



# Cobham Drive to Buckle Street transport improvements

## Public engagement

### Former Home of Compassion crèche

21

The former Home of Compassion crèche was built in 1914 and has recently been registered as a Category I historic place with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

It is located on Buckle Street at the north-western corner of the Basin Reserve.

#### Why is the crèche significant?

- The crèche is a physical reminder of French nun Mother Suzanne Aubert, most famous for her work with children with needs.
- It's a remnant of the intensive Catholic presence in the area from the late 19th century
- It's the oldest remaining purpose-built crèche in New Zealand.

#### History

- Mother Aubert wanted to help low-income mothers by providing care for their children while they worked.
- The building was designed by John Swan in a domestic Gothic style.
- The original building had a large playroom, dedicated sleeping room, bathroom with separate water closet with sink and two additional rooms.
- In 1973 the crèche moved to new premises in Sussex Street. St Patrick's College then used the building as a classroom, library and art room.

#### Who was Mother Aubert?

Mother Suzanne Aubert was born in France and studied nursing there before travelling as a missionary to New Zealand in 1860.

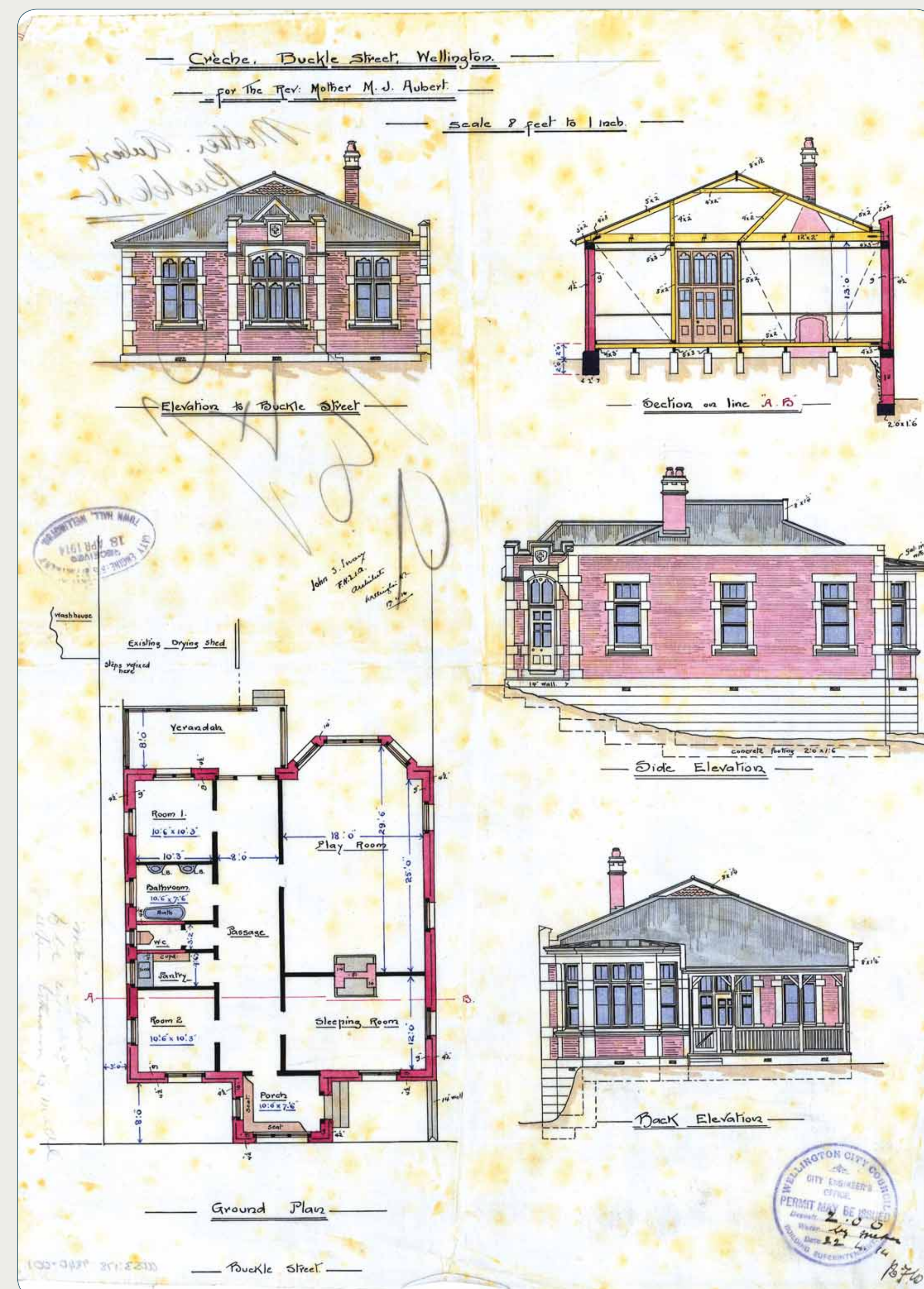
Her life works included establishing the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion and working among the poor, ill, deformed and disabled and their children throughout New Zealand.

By the end of the 1800s our cities were experiencing dire poverty. Mother Aubert moved to Wellington in 1899, where she founded the St Joseph's Home for Incurables, the Silverstream Home of Compassion, St Anthony's Soup Kitchen, Our Lady's Home of Compassion in Island Bay, and the Home of Compassion crèche. Mother Aubert was also one of the founding members of the Plunket Society. She passed away in 1926, aged 91.

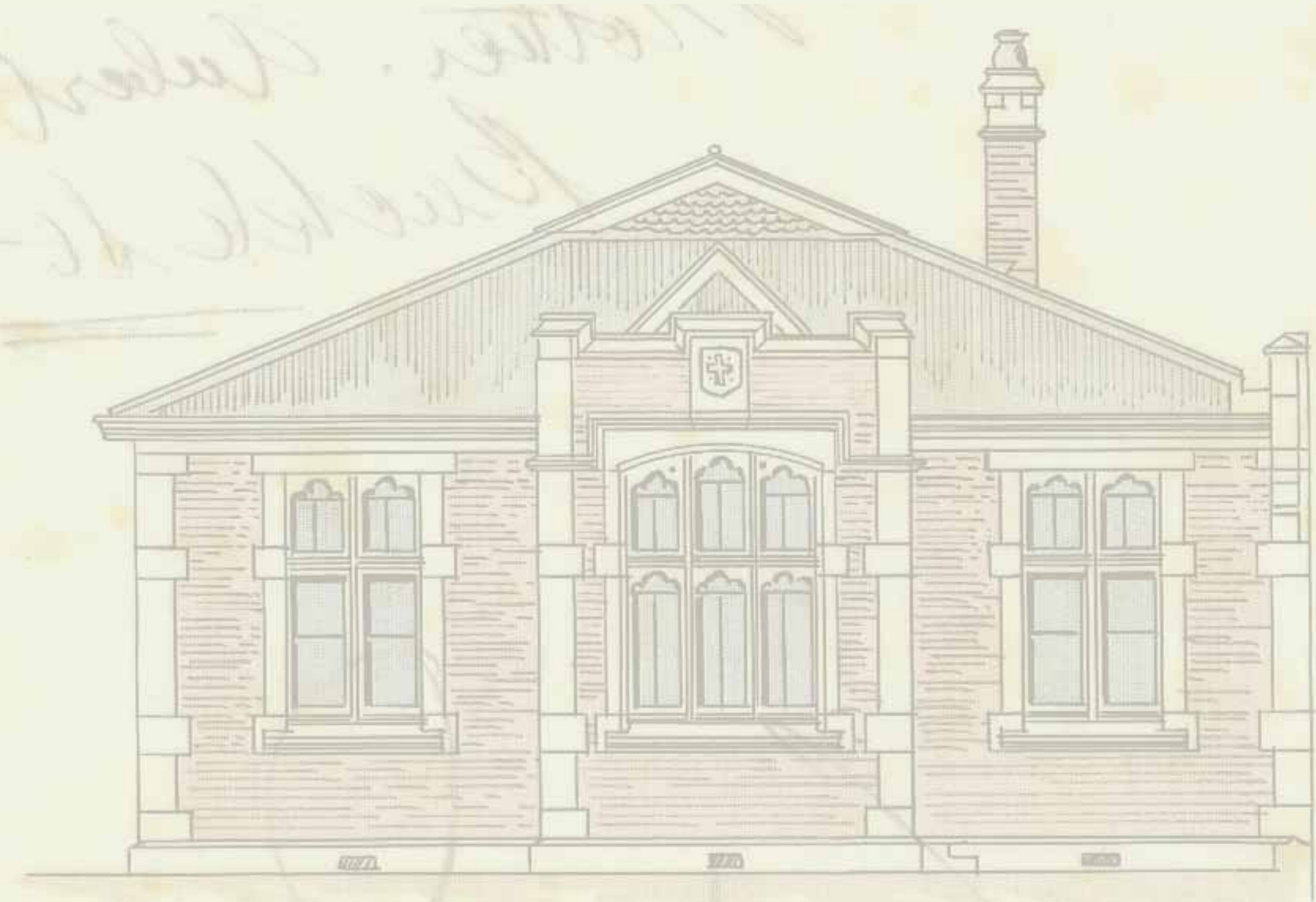
Mother Aubert's pioneering social work made her a national figure and she is now the first New Zealander being considered for canonisation.



View of the crèche from Buckle Street. Many people walk past the building unaware of its existence or historic importance.



The original architectural drawings of the crèche. Mother Suzanne Aubert had the vision to build the crèche, which was the first of its kind in New Zealand. It was designed by John Swan and built in 1914.



Elevation to Buckle Street



Views of the crèche, probably taken in the 1950s.