

Papa kāinga Hearing Evidence

Richard Morrell on behalf of Ngā Uri o Te Aurere Pou Whānau Trust

The intention of our evidence is to:

- Share our experience taking our project through the resource consent process;
- Share some feedback on how the Council and this plan change can influence the process papa kāinga projects must go through.

Ngā Uri o Te Aurere Pou Whānau Trust is a small whānau Trust established to manage the block of ancestral Māori land on behalf of the 51 owners.

This project has taken over 10 years to move this project from an aspiration for our immediate whanau to a project supporting our wider whanau.

We have dedicated over 5 years of serious mahi to actively progress this project from an aspiration to a reality.

Project outline

Our project is a sustainable papa kāinga on our ancestral Māori land for 10 new earth homes. The development is the manifestation of the tikanga and mātauranga of our hapū, permaculture principles and sustainability which directs the development and informs where everything is located. We will be undertaking the majority of the work ourselves.

Key motivators:

Its obvious that our people are struggling to thrive in the current environment.

- Affordable housing in the current housing market is not a reality for families with tamariki, the cost of living and supporting their children consumes 100% of their earnings. This makes them ineligible for a mortgage in the current market.
- There are limitations on the type of affordable homes for whānau in need that accommodates people at different stages of their lives eg. Kaumatua kuia; families with tamariki, transient singles.
- Our whānau are suffering reoccurring health issues are often caused by their poor housing situations, which can also consume most, of their meager income. This is a recipe for early death in our Kaumātua Kuia and is a huge driving force behind wanting to provide healthy, low maintenance, sustainable & affordable housing on whānau land where they are valued and important to our future!

- Affordable homes for whānau in need that accommodates people at different stages of their lives eg. Kaumatua kuia; families with tamariki, transient singles. The principle of Whānau sits at the core of Kaupapa Māori. It acknowledges the relationships that Māori have to one another and to the world around them. Whānau, and the process of whakawhanaungatanga are key elements of Māori society and culture.

Our aspirations, through this project, are to:

- Reconnect with and repatriate our ancestral Māori land, that was historically, the kāinga for the hapū;
- Live a sustainable lifestyle in the most comprehensive way possible that is consistent with tikanga Māori. Seeing the development of the whenua as a livable asset that provides kai, natural resources, eco homes and ultimately place for our whānau to call home.
- Provide warm, healthy homes that are relatively low cost to construct and low cost to maintain using sustainable infrastructure
- Enable our whānau to live socially and with the support of other whānau members (parenting modelling, anti-violence, guidance) rather than being isolated and away from their whanau.
- Provide a healthy living environment by way of gardens, orchards, aquatic production and running stock, that is self-sustaining, organic and supports the well being of the whānau into the future.
- Provide a home that also creates education and employment opportunities for the whānau in earth building, property management and maintenance, organic gardening and stock management and other offshoot industries.
- Restore health to our whenua and the awa by riparian planting along the river margins to enhance water quality & provide shade for aquatic fauna, restoring the ephemeral areas as a wetland and pond network for growing watercress, raising eels and improving the biodiversity.
- Our project is more than just building a building, we are addressing the healing of a whānau, helping a hapū and involving an Iwi.
- Our whare are healthy with off the grid energy efficient homes that keep us cool in the summer and warm in the winter with no cost to the occupant.
- Our whare will have alternative energy supplies that will provide power at little to no cost to the whānau
- Our whare will have solid earth walls that will endure a growing family.

- The distance to Whangārei city & shopping amenities is 40km but the strength in our project lies with the people who we will provide housing for. By living together and being in each others lives, we can address the day to day needs of the whānau and work together to develop rounded healthy whānau orientated support structures.

Statutory Approval Processes

- Whangarei District Council Resource Consent - approved
- Northland Regional Council Resource Consent - approved
- Whangarei District Council Building Consent – in preparation
- Māori Land Court Ahu Whenua Trust Application – underway

Our Experience of the Whangarei District Council regulatory process

Positives:

- Pre-lodgement meetings

We had several pre-lodgement meetings with WDC staff. We found these extremely useful and we were encouraged to continue engaging with the Council because we were not charged for these meetings. It was also beneficial that the planner likely to process the regional planning consent was in attendance for one of the larger meetings.

- Staff:

There was a willingness amongst staff to understand the project. It was helpful that the processing planner understood communal living. The staff outside of the planning team but involved in the planning process were pragmatic.

- Papakainga planning policy:

The current objectives and policies for papa kāinga development is in alignment with how we, as owners of Māori land aspire to develop our whenua. They reflect our value system and how we would develop our whenua.

Challenges

- Staff

It has been clear that the planning department and officers who work in planning processes were unfamiliar with papa kāinga and te ao Māori.

- Cost

Pre-commencement costs incurred to date - \$153,763.53 and that's with no physical works have started on the site. There will be additional costs incurred through the building consent process, inspections, resource consent monitoring.

There are also no other whanau based sustainable earth building contractors available in Tai Tokerau, nor is there a prior template for this type of project. To inspire confidence in the project development we have sought experience from professionals in their respective fields, and have their commitment to continue advising on the project:

- Registered Architects & Engineers who have experience in earth building: Advance Design Architects & Richardson Stevens Engineering & Base Group Consulting & Cook Costello
- Qualified waste water consultants – Nature Flow Systems
- Qualified Landscape Architect and Permaculture experts
- Registered Builder & Project Manager who has experience in earth building – Clint Goldie
- Qualified Surveyor - Shane Stratton
- Qualified Town Planning Consultant – Bernadette Aperahama
- Registered Accountant – Brent Martin of Plus Accounting
- Legal Executive – Katherine Heta
- Experienced Manager & Whanau Facilitator – Aroha Shelford
- Experienced Earth Builder – Richard Morrell
- Chair of NZ Earth Builders Association as a consultant – Graham North
- Principal Maori Advisor for local Maori Land Court – Jared Pitman
- Principal Maori Advisor for CYF as a social policy advisor – Dr Moana Eruera

We recognise that many other whanau will not be able to engage the input we have simply because of cost. We want our project to be a successful pilot but not one that raises the threshold that is too high for other applicants.

Regulatory Fees*

Whangarei District Council – Resource Consent Deposit \$1, 500.00

Whangarei District Council - Environmental Standard report \$ 233.00

Whangarei District Council Resource Consent final invoice \$ 6, 229.80

Total costs charged by Whangarei District Council	\$7, 962.80
Northland Regional Council Deposit	\$ 858.00

*Does not include building consent costs, inspection costs, resource consent monitoring fees which will all be additional.

Under the proposed WDC provisions (refer Attachment 5 of the Hearings documents), our papa kāinga project would've been a permitted activity. That would've saved over \$27,000 in council consenting fees and expert fees needed to put the application together. This is an enormous cost for our whānau project and one that many whānau will not be able to manage.

Initial feedback from WDC was that our development would proceed on a non notified basis. At a subsequent meeting when we were close to submitting the application Council staff advised that we need to notify the application. The timeframe that we needed to lodge the application was sooner than we had time to re-engage with whānau for the purposes of obtaining written approval so we sought limited notification of the application. This came at an extra cost for us. We struggle to be comfortable with this notification process when we are repatriating our ancestral land and others moved in to the area and are degrading our environment – yet we need to engage with them. Our project would produce environmental benefits far better than what is happening in our community at the moment.

Moving forward

We support the plan change to better enable Māori to reconnect with their whenua recognising the enormous process we have been through to date. The resource consent process was really expensive and intensive for us and we can see how other whānau will be deterred from using their land.

We see the willingness in staff to understand the project and assist us as applicants. They need support from Council to understand the environment they are working within and the people they are engaging with.

We are happy to be engaged by Council to contribute to the preparation of a papa kāinga toolkit for applicants.

Pre-Commencement Costs Incurred to Date

Project Management

- Project Management \$37, 700.00

Financial

- Chartered Accountant for financial forecasting model \$3, 450.00
- Chartered Accountant for financial practise & procedures \$1, 725.00

Technical: Advice, Design and Reports

- Earth Building Project Design – site visit, site plan, plans etc \$7, 146.28
- Architectural costs \$30, 333.72
- Surveying & topographical information \$1, 955.00
- Geotechnical reports \$3, 335.00
- Permaculture plans: landscape and house sites \$5, 750.00
- Planning: Resource consent preparation (District & Regional) \$19,084.71
- Engineering \$8, 780.26
- Te Reo me Tikanga consultant \$ 250.00

Policy Development

- Tuku Iho Trust for developing governance policies & procedures \$7, 500.00

Infrastructure Design

- Naturalflow for the design of the effluent systems \$4, 887.50

Shareholders / Landowner Engagement

- Northern Advocate for Ahu Whenua Trust advertisement \$ 155.39
- Ahu Whenua Trust Hui – Rotorua & Hamilton & Auckland \$ 500.00
- Ahu Whenua Trust Hui – Hamilton & Rotorua \$ 500.00
- Stationery & Kai AW Trust Hui – Set up \$ 100.00
- Copy of Land Title (CT) \$ 21.00
- Warehouse Stationery \$ 268.87

Regulatory Fees *

- Whangarei District Council – Resource Consent Application \$1, 500.00
- Whangarei District Council for Environmental Standard report \$ 233.00
- WDC Resource Consent final costs \$ 6, 229.80
- Northland Regional council Deposit \$ 858.00

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TOTAL SPENT TO DATE - \$142,263.53