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PVN OP 053 Excavation Report

Edward M. Schortman
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Operation 53

The approximately 1,600m² area covered by Operation 53 contains 8 surface-visible structures (Strs. 25-27, 38, 39, 41, 71, and 90). None of these edifices stand alone. They instead appeared during initial mapping to be grouped into four sets of joined constructions; Strs. 25-27, 38-39, and 41, 71, and 90. All the edifices are organized around a central open space which they almost completely surround; gaps measuring 3m and 4m wide provide access to the patio from its northwest and northeast corners, respectively. Operation 53 is surrounded by Op. 15, 32, 20, 11, 54 and 55 and is in the midst of the most densely settled portion of La Sierra's North Cluster. Full 453m² were excavated here in the process of largely clearing Str. 38, 39, 41, 71, and 90 during the 1995 field season. The work was primarily overseen by Matthew Turek, April Haneline, and Bevin Etheridge.

Structure 38

Structure 38 is 2.3-2.7m north of Str. 39 and 3.3m east of Str. 90. The ground on which Str. 38-1st was raised seemingly rose 0.1m over 6m from north-to-south. Investigation of Str. 38 was conducted within Subop. 53C, H, and I, 50m² being cleared in the course of this work. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.92m and 1.1m below modern ground surface within and beyond construction, respectively. One major, but much-remodeled, building phase was revealed in the course of this work which was directed by April Haneline.

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	-	-	S.1	-	LCLII
2	-	-	S.2	-	LCLII
3	-	-	S.3	-	LCLII
4	-	-	S.4	F.1	LCLII
5	Str. 38-1 st	U.1-5, 13, 17, 19	-	-	LCLII, III
6	Str. 38-1 st	U.6-11, 14, 15, 16, 18	-	-	LCLIII, II
7	Str. 38-1 st	U.12	-	-	LCLIII
8	-	-	-	F.2, 3	LCLIII, EPC
9	-	-	S.4-5	F.4	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the environs of Str. 38-1st was the seemingly natural deposition of a coarse-textured, soft-compacted, tan sand (S.1) that was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.11m north of the building (S.1's base was not encountered). Stratum 1 was traced for 1m over which it dropped 0.05m from north-to-south. The presence of artifacts in small numbers within S.1 points to human occupation in the area during this soil's deposition.

Time Span 2

Overlying S.1 by 0.21-0.23m in the deep northern probe is a nearly identical soil that is stained a dark brown to black (S.2). Traced for 1m, S.2 descends 0.02m from north-to-south. Stratum 2's dark

color may be due to the infiltration of organic material resulting from human activities in the area. While there is no definitive evidence to support this interpretation the recovery of artifacts from S.2 lends some weight to this interpretation.

Time Span 3

Stratum 2 is capped, in turn, by a 0.03-0.05m-thick deposit composed of coarse-textured, soft-compacted, tan sand (S.3), indistinguishable from S.1. Once again, this deposit contains cultural material. It runs flat over the 1m it was exposed in the relatively deep pit dug north of Str. 38-1st.

In general, S.1-3 seem to represent different episodes of natural soil deposition that occurred prior to the initiation of significant construction in this part of La Sierra. The coarse texture of the sand that comprises these layers may suggest the soil's origins in floods from the quebrada located ca. 13m to the south.

Time Span 4

Approximately 0.15m of a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.4) that does contain some artifacts was laid down now. Deposition of S.4 resumed after Str. 38-1st was abandoned, making it difficult to determine how much of this material was introduced prior to construction and how much was added after the platform's abandonment. Based on the disposition of architectural debris fallen from final-phase construction (F.4), we estimate that about 0.15m of that portion of S.4 that directly overlies S.3 was laid down during TS.4.

A small fragment of what may be a wall (F.1) pertaining to an early version of Str. 38-1st was uncovered in the niche found with Room 3's northeast corner (see TS.6). Feature 1 was traced for only 0.3m north from where it extends from beneath U.7. It consists of unshaped cobbles, is 0.2m wide, and is aligned due north-south. Too little of this construction was revealed to determine the form and dimensions of the building with which it is presumably associated.

Time Span 5

The earliest version of Str. 38-1st which was clearly identified consists of a platform delimited by stone facings that stand 0.62-0.9m tall (U.1-4). The northern and eastern basal walls (U.1 and 2) rise directly to the earthen-floored summit. Unit 3, the southern facing, has a low step-out that runs for its entire east-west length. This outset (included in U.3) is 0.36m high and projects 0.3m south from U.3's south face. Unit 3's low basal step-out continues around Str. 38-1st's southwest corner, extending for 1.1m north in front (west) of U.4, the western basal wall, which is only 0.32m wide at this point. The step-out is 0.45m wide, east-west, here and terminates on the north at a western projection of U.4. North of this point U.4 is 1m wide and runs at its full height north to form the platform's northwest corner with U.1.

Structure 38-1st's summit encompasses 2.1m north-south by 2.4m east-west and supports two compartments (Rooms 1 and 2) separated by a footing (U.13). Unit 13 measures 0.28m across, is 0.16m high, and projects 0.7m north from its abutment with U.3, the southern summit facing. Unit 13 divided Str. 38-1st's summit into two enclosures set in an east-west line. The eastern compartment covers 2.4m² while its western counterpart encompasses 2.3m². Passage between them was achieved by crossing through the 0.6m-wide gap that spanned the distance between U.13 on the south and U.5 on

the north. The enclosures' earthen floors are estimated to have been set 0.3m below the tops of the surrounding facings (U.1-4). The entirety of the summit's north wall is fronted by a 0.12m-high by 0.88m-wide stone-faced and -surfaced bench (U.5). Unit 5 faces directly into Rooms 1 and 2. A stone shelf (U.19) measuring 0.5m across was built into the summit's western wall (U.4) in the room's northwest corner. Unit 19 is 1.5m long north-south, extending 0.55m north of U.5's south edge. The fill underlying the summit floor and retained by U.1-4 consists of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured brown soil with very few included stones (U.17).

By the end of TS.5, Str. 38-1st was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that measured 3.4m north-south by 4m east-west, stood 0.62-0.9m tall, and was aligned approximately 358 degrees. A 0.36m-high by 0.3-0.45m-wide stone outset ran the length of the platform's south face and continued for 1.1m north from Str. 38-1st's southwest corner. The earthen-floored summit encompasses 5m² and supported two rooms set in an east-west line; the eastern compartment covers 2.4m² while its western analogue measures 2.3m². A stone-faced and -surfaced bench built against the enclosures' north wall looks directly into both of these compartments, 0.6m separating it from the wall (U.13) that divides Rooms 1 and 2. That bench stood 0.12m tall and was 0.88m wide by 2.4m long east-west. A 0.5m-wide by 1.5m-long stone shelf was built into the summit's west wall, extending into the superstructure's northwest corner.

The constructions raised during TS.5 are built primarily of unshaped river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. Faced stones are recorded in all of the walls except U.2. These pieces of masonry are usually found at the bases of basal platform corners. All of the stones are set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 6

During this interval Str. 38-1st underwent a major northern expansion resulting in the creation of a formal entry feature (Room 3) leading to the core platform's summit bordered on the west by a compartment (Room 4) raised directly on ancient ground surface. Room 3 is bounded by stone facings on the east (U.6) and west (U.7) that run south to where they abut U.1, the core platform's northern facing. Unit 6 intersects the core platform's northeast corner while U.7, the entry feature's west margin, joins U.1 at 1.1m east of the platform's northwest corner. Unit 6 has a 0.14m-high stone-faced and -surfaced step out that projects 0.5m east, and runs for the full north-south length, of the wall's main ascent to Room 3 (all included in U.6). Unit 6's main wall rises 0.42m above this basal outset.

The entry feature's north face is fronted by two stone-faced and -surfaced risers (U.9 and 16). The basal step, U.9, is 0.4m high by 0.6m wide and gives way to a 0.32m-high ascent (U.16) leading to a threshold (U.8) made primarily of faced stones. Unit 8 is 0.6m wide and runs 1.45m east-west, ending 0.75m west of the entry feature's northeast corner (the northeast corner of U.6). Units 9 and 16 originate on the east at a point 0.1m west of U.8's east edge. A construction (U.11), composed entirely of one 'L-shaped' cut stone block, projects 0.51m north of U.9, 0.4m west of U.9's northeast corner. Unit 11, which is 0.45m wide and rises to the top of U.9, likely served as a step leading towards Room 3; the short leg of the 'L' served as the riser while the long leg was the tread.

Room 3's earthen-floored interior measures 1.26-1.4m (north-south) by 1.8m (east-west) and is underlain by an earthen fill composed of moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil that contains a very few small pebbles (U.18). Unit 1 defines Room 3's south side and

protrudes ca. 0.3m above the enclosure's putative floor level. A cut stone block (U.15), measuring 0.4m north-south by 0.52m east-west, was set even with Room 3's floor, 0.1m south of the U.8 threshold. Unit 15, when discovered, was heavily cracked but seemed to have been broken *in situ*; it may well have marked the formal entrance into Str. 38-1st during TS.6. Unit 15 is directly in line with the U.11 step.

Overall, the northern entry feature encompasses 2.85m east-west and projects 2.6m north of Str. 38-1st's core platform (excluding the U.11 step). Two low, narrow stone risers lead up to a formal threshold which, in turn, provides access to an earthen-floored room covering 2.4m². In the northern half of the enclosure is a cut stone block (measuring 0.4m by 0.52m) set flush with the room's floor and aligned with a basal stone step placed against the lowest riser and made from a repurposed 'L-shaped' block.

Units 9 and 16, the northern risers fronting the entry feature, extend 2.2m west of that construction. In this area they define the north side of an earthen-floored enclosure (Room 4) built directly on ground surface. Unit 16 continues 3.3m west to where it encounters the compartment's western footing (U.10). Though U.16's north face runs straight, its south flank steps south 0.3m at a point 0.9m west of U.8. Unit 9's north side extends 0.25m north at a point 1.65m west of its eastern terminus. Unit 10 runs 2.65m south from its junction with U.9, is 0.48m wide by 0.4m tall, and defines the west side of Room 4. The area enclosed by U.1, 7, 10, and 16 covers 1.3x1.6m (measured across the center). A 0.2m-wide gap in the room's southwest corner might have allowed the passage of air, though probably not people, into Room 4. A niche covering 0.6 by 0.9m occupies Room 4's northeast corner, this space being accessed through a 0.5m-wide gap between U.7 and 16.

A floor constructed of small, unshaped cobbles (U.14) extends at least 0.6m north of U.9 and appears to be contemporary with that addition (U.14's north edge was not uncovered). Unit 14 measures 1.65m east-west and its east edge is coterminous with the northern step-out of U.9. The floor ends on the west 0.25m east of U.9's west edge.

By the conclusion of TS.6, Str. 38-1st's core consisted of a stone-faced platform unchanged from TS.5. Appended onto this earlier construction was a stone-faced entry feature that projected 2.6m north from the core platform's northeast corner. This construction measured 2.85m east-west, stood maximally 0.72m tall, and was ascended on the north by two stone-faced risers measuring 0.4 and 0.32m high while the basal ascent was 0.6m wide. A step made of a re-cycled L-shaped block was set against the basal riser. The two northern ascents gave way to a threshold, made largely of faced masonry, that measures 0.6m wide by 1.45m long east-west. The compartment (Room 3) entered across this threshold covers 2.4m² and has a fragmented, but intact, cut block set in the northern part of its earth floor. This stone, which possibly served to formalize passage into Room 2 on the south, is in direct line with the aforementioned cut-block step set against the northern basal riser. Another enclosure (Room 4) is set on ground surface immediately west of Room 3. This compartment encompasses 2.1m² and contains a niche covering 0.5m² in its northeast corner. No clear doorway leading into Room 4 was found though a 0.2m gap in its southwest corner may have helped ventilate this space. A stone floor extends minimally 0.6m north of the basal U.9 ascent and may be part of another construction that was only partially revealed in this area.

All TS.6 constructions were fashioned primarily of unmodified river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. As noted, U.11 (the northern step) and U.8 (the summit threshold) were made of cut blocks. Masonry comprised a minority of the rocks recorded in U.6 and 10

where a few cut blocks appear largely as foundations for corners. All of the rocks are set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 7

Structure 38-1st's general form and dimensions remained largely unchanged from TS.6. The core platform (defined by U.1-4) was blanketed now by the addition of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured brown soil (U.12) that covered the U.5 bench and may have reached to the tops of the basal walls that delimit this portion of the edifice. Unit 12 contains dense concentrations of small to large stones, especially within 0.6m of the basal facings, the frequencies of these rocks declining towards the building's center. No bench or shelf that would have replaced U.5 and 19 were noted.

By the end of TS.7, Structure 38-1st covered maximally 4.6m east-west by 6m north-south, was oriented 358 degrees, and contained three earthen-floored rooms. The northern compartments (Rooms 3 and 4) remained unchanged from TS.6 while Rooms 1 and 2 on the core southern platform were erased and replaced by one featureless enclosure that covered 5m².

Time Span 8

During TS.8 a possible wall (F.2) was set against the north face of U.1 within Room 3. This putative construction consists of a deposit of flat-laid cobbles that extends U.1 for a distance of 0.48m into Room 3. Feature 2 did not stand out as purposeful construction when it was first revealed in excavation. Its inferred existence is based on the horizontal disposition of its component rocks set in a brown soil matrix, an arrangement that contrasts with the tilted, downward sloping attitudes of stones found around F.2 and thought to have fallen from final-phase construction (F.4). If F.2 comprises the remains of construction, then its addition would have reduced the area covered by Room 3 to 2.2m².

On the south, a dense concentration of flat-laid cobbles (F.3) was raised against the south side of U.3. Feature 3 extends for 0.78m south of the core platform's south facing and, like F.2, is distinguished by the horizontal disposition of its closely packed rocks, all set in a brown soil matrix. It is unclear if F.3 was part of an effort to expand Str. 38-1st southward or if it was a more casual construction that served to obscure the building's southern flank. We are not certain if comparable constructions were located off the platform's east and west sides where clearing of construction was more limited. It may be, however, that by the conclusion of TS.8, Str. 38-1st was in the process of being intentionally buried.

Time Span 9

During this interval, Str. 38-1st was abandoned and gradually covered by earth and construction debris. Deposition of S.4 resumed now, eventually accumulating to a thickness of as much as 0.56m. Covering S.4 by 0.11-0.14m is a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown soil that is particularly rich in small roots (S.5). Stratum 5 is the humus horizon that formed atop S.4. Embedded in S.5 and upper S.4 are stones that apparently fell from final-phase architecture (F.4). Feature 4 is particularly dense south of Str. 38-1st where it was traced for about 1m from the putative south face of F.3.

Structure 39

Structure 39 is 2.3-2.7m south of Structure 38 and 6.65m southeast of Str. 90. The ground on which Str. 39 stood rose approximately 0.2m over 8.7m south-to-north. All but the building's northeast corner was cleared in the course of exposing ca. 73m² within Suboperations 53C, I, and F. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.7m and 1m within and outside construction, respectively, under the direction of April Hanneline. Two distinct building phases were identified in the course of this work.

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Features	Strata	Dates
1	Str. 39-Sub1	U.1, 2	F.1	-	LCLII, I
2	Str. 39-1 st	U.3-17, 19, 20, 23-28	-	-	LCLII, III
3	Str. 39-1 st	U.18, 21, 22	-	-	LCLIII, II
4	Str. 39-1 st	-	F.2	-	LCLIII
5	-	-	F.3	S.4, 5*	

*These strata designations are continued from the Str. 38-1st sequence.

Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the environs of Str. 39-1st was the construction represented by U.1 and 2. Unit 1 was traced for 0.8m north-south, is 0.3m wide, and lies 0.5m west of U.2. The latter was found protruding from beneath U.3's west end. Unit 2, which was preserved to a height of 0.2m, was traced for 1m east-west. We tentatively suggest that that these two partially exposed constructions are parts of the southern (U.2) and western (U.1) stone footings for an earthen-floored building raised directly on ancient ground surface (Str. 39-Sub1). If so, Str. 39-Sub1 covered at least 0.8 by 1.5m and was aligned very approximately 271 degrees. The stones used to fashion U.1 and 2 are unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar.

Associated with the erection of Str. 39-Sub1 was the introduction of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, tan clay (F.1). Feature 1 is minimally 0.43m thick (its base was not revealed) and contains a moderately dense concentration of small to medium-size cobbles most of which are flat-laid. Though it is possible that F.1 was deposited through natural processes, its close association with early architecture and absence at comparable depths elsewhere in the Str. 38 and 39 excavations tentatively implies that this material was purposefully placed here. Because F.1 covers U.1 and 2 and underlies Room 1 in Str. 39-1st, it is likely that this mix of clay and stone was introduced to terminate the earlier architecture while providing a firm footing for TS.2 construction. The addition of F.1 also apparently resulted in raising the terrain atop which Str. 39-1st was eventually built, the ground now ascending 0.54m over 8.7m south-to-north.

Time Span 2

Structure 39-1st is fronted on the south by three low, stone-faced risers that lead up to a large, stone-paved enclosure (Room 1). The basal riser (U.12) stands 0.18m tall, has a stone-surfaced tread that extends 0.82m north-south, and runs 5.1m west from Str. 39-1st's southeast corner. Rising 0.19m above U.12 is U.11, a stone-fronted ascent that is 0.46m wide, and extends 4.6m west from its intersection with U.28, the south footing of Room 2. Units 11 and 12 overlap for 2m where they front Room 1 in Str. 39-1st's approximate center; they likely served, in this segment, to provide access to the

building's central space. That area was reached by passing up and over a 0.33m-high stone riser (U.13). Unit 13 parallels and runs behind (north) of U.11, ending 4.6m west of its abutment with U.28.

The space that U.13 gives access to covers 1.6 by 1.7m, is completely open to the south where it overlooks the aforementioned risers, and contains a faced block (U.14) set into and even with the reconstructed top of its earthen floor. Unit 14, which measures 0.5 by 0.4m and was completely intact, likely marks the formal entrance to Str. 39-1st during TS.2. This vestibule is bordered by stone foundations (U.4 and 8) which stand 0.4m tall and are 0.2m wide. Backing the entry hall on the north is an enclosure (Room 1) that covers 2.4m north-south by 1.8m east-west. Fully 1.3 by 2.3m of this space is surfaced with a stone pavement (U.15) that stands 0.14m above the inferred level of the vestibule's floor to the south. Unit 15 runs along the east wall of Room 1 and stops 0.15m shy of the compartment's northern limit. A 0.15m-high by 0.95m-long stone-faced shelf (U.16) projects 0.4m east from Room 1's west footing (U.4). Unit 16's north edge is 0.7m south of the foundation (U.3) that delimits Room 1 on the north. The walls bordering Room 1 on the east and west (U.8 and 4) are 0.5-0.6m high (slightly higher than their southern extensions that define the southern vestibule) and 0.2m wide. The compartment's northern footing (U.3) is considerably wider (0.5-0.56m across) and it rises to a height of 0.67m on either side of Room 1. In that portion of U.3 that was nearly coterminous with Room 1's north side, the wall was reduced in height to a point equal to the level of the U.15 pavement. This likely doorway measures 1.7m across east-west.

Bordering the aforementioned spaces on the east are two enclosures set in a north-south line (Rooms 2 and 3). Both are floored with a mix of rocks and earth. The southern-most of these compartments (Room 2), which covers 1.48m north-south by 2.6m east-west, lies directly east of the southern vestibule. Room 2 is open to the east where it overlooks a 0.15m-high stone step up (U.9). Unit 9 was traced for 3.1m north from its intersection with U.12 at Str. 39-1st's southeast corner. How much further north this step-up continued, if at all, is uncertain though there is no evidence that it ever joined up with U.3 on the north. Room 2's other sides are delimited by stone footings (U.8, 20, and 28 on the west, north, and south, respectively) that are 0.2-0.5m wide and 0.14-0.4m tall, lowest on the south). Running the full length of the enclosure's northern foundation (U.20) is a 0.22m-high stone-faced and -surfaced bench (U.19). Unit 19 is 0.64m wide north-south by 2m long east-west; U.20 (the northern room wall) rises directly above U.19's north side and the two constructions were apparently raised as part of the same building effort.

Room 3 borders Room 1 on the east and Room 2 on the north. This enclosure measures 2.18m north-south by 1.7m east-west and contains no built-in furniture. Bordered by U.3, 8, and 20 on the north, west, and south, Room 3 ends on the east in what looks to have been a 0.2m-high stone step (U.10). Unit 10 was traced for only 0.5m north-south. It may be part of a step-up lying 0.65m west of U.9 which borders Room 2 on the east, though it is not clear that the latter construction ever ran in front (east) of Room 3. In fact, U.9 and 10 were not traced far enough to determine how they are related to each other. Like U.9, U.10 does not appear to have ever been joined with U.3, the wall that marks Str. 39-1st's north edge.

Room 4, which adjoins Room 1 on the west, covers 1x2.1m. It is completely open on the west and is otherwise framed by U.3, 4, and 17 on the north, east, and south. The last of these constructions is a block of stones standing 0.33m tall and encompassing 0.62m by 1m; U.17 intrudes 0.2m into Room 1's southwest corner. The unusual width of this construction suggests that it was more substantial than

was needed to support perishable upper walls. Unit 17 may have doubled as a wall footing and shelf. No other built-in furniture was recorded within this earthen-floored space.

Lying immediately south of Room 4 is a 0.3m-high stone-faced platform that makes up Str. 39-1st's southwest corner. The platform's north edge (U.5) extends directly west for 1.6m from U.4, lying just 0.1m north of U.17. The unit's west margin (U.6) extends 1.6m south to join U.13. Rather than running straight, U.6 steps back (east) three times in the course of this distance; the northernmost of these segments is 1.1m long, followed by two step-backs that extend 0.25 and 0.5m east and 0.25m south (both segments). The platform delimited by U.5 and 6 is paved with stones (U.7) that stops at U.4, the footing which borders the southern vestibule on the west.

Lying 1.99-2.25m north of Str. 39-1st is a free-standing stone wall (U.23) that is 0.53m tall by 0.3-0.5m wide (broadening out from east to west). Unit 23 runs 5.65m on an orientation of 258 degrees. On the east, U.23 turns north and runs for 0.3m in that direction before stopping. The situation on the west is more complex. Here U.23 ends in a platform defined by stone facings (U.23-26) that are 0.18m high and delimit an area covering 2.4m east-west and 1.6m north-south on the west to 2m across on the east. The southeast corner is inset 0.2m north-south by 0.5m east-west. At its closest, the western platform is 0.55m north of U.3. The westernmost 0.6 by 0.6m of the platform's summit is paved with stones (U.27). The remainder of this space covering 0.75x1m was covered with earth. Recovery of a secondary, bundled interment that was intruded into the low platform's eastern summit may account for the absence of a stone floor here; possibly, the burial was introduced late in the structure's use-life, the summit never being re-paved. The U.23-27 complex was not apparently linked architecturally to Str. 39-1st during TS.2.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 39-1st was a complex of four adjoining rooms that covered 6m north-south by 6.5m east-west and was aligned roughly 80 degrees. These spaces were delimited by stone footings that measure 0.2-0.56m wide by 0.14-0.67m tall and which likely supported perishable upper walls. The building was fronted on the south by three long risers that ascend in increments of 0.18-0.33m to an earthen-floored vestibule that covers 2.7m². This space is completely open to the south overlooking the steps and there are no obstacles separating it from Room 1 immediately to the north. A sizable faced stone block, measuring 0.4 by 0.5m, is set even with the floor in the vestibule's approximate center and may have marked the formal entrance to Str. 39-1st. Room 1 to the north encompasses 4.3m², 3m² of this space being taken up by a stone pavement that stands 0.14m above the inferred floor of the southern vestibule. A 0.15m-high by 0.95m-long stone-faced shelf projects 0.4m east from the compartment's western foundation. A 1.7m-wide doorway takes up nearly the entire north side of Room 1 leading out of the compartment towards Str. 38-1st. Room 2 and 3 are set in a north-south line and border Room 1 and the southern vestibule on the east. Both of these enclosures are surfaced with a mix of stone and earth and are open to the east where they overlook a 0.15-0.2m-high step leading into them. The southern compartment (Room 2) covers 3.7m². Built against its northern wall is a stone-faced and -surfaced bench that is 0.22m high by 2m long by 0.64m wide. Room 3, to the north, covers 3.9m² and has no built-in furniture. Adjoining Room 1 on the west is Room 4, an earthen-floored enclosure that covers 2.1m² and which is completely open on the west. A 0.3m-high stone-faced and surfaced platform delimits Room 4 on the south and supports on its north edge a block of stones that is 0.33m tall and covers 0.62m by 1m. This unusually broad (by local standards) rock block may have doubled as a wall support and shelf.

In general, Rooms 1-4 and their associated constructions seem to have been built on a low south-to-north rise, the ground ascending 0.54m over 8.7m in this direction. Consequently, Str. 39-1st was not a platform but an edifice that rose 0.54m above natural ground surface on the south while standing directly on the foundation created by the introduction of the F.1 soil and stones on the north (see TS.1). The arrangement of rooms suggests that Room 1 and the southern vestibule were the focal points of Str. 39-1st, serving as an elaborate passageway leading from the southern steps northward towards Str. 38-1st and the Op. 53 central patio. That movement in this direction was controlled is suggested by the construction of a 0.53m-tall by 0.3-0.5m-wide stone wall that lies 1.99-2.25m north of Str. 39-1st and runs for 5.65m at an angle of 258 degrees. This construction spans the full east-west width of Str. 39-1st and terminates on the west in a 0.18m-tall, stone-faced platform that covers 4.3m². This edifice's summit was apparently surfaced with stone, though the eastern half was seemingly disturbed by the intrusion of a burial at some point late in its occupation. The scant 0.55m that separates Str. 39-1st from this platform tentatively implies that passage west along the southern building's north face would have been far more restricted than was movement to the east. Once through Str. 39-1st, therefore, it seems that people were channeled east before being allowed to move north.

Constructions raised during TS.2 were fashioned primarily of unmodified river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. The portions of the U.11-13 risers that front the southern vestibule were, however, composed almost exclusively of faced blocks, the segments flanking them on the east and west consisting of large river cobbles. Otherwise, cut blocks made up a small minority of the rocks found in U.4 and 5 (Room 1's western footing and the low platform found in Str. 39-1st's southwest corner, respectively). All of these stones were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Some minor modifications were made to Str. 39-1st during this interval. Starting on the south, a 0.18m-tall block of stones (U.18) now projects 0.82m south from U.11's west end (U.11 is the second ascending riser on Str. 39-1st's south flank). This addition is 1.55m long east-west and, though in line with U.12's south face, stops 1m shy (west of) that basal southern step. Unit 21, in turn, is a 0.3m-tall westward addition made to U.6 (the west wall of the platform bordering Room 4 on the south). This addition is 0.45m wide and extends 1.4m west from U.6's approximate center. One consequence of U.21's construction is the creation of a possible earthen-floored room set on ground surface and bounded by U.13, U.6-south, and U.21 on the south, east, and north, respectively. This space covers 1.15x1.55m, is open to the west, and lacks any built-in architecture. The final addition recognized in the course of investigations is a 0.15m-high 'L-shaped' stone wall (U.22) that protrudes 0.49m north from, and obscures all but the westernmost 0.5m of, the doorway through U.3 into Room 1. Measured along its interior (south) face, U.22 is 1.05m long east-west while its short, eastern 'leg' extends 0.11m north from its abutment with U.3 at a point 0.1m east of the door's east edge. Joined to U.3 on the east, there is no sign that U.22 ran back to that northern foundation on the west. It may be that U.22 was added to at least narrow Str. 39-1st's northern entrance from 1.7m to 0.5m; the 0.3m separating U.22's northwest corner from the southeast corner of the platform formed by U.23-26 implies that movement northward through Str. 39-1st was greatly reduced now. Perhaps, such traffic was now funneled through the 0.55m-wide corridor leading west between U.3 and U.25.

Overall, by TS.3's conclusion, Str. 39-1st retained its overall form, dimensions, and orientation from TS.2. A new earthen-floored room set on ancient ground surface was seemingly appended to the building's southwest corner. This compartment covers 1.8m², is open on the west, and contains no built-in furniture. The addition established a roughly symmetrical arrangement of rooms east and west of Room 1 and the southern vestibule. There were now two compartments set in a north-side line on either side of that central pairing. A low (0.18m-tall) stone block set against the west end of U.11's south face may have served as a shelf or place to sit and work under Str. 39-1st's eaves. Meanwhile, the addition of a 0.15m-high wall seemingly reduced Room 1's northern entrance to 0.5m wide east-west and may have channeled traffic westward from that compartment along a 0.55m-wide corridor.

All constructions raised during TS.3 were fashioned of unmodified river cobbles, there being a slight tendency to orient the naturally flatter aspects of these rocks outwards. The stones, in turn, were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 4

The area between Str. 39-1st's northern facing (U.3) and the free-standing northern wall (U.23) was apparently filled in with a dense concentration of flat-laid stones set in a brown soil matrix (F.2). Feature 2 is ca. 0.6m thick and rises to the tops of U.3 and 23, covering the platform attached to U.23's west end. It may be that F.2 was introduced in an effort to expand Str. 39-1st northward, though it could also be the case that this material was deposited as part of an effort to terminate formally the building's use-life.

Time Span 5

Following Str. 39-1st's abandonment, the building was covered by the seemingly natural deposition of a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.4). Stratum 4 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.57m (seen on the north where it overlies F.1) and was, in its turn blanketed by a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown soil that is particularly rich in small roots (S.5). Embedded in S.4 and 5 is material fallen from final-phase architecture (F.3). Feature 3 is particularly dense off Str. 39-1st's north side where it was traced for 1.2m north from U.23; the concentration of tumbled debris is far lighter to the south.

Structure 71

Structure 71, 3.3m west of Str. 90, was revealed in excavation to consist of four tightly packed but distinct buildings (Strs. 71A/D). Each of these constructions will be described separately below. The entire complex was built on land that rises from south to north and west to east.

Structure 71A

Structure 71A is the southernmost edifice in this agglomeration, lying directly south of and connected to Str. 71B. This building was excavated within Subop. 53D and K, the work being directed by Bevin Etheridge during 1995. Approximately 42m² was cleared in the course of the work, digging reaching maximum depths of 0.5m and 0.6m below modern ground surface within and beyond architecture, respectively. One clear construction phase, along with hints of an earlier building effort, were revealed during the investigations.

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Features	Strata	Dates
1	-	-	-	S.1	
2	Str. 71A-2 nd	U.9, 10	-	-	LCLII, III
3	Str. 71A-1 st Str. 71A-Sub 1	U.1-8,11,13-16 U.12	F.2	-	LCLIII, II
4	-	-	F.1	S.2, 3	

Time Span 1

Excavations in Subop. 53D revealed the top-most 0.02m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, tan soil (S.1) that appears to have underlain all recovered architecture. Not enough of S.1 was uncovered to determine its full thickness or if it contained cultural material.

Time Span 2

Two discontinuous segments of constructions (U.9 and 10) relating to Str. 71A-2nd were identified underlying TS.2 architecture. Unit 10 is an 'L-shaped' wall found in Str. 71A's northeast quadrant. The west side of the construction extends 1.7m from its southern terminus northward at an alignment of 355 degrees to the point where it turns a right-angle corner heading east for 1.7m (included in U.10). The south face of U. 10's north element runs 0.9m west from its east end before stepping back (south) for 0.3m before continuing 0.5m to join with the east face of the construction's west wall. Unit 10 was revealed to a height of 0.2m and is 0.3-0.55m wide (it is not clear that the unit's base was revealed). Unit 9 is 2.5m southwest of U.1 and was found protruding from beneath TS.2 architecture in Str. 71A's southwest quadrant. Unlike U.10, we did not find the formal ends of this construction; it was traced for 1.85m south (oriented at ca. 352 degrees) from where it emerged beneath U.8 at which point it turned a right-angle corner and was followed for 0.8m east where U.9 disappeared beneath U.3. Only the top of U.9 was uncovered and its maximum exposed width was 0.75m.

Though revealed in two distinct locales, U. 9 and 10's comparable stratigraphic positions beneath TS. 2 architecture and depths below datum tentatively suggest that they are roughly contemporary. It is not clear, however, that U.9 and 10 were parts of one building. More likely they are elements of two closely spaced edifices that were later covered by Str. 71A-1st. Both U.9 and 10 were fashioned primarily from unmodified stones set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Structure 71A-1st is fronted on the west and south by stone-facings (U.8 and 2) that stand 0.3m (U.8) and 0.38m tall (U.2). The western riser, U.8, is built directly atop Str. 71A-2nd's U.9 (see TS.2) and intersects Str. 71A-1st's western foundation (U.3) 1.3m north of its southwest corner with U.2. Unit 8 projects 0.4m west from U.3, running 1.15m north before jogging west for 0.5m. The riser then continues north for 2.45m at which point it turns a corner, extending for at least 1m to the west (excavation ceased at this point). Unit 2 on the south was traced for 3.75m east from its corner with U.3 before excavation ended. This facing retained its full height of 0.38m for only 2.7m of that distance after which it dropped to at least half that height.

The structure erected atop the raised space delimited by U.2 and 8 consists of four earthen-floored rooms, three set in a north-south line looking west over U.8 (Rooms 1-3) and one larger compartment backing these cubicles on the east (Room 4). These spaces are bounded by stone foundations (U.1, 3, 4, 5, and 6) that are 0.36-0.7m wide and 0.14-0.27m high. The widest of these footings is U.1 that divides Rooms 1-3 from Room 4. Unit 1 seems thicker than would be necessary to support a perishable upper wall; perhaps it doubled as a wall foundation and bench facing into all for enclosures.

The central compartment on the west (Room 1) covers 1.69m east-west by 0.81m north-south, its floor resting an estimated 0.07m above the U.8 terrace. The fill underlying Room 1's floor is a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil that includes a few small to medium-size stones (U.15). Located 0.36m east of the room's western footing (U3) is a single faced stone block (U.13) that is set into the earth floor and which measures 0.45m east-west by 0.6m north-south. Unit 13 was heavily fragmented when found, the breaking apparently having happened *in situ*. A 0.26m-high stone block composed entirely of horizontally laid cut blocks (U.11) is situated off U.13's southeast corner. Unit 11 projects 0.5m north from U.4 (Room 1's southern footing) and extends 0.35m east from the U.13 stone block. Whatever U.11's architectural significance may be, its introduction narrowed the passage west-east through Room 1 to the 0.31m separating it from the compartment's north wall (U.5).

Room 2 lies immediately south of Room 1 and encompasses 0.9m north-south by 1.1m east-west. This enclosure's floor is apparently equivalent to the top of U.2, the compartment looking out southward directly over that facing. A 0.45m-high stone block (U.16) bounds Room 2 on the east. Unit 16 is 0.9m long north-south, 0.35m deep east-west, and seems to have been built as an extension projecting westward from U.1. It likely served as a shelf.

Room 3, lying north of Room 1, measures 1.24m north-south by 1.5m east-west and is open on the north and, quite likely, the west. The latter direction is still marked by a northern continuation of U.3 but that wall has stepped down where it borders Room 3 to a level equal to the latter's floor.

Backing Rooms 1-3 on the east is Room 4. Covering 2.55m north-south by 1.5m east-west, this compartment is open completely on the east and the south where it overlooks the eastern continuation of U.2. A ca. 0.1m-high-stone block (U.7) measuring 0.4m by 0.6m occupies Room 4's southwest corner. Like U.16 in Room 2, U.17 may have functioned as a shelf. Feature 2 consists of three more-or-less complete but broken jar necks and rims set against the east face of U.1 and covering an area of 0.7m². The diameters of these jar necks are 0.23m, 0.3m, and 0.37m. The easternmost of the jar necks contains numerous fragments of a bowl. It may be that the bowl had originally rested atop the jar rim and eventually broke and settled into the space defined by that rim. As only the necks and rims of these jars were found here it is highly likely that parts of these three vessels were recycled as supports for other containers, including the bowl described above.

Unit 14 is a 0.2m-high, free-standing stone construction raised atop U.10 and lying immediately north of Room 3's northeast corner. This entity is 'U-shaped', its open side facing south, and its walls are maximally 0.28m thick. Overall U.14 measures 0.7m east-west by 0.5m north-south and its interior is open. No signs of burning or other diagnostics of past activities were recorded associated with U.14.

Parts of the north and west walls (all glossed as U.12) from a structure lying 0.3m south of Str. 71A-1st were uncovered. Designated Str. 71A-Sub1, this edifice may have been a surface-level building

bordered by stone foundations that are 0.2m tall by 0.22m across. Fully 1.7m of Str. 71A-Sub1's north wall was uncovered while its west footing was traced for 0.6m south from its juncture with the north foundation.

By TS.3's conclusion, Str. 71A-1st measured 4m north-south by (maximally) 5.3m east-west and was aligned roughly 354 degrees. The building is fronted on the south and west by stone risers that are 0.38 and 0.3m high. The western step-up extends north to a point just 0.15m southwest of Str. 71B-1st's southwest corner. The north and east sides of Str. 71A-1st were not fronted by formal architecture, suggesting that the edifice was easily accessed from ancient ground level on these sides. As Str. 71A-1st was built onto land that rose ca. 0.4m from south to north and 0.2m from west to east under the building, the edifice was faced with formal constructions only on its lower, down-sloping west and south flanks. The core building was composed of four earthen-floored compartments; three set in a north-south line on the west (Rooms 1-3) and backed by a larger enclosure (Room 4) on the east. The central cubicle's (Room 1) floor is slightly elevated (0.07m) above those of the neighboring enclosures. Room 1 covers 1.4m² and contains a lone cut and fragmented block set even with its floor. This apparent entry marker was bordered on the southeast by a construction measuring 0.35m by 0.5m and standing 0.26m tall. The behavioral significance of this unit is unclear though it did narrow passage through Room 1 to Room 4 on the east to a space measuring a scant 0.31m across. Room 3 north of Room 1 encompasses 1.9m² and was open on the north and west. Though no built-in furniture was recorded within the compartment a U-shaped stone wall standing 0.2m high and measuring 0.7m across its maximum dimension (east-west) was found immediately outside Room 3's northeast corner. Room 2, south of Room 1, covers 1m² and is bordered on the east by a stone-faced shelf that is 0.45m high, 0.9m long-north-south, and 0.35m wide. By far the largest of Str. 71A-1st's enclosures, Room 4, measures 3.8m², is open on the east and south, and contains a small stone shelf in its southwest corner. The latter unit is 0.1m tall and measures 0.4m by 0.6m. Vessel supports, formed by three closely spaced ceramic jar necks, were clustered along the western edge of Room 4.

Fragments of what seems to have been a surface-level edifice were found 0.3m south of Str. 71A-1st (designated Str. 71A-Sub1). Structure 71A-Sub1 covered at least 0.6m by 1.7m and was oriented ca. 79 degrees. The foundations delimiting the edifice on the north and west are 0.2m high by 0.22m wide.

The constructions fashioned during TS.3 were made primarily of unfaced rocks set in a mud mortar. Some effort was made to direct the flatter aspects of these stones outwards. As noted above, U.11 and 13 in Room 1 were made exclusively of cut blocks. In the former case the ashlar were laid flat and stacked one atop the other. In U.12, the foundations delimiting Str. 71A-Sub1, the rocks were set vertically as opposed to the other facings and walls where they were laid flat.

Time Span 4

Following Str. 71A-1st's abandonment, the edifice was covered by the deposition of a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 accumulated to a maximum thickness of 0.42m and was blanketed by 0.11m of a very similar earth distinguished by its darker brown color and greater density of modern roots (S.3). Embedded in S.2 and 3 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1).

Structure 71B

Structure 71B, directly north of Str. 71A, adjoins and lies southwest of Str. 71C, and is 0.55m south of Str. 71D. Excavations conducted here in Subop. 53D, E, and K uncovered ca. 47m², digging reaching maximum depths of 0.7m and 0.6m below modern ground surface beyond and within construction, respectively. One major building episode and hints of an earlier version of Str. 71B were revealed in the course of this work. The investigations were directed by Bevin Etheridge in 1995.

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	Str. 71B-2 nd	U.1	-	-	LCLII, III
2	Str. 71B-1 st	U.2-21	-	-	LCLIII, II
3	-	-	S.2, 3*	F.1	

*The strata designations used to describe Str. 71A's occupation sequence are continued here.

Note that material dating to the Middle Preclassic through Late Preclassic and Early Classic (Late Classic I) were recovered from mixed contexts here.

Time Span 1

The only remnant of Str. 71B-2nd that survived was what appears to be the remains of a wall (U.1) that underlies Str. 71B-1st's southwest corner. Unit 1 was exposed for a width of 0.35m north-south (its north side was not exposed) and for a distance of 0.9m west from where it emerged beneath the northern terminus of Str. 71A-1st's U.8. Unit 1 was aligned very approximately 265 degrees and sits at the same depth as U.9 and 10 from Str. 71A-2nd. It may be that all of these constructions are parts of a complex of low platforms or surface-level rooms that were superseded by the erection of Str. 71A-1st and 71B-1st. Unit 1 was fashioned of schist slabs and cut blocks set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 2

Structure 71B-1st is a structure that rises ca. 0.4m on the west and 0.3m on the south but rests on ancient ground surface on the east and north. Like its southern neighbor, it was erected atop ground that slopes up from west to east and south to north. The building is fronted on the west for all but its southernmost 0.15m by a 0.2m-high stone-faced terrace (U.2). Unit 2 does not extend in a straight line along its full length. Fully 4.35m north from U.2's southwest corner the facing slants out at an angle of ca. 324 degree for 0.6m before resuming its northward run for 1.5m to the structure's northwest corner. Unit 2, thus, varies in width from 0.3-1.3m across. The northern (U.5) and southern (U.6) perimeter walls are 0.2m high and step back and in as they progress eastward. Unit 5 runs 3.1m east from its intersection with U.2 at Str. 71B-1st's northwest corner before disappearing beneath the west corner of Str. 71C-1st. The wall then extends an estimated 1.1m south before joining U.9. The latter wall continues for 1.7m eastward where it forms the east side of a doorway leading into Room 5 at Str. 71B-1st's northeast corner. The southwest corner of Str. 71B-1st formed by the intersection of U.6 and 2 is inset 0.15m north-south by 1.1m east-west. Unit 6 then runs for 2.3m east before stepping back (to the north) 0.5m. The facing then continues for 2.3m eastward where it forms the building's southeast corner with U.8. Structure 71B-1st, therefore, has the overall form of a squat 'T', its broad crossbar lying on the west, while the narrower leg projects 2.3m eastward.

Rising above the approximate center of U.2 are two steps (U.3 and 4) leading up to the superstructure. Unit 3, located 0.3m east of U.2, is 0.17m high by 0.33m wide and runs for 2.2m north-south. It is succeeded on the east by U.4 which stands 0.23m above U.3's stone tread and serves as both a step and a 0.5m-wide wall delimiting Room 1's west side. The stairs are bordered on the south by a 0.3m-tall by 0.2-0.4m-wide stone wall (U.14) which narrows from west to east. Unit 14 runs east-west for 2.65m beginning at the west face of U.2. A stone surface measuring 0.9x1.1m (U.18) lies immediately south of U.14 atop the U.2 terrace and is bounded on the south by another low foundation (U.19), this one ca. 0.2m tall and extending 1.1m east from U.2.

Structure 71B-1st's superstructure consists of five rooms; three set in a north-south line on the west overlooking U.2 (Rooms 1-3) and two lying immediately to the east (Room 4-5). Unit 10, a 0.36m-tall by 1.18m-wide stone wall, runs north-south and separates these two set of compartments. Unit 10's unusually ample girth hints at its use as both a support for perishable upper walls and a bench. Room 1, the central western enclosure, covers 1.56m east-west by 1.8m north-south and is bounded on the north and south by stone foundations (U.13 and 21) that are 0.4m tall by 0.35-0.45m wide. Set into Room 1's earthen floor is a cut stone block (U.15) that covers 0.5m north-south by at least 0.4m east-west (its east edge was not revealed). Unit 15 is 0.44m east of Room 1's west edge and 0.5m north of U.21, the compartment's southern footing. Room 2, immediately north of Room 1, encompasses 0.7m by 1.6m and contains a 0.28m-tall stone-faced bench (U.12) set against the compartment's north wall. Unit 12 runs, maximally, 2.1m east-west and is 1.35m wide. A 0.6m-wide doorway with a stone threshold (U.17) in Room 2's southeast corner provided passage between this space and Room 1. On the south, Room 3 covers 1 by 1.5m and contains no built-in features. Room 1 is open to the west where it overlooks the U.3 and 4 steps which lead directly to this space. Room 2 was seemingly open on the west where it faced out over the U.2 terrace whereas Room 3 was unobstructed by construction on the south and west. On the latter side Room 3 is bounded by a ca. 0.25m-high facing (U.20) that steps down to the U.18 stone pavement.

Rooms 4 and 5 are arranged in a north-south line east of Rooms 1-3. The earthen-floored southern compartment, Room 4, covers 1.3m on a side and has no built-in features. Its northern counterpart, Room 5, measures 1.3m by 1.52m and was entered through a 0.5m-wide door in the enclosure's northeast corner. A stone-faced shelf (U.16) was built into U.10's east face in Room 5's northwest corner. Unit 16 is 0.2m high, 0.81m long north-south, by 0.5m wide. As noted earlier, Rooms 4 and 5 sat atop a low west-to-east rise and so apparently rested directly on ancient ground surface. The foundations (U.7-11) bordering these two spaces are unusually substantial by local standards. In addition to U.10 described above, U. 7, 8, and 11 are 0.5-0.6m high by 0.52-0.72m wide. Unit 7, the southern foundation, is set back 0.24m north from the south face of the U.6 terrace. The northern foundation (U.9) is comparable in width (0.64m across) to its compatriots but much lower (0.22m). This height discrepancy may be due to U.9's proximity (within 0.1m at its closest point) to Str. 71C-1st. Given that Str. 71C-1st post-dates Str. 71B-1st's construction and essentially closes off the latter's north side, U.9 may have become redundant to purposes, the wall's upper parts being dismantled for stones used in raising Str. 71C-1st.

It is not clear how Room 4 was accessed at the end of TS.2 as there is no doorway leading into it from Room 5 or outside Str. 71B-1st. A 0.28m-wide door may once have pierced U.10, 0.32m north of Room 4's southwest corner. This possible passageway is signaled by a change in construction from the rest of U.10' east face, implying that the door was filled-in late in Str. 71B-1st's occupation. If this

doorway continued all the way through U.10 it would have connected Rooms 1 and 4. The west side of U.10 where the putative passage would have been located was not completely cleared. Consequently, we cannot establish that it was ever possible to transit between Rooms 1 and 4 as has been suggested here.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 71B-1st was a stone-faced construction built into a west-to-east and south-to-north rise in ancient ground surface. The building, therefore, stands 0.6m high on the west, 0.3m high on the south, and seems to have rested upon the ancient ground level on the east and north. Str. 71B-1st was shaped like a squat T, its western portion comprising the cross-bar and measuring 2.7 east-west by 6.5m north-south while its east segment is 3.22m east-west by 4.9m north-south. Overall, the building is aligned approximately 359 degrees. The superstructure consists of five earthen-floored rooms separated into two distinct aggregates by an ample (1.18m-wide) north-south running stone wall that may have doubled as wall support and bench. West of that foundation are three compartments (Rooms 1-3) set in a north-south line. Room 1, the central enclosure, covers 2.8m² and overlooks two stone steps leading up from the building's basal western terrace. In the approximate center of the enclosure is a cut block that seems to have been broken *in situ*. This shaped stone, together with the steps, likely marked Room 1 as the formal entrance into Str. 71B-1st's superstructure. A 0.6m-wide doorway in Room 1's northeast corner provided passage into Room 2, a compartment measuring 1.1m² that is bordered on the north by a 0.28m-tall stone-faced bench. This bench is 1.35m wide north-south by 2.1m long east-west. The southern cubicle, Room 3, encompasses 1.5m² and contains no built-in features. This compartment does overlook on the west a stone surface measuring 1m² and set 0.25m below Room 3. The pavement is at the same level as the top of Str. 71B-1st's western terrace and may constitute another, albeit small, cubicle. Rooms 4 and 5 east of the medial wall are also arranged in a north-south line. The southern compartment (Room 4) measures 1.7m² and has no built-in furniture while its northern neighbor (Room 5) encompasses 2m² and has a 0.25m-high stone-faced shelf built into the east face of the medial wall. This shelf extends 0.81m south from Room 5's northwest corner and is 0.5m wide. The foundations delimiting these five compartments varied considerably in their dimensions; those on the west are 0.4m tall by 0.35-0.45m wide while on the east they are 0.5-0.6m high by 0.52-0.72m across. The north-south-running medial wall falls within this height range (0.36m tall) but is far wider (1.18m across) whereas Room 5's northern foundation is unusually low (0.22m high). As noted, the medial wall's ample width may point to its use as a bench for Rooms 1-5 while the seemingly truncated height of the northern footing may result from late modifications coincident with the erection of Str. 71C-1st immediately to the north. Doorways are rarely attested to in Str. 71B-1st's superstructure; a 0.5m-wide gap in Room 5's northeast corner provided access to that compartment while the aforementioned 0.6m-wide door facilitated passage between Rooms 1 and 2. Otherwise we are at a loss to infer how people traversed this room complex.

The primary material used in raising TS.2 constructions consists of unfaced rocks carefully placed so that their naturally flatter aspects are directed outwards. A few shaped stones were recorded scattered among the more common river cobbles in U.2, 3, 4, 6, and 10. All of these rocks were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Following Str. 71B-1st's abandonment, final-phase architecture was largely blanketed by the natural deposition of a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil (S.2). Stratum

2 was covered in turn by 0.11m of a dark brown earth containing a dense concentration of modern roots (S.3). Embedded in S.2 and 3 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from TS.2 architecture (F.1).

Structure 71C

Structure 71C is as close as 0.1m northeast of Str. 71B and directly adjoins Str. 71D-1st's southwest corner. The ground on which this edifice was raised ascends 0.5m over 5.36m north-to-south. Excavations directed here by Bevin Etheridge within Subop. 53E exposed ca. 25m², digging reaching a maximum depth of 0.71m outside architecture (no probes were sunk into Str. 71C-1st's fill). One major building phase along with hints of earlier construction were revealed in the course of this work conducted in 1995.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	-	-	S.1	-	LCLII
2	Str. 71C-2 nd	U.1	-	-	LCLII, III
3	Str. 71C-1 st	U.2-14	-	-	LCLIII, II
4	-	-	S.2, 3*	F.1	

*The strata designations used in describing Str. 71A's construction and occupation sequence are continued here.

Time Span 1

The first activity attested to in Str. 71-C's environs is the deposition of a light reddish-brown, soft-compacted, fine-grained ashy silt (S.1). Stratum 1 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.16m northeast of Str. 71C-1st's northeast basal facing (U.3) where it was seen to ascend 0.14m over 1.9m northeast-southwest. The base of S.3 was not exposed. Cultural material was found embedded in this ashy silt.

Time Span 2

The only evidence of Str. 71C-2nd is a 0.18m-high wall made of unmodified stones set in a mud mortar (U.1). Unit 1 was found projecting maximally 0.7m west from beneath Str. 71C-1st's northwest facing (U.2). This early construction is oriented roughly 357 degrees and was traced for 1.9m north from where it emerges underneath U.2 at which point it turns a right angle heading east for at least 0.9m (all glossed as U.1). We did not follow U.1 further east beneath U.2. Most likely Str. 71C-2nd is part of the complex of modest constructions, represented as well by Str. 71B-2nd, 71A-2nd, 41A-2nd, and 41B-2nd that were once spread across this area. Erection of Str. 71C-1st, like the raising of Str. 71B-1st, Str. 71A-1st, 41A-1st, and 41B-st, eventually obscured these earlier buildings.

Time Span 3

Structure 71C-1st is a five-sided construction that was wedged in between Str. 71B-1st on the southwest, Str. 71D-1st on the west, and Str. 90-1st on the east. That Str. 71C-1st's west corner overlaps

and obscures Str. 71B-1st's northeast corner strongly suggests that the former's final version post-dates the latter's terminal architecture.

Structure 71C-1st's northwest facing (U.2) is 5.15m long, oriented 23 degrees, and stands 0.8m tall. It joins with U.4 to form the building's west corner. Unit 4 is 0.28m-tall and extends for 3m along an alignment of 113 degrees. Unit 5 runs for 2.3m at an orientation of 86 degrees from its junction with U.4 on the west, defining the south flank of Str. 71C-1st. Unit 6, at 0.46m tall, delimits Str. 71C-1st on the east and is at least 2.5m long and aligned ca. 8 degrees. The northeast side of the edifice is bounded by U.3, a 0.22m-high facing that was traced for 1.2m southeast of its junction with U.2 at Str. 71C-1st's north corner; its full northwest-southeast length was not exposed. Unit 3 is oriented roughly 117 degrees and fronts a terrace that is 1.6m wide northeast-southwest. This surface is bounded on the northwest by U.2 and on the southwest by a 0.51m-high ascent to the summit (U.10). On the remaining sides of the edifice the rise to the summit is direct, unmediated by intervening terraces. The U.3 terrace may have been built to compensate for the north-to-south rise of the underlying terrain here and to create an elevated work space measuring an estimated 1.6 by 4m northeast of the superstructure. It is unclear if U.6 on the east and U.3 on the northeast ever joined to form Str. 71C-1st's east corner.

The superstructure consists of five earthen-floored enclosures (Rooms 1-5) clustered within a space measuring 3.7 by 4.35m and bounded by stone lines (U.7-14) most of which do not seem to have projected above floor level. Three compartments are arranged in a northwest-southeast line on the summit's northeast side while the remaining two parallel and border this trio on the southwest. Room 1, the northwest of the two southwestern compartments, covers 0.95m by 2.1m, is open on the southwest (over U.4), and is bounded by low stone foundations (0.05-0.2m tall by 0.3-0.5m across). Lying immediately northeast of Room 1, and in the center of the northeast triad of enclosures, is Room 2. This compartment encompasses 1.15m by 1.24m and is open on all sides but the southwest where U.12 separates Rooms 1 and 2. Room 3 adjoins Room 2 on the southeast and measures 1m by 2.2m. The boundaries of Room 3 are all stone lines seemingly set flush with the floor level. Room 5 borders Room 2 on the northwest, measures 0.7 by 1.2m, and is open on all sides save the southwest where U.12 rises ca. 0.3m above its floor and separates Rooms 1 and 5. Room 4, immediately southeast of Room 1, is almost triangular in shape. This compartment is 2.25m long northwest-southeast and narrows from 1.45m across on the northwest to a scant 0.3m wide on the southeast. A stone foundation ca. 0.05m high by 0.6m wide (U.14) separates Rooms 1 and 4 on the northwest; otherwise the stone lines demarcating Room 4 are level with its earthen floor. No built-in features were recorded in any of these enclosures.

By the conclusion of TS.3, Str. 71C-1st was a five-sided building delimited by stone facings that are 0.22-0.8m high and oriented between 27-356 degrees. A 0.22m-high by 1.6m-wide terrace fronts Str. 71C-1st on the northeast and provides roughly 6.4m² of open space sitting 0.51m below the superstructure to the southwest. On the building's remaining sides, facings lead directly to the summit. Variations in the heights of these basal walls indicate that the edifice was built over terrain that rose 0.37m over 5m from northwest to southeast and 0.5m across 5.36m from northeast to southwest. The summit covers 16.1m² and supports five small, earthen floored rooms. These enclosures are set in two parallel and adjoining lines running northwest-southeast; three compartments on the summit's northeast side and two behind them on the southwest. Rooms 5, 2, and 3 on the northeast cover 0.8m², 1.4m², and 2.2m², respectively while Rooms 1 and 4 to the southwest encompass 2m² and 1.6m². None of these compartments contain built-in features and all are open on at least one side.

Though no formal doorways were noted, passage among the enclosures was unimpeded by high foundations.

Constructions raised during TS.3 were fashioned primarily of unmodified stones carefully placed so that their naturally flatter faces are directed outwards. Cut blocks were noted in U.2, 3, and 7 where they comprise a minority of the stones used in each case. All of these rocks are set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 4

Following Str. 71C-1st's abandonment, the building was largely buried by the deposition of as much as 0.6m of a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 was, in turn, blanketed by 0.11m of a very similar soil distinguished by its darker brown color and greater density of modern roots (S.3). Embedded in S.2 and 3 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1).

Structure 71D

Structure 71D looks to have joined with Str. 41A on the west while its southeast corner intersects the west wall (U.2) of Str. 71C-1st at a point 1.05m northeast of that building's west corner. Excavations here within Subop. 53B and J uncovered the entirety of Str. 71D-1st, clearing approximately 28m² in the process. One construction phases was revealed in the course of this work which was directed by Bevin Etheridge and Matthew Turek in 1995.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	Str. 71D-1 st	U.1-10	-	-	LCLIII, II
2	-	-	S.2-3*	F.1	

*The strata designations used in describing Str. 71A's construction and occupation sequence are continued here.

Time Span 1

Structure 71D-1st is a low platform bordered on the west by a sizable room raised on ground surface. The platform itself is delimited by stone facings (U.1-4) that stand about 0.5m high and are 0.28-0.53m wide. The earthen-floored summit consists of one enclosure (Room 2) measuring 1.8 by 3.5m that contains no built-in features. The earthen-floored compartment (Room 1) lying to the west is bordered on the north and south by stone foundations (U.5 and 6) that are 0.33 to 0.52m high by 0.3-0.35m wide; the platform's western facing (U.1) bounds Room 1 on the east. Unit 5 stops just 0.2m shy of Str. 41A-1st's eastern basal wall while U. 6 on the south may have spanned the 3m separating Str. 71D-1st's core platform from Str. 41A-1st. Room 1 covers 2.1 by 2.2m and contains no built-in features. There is no clear access into Room 1 from the north where a scant 0.2m separates the enclosure's northern foundation (U.5) from Str. 41A-1st's eastern basal facing. Two stone steps (U.7 and 8), however, ascend a gradual, 0.7m-high south-to-north rise in the terrain. The basal riser, U.8, extends 1.9m west from the core platform's southwest corner, is 0.5m tall, and 0.8m wide. It is succeeded on the north by U.7 which rises 0.2m above U. 8's tread and runs back 0.35m northward to U.6, Room 1's south foundation. Unit 7 was traced for 1.45m west from its junction with the core platform's west

facing (U.1) though it may well have continued the remaining 0.35m westward to join with U.9. If so, then both steps terminated in U.9. The latter construction is a low, 0.2m-wide wall that likely intersected U.6 on the north and continues for 0.5m south of U.8. Together with U.1 on the east, U.9 frames the U.7 and 8 stairs. Unit 9, therefore, may have functioned as a balustrade. Lying 0.3m south/southwest of U.9 is a cut block set into ancient ground surface (U.10). Unit 10 measures 0.4 by 0.6m and was heavily fragmented when found, having been broken, it appears, *in situ*.

By the end of TS.1, Str. 71D-1st consisted on two earthen-floored rooms set in an east-west line, the eastern enclosure built atop a 0.5m-high stone-faced platform while its western counterpart rested on ancient ground surface. Structure 71D-1st at this time covered 4.3 by 5.5m and was aligned approximately 352 degrees. The eastern platform covers 2.64 by 4.25m (11.2m²) and supported one featureless room (Room 2) that encompasses 6.3m². The western compartment (Room 1) encompasses 4.6m² and is bounded on the north and south by stone foundations that are 0.33-0.52m high by 0.3-0.35m wide. Two stone steps lead up to this enclosure's south face; the basal riser is 0.5m high by 0.8m wide while the next ascending step is 0.2m high by 0.35m wide. The core platform's west basal facing borders these steps on the east while a low, narrow stone balustrade defines their west edge. A fragmented cut block set in ancient ground surface and lying 0.3m south/southwest of the western balustrade likely served as a threshold traversed by those passing towards Str. 71D-1st's steps. Presumably, Str. 71D-1st was entered by traversing the southern steps into Room 1 and from there by ascending the ca. 0.5m-high step up to Room 2 on the core platform's summit to the east.

Constructions making up Str. 71D-1st are generally made of unmodified stones. A few cut blocks were found mixed with these cobbles in U.5, Room 1's northern foundation. Though in just about all instances the stones used to fashion walls were laid flat, in U.9 they were placed on end. All of these rocks, regardless of their dispositions, were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 2

Following Str. 71D-1st's abandonment, the building was largely buried by the deposition of a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 was, in turn, blanketed by a very similar earth distinguished by its darker brown color and greater density of modern roots (S.3). Embedded in S.2 and 3 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1).

Structure 41A

Structure 41A adjoins Str. 71D on the west and is 1.3m south/southwest of Str. 41B. This building was almost completely uncovered during excavations carried out within Subop. 53B and J, roughly 38m² being cleared in the course of this work. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.3 and 0.7m below modern ground surface within and beyond construction respectively, revealing evidence of two construction stages. These investigations were directed by Matthew Turek during 1995.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	-	-	S.1	-	LPrecl, LCLI?
2	Str. 41A-2 nd	U.1	-	-	LCLII, III

3	Str. 41A-1 st	U.2-18	-	-	LCLIII, II
4	-	-	S.2, 3	F.1	

Time Span 1

The first activity identified in Str. 41A-1st's vicinity was the deposition of a soft-compacted, fine-textured, brown soil (S.1). The uppermost 0.21m of S.1 was revealed south of Str. 41A-1st where it ascended 0.05m over an exposed distance of 1.22m from south-to-north. Stratum 1's base lies beyond excavation limits. No cultural materials were definitively associated with S.1 in the limited portion of this deposit that was uncovered.

Time Span 2

The only evidence for Str. 41A-2nd (U.1) is a wall that is 0.65m wide which was traced for 1.75m running at an orientation of ca. 6 degrees under the approximate center of Str. 41A-1st's Room 4. Unit 1 is at least 0.1m tall though it is not clear that the wall's base was found. Isolated as it is, we cannot infer how this element fit within Str. 41A-2nd or what that building looked like.

Time Span 3

Structure 41A-1st is a construction that supports a superstructure composed of three small cubicles (Rooms 1-3) set in an east-west line and backed on the north by a larger compartment (Room 4). The structure was erected over ground that rises 1.1m across 6m from south-to-north. Consequently, while Str. 41A-1st's south face is ascended by two steps (U.10 and 11) its northern wall (U.2) rises directly above ground surface. Turning first to the southern risers, the basal step (U.11) is 0.32m tall by 0.7m wide and is succeeded by U.10. The latter rises 0.42m above U.11 and runs back (north) for 0.85m to the U.13 shelf in Room 1. Though Str. 41A-1st's southwest corner was poorly preserved, it appears that U.11 runs for 5m east-west before turning back to join U.10 on the west and U.3 on the east. Unit 10, in turn, corners on the west with U.12, the platform's west basal facing. Unit 12 runs north for at least 5m at which point it may corner with U.2, Str. 41A-1st's north wall. This juncture was not confirmed, however, and U.12 may continue past that corner for at least 0.5m (at which point excavation ceased).

Rooms 1-3 are all open to the south where they overlook the U.10 and 11 steps. These compartments are separated by stone foundations (U.7-9 and the southern continuation of U.3) that are 0.2-0.5m high by 0.23-0.6m wide. The central member of the triad (Room 1) covers 1.4m by 1.85m and has a 0.09m-high stone-faced and -surfaced shelf (U.13) that completely fills the enclosure's north side (running 1.4m east-west) and measures 1m north-south. Room 2, immediately west of Room 1, encompasses 0.8m by 1m. A 0.3m-high stone-faced and -surfaced shelf (U.14) runs 0.8m east-west against the compartment's north wall and is 0.45m wide north-south. Room 3, bordering Room 1 on the east, measures 0.82m by 1.5m and also contains a low stone-faced and -surfaced shelf (U.15). Unit 15 is 0.2m tall, covers 0.75m north-south by 0.82m east-west, and is built against Room 3's north wall. Room 4, which backs these enclosures on the north, covers 1.78m by 3.55m and its earthen floor is 0.5m above the floors of Rooms 1-3. Unit 4 rises 0.5m above the shelves in Rooms 1-3 and separates that trio of compartments from Room 4. A 0.1m-high, free-standing block of stones (U.6) in Room 4's eastern half may have served as a shelf. U.6 is 0.35m wide north-south by 0.55m long east-west and is 0.3m

south of U.2, Room 4's ample north wall. The foundations bordering Room 4 on the south, east, and west are 0.5-0.6m wide by 0.5-0.7m tall (U.3-5). Unit 2, the 0.55m-high northern foundation, is broader (0.86m across) than U.3-5 and projects an estimated 0.2m above Room 4's floor. This footing's relatively great width may imply that it doubled as both wall support and bench. The fill (U.16) underlying Room 4's floor is a mix of a hard-packed, dark brown soil and a moderately dense concentration of medium to small stones.

Lying 0.5m north of Str. 41A-1st's northeast corner are two 0.1m-high by 0.25m-wide stone walls (U.17 and 18) that form a rough 'X' shape. Unit 18 runs 2.2m at an azimuth of approximately 286 degrees whereas U.17 overlaps the former wall 0.5m southeast of U.18's northwest end. Unit 17 extends for a full 1.15 at an angle of ca. 16 degrees, extending 0.75m southwest of U.18. The behavioral significance of these units is unclear. They seem to be part of a construction raised directly on the ancient ground surface above which Str. 41A-1st's north wall (U.2) was erected.

By the conclusion of TS.3, Str. 41A-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled construction that rose 1.33m tall on the south and was set on ancient ground level on its upslope, northern flank. The building at this time encompassed 5.74m north-south by 5.14m east-west (measured across its approximate center) and was aligned roughly 4 degrees. Two stone-faced steps, 0.32-0.42m high, ascend the building's downslope, southern flank. Facing out over these risers are three earthen-floored cubicles set in an east-west line and demarcated by stone foundations that are 0.2-0.5m tall by 0.23-0.6m wide. All of these compartments are open on the south and contain low (0.09-0.3m tall) stone-faced and -surfaced shelves built against their northern walls. Room 1, the central compartment, covers 2.6m², its shelf encompassing 1m by 1.4m. Room 2 on the west measures 0.8m² while its shelf covers 0.45m by 0.8m. Room 3 on the line's east end measures 1.2m² while its shelf encompasses 0.75m by 0.82m. A 0.5m-high ascent divides Rooms 1-3 from Room 4 on the north. The latter earthen-floored enclosure measures 6.3m² and contains a 0.1m-high shelf that is 0.35m wide by 0.55m long east-west. Room 4's especially broad (0.86m across) northern facing may have served as both wall support and bench. A surface-level building of uncertain form lies 0.5m north of Str. 41A-1st's northeast corner. Consisting of at least two intersecting walls that are 0.1m high by 0.25m wide, this edifice covers an exposed 0.75m by 2.2m and was oriented very roughly 290 degrees.

Time Span 2 architecture was fashioned primarily from unmodified stones the naturally flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. Cut blocks comprise the minority of stones found in U.4 and 13. All of the rocks are set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 4

After Str. 41A-1st was abandoned the building was largely covered by the deposition of a hard-packed, dark brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 accumulated to a maximum thickness of 0.45m and was covered, in turn, by 0.03-0.12m of hard-packed even darker brown earth (S.1). Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a dense concentration of stones (F.1) that likely fell from final phase architecture. These rocks are so densely packed and flat-laid where they overlie U.11 that they may have been intentionally placed so as to bury Str. 41A-1st's basal southern step.

Structure 41B

Structure 41B is 1.3m north/northeast of Str. 41A and 1.2m north of Str. 71D. Structure 41B was damaged by the excavation of a trench, dug for a water pipe, that cut completely across the northern third of the building. This modern activity disturbed several summit features, making it difficult to reconstruct the form of Str. 41B-1st's superstructure. Digging within Subop. 53A, B, G, and J on and around Str. 41B, under the direction of Matthew Turek in 1995, uncovered ca 76m² in the process of completely revealing Str. 41B-st's core platform. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.78m and 0.82m within and beyond construction, respectively. Two major building phases were identified in the course of this work.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	Str. 41B-Sub1	U.20	S.1	-	LCLII, III
2	Str. 41B-Sub2	U.19	S.2	-	LCLII, III
3	Str. 41B-2 nd	U.1-5	-	-	LCLII, III
4	Str. 41B-1 st	U.6-18, 21-23	-	-	LCLIII, II
5	-	-	S.3, 4	F.1	

Note that material diagnostic of Late Classic I and the Middle Preclassic were found in mixed contexts here.

Time Span 1

During this interval a very fine textured, loosely consolidated, dark gray-brown soil (S.1) was deposited. The uppermost 0.3m of S.1 was exposed 4m north of Str. 41B-1st in a 1 by 1m probe. Stratum 1 ran flat within the small area in which it was revealed.

Embedded in this earth layer is U.20, a 0.22m-tall cobble wall that was traced for 0.7m north from its apparent southern terminus. Unit 20 is aligned roughly 4 degrees. Not enough of this construction was exposed to infer the nature and dimensions of the building in which it figured. Possibly, U.20 was part of a foundation that delimited a surface-level edifice.

Time Span 2

Stratum 1 was blanketed by 0.14-0.18m of a fine-textured, loosely compacted, brown soil (S.2) that ascended 0.09m over 5.2m from north-to-south. Embedded in S.2 are remnants of another cobble construction (U.19). Unit 19 was apparently the southwest corner of a building the south and west walls of which were 0.3m high by 0.3-0.4m wide (all included in U.19). This edifice was oriented very approximately 250 degrees and was probably raised directly on ancient ground surface. Unit 20 is 0.1m north of and immediately below U.19.

Time Span 3

Most of what was revealed of Str. 41B-2nd is a large stone circle (U.4) embedded within a stone pavement (U.1-3). Unit 4's south arc was fully revealed along with about half of its outer, western curve. Based on these exposures, U.4 is 0.4-0.7m thick and has a diameter of 4.2m (exterior) and 3m (interior). This circle is set flush with a stone pavement (U.1-3) that extends 0.7m south of U.4 and an

estimated 0.3m east and west of the circle. The most completely cleared portion of the U.1-3 floor measures 4.2m east-west and is oriented approximately 82 degrees.

Pre-dating Str. 41B-1st architecture and emerging from under Str. 41B-1st's northeast corner is an 'L'-shaped wall (U.5) that is 0.12m high by 0.25m wide. Unit 5 runs 1.3m at an orientation of 345 degrees, turning a corner on its south end to continue at least 0.45m to the southwest (its southwestern terminus was not found as it extended under Str. 41B-1st's north basal wall [U.7]). Most likely U.5 is a foundation for a surface-level building associated with the use of U.1-4.

Overall, the core of Str. 41B-2nd consisted of a stone pavement that encompassed 4.2m east-west, was aligned roughly 82 degrees, and which surrounded a 0.4-0.7m-thick stone-lined circle with exterior and interior diameters of 4.2m and 3m, respectively. At least one surface-level building, bounded by low stone foundations (0.12m high by 0.25m wide) was located off the pavement's northeast corner. All TS.3 constructions are fashioned primarily of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar. The one exception is U.2, the pavement's east line, which is made from a combination of schist slabs and cut blocks. Circular constructions are very rare at La Sierra and ones this size have been identified as ceramic kilns within Op. 31 and 43. No clear signs of burning are attested here, however.

Time Span 4

Str. 41B-1st is a platform bounded on all four sides by stone facings (U.6-9) that are 0.33-0.7m high. The structure was raised atop terrain that sloped up 0.6m across 7.7m north-to-south and, less clearly, ca. 0.7m over 4.4m west-to-east. Fronting the building on the north is a 0.16m-high stone-faced outset (U.16) that is 2.7m long east-west and which projects 1.05m north from the platform's north basal facing (U.7). Unit 16 intersects U.7 at a point 1.6m east of Str. 41B-1st's northwest corner. Given that the U.1-3 pavement was likely still exposed at this time on the platform's south face, Str. 41B-1st was flanked on both the north and south by comparable outsides. The southern U.1-3 pavement emerges from beneath the platform's south facing (U.9) 1m east of the building's southwest corner, projects 1.4m south of Str. 41B-1st, and is 4.2m wide east-west. The U.4 circle was, however, largely buried beneath TS.4 construction and was no longer in use now.

A formal entryway to Str. 41B-1st's summit is marked by U.17 and 18. The basal step (U.17) is a 0.15m-high stone riser that measures 1.1m north-south by 0.5m east-west. It is succeeded on the west by U.18 which ascends 0.27m above, and sits directly behind (west of), the basal riser. Unit 18 is built into Str. 41B-1st's southeast corner and extends 1.85m north from a point coterminous with U.17's south edge. The stone threshold formed by U.18 is 0.5m wide east-west.

Structure 41B-1st's earthen-floored superstructure is divided into east and west segments by a substantial stone foundation (U.10) that is 0.35m tall by 0.6m wide and which runs for 4.55m north-south across the full length of the summit. The space west of U.10 (Room 1) covers 1.7 by 4.55m and is largely taken up by a 0.21m-high stone-faced bench (U.11). Unit 11 is 1.7m wide east west by at least 2.07m long north-south and abuts U.10. As the tops of both constrictions are roughly equivalent, U.11 may have measured 2.3m wide for the 2.07m that U.10 and 11 are coterminous. Unfortunately, the trench that was dug to contain the water pipe seriously disturbed U.11's north side. A wall fragment (U.12) lying 0.5m north of, and across the water-pipe trench from, U.11 may have been related to the bench in some way. Unit 12 is an estimated 0.18m high by 0.2m wide and was traced for 1.05m south from its abutment with the north basal facing's (U.7) south side; it may well have continued the full

1.55m to join with U.11. If U.12 and 11 did intersect, then the former wall was probably a stone facing for a 1.3m-wide northern extension of the U.11 bench.

East of U.10 is a sizable earthen-floored compartment (Room 2) encompassing 2.3 by 4.55m. A 0.2m-tall by 0.45m-wide wall (U.14) projects 1.05m north from Room 2's south side. Unit 14 is 1m east of Room 2's southwest corner and may have served as a baffle directing traffic passing up and into the superstructure from the U.17/18 entry. Unit 15, a 0.15m-high stone block measuring 0.75m north-south, projects 0.35m east from U.10's east face. This construction is set opposite U.11's northeast corner and may have served as a step providing access from Room 2 to that bench. Finally, a 0.35m-high wall (U.13) was recorded running east-west 0.4m south of Room 2's north wall (the south side of U.7). Only 0.7m of U.13's central portion was preserved, making interpretation of its architectural significance difficult (digging of the water-pipe trench 0.3m south of U.13 may well have disrupted the latter construction). Tentatively, if U.13 originally spanned Room 2's full east-west width, it might have fronted a 0.35m-high bench that was 0.7m wide north-south by 2.3m long east-west.

Two, possibly as many as three, stone-faced, earthen-surfaced terraces (U.21-23) ascend towards Str. 41B-1st from the west. The basal riser, U.21, is 4.4m west of Str. 41B-1st. This terrace is 0.2m high, 0.85m wide, and was traced for 3.5m at an orientation of 176 degrees. It is succeeded on the east by U.22 which rises 0.4m above U.21 and extends at least 0.5m to the east. Unit 22 was exposed for 3.55m over which distance it parallels U.21. Hints of a third ascending terrace (U.23) were noted 0.5m east of U.22. If U.23 existed it was a fairly low (0.1m high) riser that gave way to 3.05m of relatively flat terrain leading back (east) to Str. 41B-1st.

By the conclusion of TS.4, Str. 41B-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.33-0.7m tall, measured 5.38 by 5.8m (exclusive of the outsets), and was aligned roughly 355 degrees. Stone outsets project north and south from this core platform. The northern example is 0.16m high, 2.7m long, and extends 1.05m north from near the platform's center. Its southern counterpart consists of the still-visible U.1-3 pavement from TS.3 that projects 1.4m south from beneath the platform's south facing and runs for 4.2m east from a point 1m east of Str. 41B-1st's southwest corner. The extensive earthen-floored summit was accessed by passing over two steps set into the platform's southeast corner. The basal riser is 0.15m high, 0.5m wide, and 1.1m long north-south. It is succeeded on the west by a 0.27m-high riser that gives way directly to a stone threshold measuring 0.5m (east-west) by 1.85m long (north-south). After passing over this threshold, Str. 41B-1st's superstructure was entered through a space measuring 0.8m by 1.05m in the southeast corner of the eastern summit enclosure (Room 2). Room 2 covers 10.2m² and may have had a 0.35m-high bench built against its north wall. We tentatively infer that this latter construction was 0.7m wide and 2.3m long east-west. Separated from Room 2 by a 0.35m-high, 0.6m-wide wall that runs the summit's full north-south length is the smaller western enclosure (Room 1). Room 1 measures 7.7m², much of that space being taken up by a stone-faced bench that stands 0.21m tall, is 2.3m wide, and 2.07m long north-south. There may have been a 0.18m-high by 1.3m-wide extension to the bench which spanned the 1.55m between said bench and Room 1's north wall. That extension is set back (west) 0.4m from the bench's east edge. An area of open floor covering 0.8m by 1.7m lies immediately south of the bench. Passage between Rooms 1 and 2 may have been facilitated by a 0.15m-high stone step set near the center of the medial wall that divides these compartments. At least two stone-faced, earthen-surfaced terraces front Str. 41B-1st starting 4.4m west of the building. These risers are 0.2-0.4m tall by 0.5-0.85m wide and may have ended in a 0.1m-high step-up to 3.05m of level terrain leading back (east) to the platform.

Constructions raised during TS.4 were made almost completely of unmodified stones the flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. Cut blocks were used exclusively, however, to fashion the threshold (U.18) leading into the superstructure from its southeast corner. All rocks used in the construction of TS.4 architecture were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 5

Following Str. 41B-1st's abandonment most of its final-phase architecture was covered by as much as 0.45m of a hard-packed, dark brown soil (S.3). Stratum 3 was, in turn, blanketed by 0.05-0.11m of hard-compacted, even darker brown soil (S.4). Embedded in S.3 and 4 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks tumbled from TS.4 architecture (F.1).

Structure 90

Structure 90 is 3.3m west of Str. 38 and 6.65m northwest of Str. 39. The ground on which this platform was raised was relatively flat, showing no appreciable change in elevation across excavations that measured 12.8m east-west by 14.5m north-south. Fully 74m² was cleared within Subop. 53L, M, N, O, P, and Q, revealing approximately 90% of Str. 90-1st. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 1.32m and 0.8m below modern ground surface beyond and within architecture, respectively. Construction fill was not probed to reveal construction phases pre-dating the one interval of building use that we encountered. The investigations were directed by April Hanneline during the 1995 field season.

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Features	Strata	Dates
1	-	-	-	S.1	
2	-	-	-	S.2	LCLI, II
3	Str. 90-1 st	U.1-10 (lower), 12, 13, 15, 16, 18-21	-	-	LCLII, III
4	Str. 90-1 st	U.10 (upper), 11, 14, 17	-	-	LCLIII, II
5	Str. 90-1 st	-	F.1	-	LCLIII, EPC, LPC
6	-	-	F.2	S.4, 5	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in Str. 90's environs is the seemingly natural deposition of a moderately fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, tan clay (S.1). Stratum 1 was exposed in a 0.85m by 1m probe dug off Str. 90-1st's south side where it was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.1m (its base was not encountered). This soil level ran flat over the limited segment that it was exposed. No cultural materials were definitively associated with the limited portion of S.1 that we uncovered.

Time Span 2

During this interval 0.04-0.11m of a coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown-to-gray soil (S.2) was laid down atop S.1 (the only place where it was uncovered). Stratum 2's top is not

flat but is slightly undulating. This soil is rich in cultural material, including pottery fragments and flecks of burnt earth (bajareque), along with numerous pebbles (0.02m in diameter and smaller) and diminutive charcoal fragments. The S.2 deposit certainly indicates a human presence in the immediate area during TS.2 though whether the soil was part of an *in situ* midden or if it was introduced to raise ground surface in preparation for building Str. 90-1st is unclear.

Time Span 3

Structure 90-1st was, during this interval, a platform bounded by stone facings (U.5-8) that are 1.3-1.52m tall (where exposed on the north and south; digging on the east and west did not reveal the bases of U.6 and 8) and 0.37-1.01m wide.

The building is fronted on the north by three stone-faced terraces (U.1-3). The basal riser (U.1) is 0.14m tall by 0.3m wide and gives way on the south to the next ascending step-up, U.2. The latter is 0.18m high and runs back 0.29m to the south where it terminates in U.3. Unit 3 stands 0.41m above U.2 and extends back 1.36m to the platform's north basal facing (U.5). Unit 5 ascends 0.57m above the U.3 terrace and runs down behind (south) of it. The U.1-3 terraces intersect U.5 at a point 1m west of that basal facing's junction with U.6 to form the core platform's northeast corner.

A wall standing 0.25m tall (U.4) runs out from under, and for 2m east of, U.3. Unit 4 terminates on the east in a comparably tall construction (U.9) with which it forms a corner. Unit 9 was traced for 1.25m south before excavation ceased. At its exposed southern end, U.9 is 1m east of the core platform's northeast corner. The architectural significance of U.4 and 9 is unclear. That U.4 underlies U.3 suggests that the former pre-dates the latter construction. It may be that U.4 and 9 were part of an earlier terrace or set of terraces that were superseded by U.1-3. Nonetheless, U.4 and 9 apparently remained visible after the construction of U.1-3 and continued to function as part of Str. 90-1st during TS.3. They may have formed the north and east sides of a 0.25m-tall platform that measured 1.2m by 2m and was bounded by the U.1-3 terraces on the west and U.5 on the south. Excavations did not proceed far enough westward along U.1-3 to determine how they related to the core platform on this side.

The summit bounded by U.5-8 was initially divided into three rooms delimited by stone foundations that are 0.23-0.41m tall by 0.38-0.65m wide (U.10, 15, and 20; the tops of U. 5 and 6 define the north and east sides of the northeastern room). The earthen-floored northeast compartment encompasses 1.98x2.9m. A 0.6m-wide door in the enclosure's northwest corner (between U.10 and 5) provided access to the northwest room. This latter space measures 2.45m by 2.6m and is open on the west. Its north side may also have been unencumbered by architecture. Unit 5, the north basal facing, is much lower here than it is on the north side of the northeast room where it stands 0.57m above the putative floor of the uppermost terrace (U.3). A westward extension of U.12 (see below) seals the northwest room's south side. A 1.04m-wide gap between U.12 and the west basal facing (U.8) may have provided passage south towards the southern enclosure. Unit 18, a 0.14m-tall wall, spans this putative doorway and may have served as the entryway's stone threshold. A stone floor (U.21) covers at least the southern third of the northwest enclosure, running below U.18.

The earthen-floored south room covers 2.1m by 3.45m and is separated from its northern counterparts by a sizable wall that is, maximally, 1.04m wide by 0.72m high (U.12). Unit 12 maintains its maximum width for 3.6m on the east, narrowing to 0.6m across at its westernmost 0.6m where it seals

the southern room's northwest corner. The southern enclosure's west wall, U.13, is also unusually broad (0.9m wide) and at least 0.4m tall. Unit 13 during this phase seems to have run 1.68m south from its intersection with U.12 on the north, leaving a gap of 0.42m between it and U.20, the room's southern footing. This narrow space in the south room's southwest corner may have served as a door. The relatively ample widths of U.12 and 13 possibly point to their use as both supports for perishable upper walls and as benches. Unit 12 may have served this function for the northeast and south rooms, as it looks into both spaces. Unit 13, in turn, faces directly into only the southern enclosure.

A 0.2m-high by 0.4m-wide stone wall (U.16) projects 0.65m south from U.20. Unit 16 is built atop the platform's broad southern basal facing (U.7) and may have delimited a space 2.8m long east-west by 0.65m wide north-south that adjoins the southern room on the south. A comparable area may extend 1.35m east of U.16. If these last two entities were rooms they were open on all sides save the north.

A single wall (U.19) was recorded 3.3m west of the core platform's west basal facing (U.8). Unit 19 is part of Str. 71B-1st's east perimeter wall (U.8).

By TS.3's conclusion, Str. 90-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood 1.3-1.52m tall, measured 9.4m by 6.28m, and was aligned roughly 350 degrees. The building's core platform, delimited by U.5-8, covered 6.28m by 7.46m. The structure was apparently ascended from the north where three stone-faced terraces rise in increments of 0.14m, 0.18m, and 0.41m towards the summit. This terrace system joins the core platform's north facing 1m west of the platform's northeast corner. A 0.25m-high stone-faced platform seems to have been built immediately east of the terraces, covering an area of 2.4m². The full east-west length of the northern terraces was not determined. The summit was divided into three sizable compartments by stone foundations that are 0.23-41m tall by 0.38-0.61m wide. All of the superstructure is floored with dirt except for the southern third of the northwest room which has a stone pavement. The two rooms on the north are set in an east-west line and backed by a southern enclosure. The northeast compartment encompasses 5.7m² and was backed on the south by an ample stone wall that likely served in part as a bench. The latter construction is 0.72m high by 1.04m wide and spans the full width of the northeast room (2.9m). Access to this enclosure was apparently not from the aforementioned terraces; the core platform's northern facing projects 0.57 m above the reconstructed level of the uppermost terrace. Instead, the northeast and southern summit enclosures may have been reached through the northwest room. This space, which encompasses 6.4m², could have been easily entered from the northern terrace as no significant construction impeded access from this side. Once in the northwest room a 0.6m-wide door in its northeast corner provided passage to the northeast room. A 1.04m-wide door in the northwest room's southwest corner was marked by what looks like a 0.14m-high stone threshold that provided egress from this compartment southwards on the summit. After passing along this corridor, the southern enclosure, covering 7.2m², was entered through a 0.42m-wide door in its southwest corner. The bench overlooking the northeast room probably also faced south into its southern neighbor. In addition, the ample (0.4m tall by 0.9m wide) western foundation of the south room might have also functioned as a bench that was 1.68m long north-south. Two additional spaces are found atop the broad southern basal wall immediately south of the south room. These areas are separated by a 0.2m-high by 0.4m-wide stone wall and are set in an east-west line. The western space covers 1.8m² while its eastern neighbor encompasses 0.9m². Both putative enclosures are open on the south and to the west (for the western example) and east (for its eastern counterpart).

All of the constructions raised at this time were fashioned almost exclusively of river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. Two possibly faced blocks were recorded within U.3, the uppermost of the three northern terraces, where it fronts the northeast room. The stones in all cases were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 4

Structure 90-1st retained its basic form, dimensions, and orientation from TS.3 during this period. The primary changes that were made now involved modifications visited in the core platform's superstructure. These principally took the form of subdividing the northeast and south rooms by the construction of walls that were 0.32-0.5m high by 0.38-0.5m wide (U.11 and 14). It was also during this span that U.10, which separated the northeast and northwest rooms, was raised 0.26m to a full height of 0.55m. The earlier, lower portion of U.10 projects 0.18m east into the northeast room, giving the foundation's east side a stepped appearance. No sign of U.10's original wall was seen on its west face. The doorway that formerly linked the northeast and northwest rooms during TS.3 was sealed in the course of fashioning these additions. The passage into the southern room through its southwest corner was also closed off at some point during TS.4. How these spaces were now accessed is currently unclear. It could be that closing these doors took place at TS.4's end, possibly as parts of actions designed to terminate formally at least parts of Str. 90-1st's superstructure.

As a result of these changes, what had once been two rooms running in an east-west line across the northern platform's summit were transformed into three compartments. The northwest room (now designated Room 3) remained unchanged while its northeast neighbor now contained two cubicles set in an east-west line and separated by a stone footing (U.11). Room 1, in the eastern part of the old northeast enclosure, measures 1.1m by 1.98m while its newly created western neighbor (Room 2) covers 1.25m by 1.98m. Passage between these spaces was through a 0.4m-wide gap between U.11 and U.5. The southern room now also contained two cubicles arranged in an east-west line and separated by a stone foundation (U.14). The eastern compartment (Room 5) encompasses 1.04m by 2.1m while Room 4 to the west measures 1.75m by 2.1m. The U.13 bench described in TS.3 now faced into Room 4 while the U.12 bench probably still served this purpose for Rooms 1, 2, 4, and 5. A 0.95m-wide gap between U.14 and 20 likely served as a door connecting Rooms 4 and 5.

In addition to these constructions, an approximately 0.25m-high stone block (U.17) was constructed against the core platform's northeast corner. Unit 17 covers 0.5m north-south and projects 0.4m east from that corner. The architectural significance of U.17 is unclear.

By the conclusion of TS.4, Str. 90-1st's overall form and dimensions remained largely unchanged from TS.3. Its summit now consisted, however, of five rooms; three laid out running east-west on the north half of the core platform and two on the south. The northern examples measure, from east-to-west, 2.2m², 2.5m², and 6.4m² (the unchanged northwest room). On the south what had previously been a sizable enclosure was now sub-divided into two compartments, the eastern example covering 2.2m² and its western counterpart encompassing 3.7m². The summit benches described for TS.3 were still in use, looking into all of these compartments save Room 3 (formerly the northwest enclosure). Movement between Rooms 1 and 2 (in the old northeast compartment) and Rooms 4 and 5 (in the former south enclosure) were through doorways that spanned 0.4m and 0.95m, respectively. The passages that previously linked the old northeast and northwest room and provided access to the south

room were, however, sealed. A 0.25m-high stone block measuring 0.4x0.5m was appended to the core platform's northeast corner. The functional significance of this renovation is unclear.

All constructions raised now were made of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar. Some effort was devoted to directing the naturally flatter aspects of these rocks outward.

Time Span 5

The only activity assigned to this span was the introduction of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, tan clay that contains a dense concentration of small to large cobbles (F.1). Feature 1 was most clearly recognized off Str. 90-1st's east and west flanks where it covered all but the uppermost 0.13m (on the east) and 0.21m (on the west) of U.6 and 8. In both cases, F.1 slopes down and away from the core platform, dropping 0.52m over 1.23m east to west away from U.8 and 0.37m over 3m east and away from U.6. On the south, what looks to be an analogue to F.1 was found covering the basal 0.3m of U.7 (included in F.1). Here, the deposit slopes down and away from the platform, dropping 0.27m over 0.83m north-to-south. Feature 1's behavioral significance remains uncertain. The generally horizontal disposition of the stones embedded in it very tentatively implies that F.1 was purposefully introduced through human action.

Time Span 6

Following Str. 90-1st's abandonment, as much as 0.8m of a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil (S.3) was laid down, covering all but the uppermost portions of surviving final-phase architecture. Stratum 3 was, in turn, blanketed by 0.08-0.14m of a very similar soil (S.4) that was distinguished by its dark brown color and dense concentration of modern roots. Embedded in S.3 and 4 is a dense concentration of stone debris (F.2) that fell from final-phase construction. Feature 2 was traced for up to 3m from Str. 90-1st.

Chronological Summary

The earliest evidence for occupation in Op.53 is provided by small numbers of ceramics diagnostic of the Middle Preclassic and Late Preclassic found mixed with much larger quantities of later material around Str.71B, 41A, and 41B. Middle Preclassic materials were recovered from excavations conducted on Str.41B and 71B while Late Preclassic items were noted at Str. 41A and 71B. These scattered remains tentatively hint at a dispersed population in Op. 53 for a protracted span. No architecture was clearly associated with these remains. Late Classic I ceramic markers were retrieved from the environs of Str.39, 41B, and 90. Once again these diagnostics were mixed with larger amounts of later materials and were not clearly associated with constructions. The consistent appearance of Str. 41A in these lists may suggest that it was near the putative center of a shifting, light, and early occupation of the area. This interpretation is, at present, speculative.

Significant occupation of Op. 53 seems to have begun in early Late Classic II, material pertaining to this interval being recovered from Str.38, 39, 71C, and 90. Modest stone architecture may have been raised at Str.38 and 39 at this time. Settlement of the area apparently intensified at the Late Classic II/III transition. Early versions of Str.38, 39, and 90 were raised now while Str.71A-2nd, 71B-2nd, 71C-2nd, 41A-2nd, 41B-Sub1, 41B-Sub2, and 41B-2nd were also erected during this span. Later in Late Classic III use of the zone continued to expand with significant renovations being made to Str.38, 39, and 90 whereas Str.71A-1st, 71B-1st, 71C-1st, 71D-1st, 41A-1st, and 41B-1st were built and used at this time. There is some

evidence that the final version of Str. 71C-1st was erected late in Late Classic III, possibly post-dating and slightly overlapping construction pertaining to Str.71B-1st. Near the end of Late Classic III or possibly early in the Early Postclassic all of the exposed edifices were seemingly abandoned. This process may have been formalized at Str.38, 39, and 90 by the deposition of stones that covered at least portions of the aforementioned buildings. Occupation of Op.53 during the last Precolumbian centuries (the Late Postclassic) is indicated by one diagnostic pottery fragment recovered from excavations on Str.90. There is no sign that any architecture relating to this building was raised now.