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PSB OP 054 Excavation Report

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Site 54

Site 54 consists of six structures (0-0.5m high), five of which are tightly nucleated around a patio (Strs. 54-1/5) with a single outlier (Str. 54-6) lying 88m to the south. All component buildings occupy a narrow, north-south running ledge within the eastern foothills delimiting the southeast margin of the Las Huertas/Hondo pocket. Site 51 is ca. 100m to the southwest and 15m below Site 54; the perennial Rio Juncuntal courses 125m to the south while the Rio Hondo is 650m north of the settlement. Structure 54-6 was the sole building excavated here (June 4-5, 1985), eight person-days of labor invested in clearing 3.5m². This building was chosen because its relatively isolated location hinted at a non-residential function; possibly a seasonally occupied fieldhouse. Investigations here were designed to test this attribution and, if verified, to date when such a specialized construction might have been raised. All work at Site 54 was supervised by Colleen Siders and Marie Hamilton.

Structure 54-6

Structure 54-6 was investigated by means of a single 1x2m trench (Suop. 54B) dug against the building's west side. A 0.5x3m extension was pursued north of the original trench following the western basal facing (U.1) in hopes of securing a larger artifact sample. Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 0.8m below and west of construction and were not pursued into the building's fill. A single construction phase was revealed in the course of this work.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Date</u>
54B/1	1 sherd	Mixed Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction Soil Deposition	?
54B/2	empty	Mixed Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction Soil Deposition	?
54B/3	empty	Preconstruction Soil Deposition	?
54B/4	?	Mixed Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction Soil Deposition	?

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1,2	-	?
2	54-6-1st	U.1	-	-	?

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a light brown, coarse-textured, gravel-rich colluvium, was deposited during this interval. Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.5m before disappearing into the base of excavation. The top of S.1 drops 0.25m over an exposed east-to-west distance of 2m, suggesting that Str. 54-6-1st was built over sloping terrain near the ledge margin. A total of 0.06m of S.2 intervenes between the U.1 base and S.1. Apparently, the lowest portion of S.2, a dark brown, coarse-textured, organic-rich soil containing numerous small rocks, was laid down prior to Str. 54-6-1st's construction.

Time Span 2

Only the west basal facing of Str. 54-6-1st was exposed during excavation. This wall (U.1) rises a preserved 0.18m and consists of a single row of angular stones, gray to orange in color, with their flatter faces generally oriented outwards. Unit 1's rocks are set in a brown mud matrix; no chinking stones were recorded. Rocks comprising U.1 measure 0.11x0.13x0.21m to 0.14x0.24x0.44m and the wall is aligned 21 degrees, thirty minutes. It is likely that Str. 54-6-1st was a low, stone-faced platform rising in a single ascent to the summit.

Time Span 3

The remainder of S.2 was deposited after Str. 54-6-1st's abandonment, burying U.1 by 0.02-0.04m. Feature 1, a moderately dense concentration of tumbled architectural debris, extends approximately 0.84m west of U.1 and likely represents stone originally incorporated in the western basal facing.

Chronological Summary

Few artifacts in general, and none that were temporally diagnostic, were recovered from Str. 54-6-1st. The building was not sufficiently cleared to provide architectural data relevant to inferring the occupation period(s) nor is Str. 54-6-1st's isolated location helpful in assigning a date. The small amount of soil (0.06m) that had formed atop the basal colluvial level prior to Str. 54-6-1st's construction hints at a late occupation atop the ledge, fairly soon after gravel derived from the eastern slopes ceased being deposited. Structure 153-3-1st occupies a similar stratigraphic position atop the same ledge, ca. 75m to the southeast. Construction of Str. 153-3-1st is dated to the Late Classic and Str. 54-6-1st can be plausibly assigned to the same period. Such an assignment, however, remains a tentative hypothesis.