

Kenyon College

Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange

Four Valleys Archive

Anthropology

1990

PVN 096-Excavation report

Edward Schortman
schortma@kenyon.edu

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



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schortman, Edward, "PVN 096-Excavation report" (1990). *Four Valleys Archive*. Paper 68555.
<https://digital.kenyon.edu/honduras/68555>

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.

Site 96

Site 96, located within 1km northwest of La Sierra, consists of eight visible structures arranged around an open patio. This settlement covers 812m², its patio encompassing 12m north-south by 15m east-west. The land occupied by Site 96 is relatively flat. Digging here in 1990 exposed portions of six buildings, uncovering 208m². Site 96 was relatively well preserved when first investigated though it had been bulldozed by 1996. Nearly all traces of the settlement's constituent buildings were obliterated by these destructive processes. Excavations at Site 96 were directed by L. Aldrete and M. Yaeger from April 16 to May 23, 1990.

Structure 96-1

Structure 96-1 is located 1m east of Str. 96-2 on the south side of the main patio. Structure 96-8 is 2.7m to the north. Excavations directed here by M. Yaeger within Suboperation 96A uncovered ca. 25m², digging being carried down to maximum depths of 0.83m and 0.48m below modern ground surface beyond and within architecture, respectively. These investigations revealed one major construction phase. The soil strata associated with Str. 96-1-1st were not described. Consequently, this account focuses on the portions of Str. 96-1-1st that were uncovered within Subop. 96A.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.1	F.2	
2	Str. 96-1-1 st	U.1-7	-	-	
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

Prior to the erection of Str. 96-1-1st at least 0.32m of S.1 was laid down (the bottom of this earth level was not revealed). Based on the position of final-phase basal architecture on the north and south it appears that the ground surface above which this building was raised remained fairly flat over the 5.92m encompassed by Str. 96-1-1st.

Feature 2, a layer of burnt earth, was found 1.26m south and 0.18m below the base of TS.2 architecture. As the terrain supporting Str. 96-1-1st seems to have been level it is likely that F.2's lower stratigraphic position signals its earlier date. Feature 2 measures 0.8m north-south and seems to have formed in situ. Perhaps these materials constitute the fallen remains of a building raised directly on ancient ground surface.

Time Span 2

Structure 96-1-1st is a 0.38-0.4m-tall platform that measures 5.92m across north-south and was aligned roughly 1 degree; the building's east margin was not encountered. Units 1 and 4, which define the platform's north and south flanks, are unusually broad, covering 2.43m and 1.53m across respectively. We are at a loss to account for such relatively wide walls in relation to

the need to enhance the building's stability along these flanks. As noted, Str. 96-1-1st was seemingly built atop level terrain and there was apparently no need to shore up these sides against the adverse effects of downslope erosion. Rather, U.1 and 4 may have doubled as supports for perishable upper walls and as shelves, benches, or places where various tasks could be conducted above ground level and under a roof. The fill contained between U.1 and 4 consists of a moderately dense concentration of stones set in a brown soil matrix (U.7). The edifice's western flank is delimited by U.2 and 3. The former runs 2.7m south from its intersection with U.1 at Str. 96-1-1st's northwest corner. At this point the platform's west flank steps in 0.75m to the east before running south (as U.3) for an additional 2.5m to join U.4 to form the platform's southwest corner. Units 2 and 3 are 0.26-0.32m wide and 0.26-0.43m tall. It is possible that Strs. 96-2-1st and 96-1-st were joined on the north, the relatively low height of U.2 resulting from its having been built above an artificially elevated surface in this area. No signs of the retaining walls that would be expected to define the limits of this putative intervening construction on the north and south were found, however. It may just be that we did not find the base of U.2 in our investigations. An earthen-floored room covering 1m north-south by at least 1m east-west was uncovered on Str. 96-1-1st's summit (its east side was not located). A niche measuring 0.3m across extends at floor level 0.6m south into U.4, which defines the summit room's south side. This niche is located 0.5m east of the enclosure's southwest interior corner. A poorly preserved construction (U.5) projects 0.95m south of U.4. Unit 5 is 0.34m high by roughly 1.3m wide at its junction with U.4; it may have narrowed to 1m across at its southern edge. All TS.2 construction consists of cobbles set in a mud mortar and with small chinking stones packed under and around the larger rocks. In general the flatter faces of these stones are directed outwards.

Remnants of another construction were found in addition to the units that were directly related to the Str. 96-1-1st platform. Unit 6, lying 0.7m north of the building's northwest corner and 0.4m northeast of Str. 96-2-1st' northeast corner, is a roughly circular arrangement of small to medium-size cobbles. This entity covers 1.1m east-west by 0.8m north-south, is one stone thick, and the rocks are generally set horizontally with their flatter aspects directed outwards. Some burnt earth was found adhering to several U.6 stones, especially on its east side. It appears that U.6 might be the foundation for a construction that was made partly of earth and subjected to high heat.

Time Span 3

Following its abandonment, Str. 96-1-1st was largely covered by the resumed deposition of S.1. Embedded primarily within the uppermost 0.4m of S.1 is a moderately light concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely fell from final-phase architecture. These stones were primarily concentrated atop the platform's summit though F.1 was traced for 1m south and 1.1m north of the building.

Structure 96-2

Structure 96-2 lies on the south side of the main patio, immediately west of, and possibly joined to, Str. 96-1 and 12m south and across the patio from Str. 96-6. Digging here within Subop. 96B and J uncovered ca. 51m², revealing most of the building's perimeter and 1m-wide swath of the summit along its west side. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.5m and 0.67m below modern ground surface within and beyond architecture, respectively. One major

building phase along with a significant period of renovation were identified in the course of this work that was overseen by L. Aldrete.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	Str. 96-2-1 st	U.1-5, 12	-	-	
3	Str. 96-2-1 st	U.6-11	-	-	
4	-	-	S.1-2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The first activity identified in Str. 96-2-1st's environs was the deposition of a moderately hard-packed, moderately fine-textured, reddish-brown soil (S.3). Stratum 3 was revealed to a thickness of, maximally, 0.12m in the base of excavations (its full depth was not revealed). Artifacts found in this stratum may point to a human presence in the area while the soil was being laid down. We cannot rule out the possibility, however, that these materials worked their way down into S.3 from later contexts.

Time Span 2

Structure 96-2-1st is a stone-faced platform that is aligned approximately due north-south. Its basal walls (U.1-4) apparently rose directly 0.7m-0.9m to the summit. Unit 3, the south basal facing, was preserved to only 0.3m high. It seems unlikely that this wall was originally so low as there are no signs of other step-ups leading to the summit from U.3. The south ends of U.2 and 4 where they join U.3 are also lower than they are elsewhere along these walls. Most likely, U.3 and southern U.2 and 4 were dismantled near the end of Str. 96-2-1st's occupation, possibly to secure stones used in raising other constructions at Site 96.

Structure 96-2-1st covers 3.52m by 4.75m while its earthen-floored summit encompasses 2x3.6m (7.2m²). The unusually broad northern facing (U.1, measuring 1.17m across) might have served as fill-retaining unit, support for perishable upper walls, and bench. The other basal walls (U.2-4) are 0.3-0.6m wide. The fill contained by U.1-4 consists of a brown soil mixed with a few stones (U.12). A stone pavement (U.5) fronts Str. 96-2-1st on its northern, patio-facing side. Unit 5 projects maximally 2.7m to the north. All constructions raised now are primarily made of river-worn stones set in a mud mortar and packed round with chinking pebbles. The flatter aspects of these rocks are directed outwards or, in the case of the U.5 pavement, upwards. A few cut blocks comprise minority components of these walls, mostly being found at the corners of the basal facings (U.1-4).

Time Span 3

During this interval the platform was expanded on all sides save the north. Unit 7, a 0.26m-tall riser, projects 0.38m south of U.3. This construction runs the full length of U.3, the core platform's south facing, and may have served as a step up leading to the platform's summit. Given the poor state of U.3's preservation it is unclear how much of that wall rose above U.7 during TS.3. If, as we estimate, U.3 projected 0.53m above U.7 it seems unlikely that the summit could have been easily reached without a step intervening between U.7 and 3. On the east Str. 96-2-1st was expanded 0.87m by the addition of U.6. This 0.35m-high facing apparently fronts a terrace the earthen tread of which is bounded by U.2 on the west. The latter projected an estimated 0.3m above U.6. On the west a 0.44m-tall riser (U.8) fronts an earthen-floored terrace that extends 0.8m west of the core platform's western basal wall (U.4). In this case, the earlier construction (U.4) still rose approximately 0.25m above the later addition. Unit 8 runs east to join U.3 and 7 to form the newly expanded platform's southwest corner. No such connection was determined between U.6 and U.3 and 7. The lack of such a junction may result from poor preservation. It might, however, signal that these additions remained incomplete when work on Str. 96-2-1st ceased.

Units 6 and 8 extend 2.4m and 1.85m north of the core platform's northeast and northwest corners, respectively. Unit 8 terminates at this point while U.6 corners with U.11, a 0.26m-tall by 0.4m-wide wall that projects 2.1m west from its junction with U.6. Unit 10, standing 0.35m high by 0.45m wide, then extends 1.1m north from the west end of U.11. A low (0.15m-tall) wall (U.9) was then traced for 1.1m west from its corner with U.10 before excavation ceased. Units 6, 8-11 border the U.5 floor on all sides; U.8's east flank where it lies north of the core platform encroaches, and rests on, that pavement. It appears that U.5 may have been expanded 1.2m north during this interval to fill the space defined by U.6, 8-11. Raising these additions seemingly functioned to enclose the U.5 surface save on its northwest corner where the west footing, U.8, may not have intersected the northern boundary wall, U.9. The latter is sufficiently low (0.15m high) that it might have served more as a threshold leading onto the U.5 floor than as a support for a perishable upper wall blocking access to that surface. Whether U.9 continued for U.5's full east-west width and, if so, if it retained this low height over the estimated 4m it would take to bound the pavement on the north remains unknown.

By the end of TS.3, Str. 96-2-1st's core platform retained its original height, orientation, and the building's earthen-floored summit was apparently unchanged. The edifice's basal dimensions were however expanded to encompass 3.9m north-south by 6.42m by the addition of terraces on all sides except the north. The southern terrace is 0.26m tall by 0.38m wide while its eastern and western counterparts measure 0.35m high by 0.87m wide and 0.44m tall by 0.8m wide, respectively. It may be that these risers provided relatively easy access to the summit; step-ups to the latter would have been 0.25 and 0.3m, formed by the tops of the core platform's basal facings that were still visible after completion of the eastern and western terraces. The northern stone pavement (U.5) was apparently expanded 1.2m northward at this time, that surface now being bordered by stone foundations measuring 0.35-0.45 tall by 0.4-0.65m wide on the east and west. Unit 1, the core platform's north face, still delimits U.5 on the south while access to the pavement may have been largely unimpeded on the north by passing over a 0.15m-high stone threshold. Enclosing U.5 in this way created a stone-floored surface-level room that bordered the original platform on the north and covered roughly 16m². No built-in furniture was uncovered in this area. All TS.3 architecture consists primarily of river-worn cobbles, packed round with chinking pebbles, and set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks were generally directed outwards. Cut blocks were found as minority components

in U.6, 7, and 9. Adding the northern room to Str. 96-2-1st's overall dimensions increased the building's north-south dimension to maximally 7.8m. There are some signs that renovations on Str. 96-2-1st were not completed when work on the building came to an end.

Time Span 4

Following Str. 96-2-1st's abandonment as much as 0.3m of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, brown soil (S.2) was laid down atop S.3 and covered most of the surviving architecture. Stratum 2, in turn, was blanketed by about 0.1m of a very similar soil that is distinguished by its darker brown color. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a relatively light concentration of stones (F.1) that seemingly fell from final-phase architecture. As the putative dismantling of Str. 96-2-1st's south side (see TS.2) occurred prior to the deposition of S.1 and 2 it appears that this activity predated the final occupation of Site 96. The relative paucity of F.1 stones in this area tentatively suggest that the poor preservation of the core platform's south basal facing (U.3) was not due to the collapse of this wall.

Structure 96-4

Structure 96-4 is on the west side of the Site 96 patio. It is located 1.1m south of Str. 96-5 and 14.8m west and across that patio from Str. 96-8. The ground here rises about 0.2m over 12m from northeast-to-southwest. Approximately 41m² was cleared in the course of exposing the building's northwestern half, the work being conducted within Subop. 96C and K. Digging was pursued to a maximum depth of 1.16m below modern ground surface beyond final-phase architecture; the platform's fill was not investigated. One major construction phase was revealed in the course of this research, which was directed by L. Aldrete.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	Str. 96-4-1 st	U.1-18	-	-	
3	-	-	S.1-2	F.1	

Time Span 1

This interval witnessed the deposition of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.3). Stratum 3 is at least 0.22m thick (its base was not found) and ascends 0.22m over 0.9m from southwest-to-northeast where it runs under Str. 96-4-1st's southwest flank. By the time S.3 emerges from beneath Str. 96-4-1st's northeast side that soil level is 0.32m lower than it observed high point 5.75m to the southwest. It would appear, therefore, that Str. 96-4-1st was built atop a low rise. The recovery of cultural material from S.3 points to a human occupation in the area before the building's final version was raised.

Time Span 2

What constitutes roughly the northwest half of Str. 96-4-1st was uncovered. Extrapolating from this segment to the platform suggests that the building's penultimate form had a 'T' shape, the 'crossbar' running northwest-southeast while the 'stem' projects 2.7m to the southwest from the approximate center of that crosspiece. The northeast segment is bounded by basal stone walls (U.1-3) that are 0.4m (U.1), 0.3m (U.2), and 0.28m tall (U.3). Unit 1 was traced for 3.1m northwest from the southeastern excavation limits to its junction with U.2 at Str. 96-4-1st's north corner. The latter measures 3.15m and joins U.3 to form the west corner of the platform's northeast segment. A possible 0.1m-tall step (U.18) projects 0.1m northwest of U.2 and runs for 1.2m along the front of U.2 from the latter's corner with U.1. This potential riser is aligned ca. 260 degrees, diverging somewhat from U.2's overall orientation of roughly 240 degrees. Unit 3, the southwest facing of the northeast 'crossbar', runs for 1.35m southeast of its corner with U.2 ultimately joining U.4. The latter is the 0.38m-high northwest facing of Str. 96-4-1st's southwest 'stem.' Unit 4 extends 2.7m southwest of its point of intersection with U.3 where it joins U.5, a 0.45m-tall wall that defines the southwest flank of the southwest projection. Unit 5 was traced for 1.95m southeast at which point excavations ceased. This wall also continues 0.7m northwest of the U.4/5 corner at which point digging ended. A poorly preserved terrace (U.15) standing an estimated 0.25m tall projects 0.75m southwest of U.5. Unit 15 intersects U.5 at a point 0.8m southeast of the U.4/5 junction and was followed for 1.65m to the northwest before work on Str. 96-4-1st came to an end. That U.5 and 15 both continue past the U.4/5 corner to the northwest suggests they may have been part of an effort to expand the building's southwest projection in this direction, possibly to bring its northwest face in line with the northwest basal wall of the 'crossbar' (U.2).

The northeast 'crossbar' supports three distinct spaces, two of which (Rooms 1 and 2) are set in a northwest-southeast line. Room 1, the northwest-most member of the pair, is bounded by stone foundations (U.6 and 8) on the northwest and southwest; the remaining two flanks are left open. Units 6 and 8 are 0.28 and 0.32m tall by 0.44m and 0.22m wide. Room 1's floor is surfaced with stones (U.7) and covers 1.15x1.34m. Room 2 lies immediately to the southeast of Room 1, has an earthen floor encompassing 0.9x1.3m, and is bounded by U.8 on the southwest, U.17 on the northeast (0.2m tall by 0.28m wide), and U.9 on the southeast (0.3m tall and at least 0.25m wide; this wall's southeast side was not uncovered). There was no obstacle to moving between Rooms 1 and 2. A faced stone block (U.10) measuring about 0.4m on a side is set into Room 2's floor at the enclosure's northwest corner and against the northeast face of U.8. Unit 10, like other similarly placed pieces of masonry recorded elsewhere within the Naco valley, may have marked a formal entrance, in this case the passage from Room 2 to the remainder of Str. 96-4-1st's superstructure. Immediately backing Rooms 1 and 2 on the southwest is Room 4. This compartment has an earthen surface measuring 0.97m northeast-southwest by 2.85m northwest-southeast and is bounded by a 0.3m-high footing (U. 11) on the southwest and a continuation of U.9 on the southeast. The latter rises 0.27m above Room 3's floor, which, in turn, is set 0.32m above the floors of Rooms 1 and 2. Room 4 appears to have been left open on the northeast where it overlooks Rooms 1 and 2 and on the northwest where it is bordered by U.2. The exposed portion of the southwest summit supports Room 3. This enclosure is at the same level as Room 4 to the northeast and separated from the latter by Unit 11. Room 3's earthen-floored interior covers 1x1.2m, was entered through a 0.8m-wide door in its north corner, and is bounded by stone foundations (U.11-14) that are 0.3m tall by 0.2-0.4m wide (the southeast side of the southeast footing, U.12, was not revealed).

A 0.19m-high wall (U.16) was located 0.1m northwest of U.2, the northeast 'crossbar's' northwest basal facing. Unit 16 is 0.57m wide over most of its exposed distance of 3.5m, narrowing to about 0.2m across near its northeast terminus. This wall is oriented ca. 65 degrees and may have served as the footing for a free-standing perishable wall.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 96-4-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.72m high on the northeast and 0.45m tall on the southwest, measured 5.85m northeast-southwest by at least 3.5m northwest-southeast, and was aligned roughly 240 degrees. It appears that the penultimate version of the building had a T-shape the crossbar of which forms the northeast part of the edifice while the 'stem' projects 2.7m to the southwest from near the center of the northeast element. The northeast crossbar covers at least 3.5m northwest-southeast by 3.15m northeast-southwest, stands 0.4m tall, and supports, minimally, three rooms two of which are set in a northwest-southeast line. Room 1 on the northwest encompasses 1.5m², is surfaced with stones and bordered by foundations that are 0.28m and 0.32m tall by 0.44m and 0.22m wide. The enclosure is open on the northeast where it overlooks the patio and on the southeast where it is bordered by Room 2. The latter is an earthen-floored enclosure that covers 1.2m² and is bordered by stone foundations on all sides save the northwest. These footings are 0.2m and 0.3m tall by 0.28m and 0.25m wide. A faced block measuring ca. 0.4m on a side was set in Room 2's floor near its northwest corner. This piece of masonry may have marked passage southwest towards Rooms 3 and 4. The latter are set 0.32m above the floors of Rooms 1 and 2. Room 4 backs these enclosures on the southwest, has an earthen floor that encompasses 2.8m², and is bounded by stone footings on the southeast and southwest that are 0.3m and 0.27m high by 0.4m and at least 0.25m wide. Room 4 was apparently left open on the northeast where it overlooks Rooms 1 and 2 and on the northwest. Room 3 borders Room 4 on the southwest and occupies the summit of the southwestern 'stem.' The enclosure's earthen-floored interior covers 1.2m² and was entered through a 0.8m-wide door in its north corner. The foundations bordering Room 3 are 0.3m tall by 0.2-0.4m wide.

It appears that Str. 96-4-1st's summit was reached by mounting the 0.1m-high by 0.1m-wide step built into the platform's north corner. This low riser gave access to Room 1's north corner. From here one could have moved easily into Room 2 and from there over the cut block entry feature to Room 4. It is not clear if Room 3 on the southwest could have been accessed from Room 4 or, as its north-facing door suggests, was reached by stepping up and over the southwest 'stem's' northwest facing, U.4.

There are some hints that, near the end of Str. 96-4-1st's use-life, the building's southwest 'stem' was expanded to the northwest, possibly to bring this portion of the platform in line with the northwest face of the northeast 'crossbar.' If this was the case, the platform's 'T-shape' was converted into a square, assuming that comparable renovations were being pursued at this time on the unexcavated portion of Str. 96-4-1st. It was in the midst of these efforts that a 0.25m-tall terrace (U.15) was added to the platform's southwest basal facing (U.5). Unit 15 projects 0.75m southwest of U.5 and did not run the full length of the building's southwest flank; it joins U.5 at a point 0.8m southeast of that facing's intersection with U.4.

A 0.19m-tall stone foundation (U.16) is located as little as 0.1m northwest of Str. 96-4-1st and may have been the foundation for a free-standing perishable upper wall. This construction narrows from 0.57m to 0.2m across over its 3.5m length. Unit 16's orientation of 65 degrees diverges slightly from the general alignment of the main platform. Structure 96-5-1st is 0.5m

northwest of U.16 and it is possible that this wall was raised to reduce visibility between the two edifices.

The constructions raised during TS.2 were fashioned primarily of river cobbles set in a mud mortar and packed round with small chinking pebbles. The flatter aspects of these rocks were generally oriented outwards or, in the case of the U.7 floor, upwards. As noted, U.10 consists of one faced block while shaped masonry comprised minority components of U.15 and 17.

Time Span 3

Following abandonment, 0.18-0.36m of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, brown soil (S.2) accumulated atop S.3. Stratum 2 was covered, in turn, by 0.12-0.14m of a very similar soil that was distinguished by its dark brown color (S.1). Embedded in S.2 and, to a much lesser extent, in S.1 is a dense concentration of rocks and ceramics (F.1) that likely fell off TS.2 architecture. Feature 1 was followed for 1.8m northeast and 1.7m southwest of the platform. Artifacts were especially plentiful components of F.1 off the edifice's northeast, patio-facing side.

Structure 96-5

Structure 96-5 occupies the northwest corner of the patio, lying 1.1m northeast of Str. 96-4 and 12.5m northwest and across the patio from Str. 96-2. Digging within Subop. 96D and H exposed 45m², revealing about 75% of the edifice. The building's north basal and summit corners were not revealed. Excavations were pursued to maximum depths of 0.75m and 0.38m below modern ground surface beyond and within construction, respectively. One major building episode was identified in the course of this work which was overseen by L. Aldrete.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	
2	Str. 96-5-1 st Str. 96-5-Sub1	U.1-15 U.16	-	-	
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the environs of Str. 96-5-1st is the deposition of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, reddish-brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 was exposed north and south of Str. 96-5-1st, reaching a maximum observed thickness of 0.27m (its base was not encountered). Stratum 2 appears to have risen ca. 0.3m over 5.7m from southwest-to-northeast. Cultural material retrieved from this earth layer points to a human presence in the area while S.2 was being deposited.

Time Span 2

During this interval Str. 96-5-1st was raised. The building is a platform fronted by stone retaining walls (U.1-4) on all sides that are 0.3-0.38m tall. Unit 1, the southeast basal facing, contains a niche measuring 0.2m on a side and open to the southeast. This indentation is located near the center of Str. 96-5-1st's southeast face. Unit 1 fronts on the southeast a terrace that is 2.58m-wide northwest-southeast. This area is surfaced with a mix of earth and stone and terminates on the northwest in a 0.36m-tall step-up to the summit (U.6). A 0.3m-high ascent to the summit (U.5) joins U.6 to define the summit's south corner and is found 1.15m northeast of U.3, the platform's southwest basal facing. No comparable terrace was noted on the northwest where the basal wall (U.4) leads directly to the summit. We did not clear enough of Str. 96-5-1st's northeast flank to determine if U.2, the basal wall, rose directly to the summit or if there was a step-up intervening between it and the platform's superstructure.

The ample southeast terrace supports two rooms set in a northeast-southwest line and separated by 2m. A faced masonry block (U.7) measuring 0.45x0.5m was set even with the terrace floor near the center of this open space and in line with, and 0.5m northwest of, the niche in U.1's southeast face. Shaped stones such as this mark entrances elsewhere at La Sierra and in the Naco valley generally. Most likely, U.7 formalized a passage that traversed the terrace surface between Rooms 1 and 2, leading to U.6 and the summit. Room 1, on the northeast, measures 1.4x1.7m, has an earthen floor, and is bordered by stone footings (U. 6, 8, 11, 12) that are preserved to 0.28-0.41m high and measure 0.28-0.48m across. Passage from the southeast directly into Room 1 was through a door set in U.11, its southeast footing. This entrance was flanked by faced stones the long axes of which run perpendicular to U.11. The southwest enclosure (Room 2) covers 1.6x1.7m. Room 2's floor was not exposed. From what we could infer based on the compartment's uncovered segments, it was bordered by stone foundations (U.6, 13-15) that are 0.19-0.4m high and 0.3-0.56m wide. Excavations in both rooms did not reveal built-in furniture. The summit compartment (Room 3) backs Rooms 1 and 2 on the northwest. Immediately northwest of the summit step-up (U.6) are two walls (U.9 and 10) that define the northeast and northwest sides of a space that covers 0.85m southeast-northwest by at least 1.05m northeast-southwest (the southwest end of U.9 was not identified). These constructions are 0.19-0.3m high and are carefully set with the flatter aspects of their component stones directed outwards. It may be that U.9 and 10, together with U.6 on the southeast, delimit a small room encompassing approximately 0.9m². Alternatively, U.9 and 10 could be facings for a C-shaped bench that fills most of the summit and looks southeast over U.6. If so, that bench could have encompassed as much as 14m² (as we did not uncover Str. 96-5-1st's summit's northeast side this figure is an estimate).

Remnants of another structure were found lying 1.7m northwest of Str. 96-5-1st. This building (Str. 96-5-Sub1) is represented by a, maximally, 0.28m-tall by at least 0.33m-wide stone wall (U.16) that is aligned ca. 9 degrees over the 1.05m it was traced in our excavations (U.16's east edge was not revealed). It is unclear from these limited remains whether Str. 96-5-Sub1 was a surface-level building or low platform.

Structure 96-5-1st is a stone-faced platform that covers 5.7x6.5m, is 0.3m (on the northwest) to 0.68m tall (on the southeast), and is aligned roughly 68 degrees. The building's height discrepancy is likely due to the raising of this edifice over a gradual southeast-to-northwest rise in the terrain. Terraces measuring 1.15m and 2.58m across border Str. 96-5-1st on the southwest and southeast, respectively. The rise to the summit is direct on the northwest; not enough of the building's northeast flank was uncovered to determine if there was a terrace on this side and, if so, what its width might have been. The southeast terrace supports three

distinct spaces arranged in a northeast-southwest line. Two of these entities are Rooms 1 and 2. Room 1 on the northeast covers 2.4m² while Room 2 on the southwest encompasses 2.7m². Each of these compartments is delimited by stone foundations that are 0.19-0.41m tall by 0.28-0.56m wide. A door bordered by cut blocks provided access directly into Room 1 from the southeast. No comparable passage was noted on Room 2's southeast flank. Separating Rooms 1 and 2 is an area measuring 2x2.6m (5.2m²). A faced block covering 0.45x0.5m is set into the floor of this space about half way between Rooms 1 and 2 and 0.5m northwest of the southeast basal riser. This block is in a line with a niche measuring 0.2m on a side that is built into the platform's southeast facing and which is open on the southeast. The aforementioned block may have marked a passageway leading northwest to the summit. The latter consists of a sizable compartment (Room 3) that covers 3.07m northwest-southeast by 5.1m northeast-southwest (the latter is an estimate as we did not clear enough of Str. 96-5-1st's northeast flank to be certain of the summit's margin in this direction). It may be that 14m² of this space was taken up by a C-shaped, stone-faced bench that looked southeast towards the passage between Rooms 1 and 2. Another building, Str. 96-5-Sub1, is located 1.7m northwest of Str. 96-5-1st and was bounded on one side by a 0.28m-high wall that was aligned approximately 9 degrees over the 1.05m it was exposed. Whether Str. 96-5-Sub1 was a platform or surface-level building is unclear.

All constructions raised during TS.2 were fashioned primarily of river-worn stones the flatter faces of which were directed outwards. One cut block was recorded in the western portion of U.1 and, as noted, faced masonry delimited the door into Room 1 and possibly marked the formal entrance to Str. 96-5-1st's summit.

Time Span 3

Following Str. 96-5-1st's abandonment, as much as 0.52m of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, dark brown soil (S.1) was laid down covering S.2 and all but the uppermost portions of TS.2 architecture. Embedded in S.1 is a dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely fell from final-phase construction. Feature 1 was especially concentrated within 1.4m northwest and 0.77m southeast of Str. 96-5-1st.

Structure 96-6

Structure 96-6 closes off the north side of the main patio. It is 4.5m east-northeast of Str. 96-5 and 7.8m northwest of Str. 96-8. Digging here in Subop. 96E and I under the direction of E. Yaeger uncovered ca. 28m², excavations being carried down to maximum depths of 0.64m and 0.74m below modern ground surface beyond and within construction, respectively. One major building phases was revealed in the course of this work. Only a very limited portion of the summit was exposed in Subop. 96E and I.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Date
1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	Str. 96-6-Sub1 Str. 96-6-Sub2	U.11-12 U.10	-	-	

3	-	-	S.3	-
4	Str. 96-6-1 st Str. 96-6-Sub3	U.1-8, 13 U.9	-	-
5	-	-	S.1-2	F.1

Time Span 1

During this interval at least 0.05m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.3) was laid down (S.3's base was not revealed in our excavations). It appears that, during TS.1, S.3's upper surface remained relatively flat over the 6.14m north-south distance that it was recorded.

Time Span 2

The remnants of what look to have been two distinct surface-level buildings were assigned to TS.2 based on their nearly identical stratigraphic position underlying TS.4 architecture and burial by the resumption of S.3's deposition during TS.3.

On the south, Str. 96-6-Sub1 is represented by U.11 and 12. These are two parallel stone lines that are aligned 248 degrees and 246 degrees respectively. Unit 11 stands 0.08m tall, is 0.4m wide and lies 1.1m south of U.12. The latter is, at most, 0.1m high by 0.34m wide. Unit 11 was traced for 1.7m southwest of its apparent east corner; only 1m of U.12's total length was revealed. It is not clear that these two constructions were parts of the same building; they may constitute foundations from two closely-spaced but separate edifices. *If* U.11 and 12 are the northwest and southeast sides of one construction the earthen floor they enclose measures 0.7m across northwest-southeast.

The portion of Str. 96-6-Sub2 that we uncovered consists of U.10, a 0.18m-tall by 0.57m wall that is oriented approximately 244 degrees over the 2.1m it was exposed. Unit 10's low height and the lack of any other construction in its immediate area which this wall might have fronted suggest that this unit was a foundation that delimited one side of an earthen-floored, surface-level edifice.

The raising of Str. 96-6-1st, therefore, apparently succeeded a collection of modest surface-level buildings (Strs. 96-6-Sub1 and -Sub2) the perishable upper walls of which were raised above stone foundations standing 0.08-0.18m high and measuring 0.34-0.57m wide. They enclosed earthen-floored rooms very little of which were exposed. One of these compartments may have been 0.7m wide. Structures 96-6-Sub1 and 96-6-Sub2 were aligned 246-247 degrees and, in the case of the latter building, ca. 244 degrees. All architecture raised during TS.2 was fashioned primarily of river cobbles the flatter aspects of which tended to be directed outwards. These rocks were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of Strs. 96-6-Sub1 and -Sub2 about 0.2m of S.3 was laid down covering the exposed portions of both buildings.

Time Span 4

It was during this span that Str. 96-6-1st was erected. From the portions of this building that were uncovered it appears to have been a platform bounded on the southeast and northwest by U.1 and 2. These walls originally stood an estimated 0.6m tall and are 0.25-0.3m wide. Together, U.1 and 2 define the earthen floored summit of a platform that measures 2.91m across north-south. This platform is fronted on its southeast, patio-facing side by three stairs that are defined on the southwest and northeast by U.3 and 7. The former's width was not determined whereas its northeastern counterpart measures 0.3m across. The basal riser (U.4) was followed for 5m northeast from its corner with U.3. At this point U.4 runs 0.66m back to the northwest where it joins U.6, the next ascending riser. The stone construction joining U.4 and 6 is designated as U.8. As a consequence of this change in direction, there is an inset in Str. 96-6-1st's southeast basal riser that measures 0.8-0.9m across northeast-southwest (between U.7 and 8) and is 0.66m deep northwest-southeast. The first step, U.4, is 0.17m tall while its tread is 0.89m wide. The next riser (U.6) ascends 0.22m above U.4 and extends 1.18m to the northwest where it is succeeded by U.5. The fill underlying U.6's tread consists of a moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, brown soil (U.13). Unit 5 rises 0.21m above U.6's tread, fronts U.1, and is 0.58m wide. This third step leads directly to the summit. Unit 5 extends below the U.6 tread, ultimately standing 0.67m tall, about the same height as the putative southeast basal facing of the core platform (U.1). Why the builders decided to raise such a significant construction in front (southeast) of and to the same height as core platform's facing is unclear; no comparable construction was noted enveloping U.2 on the northwest.

A stone foundation (U.9) that was likely part of a surface-level building (Str. 96-6-Sub3) was found roughly 0.5m northwest of Str. 96-6-1st. Unit 9 is 0.2m high by 0.48m wide and was exposed for 1.7m over which distance it was oriented approximately 241 degrees. Unit 9's base rests at about the same level as that of U.2, thereby suggesting that the two constructions are roughly contemporary.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 96-6-1st was a platform that stood 0.6m tall, measured 5.56m northwest-southeast by at least 6m northeast-southwest (its northeast and southwest margins were not identified), and was aligned ca. 70 degrees. The building was fronted on the southeast, its patio-facing side, by an extensive set of three steps that ran for 5.65m, nearly all of the building's northeast-southwest extent. The basal riser is an exception to this pattern as it extends for only 5m northeast of Str. 96-6-1st's south corner before turning back to the northwest to intersect the next ascending step. This change of direction left an inset measuring 0.8-0.9m across northeast-southwest by 0.66m deep in the platform's southeast basal step. The southeastern stairs rise in increments of 0.17m, 0.22m, and 0.21m to the summit their treads measuring 0.89m, 1.18m, and 0.58m across. The 1m-wide segment of the summit we revealed had an earthen floor and measured 2.91m northwest-southeast. No built-in furniture was revealed in this limited exposure of the superstructure. What was probably part of a foundation delimiting the southeast side of a surface-level building (Str. 96-6-Sub3) was found 0.5m northwest of Str. 96-6-1st. From the little we uncovered of Str. 96-6-Sub3 it measured at least 1.7m over which distance it was oriented approximately 241 degrees. The foundation itself is 0.2m tall by 0.48m wide. All constructions raised during TS.4 consisted of river cobbles, the larger rocks occasionally packed round with small pebbles. This patterning was especially obvious in U.7 where three clear courses of river-rounded stones were surrounded by chinking

pebbles. The flatter aspects of the rocks used to make walls and steps during this interval were generally directed outwards. All of the stones were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 5

Following the abandonment of Strs. 96-6-1st and 96-6-Sub3 as much as 0.31m of a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.2) was laid down over TS.4 architecture and S.3. Covering S.2 by 0.08-0.14m of a very similar soil (S.1) that was distinguished from S.2 by its darker brown hue. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely originally derived from final-phase construction. Feature 1 extended for at least 2.3m southeast of Str. 96-6-1st and 2.2m northwest of Str. 96-6-Sub3.

Structure 96-8

Structure 96-8 is on the east side of the main patio, lying 14.8m east and across that open space from Str. 96-4 and 2.7m northeast of Str. 96-1. Digging here within Subop. 96F and G uncovered approximately 18m² in the course of revealing most of the building's east and west flanks along with a 1m-wide trench that cut across the platform's summit heading east-west. Excavations reached maximum depths of 0.58m and 0.7m below modern ground surface beyond and within architecture, respectively. Two major renovations that were included in one major construction phase, along with hints of an earlier building episode, were recorded in the course of this work which was directed by E. Yaeger.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	Str. 96-8-Sub1	U.1	-	-	
3	-	-	S.2, 3	-	
4	Str. 96-8-1 st	U.4-9	-	-	
5	Str. 96-8-1 st	U.2-3	-	-	
6	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The first activity attested to in the vicinity of Str. 96-8 was the deposition of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.3). Stratum 3 was identified only off the building's east side where it was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.21m (its base was not found). This soil level rose 0.07m over 0.78m east-to-west immediately east of Str. 96-8-1st where it was observed to run beneath that platform's east basal facing (U.4).

Time Span 2

The only portion of Str. 96-8-Sub1 that was uncovered in our investigations is a stone wall (U.1) that stood 0.14m tall, measured 0.28m across, and was traced for 0.55m north of U.2 (Str. 96-8-1st's northern basal wall). Over this limited distance U.1 was oriented ca. 344 degrees. Unit 1's north edge was not clearly identified while its southern terminus lies somewhere below Str. 96-8-1st's final-phase architecture. Based on the very restricted portion of U.1 that we exposed it appears that it might have been part of a foundation that delimited the boundary of a surface-level edifice that was superseded by TS.4 construction.

Time Span 3

After the abandonment of Str. 96-8-Sub1 the edifice was buried by the deposition of roughly 0.4m of a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.2). Stratum 2 so closely resembles S.3 that it seems likely they represent slight variations within the same stratum; S.2 where it is exposed north and west of Str. 96-8-1st is at a depth equivalent to S.3 on the east. As S.2 resumed deposition following Str. 96-8-1st's abandonment it is difficult to say how much of this soil was laid down during TS.2. The 0.4m figure is based on the amount of S.2 that intervenes between the bases of U.1 and 2, the latter overlying the former.

Time Span 4

During this interval Str. 96-8-1st was a platform defined by stone facings (U.4 and 5) on the east and west, respectively (the putative northern basal wall was not uncovered and only a small portion of the southern steps (U.6) were revealed). Unit 4, the eastern basal facing, is 0.41m tall by 0.47m wide whereas its western analogue (U.5) probably rose to an equivalent height but is 0.8m wide. The latter's base, however, extends down to at least 0.16m lower than that recorded on U.4 (it is not clear that U.5's base was encountered). Why U.5 is somewhat deeper remains unclear; there is no sign that the ground on which it was raised dropped off in this direction. It may be, given its relatively great width, that U.5 was built to be especially substantial so as to anchor constructions built east and west of this wall. Access to the platform's earthen summit was apparently achieved by ascending two steps (U.6) situated on Str. 96-8-1st's southeast corner. Unit 6's risers are 0.16m and 0.27m tall while the tread between the basal and second ascending step is 0.16m. These steps project 0.5m south of the platform, their construction making Str. 96-8-1st's southeast corner inset. Said inset measures 0.5m on a side. A stone surface (U.7) extends 1.7m south of U.6. The full east-west extent of U.7 and the western terminus of U.6 were not determined. The fill contained by U.4 and 5 on the east and west consists of two superimposed levels. The uppermost fill (U.8) is made up of a dense packing of small to medium-size cobbles set in a brown soil matrix. Unit 8 is 0.37m thick and is underlain by a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown earth (U.9) that is indistinguishable from S.2. Very few rocks were included in U.9.

Structure 96-8-1st was, by the end of TS.4, a 0.41m-tall stone-faced, stone-and-earth-filled platform that measured 3.5m east-west by at least 3.5m north-south (its north edge was not uncovered), and was oriented ca. 6 degrees. The earthen-floored summit was reached by ascending two stone risers that project 0.5m south of the building. These steps are 0.16m and 0.27m tall while the tread intervening between the two is 0.16m wide. The stairs were fronted by a stone surface that is 1.7m wide north-south. Construction of the steps created an inset southeast corner for the platform that encompassed 0.5m on a side. All TS.4 construction was

fashioned primarily of cobbles the flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. A cut block was incorporated in the basal southern U.6 step. Small pebbles were used to fill in the spaces around the larger rocks in walls and steps. The stones employed in TS.4 architecture were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 5

During this interval Str. 96-8-1st was expanded 2.2m to the west through the construction of U.2 and 3. Unit 2, the addition's north facing, is estimated to have stood 0.4m tall while its western counterpart (U.3) is about 0.3m high. Unit 3 ran 4.75m south from its intersection with U.2 to form the addition's northwest corner. This corner is inset, measuring 0.25m east-west by 1m north-south. The addition's southwest corner was tentatively identified. Unit 5, the former western basal wall, was largely obscured by this renovation.

As TS.5 drew to a close Str. 96-8-1st measured 5.7m east-west by roughly 4.75m north-south, stood 0.3m to 0.41m tall, and retained its earlier orientation of approximately 6 degrees. Not enough of the summit was exposed to determine the superstructure's form or if it contained built-in furniture. It appears that the southern steps still provided a formal means for reaching the summit. Units 2 and 3 were built much like their predecessors. A piece of shaped masonry was incorporated among the stones that comprised the northwest corner formed by the junction of U.2 and 3.

Time Span 6

After Str. 96-8-1st was abandoned roughly 0.2m of S.2 was laid down. This soil was, in turn, covered by 0.12-0.18m of a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown soil (S.1). Embedded in S.1, but especially in upper S.2, was a variably dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely tumbled from final-phase architecture. Feature 1 was especially marked on Str. 96-8-1st's east side where a dense concentration of these stones was traced for 1.5m east of U.4. Very few fallen rocks were recorded west of the building within the central patio.