



Hinemihī at Clandon Park – a summary

Today Hinemihī, the Maori Meeting House at Clandon Park, comes to us on an extraordinary journey that starts with her construction in 1880 by the Ngāti Hinemihī people of Te Wairoa, New Zealand. This journey includes her¹ survival as a place of sanctuary in 1886 from the devastating Mount Tarawera volcanic eruption. Her story continues with her relocation in 1892 to Clandon Park as an ornamental garden building and a souvenir of the fourth Earl of Onslow (Governor of New Zealand 1889-1892). Hinemihī initially formed the focal point of a new Water Garden round the lakes at Clandon, surrounded by carefully chosen New Zealand planting, and was moved to her current location near the house by 1934. She has been viewed as a curiosity, a nurse, and an image on a banknote. She has been managed as a National Trust property, a Grade II Listed Building, a Ngāti Ranana (London Maori Community) wharehūi (meeting house), and understood increasingly as a Maori Ambassador at the centre of a transcultural partnership between British people and New Zealanders, Maori and non Maori. This partnership will hopefully see her transformed from a vulnerable historic building into an active marae (Maori ceremonial space) and a cultural centre for Maori activities and learning in Britain.

Hinemihī is a carved, painted, wooden building; she is also a living being and ancestor of the Ngāti Hinemihī people. As a vulnerable structure in the harsh external environment of the gardens of Clandon Park, she requires regular, routine maintenance and periodic, extensive interventions in order to safeguard her long-term future. As a living being, she needs to be kept warm by interaction with people. Hinemihī's physical fabric has been subject to many transformations since her construction in 1880. This has included periods of destruction and deterioration as well as reconstruction and revitalisation.

Currently, the need for a major restoration of Hinemihī has become apparent in order to mitigate water ingress through her deteriorated roof and remedy a breakdown in the protective painted surface of her carvings. This need occurs at a time of increased integration of Hinemihī into the lives of British and New Zealand Maori that has raised the profile of Hinemihī locally, nationally and internationally. The observance of Maori protocol (described in Maori as tikanga, kawa), recitation of whakapapa (genealogical narratives), and performance of korero (oratory), waiata (song), haka and kapahaka (dance) that occur on Hinemihī's marae, help maintain Hinemihī as a living being. Interaction with National Trust visitors and people local to Clandon is also seen as crucial to her future sustainability.

Since 2004, the National Trust has been approaching the conservation of Hinemihī in collaboration with "Hinemihī's people"². This group includes the descendants of the originating community (Ngāti Hinemihī) in New Zealand, with locally based National

¹ Maori meeting houses (wharehūi) embody the ancestors of their tribal groupings (iwi) and therefore are referred to as individuals, Hinemihī as a female is referred to as "her".

² "Hinemihī's people" is an evolving group that contributes to activities and events at Hinemihī. This has included powhiri (welcoming), karakia (blessing), annual public events such as the "Kohanga Reo hangi", "Maori and Pacific Day of Dance", "Hinemihī Maintenance days", and community-building events such as "Being with Hinemihī" and "Sharing with Hinemihī" workshop series.

Trust volunteers and staff and the British Maori and Polynesian community; Ngāti Ranana (London Maori Club), Te Kohanga Reo o Ranana (The London Maori language school), Maramara Totara (London Maori weaponry school), Matariki (Maori Cultural Group) and Beats of Polynesia. Hinemihi's people also include visitors to Clandon and the local community, although they have been involved to a lesser extent. The intention is to involve as many interested parties and members of the community as possible. In order to facilitate this, the National Trust proposed in 2011 the creation of a "friends of Hinemihi" group which would raise the awareness of Hinemihi and get more people involved in the dialogue of how she can be used in future. This friends' group became a reality in March 2012 and is called Te Maru O Hinemihi – the welcoming embrace of Hinemihi.

Hinemihi's people, including the National Trust, very much have the vision of Hinemihi being returned to a working marae, used and enjoyed by visitors, community groups, schools and the New Zealand community as well as those interested in learning about Maori or Polynesian culture. However a project of this nature could cost well over £250,000, and it is important to ensure that if we invest this money, people will make use of a functional meeting house. A Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Hinemihi was turned down in March 2011 and this was largely because it was felt that we needed to do more to demonstrate that Hinemihi would be used as envisioned. If there is insufficient interest in a working marae, then we need to know what use people will make of Hinemihi and invest accordingly. Te Maru will help the National Trust answer the question "if we build it, will you come?" We hope to have an answer to this question by the end of 2012 or early in 2013 so that we can return our attention to the specification of the project and fundraising.

The proposed conservation of Hinemihi is designed to be less a response to Hinemihi as an historic "art work", but more as a response to the needs of her people. In doing so, the conservation seeks to ensure that in preserving the fabric of the past, we do not restrict cultural development in the future. The current conservation and repair considerations therefore provide an opportunity to invest in the relationships between Hinemihi and her people in order to sustain Hinemihi's care in the long term. This conforms to the National Trust's conservation approach for "the careful management of change". The Trust also has the ambition of "bringing places to life" and has a unique story to tell at Hinemihi with a building that *is* alive.

Date: August 2012