

# Kenyon College

## Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange

---

Four Valleys Archive

Anthropology

---

1992

## Pvn Op 426 Excavation Report

Edward M. Schortman  
*Kenyon College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/honduras>



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Schortman, Edward M., "Pvn Op 426 Excavation Report" (1992). *Four Valleys Archive*. Paper 4924.  
<https://digital.kenyon.edu/honduras/4924>

This Excavation Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Anthropology at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Four Valleys Archive by an authorized administrator of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [noltj@kenyon.edu](mailto:noltj@kenyon.edu).

Site 426

Site 426, located ca. 5.25km west-southwest of La Sierra, consists of 15 surface-visible constructions grouped around two adjoining northwest-southeast-running patios. The three monumental platforms found at Site 426 point to some local control over labor above the level found at nearby domestic groups such as Sites 418 and 428. A seasonal tributary of the Quebrada La Guasma lies within 100m of the settlement while the perennial Rio Agua Sucia is approximately 725m to the south. Site 426 was raised on level terrain at the base of the western foothills that delimit the valley on this flank. The escarpments are ready sources of tuff and perlite nodules, two products of ancient volcanic activity that were transformed into masonry blocks and chipped flake tools, respectively, at various points in the Naco valley's prehistory. Informants report that local soils are very productive, capable of supporting two maize crops per year with sufficient rainfall. This fertility estimate was confirmed by geomorphological investigations conducted during the 1992 field season by Kirk Anderson.

Five structures were excavated at Site 426; two facing into the northeastern patio (Strs. 426-12 and 15), two bordering its southwestern counterpart (Strs. 426-3 and 11), and one within the line of buildings that separates these two spaces (Str. 426-7). Roughly 301m<sup>2</sup> were cleared in the course of this work which was conducted from January 28-March 13, 1992 under the direction of L. True, L. Armstrong, C. Attarian, E. Brown, and J. Ehret.

Structure 426-3

Structure 426-3, closing off the northwestern end of the southwest patio, is 14m northwest of Str. 426-7 and 21.8m southwest of Str. 426-15. The land surrounding Str. 426-3 rises 0.32m over 9m southeast-to-northwest. Excavation of ca. 61m<sup>2</sup> within Subops. 426B, F, and T uncovered all but a small fraction of Str. 426-3 and revealed the presence of a low construction 2.27m northwest of the main building that was not visible on ground surface (Str. 426-Sub2). Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 0.98m and 0.76m beneath modern ground level outside construction and into architectural fill, respectively. A single building phase, punctuated by the fashioning of a major addition, was identified in the course of this work. The Str. 426-3 investigations were overseen by C. Attarian from January 28-March 13, 1992.

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	-	-	S.2	-	LCLII
3	Str. 426-3-1st	U.1-6, 10	-	-	LCLII/III
4	Str. 426-3-1st Str. 426-Sub2-1st	- U.11	S.2-4	-	LCLII/III

5	Str. 426-3-1st	U.7-9	-	F.1	LCLII/III
6	-	-	S.4, 5	F.2	-

### Time Span 1

The uppermost 0.06m of a coarse-textured, soft-compacted, yellow-orange sand (S.1) were exposed at the base of excavation southeast and northwest of Str. 426-3 (the base was not encountered). Stratum 1 was uncovered in two discontinuous segments, separated by the bulk of Str. 426-3-1st. Piecing these elements together, S.1 rises 0.3m across 10.04m from southeast to northwest. No artifacts were retrieved from this layer, though the very restricted portion of it exposed in our excavations precludes a definitive judgment concerning cultural content or lack of same. A similar sand found underlying construction elsewhere in Site 426 was determined to be culturally sterile, however, and it is likely that S.1 marks a continuation of that same deposit laid down when human occupation in this area was sparse to non-existent. The S.1 sand might also represent a short-term flooding episode the residues of which seal undetected culture-bearing deposits.

### Time Span 2

Stratum 2, a light brown ash containing large quantities of artifacts (especially pottery sherds) and some charcoal flecks, covers S.1 by 0.2-0.52m (it is especially thick [0.36-0.52m] on the northwest). This deposit runs beneath Str. 426-3-1st and 426-Sub2-1st architecture and buries the bottom-most 0.28m and 0.23m of the former's northwestern basal facing (U.1) and the latter's southwestern wall (U.12), respectively. This stratigraphic relation may suggest that the activities generating so much ash and ceramic fragments began in TS.2 and continued after both edifices had been raised (see S.3, TS.4, below). Stratum 2 is much thinner (roughly 0.2m thick) and more difficult to recognize on the southeast, though it seems to lie beneath, but not to bury, the base of revealed architecture here. Most likely, the deposit represented by S.2 was originally concentrated in the area between Strs. 426-3-1st and 426-Sub2-1st, the construction of the first building blocking subsequent flow of this debris southeastward. Whatever the fate of these interpretations, it is clear that there was a substantial human presence in the immediate area of Str. 426-3-1st and 426-Sub2-1st during TS.2.

### Time Span 3

Structure 426-3-1st is a platform faced on all sides by stone walls that are 0.78-0.9m high by 0.35-0.85m wide (U.1-4). These facings retain a fill of hard-compacted gray-brown silt in which are embedded a few rocks (U.10). The earthen-floored summit is subdivided into two enclosures (Rooms 1 and 2) by a northwest-southeast running foundation 0.65m wide by 0.4m high (U.7.) Unit 7 abuts U.1 on the northwest and overlaps onto U.5 (described immediately following) by ca. 0.2m. Unit 5 is a 2.6m-long by 0.5-0.7m-wide shelf recessed 0.15m into the northwest face of the platform's southeastern basal wall (U.3). Unit 5 defines the summit's southeastern margin and rises an estimated 0.11m above the floors of Rooms 1 and 2. The shelf is surfaced with rocks, including some schist slabs, the flatter aspects of which face up. Unit 5 is

bounded on the northeast and southwest by northwestward extensions of U.3 that rise 0.15 above the shelf. A 1.9m-long (northeast-southwest) portion of U.3's top, beginning 1.5m northeast of the platform's southern corner, is also capped with flat-surfaced rocks. This divergence from the irregularly shaped stones that commonly top the other walls composing Str. 426-3-1st tentatively suggests that the aforementioned segment of U.3 marked the entrance to the platform's superstructure.

As noted above, Str. 426-3's summit consists of two enclosures arranged in a northeast-southwest line. Room 1, on the southwest, covers 1.8x1.95m while its northeastern counterpart, Room 2, is somewhat smaller at 1.2x1.55m. Unit 5 faces into both summit enclosures but most of its length (1.4m) adjoins Room 1 while only a 0.55m-long segment is found in Room 2. In both cases, U.5 probably served as a shelf and step that people traversed as they entered both compartments through the putative stone-paved entryway atop U.3.

By the conclusion of TS.3, Str. 426-3-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-rock filled platform that rose 0.78-0.9m high, measured 3.3x5.15m, and was oriented approximately 61 degrees. The building raised on this substructure contained two earthen-floored enclosures set in a northeast-southwest line. Room sizes range from 1.9m<sup>2</sup> (the northeastern member) to 3.5m<sup>2</sup> (for its southwestern counterpart). The tops of Str. 426-3-1st's basal facings ascend 0.26-0.3m above the summit floor and served as foundations for the superstructure's perishable upper walls; another footing, running northwest-southeast between these entities, separated the rooms. Both compartments were bordered on the southeast by a continuous stone-faced and -surfaced shelf recessed 0.15m into the basal wall. The shelf stands roughly 0.11m above the room floors, is 2.6m long, and 0.5-0.7m wide. No steps were noted during excavations, though they may have been obscured by additions made to the edifice's southeastern flank during TS.5. A formal entryway, possibly marked by a 1.9m-long threshold of flat-surfaced stones set atop the southeast basal facing, may have existed on this side of the building.

Angular rocks, oriented so that their flat aspects are directed outwards, were set in horizontal courses to create the platform's basal walls. Chinking pebbles were inserted in the gaps between larger stones. The summit foundation (U.7) separating Rooms 1 and 2 is not so carefully fashioned, no clear horizontal coursing being preserved. Rock sizes range from 0.06x0.07m to 0.5x0.5m with the larger examples concentrated in the four basal facings (U.1-4). All stones are set in a gray-brown mud mortar. It is unclear how many of the rocks used to raise Str. 426-3-1st had been intentionally modified to create a flat face and how many were selected because they had achieved this effect through natural processes. Our general impression is that at least some of these stones were purposefully shaped to ensure a vertical face. Most of the rocks comprising Str. 426-3-1st are soft volcanic tuff, mixed (especially on the U.5 shelf surface) with schist slabs.

#### Time Span 4

Deposition of S.2 continued during Str. 426-3-1st's initial period of occupation. During this interval, S.2 ash accumulated to a total thickness of 0.43m above S.1 on the platform's northwestern flank, eventually burying the basal 0.29m of U.1. How much of S.2 pertains to TS.4 and how much was introduced in TS.2 we cannot say as there are no observed breaks in the layer that might signify a depositional hiatus.

The situation on the southeast diverges from that outlined above. Here, 0.2m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, light brown soil (S.3) intervenes between S.2 and the terrace raised

during TS.5 (U.7-9). Stratum 3, laid down directly over a lens of burnt earth southwest of the aforementioned terrace, appears to contain cultural debris, including some ash, jettisoned during the first recognized period of Str. 426-3-1st's occupation. This layer was not identified southeast of the terrace where 0.2m of S.4, a fine-textured, gray-brown earth, covers S.2 and underlies TS.5 architecture. The laying down of S.3 and the segment of S.4 described above are clearly restricted to TS.4; deposition of S.2 may well have continued throughout Str. 426-3-1st's occupation (including TS.5), ending only when the platform was abandoned.

Structure 426-Sub2-1st, located 2.4m northwest of Str. 426-3-1st, was possibly raised during TS.4. The northeastern flank (U.11) of this surface-invisible construction is a 0.51m-high stone wall running 3.31m northwest-southeast at an azimuth of approximately 333 degrees. Unit 11 is made of angular stones the flatter faces of which are directed outwards. As was the case with Str. 426-3-1st, it is difficult to determine how many of these rocks had achieved their vertical aspects through human mediation. A brown mud mortar was used as a binding agent in U.11. We lacked the time to expand excavations sufficiently to determine whether U.11 functioned as a foundation delimiting a surface-level building or as a facing for a low platform.

Inclusion of Str. 426-Sub2-1st's construction in TS.4 is based on several, admittedly weak, lines of evidence: U.11's base is 0.2m above that of Str. 426-3-1st's northwestern basal wall (U.1), suggesting that the former was laid in after the latter; S.2 runs beneath and obscures the bottom-most 0.23m of U.11, implying that this soil continued to accumulate against the facing/footing after it was constructed, as was the case for Str. 426-3-1st's U.1 in TS.4-5. Structure 426-Sub2-1st, therefore, was seemingly built no earlier than TS.4 and no later than TS.5.

### Time Span 5

During this span, a 0.2m-high (above S.4) terrace was appended onto Str. 426-3-1st's southeastern (patio-facing) side. This entity is bounded by a single, low vertical ascent (U.7) that abuts U.3, 1.6m northeast of the latter's southern corner and extends 2.35-2.4m southeastward. The terrace is at least 4.1m long northeast-southwest; its eastern corner and point of intersection with the main platform on the northeast were not clearly recognized. Unit 7's southern corner is outset 0.15m and 0.4m from the terrace's basal southwestern and southeastern lines, respectively. We cannot say whether this element was replicated on the eastern corner. The terrace is divided into two levels by a northwest-southeast running step-up (U.8). The southwestern segment is 0.32m higher than its northeastern counterpart. The two terrace portions are further distinguished by how these entities are surfaced; the southwestern segment is paved with stone (U.9) while its northeastern counterpart has an earthen floor. Two fragmented but largely complete nested ceramic cylinders (a polychrome vessel of apparent Peten origin placed within a plain container) were found lying on their sides at the junction of these two terrace levels. They had most likely fallen from the U.9 pavement onto the earthen northeast floor immediately prior to the building's abandonment. There is no evidence that the cylinders were ceremonially cached.

By the end of TS.5, Str. 426-3-1st's core platform was seemingly unchanged, though now there was a 0.2m-high terrace projecting 2.35-2.4m southeast of the edifice into the southwestern patio. This construction is at least 4.1m long, its summit divided into southwestern and northeastern portions by a 0.32m-high step-up. The southwestern segment is the higher of the two, measures 1.9x2.3m, and is paved with stones. The northeastern element covers an

estimated 2.2x2.4m and has an earthen floor. There is no sign that the terrace ever supported a superstructure, though most or all of it may have been sheltered by eaves projecting from Str. 426-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure. Entrance to the latter may now have been achieved by ascending the southeastern terrace, its elevated southwestern floor providing access to the putative threshold atop U.3, 0.32m above the U.9 pavement. The principal impact of the terrace's construction was to expand Str. 426-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest-southeast dimension to 5.7m, creating additional work and living space on the platform's southeastern side.

Architecture assigned to TS.5 consists of angular rocks set with their flatter aspects directed outwards. Though some of these stones may have been crudely shaped to achieve a flat face, we find it hard to distinguish such artificial creations from their natural analogues. Schist slabs were apparently the primary stones used in the U.9 floor. A brown mud mortar served as a binding agent in all facings and the U.9 pavement.

It was near the end of TS.5 that F.1 was laid down. Feature 1 is a dense deposit of bajareque fragments that litter the floors of Rooms 1 and 2. Sizable quantities of pottery sherds are mixed with burnt wattle and daub fragments in Room 1, many fewer of these vessel fragments were identified in Room 2. This debris apparently derives from superstructure construction and activities pursued within that edifice.

Though included in TS.4, Str. 426-Sub2-1<sup>st</sup>'s erection may date to this interval (see above).

### Time Span 6

After abandonment, Strs. 426-3-1<sup>st</sup> and 426-Sub2-1<sup>st</sup> were covered by the natural deposition of S.4 and 5. The first of these layers, described under TS.4, covers S.2 between the above buildings by 0.13-0.41m. Stratum 4 does not seem to have been laid down during TS.6 southeast of construction. Here, 0.35-0.45m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, gray-brown soil containing numerous small roots (S.5) blankets that portion of S.4 deposited during TS.4. The same earth covers S.4 on the northwest by 0.04-0.19m. Stratum 5 buries all but the highest preserved portions of Str. 426-3-1<sup>st</sup> architecture and completely obscures Str. 426-Sub2-1<sup>st</sup>. Embedded within S.4 and 5 is debris fallen from Str. 426-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s final-phase construction (F.2). Feature 2 is a moderately dense concentration of displaced rocks that blankets the structure and extends for minimally 1.8m southeast of the platform and 1.38m northwest of the building. No appreciable quantities of fallen stone were associated with Str. 426-Sub2-1<sup>st</sup>.

### Structure 426-7

Structure 426-7, 15m northwest of Str. 426-11 and 14m southeast of Str. 426-3, is in the line of buildings that separates the northeastern and southwestern patios. The ground here slopes up 0.2m over 16.96m from southwest to northeast. Excavations conducted within Subops. 426H, J, N, and S uncovered roughly 45m<sup>2</sup> of the edifice and its environs, clearing most of the western facade and the small summit. Digging was carried down to a maximum depth of 1.86m below modern ground surface outside the platform, leading to the identification of a single construction phase (architectural fill was not probed). These investigations were overseen from January 28-February 20, 1992 by L. True.

### 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	-	-	S.2	F.1	LCLI?
3	-	-	S.3	F.2	LCLI/II
4	Str. 426-7-1st	U.1-17	-	-	LCLII
5	-	-	S.3	-	LCLII
6	Str. 426-Sub1-1st	U.18	-	-	LCLII/III?
7	-	-	S.4	F.3	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1 is a coarse-textured, soft-compacted, orange-gray, culturally sterile sand that was exposed to a maximum thickness of 1m (its base was not encountered). Revealed in two unconnected segments northeast and southwest of Str. 426-7-1st, S.1's elevation exhibited very little variation; being 0.2m higher on the southwest than it is 16.96m to the northeast. The absence of cultural material within S.1 suggests that there was no human occupation nearby when the layer was deposited.

### Time Span 2

Stratum 2 is a fine-textured, soft-compacted, gray ash incorporating large quantities of cultural material that was laid down within a pit (F.1) sunk into S.1 off Str. 426-7-1st's northeast flank. Feature 1 was dug 0.68m into S.1 and measures at least 1.48m across northeast-southwest (only F.1's northeastern margin was identified). The combination of ash and considerable numbers of artifacts imply that S.2 constitutes trash deposited during an interval preceding Str. 426-7-1st's erection. We cannot tell at present whether F.1 was originally built as a receptacle for this debris or came to fulfill this role late in its use-life.

### Time Span 3

Stratum 3, a dark brown silt, buries S.1 and 2 on the northeast by 0.22-0.26m and covers S.1 on the southwest by 0.26-0.29m. This layer apparently ascends 0.17m over 16.96m southwest-to-northeast. Artifacts retrieved from S.3 suggest that human occupation in Str. 426-7-1st's vicinity persisted during TS.3. Capping this segment of S.3 on the northeast is F.2, a 0.06m-thick deposit composed of small rocks, sherds, and bajareque fragments. This apparent debris lens was traced for 0.96m from northeast to southwest at which point it disappeared into

excavation limits. Feature 2 may be the collapsed remnants of a modest surface-level edifice that lies in uninvestigated areas immediately to the southwest.

#### Time Span 4

Structure 426-7-1st is a sizable stone-faced platform the core of which is defined by substantial facings 0.92-1.48m high by 0.44-0.71m wide (U.1-4; the full heights of only U.2 and 4, the northeastern and southwestern elements, were revealed). These walls bound a relatively small, earthen-floored summit that covers an estimated 2.9x5.2m (based on uncovered architecture and surface indications). A single enclosure (Room 1), encompassing 1.65x3.13m occupies this area, its perimeters defined by the tops of the core facings except on the northeast where U.5 fulfills this function. The latter, a 0.36m-high by 0.73m-wide foundation, lies 0.81m southwest of U.2's northeastern face, the space between them serving, perhaps, as a walkway. Room 1 was entered through a 0.85m-wide doorway set 0.3m southwest of its northern corner. A low, stone threshold (U.15) lies 0.25m northwest of the entryway and serves to further formalize the passage. As we found no staircases on the platform's southwestern and northeastern flanks, it is possible that Room 1's door looks over an access feature on the northwest. An insufficient amount of Str. 426-7-1st was cleared, however, to establish this point. It is also possible that another door breaches Room 1's largely unexcavated southeastern perimeter wall. No built-in furniture was recorded within the summit compartment.

Structure 426-7-1st's southwestern facade consists of what might have been three rooms arranged in a northwest-southeast line and fronted by a low stone-faced and -surfaced terrace. The central of these putative enclosures (Room 2) was completely cleared and is built against the southwestern core facing (U.2). The walls (0.43-0.93m tall) that define Room 2 on the northwest and southeast (U.13 and 12) abut U.2 and rise ca. 0.5m over their lengths of 3.1m (U.12) and 2.5m (U.13) southwest-to-northeast. Whether this ascent was a part of the original building plan or a consequence of differential preservation we cannot say. Unit 17, a 0.47m-high by 0.27m-wide foundation, runs 0.6m southeast from U.13 on the northwest, partially sealing off Room 2's southwestern flank. Room 2 overlooks the stone-paved (U.14) summit of an approximately 0.25m high terrace (U.6) on the southwest. This construction is ca. 2.1m northeast-southwest by 3.35m northwest-southeast and is largely restricted to the area fronting Room 2 on the approximate center of Str. 426-7-1st's southwestern flank. Room 2, itself, is floored with earth and covers roughly 4m<sup>2</sup>. The compartment narrows from 1.75m to 1.4m across from southwest to northeast; the northwestern perimeter wall (U.13) steps in 0.35m to reduce Room 2's width. Room 2 is accessed through a 0.9m-wide doorway, set between U.12 and 17. This door leads out onto the U.6/14 terrace. The U.14 pavement continues into this entry and for 0.2m into the enclosure. No built-in furniture was recorded in Room 2.

Bordering Room 2 on the southeast may have been a second compartment defined by U.12 on the northwest and a much more casually built stone footing (U.11) on the southeast. Unit 11 is 0.25m wide by 0.4m high. A segment of U.12, measuring 0.55m across, projects 0.25m southeast of that wall. This 0.48m-high extension, together with U.11, possibly defines the northwest and southeast sides of a 1.55m-wide doorway leading into the putative room. Said enclosure measures 1.8m across, is floored with stones (U.16) over the areas investigated (the immediate vicinity of the presumed doorway), and ends on the southwest in a stone-faced step-down (U.9) to the patio. Unit 9 continues for 0.2m southeast of U.11 where it corners with a comparably low facing (U.10). The latter was traced for only 1.6m to the northeast and is

probably the facing for a diminutive terrace that borders Str. 426-7-1st on the southeast.

Excavations northwest of Room 2 were limited to following a low stone facing (U.7, ca. 0.3m high) analogous to U.9 on the southeast. Unit 7 runs 2.2m northwest from its junction with U.6 at which point it corners with U.8. The latter was followed for 1.05m to the northeast and probably served as the facing of a 0.3m-high terrace bordering Str. 426-7-1st on the northwest. The existence of a room atop the area bounded by U.7 and 8 is tentatively inferred solely on the basis of symmetry. Digging was not pursued far enough to unearth foundations here, though U.13 might mark the putative compartment's southeastern side just as U.12 demarcated the northwestern boundary of the slightly better documented southeastern room. We could not discern whether U.7 and 8 were backed by a stone pavement.

Structure 426-7-1st is a 1.18-1.37m-high platform (slightly taller on the southwest) that encompasses 7.85x8.25m (excluding the U.6/14 terrace) and is aligned roughly 337 degrees. The summit is estimated to cover 15.1m<sup>2</sup>. Located on this eminence is a single enclosure (Room 1) which encompasses 5.2m<sup>2</sup>. Room 1 was entered through a 0.85m-wide doorway in its northern corner that was fronted by a low stone threshold. This passage may have overlooked stairs on the building's northwest flank, there being no signs of access features on either of the patio-facing sides (southwest and northeast). Room 1 lacked any sign of built-in furniture and is bounded on the northeast by a 0.81m-wide walkway.

The edifice's northeastern flank is ascended by a single, steep vertical facing. No construction was identified fronting Str. 426-7-1st on this side, though excavation here was restricted to a 1m wide exposure. On the southwest, a northwest-southeast running line of two, possibly three, rooms were built atop a low terrace extending 2.9m from the core platform. This terrace is 7.7m long and corners with what appear to be comparably low step-ups fronting Str. 426-7-1st on the northwest and southeast. The most thoroughly investigated of the southwestern compartments (Room 2) is the central element in the line, constructed right against the platform's southwestern facing. This earthen-floored compartment encompasses 4m<sup>2</sup> and lacks built-in furniture. A 0.9m-wide door gives access to the enclosure from the southwestern patio but there is no surviving evidence indicating that the enclosure was directly reachable from the platform's summit. Remnants of a 1.8m-wide (northwest-southeast) stone-paved compartment border Room 2 on the southeast. This enclosure was entered through an ample (1.55m wide) door that overlooks the southwestern patio. A third enclosure may have lain northwest of Room 2, though excavations were not pursued far enough here to establish this point. A 0.25m-high, stone-floored terrace fronts Room 2 on the southwest and measures 2.1m northeast-southwest by 3.35m.

The sequence of construction on the southwest begins with the raising of U.2, the core platform's southwestern facing, followed soon after by erection of the southwestern terrace and projection. The room walls (U.11-13, 17) rest on the surface backing the terrace and abut U.2, indicating that they were the last elements to be added. How much time elapsed between each step is not known, though there is no compelling evidence to suggest that the intervals were long enough to warrant the definition of separate construction phases.

Facings and floors are built of angular stones, mostly volcanic tuff, the flatter faces of which are oriented outwards. It was difficult for us to discern whether the rocks had been modified to create these vertical aspects or if they were simply products of natural fracturing. One clear masonry block was, however, incorporated within U.5. In U.2 and 4, the most thoroughly cleared core facings, the stones are placed in clear horizontal courses, chinking pebbles packed in and around the larger rocks. Coursing seems to be present, but less marked, in

the two other uncovered substantial walls (U.12 and 13) and chinking stones are used here as well to fill in gaps among the more sizable rocks. Such care in construction is not as clearly evident in the lower facings integrated within Str. 426-7-1st. Quite a few schist slabs were found clustered within 1.6m northeast of U.2 on the building's summit. Though out of place, their prevalence in this area hints at the former incorporation of these rocks within Room 1's architecture. What role(s) they played in that construction remains unknown. Schist slabs also comprised minority components of several Str. 426-7-1st facings and foundations. A gray-brown mud mortar was used as a binding agent in all units. Rock sizes range from 0.06x0.07m to 0.24x0.63m.

#### Time Span 5

During the course of Str. 426-7-1st's occupation, S.3 was apparently allowed to continue accumulating against the platform's northeastern flank (U.4). By the conclusion of this interval, U.4's base was obscured by 0.6m of S.3, only 0.32m of that wall remaining in view. This segment of S.3 slopes up markedly from northeast to southwest, rising 0.64m across 5.5m in that direction. Considerable quantities of artifacts were recovered from those portions of S.3 laid down during TS.5, implying that the earth was mixed with trash jettisoned during Str. 426-7-1st's final period of occupation.

#### Time Span 6

Located atop S.3, 2.33m northeast of Str. 426-7-1st, are the remains of a stone foundation (U.18) that was part of a surface-level building undetected on ground surface (Str. 426-Sub1-1st). Unit 18 is 0.23-0.44m high, runs 3.24m northeast-southwest (though it may continue further to the northeast beyond our excavation limits), and is at least 0.3m wide (the southeastern face was not clearly identified). This footing changes direction slightly over its exposed length, stepping out 0.2m to the northwest 1.35m northeast of its southwestern terminus. Unit 18 rides on the northeast-to-southwest slope of S.3, its base ascending 0.16m towards Str. 426-7-1st over its revealed extent. Little effort was apparently invested in levelling the terrain prior to Str. 426-Sub1-1st's construction. The above observation, together with the relative casualness of U.18's architecture, imply that Str. 426-Sub1-1st was a relatively insubstantial building. Unit 18's stratigraphic position, resting on S.3 which covers the bottom-most 0.6m of U.4, further indicates that Str. 426-Sub1-1st was built relatively late in the occupation sequence, possibly following Str. 426-7-1st's abandonment.

Structure 426-Sub1-1st, therefore, appears to be a surface-level edifice measuring at least 3.24m northeast-southwest and aligned very roughly 62 degrees, 30 minutes. The exposed foundation is built of angular stones, not set in horizontal courses, that vary in size from 0.08x0.09m to 0.25x0.48m. A gray-brown mud mortar fills in the often considerable spaces between rocks.

#### Time Span 7

After the abandonment of Strs. 426-7-1st and 426-Sub1-1st, both edifices were blanketed by the natural deposition of a hard-packed, gray-brown, silty-loam (S.4). Stratum 4 covers S.3 by 0.26-0.63m and obscures all but the uppermost stones of final-phase architecture. Embedded

within S.4 are rocks fallen from construction (F.3). Feature 3 comprises a moderately dense concentration of debris on Str. 426-7-1st's summit and extends for 1.45m southwest and 2.38m northeast of the platform. Items that make up F.3 are moderately dense in the latter direction but comprise only a light scatter on the southwest.

Structure 426-11

Structure 426-11, situated on the southeastern margin of the northeast patio, is 5.1m southwest and 31.8m southeast of Strs. 426-12 and 426-15, respectively. The terrain surrounding Str. 426-11 ascends 0.18m over 17.9m from southeast to northwest. Excavations pursued within Subops. 426D, G, K, P, Q, and R uncovered ca. 98m<sup>2</sup>, sufficient to expose all of Str. 426-11's perimeter along with the vast majority of its summit, about three-quarters of a surface-level building (Str. 426-Sub4) appended to the platform's southern face, and a small fragment of Str. 426-Sub5-1st. Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 1.7m and 1.16m below modern ground surface outside construction and within architectural fill, respectively. This work, overseen by E. Brown from January 28-March 11, 1992, revealed a single major building phase that was preceded by a poorly understood suite of constructions.

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	-	-	S.2,4	-	LCLI/II
3	Str. 426-Sub3-1st	U.1-3	-	-	LCLII?
4	-	-	S.2-4	-	LCLII
5	Str. 426-11-1st Str. 426-Sub4-1st Str. 426-Sub5-1st	U.4-18, 23-25 U.19-22 U.26	-	-	LCLII/III
6	-	-	S.4, 5	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a tan-colored sand devoid of artifacts, was uncovered to a maximum thickness of 0.53m at the bases of our deepest probes (the bottom lies beyond excavation limits). This earth closely resembles culturally sterile levels found beneath architecture throughout Site 426. This consistent stratigraphic position suggests that S.1 was laid down as part of an event, of unknown duration, that affected much of what would be the area occupied by Site 426. There is

no evidence for a human presence during TS.1.

### Time Span 2

Stratum 1 is blanketed by a fine-textured, soft-compacted, tan to gray ash containing cultural material (S.2). This sequence was identified off Str. 426-11-1st's southwestern flank where a test probe was sunk at the intersection of U.2 and 8. Here, roughly 0.4m of S.2 intervenes between S.1 and the base of TS. 3 architecture (U.2), suggesting that at least this much of the level was laid down prior to the latter's construction. A similar ash was not clearly identified in other deep test pits sunk off Str. 426-11-1st's other flanks. On the north, S.1 is directly overlain by S.4, a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, tan soil containing some artifacts. Stratum 4 was also located beneath final-phase (TS.5) architecture off the platform's eastern and southern margins, though digging here was not carried deep enough to encounter S.1. It is very likely, therefore, that the S.2 ash represents a localized trash deposit made during an interval when S.4 was being laid down elsewhere in Str. 426-11's vicinity. Clearly, TS.2 witnessed the establishment of a human presence in this area.

### Time Span 3

Structure 426-Sub3-1st is an omnibus term that covers a set of three constructions linked by their stratigraphic position beneath TS.5 architecture. There is no good evidence to suggest that these three entities were ever components of a single building; probably they are remnants of relatively insubstantial surface-level constructions that were mostly, but not entirely, covered by Str. 426-11-1st. Unit 1 is a 1.65m-long by at least 0.5m-wide low stone wall standing 0.2m high that projects 0.3-0.4m out from under Str. 426-11-1st's southwestern platform facing (U.7). Unit 2, 2.4m northwest of U.1, is 0.22m high by 0.48m wide and was traced for 0.9m southwest from where it emerges from below Str. 426-11-1st. This wall's southwestern terminus was not identified. Unit 3 extends minimally 0.4m southeast from beneath Str. 426-11-1st's southeastern summit facing (U.6) and was exposed to a height of 0.16m (U.3's base was not reached nor was its width ascertained). Extending 0.22m southeast from U.3 is an 0.11m-thick level composed of bajareque fragments (the base of this layer was not reached). Most likely, the aforementioned entity represents fragments of the upper wall originally supported by U.3.

Units 1-3 are variably aligned, 342 degrees, 59 degrees, and 142 degrees, respectively. Some of these differences may well result from the very small segments of U.2 and 3, especially, that were exposed. Only U.1 was uncovered for what seems to be its full length of 1.65m. As noted above, the sizes and general appearance of U.1-3 imply that they were foundations incorporated within surface-level edifices, rather than platform facings. The proximity of these elements suggests that the buildings of which they are parts were clustered together, possibly forming a distinct group of functionally related structures. The form of that agglomeration and the purposes to which the edifices were put elude us now. Units 1-3 are all built of angular stones the flatter aspects of which are oriented outwards. Some of the rocks may have been modified to create vertical faces, though none were more than crudely shaped, if that. A tan mud mortar was used as a binding agent.

### Time Span 4

The dispersed elements of Str. 426-Sub3-1st were covered on the west by the resumed deposition of S.2 (buries the lower 0.11m of U.2). Stratum 2, in turn, was blanketed by 0.11m of a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, tan soil distinguished by the large amounts of bajareque fragments included in it (S.3). Stratum 3 seals U.2, though it was not encountered elsewhere in our excavations where S.4 continues to be laid down and forms the surface above which Str. 426-11-1st was raised. A particularly dense concentration of cultural material found embedded within S.4 up to ca. 0.2m below TS.5 architecture may be the equivalent of S.3 elsewhere around Str. 426-11-1st. Whether the portions of S.2-4 laid down now were introduced naturally or as fill used to level out Str. 426-11-1st's construction site we cannot say. The significant amounts of cultural material lying immediately beneath TS.5 architecture tend to favor the latter interpretation, architectural debris (i.e., bajareque fragments) and trash associated with TS.3 occupation having been recycled as fill during what may well have been the fairly brief interval represented by TS.4.

### Time Span 5

Structure 426-11-1st is a substantial stone-faced platform bordered by low terraces on the northwest and southeast. An extensive surface-level room (Str. 426-Sub4-1st) was also appended to the latter flank. The core platform is defined by vertical stone facings that rise ca. 0.9m high (U.4-7) and measure 0.59-1.5m across (the full width of the southwestern wall [U.7] was not determined). A single, extensive enclosure occupies the core's summit (Room 1). The core-facings' upper ca. 0.4m seem to have acted as foundations delimiting the compartment on all sides. On the northeast, a 0.65m-wide, stone-lined niche is built into U.5 just above the putative floor level. Poor preservation of this element, along with most of U.5's southwestern face, thwarted efforts to reconstruct the niche's full dimensions. Room 1's central open space covers 2.75x 2.82m and has a single schist slab (U.18) embedded in the approximate center of its earthen floor. Unit 18 is in line with the northwestern steps (see below) and probably marked the entrance into Room 1. The compartment's entire southwestern wall is taken up by a 0.38m-high, stone-faced bench of uncertain width (U.16). Unit 16 may have measured as much as 2m across northeast-southwest. The fill (U.23) retained by U.4-7 is a tan soil virtually identical to S.4. A few rocks and artifacts are scattered throughout the exposed portions of U.23.

A 1.81m-wide terrace was appended onto the core's northwestern face at some point in the construction sequence. This element is 7.8m long northeast-southwest, extending 0.5m and 0.7m beyond the core's northeastern and southwestern facings, respectively (U.5 and 7). Consequently, the southwestern and northeastern terrace facings (U.8 and 10) step back these distances to abut the core platform's northern and western corners. The terrace's 0.34m-high northwestern basal step-up (U.9) gives way on the terrace's axis to a 1.38m-wide earthen tread that is, in turn, succeeded by a 0.19m high step (U.13). The 0.45m wide U.13 is succeeded by the upper 0.39m of U.4 that continues to protrude above the northern steps. Unit 4 now acts as the final ascent to Room 1 on the summit. The U.9, 13, and 4 steps are bounded on the northeast and southwest by 0.22-0.36m high by 0.25-0.3m wide stone balustrades that extend from U.9 back (southwest) to U.4 (U. 11 and 12). The area defined by U.11 and 12 encompasses 1.81m northwest-southeast by 2m northeast-southwest. Fill (U.24) underlying U.13 and burying U.4's base consists of a tan soil indistinguishable from S.4. Flanking the steps on the northeast and southwest are two seemingly open spaces that cover 1.6x2.7m and 1.9x2.5m (the northwestern terrace widens ca. 0.3m from northeast to southwest). Construction of the steps, therefore,

created a tripartite spatial division on Str. 426-11-1st's northwestern terrace.

A ca. 0.45m-high terrace bounds the entirety of the Str. 426-11-1st core's southeastern flank (U.14). This entity is 1.85m wide and junctions with the core's southern and eastern corners. The fill (U.25) backing U.14 is a tan soil that closely resembles S.4 and contains sizable amounts of cultural material. Two stone walls about the southeastern core facing (U.6) and extend 1.56m out to U.14 (U.15 and 17). Units 15 and 17 are 0.37-0.64m tall, their original heights probably approximating the larger figure. Together, U.6, 14, 15, and 17 bound an earthen-floored space encompassing 1.56x3.1m (Room 2). No built-in furniture was identified in this enclosure. Excavation was not carried to sufficient depths northeast and southwest of U.17 and 15 to determine if other compartments were located atop the terrace in these areas as well. It is possible, though not established, therefore, that both the northwestern and southeastern terraces were divided into three spaces strung out in northeast-southwest lines.

Structure 426-Sub4-1st is a surface-level building that was raised adjacent to Str. 426-11-1st's southeastern terrace. The building is delimited by stone foundations (U.19-21) that stand roughly 0.35m high and are 0.3-0.42m wide. Uncovered portions of U.19-21 resemble a "J". The fully revealed northeastern footing extends 4.73m southeast from its abutment with U.14 to its junction with U.20, the southeastern foundation. The latter runs 2.25m northeast-southwest and connects with the 1.4m-long segment of U.21 that bounds the edifice's southwestern flank. Unit 21 ends at this point in what seems to be a door leading into the earthen-floored room delimited by the above footings. The putative entryway's width was not ascertained. Unit 14, the southeast terrace facing, apparently doubled as Str. 426-Sub4-1st's northwestern perimeter wall. The space enclosed by U.14, 19, 20, and 21 is 2.6x4.2m and it contains no built-in furniture or room partitions. Such entities might lie undetected in unexcavated portions of the building on the southwest. Though no clear living surface was identified within Str. 426-Sub4-1st, comparison of unit elevations strongly suggests that this building was raised on a southeast-to-northwest ascent of ca. 0.4m. No effort was apparently made to level out the rise prior to construction. A 0.12m-high block (U.22) constructed of small stones abuts the approximate center of U.20's southwestern face. Unit 22 covers 0.5x0.55m and served a function(s) that we are powerless to discern.

Unit 26, a 0.14-0.16m-high stone wall running 1.95m northwest-southeast, was unearthed 0.65m northeast of U.19 and 2.15m southeast of U.14. This element seems to be a foundation associated with a surface-level building (Str. 426-Sub5-1st) that was undetected on ground surface.

By TS.5's conclusion, Str. 426-11-1st is a 0.9m-high platform that covers 6.65x7.15m (measured across the center) and is aligned roughly 334 degrees. The core is bounded by substantial vertical facings the upper 0.4m of which apparently functioned as supports for the superstructure's perishable walls. The single enclosure contained within the superstructure (Room 1) covers at least 7.8m<sup>2</sup> and is bounded on the southwest by a 0.38m-high, stone-faced bench that is 2.82m long by as much as 2m wide. A 0.65m-wide niche was built into Room 1's northeastern foundation, 0.65m northwest of the compartment's eastern interior corner. A schist slab is embedded in the approximate center of the enclosure's earthen floor. A 0.34m-high by 1.81m-wide terrace was added to the core's northwestern patio-facing, flank. The center of this entity is taken up with a set of three stone-faced steps (including the terrace facing), each riser 0.19-0.39m high, and bounded by low balustrades. The area contained within these limits encompasses 1.81x2m. Bordering the staircase on the terrace are two seemingly open areas that cover 4.3m<sup>2</sup> and 4.8m<sup>2</sup>. A comparably broad (1.85m across), 0.45m-high terrace was also

appended to the core's southeastern side. The center of this entity is taken up with an earthen floored compartment (Room 2) measuring 4.8m<sup>2</sup>. Other enclosures may occupy the terrace northeast and southwest of Room 2. Both the northwest and southeast terraces, therefore, may have been divided into three parts. The case for such a reconstruction is stronger for the northwestern than for the southeastern terrace.

Structure 426-Sub4-1st is a surface-level building that was appended to Str. 426-11-1st's southeastern terrace late in TS.5. This edifice is delimited by stone foundations that enclose what seems to have been a single, featureless, earthen-floored room measuring 10.9m<sup>2</sup>. This interior space seems to have been canted upward 0.4m from southeast to northwest, a consequence of erecting the building on a natural rise. A doorway on the southwest provided access to Str. 426-Sub4-1st's room. A comparably late, but seemingly much smaller, surface-level edifice lies 0.65m northeast of Str. 426-Sub4-1st (Str. 426-Sub5-1st). Only the 1.95m-long southwestern footing of this edifice was revealed in excavations.

All TS.5 facings and foundations are built primarily of angular stones (mostly volcanic tuff) the flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. There is a continuum of formality in these vertical faces, ranging from those which are probably the results of natural fracturing to others that were clearly modified by human action. Many fall towards the center of that range. Definite masonry blocks were recorded in U.5, 8, and 10 while schist slabs apparently capped the southeastern core facing's southeastern face (U.6) and one was seemingly used to mark the entrance to Room 1 (U.18). Coursing is variably expressed in these entities, being clearest in U.4, 5, 8, 10, and 15 and is especially hard to identify in those foundations that define Strs. 426-Sub4-1st and 426-Sub5-1st. Chinking stones were generally used to fill in the gaps among the larger rocks, though they are very rare in U.15. Stone sizes, excluding chinking pebbles, range from 0.04-0.15m by 0.17-0.52m. A tan mud mortar was used as a binding agent in each wall. Overall, the most casual architecture, as measured by the care invested in shaping rocks and placing them in horizontal courses, is seen in the footings that define Strs. 426-Sub4-1st and 426-Sub5-1st.

### Time Span 6

Resumed deposition of S.4 and the laying down of S.5 eventually buried all but the highest surviving portions of Str. 426-11-1st. The latter soil layer is distinguished from S.4 solely by its darker hue and greater concentration of small roots. Embedded within S.4 and 5 are rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is found for 0.94m northwest of Str. 426-11-1st and 3.5m south of the platform (here mixed with debris fallen into Str. 426-Sub4-1st).

### Structure 426-12

Structure 426-12 occupies the southeastern margin of the northeast patio, 5.1m northeast of Str. 426-11. Land surrounding the edifice is fairly level, dropping 0.23m over 10m northwest-to-southeast. Excavation here, conducted within Subop. 426E, cleared ca. 50m<sup>2</sup> and was carried down to maximum depths of 0.99m and 0.92m below modern ground surface outside and within construction, respectively (but *not* into architectural fill). A single building phase was revealed in the course of this work which was directed by J. Ehret.

### 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	-	LCLI/II
2	Str. 426-12-1st	U.1-8	-	F.1-2	LCLII, II/III
3	-	-	S.3-5	F.3	-

### Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a brown sandy loam, was exposed to maximum thicknesses of 0.15m and 0.21m northwest and southeast of Str. 426-12-1st, respectively (the base lies beyond excavation limits). This layer's top undulates, generally ascending 0.14m over 10m southeast-to-northwest. Covering S.1 by 0.03-0.3m is a dark brown clayey sandy loam. Like its predecessor, S.2 was part of a rolling topography, though it rises 0.23m across 10m from southeast to northwest. Recovery of artifacts from S.2 points to a human presence in the immediate area while this layer was being deposited.

### Time Span 2

Structure 426-12-1st is a surface-level building delimited by 0.43-0.58m-high stone foundations that measure 0.4-0.5m across (U.4-7). The building is entered through a 0.95m-wide doorway that breaches the northwestern footing (U.7) and faces directly into the patio. This passage is fronted by a 1.1m-wide earthen veranda that projects 1.9m northwestward from the building (U.1). Unit 1 rises 0.27m above S.2 and is bounded on all sides by low rock facings. The veranda is restricted to the area of the aforementioned door and has embedded within its approximate center a cut block measuring 0.5x0.65m (F.1). Feature 1 was fragmented into eight pieces when found. The block seems to have been flush with U.1's earthen surface and to have marked Str. 426-12-1st's entryway.

An earthen-floored enclosure covering 0.98x2.4m lies just inside the northwestern door (Room 1). Room 1 is backed on the southeast by a 0.32m-high, stone-faced but earth-surfaced bench that is 2.15m long northeast-southwest by 1.8m northwest-southeast (retained by U.3 and 8 on the northwest and southwest, respectively). Room 2, an L-shaped, earthen-floored enclosure bordering Room 1 and the bench on the southwest, encompasses 3.4m<sup>2</sup>. This compartment could have been reached directly from the bench or by stepping up and over the ca. 0.5m-high by 0.25m-wide foundation (U.2) that runs between the bench and U.7, separating Rooms 1 and 2. Within U.2, 0.13m southeast of its abutment with U.7, there is a definite, formalized gap in construction. This disjunction takes the form of a 0.2m-wide drop in U.2's height. Within this narrow area, the construction stands only 0.16m tall. The breach seems to have been purposefully built, the stones bordering it positioned so that their flat faces frame the gap. Too narrow to have been a door, the architectural significance of this element remains unknown.

Extending southwest of U.1 and fronting U.7 is a poorly preserved line of stones that

appears to delimit the perimeter of an area measuring approximately 1.6x4.8m (F.2). Large fragments of ceramic vessels were found resting on F.2's earthen-floor up against U.7.

Structure 426-12-1st is a surface-level edifice that measures 3.5x4.5m (exclusive of U.1 and F.2), contains two earthen-floored rooms, and is oriented roughly 65 degrees. The building was entered by passing over a 0.27m-high, stone-faced, earthen-floored veranda that projects 1.9m northwestward into the patio from the 0.95m-wide doorway in the northwest footing. A sizable faced block, set in the veranda's approximate center and flush with its surface, may have formally marked the entryway. Passing through the door gave direct access to Room 1, an enclosure that covers 6.3m<sup>2</sup> more than half of which is taken up by a 0.32m-high, stone-faced bench (1.8x2.15m). Bordering this enclosure on the southwest is Room 2 whose 3.4m<sup>2</sup> might have been reached from the bench or by stepping up and over the 0.5m-high wall separating Rooms 1 and 2. Southwest of the veranda, Str. 426-12-1st may have been fronted by a very casual construction consisting of a stone line that borders an earthen-floored area of approximately 7.7m<sup>2</sup>. There are no signs that this area was elevated above ancient ground surface. Instead, if this is indeed a legitimate construction, the stones may have served to define a work and/or storage area which housed ceramic vessels.

All walls are built primarily of unmodified angular stones whose naturally flatter aspects are directed outwards. Cut blocks were noted in U.4, 6, and 7 and F.1 consists of a single masonry block. A brown mud mortar was used as a binding agent and chinking stones filled in the gaps among the larger rocks. Rock sizes range from 0.05x0.07m to 0.18x0.4m, with most falling towards the middle of that range.

### Time Span 3

Following Str. 426-12-1st's abandonment, the building was covered by S.3-5. The first in the sequence is a light brown sandy loam that buries S.2 by 0.1-0.2m on the southeast. Northwest of the edifice, S.3 appears as a lens beginning 0.57m beyond U.1. Stratum 3 in this area eventually expands to a thickness of 0.17m at the limits of excavation, 1.69m northwest of that construction. Stratum 4, a dark brown clayey sandy loam, covers S.3 by 0.13-0.43m. Stratum 5, virtually identical to S.3, blankets S.4 by 0.18-0.38m on the northwest and obscures all but the highest preserved elements of Str. 426-12-1st. To the southeast, S.5 is a lens overlying S.4 that starts 1.7m distant from U.4 and expands to 0.3m thick by the excavation's margins 3.1m southeast of that footing. Embedded within S.4 and 5 particularly is a light concentration of fallen architectural debris (F.3) that extends for 1.62m southeast and 1.4m northwest of Str. 426-12-1st.

### Structure 426-15

Structure 426-15, lying 21.8m northeast of Str. 426-3, closes off the northwest side of the northeast patio. The land surrounding Str. 426-15 rises gradually from south to north, ascending 0.38m over 13m in that direction. Excavation of approximately 47m<sup>2</sup> in Subops. 426C, I, L, M, and O resulted in clearing about 70% of the building. Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 1.04m and 0.92m beneath modern ground surface outside and into construction fill, respectively. A single major building phase was recognized in the course of this work which was overseen by L. Armstrong from January 28-March 20, 1992.

## 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	-	-	S.2	-	LCLI/II
3	Str. 426-15-1st	U.1-23	-	-	LCLII, II/III
4	-	-	S.2, 3	F.1	-

### Time Span 1

The first event recognized in Str. 426-15's vicinity was the apparently natural deposition of a soft-compacted, tan sand lacking in cultural materials (S.1). Stratum 1 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.34m (its base lies beyond excavation limits) and rises 0.25m across 13m south-to-north. This earth layer closely resembles other culturally barren strata revealed in the base of excavations conducted throughout Site 426, suggesting that it was laid down under fairly uniform conditions that prevailed throughout the settlement during an interval that preceded the erection of surface-visible architecture.

### Time Span 2

A moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil (S.2) buried S.1 prior to construction of Str. 426-15-1st. The amount of S.2 laid down during TS.2 is indeterminable as deposition of this earth resumed after Str. 426-15-1st's abandonment and there are no discontinuities within the stratum clearly indicating the location of the living surface associated with that building. Approximately 0.2m of S.2 intervenes between S.1 and architecture on Str. 426-15-1st's north side, indicating that at least this much of the layer must have been introduced during TS.2. On the south, construction seems to have rested directly on S.1, implying that little, if any, of S.2 was deposited here before the platform's abandonment. Recovery of artifacts from lower S.2 indicates a human presence in the immediate area while this soil level was being deposited.

### Time Span 3

Structure 426-15-1st consists of a core platform surrounded by low, relatively narrow stone-faced terraces on all sides save the south where a broad addition to the summit supports a relatively elaborate entryway. The core measures 3.73x5.45m and is delimited by stone facings (U.1-4) 0.72m and 0.98m tall on the north (U.3) and south (U.3), respectively, and 0.4-0.6m across. The height discrepancy between U.1 and 3 most likely reflects the natural south-to-north ascent of the land beneath the platform (see S.1, TS.1). The uppermost ca. 0.25m of U.1-4 also serve as foundations bordering a single summit enclosure that covers 2.9x4.4m. An extensive

stone-faced and -surfaced bench takes up most of the room's northwest corner and western wall (U.16). Unit 16 is 0.22m high, 2.17m long north-south, and 1.2m wide east-west. Bordering U.16 on the south is a pavement of schist slabs (U.15) that fills the remaining space between U.16 and the southern summit wall (U.3). Measuring 0.83x1.2m, U.15 is the only stone surface within an otherwise earthen-floored summit room. Occupying the compartment's approximate center is another stone-faced and -surfaced bench (U.17). This L-shaped construction is 0.4m high and extends 2m east from its intersection with U.16 at the latter's approximate midpoint before turning to run 0.65m south at its eastern terminus. Unit 17 is 0.5-0.65m wide over most of its extent. It may narrow to 0.15m in the first 0.6m eastward from U.16, though it was unclear whether this seeming construction change was intentional or resulted from differential preservation. Located 0.1-0.15m east of U.17 is an L-shaped element composed of rocks projecting vertically from the earth floor (U.18). Unit 18's north-south segment is 0.9m long by 0.15m wide. A 0.4m-wide portion extends 0.35m eastward from the north-south-running segment's southern end. Together, U.17 and 18 continue most of the way across the summit room's east-west dimension from U.16, leaving a 0.75m-wide passage on the east through which the northern part of the enclosure could be reached. A ca. 0.3m-high stone block, measuring 0.31m wide (U.20), protrudes 0.55m east from U.16's southeast corner. Along with U.16 and 17, U.20 may have defined a cubicle covering 0.5x1.35m and accessed through a 0.85m wide gap in its southeast corner. The summit room, itself, was entered through a 0.5m-wide doorway that breaches the southern summit wall (U.1). This entryway directly faces U.17 and the aforementioned diminutive compartment. The back (northern) part of the room would, therefore, have been blocked from view and access by the arrangement of built-in furniture; reaching this area involved tracing a circuitous path around U.17 and 18.

The summit door was reached through a formal entryway that begins on the south with a 0.26m-high by 2.65m-long step (U.10) that projects 0.6-1m into the patio from Str. 426-15-1st. Unit 10 is located on the edifice's centerline, aligned with the aforementioned door, and is succeeded by an estimated 0.48m-high ascent to the summit. This step-up consists of an eastward continuation of U.5, a 4.7m-long (east-west) facing that is the western portion of the summit's southern basal wall. Unit 5 is succeeded over the remaining 2.75m on the east by U.7 (the transition occurs at approximately the point where the U.10 step intersects with the platform's southern facing). Unit 7 is offset 0.2m south of U.5 and they have slightly different orientations (89 degrees and 95 degrees, 30 minutes, respectively). These observations led to the definition of two distinct units here and tentatively suggest that the southern basal wall might have been constructed in an equal number of building episodes. Both U.5 and 7 are approximately 0.75m high. Framing the passageway are U.11-14. Units 11 and 12 are low (0.13m- tall), wide (0.45-0.5m across) stone walls that extend northward from U.5 and 7 to within 0.6m of the summit door (U.11 was thoroughly uncovered and is 1.6m long; U.12 had been revealed for only 1.3m of its north-south extent when excavations drew to a close). These constructions frame the doorway, channeling traffic from the patio into the superstructure's principal enclosure. Units 11 and 12 also give the southern summit a tripartite structure; a central passageway encompassing 1.7x2.2m (measured across the center) flanked on the east and west by spaces covering 2.4x2.5m and 2.25x2.4m, respectively. The latter areas appear to have been open on those sides overlooking the platform's facings. Bordering the summit door on the east and west are U.14 and 13, roughly square-shaped blocks of stone that rise approximately 0.15m and encompass 0.35m on a side and 0.6x0.65m, respectively. Units 11 and 13 are joined, making one continuous line from U.5 to U.1; U.14 is not connected to U.12 whose extrapolated

junction with U.1 is 0.6m further to the east. A 0.21m-high rectangular stone-faced construction (U.19) occupies the junction of the southern step (U.10) and southwest basal wall (U.5). Unit 19 is 0.3m wide north-south by 1m long east-west and may have been a shelf on which goods and/or people could be set/sit.

The eastern, western, and northern flanks of Str. 426-15-1st were apparently faced with single, stone-faced terraces (U.8, 6, and 9, in turn). The best understood of these elements is the northern terrace, U.9. This construction is 0.15m high and is backed by an earthen fill (U.23) indistinguishable from under- and overlying S.2 (see TS.2 for a description). The U.6, 8, and 9 terraces are each roughly 1m wide and have earthen surfaces. An enigmatic construction was raised atop the western terrace, adjoining the western core wall (U.4). Unit 20, a 0.15m-high by 0.2m-wide L-shaped stone wall, intersects U.4, 0.85m north of its southwest corner. Unit 20 then extends 0.55m to the southwest where it turns and runs south for 0.9m. Unit 21 is a 0.35m-wide wall that runs 0.55m northwest-southeast between U.20 and 4, joining the latter 0.1m north of its southwest corner. Units 20 and 4 might have defined an earthen-floored cubicle with interior dimensions of 0.55x0.9m, open on the south. *If* this was the case, however, we are at a loss to explain the presence of U.21 running across this putative enclosure.

Structure 426-15-1st is a 0.72-0.98m-high platform (taller on the south than on the north) that encompasses 6.9x7.45m (excluding the southern step) and is aligned 89 degrees to 95 degrees, 30 minutes. As noted earlier, the gradual south-to-north ascent over which Str. 426-15-1st was built accounts for the divergent heights of the building's northern and southern flanks. The earliest known portion of Str. 426-15-1st consists of a core encompassing 3.73x5.45m and bounded by substantial rock walls (U.1-4). This entity supports a summit room that covers 12.8m<sup>2</sup>, was entered through a 0.5m-wide doorway in the southern foundation, and contains two stone-faced and -surfaced benches. The more extensive of the pair (U.16) is a 0.22m-high, 1.2m-wide construction that runs for 2.17m south from the enclosure's northwest corner along its western wall. A stone pavement covering 1m<sup>2</sup> borders U.16 on the south. The second bench (U.17) is 0.4m high and projects 2m east from, and is perpendicular to, the first entity. Unit 17 is 0.5-0.65m wide and is L-shaped, a 0.65m-wide extension protruding 0.65m south of the bench's eastern end. Lying a scant 0.1-0.15m east of the U.17 bench is another element whose outlines conform to the shape of that letter. This one (U.18), however, consists of stones set on end creating a jagged upper surface that would have afforded a most uncomfortable resting place. A small cubicle (encompassing 0.7m<sup>2</sup>) apparently fronted the U.17 bench. All of the aforementioned built-in furniture effectively created two spaces within the summit compartment; a public, easily accessible southern area between the door and L-shaped bench and a private zone north of that construction. Movement between the two segments was by means of a 0.75m-wide passage on the enclosure's eastern margin, well away from the main southern portal.

At some point in the construction sequence, the summit was enlarged 2.2-2.5m southward by the erection of a 7.45m-long (east-west) element (this addition may, itself, have been the product of at least two building episodes). A 0.26m-high by 2.65m-long stone step (U.10) projects 0.6-1m south of the newly expanded building's centerline and provided access to a corridor bounded on the east and west by low stone constructions. This passageway covers 3.7m<sup>2</sup> and channels traffic from the step to the summit door. Bordering the corridor on the east and west are areas encompassing 6m<sup>2</sup> and 5.4m<sup>2</sup> that were apparently open on their two sides that overlooked the platform facings. A 0.21m-high shelf measuring 0.3x1m is wedged into the corner formed by the junction of the step and southern platform wall. This entity may have functioned as a place where people rested themselves and their burdens. Structure 426-15-1st's

remaining flanks are bounded by 1m-wide, low, stone-faced, earthen-floored terraces the northern one of which is 0.15m high. A small room, measuring 0.5m<sup>2</sup> and open to the south, was possibly appended to the core's southwest corner, built atop the western terrace. We are not sure where in the construction sequence the eastern, western, and northern terraces belong. They clearly postdate the core platform and are most likely contemporary with the augmentation of the southern summit.

Most walls are made of angular stones the flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. These rocks consist largely, if not invariably, of soft volcanic tuff. The flat faces they bear may be the results of natural processes, crude human intervention, or a combination of both. Definite masonry blocks (tuff) were used to fashion the southern step and the stone block that borders the summit door on the east. Schist slabs were also employed in the creation of the diminutive floor (0.83x1.2m) in the summit room's southwest corner. Both schist and faced blocks were incorporated as minority components in other walls, masonry appearing primarily the southern and western core facings (U.1 and 4) as well as the southern basal wall (U.5). Chinking pebbles were used to fill in the gaps among the larger rocks and all stones are set in a brown mud mortar. Rock sizes vary along the continuum from 0.09x0.1m to 0.36x0.45m, with most falling towards the middle of that range. Though stones are set horizontally in most cases to create walls and facings, the southern end of the U.16 bench is defined by rocks set on end and the L-shaped construction bordering the U.17 bench consists entirely of rocks projecting vertically from the earthen summit floor.

#### Time Span 4

Following Str. 426-15-1st's abandonment, S.2 resumed deposition, eventually accumulating to depths of 0.53-0.59m over S.1. Stratum 3, a moderately coarse-textured, dark brown soil that covers S.2 by 0.12-0.19m, is virtually identical to its predecessor. Stratum 3 is distinguished primarily by its greater concentration of small roots. Together, S.2 and 3 cover all but the highest rocks making up Str. 426-15-1st. Embedded within S.2 and 3 is debris fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 consists of a light density of displaced rocks extending for 1.8m south of construction and a moderately dense concentration of rocks continuing for 3.05m to the north.

#### Chronological Summary

The earliest settlement clearly attested to at Site 426 dates to the Late Classic I/II transition. Material pertaining to this interval was identified in deposits underlying construction at Strs. 426-7-1st, 426-11-1st, 426-12-1st, and 426-15-1st. The large trash deposit predating Str. 426-7-1st's erection (S.2) may have been laid down in Late Classic I, but this point was not established. Use of Site 426 intensifies during Late Classic II, at which time Strs. 426-7-1st, 426-12-1st, 426-15-1st, and 426-Sub3-1st were raised. The Late Classic II/III transition witnessed continued use of all but the last of these edifices along with the construction of Strs. 426-3-1st, 426-11-1st, 426-Sub1-1st, 426-Sub4-1st, and 426-Sub5-1st. In general, Site 426 underwent a relatively rapid period of occupation and growth, beginning perhaps as early as Late Classic I. Certainly by Late Classic I/II, people were widely dispersed across the settlement and by Late Classic II were devoting their energies to fashioning a wide range of buildings, some of which (Strs. 426-7-1st and 426-15-1st) were fairly substantial. The pace of construction

continued unabated throughout Late Classic II and into the first years of Late Classic III, with at least one sizeable platform (Str. 426-11-1st) erected during this interval. Site 426 may have continued in throughout Late Classic III. The paucity of recovered Late Classic III diagnostics, however, implies that population numbers may have been dwindling by this time. No constructions can be securely dated to late within Late Classic III. Site 426 was apparently abandoned prior to the onset of the Postclassic as no material markers relating to the last Precolumbian (or early historic) centuries were found here.