



# Marae Makeover

## THE CASE STUDY

### PROJECT DETAILS

Location  
Auckland

Project Type  
University Marae

Architectural Designer  
NARA

Builder/Developer  
NARA/Indelible

### FEATURED PRODUCTS

- ExoTec™ Facade Panel

An iconic marae building on the Unitec campus gets a much-needed cladding renovation that preserves its special character and makes it useful again.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Located on the Mt Albert campus of Unitec at 139 Carrington Road, the Unitec Marae building is a culturally significant structure created by the late Rewi Thompson. Originally built in 1993, this 600-square-metre building was constructed to provide office space for the marae team and a venue for various classes.

The design features a striking architectural juxtaposition, with metal box structures symbolising the Māori concept of the 'three baskets of knowledge' contrasting with a traditional gabled roof. However, after years of exposure to the elements,

the metal cladding became leaky, rendering the offices unusable.

To preserve the architectural integrity of this iconic building while addressing its weather-tightness issues, Unitec commissioned NARA to lead a renovation project in collaboration with builder Indelible Homes. The primary challenge was to find a solution that would respect the original design while upgrading the building with modern, reliable materials.

Akash Narayan, lead designer from NARA, explained the decision to specify Hardie™ fibre cement cladding for the project.

"Unitec was clear about wanting to remove the existing metal cladding and adopt a weatherboard-on-cavity system. However, given the architectural significance of the building, we knew that standard weatherboard cladding wouldn't preserve its iconic appearance.

"I decided to specify ExoTec™ Panels because they closely resemble the original metal cladding in size and aesthetic, maintaining the integrity of Thompson's vision while providing modern durability."





### EXOTEC™ FAÇADE PANEL

ExoTec™ Facade Panel is designed for low-rise, high-rise and commercial building facades, fascias and soffits. It is a smooth-sanded compressed fibre cement (CFC) panel that works with a top-hat system to create geometric designs with 10mm express joints.



ExoTec™ Facade Panel was applied across the exterior of the Marae building, replacing the aging metal cladding. This choice ensured the building retained its bold, modern appearance while benefiting from a contemporary, low-maintenance solution.

A standout architectural feature of the project is the floating facade, which angles into the windows. Akash noted that James Hardie had this installation detail ready for ExoTec™ Facade Panel, which greatly assisted the project.

“Once painted, the renovated building closely resembles the original design concept but with modern materials. Our Unitec client is thrilled with the result.”

Familiar with the entire Hardie™ fibre cement products range, Akash highlights design flexibility, technical support and ease of installation as key benefits of using products by James Hardie.

“The James Hardie online CAD library allows us to use the products in interesting ways. Hardie™ fibre cement products require less maintenance compared to timber and the service is excellent, whether it’s onsite meetings or technical help.”

