



ments were succeeding where Tarawera had failed.

Hinemihī was a mess. Weeds ran riot and the roof, in need of re-thatching, had collapsed. The building had been shortened at some stage during its reconstruction, as had the carved ridge pole.

The porch wall had been omitted altogether and consequently no window or door existed. A carved ridge support had been reversed and many carvings re-painted in totally wrong colours. Extensive renovations were called for.

Financial setbacks delayed work. In 1979 tenders were called for the restoration of Hinemihī.

A contract was awarded to the firm of J.W. Draper and Son, experts in Tudor and Georgian buildings... maori architecture was something new to them.

Drapers sought expert advice. The N.Z. High Commission in London, Museum of Mankind, and Rotorua Art Gallery provided assistance. The firm acted on recommendations that took account of the absence of New Zealand materials and the peculiarities of the English environment.

Drapers removed carvings to their workshops. Using a stripper they clean-

ed painted surfaces, removed moss and growth, and laboriously picked paint and dirt out of original lines of carving. Preservatives were used to treat timber before uprights were replaced on a concrete foundation.

Re-painting created a minor problem until samples of red ochre could be obtained from New Zealand for colour matching in England.

Paua shell replaces that missing from eye sockets. A porch constructed across the front of the building, despite lacking carved pare and window frames, resembles that of the original at Te Wairoa.

Elm slabs have been rough cut to simulate adze marks and remain unpainted. Drainage has been improved and, as a finishing touch the now solid structure has been topped with a thick thatch... in ye olde Englishe style!

Where authentic materials were unavailable, substitutes appeared, Bamboo replaces raupo stems and realistic imitations stand where once tukutuku panels graced inner walls. A National Trust appeal for \$10,000 subsidised the cost of restoration estimated to have amounted to \$17,000.

Hinemihī has been resurrected. Once again ancestral figures glower from the

rafters. Standing at the apex of the gables is a koruru surmounted by a proud tekoteko. These days it is only the day-trippers who pay homage. An interlude between Chinese porcelain and rose gardens. The visitors miss the emotive touches.

One carved panel has the word "ROTOPOPA" etched into the surface. On others ROTO-TANGA-TA and PIKIAO are visible. Did the carver ever dream that his work would rest so far from home?

"What's this house for mum?"

"This,... Oh it's just a maori house, they live in them in New Zealand."

"Yea but what's it for?"

"Don't really know dear... look there's a totem pole inside... s'pose they used to murder people in them."

... Some come closer to the truth.

"Hey this is the place that was flattened by lavas and the Earl of Onslow rescued it."

"Oh yea ... of course."

Distance is the anomaly of course... Hinemihī stands alone far from the Arawa people. Without people there is no spirit. Without land there is no soul. Karanga ra te tupuna whare te kahui pani, ki nga iwi e, karanga ra.