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| 20th Century Naval Dockyards Devonport and Portsmouth 6265 Record Form | | Portsmouth Dockyard Archive: PCC HER Building Ref: NA Building Names: Western Jetties Grid Ref: SU 62715 00771 | |
| Archive name and address | Historic Environment Record, Museums, Archives & Visitor Services, City Development and Cultural Services, City Museum, Museum Road Portsmouth PO1 2LJ | | |
| Visit date | 9 January 2013 | | |
| Document reference | Site Activity PM59; Source PM 57. Gifford & Partners (August 1999). Report No. B1989A/R01 (Phase 1A). The Jetties, HMNB, Portsmouth Interim Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief. Southampton: Gifford & Partners Ltd. Gifford & Partners (July 2000). Report No. B1989B/R02 (Phase 1B). The Jetties, HMNB, Portsmouth Interim Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief. Southampton: Gifford & Partners Ltd. | | |
| Subject | The Jetties, HMNB, Portsmouth | | |
| Relevance to technology/chronology/dockyard development/other/where it fits into the larger picture | A non-statutory SAM Clearance Notice to implement an archaeological watching brief during below-groundworks was submitted by Symonds relating to SAM 397, which covers the whole of Basin No. 1, including the old sea wall frontage to Pitch House and Sheer Jetties and Dry Dock Nos 1-6. The brief covered Phases 1A and 1B of the RN refurbishment of the Western Jetties and aimed to identify and record archaeological features and deposits and recover significant any artefacts. (Report No. B1989A/R01, pp. 1, 4) Phase 1A groundworks Phase 1B groundworks comprised the construction of one long continuous jetty extending from Sheer Jetty northwards to Middle Slip Jetty. In front of the sea walls lay jetties constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, which were not covered by the SAM and were demolished. Groundworks were centred to the south and west of the substation on the North Railway Jetty. The existing substation was enlarged and new cable ducts were installed to service the new Western Jetties. RN Western Jetties refurbishment for the new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers. | | |
| Reasons why an image should be included in the Report: Yes/No | Changes to the Jetties were made to allow the two new aircraft carriers to moor alongside safely. | | |
| Core/Secondary importance | Core | | |
| Identify whether it should be copied for data: Yes/No | | Yes | |
| Identify whether an image should be included in the Report: Yes/No If Yes explain why, as succinctly as possible (its relevance to technology/chronology/ dockyard development/other/where it fits into the larger picture) | | No | |
| Give indication of importance: Core/Secondary/Nil | | Core | |
| Abstracted or transcribed extracts; folio/page references/listed images (acquired electronically or by photocopy) which should feature in the Report text. | History of the Western Jetties (Report No. B1989A/R01, pp. 1, 3, 6). Reclamation of land in the early 1700s created a camber dock along the northern edge of the jetty called North Camber Channel. This was altered in 1805 to create two new dry docks: No. 7 and No. 10, under Samuel Bentham's plans (which were carried out by Simon Goodrich). Dock No. 10 was filled in during the 1970s and a road was laid over it. The Western Jetties (p. 3) are thought to have been constructed of timber and cast iron between 1840 and 1870, extending from the south Camber to Dock No. 9. These were replaced in the 1920s and 1930s with concrete jetties, Middle Slip Jetty being replaced in the 1990s. | | |

Excavation around the substation exposed 30m of the back of the sea wall, which was in poor condition due to the insertion of service ducts and a culvert in c.1905. A number of facing stones had been replaced by concrete. At its greatest width the wall was 3m thick, constructed of dressed stone with a rubble core. In the south west corner a stepped footing (0.28 x 2.5m) was observed. It did not run the length of the wall and may have been built to strengthen the corner. A short section of the southern end of the sea wall was exposed. Its northern face consisted of dressed stone blocks similar to the western wall. A buttress was seen 2m east of the south west corner (0.66m x 1.9m), also of dressed stone blocks (Report No. B1989B/R02, pp. 1, 4-5).

The northern part of the current sea wall was a later addition, c.2m wide. The eastern upper part of this wall was heavily truncated, with only one course of dressed stone blocks seen at the bottom of the excavation (Report No. B1989B/R02, p. 5).

The site was divided in half by a double culvert (c.1905) which ran from the Engine House to the east, under the substation, and discharged into the harbour. Excavation for this culvert had removed any archaeology from a 7m wide strip (Report No. B1989B/R02, pp. 1, 4).

To the south of the culvert two rows of paired wooden piles, c.5m apart, were seen running east-west. Each paired row of piles carried a reinforced concrete foundation also running east-west, its top just below the ground surface. The piles were each 0.30m square, made of pine. The parallel paired rows were 0.75m apart, with a spacing of 2.25m between the pairs (Report No. B1989B/R02, p. 5).

To the south east corner of the site a 1.5m wide limestone wall was found running north-south. It appeared to be of a rougher construction than the sea wall, and heavily truncated by later services, especially at the northern end by the culvert. It was marked on the c.1905 plans for the Engine House, but not on earlier plans. Its rough nature could denote an early structure or the footings for a large building (Report No. B1989B/R02, pp. 2, 5).

A 2m wide wall running east-west was observed to the north of the culvert, which appeared to turn south west at its western end for 1.67m. It was faced on its northern side by large blocks of dressed stone (c.2m x 0.45m), and had a rubble core. The block forming the corner was angled at its western end so that the joint between the stones was not at the corner of the wall. The east-west wall matches the lines of the jetty shown in a 1750 plan of the dockyard (Report No. B1989B/R02, pp. 2, 5).

A similar wall aligned north-south was seen in the northern section abutting the east-west wall 2.46m east of the corner. The abutting wall may be part of the 1805 alterations, when the North Camber Channel was enlarged. It was 2m wide built of stone blocks (Report No. B1989B/R02, pp. 2, 5-6).

A large bollard whose foundation was c.1m³ was removed from the south east corner of the excavation, retained for use elsewhere. A capstan base (6m x 2m), marked on the 1905 Engine House plans, was uncovered north of the bollard (Report No. B1989B/R02, p. 5).

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| | <p>Test Pit 3 exposed a layer of granite cobbles similar to those found under Victory Parade (Report No. B1989B/R02, p. 4).</p> <p>At the junction of two trenches excavated north of the substation another capstan base was uncovered, c.1m x 2m, with brass fittings and without a housing for a motor. This capstan was also marked on the 1905 Engine House plans. To the north of this capstan base the northern face of a wide brick structure was seen, faced in large stone blocks (Report No. B1989B/R02, p. 6).</p> | |
| Researcher initials | AVC | Updates/initials |
| Relationship to other building/ structure, if known | N/A | |
| References | <p>See Coats <i>et al.</i> (2015), p. 138-9, 144-6.</p> <p>Coats, A., Davies, J. D., Evans, D., and Riley, R. (2015). <i>20th Century Naval Dockyards: Devonport and Portsmouth Characterisation Report</i>. Portsmouth: Naval Dockyards Society. ISBN 978-0-9929292-0-6, ebook ISBN 978-0-9929292-2-0.</p> <p>The Report is free to download on the Naval Dockyards Society website: http://navaldockyards.org/c20-naval-dockyards/</p> <p>Gifford & Partners (August 1999). Report No. B1989A/R01 (Phase 1A). The Jetties, HMNB, Portsmouth Interim Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief. Southampton: Gifford & Partners Ltd.</p> <p>Gifford & Partners (July 2000). Report No. B1989B/R02 (Phase 1B). The Jetties, HMNB, Portsmouth Interim Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief. Southampton: Gifford & Partners Ltd.</p> | |