

Submission
No 19

FORMER URANIUM SMELTER SITE, HUNTER'S HILL

Name: Mr Graham Camp

Date received: 30/06/2008

Dear Inquiry members,

My name is Graham Camp. I am the man who removed soil from No. 11 Nelson Parade in the 1960s. I never lived on the block, I worked on the block on and off for a couple of years.

I bought the block in 1965 through an agent. I paid 3200 pounds. There was no trace of any factory on No. 11 when I bought it. Homes were already on No. 7 and 9 Nelson Parade.

I built the sandstone retaining walls at the rear of the house and at the top of the cliff using rock quarried from the site. I have photographs of the site while the work was in progress.

I also organised the construction of the stone wall at the harbour's edge on the foreshore of No. 11. I fixed up mistakes, and used soil from No. 11 to fill behind the wall. I cut the upper sections back to rock, and transported the waste soil to the foreshore using a self-designed railway and skip.

I did not build the house, I started to build a pool wall which is part of the home's foundation.

I first became aware of radioactivity when a man with a geiger counter came on site. That man was investigating reports of people who had died, I understood that they had died from painting radium on watch faces. I never saw any of the results for readings that he took.

I was told that I could sun bake on the soil for 2 hours a day and it would still be safe, if I had a lawn on top.

During the work, I wore a white badge 2 inches square for radiation exposure. I do not recall the film badge being changed. I didn't bother to have it tested after I sold the land. I did not use a dust mask. The soil was brown and granular, there wasn't much dust.

During my work, I spoke to a man whose father used to live in the radium smelter site. That man described how the ore was unloaded from ships in wooden barrels. When barrels split, they were kicked off the wharf into the harbour.

I wrecked my back quarrying the rock, and the doctor told me to sell the block before I killed myself. I do not have any trace of cancer that I know of. I have asbestosis and emphysema, but these are not related to the site. I used to smoke 2 packets a day, but quit 30 years ago.

I sold the land to DW Lemerle, a boat builder at Woolwich. I never met Lemerle, my agent sold it to him. I was not told that radiation was serious, so I didn't tell anyone else. I didn't convey radiation concerns to Lemerle. I do not know if my agent discussed it with Lemerle.

I think he sold it again quick smart. I think Lemerle sold it to a solicitor who used to be in state Government. I found out the Nurses bought the block when I spoke to a lawyer friend of Mary's. I later bought kitchens from Mr Nurse's kitchen business in Glebe.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Camp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, vertical tail on the final letter.