

# In Common



## Papakāinga for the present: new models for collective living on ancestral whenua

An interview with Jade Kake

This is a free PDF  
available from  
[pipipress.co.nz](http://pipipress.co.nz)

See final page for further  
publication details

Pipi Press



## ***Papakāinga for the present: new models for collective living on ancestral whenua***

*An interview with Jade Kake  
by Cait Puatama Johnson  
and Gabi Lardies*

Jade Kake is an architectural designer, housing advocate and researcher who works with Māori communities to rebuild papakāinga. She is currently based in Whangarei, her kāinga tupu. Jade visited us in Tāmaki Makaurau to talk about the past and future of papakāinga, how settlement patterns were forcibly changed through colonisation and how papakāinga might offer hope for healing, reconnection and regaining socio-economic balance.

**Ko wai koe? Nō hea koe?**

Ko Parihaka te Maunga  
Ko Hātea te awa  
Ko Ngāpuhi ratau ko Te Arawa ko  
Whakatōhea ōku iwi  
Ko Ngāti Hau me Te Parawhau ngā hapū  
Ko Pehiāweri te marae  
Ko Kake te whanau  
Nō Whangārei-Terenga-Paraoa te kāinga  
Ko Jade Kake tōku ingoa

*In Common*

51

**Could you tell us a bit about precontact papakāinga; in particular, what were the key buildings or areas and how were they used by people?**

Pre and early contact, the dominant settlement pattern was across three areas. Kāinga were unfortified villages and would generally be at a whānau or hapū level. Within those kāinga there would be homes in clusters, they might be sited close to natural resources and the idea was that people would live and work predominantly on the kāinga. Then there were also pā which were fortified villages (usually associated with a kāinga) that would be retreated to in times of conflict. There was a third category, accessible encampments, which were associated with mahi and kai; so fishing villages, that kind of thing. Because hapū have different areas, they relied on relationships with coastal or inland whanaunga. Often there would be marriages specifically brokered to grant access to different resource sites. People couldn't just go anywhere they pleased—clearly established and understood boundaries and relationships enabled access to resources. So, regardless of whether you were an inland tribe, a coastal tribe or in the ngahere, you could get what you needed.

***Pākeha brought the idea of the nuclear family living in one dwelling. Whānau encompasses a much wider kinship group; what did this more communal way of living look like on a day-to-day basis?***

An interesting point to bring up is that marae, as we understand currently, was a new typology that emerged out of the conditions of the time. A marae is an expanded version of the ceremonial

centre of the kāinga. The ceremony of pōhiri is really important because you end up face-to-face with each person and so you are able to know exactly who is there, why they are there and what their intentions are. Even though the ceremonial purpose now seems largely symbolic, welcoming people into the kāinga in that way meant that you were able to discuss why they were there and ascertain exactly who they were because they would stand there and tell you in detail. Plus, you would harirū or hongiri and so you would actually see each person's face. I think you would go through that same process, except unlike our marae today, which often don't have whare around them, this would be in the centre of the village.

I think the other thing that's worth mentioning is that you needed the land base to be able to sustain extended or whānau living. Part of the process of colonisation meant that there was a deliberate and successful attempt to erode the land base through a variety of ways. That's why we have such a small amount of land left now. It was achieved through confiscation, through coerced sales and through things like, "You have to register the title. Oh great, you have no money you can't afford the survey, now you have to give up the land" or "We'll recognise this one person who we'll allow to sell on behalf of the whole group although they have no authority to do so."

There was also encouraged urban migration to support the growing settlements, leading to the hollowing out of the population. What was left became mostly rural, partially because you couldn't live on land that had not been zoned multi-residential. This is

still a problem in a lot of places. In Whangārei, we've got a great plan change, which happened last year, that enables papakāinga as a matter of right on Māori land. Unfortunately, a lot of places are zoned countryside, which means only one house per ten hectares. The planning system has a lot to account for in that respect.

It was a complexity of factors that ultimately sought to change the dominant settlement pattern amongst other things.

**Yeah, and that worked for Pākehā, because rather than people being able to sustain themselves off the land, they had to go and work for them.**

And the old people were left at home on the farms, they couldn't manage.

**What were the relationships between the people, the buildings and the surrounding environment in papakāinga?**

I feel that our settlements were very strategically sited; when people lived in places it was for a good reason. I know in Whangārei we had strategic locations around the harbour so you could monitor what was coming in, as a way to assess threat. Some of those kāinga were located in places that Europeans later described as "a good spot for a signal station". Sites were chosen for practical reasons: surveillance and defence, access to resources and connections to other settlements. There were well-established trails between the different kāinga.

***Māra kai and mara rongoā are key features of papakāinga past and present; why is this such an important element?***

You need to be able to feed the village and you need to be able to feed manuhiri. We've got cultivated foods from the māra kai, which were usually either leafy or root vegetables; we've got the food that comes from the ocean — lots of different kinds of shellfish and fish; then we've also got food from the ngāhere — so that might be birds, berries or certain roots. Those are the three main areas and māra kai is an important part of that. I've been reading some books by Nick Roskruge, who's a Te Ātiawa academic writing about Māori horticulture. One of his books is on root vegetables, one is specifically on potatoes and one is on leafy vegetables. They are really fantastic and show you there was a huge variety of cultivated kai; more so than we're familiar with now.

Rongoā is really essential to ensure everyone is well. A lot of rongoā is about preventative medicine as much as it is treating ailments. I do not pretend to be somebody who knows a lot about it, but I think that there are a lot of things that worked really well for our tūpuna or even just our grandparents. Maybe there are things we can pick up and integrate into our daily lives now.

I had a nice experience with my friend: we were eating fish heads and kamo kamo and we were like: "Our grandparents would have eaten like this everyday!" A lot of that is still accessible to us now, we're just not used to it. The other day, I went diving for scallops

*Jade Kake*

55

with one of my whanaunga. We went out together and then I took them home, shucked them and chopped them up and made fritters for a hui. You have these moments and you think, if I had the right space and lifestyle, not working all the time, living on my whenua with access to the harbour, you can see how these things could be reintegrated into your normal way of living. There are plenty of people that do these things but it gets harder and harder because our access to the harbour isn't good—often there'll be pollution, there are limits on how much you can take and there are sometimes conflicts about the way it's managed. When it comes to māra, unless you've got papakāinga, there are fewer spaces where you can do the constant maintenance and harvesting required.

**The concept of kaitiakitanga—guardianship rather than ownership—is one that we feel is very pertinent. Could you talk about how it affects people's relationships to the whenua?**

I think the best way to do that is by doing some of the things that we've already talked about. If you're living on your land, you have sustainable systems in place, you're responsible for managing your own waste, you're responsible for your own kai production and sustainable management of mahinga kai. I think that closer relationship means you can't really do things without thinking. Because you have reintegrated yourself into being a part of that system, when things happen to that system through your mismanagement, you experience it. It has to begin as a fundamental shift in the way we think of ourselves as human beings. Sometimes the

best way to do that is to become part of the ecosystem again.

I grew up in Australia in an eco community. We lived in a house that my dad built out of recycled timber, we got all our water from the roof and collected it in rain water tanks, we had a solar-power system, we had composting toilets, we grew a lot of our own food and because we weren't on town services, we had to recycle as much as possible, keep waste to a minimum and manage it well. I think it's this active management that makes you really aware of changes and your actions within that system.

There's another way we can talk about that too. I do quite a bit of resource management work for my hapū and there are so many things you need to respond to. It's good, in a way, that the Resource Management Act requires engagement with hapū, but it creates a big burden because there's so much work to be done. Often we don't have the capacity or capability, but if we miss things (both cultural and historical) others might not think they are important, so developments might go ahead without considering them. Maybe there's not enough wider understanding, which is partially due to knowledge and partially due to value sets. You can't rely on the developer, architect, surveyor, planner or the council. There are certain things that only hapū will bring up and that is a lot to be responsible for.

**What is the role of manaakitanga in a papakāinga? How does it manifest both in the buildings and in people's actions?**

In the design work I do and advocate for, I often refer to a guide called “Ki te Hau Kainga Māori Housing Design Guide”, authored by Rau Hoskins and others. There are some really useful things in there; one of them is around having quite large living spaces in homes so that you're able to host manuhiri. It involves maybe having second living areas so that family members who live in the house can retreat, even when there is a large group being hosted. It also involves things like having good passive surveillance of the entrance, so you can see when people are coming. I guess it's a security function but also allows for positive interactions with manuhiri.

In the wider master plan, that might look like having areas that are closer to roads, parking and entrances that are intended to host people who don't live there and then keeping other facilities that are just for the use of the papakāinga located a bit further away. Recently we had a workshop for a project where we did some indicative master plans. I was guiding everyone through a few different aspects: clustering of dwellings and the configuration of dwellings was one; circulation was another—roads and paths; shared versus private space and parking and green space. One of the things that came out of the workshop—which I thought was quite interesting—was that there was a road that was the spine with the homes coming off it in clusters and then in the centre there was a whare that could

be used to host manuhiri. That could be for workshops or things that could involve a much wider group, a kind of multi-purpose space. Then we said, let's have one over here that's more of a utility room, it could be a laundry or a tool shed, those kind of more domestic activities. I thought that was quite a nice way of delineating it—it's deliberately set further back so you have to be welcomed in—and if you're doing things like community activities or tours it means you don't have people traipsing past your house. So there are a lot of sensitivities there but I think these can be managed effectively through good design.

**How does the way papakāinga are constructed enable more collective ways of living and foster whanaungatanga?**

I think that by having your whanau or hapū members around you, it naturally means that you get to know each other a lot better, especially with children involved because they will play together even if adults might be more reserved. If there are spaces intended for children, they'll naturally commingle. One thing I think works quite well is having homes with good passive surveillance of playing areas so you can watch from your living space, kitchen or deck.

Those communal spaces are key, getting that public/shared/private balance right is important because you want to build community and relationships, but in a natural, non-forced way. You still want to have a degree of privacy and not be in each others' pockets. You want to be able to interact and retreat when you want to, and I think well-designed

spaces should be able to deliver both. I think you build whanaungatanga by doing things together; whether it's gardening or going out gathering, fishing, weaving or sharing a meal. People will make things happen regardless, but I think well-designed spaces go a long way to facilitating and fostering those kinds of positive relationships and interactions. I feel like we've built our relationships within our whānau just because we work on stuff together all the time. Relationships through mahitahi is a good way of thinking about it.

***Rebuilding papakāinga on ancestral  
whenua holds so much promise;  
what are some of the ways in  
which you feel papakāinga can  
uplift mana whenua?***

Well, I think part of it is about healing trauma in the first instance. That's often multilayered, intergenerational and really complex, but rebuilding our relationships with each other, ourselves, culture and whenua is a start. Papakāinga can provide the base for that, which is not to say that if you throw people who have a bunch of complex problems into a space that it won't be hard—there's a need to be realistic about that. However, I think the solution is embedded in the settlement pattern. It takes us back to ground zero because we're able to live together: we're able to live together within our social configuration, we're able to live back on our own land and we can start to fulfill some of these responsibilities.

I did this really nice interview with Aroha Shelford, who led the development of her whānau papakāinga in Mangakahia.

She was saying: “We’re not going to need so much outside money, you know, we’re gonna have milk and we’re gonna have gardens, and we’re gonna do all these things, and support each other on the land, and so we should be able to set aside money. If someone wants to go be this, we can back them, we can fund them to go and be this thing they wanna be.” I really like what she was saying because of her vision. There doesn’t have to be a limit on your dreams and aspirations because of poverty and trauma: we can invest in the next generation. If we work through complex problems and set foundations, we can start to have big aspirations and start to build a much more hopeful future.

We must recognise that for Māori partial support is a starting point to get back some things that were lost, and get back to a position of parity—that’s just not where Māori sit currently. If you look at the statistics, they show Māori at the bottom of many socio-economic indicators; it would be quite nice to be on par.

**What does it mean for a papakāinga and the land it is built on to be held collectively by mana whenua when people are now so used to the colonial construct of private property?**

This is a good question! Papakāinga do not align to our models of private ownership, which creates all sorts of barriers to accessing finance, questions around how papakāinga fit into the wider housing market and issues with the planning system.

Accessing finance for papakāinga can be tricky. Banks expect a security to

be put up for loans, so an individual owner might have an alternative asset (usually property, or a vehicle or business) or they put up the land itself as collateral, in case you default on the loan. Māori land is communally owned and there are all these limitations on alienation, so the land itself cannot usually be collateral. For a long time there was no finance available. Now, there is one loan product and it's called Kāinga Whenua, which is underwritten by Housing New Zealand and administered by Kiwibank. Theoretically its open to any bank, but no other banks have taken it up.

Kāinga Whenua is difficult to access because there's a lack of specialist knowledge within both those institutions (Kiwibank and Housing New Zealand). There can also be quite a big education component required: silly things like people will pre-qualify, but then they might buy some whiteware on credit and no longer qualify, without them understanding why. If you haven't had a culture of borrowing money and so on, these are common mistakes to make, so there's often education, navigation and support required. So for financing papakāinga this is a pathway, but it's difficult and limiting.

There is some grant money available but it's not a large amount. The best bet is if you can get a decent amount of grant money for your first stage of development and then use the rental income to fund successive stages. You probably won't get successive stages funded, but you might get a few houses to begin with to get you started. I think the funding available is enough to build about 20 houses per year—it's not a lot.

I've been thinking about some alternative tenure types and ownership models. At the moment, based on what's happened so far, your options are either: the trust or incorporation owns and manages all the houses and everybody rents, with the rent paying off a collective mortgage; or, individuals getting a licence to occupy, a mortgage for their own house and paying the bank back independently. They might also have a contribution in the licence-to-occupy agreement, which would cover their share of the rates, or a little bit to cover mowing, whatever. With renting you never have the opportunity for that to be your permanent house, which may or may not be a problem. With the second model you are potentially stuck with a worthless asset because you have a limited pool of buyers, so you might get trapped.

I've been developing some options in between. One is shared equity, which is used widely in the community housing sector. You might rent for five years but your rental agreement will include the provision that at the end of that five years if you choose to pursue ownership you would be able to capitalise a portion of that rent. That gives you the option to move into ownership, which could be shared. Shared ownership could look like the trust holding onto 50%, for which they received funding, and say the remaining 50% could be the part that the family gets a mortgage on. It would mean smaller mortgage payments and the trust or incorporation holding onto some ownership of the house. The family could buy that out, they could choose to leave with somebody else purchasing their share or they could just keep living there.

The main reason for shared equity is to make mortgage payments more accessible. Papakāinga housing isn't necessarily going to be a cheaper option because building new houses is not cheap; it's much more expensive than buying existing houses. The quality will be good, they'll be well designed, they'll be healthy, but they won't necessarily be cheap. What might sound affordable across the board is relative to income, so even though we talk about 400k being affordable, that doesn't mean much if your income is 20k. Shared equity might be the difference between putting yourself into financial stress and being able to live decently.

We also need to consider resale. I remember talking to my uncle and he was saying: "Why would anyone want to leave?" But you know, lots of things happen! There's a market that exists outside Māori land and communal tenure, and there's a high likelihood of having to re-enter that market. The whole reason of thinking like this is to make sure that if you have to leave for any reason you're not going to be worse off than someone who has been living in market housing for however long you've been in the papakāinga.

Reselling could work under two mechanisms. The first could be giving first right of refusal to the trust or incorporation. The problem with this is that a lot of these Māori land entities don't have money sitting around or have easy access to finance. The second option might be around vetting. In that case you might have preferred classes of purchaser; for instance, the first might be shareholders of the land, the next might be the wider beneficiary group, the next could be members of the hapū that the land is based on, the

next might be the iwi, and you might get all the way down until you get to the open market. The idea being that nobody should get trapped by a worthless asset, but with all these options along the way, it should never get to the point of an open-market sale.

The point is that the wider market exists and if we're going to promote communal tenure options, I don't think we can turn our backs on that situation. It is important to figure out how these different pieces work together so we're not disadvantaging people through a system that theoretically is meant to be all positive.

All these things need to be written into the residential tenancy agreement or the licence to occupy. I think what we're proposing is much more complex than what's been done previously. Our next step will be to draft some of these documents and to test them in the Māori Land Court, with the Tenancy Tribunal and also with Kiwibank. We want to get this across the line so we end up with something that's somewhere between renting and freehold ownership. I think this would offer stability and could function as a financial asset; not to the same degree as an open-market house, but to some degree.

*For those of us who live in  
urban centres—Māori and non-  
Māori—who don't have access to  
much land, is there a way we can  
incorporate some of the principles  
of papakāinga into our ways of  
living?*

There are some interesting resident-led developments happening. Like Nightingale Housing in Melbourne, where the

residents were the developers and the architects were part of the team. There's a co-housing development moving forward on Surrey Crescent in Grey Lynn: Cohaus. They've had a lot of hurdles in terms of how the development interacts with the planning system. The interesting thing about all of these co-housing groups cropping up is that they are often educated, middle-class people: professionals who have an ability to navigate the systems and a degree of financial resources—that's not saying they're well-off, but with some degree of financial resources.

I'm hopeful that the people who are doing this, because they believe its a better way of life and want to see it happen within our urban areas, will pave the way for others. If they are getting blocked through the regulatory system (planning and finance are the key elements where you will run into issues), by hitting those issues and finding a way to solve them, they will modify the system to be more enabling of these kinds of developments. Then it will enable others to follow and it should be easier. The people interested might be taking on that community development role, or might just be looking to get into their first house, and these developments are more affordable. I think, fundamentally the fabric of the city has to change because there are so few places like this.

I think the way forward for everybody else will be following those with technical means, drive and perhaps some resources behind them once they modify the system and create ways to accommodate different models.

**There's hope!**

You could also just live in a big warehouse illegally, I've done that!

***I've done that too!***

With many thanks to many friends,  
supporters and collaborators  
without whom this publication  
would not have been possible. 



*In Common*

© 2019 Pipi Press & Contributors

Edition of 300

978-0-473-49676-0

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored  
in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by  
any means without prior permission in writing from the  
respective author or the publisher.

Published by Pipi Press  
281 Karangahape Road,  
Auckland 1010, New Zealand  
pipipress.co.nz

Printed & bound in Tāmaki Makaurau  
Risograph GR3770 at Inky Palms  
Risograph EZ-570A at Compound press  
HP Indigo at Pressprint  
Brehmer 1951 at Design Bind.

Papers: Neo Offset, B&F Bond: Saffron, Taro & Platinum

Typefaces: Code Saver, *fondamento*, **Albertus**, **Rhode**  
Array Mono, Monarcha, **Covik Sans**

