

Te Oro

Music & Arts Centre

DESIGN THINKING // MĀORI DESIGN CASE STUDY

Glen Innes, Auckland

OVERVIEW

Steeped in Māori design thinking, Te Oro (the Glen Innes Music and Arts Centre) raises the bar for both Māori design and public architecture within Tāmaki Makaurau. Te Oro clearly expresses place and culture – Glen Innes, located within Tāmaki Makaurau, intrinsically linked to Moana Nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean) and its many cultures.

Te Oro has developed over a 20 year period, and is testament to a community's persistence and desire to have a truly representative and responsive community facility that meets their needs, fuels their aspirations and allows growth amongst their people into the future. A highly contemporary piece of architecture, Te Oro seamlessly integrates art and architecture as a result of a wide reaching process of engagement.

Te Oro is a landmark building, for and from Tāmaki Makaurau, nowhere else.



The main entrance to Te Oro featuring tukutuku artwork.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The seed for Te Oro was planted in 1995 when a charrette was held with the Glen Innes community to explore the idea of an arts centre. A long period of research into community needs resulted in final concept and funding from the local Maungakiekie-Tāmaki board of Auckland Council. In 2012 the project's architects established a working relationship with a senior Māori artist/designer, Mana Whenua groups Ngāti Paoa, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and representatives of the broader community.

Art, design and culture are evident across the whole building and inform the way Te Oro functions and is experienced. Sound, whakairo, tukutuku, kowhatu, the use of reo Māori in all signage, branding and the physical structure itself reflect the ancestral landscape, traditional narratives and contemporary collaborations. Te Oro is a melding of traditional form and iconography with contemporary thinking and technology.

Te Oro comprises three two-story pavilions linked by a naturally-lit circulation space. The first pavilion houses two large dance studios and working areas. The second pavilion contains a double height 394 seat performance space, digital editing suite and recording rooms. The final pavilion houses fine arts workshops for jewellery making, whakairo and painting. Te Oro is located immediately adjacent to an existing pan-tribal marae *Ruapotaka* and the local library - the cultural heart of Glen Innes.



Te Oro from Line Road.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT TYPE

MUSIC AND ARTS CENTRE

FLOOR AREA

1481 M²

ROHE / LOCATION

**98 LINE ROAD
UKUTOIA, TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU**
(GLENN INNES, AUCKLAND)

YEAR COMPLETED

2015

PROJECT DURATION

20 YEARS

(From conception to completion, with a 1 year construction period)

PRICE BAND

\$8.5 MILLION

plus \$150,000 arts budget which had approximately \$350,000 in-kind support

ARCHITECT / DESIGN TEAM

LINDSAY MACKIE - ARCHIMEDIA WITH
BERNARD MAKOARE, PETELO ESEKIELU AND
MARTIN LEUNG-WAI

MĀORI DESIGN CONSULTANT

BERNARD MAKOARE WITH PETELO ESEKIELU
AND MARTIN LEUNG-WAI

BRANDING & TYPOLOGY

**TYRONE OHIA AND DEANE POOLE - ALT
GROUP**

MANA WHENUA INVOLVED IN PROJECT:

**NGĀTI PAOA, NGĀI TAI KI TĀMAKI, NGĀTI
WHĀTUA ŌRĀKEI**

CLIENT/DEVELOPER

**MAUNGAKIEKIE-TĀMAKI LOCAL BOARD,
AUCKLAND COUNCIL**

MAIN CONTRACTOR

HAWKINS

SOUND ARTWORKS

JEROME COWLEY (NGĀTI WHĀTUA KI
ŌRĀKEI)

GEORGE KAHİ (NGĀTI PAOA)

MAHU RAWIRI (NGĀI TAI KI TĀMAKI)

PRODUCER - MATTHEW SALAPU (AKA
ANONYMOUZ)

MACHINE CARVED TIMBER PANELS

TESSA HARRIS (NGĀI TAI KI TĀMAKI)

TINA PIHEMA (NGĀTI WHĀTUA ŌRĀKEI)

LORNA RIKIHANA (NGĀTI PAOA)

TUKUTUKU PANEL

TE ROOPU RARANGA O TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU:

KELLY DIXON AND LORNA RIKIHANA (NGĀTI
PAOA)

TESSA HARRIS AND HUHANA TUREI (NGĀI
TAI KI TĀMAKI)

BERNADETTE PAPA AND TANYA WHITE
(NGĀTI WHĀTUA ŌRĀKEI)

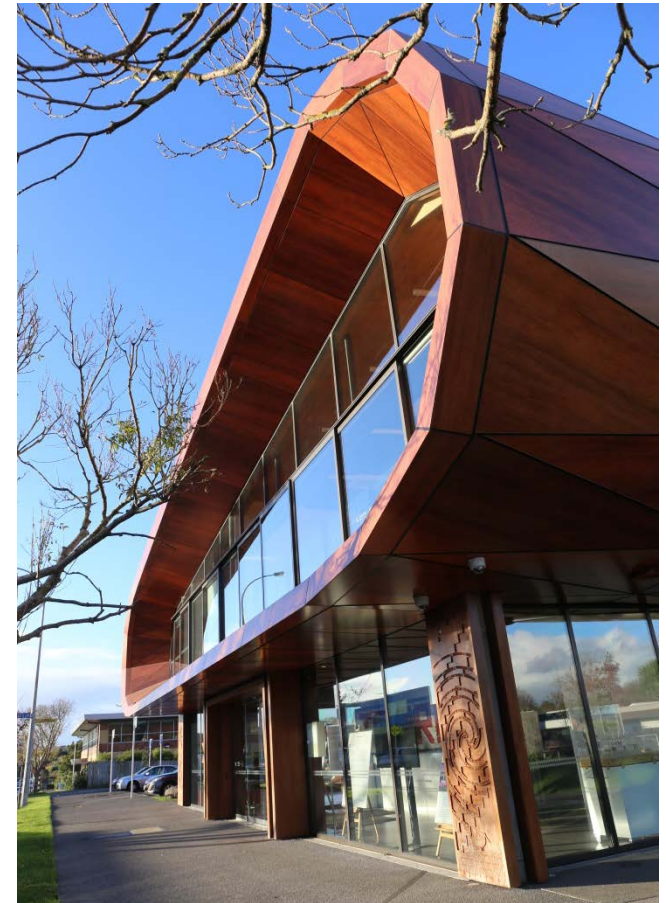
MANA WHENUA ENGAGEMENT

With the involvement of the local Maungakiekie-Tāmaki board, in 2010 all 19 Mana Whenua groups within Tāmaki Makaurau were formally notified and invited to be involved in the project. Responses were received from Ngāti Paoa, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

All three iwi nominated representatives to attend workshops and participate in discussions and meetings to plan and contribute, as a part of the design team, to the design's development. Recognising the importance and need for high levels of engagement and collaboration, resourcing for the involvement of Mana Whenua representatives was included in the project's budget.

Engagement with Mana Whenua and the broader community has directly informed Te Oro's design and the meaningful integration of art, naming and branding. The architects stress the importance of engagement, and highlight that one of the traditional narratives provided the unique form of the building. The name Te Oro itself was gifted by Ngati Paoa and references the sound that the wind blowing across Maungarei (the dominant local maunga) and through lava caves on that maunga.

Mana Whenua set and held tikanga throughout construction, including the laying down of a mauri stone at construction outset. Artists from all three Mana Whenua groups designed and constructed artworks that adorn the building and surrounds, ensuring presence and meaning is authentic and integrated.



Te Oro's form mimics the canopy and trunks of an uru (grove) of karaka.

MANA WHENUA LANDSCAPE KEY FEATURES

Glen Innes sits between two local maunga, Taurere (Mt Taylor) and Maungarei (Mount Wellington). The settlement also sits adjacent to Te Wai o Taiki (Tāmaki River), the waterway connecting Te Waitematā and beyond to Tikapa Moana and Te Moana Nui-a-Kiwa with three of the historic waka portages that crossed the isthmus at nearby Ōtāhuhu.

Te Oro's distinctive architectural form finds root in narratives linking Aotea waka voyaging to Aotearoa from across the Pacific to a small stand of karaka trees which stand today on Taurere. Tradition records that these living trees were grown from seeds brought on Aotea.

From these landscape and whakapapa references the building has been designed as three floating canopies supported by a series of stocky timber trunks to create an uru (grove) where people can go to shelter, talk, learn and make, a space and function similar to that afforded traditionally by uru.



Te Oro is located in the Glen Innes town centre, the retail, transport and services hub for the surrounding area.

INGOA MĀORI NAMES & NAMING

The name Te Oro references natural phenomena well known to Mana Whenua, the sound of wind through and across Maungarei.

Views to Maungarei are emphasised for those leaving the building's main entrance, with Maungarei further referenced as the basic triangular form within the font system designed for Te Oro's branding.

Key rooms within Te Oro were gifted the names of the local landscape features Maungarei, Taurere, Te Omaru, Te Pupu O Kawau and Te Wai O Taiki by Mana Whenua, further connecting Te Oro to landscape, tūpuna (ancestors) and pepeha (statements of place).



Maungarei (Mount Wellington) and uru (grove) of karaka.

MAHI TOI CREATIVE FEATURES

Aside from Te Oro's form itself there are six interwoven components to its art. These are soundscapes, whakairo (carvings) and kōwhatu (stones), font and branding, way finding, tukutuku (traditional wall mounted patterning), and a metaphorical Manaia (a stylized figure, typically carved) that binds all together. All of this art is of place, highlighting Mana Whenua and community values and stories to firmly root the development in this location.

There are six cohesive installations around the outside of the building, each featuring sound art, a carved panel and a large partially carved kowhatu. Three of these have been prepared by Mana Whenua and are located cardinally to address respective hau kainga (home winds). The remaining three have been prepared by the broader Glen Innes community.

Each group was empowered to direct the creation of 'their' piece, the stories they would tell and the artists they would use. These six installations tell different stories about the same place seen from different perspectives. They honour everyone's voice but none is heard above the other – truly equitable and strongly community focussed design.



Te Oro Tukutuku Panel, woven by kairaranga (weavers) from each of the Mana Whenua groups.

MAHI TOI CREATIVE FEATURES

Sound Art

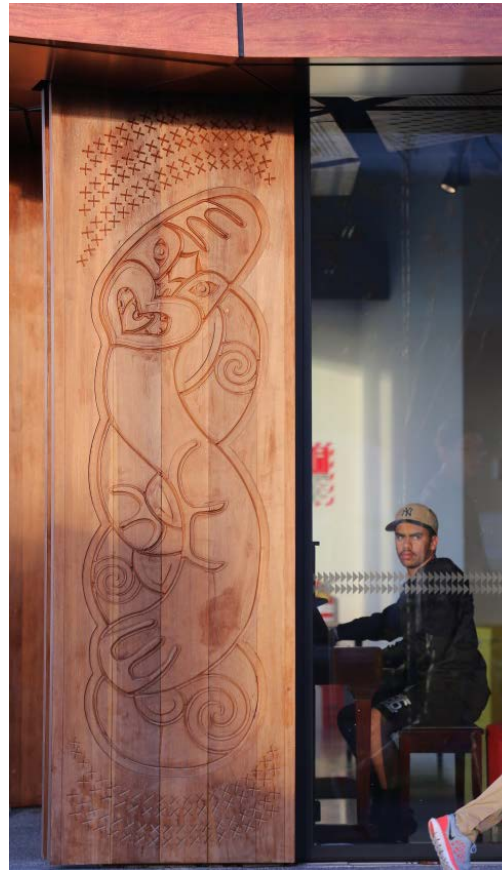
The six sound art pieces, each 20 minutes long, play continuously 24 hours a day. All are programmed to volume down between 10 at night and 7 in the morning, and are choreographed to minimise aural overlap between adjacent works. Each Mana Whenua group has contributed one sound piece, and all relate to place and people. Including sound art ensures that Mana Whenua and community voices are heard by all approaching and leaving Te Oro.

Whakairo and Kōwhatu

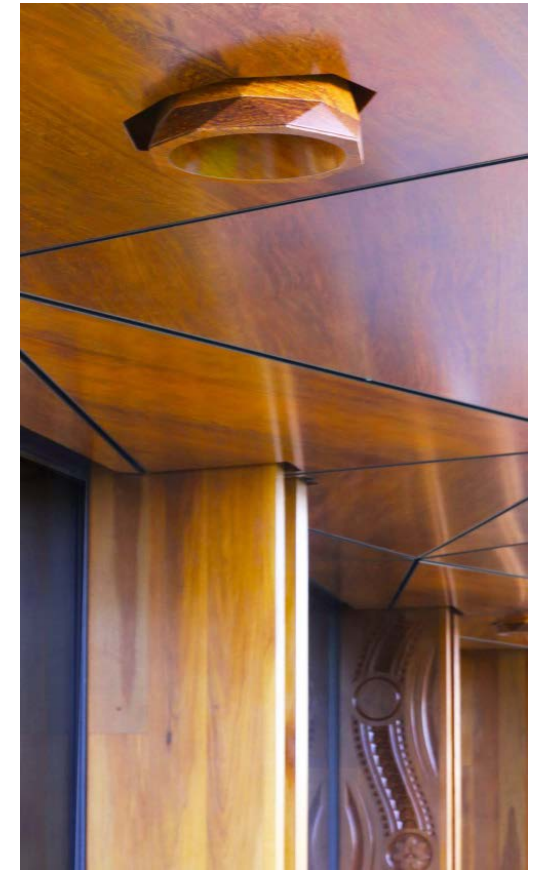
The timber Whakairo panels were machine cut from solid timber rather than traditionally carved, and were designed by artists from each of the three Mana Whenua groups. The kōwhatu were gifted and carved by Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, and located to 'extend' the site and link together the building, art and setting.

Font, Branding and Signage

The project team were very keen to create a unique identity for Te Oro beyond architectural form and have achieved this through branding and signage. A Māori graphic designer developed a unique font with a triangular base form referencing traditional taniko patterning and the adjacent maunga *Maungarei*. This font is incorporated in branding, website graphics, artwork, naming and way-finding throughout the building. This font is currently one of a small handful of Māori typefaces in existence and draws its strongest relevance from Te Oro's landscape context. All rooms feature labelling in reo Māori employing the unique Te Oro font.



Whakairo timber panels.



Sound art from each Mana Whenua groups is heard when approaching and leaving Te Oro.

MAHI TOI CREATIVE FEATURES

Tukutuku

As part of branding the project team decided to utilise tukutuku to create a large scale artwork for the entry area. The Te Oro tukutuku design was developed by kairaranga (weavers) from each of the three Mana Whenua groups and a Māori graphic designer, drawing heavily on the Te Oro font design and a stylised Maungarei triangle form. For this artwork the weavers decided to divert from traditional tukutuku form and use coloured plastic ribbon and Perspex rods within a wooden frame. Weaving was carried out in one of the workrooms at the adjacent Ruapotaka marae. Separating tukutuku from the marae where it typically resides, scaling it up to the generous dimensions (five metres by one), and using it to create a nameplate takes the traditional art form of tukutuku into a new space. This work puts toi wahine up front, celebrating Maungarei, it refigures the art form. This work is an exciting and bold addition to Te Oro.

Manaia

Te Oro is located amongst several community buildings. These buildings are poorly integrated, given their range of styles, ages, forms, scale and functions. Recognising this, a traditional Manaia form designed by a senior Māori artist is draped over these buildings to bind them together. The adjacent library is conceived as the head of the Manaia, the marae the heart, Te Oro forms the arms and the community centre and park respectively the feet. This is a subtle design, 'drawn' in the floor of Te Oro and its surrounding walkways with bands of coloured concrete, and is difficult to read as a whole. Despite this, the Manaia form establishes a relational frame for the community facility cluster in Glen Innes.



Kōwhatu link the building and surrounding site.

A LIVING PRESENCE

Management of Te Oro is by a six-person board, three of which are publicly elected officials from the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board. The other three are community representatives, one of whom must be Mana Whenua, thus ensuring a Mana Whenua presence is maintained.

Tikanga (cultural practice) and Kawa (cultural protocols) are two key areas where Te Oro makes a living presence possible. When the building's foundations were laid a mauri stone gifted by Ngāti Paoa was laid with appropriate ritual. When Te Oro was officially opened, in addition to public speeches from the Mayor and other public officials, there were karakia (blessings) at dawn and whaikōrero (speeches) from Mana Whenua as kawa (protocol) demands.

That these events were comfortably built into the programme is in part a result of the relationships that have been built up between Mana Whenua and project managers. But it also highlights the determination on the part of the project and Te Oro staff to normalize tikanga and kawa in Te Oro's ongoing function.



A LIVING PRESENCE

A sign in one of the studios asks tutors to pull down the blinds if there is a tangi (funeral) on at the adjacent Ruapotaka marae, which the room overlooks – this is kawa.

Mana Whenua and community voices are the first and last heard as people come and go from Te Oro – and although this is actually part of the sound art, these are the voices which have the first and last word – this is tikanga.



SUSTAINABILITY

Te Oro features 256 photovoltaic panels on the roof structure, sufficient to supply total building energy needs in 2016.



Maungarei (Mount Wellington).

LESSONS LEARNT

Engagement - The success of Te Oro has drawn from the expansive and multi-layered process of engagement undertaken, involving community, Mana Whenua, Local Government, artists, designers, users and staff. This process of engagement was complex, time consuming and at times difficult – but has allowed the creation of a rich, meaningful and nuanced building and an important community facility in an area that has historically lacked social and cultural infrastructure.

Place(d) – Te Oro is strongly grounded in its context by the narratives it speaks of and to, and the cultural expression and behaviours it accommodates. Te Oro demonstrates the potential for kaupapa Māori to locate a development in its site and context, and highlights the benefits of architects/artists/designers collaborating on projects.

Living Culture – Culture is lived at Te Oro day-to-day. Te Oro highlights the potential for a community facility to work equally for Māori and the broader community while expressing kaupapa Māori values. In so doing Te Oro moves kaupapa Māori into the public domain, clear of the shadows of the mainstream.

Quality – Te Oro is a complex, interesting and sophisticated piece of architecture which manages to very clearly express its purpose as a community art centre. In very simple terms, Te Oro sets a new standard for community buildings within Tāmaki Makaurau. In doing so Te Oro highlights the importance of aspirational goals, of not succumbing to easy and cheap options, and of the importance of resourcing appropriately for engagement, building, art and landscape.

Building Relationships – A critique of Te Oro building relates to its relationship with the adjacent Ruapotaka marae. Te Oro's larger scale and form imparts a physical dominance over *Ruapotaka*, and provides users the opportunity to overlook the marae, which is not always culturally appropriate (such as at times of tangi). Whilst this shortcoming has to a degree been addressed through kawa within the building, this relationship is not ideal.



Te Oro's digital editing suite and recording rooms.

MORE INFORMATION

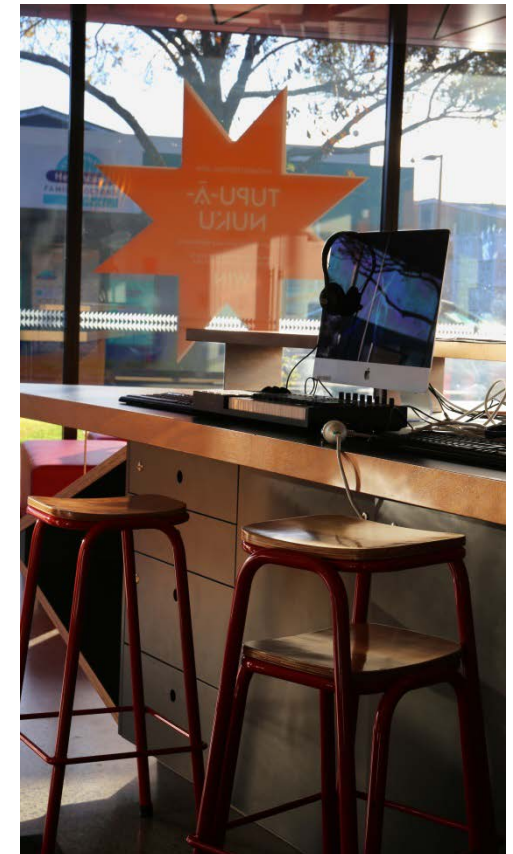
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The Auckland Design Manual is a fantastic free resource that's been created to help you through your design concept and development phase. It's a practical guide that sits alongside the Unitary Plan. If the Unitary Plan is your rule book, think of the Design Manual as your how to guide - helping you to visualise what you can build in Auckland.

The Design Manual will help you to avoid expensive mistakes by giving you the information you need up front, so that you are well-informed and know how to ask the right questions.

The Design Manual can support you at the following key stages in your development process:

- Inspiration for what you could build on your site
- Understanding the rules
- Writing your brief
- Developing a design
- Hiring your design and build team

Go to aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz to find out more

*Case study developed
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