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PSB OP 098 Excavation Report

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Site 98

Site 98 lies on the edge of the low terrace formed by the Rio Ulua in the northeast Gualjoquito vega. The largest, most complex constructions surround a patio on the north site margin (Strs. 98-1 through 6) while the remaining buildings are found clustered around this aggregate or scattered without any clear pattern southeast of it. Six of the site's 29 constructions were excavated over the course of five days in April, 1985 by a crew of six men. Three of the investigated edifices are part of Site 98's patio-group while the remaining structures examined in 1985 lie south of that nucleated cluster. An investment of 30 person-days of labor resulted in the excavation of 43.2m². All of the work was overseen by R. Paine and E. Schortman.

Structure 98-1

Structure 98-1 delimits the east flank of the Site 98 patio group. The building was raised on more-or-less level terrain and was investigated by Op. 98B, a 1m-wide (north-south) by 6.7m-long (east-west) trench set against the approximate center of the building's east side. Operation 98B was dug to a maximum depth of 1.12m through fill and pre-construction occupation debris revealing a single construction phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98B/1	100 sherds 1 obsidian piece	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3
98B/2	30 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3
98B/3	202 sherds 10 <u>bajareque</u> frags. 1 figurine frag.	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3
98B/4	5 sherds	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	1,3
98B/5	57 sherds 1 obsidian piece	Fill	3
98B/6	19 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1
98B/7	210 sherds 4 censer frags. 1 <u>candelero</u> frag. 1 chert piece	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	1,3
98B/8	32 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3

98B/9	90 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1
98B/10?	artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3
98B/1116	sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1
98B/12	Sterile	N.A.	1

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	-	LC
2	Str. 98-1-1st	U.1-4	-	- LC	
3	Str. 98-1-1st	U.5-6	-	-	LC, EPC
4	-	-	S.3	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1 runs beneath exposed Str. 98-1-1st architecture while the overlying S. 2 extends below and buries the lower 0.04-0.06m of Units 2 and 5. These earth levels were, therefore, likely deposited prior to construction of Str. 98-1-1st. The top of S.2 most likely represents the ground surface into which later construction was set (U.2 and 5) and on top of which fill for the late eastern addition to the platform was laid (U.6). Stratum 1, an orange-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil with few included stones, was uncovered to a thickness of 0.38m before it disappeared into the base of excavation. Stratum 2 is 0.13-0.2m thick level of light yellow-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil with quite a few included rocks. This earth layer descends very gradually from west to east, dropping 0.13m over a horizontal distance of 5.38m. Cultural material recovered from S.1 and 2 is densest on the west below U.2, implying that occupation in the immediate vicinity and predating the construction of Str. 98-1-1st was concentrated in the area buried by that platform.

Time Span 2

The earliest components of Str. 98-1-1st construction exposed in Subop. 98B are Units 1 through 4. Unit 2 is a 0.26m-high cobble facing set 0.06m into S.2 and backed on the west by a stone pavement (U.3) running back 0.43m to where it abuts the next riser (U.1). Unit 1 runs down behind, and so predates, U.2 though their precise relationship was not investigated during our excavations. Fully 0.32m wide and rising 0.39m above U.3, Unit 1 is a cobble step-up to Str. 98-1-1st's summit. A disrupted cobble pavement (U.4), ca. 0.15m thick, was traced back (west) of U.1 for 0.44m before digging was called to a halt. It is possible that the platform's summit

was completely surfaced with this material. Structure 98-1-1st, therefore, rose to a total height of 0.57m on the east above an earthen surface (the top of S.2), was aligned 359 to 6 degrees, and was fronted by a stone-faced and paved terrace which gave way to a cobble step-up to the summit.

Time Span 3

Construction of U. 5 and 6 extended Str. 98-1-1st 4.31m to the east and, in the process, buried U.2. Unit 5, a 0.33m-high, 0.54m-wide cobble wall, serves as the new basal eastern terrace facing backed by a ca. 0.27m thick deposit of cobble-and-earth fill resting atop S.2 (U.6). The soil included in U.6 is indistinguishable from S.3, a dark gray-to-brown, fine-textured, hard compacted earth. It seems likely that the top of U.6 served as a cobble pavement running more-or-less level with, and running back to, U.3 which may have still been exposed during this interval. Units 1 and 4 continued to serve as summit step-up and paving respectively during TS.3. Unit 5 is oriented 343 degrees, diverging considerably from Unit 1's alignment. Much of this discrepancy can be accounted for by the relatively poor state of U.5's preservation and may not signal a change in the building's orientation in TS.3. If this was the case, Str. 98-1-1st was not considerably modified by the addition of U.4 and 5, its height on the east and orientation being unchanged from what they had been in the previous interval. Construction of the eastern terrace did considerably expand the platform's east-west basal dimension.

Time Span 4

All exposed Str. 98-1-1st construction was buried by S.3, a dark gray-to-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil laid down after the building's abandonment. Feature 1, a scattering of cobbles dislodged from final-phase architecture was incorporated in S.3. Stone tumble is densest on the west where it overlies U.1-4 and 6, decreasing considerably east of U.5. The quantity of building debris represented by F.1 suggests that Str. 98-1-1st suffered moderate disruption after TS.3.

Structure 98-5

Structure 98-5 occupies the northwest corner of the Site 98 patio group, facing Str. 98-1 across the patio to the east. Information obtained from the excavation of Subop. 98C, a 1m wide (north-south) by 13.36m long (east-west) trench bisecting Str. 98-5, was extended through digging Subop. 98H and I on the building's northeast corner and south flank respectively. Together, these investigations permit reconstruction of Str. 98-5-1st's terminal basal dimensions. Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 1.34m into and below construction fill (in Subop. 98C) revealing a single clear construction phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98C/1	38 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2

98C/2	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/3	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/4	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/5	55 sherds 1 censer frag. 6 <u>bajareque</u> frags.	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/6	96 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/7	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/8	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/9	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/10	66 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1,2
98C/11?	artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/12?	artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/13?	artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/14	108 sherds 1 chert piece	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	2
98C/15	70 sherds 3 <u>jute</u> shells 1 <u>bajareque</u> frag.	Fill	2
98C/16	107 sherds 1 censer frag. 45 <u>jute</u> shells 2 obsidian pieces	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1
98C/17	44 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98C/18	2 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1
98H/1	52 sherds 2 sherd disks (fit)	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98H/2	13 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2

98I/1 203 sherds Terminal Debris (Secondary) 2
 1 censer frag.
 4 obsidian pieces
 5 freshwater shell frags.

Note: Lots 98C/1, 2, 3, and 17 were unearthed between Strs. 985-1st and 98-6-1st, their included material could pertain to either building.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.1-4	-	EC, LC
2	Str. 98-1-1st	U.1-8	-	-	LC, EPC
3	-	-	S.4	F.1-3	-

Time Span 1

The first period of activity represented in the Str. 98-5 excavations is the deposition of S.1-3 and the lower ca. 0.1m of S.4. Stratum 1, the lowest earth level, is a red-brown, fine-textured, soft-compacted soil devoid of cultural material. Exposed in the probe beneath Str. 98-5's summit, S.1 was revealed to be at least 0.38m thick, though its base was not identified. Overlying S.1 is a light brown, fine-textured, hard-packed soil (S.2) recorded east, west and underlying Str. 98-5-1st construction in Subop. 98C, H, and I. Stratum 2's thickness is variable, measuring 0.14-0.22m where it is exposed in the summit probe but the layer is minimally 0.44m thick east of construction (S.2's base was not encountered in excavations east and west of the platform). Stratum 2 rises very gradually from west to east towards the Site 98 patio, ascending 0.52m over 6.26m horizontal distance, before leveling out. The few artifacts unearthed in S.2 may be the vestiges of a sparse, early occupation in this portion of the locus or represent materials that have worked their way down from later deposits.

Stratum 3 was identified only in the summit probe where it obscures S.2 by 0.12-0.17m. This fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, artifact- and jute-rich level is tinged gray, apparently from ash, and seems to represent a debris layer associated with occupation predating the raising of Str. 98-5-1st. No architecture could be associated with these remains, though only a small portion of S.3 was uncovered in Subop. 98C. The lower 0.1m of S.4 underlies Str. 98-5-1st construction on the east (U.7) and provides a surface into which the west basal facing of that platform (U.1) was set. Stratum 4 is a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted earth containing quantities of tumbled stone architectural debris and penetrated by roots near current ground surface. It seems likely, given slight (ca. 0.07m) differences in the depths of Str.98-5-1st construction on the east and west, that this initial 0.1m of S.4 followed the same gentle west-to-

east ascent of the underlying S.2.

Time Span 2

Structure 98-5-1st's west flank is defined by a single basal cobble wall (U.1), 0.84m thick and a preserved 0.43m high. Unit 1's base rests 0.22m lower on the west than it does on the east, suggesting that the wall's outward face was set deeper into the prevailing ground surface to enhance stability on this, the building's downslope side. Backing U.1 on the east are two levels of earth fill (U.2). The lower element is 0.16-0.21m thick, overlies S.3, and consists of a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil with few included rocks. The succeeding layer is a red-brown, fine-textured, very hard-compacted earth in which a number of small to medium-sized cobbles are scattered. A portion of this highest fill unit was exposed underlying construction (U.3 and 4) to the east. A disrupted level of medium to large cobbles (maximum diameters 0.25-0.3m and ca. 0.08m thick) was found near the top of the red-brown fill layer, roughly equivalent to the top of U.1. It is possible that these stones are the remnants of a floor which once covered the space between the west basal facing and Str. 98-5-1st's summit bench, U.3. Unit 3, constructed of cobbles set in earth, is 0.63m wide and 0.16m high on the east. Stones of U.3 rest on U.2 earth fill at a point 0.29m above the putative level of the western floor. Whether this flank of U.3 was exposed earth or was originally faced with stone while Str. 98-5-1st was in use remains unknown.

The platform was ascended on the east by passing over two low, cobble risers (U.5 and 6) which ascend above a stone floor ca. 0.12m thick (U.7). The latter floor seems to abut U.5, indicating that the raising of Str. 98-5-1st's final phase and the laying down the U.7 pavement are contemporaneous. Unit 7 does not extend across the entire patio, a 1x1m probe dug 5m southeast of Str. 98-5 to a depth of 0.6m uncovered no sign of a stone surface (Subop. 98M).

Unit 5, standing 0.11m above the U.7 floor and measuring 0.5m wide, looks to have been a step easing passage to the 1.17m-wide eastern terrace faced by U.6. The latter construction rises a preserved 0.22m above U.5. It seems likely, however, that U.6 once stood at least 0.3m tall, thus allowing the U.6 terrace to articulate with U.4, the cobble-faced step-up to the summit. Unit 4 is 0.22m high and 0.64m wide. Both U.4 and 6 are backed by earthen surfaces, the former measuring 0.58m east-west before reaching the U.3 summit bench. Unit 8 is a 0.3m high cobble facing which defines the southern flank of Str. 98-5-1st. Excavations on this portion of the building were restricted and we did not determine the nature of construction leading up to the summit from this side. Entrance onto Str. 98-5-1st seems to have been easiest from the patio, where a formal pedestrian surface (U.7) and step (U.5) are also found.

Structure 98-5-1st is, therefore, a stone-faced, earthen-filled platform, rising 0.68m above the patio on the east, 0.79 m on the west, oriented 346 to 349 degrees, and measuring a reconstructed 6m east-west by 6.9m north-south. Its summit supports a bench which apparently faced eastward over the patio. The stone pavement fronting Str. 98-5-1st is restricted to the immediate area of the platform and most likely linked this building with its immediate neighbor, Str. 98-6-1st, 1.34m to the east (see below).

Time Span 3

After abandonment, Str. 98-5-1st was buried by the natural deposition of S.4 (described under TS.3). Included within this earth level is variable amounts of tumbled stone architectural

debris. The latter material is densest on the east where it is found lying atop U.7 to a depth of 0.28m between Strs. 98-5-1st and 98-6-1st (F.2). On the west and south, stone tumble extends for 2-2.2m away from the building after which the density of the debris decreases sharply (F.1 and 3 respectively). The quantity of displaced materials found in F.1-3 implies that Str. 98-5-1st has suffered a moderate amount of disruption since TS.2.

Structures 98-6 and 98-7

Structure 98-6, on the north side of the Site 98 patio, was investigated by digging within Subop. 98E, which was set against the approximate axis of the building's north side. The platform's southwest corner was exposed in Subop. 98C during the investigation of neighboring Str. 98-5. Suboperation 98E measures 1m east-west by 3.85m north-south and was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.51m into and below architectural fill exposing a single, clear construction phase. Architecture exposed in Subop. 98E pertains to two separate buildings, Strs. 98-6 and 7, which were apparently linked during their final use phase. The latter platform barely protrudes above current ground surface and lies ca. 1.8m north of Str. 98-6. Exposed portions of both edifices will be described here along with their relationship.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98E/1	50 sherds 46 obsidian pieces	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris, Str. 98-7	1,2
98E/2	25 sherds 1 <u>metate</u> fragment 1 stone sculpture	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris, Str. 98-6/7	1,2
98E/3	18 sherds	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris, Str. 98-6/7	1,2
98E/4	20 sherds	Occupation Debris (secondary), below Str. 98-6/7	1

Note: Lots 98C/1, 2, 3, and 17 were unearthed between Str. 98-5 and 6, it was not possible to assign the included material to one building or the other.

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	-	EC?

2	Str. 98-6-1st	U.1-2	-	-	LC?
	Str. 98-7-1st	U.4-5	-	-	LC?
	Str.98-6/7 linkage	U.3	-	-	LC?
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

Time Span 1

Time Span 1 witnessed the deposition of S.1, a light brown, fine-grained, hard-compacted soil, exposed to maximum thicknesses of 0.25m immediately north of Str. 98-6-1st and 0.45m west of that building before disappearing into the base of excavation. A few artifacts were uncovered from this early soil level hinting at the existence of a dispersed occupation predating the raising of Strs. 98-6-1st and 98-7-1st. Tentative assignment of this habitation to the Early Classic is based on recovery of sherds diagnostic of this interval from mixed TS. 2 fill and TS.1 occupation debris contexts revealed in Subop. 98E (lot 98E/3 contained only Early Classic ceramics).

Time Span 2

Portions of Str. 98-6-1st's north basal cobble wall and southwest corner were uncovered in Subop. 98E and C (U.1 and 2 respectively). Unit 1 rises a preserved 0.58m high, though it seems to have been set 0.22m into the preexisting S.1. Unit 2 is much less well-preserved, ascending 0.3m above the U.7 floor fronting Str. 98-5-1st. Str. 98-6-1st's southwest corner rests on U.7, indicating that U.2 was raised after the stone pavement and final-phase construction associated with Str. 98-5-1st were introduced (see Str. 98-5, TS.2). During the first portion of TS.2, Str. 98-6-1st was a stone-faced platform rising 0.3-0.36m above earthen and cobble surfaces on the north and west, oriented roughly 81 degrees (based on measurements taken on U.1), and measuring a reconstructed 3.6m north-south. The 1.36m separating Strs. 98-5-1st and 98-6-1st was bridged by the U.7 pavement which seems to have formally linked the two buildings. The Str. 98-6-1st summit not investigated.

Only Str. 98-7-1st's south basal wall (U.4) and the fill it contained (U.5) were exposed in Subop. 98E. The former is a cobble construction standing 0.3m high (set 0.07m into S.1), oriented 78 degrees, and 0.71m wide behind (north of) which is the U.5 fill composed of a mix of earth and stone. The soil in U.5 is indistinguishable from overlying S.2, a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted earth. No formal stone pavement was noted in the uncovered portions of Str. 98-7-1st's summit. The base of U.4 rests a scant 0.05m above that of U.1 implying that both walls were fashioned at about the same time.

Unit 4 was initially interpreted as the north basal facing of Str. 98-6-1st, U.1 then seen as a particularly deep summit wall. Closer examination of U.4, however, revealed that its best constructed facade looked south into the U.3 fill. Stones on this side of the unit were arranged with their naturally flat faces oriented outward, thus giving the south face a fairly plumb line. Unit 4's north side was far more irregular in appearance, looking like the back of other walls excavated in the middle Ulua drainage. It is for these reasons that U.4 is now interpreted as the south basal facing of Str. 98-7-1st.

At some point during TS.2 the 1.83m between Strs. 98-6-1st and 98-7-1st was filled in with a dense deposit of flat-laid cobbles set in an earth matrix (U.3) identical to that described above for Str. 98-7-1st's U.5. Unit 3 rests on S.1, rises to the top of U.4, and leaves ca. 0.19m of

U.1 still protruding above the cobble fill. The addition of U.3 apparently joined Strs. 98-7-1st and 98-6-1st into a single building, enlarging the amount of elevated living/working surface beyond that available on either building alone. The original Str. 98-6-1st platform would still be discernible but now rose above an earth-(U.5)-and-stone (U.3)-surfaced construction extending over 3.62m to the north.

Assignment of TS.2 to the Late Classic is founded on dating Str. 98-5-1st's primary construction (TS. 2) and use to this interval based on associated diagnostic materials. Given the stratigraphic relationship between Str. 98-6-1st (represented by U.2) and Str. 98-5-1st (in the form of U.5 and 7) it seems very likely that the former was raised a short time after the latter. The principal period of use for Strs. 98-5-1st and 98-6-1st, therefore, seems to have been the Late Classic.

Time Span 3

Stratum 2, a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil penetrated by roots near current ground surface, buries TS.2 construction by up to 0.07m. Portions of U.1 and 2 still protruded by up to 0.09m above this post-abandonment layer when Site 98 was excavated in 1985.

Structure 98-11

Structure 98-11, barely protruding above ground surface, lies immediately south of the Site 98 patio. This building was investigated by means of Subop. 98J, a 1m (north-south) by 2m (east-west) trench dug against the approximate center of the structure's west side. Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 0.66m in front (west) of construction. A single building phase was revealed by this work.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98J/1	? artifacts	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98J/2	20 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1

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. 98-11-1st	U.1	-	-	?
3	-	-	S.2	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Both S.1 and at least the lower 0.1m of S.2 were deposited prior to the construction of Str. 98-11-1st. Stratum 1 is a light brown, fine-textured, hard-packed soil exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.38m before it disappeared into the base of excavation. Stratum 2 is nearly identical to the soil it buries save that this upper layer is a dark gray-brown in color and contains a few scattered stones. The scant number of artifacts recovered from both strata below the level of Str. 98-11-1st construction points to some slight use of this area prior to the activities assigned to TS.2.

Time Span 2

Only a small (1m long) portion of Str. 98-11-1st's western foundation wall was uncovered in Subop. 98J (U.1). Unit 1 is a line of flat-laid cobbles a single stone high (0.13m), backed on the east for at least 0.4m by what may be a cobble surface. Alternatively, the latter stones may simply represent a continuation of U.1, creating a foundation minimally 0.63m wide east-west. In either case, our limited investigations suggest that Str. 98-11-1st was a surface-level building oriented 321 degrees delimited by low stone footings for perishable upper walls.

Time Span 3

The remaining 0.18m of S.2 was laid down after Str. 98-11-1st's abandonment, burying the lower portions of U.1 construction by as much as 0.12m (portions of Str. 98-11-1st's foundation still protruded by as much as 0.04m above ground surface at the time of excavations and provided the primary means for locating the building during survey). Very little tumbled stone architectural debris was identified in Subop. 98J, most likely because the source of these displaced stones, Str. 98-11-1st's cobble foundations, were never very high. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that the investigated edifice had suffered significant disruption following TS.2.

Structure 98-12

Structure 98-12 is south of Str. 98-11, both buildings being part of the same collection of dispersed constructions lying south of the Site 98 patio. The north and east flanks of Str. 98-12 were investigated by Subop. 98F and G respectively, short (2-2.1m long), narrow (1m wide) probes placed against the approximate centers of these flanks to expose the building's perimeter walls on these sides. Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 0.3m beyond construction, exposing a single construction phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98F/1	38 sherds 1 censer fragment	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1,2

98G/1	20 sherds 6 <u>bajareque</u> fragments	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98G/2	? artifacts	Occupation Debris	1

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. 98-12-1st	U.1,2	-	-	?
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1 and the lower 0.04m of S.2 underlie Str. 98-12-1st construction (U.1) and so their deposition predates the raising of that edifice. The former is a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil while the next ascending level shares the same characteristics save for color, having a dark gray to brown hue. The scattering of artifacts pertaining to TS.1 deposits argues for only slight use of this spot prior to the activities chronicled in TS.2.

Time Span 2

The eastern and northern walls of Str. 98-12-1st (U.1 and 2 respectively) consist of a line of flat-laid cobbles a single stone high (0.1-0.15m) and wide (0.15-0.3m). Structure 98-12-1st, like its northern neighbor Str. 98-11-1st, was probably a surface-level building delimited by stone footings for perishable upper walls. The northern and eastern foundations are aligned 71 and 345 degrees respectively.

Time Span 3

The upper 0.1-0.15m of S. 2 was deposited after Str. 98-12-1st's abandonment, leaving the upper portions of at least parts of U. 1 and 2 protruding above ground surface. Little evidence of tumbled architectural debris was exposed in our excavations, though the minimal nature of exposed Str. 98-12-1st construction would have provided only a limited source of such material. Overall, it appears that Str. 98-12-1st had been little disturbed in the centuries that followed TS.2.

Structure 98-13

Structure 98-13 is south of Str. 98-12 among the low, scattered buildings found south of the Site 98 patio. The east and south flanks of this edifice were investigated via two short (1.9-2m long) narrow (0.9-1.3m across) trenches (Subop. 98K and L respectively) set against the approximate centers of these sides. Digging in these trenches extended down 0.3-0.42m below

ground surface outside construction. A single building phase was recognized in the course of this work.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98K/1	7 sherds	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1,2
98L/1	? artifacts	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1,2

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?
2	Str. 98-13-1st	U.1,2	-	-	LC?
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1 and the lower ca. 0.1m of S.2 were found underlying Str. 98-13-1st construction (U. 1 and 2) and were, thus, deposited prior to the building activities included in TS.2. The lower earth level, S.1, is a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil with few stones or artifacts incorporated within it. Stratum 2, which overlies S.1, is identical to the latter in all ways save color, having a dark gray to brown tone. The scant cultural material unearthed from TS.1 deposits points to light use of this area prior to raising Str. 98-13-1st. Tentative assignment of TS.1 to the Early Classic is based on the recovery of a few sherds diagnostic of the period in mixed TS.1 and 2 occupation debris contexts within Subop. 98K.

Time Span 2

Structure 98-13-1st is a surface-level building bordered by foundations built of a single layer of flat-laid cobbles. These footings undoubtedly supported perishable upper walls, are oriented 74 degrees (on the south, U.1), 350 degrees (on the east, U.2), and stand roughly 0.26m high. Time Span 2 is preliminarily given a Late Classic date based on the identification of sherds diagnostic of this period within a mixed TS.1 and 2 occupation debris contexts unearthed in Subop. 98K.

Time Span 3

The remainder of S.2 was laid down after Str. 98-13-1st was abandoned, though considerable portions of U.1 and 2 continued to project above ground surface at the time of excavation. Structure 98-13-1st's low walls did not generate much tumbled architectural debris

and it appears that the building was little disturbed in the years which have elapsed since TS.2.

Structure 98-15

Structure 98-15 is east of Str. 98-12 and northeast of Str. 98-13 in the dispersed scatter of low buildings south of the Site 98 patio. A 5.7m-long (east-west) by 1m-wide (north-south) trench (Subop. 98D) was placed on the approximate center of the building's west side to reveal final-phase architecture and associated cultural deposits. Digging was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.51m and 0.37m below modern ground surface into construction and beyond the building, respectively. This work revealed a single construction phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
98D/1	134 sherds 2 censer fragments 9 obsidian pieces 22 andesite pieces 8 chert pieces 1 rock (unid.)	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98D/2	110 sherds 9 stones (unid.) 1 barkbeater	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98D/3	43 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98D/4	40 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
98D/5	195 sherds 1 censer fragment 2 chert pieces 3 <u>bajareque</u> fragments	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	2

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	Str. 98-15-1st	U.1-3	-	F.1	LC to EPC
3	-	-	S.2	F.2	-

Time Span 1

Structure 98-15-1st construction is set 0.09m into, and rises above, S.1, a light brown-to-tan, fine-textured, hard-compacted, soil that slopes down 0.11m over a horizontal distance of 2.22m from east to west away from construction. Stratum 1 was exposed for a maximum thickness of 0.14m before it was lost in the base of excavation. No artifacts could be clearly assigned to S.1 though the limited portions of the level revealed in Subop. 98D preclude a designation of culturally sterile for it.

Time Span 2

Structure 98-15-1st is defined on the west by a 0.32m-high (above S.1), 0.27m wide cobble facing backed by an orange-brown, fine-textured earth fill (U.2). Unit 2 was found, on excavation, to stop 0.2m below the preserved top of U.1. Either the top of this earthen fill has been truncated by post-abandonment erosional processes or the original west summit surface was set below the top of the basal facing. Unit 3, 0.71m east of U.1 appears to be part of a cobble foundation defining a room on Str. 98-15-1st's summit. This footing ascends 0.32m above the preserved top of U.2 on the west and is 0.48m wide. Unit 2's top east of U.3 comprises the room's floor, resting 0.2-0.24m below the uppermost preserved stones of the western foundation. A relatively dense level of artifacts (F.1) was identified lying atop this earthen surface, thereby reinforcing our interpretation of the floor's location.

Structure 98-15-1st, therefore, was a low, earth-filled, stone-faced platform, rising ca. 0.25m on the west (top of S.1 to the putative summit floor), and aligned 347-350 degrees. The building's west flank was defined by a low cobble facing. Located 0.71m east of that facing is at least one room the unpaved floor of which was delimited by cobble foundations.

Time Span 3

Stratum 2, a dark gray-to-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil, overlies most exposed Str. 98-15-1st construction and was deposited after the platform's abandonment. A moderate amount of displaced stone building material (F.2) was found extending for 2.16m west from U.1. In general, Str. 98-15-1st seems to have suffered from at least a modicum of disruption following TS.2.

Test Pits

Suboperations 98M and N were dug in areas devoid of surface-visible architecture in an attempt to locate activity areas unassociated with physically salient buildings. The former was situated in the approximate center of the Site 98 patio, in part to ascertain whether the stone pavement fronting Str. 98-5-1st (U.7) extended east and south of that building. Suboperation 98N lies just beyond the patio, approximately 15m east of Str. 98-2. Both probes measure 1x1m and were carried down to between 0.56-0.6m. No architecture and precious few artifacts (all recovered in the uppermost 0.2-0.3m) were uncovered while digging these tests. It may be, therefore, that domestic activities at Site 98 tended to be concentrated near buildings. Only a more systematic excavation program carried out over a wider sample of "open" terrain could properly evaluate this proposition. It should be noted that the earth in the highest 0.34m in the

patio test (Subop. 98M) is a gray, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil and that the stratum it buries, a nearly identical material distinguished by its light brown color, is mottled with orange. These hues were not identified in other Site 98 excavations and may result from the collection of standing water in the patio after heavy rains. It was noted during excavation that this area was muddy after downpours and tended to retain moisture longer than better-drained, higher areas within the site.

Chronological Summary

Scant evidence of Early Classic occupation at Site 98 was unearthed from deposits underlying Strs. 98-5-1st, 98-6-1st, and 98-13-1st. The clearest evidence of this early occupation derives from the artifact-rich earth level that immediately antedates Str. 98-5-1st (S.3). It may be, therefore, that what appears to be the initial period of settlement at Site 98 was concentrated in the area of the main patio with only slight use being made of areas to the south along the Ulua terrace (beneath Str. 98-13-1st). If so, additional Early Classic deposits should lie buried by the relatively large platforms defining the main patio. Only further excavation here, as well as south of this nucleated group, can resolve the issue.

Significant construction activity at Site 98 is restricted the Late Classic when all of the excavated buildings for which we have sufficient information were raised. By far the vast majority of all recovered materials pertain to this interval, strongly suggesting that this was the primary period of occupation at Site 98. Almost certainly, the main patio group was constructed and occupied during the Late Classic and at least some of the smaller buildings scattered south of that nucleated aggregate were also raised now. Continued use of Site 98 into the Early Postclassic is indicated by the recovery of ceramics diagnostic of that interval both within the main patio and south of it. Identification of Early Postclassic sherds mixed with Late Classic material in the fill of Str. 98-1-1st's east terrace (U.6) may point to construction of that element during this late prehistoric span. It is also possible, however, that some late pottery fragments worked their way down through the permeable terrace surface from later deposits to eventually be unearthed from what was originally a Late Classic construction. Based on the quantities of material recovered and numbers of find spots, it appears that Early Postclassic use of Site 98 was less intensive than, and building efforts were reduced from, levels achieved during the Late Classic. A smaller population was, most likely, continuing to occupy pre-existing structures, possibly making a few additions to these edifices in the process.

Architectural Summary

Secure data on construction techniques is only available for the Late Classic. During this period, platforms were faced with walls built of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar. Stone risers contained fills that were almost universally composed of earth, commonly distinguished by its red-brown color. Densely packed rock fill was noted only in the late addition which linked Strs. 98-6-1st and 98-7-1st (U.3). Platform summits supported superstructures fashioned of perishable materials set, in at least one case, atop stone foundations (Str. 98-15-1st). Summit floors, in the two cases for which we have relevant data (Strs. 98-5-1st and 98-15-1st) are earthen. Stone paving of terrace, summit, and extramural surfaces was rare at Site 98, the only clear cases being the surface linking Strs. 98-5-1st and 98-6-1st (U.7, Subop. 98C) and Str. 98-1-1st's eastern terrace (U.6). One bench was identified in our investigations, a stone-faced, earth-

filled unit surmounting Str. 98-5-1st (U.3), standing 0.16m high and measuring 0.63m across. Additional clearing of building summits would have, undoubtedly, netted additional examples of benches. Platforms generally were ascended on at least one side by a low terrace though excavations were not carried out in enough areas to establish any patterning in terrace location (e.g., were these units consistently located on the patio-facing sides of buildings?).

Three surface-level buildings were briefly investigated (Str. 98-11-1st, 98-12-1st, and 98-13-1st). Each is defined by low, variably broad, stone foundations which almost certainly supported perishable upper walls. River-rounded cobbles were the most common constituents of these footings. Dimensions and the internal organization of these constructions cannot be reconstructed from available data though in all cases they seem quite small and probably contained no more than one room.

The most common construction stones are basalt river cobbles with their naturally flatter faces oriented outward. A few rocks may have been crudely shaped to create a flat, exterior face, though human intervention was hard to distinguish from natural chipping in most cases. Stone sizes range from 0.1-0.55m in diameter. No faced blocks were recorded in walls exposed at Site 98.

Structure orientations varied considerably, alignments ranging from 321 to 6 degrees with most (six) clustered between 340-351 degrees. No significant effort was apparently invested in sighting buildings to common azimuths, even within the Site 98 patio group where orientations diverged by as much as 18 degrees from each other.