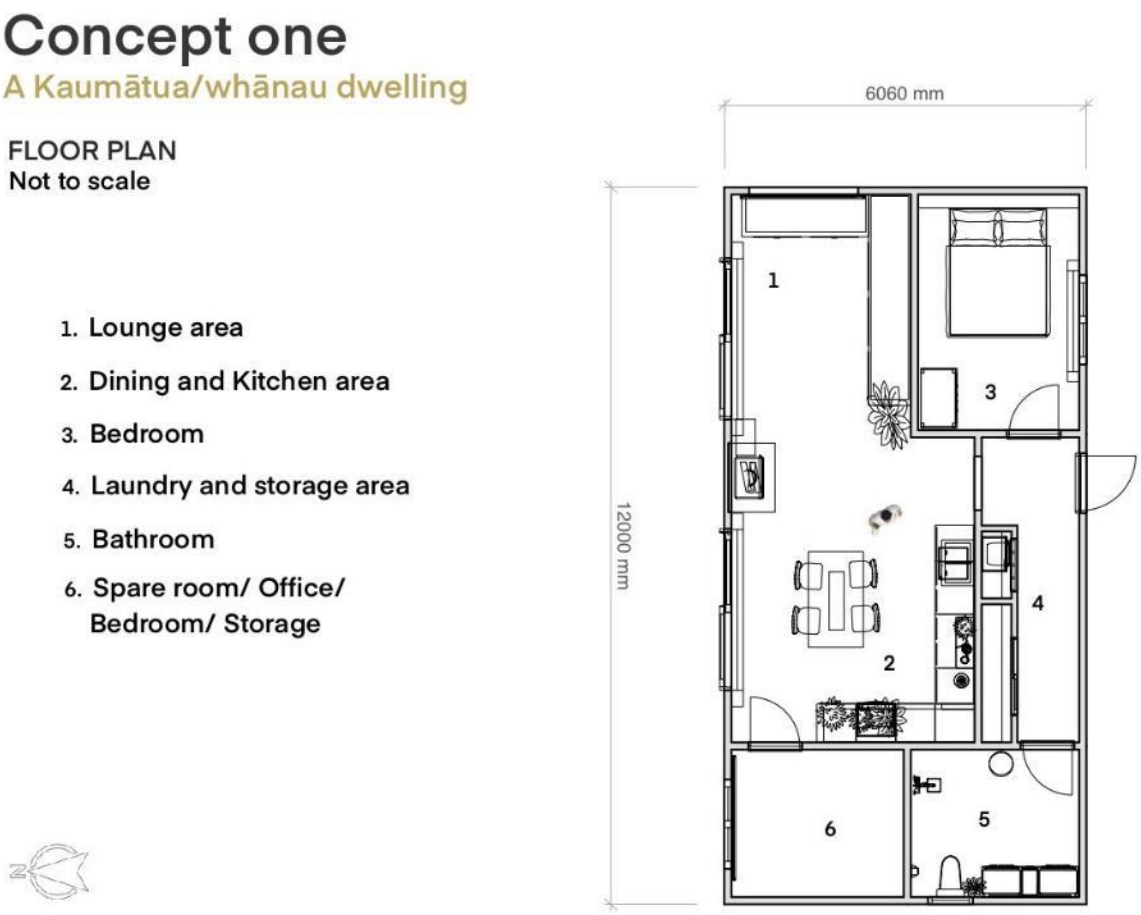

Figure 7: Tawa,T I. (2023). Small housing design inspired by Hau-te-kura

Figure 8: Tawa,T I. (2023). Concept for a more socially 'breathable' small home

Whānau Assessment and Feedback

The engagement process for the concept designs involved a visit to Ruatāhuna, spending the day with whānau, (our interviewees) sharing kai (food) and exchanging stories. We also visited Nan where she rests in the family Urupa, overlooking the beautiful Ruatāhuna valley. We came across some of the many Ruatāhuna horses throughout the day, and Irirakau shared stories of her childhood, riding horses in the forests and riverbeds of Te Urewera. We visited each of our interviewees in turn. As each of the interviewees engaged with the concept design, they generously contributed whakaaro (ideas) that were drawn from their experiences and circumstances.

Figure 9: The roaming horses of Ruatāhuna

Interview: Pāpā, Huiroa Tawa.

Our interview with Pāpā or Huiroa, took place in the home he built himself a ‘wharepuni’ or home built into the earth, using recycled building resources he collected or traded for. The design of Pāpā’s home mirrors a traditional Tūhoe wharepuni, of the kind his grandfather, Heemi Tawa had built at Maungapohatu,Te Urewera (see below).

Figure 10: Te Urewera wharepuni built by the great grandfather of Te Irirākau, Heemi Tawa

In the tradition of the wharepuni, we see Pāpā's home development (mokopuna wharepuni) is built into the ground, cut into the side of the hill and connecting the whānau, Huiroa says, to Pāpatuanuku. He describes the many of advantages of building in this way.

> *The hapū, whānau, iwi built our wharenui under our own rangatiratanga and tikanga. That has changed, and it is still changing today. This house was built from the blueprint taken from our meeting houses throughout Te Urewera. Wharepuni are built half into the ground, with the roof exposed. Significantly, there is the wharepuni at Maungapohatu and that is still in the ground. That's where this design [for this whare] was copied from. Building a wharepuni doesn't require a lot of material but keeping water away is the big requirement (Huiroa Tawa, 2023).*

As it was built using reclaimed or recycled materials, the home did not require mortgage or a debt, which Huiroa describes as 'living stress free' when compared to others in Ruatāhuna who are paying off mortgages.

Figure 11: Huiroa Tawa overlooking the view from the mokopuna wharepuni.

Figure 12: View from the mokopuna wharepuni overlooking the Waihui river.

The use of reclaimed materials for the wharepuni draws attention to a decommodified approach to Māori housing, one that fosters independence and the wellbeing of the inhabitants. As such, the mokopuna wharepuni is created as a place that is continually evolving and can be adapted to meet the needs of the current and future inhabitants.

Figure 13: The interior at the mokopuna wharepuni

Huiroa commented that 7m x 10m is the ideal size for the wharepuni as it is within a scale for a person to build himself and to maintain and therefore, fosters self-reliance. The recycled materials used to construct the home, were collected over time from community members

Figure 14: View of the mokopuna wharepuni showing the roofline indicating home is built into the hillside

who no longer needed them and were willing to trade or gift them to the project. Huiroa connected this autonomy over the process of providing resources for the home, without needing to go into debt, as part of maintaining rangatiratanga. The mokopuna wharepuni is a place that will provide shelter today, but also for the whānau of the future. Where conventional houses are bought and sold as a commodity, this home will be passed to future generations as part of the whenua (land).

Figure 15: The entrance to the mokopuna wharepuni with the mauri stone at the entrance

As the interview closed, Huiroa showed us a place in the floor that he called, the 'Pito' – or umbilical cord of the wharepuni. A place where whenua, tangata and whare are connected to Papatuanuku or the mother earth.

First participant's feedback on the design concept

The initial response to the design from our first interviewee, Huiroa Tawa or 'Pāpā' was that it was too square and too rigid, especially with regard to the use of space for individual bedrooms. Pāpā felt that a better use of space would be to use the 70m2 footprint for communal spaces, ablutions and kitchen, and to create separate individual sleeping zones using small externally located pods.

> *The communal area can be left for manuhiri while residents have their privacy and space away from the noise of the communal area. This is like the Marae, where the wharekai is the communal area for kai and entertainment while the wharenui is the area for moe (sleep). (Huiroa Tawa, 2023)*

Pāpā noted that this is a way family homes are being extended in Ruatāhuna. As whānau are coming back to Ruatāhuna, he says, whānau are putting pods and small dwellings around the main house and that this idea works for the wharenui concept of building houses. Although it may take more material overall, such a home can care for many more people at one time and in the long run.

Interview; Uncle Sonny Te Rire

Our second interview with Uncle Sonny Te Rire took place in Uncle Sonny's home in Ruatāhuna. The home was a standard three bedroom home built in the 1980's that was substantially modified to meet the needs of Uncle Sonny's severly disabled daughter, Te Waikāretu who is 33 years old. Uncle Sonny described the house as built to 'a Pākēha plan' and 'a normal three-bedroom home' until Te Waikāretu came along. Since then, ACC has added an external ramp for accessibility, changes to the bathroom including a hoist, a hoist over the bed and ramps at each of the exits and a larger bedroom dedicated to providing Te Waikāretu with the space for the care needed.

Figure 16: The veiw from Uncle Sonny Te Rire's home in Ruatāhuna

Uncle Sonny described the immense challenges the family had faced caring for Te Waikāretu and how the modernisation and improvements to the home had changed everything for the family, enabling them to care properly for his daughter. Waikāretu's needs opened Uncle

Sonny's eyes to the 'modern' world, and his daughter's severe medical needs changed many of his priorities.

The land the house is built on was gifted to Uncle Sonny by his mother, to go to the moko's and, Waikāretu. Uncle Sonny would not want to leave the house, as it has come to him from his Tīpuna. He described it as the whānau tūrangawaewae.

Second participant's feedback on the design concept

When Uncle Sonny was shown the concept design developed from Hau-te-kura, he looked over the plan and assessed the design from the perspectives he had given with regard to the needs of his daughter Waikāretu. He thought the floorplan was good, because it was simple, modern and would meet the needs of whānau. He added that he had 'lived in a Māori way' earlier in his life but now modern services that met the needs of Waikāretu were of primary importance. Uncle Sonny's assessment of the design was that it would serve him, as a simple, modern home was all that was needed. It should not be too complex but focused on meeting the needs of the people who lived in it and able to be adapted to their ongoing needs.

Uncle Sonny elaborated on the concept of 'turangawaewae' or a place to stand, with respect to his home. He described his home as turangawaewae. He also talked about passing the turangawaewae on to his tamariki and mokopuna, as something that could ensure their wellbeing into the future.

Post interview analysis and further design considerations.

The feedback given by the two participants offered two differing perspectives. Pāpā shared the view that the home would serve more people over time if a more communal approach was applied to the design. Uncle Sonny felt that a simple modern home could serve his family, provided modifications that suited the needs of family could be added later. It is worth noting that apart from the additions that had been completed to meet Te Waikāretu's needs, Uncle Sonny's whare had undergone the additions he referred to. A deck from the kitchen and ablution services, leads to a side area occupied by a sleeping pod and a caravan, added on to accommodate additional family members at times.

Using the perspectives offered up through the whānau interviews we extended and developed the original design concept to encompass considerations for a more collective approach to small housing.

Figure 17: Tawa, T I. (2023). Concept two, a collective concept for a small housing design

Figure 18: Tawa,T I. (2023). Concept design for the central home as part of a more collective housing development

Continuing to follow the metaphor of harakeke, the central built area of the home is designed as a communal hub for meeting spaces, a kitchen, storage zones, ablutions and laundry zones. The main area is design to function as a communal zone with only limited private sleeping space. External to the main building, the wharepuni, additional smaller sleeping zones are located. As such the home is not just a building but a dynamic, connective space that can evolve, expand and change with whānau over time.

Conclusion and findings

The brief of this section of the project was to develop a house design that is functional, affordable, accessible, buildable and takes into view the needs and perspectives of Māori. To achieve this, we drew upon Nan Hokimoana's home, Hau-te-kura, to explore the values that

underpin Māori housing development when it is led by Māori for Māori, in the context of one whānau from Ruatāhuna. Through this, we gained a sense of the concept of ‘home’, and of concepts of ‘prosperity’ for whānau with respect to housing.

Figure 19: Tawa,T I. (2024). Concept for additional small dwellings as part of a collective housing development

Through analysis of the phases of building and modification of Hau-te-kura, it became clear that whānau were not interested in providing individual bedroom spaces or standard sized kitchen, dining and living areas as are usually the features of small home design. Instead, the open floor plan was maintained almost to the final phase of modification of the home. The changes that were made at each phase, were predominantly centred on providing upgrades that accommodated more people for gatherings, sleepovers or as carers.

Therefore, the concept of ‘prosperity’ present in the development of Hau-te-kura was centred on the need to care for people, both in the present and over time. ‘Home’ is considered a place of kotahitanga and even at times rangatiratanga in the context of Hau-te-kura. A space where whānau can strive for prosperity through collective effort and contribution. Through this, a sense of autonomy and pride are also attained.

The feedback offered up by our research participants and whānau members further endorsed these values although from different perspectives. One participant contributed the idea that self-building and improvisation, using reclaimed and local resources, supported the maintenance of rangatiratanga and therefore the build was an important opportunity to build the hauora of whānau.

For the participant, this vision extended into the future, presumably through many future additions and alterations to the home, as a way to support his mokopuna and the generations to come. We also heard this value echoed by our second participant who felt his home was a ‘gift from his Tīpuna’ highlighting the view of home as more than a building, and as a collective and longitudinal space that is contributed to and maintained over generations.

Figure 20: Tawa, T I. (2024). Concept design for additional pods as part of a more collective housing development

Our second participant offered a concept of tūrangawaewae with respect to his home, but the footprint of his home was of secondary importance to the need to access services that would aid and benefit the care of a disabled daughter. The common element to both participants kōrero was the view that the home is a place in the service of people, and about

the care of people for the present and into the future. The concept of ‘prosperity’ and ‘striving for prosperity’ or ‘Hau-te-kura’ that is intrinsic to the concept of home, therefore stems from a world view where the care of people and whānau are at the centre.

Socially extendable, homes that are useful over time.

From the investigation and findings, we conclude that some Māori homes operate and reach into socio-cultural spaces that are not represented in the design of homes intended for Māori. As such, Māori homes tend to have the ability to expand to accommodate more people or adapt to new needs as changes arise.

For this to occur, interior spaces need to be more fluid and less ‘designated’ and therefore, hold the capacity to shift and change according to occupancy and current need. The research confirmed that the concept of individual spaces and ‘bedrooms’ is not something that was of high concern to the originators or occupants of Hau-te-kura or either of our participants in this research. Instead, the building’s ability to expand to accommodate people and to meet their needs was of higher value.

At Hau-te-kura the breathable, fluid nature of the internal spaces, also communicated with and extended to outdoor spaces at times. The original bath, for example, was located outside on the deck in the original iteration of the home and later, an externally located second kitchen and smokehouse area were developed.

This leads us to observe that ‘home’ can extend to include and link to external spaces in a Māori context. In these instances, the central built environment functions as the dynamic centre, generating an extended concept of home, that links and reaches out to external zones such as additional food prep areas, sleeping zones, gardens and beyond.

A ‘vernacular’ approach to maintenance and remodelling.

Following the investigation, it is easier to understand how gaps in effective housing policy for Māori may have arisen. When confronted with ‘standard’ house designs featuring mostly predetermined space, designated for individual use, Māori may not recognise how the space will work for their whānau needs. It could be difficult for individuals to articulate, or advocate for more socially connective, and adaptable housing/spaces.

In addition, in some Māori communities, a vernacular approach to adding to and maintaining housing is in play, as we observed in Ruatāhuna. People often proactively adapt the standard floorplans of small homes to extend the way the home can accommodate more people. Whānau stockpile materials; timber, used doors and windows and sheets of iron, to use for repairs and/or extensions to existing homes. Materials are often repurposed and adapted to extend the home by creating additional useful spaces such as food prep/distribution zones, or even living spaces.

This vernacular approach to building/extending homes means that there is a view of housing within these communities, that houses can start small because they may be adapted, improved and increased in size as needs arise and resources allow. This contributes to a sense of autonomy, self-reliance, and rangitiratanga as one of our participants described. However, it is also important to say that this view is not universally held by all Māori as our other interviewee expressed to us.

Final recommendations

This investigation concludes that for small housing solutions can work more appropriately for Māori, when they better reflect Māori values and needs. These can include a more communally oriented home design characterised by flexible floorplans allowing for adaptable and versatile use. The examples explored in his research, show that smaller homes can be developed to accommodate many more people, and expanded or adjusted to adapt to new needs. Smaller homes are not small, therefore, when they are appropriately designed to connect to a shared built environment, to external communal or shared access spaces, whenua, and community networks.

Housing policies are likely to be more effective for Māori when they acknowledge and respond to Māori communal influences and priorities. Policies should acknowledge that buildings are often intended to serve many whanau of the present, and are often prepared with whanau of the future in mind. In this respect, a home is more than a building, but can be likened to a networked hub for the whanau, and linking to wider iwi networks when it comes to collectively sharing resources.

Community-led initiative and tino rangatiratanga can be served through designing policies that allow for greater autonomy for Māori in managing their own solutions. Autonomy could include self-build development opportunities, access to knowledge and resources, and

developing systems for locally-led site development. Policies should include setting up a landscape where Māori can proactively engage in planning and development. Training policy makers and new designers in Mātauranga Māori is a way to further ensure responsive, integrated community solutions for Māori.

Returning to the metaphor of harakeke, as we see Māori housing linked to and nurturing whakapapa, whenua and whānau, we may form a more effective view of housing for Māori. This mind-shifts moves away from a view of housing as a commodity, barricaded to exchange value, but sets housing into a humanised framework where it serves as a socially connective dynamic hub with the potential to grow thriving communities in the present and through future generations.