Brading Haven Old Sea Wall, Brading, Isle of Wight

SZ 61414 87300 –
SZ 61560 87035

Level 1 Historic Building Record

April 2006

PRN 6061

Prepared for
Brading Town Council

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Summary

WCA Heritage were commissioned by Brading Town Council to undertake a Level 1 Historic Building Survey of the Brading Haven Old Sea Wall. The earthwork embankment and limestone wall surveyed here relates to the reclamation of Brading marsh in 1594, by Edward Richards of Yaverland Manor, an event which is later documented by Sir John Oglander (the former deputy lieutenant of the Island) in his memoirs. This Historic Building Survey has been undertaken prior to restoration works, in order to inform repairs, interpretation and to provide an archaeological record of the wall. Further works include a desk based assessment of documentary sources to examine evidence for the social and cultural impact of the landed gentry's reclamation of the area north and east of Brading in the 16th century on the development of the town (WCA Heritage, forthcoming).

The full extent of the Haven wall and embankment is first depicted on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1793 (IWCRO MP/D/11) with the two present day sluices allowing the Yar to flow out to the Haven (Figure 1). An earthwork embankment extends for the full length of the surveyed wall. A representative sketch section was drawn through the earthwork (Figure 6). On average, the earthwork is 6.22m wide at its base and 3.5m wide at the top. The bank angle is approximately 30-40º. Step erosion, possibly caused by stock or natural processes was recorded along much of the embankment. In addition to the up standing earthwork, a ditch was also identified aligned parallel with the embankment earthwork on it south west side. It is possible that the earthwork was constructed from material excavated from this ditch as it runs parallel to the earthwork for much of its course. However, it is also possible that it was excavated at a later date.

The Level 1 Historic Building survey identified and recorded 3 types of walling. The changes in wall construction do not reflect the change in alignment of the wall as might be expected. This would suggest that its course may be determined by topographic features, such as river channels or visible features in the landscape at the time of its construction. Topographic survey is recommended to investigate this hypothesis and elucidate on the early history of the reclamation and its design.

Wall (1) extends for a length of 12.60m from the end of Wall Lane where it survives only to a height of 2 courses. It is not clear to what extent this is a result of later re-use or if this is the original form of the wall at its most north westerly extent (and probably highest level). Elsewhere the wall survives to a height of 1m above ground level and comprises 5 courses of random, smooth faced limestone blocks. No batter was recorded on wall 1 but a pink sandy mortar was visible. In contrast Wall (2) is clearly battered back at an angle of approximately 15º off the vertical. Seven courses were identified with a distinct uneven coursing. The top course is constructed from very large blocks, below this are two or three courses of random coursed rubble constructed of smaller blocks. Both wall (1) and (2) are located in an area which historically has incorporated buildings and field divisions suggesting agricultural activity. Today, a cattle fence is extant in this area which is in general filled with numerous stock management related features. This leads to the suggestion that these sections of wall have been used for a secondary purpose and may have been altered or repaired. Wall (3) is constructed of random uncoursed blocks of variable sizes. There is little evidence for coursing or grading of masonry sizes. This section appears to be a drystone wall which has been the subject of some repair, particularly at point G.

The Middle Sluice lies at the very edge of the survey area, at the south eastern extent of the wall. The name 'Middle Sluice' and references to a third sluice (IWCRO AC 2005/16) may be explained by a dip in the earthwork and change in wall construction recorded at point A. Both the Oglander and 1810 OS maps show a tributary terminating at the embankment at this point. Therefore, it is suggested that this tributary may have initially continued via a sluice at point A.

Slight surviving earthworks (SZ 6150 8734, SMR 1816) as well as documentary and cartographic evidence from the early Post Medieval Period attest to the remains of the town's quay at the north west end of the Sea Wall. Following a preliminary investigation of the relevant sources, it is suggested that the quay is viewed as a related structure integral to the wall, rather than as a separate feature.

It is not possible to securely date the quay to a period after the construction of the embankment and sea wall. Topographic survey of the quay is recommended to record this important physical relationship further at this point and to investigate the possibility that the features are contemporaneous. Oglander suggests that before this quay and embankment were built, the quay was located nearer to the High Street. However, the County SMR records the medieval quay as on the site of the Sewage treatment plant in Wall Lane due to the occurrence of earthworks on the 1898 OS map. Edwards (1999 p10) suggests that a topographic survey be undertaken on the site of the sewage plant to help identify the true location of the earlier quay.

The reclamation of the marshes around Brading had been attempted both in earlier and later periods. Richard's sea wall appears to have been temporarily surpassed in 1620 when the whole of the Haven was reclaimed by Sir Bevis Thelwell and Sir Hugh Middleton's embankment across the mouth of the Haven from St Helen's to Bembridge. This was subsequently breached by the sea in 1630 (Long, 1888: 110-117). Why this further embankment is required only 26 years after the construction of Richard's embankment is unknown. Late 18th century topographic descriptions, illustrations (e.g. Albin 1795:469) and cartographic sources suggest that following the breach, the sea returned to flood the Haven at high tide and Richard's Sea Wall returned to its purpose. It was probably only with the Parliamentary Act of 1874 to secure a railway line from Brading to St Helen's that Richard's 1594 sea wall fell out of use.

The Historic Building Record (level 1 survey) report forms part of ongoing archaeological works. The survey has produced a photographic and written record of the wall and embankment. More building survey works are unlikely to recover further significant detail from this homogenous, simple structure. An alternative method of enquiry and recording is recommended; topographic survey should be undertaken to elucidate further on the issues identified above. It is also recommended that a rapid levels survey be produced on the area surrounding the sewage plant, should the opportunity present itself.

This survey has recorded many areas of collapse along the wall (outside of the area under consideration for repair). Aerial photographs record an increase in scrub growth in the last thirty years. It is recommended that to prevent further scrub encroachment and degeneration of the wall, a programme of light maintenance should be established to secure the preservation of this important historic feature.

Recommendations :

- *Establishment of light maintenance routine to control future scrub growth*
- *Undertake topographic survey of quay and along the wall instead of Level 3 Building Recording*
- *Undertake topographic survey of area around sewerage works if possible*
- *Produce photographic record of wall repairs before, during and after*
- *Wall repairs should be undertaken in the style of the section of wall*

Contents

1. Introduction and Project Background

1.1 WCA Heritage Ltd was commissioned to produce a Level 1 Historic Building Record of the Old Sea Wall at Brading following a request from the local planning authority, Isle of Wight Council, for a programme of historic building recording to be undertaken to ensure that the Client (Brading Town Council) 'provide an accurate and up-to-date record of the quay walls and other structures as appropriate in advance of future proposals for regeneration of structures' and 'allow future development plans to be informed by the actual nature of the surviving remains.' The project was commissioned in February 2006 following a Written Scheme of Investigations prepared by WCA Heritage (2006) and approved by IWCAS.

1.2 The development proposals include repair and restoration of the wall and it's embankment to formalise public access along the top of the feature and to interpret this historic monument for the public.

1.3 This Level 1 Historic Building Recording survey was carried out prior to commencement of the proposed works and forms part of a staged archaeological programme of works also including historic documentary research designed to locate the structure within its local and regional context and detail development of the Haven and Quay (WCA Heritage, forthcoming).

1.4 The Old Sea wall forms a linear feature running from SZ 61414 87300 to SZ 61823 86916 (Figure 1) which lies in an open area of marshland/pasture east of Brading town. The site lies below the 5m contour. It is currently in public use as a footpath. It is recorded on the SMR (PRN 2592) as a reclamation embankment, "which prior to 1880 formed the southern boundary of Brading Harbour". The feature is aligned generally north west - south east from the end of Wall Lane at SZ 61414 87300 to the sluice gate at SZ 61620 86878 (the Great Sluice), and cuts through the River Yar flood plain. From this point the feature changes direction and is aligned east – west, terminating at SZ61823 86916, this section of the feature comprises an earthwork embankment which lies across the combe east of Centurions Hill.

1.5 From SZ 61414 87300 to SZ 61648 86879 the embankment is faced on the north east side by the Old Sea Wall. The extent of this HBR survey incorporates the north west end of this feature from SZ 61414 87300 to the sluice gate at SZ 61560 87035 (referred to in this report as Middle Sluice).

1.6 The methodology for the building recording complies with the guidelines for Level 1 Historic Building Recording (RCHME, 1996) and is intended to instigate works in line with the provisions of *Policy Planning Guidance 15;* Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15, DoE 1994) and applicable English Heritage guidelines and advice (English Heritage 1998; Clark 2001).

1.7 The project was managed by Katie-Sue Wilson BSc AIFA. The Building Recording was undertaken by Katie-Sue Wilson BSc AIFA and Rosie Edmunds BA. This report has been prepared by R Edmunds with editing by K Wilson.

1.8 The project Primary Record Number is PRN 6061 and the site archive will be deposited with IWCAS under this PRN.

2. Methodology

2.1 The field recording was undertaken between 13th March and 22nd March 2006 by WCA Heritage. Access was possible to both sides of the structure. A walkover and visual inspection of the wall and its associated features was conducted prior to commencing the survey to identify the broader historic landscape context and to assess the significance of potential associated features.

2.2 The archaeological recording comprised pro forma masonry record sheets, annotated hand sketches and photographic record sheets. The Ordnance Survey 1971 1:2500 map was used as

base plan for an annotated plan of the site, in the absence of a site plan being provided by the client. Masonry Record Sheets and hand annotated sketches were used to record construction material, method and nature of stone and mortar, including descriptions of repairs, such as repointing and any features. Also recorded were dimensions, orientation and angle of wall and its embankment earthwork.

2.3 Digital photography was used as appropriate to the conditions and the subject. On visual inspection, 3 separate sections of wall were identified. Selected representative views of these elements of the structure were photographed in addition to general photographs of the earthwork embankment and other features around the site. Selected views of the wall with areas of detail, details of the structure relevant to its design, development and use were also taken.

2.4 The paper and photographic record also demonstrated the condition of the monument during the course of the survey. It is noticeable that the extent of scrub growth and the negative impact on the wall has rapidly increased in the last thirty years.

3. Archaeological Background

3.1 A full desk based assessment of the historic documentary, cartographic, photographic and illustrative material is currently being undertaken by WCA Heritage to place the reclamation embankment within it landscape and historical setting (WCA Heritage, forthcoming). A summary of the preliminary research has been incorporated into this report.

3.2 Although place name evidence suggests that Brading may have been established during the Anglo Saxon period (Kokeritz 1940, Basford, 1980:35), it is not until the Medieval Period that that there is persuasive evidence that Brading became a substantial settlement. Documentary evidence indicates that Brading became an established settlement by 1285 when it is recorded to have been built on the Manor of Whitefield and in receipt of it's first charter (Cal. Close. 1279-1288: 344). Brading later received a grant for a market or fair from Edward VI in 1547 and Edwards suggests that the Medieval market may have been held at the top of the High Street (Edwards 1999: 4). Basford states that no detailed study of Medieval Brading has been published and therefore it is difficult to assess the extent of Brading's characteristics as a suburban settlement (Basford 1980:45).

3.3 Alike to other contemporary settlements on the Island such as Newtown and Newport which although planned towns, were sited to exploit natural harbours, the town of Brading was established overlooking a tidal inlet from Bembridge. The location of the town's first (Medieval) Quay is disputed although Sir John Oglander, writing in the 17th century indicates that an early quay was located on Brading High Street during the 14th century:

[…formerly ye boates came up to ye middle of Bradinge street:..]

(Long 1888: 111)

3.4 Earthworks on the 1898 OS map have led to the alternative suggestion that the Medieval Quay was located at SZ6120 8726 on the site of the present Sewage Works (SMR 1868). There is little evidence to support this theory however; these earthworks could equally relate to the establishment of the sewage works or the adjacent cement works, both of which were operational during the late nineteenth century.

3.5 Post Medieval cartographic sources indicate that during the late 18th century the core of the settlement at Brading occupied the area between the High Street and the Bull Ring, the Mall being less densly occupied, and that this area may have been the focus of the Medieval town (Edwards 1999:4 citing IWCRO OG/PP/14). The Tithe Map (IWCRO JER/T/33B) may suggest elements of possible burgage plots, although there is little evidence to suggest that the Town was extensively planned (Edwards ibid). Surviving standing buildings within the town, aside

from the Church, all appear to date from the post medieval period, most notably the Old Town Hall (dating from the 17th century), and the Wax Museum, although documentary sources suggest a rectory or vicarage near to the church built in the late 13th century or early 14th century (Edwards 1999:5 citing PRO E315/45/114 and IWCRO BDG/4).

3.6 The site of the post medieval quay associated with the sea wall is indicated by surviving earthworks at the end of Wall Lane (at SZ 6150 8734, SMR 1816) as well as documentary and cartographic evidence (see paragraph 3.13 below and Long 1888:111). It is highly likely that this Quay, located at the north west end of the Old Sea Wall and embankment, is a related structure integral to the wall.

3.7 A number of other undated or post medieval linear reclamation features are recorded on the SMR and indicate piecemeal reclamation of the marsh land of the lower Yar Valley. In the vicinity of the site, these include a post Medieval reclamation bank running from SZ 61465 87461 (north of Wall Lane) to SZ 61814 87954 south of Carpenters Farm (SMR 2595) and a further (undated) reclamation embankment at SZZ6209 9705 north of Centurion's Copse (SMR 2593).

Historical evidence for the reclamation of the marsh and haven

3.8 Historic documents suggest several stages of land reclamation of Brading marsh and Haven. Sir John Oglander's memoirs note reclamation by Sir William Russell of Yaverland at Yarbridge (Long 1888:110). This would appear to relate to SMR 2292 at SZ 6070 8635 (IWCRO AC2005/16). The second stage was carried out by George Oglander and German Richards in 1562 and would appear to relate to the earthwork SMR 2595 mentioned above (IWCRO AC2005/16).

3.9 A third reclamation was carried out at the end of the 16th century:

> 'The third inninge wase made by Mr. Edward Rychardes, ano 1594, when that wase made feeding grownd from his sluice to Yarbridge, being mill marish, and ye other meads.'
>
> Oglander MSS (Long: 1888, 110)

It is likely therefore, that the area of marsh to the north of Yarbridge was reclaimed by means of the embankment and old sea wall visible today (SMR 2592), which is recorded as being constructed under the orders of Edward Rychardes in 1594.

3.10 Oglander also recounts in detail later reclamation in 1620 of the whole of the Haven by Sir Bevis Thelwell and Sir Hugh Middleton, when an embankment was constructed across the mouth of the Haven from St Helen's to Bembridge. This was subsequently breached by the sea in 1630 (Long, 1888: 110-117). Why this further embankment is required only 26 years after the construction of Richard's embankment is unknown. It would seem however that following the breach of the 1620 embankment, the sea continued to flood the Haven at high tide, and Richard's Old Sea Wall constructed in 1594 continued to serve its purpose. This is suggested by late 18th century topographic descriptions, (e.g. Albin 1795:469, and 473), cartographic sources (see paragraph 3.22) and illustrations (WCA Heritage forthcoming).

3.11 A final reclamation phase of the Haven was carried out by The Brading Harbour Improvement Railway under the Parliamentary Act of 1874 which secured a line from Brading to St Helen's. This opened in August 1878 for goods, with the embankment to Bembridge, across the mouth of the Harbour completed in 1880 (Maycock and Silsbury 1999: 115-118). This left Richard's sea wall redundant.

Cartographic Evidence

3.12 Cartographic sources suggest the embankment and wall have remained a constant feature in the landscape from its earliest depiction in the late 18th century until present day.

3.13 The earliest cartographic source depicting the old sea wall and the quay is the Oglander Map of 1773 (IWCRO OG87/26) which depicts a short section of the north west end of the embankment and wall, the quay and 'storehouses'. Also depicted is the tributary of the Yar flowing from Brading, parallel to Quay Lane towards the embankment. It also depicts the embankment running north from the quay towards Bexley Point, likely to be the 1562 embankment (SMR 2595). To the east of the old sea wall the Haven is annotated to possibly represent wet or uncultivated land, suggesting that at this time the Haven consisted of mud flats.

3.14 The full extent of the embankment is first depicted on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1793 (IWCRO MP/D/11). The alignment is as shown on later Ordnance Survey maps, with the two present day sluices allowing the Yar to flow out to the Haven. The embankment is depicted by a hard line on the north east side -presumably the embankment wall, and hachures on the south west side -representing a sloping earthwork embankment. The tributary from Brading which runs parallel to Quay Lane is depicted although in contrast to the present arrangement, it terminates at the embankment and does not join the main river channel on either side of the embankment. At the north west end of the embankment the quay (depicted by a hard line, possibly a wall) appears to stem from the embankment wall. In contrast to the Oglander Map, the 'Store Houses' are depicted as an 'L'- shaped building. Additional structures are depicted on the quay and to the rear of the Store.

3.15 The Tithe Map of 1840 (IWCRO AC94/34) does not depict the embankment, although the alignments of field boundaries suggest that the embankment formed the northwestern boundary to 'Fatting Marsh'. Wall Lane is depicted as a continuous track, providing access to the quay. To the north and south of the Lane, two buildings, including the store houses, are shown.

3.16 The 1862 25" Ordnance Survey map depicts the embankment in detail and in comparison with the modern 1973 1:2500, shows remarkable similarity in form of the earthwork and wall. Aligned parallel with the southwest side of the earthwork, a ditch is shown, extending from a few meters south east of the northwestern end of the embankment to the Middle Sluice. This ditch would appear to be fed by the tributary of the River which runs from Brading parallel to, and south of Wall Lane. At the south eastern end of the ditch, it adjoins a tributary of the main Yar River channel which flows through the Middle Sluice. An additional canalized channel from Brading adjoins the ditch just north of the Middle Sluice. It is not possible to ascertain the direction of flow or topography in a greater detail, and therefore not possible to determine if the ditch acted as a channel for diverting the stream or an excavation ditch for the embankment construction. However, south of the Middle Sluice, no ditch is depicted. At the northwestern end of the embankment the quay and store building are also depicted. The representation of the quay compares with well with the 1973 1:2500 map, although here it is depicted with a hard line, suggesting a masonry built structure rather than the denuded earthwork it later becomes. Both the path along the top of the embankment and the track from the end of Wall Lane on to the quay are depicted. The map also outlines the projected line of the proposed railway from Brading to Ryde and St Helens.

3.17 The 1864 6" Ordnance Survey map depicts the embankment in a similar form to that above, however an additional spur and railway siding on a jetty immediately north of the quay is depicted. The purpose of this spur is not known although there are documentary references to the movement of coal and later cement via the railway (Maycock and Silbury, p 119). At this time, it is not clear that the Cement Works are fully operational as there are no depictions of clay pits and typically associated features and only one building is shown.

3.18 The 1898 25" Ordnance Survey map depicts the embankment within the survey area in a similar manner to elsewhere, although the parallel ditch appears to have been partly infilled at SZ61482 87238. Annotation indicates that the water in the ditch flows south east towards the Middle Sluice. The store building has probably been demolished and the form of the quay may suggest that by this time it is denuded. The St Helens Railway line is depicted, although the branch north of the quay has been removed. Reclamation of Brading Haven brought about by the construction of the railway embankment and line has lead to the establishment of new fields (on the north east side of the earthwork at SZ61456 87269) and a new building, possibly a barn associated with the newly claimed fields, is marked just north of point A.

3.19 The 1908 25" Ordnance Survey map shows the embankment to be unchanged, although the access (represented by an infilled section of the ditch south of Point A at SZ61482 87238) has been enlarged. In addition, the field barn building north of point A at SZ61456 87269 has been enlarged. To the north of the Brading tributary, the ditch appears to have been infilled. A new building at the north west end of the embankment has also been constructed (this house may survive to the present day). The quay appears to have become a denuded earthwork by this time; only the south west facing elevation is represented by a solid line (a wall) and an adjoining structure is shown which suggests re-use of the quay area, probably for stock management.

3.20 The 1940 6" Ordnance Survey map shows no change to the embankment or associated structures. By 1973 1:2500 there is an additional drainage channel on the north east side of the embankment running north east from SZ 61490 82755 to the former river channel.

3.21 Other cartographic sources confirm that during the late 17th century until the late 19th century, the southern limit of Brading Haven's tidal waters was the embankment and quay (for example, Edward Russell's Admiralty Chart of 1693, Andrew's Map of 1769 and George Burn's map of 1794). This is also confirmed by contemporary accounts from Oglander during the 17th century (Long 1888:111) and numerous late 18th and 19th century topographical descriptions (for example Albin 1795: 468; Daniell 1824: 73; Barber 1850: 29) (WCA Heritage, forthcoming).

4. Results

3 types of wall fabric were identified along the north east and east-north-east facing side of the embankment during the survey. These were assigned individual contexts (1), (2) and (3) as indicated in Figure 1 and are described below.

Wall 1 (D – E) (Figure 2)

4.1 Wall (1) consists of the northwest end of the Old Sea Wall, near to Quay Lane. This extended for a length of 12.60m from SZ 61418 87300 to SZ 61427 87294 where it curves inwards and butts with wall (2). Both wall (1) and (2) are located in an area which historically has incorporated buildings and field divisions suggesting agricultural activity. Today, a cattle fence is extant in this area with divisions for stock management. This leads to the suggestion that these sections of walls were re-used and may have been altered or repaired. At its very beginning, the wall survives only to a height of 2 visible courses. At its maximum height elsewhere, wall 1 survives to 1m above ground level and comprises 5 visible courses.

4.2 This wall is constructed of Bembridge Limestone blocks varying is size from 0.35m x 0.18m (maximum size) to 0.15m x 0.10m (minimum size).The coursing is described as random to uneven coursed, with a smooth face. Where the wall is damaged, mortar is visible within the internal structure, and a salmon pink 'cement' like mortar on the external face which may suggest re-pointing.

4.3 Just south of point D (north west of the wall) brick, concrete and limestone fragments aligned NE-SW were observed in plan. These appear to be the remains of a previous trackway as seen on 1898 OS map. At this point, both the earthwork and wall survive only as low features; it is not clear to what extent they have been damaged or robbed out or if this is the true form of these features at their most north westerly extent.

4.4 At 0.80m from the north west end of the wall, abutting the north east face of wall (1) at right angles, is a limestone wall. This is visible extending for a distance of 4.30m. This survives at ground level as only seen in plan, with only 2 courses at the most seen above ground level. The wall is constructed with dress limestone block. The alignment of this wall and location suggests that it may be associated with the quay (see OS Map 25" 1862).

Wall 2 (E-A) (Figure 3)

4.5 Wall (2) extends from SZ 61427 8729 to SZ 61462 87268 and abutts wall (1) to the north west and wall (3) to the south west at point A. Wall (2) measures approximately 44.80m in length. This section of the wall is moderately well preserved although scrub growth on the wall has caused some damage in places. At point E the wall survives to a maximum height of 1.30m.

4.6 In contrast to Wall (1) this wall is clearly battered back at an angle of approximately 10%. The wall is constructed with Bembridge Limestone blocks of varying size. Seven courses were identified with a distinct uneven coursing. The top course is constructed from large blocks typically 0.68m – 0.46m in dimension. Below this are two or three courses of random coursed rubble constructed of smaller blocks. These vary in dimensions, with square blocks typically 0.17m x 0.17m and rectangular blocks 0.25m x 0.12m. Below this, two courses of larger blocks typically square to rectangular and typically 0.85m x 0.25m and 0.60m x 40m in dimension. An orange sandy mortar with large inclusions was identified within one part of the wall, below the top course (See Figure 3).

4.7 Wall (2) and Wall (3) abut at Point A.

Wall 3 (A-Sluice) (Figure 4)

4.8 Wall (3) extends from SZ 61462 87268 to SZ 61560 87035 for a distance of c260m. Within this section the wall changes alignment at SZ61486 87255 and SZ61570 87095. Between point A and F the wall is poorly preserved, partly due to scrub growth. The embankment earthwork survives to an average height of 1.15m but the wall does not always survive to the same height some of the fallen masonry has left the embankment exposed, demonstrating the silt construction of the bank (at G). The widest and highest section of the embankment is at point F where the earthwork is at its widest circa 8m wide. Here the wall survives to a height of 1.67m.

4.9 Wall (3) is constructed of random uncoursed Bembridge limestone blocks of variable sizes as in Wall (2). In contrast to Wall (2) there is little evidence for coursing or grading of masonry sizes.

4.10 No mortar was identified during the survey, and it would appear that this wall is a dry stone wall.

4.11 At point B the wall appears to be constructed with some grading of masonry, with smaller blocks at the top, however, to the north west and south east of point B the wall shows much more random use of various sizes of blocks with little grading. This could indicate piecemeal repair and rebuild.

4.12 A short section of the wall south of Point G remains intact. Here the masonry sizes are less variable, typically 0.60m x 0.20m, 0.35m x 0.27m and 0.25x by 0.13m in size. It is important to note however that this area corresponds with that repaired in 1994 and as documented in the Council's SMR back up files.

4.13 The sluice at the south east extent of wall (3) shows a marked contrast in construction. The limestone walls of the sluice are constructed of square, dressed, regular coursed limestone ashlar blocks. These are topped with limestone coping. A date stone of 'MW 1786' (possible 'MW 1756'?) is visible. The Sluice has been further altered with cement render visible towards its lower courses.

The Earthwork Embankment and Ditch

4.14 A walkover survey of the embankment earthwork recorded that the earthwork extends for the full length of the surveyed wall. In addition to the up standing earthwork, a ditch was also identified aligned parallel with the embankment earthwork on it south west side. This averages approximately 3.10m in width and at the time of survey, was partially flooded.

4.15 A representative sketch section was drawn through the earthwork at point B. Here the earthwork is 6.22m wide. On the south west side the earthwork slopes at an approximate angle of 30-40°. Step erosion, possibly caused by stock or natural processes was recorded along this part of the embankment. The earthwork is 3.50m wide at its top. The embankment wall shows

a batter of approximately 15º. To the south west there is a berm between the embankment and ditch 3.30m wide, although this slopes gently towards the south west probably as a result of erosion and slippage.

4.16 At the north west end of the embankment, the earthworks tapers to ground level. At point F it was noted that the embankment earthwork is broader, at c8m wide.

4.17 Infill with concrete on the top of the embankment earthwork was noted at point C. This would appear to correlate with modern disturbance seen on an aerial photograph (probably a pipeline) (OS.68.025).

5. Discussion

5.1 The survey of the north west end of the embankment identified 3 walls, although without secure dating evidence it has not been possible to define a definitive sequence or date of construction for all of the features. It is highly probable that the three walls are contemporary and part of the same structure, but the differences in construction may relate to repairs and re-use during the life of the wall. It is suggested that the sea wall has been subject to small and piecemeal maintenance and repair since its construction, although these alterations may be hard to detect, especially within the dry stone wall section, wall (3). It is also suggested that the differences in form of Wall 1 and Wall 2 may be associated with various recent activities in the northern area including building, the establishment of the railway and the use of the surrounding area for pasture and animal management.

5.2 The changes in wall construction do not reflect the change in alignment of the wall as might be expected. This would suggest that the course of the embankment may have been determined by topographic features, such as river channels or visible features in the landscape at the time of its construction.

5.3 Visual inspection of the earthwork identified that is generally of a similar form throughout the length of the surveyed part of the embankment. However natural slumping and erosion by stock, tramping and perhaps truncation by later activity at the north west end in particular have all combined to damage the earthwork. It is also suggested that the embankment south of Middle Sluice to Great Sluice (outwith the survey area) comprises part of the same earthen and limestone faced embankment. (From the Great Sluice to SZ 61823 86916 is an entirely separate feature which is built of chalk. It is probable that this section was constructed to reclaim land within the combe east of Centurions Hill).

5.4 It is possible that the earthwork was constructed from material excavated from the ditch which runs parallel to the earthwork for much of its course. This ditch has served as a drainage ditch to feed water from a tributary from Brading to the Middle sluice. However, this feature may not be an integral part of the embankment and may have been excavated at a later date. Walkover observation identified a low bank on the south west of the ditch, which could indicate that either the ditch had not been excavated to construct the bank or that it has been re-excavated at a later date. The ditch is not depicted on the Oglander Map or the 1810 OS.

5.5 Both the Oglander and 1810 OS maps show the tributary terminating at the embankment at point A. Therefore, it is suggested that this tributary may have initially flowing through a sluice at point A. If this channel had been a major tributary providing a Quay up stream at an earlier date, it would have necessitated a sluice gate to prevent build up of freshwater on the south west side of the embankment. This would account for the dip in the earthwork and change in wall construction at this point. This may also further explain the reference to 'Middle Sluice' and a third Sluice (IWCRO AC 2005/16).

5.6 Although the surviving visible stretch of quay wall at its western end appears to be later in construction than wall (1), the integrity of both walls is uncertain and likely both have been

subject to alteration and repair. It is not possible to securely date the quay after the construction of the embankment. It is more likely that the quay was constructed at the same time as the embankment as an integral part of the works in order to secure continued trade to and from Brading Town.

5.7 Reclamation of the marsh had been undertaken both before and after Richards ordered the embankment to be constructed in 1594. Indeed, Richard's sea wall appears to have been temporarily surpassed in 1620 other local landed gentry set about reclaiming for pasture the whole of the Haven from St Helen's to Bembridge. Sir Bevis Thelwell and Sir Hugh Middleton's ordered the construction of a separate embankment further east across the mouth of the Haven. This was subsequently breached by the sea in 1630 (Long, 1888: 110-117). Why this further embankment is required only 26 years after the construction of Richard's embankment is as yet unknown. No information has been recovered to suggest that the 1594 embankment fell into disrepair or was incapable. Indeed, late 18th century topographic descriptions, illustrations (e.g. Albin 1795:469) and cartographic sources suggest that following the breach in 1630, the sea returned to flood the Haven at high tide and Richard's Sea Wall returned to its purpose. It was probably only with the Parliamentary Act of 1874 to secure a railway line from Brading to St Helen's that Richard's 1594 sea wall finally fell out of use.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is likely that the earthwork embankment and wall surveyed here relates to the reclamation of the marsh in 1594 by Richards of Yaverland, as documented by Sir John Oglander and identified in cartographic sources dating from the late 18th century onwards. The embankment has remained a constant feature in the landscape since this time, with little obvious physical change. It remained in use until the construction of the Railway in 1880 apart from a 10 year period during which time an embankment was constructed across the harbour mouth. Natural decay is eroding away this historic feature, this process has been hastened in the last thirty years due to an increase in vegetation growth and lack of repair.

6.2 The Level 1 Historic Building survey identified and recorded 3 types of construction within the wall, the embankment earthwork, a parallel ditch and berm and the associated quay. Although no sequence or date of construction could be ascertained from the field survey, a number of interesting features were identified and recorded which help shed light on the development of the wall, including areas of repair, and robbing out and numerous associated features integral to the wall such as the nearby earthwork remains of the post medieval Quay and river channels.

6.2 The embankment surveyed forms part of a complex of archaeological sites within the historic landscape of the Lower Yar Valley and estuary and should be considered within its landscape setting and social context.

6.3 The Historic Building Record (level 1 survey) report forms part of ongoing archaeological works. No further building recording works are recommended. It is suggested that further information on the construction and development of the wall can be obtained through earthwork surveys. Documentary research (WCA Heritage, forthcoming) will continue to assess the social and physical effects of the reclamation upon Brading. The wall and embankment should be placed under a programme of maintenance.

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Glossary

BGL – Below ground Level

CBM - Ceramic Building Material

M aod – Metres above Ordnance Datum

Medieval – AD1066 –AD1500

Post Medieval – AD1500-AD1789

Prehistoric – c500 000BP – AD43

Modern – AD1789 – AD1970

Natural - Undisturbed natural geology of the site

NGR – National Grid reference

Romano-British – AD43 – *circa* AD410

SMR – IW County Sites and Monument Record. Database of Archaeological site and monuments complied and maintained by the IW County Archaeological Service.

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Cartographic Sources

"Plan and Survey of Farms, Estates and Tenements situate on ye north side of Brading Downs" (called the Oglander Map) dated 1773 (IWCRO OG87/26)
1810 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1793 (IWCRO MP/D/11)
Tithe Map of 1840 (IWCRO AC94/34)
1862 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map
1864 6 inch Ordnance Survey Map
1898 25 Inch Ordnance Survey Map
1908 25 Inch Ordnance Survey Map
1940 6 inch Ordnance Survey Map
Edward Russell's Admiralty Chart of 1693 (SMR)
Andrew's Map of 1769 (SMR)
George Burn's map of 1794 (SMR)

IWCRO Sources

AC2005/16 Adams, R H. Undated *Notes on the Reclamation of Tidal Lands in the Valley of the Eastern Yar and its Tributaries on the Isle OF Wight*
Card Index : Cal. Close. 1279-1288: 344

Appendix 1

Archive Content

3 x HBS Record Sheet
3x Photographic Register Sheets
2 x A4 annotated 1:2500 site plan
CD of 30 digital images