Appendix E
Heritage
Executive summary

This heritage assessment was commissioned by Wayne Stewart, Leadership Coach, Opus International Consultants Ltd.

Summary of heritage values

The Home of Compassion crèche is significant as a physical exemplification of the life works of Mother Suzanne Aubert who established the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion order and worked among the poor, the ill, the deformed and disabled and their children throughout New Zealand from the 1860s. She worked in Wellington from the 1890s, founding St. Joseph’s Home for Incourables located next to the crèche, Our Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay and the purpose-built crèche in Buckle Street, probably the first in New Zealand. Her pioneering social work has made her a national figure and she is currently the first New Zealander being considered for canonization.

The site is of significance, not only as the location of buildings associated with Mother Aubert including the Home for Incourable and the crèche but also its connection with the new demolished St Patrick’s church complex. Located on the corner of Tory and Buckle Streets and comprising most of original town acres 256 and 257, church buildings on the site included a church, school buildings, boarding establishment, gymnasium, laundry, and carpenter’s shop.

The building was an example of the works of highly acclaimed architect of the late Victorian to Inter-War years, John Swan, who designed the building in an interpretation domestic Gothic style. The style was appropriate for a religious order and which was consistent with the design of the neighbouring St Patrick’s college building. The building was well designed with a good quality of construction and materials.

E.1 Introduction

Wayne Stewart, Project Manager of Opus International Consultants Ltd, commissioned this heritage assessment following acceptance of an offer of service from the author.

E.1.1 Basis for the preparation of the heritage assessment

This heritage assessment is based on first stage described in J.S. Kerr’s *The Conservation Plan; A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance* (National Trust of Australia, 1990), but adapted to meet New Zealand requirements. In this first, the Kerr guide recommends establishing the significance of the place through research into the physical and social history of the place before assessing significance based on accepted criteria. The areas of significance researched and assessed are based on the Historic Places Act 1993 and relevant international criteria.

E.1.2 Scope and limitations

No detailed condition survey was commissioned with this assessment and it is not a structural or fire safety survey and does not address specific issues of Building Act compliance. No measured drawings have been prepared for the assessment.

E.1.3 Heritage status

The Former Home of Compassion Crèche was registered Category II with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (NZHPT); register number 3599, on 28 June 1984. The Crèche is also listed on the Wellington City Council (WCC) District Plan; map reference 16, symbol reference 42 and is described as ‘Home of Compassion (former) 1914’.

E.1.4 Ownership details

The land and building are the property of the New Zealand Transit Authority. The legal description for the site is Pt Section 263 TN of Wellington. The address of the crèche is 18 Buckle Street, Te Aro, Wellington.

E.1.5 Contributors to the assessment

Kiri Peterson and Nick Cable, Opus International Consultants Ltd, researched the physical and social history of the building. Ian Bowman, architect and conservator, compiled and wrote the remainder of the assessment.

E.1.6 Photographic sources

The author took contemporary photographs. The sources of other photographs are identified under each photo.

E.1.7 Copyright

This document is the copyright of Ian Bowman, architect and conservator.

E.2 The social and historical context

E.2.1 History of the site and its development

First European settlement in Wellington City began in the 1840s by settlers brought to New Zealand by the New Zealand Company. When initial settlement in Petone failed due to flooding, the settlers turned to the drier lands where Wellington City was later established. At the time of first European settlement there were two main Maori occupation sites within the city area; Te Aro and Pipitea. Te Aro was the village located closest to the area in which the Sisters of Compassion Crèche is now situated, and was built in 1824 by Ngati Mutunga and later occupied by Ngati Ruanui, Ngati Haumia and Ngati Tupaia hapu (McLean 2000:17).

In the early days of settlement at Wellington the city was divided into two main centres focused on the two main areas of available flat land: Thorndon and Te Aro Flat. Thorndon was considered the affluent part of what was in the 1840s known as Britannia, including prominent hotels and the military barracks. Separated from Thorndon by a narrow strip of exposed shoreline was Te Aro Flat which was known as the commercial part of town (McLean 2000: 23). The Sisters of Compassion Crèche is situated beside the Basin Reserve, which before the 1855 earthquake was a lake known as the Basin Lake. The 1855 earthquake radically changed the future of Wellington due to the land uplift which occurred, resulting in an increased area of flat land on which to build. Thorndon and Te Aro Flat were no longer separated by a narrow strip of land, and the swampy Te Aro area was largely drained of moisture. Prior to the earthquake there were plans to connect the Basin Lake to the sea by a canal in order to make it an alternative inner city harbour. The land level rise caused by the earthquake turned the lake into a swamp and prevented these plans from being carried out. It was decided to drain the swamp and make it into a recreational reserve.

This earthquake had a negative impact on the inhabitants of Te Aro Pa as the main food source (the harbour) was now further away and the highly desirable resources associated with the swamp were no longer as readily available. The increasing development of the town around the Pa also increased pressure on its inhabitants as the land was carved up and bought by the Council. By 1881 the total population of Te Aro Pa was recorded as 28 people (Yska 2006: 50), and it had been completely abandoned by the late 1880s.

E.2.1.1 Original and subsequent owners of the site

The Sisters of Compassion Crèche is situated on the original town block 263. This can be seen in the town plan drawn up by William Mein Smith who was the Surveyor General for the New Zealand Company from 1840-1843 (see Figure E.1).

The Ward Plan, dating to 1891, shows several wooden buildings situated on the property on which the Sisters of Compassion Crèche now stands (see 4), on Lot 5: two three roomed houses facing onto Buckle Street, and a four roomed building behind these. This plan was updated in 1901, and a comparison of Lot 5 on the two plans shows little change over this time. A small shed was constructed behind the south-eastern building, and possible demolition of part of the north-eastern building took place.
The two wooden buildings fronting onto Buckle Street shown on the Ward Plan in Lot 5 are likely to be the same two buildings present on the property when it was purchased by the Mother Suzanne Aubert in 1902. These were described as numbers 14 and 16 Buckle Street in the 1914 Building Plan (City District No. 9840). An article in the Evening Post, October 23rd 1903, described the Crèche at this time as “…two detached cottages, at present in process of renovation and furnishing… One room was piled high with small wicker cots or cradles, mattresses, and pillows. Here they will sleep - if Nature wills so. In the house adjoining they may babble to their hearts content…” (Sr. Bernadette Mary 2004:1). The St Joseph’s Home for Incurables was located adjacent to the Crèche, at 22 Buckle Street, in the building which was first rented as accommodation for Mother Suzanne Aubert and her Sisters when they arrived in Wellington. The original wooden Crèche buildings were condemned by the council and as they were beyond repair, were replaced by the existing brick building in 1914.

The 1936 WCC Housing Survey Plan shows that all the buildings present on the property in the Ward Plan had been demolished by this time. The current Crèche building can be seen fronting onto Buckle Street, with two small structures behind it, and the “R.C. Home” (presumably the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables) to the side.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw many families struggling with poverty. Mother Suzanne Aubert recognised this and decided to establish a crèche to assist mothers and children in need. The main idea behind the crèche was to provide care during the day for children from families whose parents had to both work to obtain enough income to provide for them (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 58). Mother Suzanne Aubert bought a property adjacent to the St Joseph’s Home for the Incurables in Buckle Street in 1902 for £1,400 from a Mrs Ferreday. There were two small wooden cottages on the property at the time, and these were renovated and used for the crèche which opened the following year; one as a place for the children to sleep, and the other for all other activities. The crèche was originally designed to accommodate approximately 34 children when the weather was wet, and possibly double that number in fine weather. This was the first crèche of its kind in New Zealand. The original wooden buildings used by the crèche (described as numbers 14 and 16 Buckle Street in the original Building Plan; City District No. 9840) were condemned by the council as they were considered beyond repair. They were replaced by the existing brick building in 1914. Funds for the construction of this new building were provided by a £200 grant from the T.G. Macarthy Board of Trustees. The building was designed by John S. Swan and built by Campbell and Burke who provided the lowest priced tender of £1160 (Sr.
Bernadette Mary 2004: 1-2). H. A. Parsonage were hired two months after it was built to make alterations to the building in the form of an enclosure around the veranda and an extra chimney.

The lay-out of the crèche is shown in Figure E.5, above, as recalled by a Sister who taught there in the 1970s. It shows a front porch leading to a central hallway with a large living room to one side and several smaller rooms including a kitchen to the other. A veranda is located to the rear of the building, leading out onto the backyard. This can be compared to the original layout drawn by architect John S. Swan, also shown in Figure E.4.

The 1936 WCC Housing Survey Plan shows that all the buildings present on the property in the Ward Plan had been demolished by this time. The current Crèche building can be seen fronting onto Buckle Street, with two small structures behind it, and the “R.C. Home” (presumably the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables) to the side.

The Crèche moved from Buckle Street in 1973 to new premises in Sussex Street (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 59). After this time the crèche building was used by St Patrick’s College as a classroom, library and art room (pers. comm. Sr. Bernadette Mary 2010). The building next-door which used to house the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables was demolished in 1973, see Figure E.6 above.

E.2.4 Development of neighbouring sites

On the west side of the Sisters of Compassion Crèche is vacant land that formerly belonged to St Joseph’s Church. Immediately next to the Crèche were two houses owned by St Josephs, and further along Buckle Street was the church. On the east side of the Crèche are car parks and vacant land on the site of the Wilson Brothers (J. and A. Wilson) business (See LINZ Survey Plans A/71, A/927 and DP 4469). The Wilson Brothers were builders, contractors and later, undertakers, who owned an extensive timber yard and workshop which included a contracting plant and special facilities for all kinds of jobs (Cyclopedia of New Zealand: 1866).

James Wilson’s original allotments (1866)

J & A Wilson Ltd (1919)

Site of Creche

Roman Catholic Houses

Figure E.6: Photographs of the front (top) and back (bottom) views of the Sisters of Compassion Crèche, probably taken in the 1950s (Sisters of Compassion Archive).
Wellington Provincial District. 1897. Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, Wellington). The business had started in the 1870s by James Wilson (Snr), a Scottish emigrant who arrived in Wellington in 1865. James Wilson died in 1892 and the land passed to his widow, Helen Wilson. James Wilson (Jnr) and Archibald M. Wilson took over the family business after Helen’s death in 1904, renaming it J. and A. Wilson Ltd. In its time, the business was one of the principal building firms in Wellington. The lot immediately adjacent to the crèche (Pt Lot 1 DP 4469) was purchased by Mother Suzanne Aubert from J. A. Wilson Ltd in 1920. It was later sold to the Roman Catholic Church in 1960, and taken for better land utilization in 1976. (C/T 23/97).

To the north-west of the crèche was St Patrick’s College, founded in 1885 by Bishop Redwood and originally staffed by Irish Marists of the Society of Mary. It was moved from its original site to Kilbirnie in 1979. (http://www.stpats.school.nz/history.htm).

The plan, Figure E.9 below is from the Catholic Archives in Hill Street dated circa 1920/30 and shows the site of St Patrick’s College complex of buildings, the hospital for Incurables and the crèche building.

The buildings identified on the drawings are as follows :

1. Church
2. Two storey brick building
3. Main building, three storey, brick
4. Main building, two storey, brick
5. Gymnasium
6. Classrooms, timber
7. Carpenter’s workshop and laundry
8. Home for Incurables
9. Sister’s hospital
10. Kitchen, laundry stores
11. Crèche
12. Night Nurse

E.2.2 People and organisations associated with the crèche

E.2.2.1 Suzanne Aubert

Born in 1835 in Lyons, France, and raised Roman Catholic, Marie Henriette Suzanne Aubert knew from a young age that her future lay in the church. On her eighteenth birthday she was refused permission from her father to enter a religious order; however she was allowed to study nursing with the Sisters of Charity in Paris and had many years experience with them, eventually attending a course for the doctorate of medicine at the faculty of Lyons although as a woman she was not permitted to sit the examinations and therefore to obtain her degree. (Rafter 1972: 15-17; Sisters of Compassion 1992: 9). Her passion for missionary work was fostered by St John Marie Vianney, also known as the ‘Cure d’Ars’. She seized her opportunity to assist the church as a missionary by accompanying Bishop Pompallier to New Zealand in 1860. Amongst nuns and missionaries there were three other un-initiated women other than Suzanne on board. It was planned that there would be a stop-over during the journey in Sydney, during which Suzanne and the other three women would receive the religious habit of the Sister of the Third Order Regular of Mary. However this stop-over was not made and it was decided that they would instead join the order of the Sisters of Mercy in Auckland (Rafter 1972: 21).

Her first appointment was at the Wyndham Street Convent with the Sisters of Mercy, starting her novitiate in 1861. In 1862 Suzanne and the other three women who had accompanied her from France set up their own orphanage for Maori children, while the others in the order focused on the European children. This officially marked their split away from the order of the Sisters of Mercy. In May of that same year they were officially established as a separate religious community, the new Congregation of the Holy Family. Suzanne was then known as Sister Joseph. Their orphanage was located in Ponsonby, and was called the Nazareth Institution (Rafter 1972: 23-24). While there she would often visit neighbouring Maori villages to give religious instruction and to assist with medical care. It was during this time that she began her studies of native plants and traditional herbal remedies. Unfortunately the orphanage struggled financially and was sold in 1869 to pay Bishop Pompallier’s creditors. By this time the departure of Bishop Pompallier back to France and disbanding of the Nazareth Institution had resulted in the removal of official status of the Congregation of the Holy Family. The Bishop of Melbourne, Bishop Goold, visited Auckland at this time and formally approved of Suzanne Aubert’s entry into the Third Order Regular of Mary (Rafter 1972: 36).

Sister Joseph was next invited to take up residence at the Marist Mission Station at Meeeanee in Napier, where she was to be in charge of the school. Ill health prevented her from operating the school however, so she acted as a substitute teacher, teaching religious instruction and singing (Rafter 1972: 39). In 1883 she moved on to the mission known as Jerusalem on the banks on the Whanganui River. The harsh conditions became too much for the Sisters of St Joseph and their leaving threatened the continued running of Jerusalem. Bishop Redwood therefore made arrangements so that Jerusalem could officially be able to give religious training to postulants. This ensured the continued running of the school as well as a continued source of trained teachers for the Maori Mission schools. The Bishop wanted the new Jerusalem sisters to be directly linked with the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Mary in Lyons, however the head of the order in New Zealand did not feel that the spirit of Jerusalem fitted with...
his order. He therefore decided that they must form a separate congregation which would be under his own jurisdiction. He therefore named them the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion in 1882, and appointed Sister Joseph as Mother Superior, from then on she was officially known as the Very Reverend Mother Mary Joseph Aubert (known to her followers as Mother Aubert) (Rafter 1972: 51, 53). She established an orphanage with the Sisters of St Joseph at Jerusalem in 1891. The order received official pontifical approval in 1913.

By the end of the century the dire poverty which existed in the cities of New Zealand was becoming evident, and Mother Suzanne Aubert was asked to move from her isolated, country orphanage to the inner city slums of Wellington (Harper 1962: 8-32). “Knowing of Mother Joseph’s work and deeply conscious of the suffering and destitution in the poorer area of Wellington, several priests and doctors of Wellington had been endeavouring for some time to persuade Mother Joseph to establish a headquarters for district nursing in the capital. Mother Joseph felt, too, that the centre of the Congregation should be established in a city, closer to medical aid and everyday amenities.” (Harper 1962: 33).

In addition to the establishment in Wellington of the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables, the Silverstream Home of Compassion, the Soup Kitchen, the Sisters of Compassion Crèche and Our Home of Compassion in Island Bay, Mother Suzanne Aubert was also one of the foundation members of the Plunket Society which formed in 1907. Mother Suzanne Aubert passed away at 91 years of age in 1926. (Harper 1962: 37,45). She is currently being considered for canonisation.

E.2.2.2 Sisters of Compassion in Wellington

Mother Suzanne Aubert and three accompanying Sisters arrived in Wellington from their base in Whanganui in 1899 with the aim of working as nurses to the sick and the poor. They rented a small cottage in Buckle Street from a Mr Martin Kennedy, and were able to buy the house not long after (Deeds Index 31/544; Harper 1962: 34). Their work consisted of visiting the city’s slum districts in Taranaki and Tory Streets (known as Te Aro Flats), nursing the sick in their homes, and begging for clothes and food from the city’s businesses for the poor, aged and suffering (Harper 1962: 34). Eventually it was decided to establish a Home for Incurables to help the most desperate cases.

It is not known where the cottage in which the Sisters originally lived was located in relation to the properties purchased later, with some sources stating that it was this building that was bought for the Home for Incurables, and others describing a much larger building bought for this purpose. In Harper (1962) the original accommodation quarters is described as a two-roomed cottage, and the building purchased for the Home for Incurables as a six-roomed cottage (Harper 1962: 35). However Rafter (1972) describes the original accommodation as a two-storied cottage with two rooms plus a scullery on the ground floor and two attic rooms (Rafter 1972: 75). Rafter then goes on to describe the purchase of a property in Buckle Street close to their rented cottage from a Mr Freeman, for the purposes of the Home for Incurables. This property consisted of two sections and one cottage which had to be renovated to be suitable to care for invalids (Rafter 1972: 77).

Whichever was the case, the property on which the Home for Incurables was located at 22 Buckle Street, and was officially opened as the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables in 1900. Further buildings were purchased that same year on the adjoining properties to accommodate the growing number of patients (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 52; Sr. Bernadette Mary 2004: 3). This purchase was made possible by a generous bequest of £500 from an M.P called Mr John O’Mea. The two additional cottages were therefore called the O’Mea Wing, and enabled the Home to accommodate 23 additional patients (Rafter 1972: 79). The rector of St Patrick’s College (situatated directly behind the Home for Incurables) offered the school’s infirmary as a training ground for Mother Aubert’s Sisters in 1901 (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 52). The medical assistance provided by St Josephs was eventually able to be better offered by the Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay, and so patients were transferred from the Home of Incurables. After 1920 female patients were no longer admitted, however male patients continued to be cared for until the closing of the Home in 1933 (Rafter 1972: 83). The St Joseph’s Home for Incurables in Buckle Street was demolished in the 1970s.

A Soup Kitchen was also opened in Buckle Street in 1901, where hot soup was available in the morning and the evening: “Hungry men of all ages and types gathered at Buckle Street - men who had lost their money, their positions, their wives, their self-respect, or their faith” (Harper 1962: 36). The Soup Kitchen was originally called St Anthony’s Kitchen, which distributed clothes and food from a porch adjoining the main kitchen of the Home for Incurables (Rafter 1972: 80). This was moved from its original location in 1928 to be further away from St Joseph’s Church who disapproved of the ‘undesirable’ characters who would congregate at the Soup Kitchen (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 55-56).

In the same year as the opening of the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables in Buckle Street (1900) Mother Suzanne Aubert bought three and a half acres of land in Island Bay in order to build a children’s hospital. By 1902 the original three and a half acres had grown to 32 acres and by 1907 Our Lady’s Home of Compassion was opened. At this time two of the Sisters were trained nurses, however when these Sisters left it was no longer possible to operate the hospital due to lack of trained staff. The empty wards were put to use accommodating infants and young children of poor families or unmarried mothers. By 1921 the Home of Compassion was able to operate once again as a hospital, and all the chronically ill women patients from the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables in Buckle Street were moved in. The male patients were moved to a property purchased in Silverstream in 1933 (Sisters of Compassion 1992: 61-64).

E.2.2.3 John Swan

John Sydney Swan (1874-1936) practised architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He formed part of the last group of architects to follow the traditional Gothic and Classical styles. He was articulated to Frederick de Jersey Clere, working with Clere on many major designs such as the Wellington Rowing Club building (then known as the Naval Artillery Boat Shed, 1894) as well as smaller provincial buildings such as the Church of the Good Shepherd, Tinui. The firm was known as Clere, Fitzgerald and Richmond and was one of the most prominent architectural practices in Wellington. From 1901 to 1906 Swan was in partnership with Clere, practising on his own account from 1907. The first major design produced by Swan in this new practice was the Karori Crematorium (1907) which served to establish his architectural identity separate from Clere. During his long and varied career Swan produced a large and wide range of work, including a number of banks for the National Bank such as the head office building in Wellington (1907), educational buildings for the Wellington Technical College with William Gray Young (1922), and a number of major buildings for the Catholic Church including St Gerard’s Church, Mount Victoria (1910), Sacred Heart Convent (later Erskine College), Island Bay (1909), and Whanganui Convent (1912).

A number of his buildings have been registered by the NZHPT those identified on the register website include:

• Cambridge Establishment (Formerly Cambridge Hotel), Church Of The Good Shepherd (Anglican) Alfredton Timu Rd, Timu
• Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building (Former), 120 Eastbound Street East, Hastings, Hawke Bay Region
• Erskine College (Former), 25-31 Avon Street, Island Bay, Wellington
• Home Of Compassion Creche (Former), Buckle Street, Wellington
• Hobson’s Building, 55 Courtenay Place, Wellington
• Last Footwear Company, 41-43 Cuba St, Wellington
• Longwood, Longwood East Road, South Featherstone, Featherstone
• Old St Pauls Schoolroom (Relocated), 21-25 Kate Sheppard Place (Relocated), Thorndon, Wellington
• St Gerard’s Church , 73-75 Hawkwer Street, Mount Victoria, Wellington
• St Josephs Church , Te Hire Marie, Avarice, Fielding, Manawatu-Wanganui Region
• St Margaret’s Church , 47 Huia Street, Taipahe, Manawatu-Wanganui Region
E.2.3 Chronology of events

Note that events directly associated with the Crèche are in bold.

1824 Construction of Te Aro village by Ngati Mutunga
1835 Suzanne Aubert born in Lyon
1840s European settlement in Wellington begins
1860 Suzanne Aubert accompanied Bishop Pompallier to New Zealand
1862 Suzanne Aubert establishes an orphanage for Maori children

Establishes the Congregation of the Holy Family
1869 Suzanne Aubert admitted to the Third Order Regular of Mary by Bishop Gould of Melbourne
1882 Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion established with Suzanne Aubert appointed as Mother Superior
1885 Founding of St Patrick’s church on Buckle Street by Bishop Redwood
1891 Mother Aubert establishes an orphanage at Jerusalem
1899 Mother Aubert and three Sisters arrive in Wellington to work as nurses to assist the poor
1900 Opening of the St Joseph’s Home for Incurables at 22 Buckle Street

Further buildings purchased to accommodate the growing number of patients

Mother Aubert purchases three and a half acres in Island Bay to build a children’s hospital
1901 The rector of St Patrick’s College behind the Home for Incurables offers the school’s infirmary as a training ground for Mother Aubert’s Sisters

Opening of soup kitchen, called St Anthony’s kitchen, in Buckle Street
1902 Mother Suzanne Aubert purchases a property adjacent to the St Joseph’s Home for the Incurables in Buckle Street
1907 Mother Aubert helps found Plunket Society

Our Lady’s Home of Compassion opened in Island Bay
1913 Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion order received Pontifical approval

1914 Design and construction of crèche
1920 Mother Suzanne Aubert purchases the lot immediately neighbouring the crèche
Female patients no longer admitted to the Home for Incurables
1922 Mother Aubert dies
1928 Soup kitchen relocated
1960 Neighbouring lot sold to the Roman Catholic Church
1970’s St Joseph’s Home for Incurables in Buckle Street was closed
1973 Crèche moves to new premises in Sussex Street
Current Crèche leased as an office

E.3 The physical context

E.3.1 Architectural design

E.3.1.1 Floor plan

The original drawing of the single storey crèche has a rectangular plan with a symmetrical extension to the south for the entry porch and a bay window to the north east corner. The entry porch door to the exterior is on the east. The porch leads to a central corridor off which are the sleeping room on the south east corner and the play room on the north east corner with a back to back fire place to each space. Room 1, now a kitchen is shown on the original plans as being on the north west corner and room 2 on the south west corner. There are three rooms between them, a pantry, toilet and bathroom, all accessed from the corridor.

The north end of the corridor leads outside to an open verandah.

The specification notes that a first floor was anticipated.
E.3.1.2 Elevations

The roof of the crèche is a corrugated steel hipped gable with eaves around the north, west and south side and a parapet to the east side. Above the entry is a steeper hip than the remainder of the roof. The exterior of the building is brickwork with rendered quoins at corners and around windows. The south elevation has the central front entry, which has a battlemented parapet with copingings to the corners and centre. A large window opening is located centrally in the entry porch with a shallow curved head. A central transom divides the window horizontally with three vertical mullions full height, within which are triple paneled Gothic styled trefoil headed windows. Above the centre of the window is a coat of arms, which is repeated above the door and expressed as a battlement.

The adjacent west window to the entry porch has a single lancet shaped window within which are narrower trefoil windows at the top and fixed rectangular paned windows underneath. The entry door has a glazed panelled door with a toplight matching the upper windows opposite.

Either side of the entry are symmetrically located windows each with central transom and single vertical mullion. The upper two windows are three paneled trefoil headed and the lower two double paneled fixed.

The east elevation has three equally spaced double hung sash windows with triple paneled toplights, all square headed. The west elevation has five similar windows centrally located to each room.

The north elevation bay window has matching windows to the east elevation on the faceted side, with similar windows in the centre but divided in three by timber mullions. The rear entry door has three top lights and sidelights divided horizontally by a transom at door head height. The side lights, the same height as the door are triple lights with bottom panels. The toplights, above the side lights are triple paneled trefoil headed, while the toplight above the door are double windows matching the side toplights. Room 1 has two joined double hung sash windows with triple paneled toplights.

The verandah is a continuation of the main roof and is supported on timber posts with 45 degree brackets. The balustrading has simple vertical square balusters and the original drawing shows a gate leading to two steps.

E.3.1.3 Internal materials

The specification of the crèche describes the interior materials as follows:

- Solid brick between the pantry, toilet and bathroom
- Heart matai for flooring
- Oregon timber for joists, studs and plates
- Rimu for all other timber work
- Plaster finish to non-solid brick walls
- Stamped steel to all ceilings other than the pantry and bathroom
- Oilcloth dado to all rooms other than the porch, pantry and bathroom
- Timber dado to the entry porch
- Cast iron “air gratings”, anchors and palm bolts.

A history of the use of these materials is included in Appendix 2.

E.3.1.4 Style

The external style of the building is not untypical of Queen Anne but with Gothic detailing as described above. The general plan layout and north elevation are similar to a Queen Anne styled bay villa with gabled hip, verandah, bay window, tall narrow chimney and general asymmetry of layout. The Gothic detailing at the street elevation and over the north door was perhaps introduced to be more closely associated with the Gothic buildings in the adjacent St Patrick’s college complex, but are nevertheless not unrelated to the Queen Anne style.

The Queen Anne style was a part of the Arts and Crafts movement that popularised vernacular English architecture, design and building traditions including hand manufacture of elements. The honest expression of materials used was also a principle of the movement, and the use of brickwork, in particular was common.

Among the styles born from the Arts and Crafts movement were mid and late English Gothic including Tudor, and later periods of architecture such as Queen Anne. This style was a revival style of late 17th and 18th century architecture popularised by British architects Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield in the 1870’s initially for large country houses. American architects Charles McKim and Henry Hobson Richardson also adapted the style and less academic versions of the American and British styles were used in New Zealand.

E.3.2 Setting

The former Crèche is on the north-west corner of the Basin Reserve, a significant historic area in the north east of Te Ara at the
southern end of Cambridge and Kent Terraces. The former crèche is built on Buckle Street facing the Basin Reserve pavilion to
the south and former Mount Cook Police Station. The former crèche sits below a brick and concrete retaining wall to the west
above, which is an empty section. A gap leads to the corner of Cambridge Terrace and Buckle Street. The section around the former crèche is not landscaped but has several trees and a rubble paved parking area to
the north, which is overgrown.

The Basin Reserve is, as the name suggests, a basin above, which Mount Victoria to the east and Mount Cook to the West rises. Around the Basin are many significant historic buildings and areas including:

- Former GHQ
- HMNZS Olphert
- National War Memorial and Carillon
- Former National museum
- Former Mount Cook Police Station
- Basin Reserve Pavilion
- William Wakefield Memorial
- Basin Reserve
- Government House
- Mount Victoria buildings north of Paterson and a line east of Dufferin Street
- Other non listed buildings on Sussex Street, Rugby Street, Adelaide Road and the south west and north east of the Basin.

E.4  Building significance assessment

E.4.1  General assessment of significance

The following assessment is based on the registration criteria of the Historic Places Act 1993 and their guide for assessment, Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Information Sheet 2, 2007. In addition the authenticity of the building is discussed. The various criteria for assessment are included in appendix 1.

E.4.1.1  Physical values

- Archaeological information

  The area around the former crèche has been used from the late nineteenth century by the Catholic church and is therefore an archaeological site which may yield information on the location of now demolished buildings, their use and landscaping.

- Architecture

  The building has been designed in an unusual combination of a Queen Anne styled plan form and north elevation with a domestic Gothic style to the street front. The street front design reflects the popularity of the Gothic style for church architecture in the period and the connection of the crèche with the adjacent Catholic church complex.

- Technology and engineering

  The building was constructed using common building techniques and materials for the period including solid and cavity brick construction, timber framing and joinery, corrugated iron, pressed metal ceilings, internal plasterwork, external render and granite fire surrounds. The use of timber trefoil window tracery is unusual in a domestic building.

- Scientific

- Rarity

  The former crèche is unique in being the first purpose designed child-care facility in New Zealand. It was used for this purpose for many years. The Gothic inspired style of the building is rare in domestic styled building of the period.

- Representativeness

  The building is representative of craftsmanship, materials and forms of construction of the period.

- Integrity

- Vulnerability

  Being constructed of brick and timber, the building is vulnerable to earthquake and fire.

- Context or group

  The former crèche is one of a grouping of buildings originally constructed on neighbouring sites for the Catholic Church. The building is one of a further group of buildings owned and/or constructed on behalf of Mother Aubert to assist with poor relief in Wellington and elsewhere including orphanages, hospitals, soup kitchens, and crèches.

E.4.1.2  Historic values

- People

  The building is principally associated with Mother Aubert whose pioneering social work in the community saw the establishment of an order devoted to this cause. She personally arranged for the design and construction of the former crèche. It is associated also with the architect, John Swan who designed it, the builders, Campbell and Bourke, the many Sisters and other nurses who worked in the building and the many parents and children who were assisted by the service.

- Events

  The major events associated with the building are its conception by Mother Aubert, its design and construction, opening and use.

- Patterns

  The former crèche represents the work of the Catholic Church in general and the tireless efforts of Mother Aubert on behalf of the children and the poor in particular. She saw the urgent need for day care for children of working parents in Wellington as well as the wider issue of reducing infant mortality through improvements in infant care by being a foundation member of the Plunket Society.

1 See Chapter 5 Appendix 9 Map page 17 WCC District Plan which shows the extent of the pre-1930s demolition rule.
E.4.1.3 Cultural values

- Identity
  The building has some presence in the Buckle Street / Basin Reserve area as a domestic scaled building in what is otherwise an area of larger scaled buildings while being designed in an unusual style for the area. It is somewhat hidden by vegetation.

- Public esteem
  The original use of the building is not known widely but, for those that are aware of the building and its history, it is held in very great esteem for its heritage values and association with Mother Aubert.

- Commemorative

- Education
  The physical presence of the building provides educative values in being the first purpose designed crèche in New Zealand with a high level of integrity. It provides a physical manifestation of the pioneering social work of Mother Aubert, while also demonstrating the work of acclaimed architect John Swan.

- Tangata whenua

- Statutory recognition

The building is registered with the NZHPT and listed by the Wellington City Council.

E.4.1.4 Authenticity

- Form and design
  The external form, scale, materials, openings, details and general style of the building have been retained as has the interior planning, form and most of the fittings. A minor modification which has changed the internal planning is the access to the bathroom from the toilet, rather than directly from the corridor.

- Materials and substance
  The original external roofing, chimney, brickwork, details, window and door joinery have been retained but with the enclosure of the verandah, designed by Mother Aubert, having been modified since. The street elevation has been painted rather than retaining the original unpainted brickwork.

  The internal materials have also largely been retained although pantry, toilet and bathroom fittings have been removed. Some old or original light and electrical fittings have been retained. The play room fire surround is an especially significant original element that has been retained.

  The condition of the building is generally good.

- Use and functions
  The building is currently used as an office and accommodation.

- Tradition, techniques, and workmanship
  The construction methods, technology and workmanship of the exterior and interior spaces, have all largely been retained from the original construction.

- Location and setting
  Much of the setting of the building has been modified, with the demolition of St Patrick’s church and associated buildings to the west and north and the empty sections to the east. The buildings associated with the order on Sussex street have been demolished or replaced, however the physical and landscape anchor of the setting, the Basin reserve and Pavilion have been retained. Other buildings around the Basin Reserve dating from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have also been retained, particularly on the corners of the Basin and the corner with Adelaide Road.

- Spirit and feeling
  The style, form, style, detailing, and materials provides a clear impression of a building of the early twentieth century, with some of the surviving elements such as the entry candelabra (possibly original) and the exuberant fire surround in the play room being somewhat incompatible with a building designed to care for the children of the poor. The building has a mix of formal and informal spaces which evokes the spirit of a late Victorian home.

E.4.2 Detailed schedule of significance of spaces and elements

E.4.2.1 Explanation

In order to formulate policies to care for the building as a whole and its spaces, elements and fabric, the relative significance of the exterior and interior is assessed according to the two principal HPA assessment criteria, historical and physical significance. An inventory describes the main spaces, the exterior elevations and the fabric of both. These are assessed according to the following levels of significance:

- Exceptional significance (E) indicates that the space or element has a primary role in understanding the heritage significance of the place;

- High significance (H), indicates that the space or element has a secondary role in understanding the heritage significance of the place;

- Some significance (S), signifies a minor role in understanding the heritage significance of the place;

- Little significance (L), indicates that there is little or no contribution in understanding the heritage significance of the place;

Physical significance may also be assessed as intrusive.

- Intrusive (I), indicates that the heritage significance is adversely affected by the inclusion of the space or element.

The spaces are also assessed according to the relative levels of authenticity as Exceptional (E), High (H), Some (S) or Little or none (L) where appropriate.

Fabric used to construct and line the building is listed with each space and is defined as original or early historic fabric (hf), reproduction or renewed fabric (rf), old but not original fabric (of); and non-historic fabric (nhf).

Note that furniture and other items against walls and on floors were not moved for the inspection of areas viewed.

Abbreviations which may be used include ‘ss’ for stainless steel, ‘whb’ for wash hand basin, ‘wc’ for toilet, ‘mdf’ for medium density fibre board, ‘ds’ for double hung sash window, ‘gc’ for galvanised corrugated iron or steel, t, g&v for tongue and groove, ‘v’ jointed timber.

The assessments are made on the basis of the information available when writing this plan and where additional information becomes available, the assessment of spaces and fabric may have to be revised.
E.4.2.2 Exterior

ROOF
- Corrugated steel (r?)
- Galvanised steel coverboards (nhf)
- Plastic guttering and downpipes (nhf)
- Painted timber soffit and fascia (hf)

WEST ELEVATION
- Unpainted brickwork (hf)
- Painted cement render to architraves and sills (hf)
- Painted timber double hung windows some with triple light toplights (hf)
- Concrete foundations (hf)
- Painted timber multi-paned with Gothic tracery to porch window (hf)

NORTH ELEVATION
- Painted plastered brickwork (hf)
- Painted timber glazed verandah (hf, nhf)
- Painted timber double hung windows with triple light toplights to west of door (hf)
- Painted timber multi-paned toplights with Gothic tracery and glazed and panelled sidelights (hf)
- Painted timber glazed and panelled door (hf)
- Painted timber door and window joinery (hf)
- Painted timber fixed and casement windows to bay (nhf)
- Concrete foundations (hf)

EAST ELEVATION
- Painted brickwork (hf)
- Painted cement render to architraves and sills (hf)
- Painted timber double hung windows with triple light toplights (hf)
- Brick foundations (hf)
- Painted timber glazed and panelled door with Gothic traceried toplights to entry door (hf)

SOUTH ELEVATION
- Painted brickwork (hf)
- Painted cement render to battlements, coat of arms, string courses, architraves and sills (hf)
- Painted timber multi-paned windows with Gothic traceried toplights (hf)
- Brick foundations (hf)
- Marble plaque (hf)

E.4.2.3 Interior

ENTRY
- Ceiling
  - Painted pressed metal (hf)
  - Painted pressed metal cornice (hf)
- Walls
  - Painted plaster (hf)
  - Painted timber match lined dado with dado rail (hf)
  - Painted timber architraves around windows (hf)
- Floor
  - Geometric tiles (hf)
- Windows
  - Painted timber multi-paned with Gothic tracery toplights (hf)
- Doors
  - Painted timber glazed and panelled with Gothic tracery toplights, hardware and furniture (hf)
- Fittings and fixtures
  - Brass kerosene lamp and candelabra (of?)

SLEEPING ROOM NOW BEDROOM
- Ceiling
  - Painted pressed metal (hf)
  - Painted metal cornice (hf)
- Walls
  - Painted plaster (hf)
  - Painted timber picture rail (hf)
- Floor
  - Carpet (nhf)
  - Uncoated timber strip (hf)
- Windows
  - Clear coated timber double hung sash with triple light toplight (hf)
- Doors
  - Painted timber four panel (hf), hardware and furniture (hf)
- Fixtures and fittings
  - Painted metal vent (hf)
  - Brick fire surround (nhf)

ROOM 2 NOW BEDROOM
- Ceiling
  - Painted pressed metal (hf)
  - Painted metal cornice (hf)
- Walls
  - Painted plaster (hf)
  - Painted timber picture rail (hf)
- Floor
  - Carpet (nhf)
  - Uncoated timber strip (hf)
Walls
- Painted plaster (hf)
- Painted timber dado and dado rail (hf?)

Floor
- Tiles (of)

Windows
- Painted timber double hung sash (bottom sash boarded up) (hf)

Doors
- Painted timber panelled (rf?), furniture (hf)

Fixtures and fittings
- Stainless steel sink benches (nhf)
- Art Nouveau granite fire surround (hf)
- Pendant light fitting (hf?)

ROOM 1 NOW KITCHEN

Ceiling
- Painted pressed metal (hf)

Walls
- Painted plaster (hf)
- Painted timber architraves and skirtings (hf)

Floor
- Tiles (of)

Windows
- Shutters over windows (nhf)

Doors
- Painted timber panelled (rf?)

Fixtures and fittings
- Ceramic toilet, wash hand basin (nhf)

TOILET

Ceiling
- Painted pressed metal (hf)

Walls
- Painted plaster (hf)
- Painted timber dado and dado rail (hf?)
- Painted timber architraves and skirtings (hf?)

Floor
- Tiles (of)

Windows
- Painted timber double hung sash (hf)

Doors
- Painted timber panelled (rf?)

Fixtures and fittings
- Ceramic toilet, wash hand basin (nhf)

FORMER BATHROOM NOW LAUNDRY

Ceiling
- Painted match, g&v lining (hf)

Walls
- Painted match, g&v lining (hf)
- Painted timber architraves and skirtings (hf?)

Floor
- Tiling to bath (nhf)

Windows
- Shutters over windows (nhf)

Doors
- Painted timber panelled (rf?)

Fixtures and fittings
- Ceramic toilet, wash hand basin (nhf)

SETTING

Neighbouring buildings
- S H L

Views to Basin Reserve
- E E S

Views to the crèche
- E E S

Historic use of the existing and neighbouring sites
- E E E
E.4.3  Summary statement of heritage significance

The Home of Compassion crèche is significant as a physical exemplification of the life works of Mother Suzanne Aubert who established the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion order and worked among the poor, the ill, the deformed and disabled and their children throughout New Zealand from the 1860s. She worked in Wellington from the 1890s, founding St. Joseph’s Home for Incurables located next to the crèche, Our Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay and the purpose-built crèche in Buckle Street, probably the first in New Zealand. Her pioneering social work has made her a national figure and she is currently the first New Zealander being considered for canonization.

The site is of significance, not only as the location of buildings associated with Mother Aubert including the Home for Incurable and the crèche but also its connection with the now demolished St Patrick’s church complex. Located on the corner of Tory and Buckle Streets and comprising most of original town acres 256 and 257, church buildings on the site included a church, school buildings, boarding establishment, gymnasium, laundry, and carpenter’s shop.

The building was an example of the works of highly acclaimed architect of the late Victorian to Inter-War years, John Swan, who designed the building in an interpretation domestic Gothic style. The style was appropriate for a religious order and which was consistent with the design of the neighbouring St Patrick’s college building. The building was well designed with a good quality of construction and materials.

E.5  Sources

Published books and articles


Staffan, L.C. (1965) Railway station buildings: an historical survey


Appendix 1

Registration criteria of the Historic Places Act 1993

1.1 Significance or value (section 23(1))

Under section 23(1) of the Historic Places Act 1993, the Trust may enter any historic place or historic area in the Register if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

1.2 Category of historic place (section 23(2))

Under section 23(2) of the Historic Places Act 1993, the Trust may assign Category I status or Category II status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history.
(b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history.
(c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history.
(d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua.
(e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place.
(f) The potential of the place for public education.
(g) The technical accomplishment or value, or design of the place.
(h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place.
(i) The importance of the identifying historic places known to date from early periods of New Zealand settlement.
(j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places.
(k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural complex or historical and cultural landscape.
(l) Such additional criteria for registration of wahi tapu, wahi tapu areas, historic places, and historic areas of Maori interest as may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act.

Category I historic places are ‘places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.’

Category II historic places are ‘places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.’

1.3 Guidance for assessment

The guide for assessment published by the NZHPT2 groups these values under:

Physical values
- Archaeological information
- The potential for information about human history through archaeology
- Architecture
- Architectural significance through design and use of materials or craftsmanship
- Technology and engineering
- Significant innovation or invention in the use of construction, technology or materials
- Scientific
- The potential for scientific information on the region
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Integrity
- Vulnerability
- Context or group

Historic values
- People
- Patterns
- Events

Cultural values
- Identity
- Public esteem
- Commemorative
- Education
- Tangata whenua
- Statutory recognition

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1.4 Authenticity

While the NZHPT criteria discusses the issue of integrity, a fuller explanation and definition is warranted.

The definition of heritage values of buildings and landscapes has been considered by a number of groups and international bodies, particularly over the last twenty years. The Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites by Bernard Feilden and Jaka Jokilehto, ICOMOS, UNESCO, ICOMOS, 1993, outlined the criteria for consideration of World Heritage listing. The concept of authenticity was considered as being crucial to the assessment, although a clear definition was not provided, in order to consider appropriate treatment strategies. The areas of authenticity in the Guidelines comprised design, material, craftsmanship and setting. It was considered that these areas of authenticity did not allow for cultural differences, which led to the ICOMOS Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994. In this documents relative values were described with respect to “form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling”.

A specific definition of authenticity was not provided. This was left until 2000 when the Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage, confirmed in Riga, Latvia, defined authenticity as:

“The measure of the degree to which the attributes of cultural heritage (including form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling) credibly and accurately bear witness to their significance.”

Taking integrity and authenticity to be the same, the Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage, confirmed in Riga, Latvia in 2000, defined authenticity as:

“The measure of the degree to which the attributes of cultural heritage (including form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling) credibly and accurately bear witness to their significance.”

This concept of authenticity is used to assess heritage values in this assessment.

Appendix 2

Historical background to materials used in the building

The following is a brief history of materials used in the building as they have been manufactured and used in New Zealand.

2.1 Cast and wrought iron

Cast iron has a high level of carbon and is, as its name suggests, cast into the shapes needed. Cast iron has a high carbon content, up to 5% and is not able to be worked like wrought iron, as it is brittle. Cast iron is very good in compression and is very resistant to rusting. Cast iron is joined by bolts, rivets or screws, and is difficult to weld because of its brittleness.

Cast iron was an early metal used mainly for decorative elements in houses. These include brackets joining verandah posts and beams, verandah posts and balustrading, fences and gates and cresting on roofs. Cast iron was also used for down pipes, gutter, sewer and vent pipes and other forms of plumbing and drainage. Cast iron could also be used for hinges, and door hardware and furniture.

Cast iron was used columns, beams and girders bolted together, although this is rare in houses. With the awareness of earthquakes in New Zealand builders used cast iron to strengthen larger masonry houses against earthquakes in the form of strips laid in courses of brick or stone. These were called hoop irons and helped to hold the house together. Iron rods could be added to masonry walls after they were built and cast iron spreader plates were used to spread the load. These plates could be round or in the shape of an ‘S’.

Wrought iron is the purest form of steel and has less than 1% of carbon. It is thought to be the oldest type of steel used in buildings. Wrought iron is not strong in compression but very strong in tension, that is supporting weight by being pulled such as a diagonal member of a gate. Like cast iron, wrought iron does not rust easily. Wrought iron is hammered and rolled into shape, hence the name wrought. The metal is wrought on anvils or in rolling machines and the more wrought iron is worked, the stronger it is. As with cast iron, wrought iron is joined by bolts, rivets or screws but can also be welded. It can also be heat joined, with white heat, two pieces of wrought iron will fuse together.

Wrought iron was traditionally used in buildings as plates joining or strengthen joints between timber members and for door and window hinges. It was also used for decorative work much the same as cast iron such as roof crestings, brackets, fences and railings.

The combination of wrought and cast iron was quite common. In the fences and gates lining many of New Zealand’s parks and gardens both have been used recognising the different qualities of each. To tell the difference, the design, means of shaping and use of the metal is a guide. Cast iron elements are usually massive and repetitive in design. Blow holes and casting marks from manufacture should be visible and if cast iron is hit it will often chip. Cast iron is used in compression, that is weight bearing directly down, such as for columns or posts. Wrought iron elements can have a beaten surface and a sliver can be taken from it with a chisel.

2.2 Brick manufacture

The main material of which the building is constructed is brick. The first recorded brickfields in the colony were two in Auckland, four in Wellington and four in Nelson in 1844. Probably the oldest brick kiln in New Zealand is at Upokongaro near Whangaruru which dates from 1857. The earliest in Christchurch was Jackson and Bishop who established their brickworks in 1861. By 1880s, additional brickmakers in the Canterbury region included George Reynolds in Hereford Street, the Fairley Brick, Drain Pipe and Pottery Works operating from St Martins and Malvern Hills owned by Austin and Kirk, Langdon and Company, W. Neighbours and three other brickyards by 1879. In 1877 Thomas Hill of Rangiora constructed a circular Hoffmann kiln for his firm Rangiora Brick and Tile Works. Ruins of the kiln still exist with parts of the tunnel chamber still intact. His own brickworks in Invercargill in 1863, and his plant included a Hoffmann kiln.

2.3 Pressed metal

Pressed metal sheets for ceiling and wall linings were manufactured as an inexpensive alternative to plastered finishes in the second half of the nineteenth century up to the Second World War. They were manufactured in either sheet iron, sheet steel, or zinc and were often referred to as pressed tin. The term tin ceiling is a misnomer as these decorative sheets were never tinned.

Rolled sheet iron was invented in the late eighteenth century with the first manufactured in the United States in Trenton, New Jersey by Robert Morris. Morris roofed his own home with sheet iron in 1794 and sheet iron became used for ceilings from 1868. It is likely that its first use for ceilings was as a fire protective measure with these early ceilings being corrugated. Soan pressed sheet iron and steel was stamped with decorative designs and were sometimes gavanised or manufactured from zinc. The ceilings were covered from foot square tiles or sheets 600 mm wide and up to 25 metres long. The tiles or sheets interlocked and were nailed onto timber furring strips. They were stamped in a series of repetitive patterns or arranged on the ceiling to form a simple design. They were also used to cover walls and dados. Accessory pieces were also available such as cornices and medallions.

The Wunderlich company was the main manufacturer of pressed metal ceilings in Australia and New Zealand and it was first established in Sydney in 1885 by Ernest Wunderlich. He established the company after finding success in the fixing of German manufactured metal ceilings in the Colonial Secretary’s Building in Macquarie Street and the Beale’s and Paling’s
Many significant buildings in Australia and New Zealand have used these ceiling, including the Wellington and Auckland Town Halls.

The first circular saws were in action in Mercury Bay in 1837 and this form of sawing timber superseded pit sawing by the 1860’s. The first circular saws were water powered, then they were powered by steam, and finally by electricity, with the first electric machine used in 1906.

Metal laths in wire mesh form were invented in England in 1841.

Rivington’s Building Construction by Major Percy Smith states:

Wrought iron was gradually replaced by mild steel from the 1890’s.

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Metal laths in wire mesh form were invented in England in 1841.

Rivington’s Building Construction by Major Percy Smith states:

Wrought iron was gradually replaced by mild steel from the 1890’s.

Wrought iron was gradually replaced by mild steel from the 1890’s.
From 1839 galvanised roofing being used in the United States and later in Australia, India. Since the late 1850’s corrugated iron has been widely used in New Zealand for roof and wall cladding, and has become part of the New Zealand vernacular. Corrugated iron was produced in Australia from the 1860’s, and in 1921 the English firm, John Lysaght set up a large-scale corrugating and galvanising plant in Newcastle16. R and T Haworth the first manufacturer in New Zealand who started producing galvanised in Dunedin in 1864 from imported steel plate17. Production was based on a single sheet system, but in 1961, continuous sheet rolling and galvanising plants were established, the product coming to be known as ‘long run.’

Early catalogues for corrugated iron showed several profiles were made. These varied in both the depth of the corrugations and the pitch or spacing of the corrugations. The greater the depth of corrugation, the wider the span between roof supports.