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## PSB OP 104 Excavation Report

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## Site 104

Site 104 lies 101m north of Site 103, part of the line of nearly continuous settlement stretching across the lower Ulua terrace from Site 99 in the south to Sites 106 and 107 on the north. The eight structures comprising Site 104 are grouped into a small patio cluster open on the east (Strs. 104-1 to 3) with outliers scattered singly (Strs. 4-6) or in pairs (Strs. 104-7 to 8) for up to 122m north of the patio. Four edifices were excavated at Site 104, Strs. 104-1 and 3 facing onto the patio, and Strs. 104-7 and 8 located on the settlement's northern margin. Roughly 56m<sup>2</sup> was exposed by a crew of 10 men laboring over the course of five days, making for an investment of 50 person-days of work in the Site 104 excavations. The work was overseen by Patricia Urban and Edward Schortman.

### Structure 104-1

Structure 104-1 closes off the south flank of the Site 104 patio, lying ca. 8.5m south of and directly opposite Str. 104-3. The former building was investigated by means of four trenches (Subops. 104C, F, I, and J) located off the structure's south, west, north, and east sides respectively. Approximately 18.5m<sup>2</sup> was exposed in the course of excavations here allowing for the reconstruction of Str. 104-1-1st's basal dimensions. Digging was pursued to a maximum depth of 0.76m through construction fill revealing a single major building phase including at least two episodes of renovation.

### 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. 104-1-1st	U.1-6	-	-	LC
3	Str. 104-1-1st	U.7-8	-	-	LC?
4	Str. 104-1-1st	U.9-11	-	-	EPC
5	-	-	S.2	F.1	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a light brown, fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, soil was identified underlying Str. 104-1-1st construction in those areas carried down to sufficient depths to encounter it west and south of the platform. In both areas, S.1 descends gradually from east to west and south to north (dropping 0.14m over 3m in the former and 0.09m over 1.9m in the latter direction). Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.43m west of Str. 104-1-1st, though its base was not identified in any of our excavations.

## Time Span 2

The first period of construction recognized at Str. 104-1-1st involved the raising of U.1-6. Unit 1, the platform's east, north, and west basal cobble facing, stands a preserved 0.47-0.56m high. A stone paving (U.2), runs back (south) 1.5m from U.1's northern component, terminating in U.3, a 0.22m-high cobble step-down to an earthen surface. Structure 104-1-1st is bounded on the south during TS.2 by U.4, a basal cobble wall 0.25m high by 0.48m wide. Unit 4 is backed by a red-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted earthen fill (U.5) the top of which comprises the surface over which the low U.3 step-down faces. Fully 1.7m separates U.2 and 3. Identical earthen fill was contained by U.1 (U.6).

The initial version of Str. 104-1-1st is an earth-filled, stone-faced platform measuring 3.72m north-south by 5m east-west, rising 0.69m (maximum), and oriented 89 degrees to 93 degrees 30 minutes. The northern portion of the building is taken up with an earthen, stone-faced and surfaced bench (U.2 and 3) that is 1.5m wide and sits 0.22m above the unpaved southern summit surface (retained by U.2 on the south).

## Time Span 3

Subsequent to construction of the aforementioned edifice, a 2.28m-wide (recorded near the center-line) terrace was appended to Str. 104-1-1st's north, patio-facing side. Terrace fill (U.8) consists of the same red-brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil noted in the earlier platform. Unit 7 delimits the terrace's north face and is a cobble facing that stands a preserved 0.23m high by 0.37m wide. Unit 7 diverged from the Str. 104-1-1st's previous orientation, being aligned 81 degrees 30 minutes. It is likely that U.7 once stood ca. 0.18m higher. This interpretation is suggested by the southward ascent of U.8 to this height and the recovery of ceramic jar sherds apparently smashed and left in place (lot 104I/4) within the uppermost 0.06m of U.8 immediately north of U.1. Alternatively, U.8 may have risen to the south between U.7 and 8 via a set of steps lacking stone facings. Assuming that the lot 104I/4 deposit rests atop the north terrace surface during TS.3, U.1 would have continued to protrude a reconstructed 0.28m above this addition. In any case, Str. 104-1-1st now measured 6m across north-south (contemporary additions were not recognized on the building's other flanks). Structure 104-1-1st was not significantly modified beyond the construction of U.7 and 8 during TS.3.

## Time Span 4

The final renovations noted for Str. 104-1-1st involved the partial dismantling of U.1 near its northwest corner and the construction of stone-faced and -filled additions here and off the building's northern and southern flanks. The southern example (U.10) is a 0.23m-high, 1.4m-wide (north-south) terrace appended onto and burying the lower 0.09m of U.4, Str. 104-1-1st's previous southern basal wall. Unit 4 continued to rise 0.16m above U.10. Unit 10, unlike earlier Str. 104-1-1st walls, was built by setting oblong cobbles on end, tilting slightly southward away from the platform. Both terrace facing and fill were built in this manner. Unit 9, which stops 0.09m short of the building's north face (U.7), was fashioned in much the same way as U.10. The primary difference between the two is that U.9 does not seem to represent a terrace but the west wall of a construction which continues eastward beyond excavation limits. It may be that

U.9 is part of a low platform, analogous to the construction fronting Str. 104-3-1st approximately 5.05m north and directly across the patio from U.9. The latter is 1.14m long and stands 0.27m high (maximum), its base and summit rising to the south towards U.7 as though the unit was built onto a gradual north-to-south ascent. Excavations near Str. 104-1-1st's northwest corner revealed a complex, poorly understood sequence of demolition and construction. The outer facing of U.1's west wall, from the northwest corner for roughly 1.2m south, was apparently removed down to the basal stones leaving only the inner facing still standing to somewhere near its original height. A moderately dense packing of cobble fill was laid over this demolished area, retained on the west by a 0.45m-high stone wall (reconstructed elevation, all included in U.11). Unit 11 continues the line of U.1's northern wall for 1.22m to the west and measures at least 1.2m north-south (its southern limit was not exposed). The architectural significance of U.11 is unknown. This late addition may be part of an effort to expand the Str. 104-1-1st platform's east-west dimensions though why this should involve the partial destruction of the building's western facade remains a mystery.

Structure 104-1-1st during TS.4 remained an earth-filled, stone-faced platform the earthen summit of which supported a bench (U.2 and 3 were still visible). The building measured 7.14m north-south, after completion of U.10, by 6.03m east-west, with the addition of U.11. Structure 104-1-1st was now ascended by a single, low terrace on the north and south (U.7/8 and 10), no comparable units gracing the east and west flanks. Unit 9 was probably not integral to Str. 104-1-1st but was apparently part of a low construction fronting the platform late in the latter's use-life. Poor preservation of 11 makes it difficult to reconstruct any changes in alignment experienced by Str. 104-1-1st during TS.4. The only construction unit for which we could ascertain an orientation with any confidence is U.10, sighted ca. 86 degrees. This figure approximates the orientations of earlier building components, which fall between 81 degrees and 93 degrees, 30 minutes.

### Time Span 5

Following Str. 104-1-1st's abandonment, the platform was gradually buried by the deposition of S.2, a dark brown, fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted soil. Included within this stratum are F.1 and 2, moderately dense concentrations of stones displaced from construction extending 1.69m west of the building and 1.65m to the east respectively. Tumbled architectural debris was not as evident north and south of the building. Structure 104-1-1st seems, on the basis of the amount and density of stone debris found in excavation, to have suffered relatively little disturbance since TS.4.

### Structure 104-3

Structure 104-3, situated 8.5m north of Str. 104-1, closes off the north flank of the Site 104 patio. Excavations here cleared ca. 24.5m<sup>2</sup> (Subops. 104B, G, and H), allowing reconstruction of the platform's basal dimensions and the appearance of its superstructure. Digging was carried to a maximum depth of 0.59m north of construction revealing a single major building phase succeeded by at least one interval of renovation.

### 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. 104-3-1st	U.1-10	-	-	LC?
3	Str. 104-3-1st Str. 104-3-Sub1 Str. 104-3-Sub2	U.11-12 U.13 U.14	-	-	LC, EPC
4	-	-	S.2	F.1	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil, buries the lower 0.03-0.13m of Str. 104-3-1st construction and was most likely deposited by natural means prior to the raising of the aforementioned edifice. Exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.27m, S.1's base was not uncovered in excavation. Stratum 1 descends very gradually to the north and south of Str. 104-3-1st, dropping 0.08m over 1.05m in the former and 0.14m over 2.4m in the latter direction. No excavation lots were derived exclusively from S.1 so we cannot be certain if human occupation predate the erection of Str. 104-3-1st in the areas investigated through Subops. 104B, G, and H.

### Time Span 2

The earliest version of Str. 104-3-1st exposed in our excavations consists of a stone-faced platform defined by a single, steep basal cobble wall 0.29-0.31m tall on the north, east, and, most likely, west (U.7). Unit 7 is set 0.13m into S.1 and is abutted near the center of its northern element by a 0.14m-high, 0.36m-wide (north-south) cobble step (U.10, its east-west dimension was not uncovered). The building's south, patio-facing side is ascended via a 0.05m-high cobble wall backed for 0.4m by a cobble surface (all part of U.1). Unit 1's south basal facing intrudes 0.05m in S.1. Succeeding the U.1 pavement on the north is the 0.14m-high cobble step-up to the summit (U.2). The summit immediately backing U.1 is divided into at least two small rooms. The cobble-and-earth floor (U.6) of the western enclosure is delimited by low (0.23-0.31m-high) cobble walls on the west and north (U.5 and 4 respectively). The eastern flank is marked by a 0.07-0.09m-high stone step-up (U.3) to the eastern room while U.2 provides no obstacle to passage into the western compartment from the patio. A 0.55m-wide door with stone threshold links the western chamber with another room to the north. The earth floor of the latter room is approximately 0.08m higher than that of its southern neighbor. The eastern enclosure is nearly identical to its western counterpart; open on the south, defined by cobble foundations on the north (U.4) and east (U.8), with passage between the two compartments over U.3 virtually unimpeded. Dimensions for the western room are 0.9x1.1m while its eastern neighbor encompasses 1.15x1.5m. The room lying north and slightly above the western enclosure appears to have contained a ca. 0.26m-high stone-faced bench extending a reconstructed 1.08m north-south (U.9). The east-west dimensions of the northern compartment were not revealed though it measures roughly 2m north-south. The northern summit room could have been accessed from

either the north (over the U.10 step) or south (through the doorway in U.4).

Structure 104-3-1st was, at the conclusion of TS.2, a 0.27-0.31m-high platform delimited by cobble facings and supporting a superstructure the walls of which were built of perishable materials raised on stone foundations. This summit construction is divided into at least three small rooms the floors of which were set at slightly different levels. The northern enclosure contains a stone-faced bench while the two uncovered southern chambers possess no distinctive features apart from their diminutive sizes (ca. 1m<sup>2</sup> and 1.7m<sup>2</sup>). Structure 104-3-1st could be ascended from the north and south though it appears that the most effort was put into formalizing access over the southern, patio-facing flank. Overall, Str. 104-3-1st covered 3.3 (east-west) by 4.5m (north-south) and was aligned 81 degrees 30 minutes to 84 degrees 30 minutes at the conclusion of TS.2.

### Time Span 3

Following the events described above, Str. 104-3-1st was expanded to the south and east through the construction of casual stone additions. Unit 11, the best-understood of these augmentations, is a 0.11m-high terrace built off the south side of Str. 104-3-1st. This construction buries the south face of U.1, the former southern basal wall, and extends the earlier U.1 terrace roughly 0.4m into the patio. Unit 11 extends approximately 0.3m east and 1.5m west of Str. 104-3-1st's original southern facing; a possible late addition to U.1 slants out from the building's southwest corner to join U.1's western terminus. Poor preservation, coupled with rather simple initial construction, made it difficult to determine how U.1 and 11 were related. Unit 12, in turn, seems to be an effort to continue U.1 at least 1.9m further to the east, albeit at an angle that diverges markedly from the building's TS 2 alignment. Whether U.12 represents the southern end of a terrace designed to expand the entirety of Str. 104-3-1st to the east or is part of a more limited construction remains unknown. No clear sign of a terrace was uncovered in other excavations along the platform's eastern flank.

In addition to revealing efforts at renovating Str. 104-3-1st, Subops. 104B and G uncovered the remnants of two low platforms, located off the building's south side, that were not apparent on the surface. Unit 13 is a 0.07-0.1m-high stone facing which defines a diminutive, asymmetrical quadrilateral platform measuring ca. 1.05m on a side and aligned 99 to 112 degrees (the northern U.13 wall diverges considerably from the orientations of the other three basal facings). This low construction lies 0.2m south of U.11 at their closest points. Unit 14 is a 0.1-0.18m-high platform facing backed on the west by an apparent cobble pavement. Located roughly 0.4m west of U.11's western terminus, U.14 seems to define the eastern margin of a low platform the bulk of which remains unexcavated. The relatively high stratigraphic positions of U.13 and 14 indicate that both were built at roughly the same time as U.11.

By the conclusion of TS.3, Str. 104-3-1st measured 4.9m (north-south) by 5.2m (east-west, maximally). Though the earlier southern basal facing (U.1) was now buried, as may have been parts of U.7's eastern wall, the remaining portions of Str. 104-3-1st described earlier were still in evidence. It was near the end of this span that the two primary context artifact deposits revealed in Subop. 104B were laid down. One consists of 50 fragments from relatively large ceramic jars located in the southwest summit room (lot 104B/4). The other is a fragmented but reconstructable pottery bowl found overturned 0.55m south of U.11 and 0.5m west of U.13 in the patio (lot 104B/9). The Site 104 patio was apparently becoming increasingly crowded as small, stone-faced platforms were now raised off the south side of Str. 104-3-1st. As noted earlier, a

fragment of what may be a comparable low edifice was noted off Str. 104-1-1st's patio-facing north side (U.9).

Time Span 4

Following abandonment of Str. 104-3-1st and nearby platforms (U.13 and 14), most construction was buried by the deposition of S.2. Stratum 2 is a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil. Included within S.2 are stones displaced from final-phase construction. This tumbled debris is especially notable in F.1, a relatively dense deposit of jumbled stones extending 1.27m north of U.7. Judging by the number of stones displaced from Str. 104-3-1st, it would appear that this building has suffered a moderate amount of disturbance, especially on its north side, since TS.3.

Structure 104-7

Structure 104-7, lying 110m northwest of the Site 104 patio, is the southern member of a pair of buildings separated from each other by no more than 6m. Approximately 11m<sup>2</sup> was cleared during the investigation of this edifice (Subop. 104D) permitting reconstruction of Str. 104-7-1st's basal dimensions. Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 0.44m within construction revealing a single building phase.

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. 104-7-1st	U.1-2	-	-	LC, EPC
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	-

Time Span 1

The lowest, exposed portions of S.1 (0.01-0.09m) underlie Str. 104-7-1st construction and were most likely deposited prior to TS.2. Stratum 1 is a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil revealed to a maximum depth of 0.44m, though its base was not identified in our excavations. The tentative assignment of this interval to the Early Classic is based on the recovery of a few ceramics diagnostic of the latter span in lot 104D/2. This collection unit contains occupation debris pertaining to both TS.1 and 2. It seems likely, if not established, that a light Early Classic occupation predated the raising of Str. 104-7-1st.

Time Span 2

Structure 104-7-1st is a surface-level construction defined by cobble foundations that are

0.48-0.55m wide and stand 0.34m high in the best preserved segment (U.1). Unit 1 delimits the four sides of an enclosure the interior of which encompasses 2.77m east-west by a reconstructed 2.6m north-south. A portion of this room seems to have been covered with a cobble pavement 0.06-0.16m thick, extending 1.96m from the building's western foundation. The remainder of the floor is earthen. Overall, Str. 104-7-1st encompasses ca. 3.1x3.2m and is aligned 92 degrees 30 minutes.

### Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of Str. 104-7-1st, the building was nearly completely buried by the deposition of S.1. A few cobbles, apparently displaced from final-phase architecture, are included within S.1, found overlying U.2 by 0.01-0.15m (F.1). Based on the amount of tumbled building debris unearthed in Subop. 104D and the state of the uncovered foundations, it appears that Str. 104-7-1st suffered a moderate amount of disruption following TS.2.

### Structure 104-8

Structure 104-8 is 6m north of Str. 104-7, situated on the northern margin of Site 104. A single trench, Subop. 104E, measuring 1m north-south by 2.2m east-west was dug against the approximate center of the platform's western face. Digging here was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.34m outside of construction revealing a single building phase.

### 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. 104-8-1st	U.1	-	-	LC, EPC
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

### Time Span 1

Time Span 1 is marked by the natural deposition of S.1, a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted earth found underlying exposed Str. 104-8-1st construction (U.1). Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.11m though its base was not uncovered in our limited probe.

### Time Span 2

The sole element of Str. 104-8-1st construction revealed in Subop. 104E is U.1, the platform's western basal wall. Unit 1 is a cobble facing standing a reconstructed 0.23m high and aligned roughly 8 degrees 30 minutes. This basal wall may have been backed by a cobble

surface which extends at least 0.6m eastward and beyond the excavation limits (included with U.1).

### Time Span 3

After Str. 104-8-1st was abandoned the platform was largely obscured through the deposition of S.2, a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil. Very few stones displaced from final-phase architecture were observed in Subop. 104E, suggesting that Str. 104-8-1st had not been significantly disturbed since TS.2.

### Chronological Summary

The earliest attested occupation at Site 104 dates to the Early Classic. A few sherds diagnostic of this span (5% of the 176 analyzed ceramics from this building) were recovered during excavation of Str. 104-7 on the northern site edge. It may well be that this habitation marks the fringe of the sizable Early Classic settlement revealed ca. 100m to the northeast at Site 106. Whatever the case, no architecture was associated with Early Classic use of Site 104 and this occupation is limited in both spatial extent and, most likely, the number of people involved.

Remnants of Late Classic settlement were uncovered at all four excavated buildings. It presently appears that the cores of both Strs. 104-1-1st and 104-3-1st were raised during this span as was Str. 104-7-1st. Limited excavation of Str. 104-8-1st precludes anything but the most tentative reconstruction of the occupation sequence here. Based on limited evidence, however, it appears that Late Classic residence in the immediate vicinity of the latter building was slight, the edifice itself probably dating to the subsequent Early Postclassic.

Intensity of site use does not seem to have decreased between the Late Classic and Early Postclassic. At least three of the four investigated constructions were occupied at this time. Additions were seemingly made to Strs. 104-1-1st and 104-3-1st during the Early Postclassic and, as noted above, Str. 104-8-1st may have been raised now. The latter platform's southern neighbor, Str. 104-7-1st, evinces a relatively weak Early Postclassic presence, suggesting that the buildings in this northern pair were in use sequentially.

### Architectural Summary

Late Classic architecture at Site 104 takes two forms, low (0.31-0.69m-high) platforms with cobble retaining walls on the one hand and a surface level construction delimited by stone foundations ca. 0.34m high by 0.48-0.55m across on the other. The former edifices seem to be earth-filled constructions (clearer for Str. 104-1-1st than 104-3-1st) that supported perishable superstructures that were set, in at least one case (Str. 104-3-1st), on cobble foundations standing 0.23-0.31m high. Stone-faced benches are found atop each excavated platform, measuring 0.22m and 0.26m high and 1.5m and 1.08m across their exposed dimensions. Summit floors consist of earth and earth mixed with stones and were reached by ascending 0.05-0.41m-high stone-faced terraces that project 0.4-2.28m into the Site 104 patio. The Str. 104-3-1st terrace was apparently surfaced with cobbles over its 0.4m width while its Str. 104-1-1st counterpart had an earth floor. A 0.14m-high by 0.36m-wide stone step set against Str. 104-3-1st's north flank provided a less formalized means of entering the suite of rooms atop this platform. Measureable summit enclosures fall within a narrow range, 1m<sup>2</sup>-1.7m<sup>2</sup> (two measureable examples, both on

Str. 104-3-1st). Platform dimensions range from 3.3x4.5m to 3.72x5m while orientations fall between 81 degrees 30 minutes to 93 degrees 30 minutes. The single exposed surface structure (Str. 104-7-1st) encompasses 3.1x3.2m, is oriented 92 degrees 30 minutes, and contains a single room covering 2.6x2.77m. At least a portion of this compartment was paved with cobbles. Most stones used in Late Classic buildings of all kinds at Site 104 are basalt river cobbles, set in a mud mortar, and ranging in size from 0.07-0.32m in diameter. Limestone and conglomerate river-worn stones were also recorded in platform facings and foundations. The naturally flatter faces of cobbles tend to be oriented outward though this is not invariably the case (U.3 and 4 on Str. 104-1-1st have rounded exterior aspects). No clear examples of artificially modified stones were recorded during excavation of Site 104.

Early Postclassic construction takes several forms at Site 104. Additions made to Strs. 104-1-1st and 104-3-1st largely consist of 0.11-0.23m-high, 0.4-1.4m-wide terraces the fill of which is comprised of a dense packing of oblong cobbles set on end and tilting slightly away from the main bodies of the platforms. Terrace facings, also cobbles set on end, are not obviously formalized and do not differ from the fill stones in composition or attitude. Terraces built of flat-laid stones, resembling their Late Classic counterparts, were recorded on Str. 104-1-1st (U.11) and 104-3-1st (U.11 is fashioned of upright and flat-laid cobbles east and west of the platform's approximate center-line respectively). Free-standing Early Postclassic edifices take two forms. The first consists of diminutive stone-faced platforms 0.1-0.27m high and measuring 1.05-1.14m on a side (U.9, Str. 104-1-1st, Str. 104-Sub 1 and -Sub2). Retaining walls are fashioned of oblong cobbles set on end which, in turn, contain a fill which seems to be comprised of nearly identical material. These edifices are aligned a reconstructed 91 to 112 degrees with considerable variation noted within the single, largely cleared example (Str. 104-Sub1). Summits were apparently small and featureless (based on the U.13, Str. 104-Sub1 case). Structure 104-8-1st, the only other free-standing building which seems to have been erected during the Early Postclassic, rises 0.23m high, is oriented a reconstructed 98 degrees 30 minutes, and has retaining walls fashioned of flat-laid cobbles. Stones employed in Early Postclassic construction are very similar to those used to raised Late Classic platforms, i.e., basalt (primarily), river-rounded stones measuring 0.1-0.32m in diameter. It seems likely that at least some of these rocks were "recycled" from pre-existing Late Classic structures (e.g., the evidence for dismantling the northwest corner of Str. 104-1-1st). As in the Late Classic, a mud mortar was used to solidify stone walls in the Early Postclassic. There was even less of a tendency to orient the flat faces of cobbles outward in Early Postclassic, than in Late Classic, walls.

During the final, attested precolumbian use of Site 104 it appears that several Late Classic platforms served as cores onto and around which Early Postclassic constructions were added. One building, Str. 104-7-1st, may have been abandoned by the end of the Late Classic and replaced by its neighbor, Str. 104-8-1st. Otherwise, there is considerable evidence of continuity in the use of specific buildings at this settlement.