

Woollahra Improves Sandstone Maintenance

Sandstone is a defining characteristic of the Greater Sydney basin. Used for everything from garden walls and seating to sculptures and historic building facades, keeping it in good condition presents a range of management issues.

Being porous the surface of sandstone marks easily. In damp shaded areas microscopic algal growth can be a problem leading to staining and in some cases dangerous slippery surfaces.

Woollahra Council experiences just this problem in the paved forecourt area of their main administration building. Traditionally the area has been cleaned with a high pressure hose and the occasional use of detergents for problem stains.

All this has changed with the application of a new water based silicone sealant that protects the surface and inhibits algal growth.

In late 2008 Noble Earth Technologies first cleaned the surface with a high pressure hose and biocide to kill algal spores. Biocides are not generally considered a sustainable product, but in this case were considered necessary to neutralise the established algal bloom. [Natural biocides are available which could make this step more sustainable, and new stone surfaces do not require this preliminary treatment.]

Once the stone was fully cleaned, a water based silicone sealant was applied. The sealant is completely invisible and does not change the



Before and after - treated sandstone at Woollahra Council.

colour, feel, or appearance of the stone. At a microscopic level however, the surface has been sealed, making it less susceptible to mould and algal growth. Almost a year later the results have been positive.

Since its been sealed we have not used the high pressure hose once and it still looks great. It has dramatically cut down the time, labour and water necessary to keep the surface looking fresh," he said.

"We are very happy with the result so far," said Wayne Coggins Woollahra Council's Property Service Coordinator.

Woollahra Council are now planning to expand the treated area to incorporate garden walls and public seating areas.



Cleaning and preparing the sandstone.



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Please call Seb Crawford on (02) 9242 4053 or email seb.crawford@lgsa.org.au if your council has a story to tell.