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## PSB OP 069 Excavation Report

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## Site 69

Site 69 contains five structures dispersed over the low terrace on the south bank of the Rio Las Huertas. The river is 25m north of the settlement and 12m west of it, Sites 67 and 68 lie 100m to the east-northeast and 150m to the southeast respectively. Structures 69-1, 2, and 4 were investigated from June 5-7, 1985, 18 person-days of labor resulting in the exposure of approximately 18.1m<sup>2</sup>. Excavations were directed by Colleen Siders, Marie Hamilton, and Marie Selvaggio.

### Structure 69-1

Structure 69-1 is in the approximate center of the site, ca. 8m south of Str. 69-2 and 12m northeast of Str. 69-4. Excavations conducted as part of Subop. 69C cleared 6.3m<sup>2</sup> along the building's west face and were pursued to a maximum depth of 0.61m below modern ground surface west of construction. Architectural fill was not probed.

### Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Date</u>
69C/1	5 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	EC, LC?
69C/2	empty	Preconstruction	-
69C/3	empty	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	-

### 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	-	EC, LC
2	Str. 69-1-1st	U.1	-	-	?
3	-	-	S.2	F.1	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a light brown, hard-compacted soil containing numerous small rocks, runs beneath Str. 69-1-1st construction (U.1). This soil level ascends 0.07m over 1m west-to-east before dropping 0.12m over 0.5m in the same direction. Stratum 1 was not pursued further on the east where it was overlain by Str. 69-1-1st architecture. Forty centimeters of S.1's total

thickness were exposed, though the base was not encountered. Several large rocks protrude from S.1 and were used as foundations for U.1 (see below). Roughly 0.05m of S.2, a dark brown, hard-compacted, organic-rich earth containing relatively few rocks, underlie Str. 69-1-1st, indicating a brief interval when this soil was laid down prior to raising U.1. We cannot be certain at this time how many, if any, of the five sherds recovered in Subop. 69C derive from S.1 and the lowest portions of S.2.

### Time Span 2

The western basal facing of Str. 69-1-1st was exposed over a north-south extent of 3.1m (U.1). This construction is a preserved 0.42m high and is casually constructed of, primarily, light gray, fine-grained rocks (probably andesite) mixed with a few other stones, all set in a brown mud mortar. The uncovered stones are angular chunks with their flatter aspects oriented outwards. No coursing or chinking stones were in evidence. Several of the exposed rocks are set atop stones outcropping from S.1; the latter were apparently used opportunistically as foundations for portions of U.1. Otherwise, the facing rests on S.2 earth 0.04-0.1m above S.1. Rock sizes range from 0.08x0.15m to 0.36x0.54m, with most falling towards the center of that continuum. Unit 1 is aligned 174 degrees, 30 minutes.

### Time Span 3

Following abandonment, deposition of S.2 resumed, burying S.1 by 0.21-0.36m, along with most of U.1. Feature 1, a light concentration of stones apparently fallen from U.1, is embedded in S.2 and extends roughly 0.9m west of that construction.

### Structure 69-2

Structure 69-2 is on the northern site margin, ca.8m north of Str. 69-1 and 4m northeast of Str. 69-5. A total of 5.1m<sup>2</sup> was excavated (Subop. 69B) along Str. 69-2's south face, the probe being carried down to maximum depths of 0.62m below modern ground surface south of, and 0.34m into, construction.

### Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Date</u>
69B/1	-	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	?
69B/2	empty	Preconstruction	-
69B/3	empty	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	-
69B/4	empty	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	-
69B/5	-	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	?

69B/6 sherds Terminal Debris (Secondary) ? LPC

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	Str. 69-2-1st	U.1,2	-	-	EPC?, LPC?
3	-	-	S.2	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1 is a light brown, coarse-textured, hard-compacted, rock-rich soil underlying exposed Str. 69-2-1st construction (U.1). Stratum 1's top runs fairly level over the 1.3m-north-south portion of it that was revealed in Subop. 69B; S.1 was exposed to a maximum depth of 0.29m (the base was not, however, encountered). Roughly 0.09m of S.2, a dark brown, coarse-textured, hard-compacted, organic-rich soil with fewer rocks than S.1, underlies U.1. As was the case with Str. 69-1-1st, a brief period of S.2 deposition must have predated the raising of Str. 69-2-1st.

Time Span 2

Two meters of Str. 69-2-1st's southern basal facing (U.1) were uncovered in Subop. 69B, revealing a wall standing 0.16-0.33m high and aligned 100 degrees. Unit 1 was fashioned using angular chunks and, to a lesser extent, cobbles, set in a single rough course and packed round with brown mud mortar but not chinking stones. Rock sizes range from 0.1x0.26m to 0.26x0.34m. Backing U.1 on the north is a fill of brown, hard-compacted, coarse-textured soil containing some stones (U.2). There is no sign of a formal, paved summit floor.

Time Span 3

Deposition of S.2 resumed after Str. 69-2-1st's abandonment, eventually burying S.1 by 0.33-0.37m along with most of U.1. Feature 1 is a light concentration of stones, likely fallen from U.1, that is embedded in S.2 and extends 1.05m south of the southern basal facing.

Structure 69-4

Structure 69-4 is on the southern edge of the settlement, ca. 12m southwest of Str. 69-1 and the same distance southeast of Str. 69-3. Approximately 6.7m<sup>2</sup> (Subop. 69D) were cleared in the course of revealing portions of Str. 69-4's south flank, excavations reaching 0.46m below modern ground surface south of architecture and 0.45m into and below construction.

### Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Date</u>
69D/1	-	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	?
69D/2	sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	EPC
69D/3	-	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	?
69D/4	empty	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	-
69D/5	sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Preconstruction	EPC
69D/6	7 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary) and Fill	?

### 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	Str. 69-4-1st	U.1-3	-	-	EPC
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1 is a light brown, hard-compacted soil in which large numbers of small rocks are included. The level was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.2m (the base lies outside excavation limits) and runs more-or-less level for at least 2.6m north-south, south of U.1. Approximately 0.12m of S.2, a dark brown, coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, organic-rich soil containing fewer rocks than S.1, lies beneath U.1. A brief interval of S.2 deposition, therefore, likely preceded erection of Str. 69-4-1st.

### Time Span 2

The basal southern facing (U.1) was uncovered over an east-west extent of 2.8m and stood a preserved 0.18-0.22m high. In general, the wall consists of angular chunks (primarily)

and cobbles placed in a single line, and set in a brown mud mortar. An effort was made to orient the naturally flatter rock surfaces outward. Most of the angular rocks are light gray, fine-grained stones (probably andesite). Stone sizes vary from 0.08x0.17m to 0.21x0.28m; no chinking stones were noted. Backing U.1 on the north is a thin (0.1-0.2m-thick) level of small cobbles and angular chunks set in a brown earth matrix (U.3). Unit 3 is probably construction fill underlying the now-eroded terrace faced by U.1 on the south. The U.1/3 terrace is 1.17m wide north-south and is succeeded by U.2 on the north. Roughly 2.1m of this construction's east-west length was unearthened in Subop. 69D, revealing a wall rising a preserved 0.09-0.18m high. Unit 2 may have originally stood 0.3m tall, protruding ca. 0.15m above U.3 (based on the placement of apparent fill immediately north of the facing). This wall most likely marks the southern summit margin.

Structure 69-4-1st, therefore, rose ca. 0.37m in two low increments on the south and was aligned 268 degrees, 30 minutes to 270 degrees.

### Time Span 3

Continued deposition of S.2 followed Str. 69-4-1st's abandonment, that earth level eventually burying S.1 by 0.22-0.34m and covering most of U.1-3.

### Chronological Summary

Small-scale Early and Late Classic occupation at Site 69 is attested to by a very few sherds recovered in the vicinity of Str. 69-1-1st. No architecture can be unambiguously dated to these intervals. The principal period of construction and habitation is tentatively attributed to the Early Postclassic. Structure 69-4-1st seems to have been raised now. Dating the erection of Strs. 69-1-1st and 69-2-1st is hampered by a paucity of temporally diagnostic artifacts clearly associated with these buildings. The casual nature of construction unearthened in all three cases conforms to general Early Postclassic architectural canons, a temporal placement further suggested by the absence of a patio focus for the site as a whole. Early Postclassic settlements are also characterized by a dearth of artifacts. These lines of evidence weakly point to the raising and use of all three investigated edifices during the Early Postclassic. Late Postclassic artifacts uncovered near Str. 69-2-1st hint at continued occupation of the settlement up to, and possibly into, the historic era.

### Architectural Summary

Revealed architecture generally consists of low (0.15-0.42m high) walls fashioned using unmodified angular chunks (primarily andesite) and, to a lesser extent, river cobbles. The flatter aspects of these rocks were generally oriented outwards, though this was not universally the case. Stones are set in a brown mud mortar but lack clear horizontal coursing. Chinking stones are absent. Naturally deposited boulders are sometimes incorporated into wall foundations (Str. 69-1-1st, U.1). These constructions were casually built, the goal apparently having been to use the least amount of rock and time to fashion terrace and summit facings. Stone sizes range from 0.08x0.15m to 0.36x0.54m while walls are aligned between 264 to 280 degrees. Fill generally consisted of stones set in a brown earth matrix.

Overall building forms cannot be reconstructed based on our limited excavations; Str. 69-2-1st seems to have been a single-level platform while Str. 69-4-1st rose in two stone-faced

ascents to the summit, at least on the south side. Structure 69-1-1st is the largest edifice in the group and was probably a multi-level platform. The single terrace sufficiently cleared to reveal its full width measures 1.17m across (Str. 69-4-1st).