

# CASEY & LOWE Pty Ltd

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## Results of Testing for Earlier Roadways AIPM Site, North Head

### Background

Many of the existing buildings at the Australian Institute of Police Management site at North Head were built in 1916 with the founding of the Seamen's Isolation Hospital. Sections of the roadways may have been laid in 1915 when the jetty and boat slip in Spring Cove were built. It was expected that evidence of any earlier road surfacing or alignment might be preserved under the existing bitumen.

To inform the Conservation Management Plan of the site, the nature of a section of the existing roadway was investigated. The section chosen was the westernmost section of the bitumen section of road leading to the jetty, in front of Harbour Cottage, not far from the boundary fence enclosing the site. The first trench was dug across the bitumen roadway, while the second was in the grass past the end of the bitumen road but in the alignment of the roadway. The work was undertaken on 10 November 2008 by Tony Lowe and Robert Stanton Excavations.



**Figure 1:** Detail of 1947 plan showing Seamen's Isolation Hospital. The test trenches are arrowed.

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### Test Trenches

The first test trench was excavated through the bitumen roadway in front of Harbour Cottage (Fig. 1, 2). Cut bedrock outcropping was visible in the vicinity of this and the second trench on the southern side of the roadway, indicating that bedrock needed to be quarried to allow the road through (Fig. 2). It is noted that substantial areas of quarried bedrock is present to the west beyond the site fence.



**Figure 2:** Section of roadway prior to testing, looking towards site boundary. Note bedrock outcrops to left and right. Scale 1m in location of first trench.

The first trench exposed loose crushed sandstone packing under the bitumen (Fig. 3, 4). This was laid onto grey sand over weathered bedrock. No evidence of road surfacing predating the present bitumen road was found.





**Figure 3:** Trench through bitumen showing sandstone packing. Scale 1m.



**Figure 4:** Trench through roadway showing detail of sandstone fill. Scales 1m.



The second trench was located in the grass to the west of the first (Fig. 1).



**Figure 4:** Trench in grassed area, looking east. Note cut bedrock to right. Scale 1m.



**Figure 5:** Trench in grassed area, with layer of gravel under the grass. Scale 1m.





**Figure 5:** Detail of trench in grassed area, showing sandstone fill. Scale 1m.

A layer of small ironstone gravel was found beneath the bitumen in the second trench, with crushed sandstone fill beneath this. The gravel appears to be part of a gravel surfacing, perhaps representing the pre-bitumen form of the roadway.

### **Conclusions**

No evidence of an earlier road surface was found under the present bitumen roadway. Gravel under the grass in the western trench indicates that part of the route was gravel surfaced. This gravel was perhaps replaced elsewhere by the bitumen where the road ran adjacent to the hospital buildings.