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## PVC-Op 20-Excavation Report

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PVC Op 20

Structure 75

Structure 75 is part of a cluster of monumental platforms located south of El Coyote's *Monumental Core*. This grouping includes Strs. 68, 70, 72, 73, 77, 81, 82, 83, 85, and 86. Structures 73 and 82 within this aggregate are described below and may have defined the southwest and northeast flanks of a ballcourt. Structure 75 lies ca. 7m south of Str. 73 and roughly 10m west of Str. 81. Structure 74, in turn, is a low construction that appeared on the surface to have been built into Str. 75's northeast corner. The land over which Str. 75 was built rises 0.76m over 24m from south-to-north.

L. Schwartz directed excavations within Subop 20AA-AE that cleared approximately 55m<sup>2</sup> of the building and its immediate environs. Most of that work was concentrated in three trenches. Suboperations 20AA and AB were part of one such trench that cut north-south across Str. 75's approximate center. Suboperation 20AC intersected the building's east side and was continued from its base to the summit. Structure 75-Sub1 was also exposed in this excavation. Suboperation 20AD was dug near the center of the edifice's west side though work here ceased after what we take to be Str. 75's western basal facing was encountered. Structure 75-Sub2 was encountered in the course of pursuing this excavation. Digging reached depths of as much as 0.56m and 0.5m below modern ground surface beyond and within architecture, respectively. Digging deeper within Str. 75's architectural fill was frustrated by the deposition late in the building's history of a dense concentration of cobbles (F.2) over all exposed portions of the summit. These rocks were highly unstable due in part to the lack of earth binding them to each other. Any efforts to pierce this capping were terminated after only a short period as the rocks surrounding the probe threatened, and often acted on that threat, to fall into the excavation. In general, the preservation of uncovered construction was poor throughout the building and what follows is a reconstruction of the edifice's dimensions and form that is more tentative than what can be offered for most of the other excavated constructions at El Coyote. One major building phase was recognized in the course of this work, which was conducted from April 2-May 8, 2002.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	Str. 75-1 <sup>st</sup> Str 75-Sub1 Str. 75-Sub2	U.1-16, 21 U.17-19 U.20	-	-	
2	Str. 75-1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-	F.2	
3	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

It was during this interval that Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> reached its final form. This platform is fronted by four stone-faced terraces (U.5-8) on the north. The basal element in this series (U.5) stands 0.32m tall and is 0.86m wide. Unit 6 rises 0.5m above U.5's tread and extends south for 0.86m at which point it is

succeeded by U.7. The latter is 0.61m high by 0.92m wide and gives way on the south to U.8. Unit 8 looms 0.63m above its predecessor and runs 0.73m south where it terminates in U.21, a 0.13m-high step-up to the summit.

Three terraces (U.1-3) were identified ascending Str. 75's south flank. Unit 1, the basal riser, is 0.36m high by 2.2m wide and is succeeded on the north by a 0.99m-high by 2.48m-wide terrace (U.2). Unit 2 gives way on the north to U.3 which rises 1.06m above its predecessor's tread and measures 2m across. Unit 4, the putative north summit wall, ascends 0.94m above the reconstructed level of U.3's tread and is ca. 0.6m wide. Unit 4 stands at least 0.45m above the estimated level of the summit floor. Unit 21, U.4's counterpart on the north, does not rise above that floor, suggesting that the exposed portion of the superstructure may have been open on the north where it overlooked U.5-8.

Three terraces (U.9-11) ascend Str. 75-1st's east flank. Unit 9 is 0.45m tall by 1.5m wide and is succeeded on the west by U.10. The latter rises to an estimated height of 0.34m and is 1.2m wide. Unit 11 ascends 0.7m above U. 10's tread and is inferred to be 5.1m wide. This terrace ends at U.15, the 0.58m-tall step-up to the summit. The basal riser on the west (U.12) had a preserved height of 0.11m when it was uncovered in 2002. The poor state of architectural preservation on this flank frustrated further excavation here though we did encounter what might well have been the remnants of the western summit wall (U.14). What little we revealed of Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> architectural fill (U.16) consists of cobbles set in a brown soil matrix.

The platform's summit measures approximately 11.45m east-west by 2.65m north-south. As mentioned before, it was difficult to clear this space given the deposition of a dense layer of unconsolidated river cobbles (F.2) during TS.2 over what seems to have been the entire superstructure. What seems to have been a wall (U.13) projects 1.25m north from its abutment with U.4, the south summit wall. Unit 13 is 0.45m tall and might have divided Str. 75's superstructure into at least two rooms, the one on the west measuring roughly 2.65x5.55m and the other on the east covering ca. 2.65x5.9m. The 1.45m separating U.13 from the northern edge of the summit might then have been a door providing passage between the putative east and west compartments.

By the conclusion of TS.1, Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that stood 2.19m, 2.9m, and 2.07m tall on the north, south, and east, respectively. The building encompasses 13.4x24m and is oriented ca. 77 degrees. Four terraces ascend the edifice's north side while three risers were recorded on its southern and eastern flanks. It is not clear how the summit was accessed. The southern terraces are sufficiently tall and steep (two of them are an estimated 0.99m and 1.06m high) that they would likely have posed significant obstacles to anyone trying to ascend them. Their eastern and northern counterparts are somewhat lower and could have served as steps leading to the summit. If, as seems at present to have been the case, at least part of the north edge of the superstructure was open where it overlooked the northern four terraces then this may have been the side from which the summit was reached. The latter covers an estimated 30.34m<sup>2</sup> and might have been divided into at least two compartments set in an east-west line. If this inference is correct, the western room would have measured 14.71m<sup>2</sup> while its eastern analogue encompassed 15.64m<sup>2</sup>. A 1.45m-wide door possibly linked these two rooms.

Almost all of the architecture pertaining to Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> was fashioned primarily of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The exception is U.5, the basal riser on the platform's north side. This entity was apparently fashioned of cut blocks, most likely made from tuff. Only a 1m-wide segment of U.5 was revealed in 2002 so we cannot say if this mode of construction continued for the terrace's full east-west length. Unit 5 does, however, stand out for the formality of its construction, that distinctiveness possibly supporting the inference that Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure was accessed by passing up and over its northern terraces which are no more than 0.63m tall.

Structure 75-Sub1 lies 1.1m east of Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> and measures 2.25m across. Its eastern limit is defined by a 0.22m-tall facing (U.17) while its western margin is delimited by a line of flat-laid stone slabs (U.18) that seem to have been embedded in ancient ground surface. It is possible that this building was built over a low east-to-west ascent, only its downslope east face rising above ancient ground surface while its west side was built into the ascending slope. A 0.15m-tall wall (U.19) is 1m west of U.17. Unit 19 might have been a low step up to Str. 75-Sub1's summit. If that was the case, said summit covers 1.25m east-west. It is also possible that U.19 is the east face of a bench. Overall, Str. 75-Sub1 encompasses 2.25m east-west, stands 0.37m high on the east but is level with ancient ground level on the west, and is aligned roughly 338 degrees. Its summit measures 1.25m east-west. Most of the architecture associated with this building was faced with cobbles that are set in a mud mortar, their flatter aspects directed outwards. Unit 18 on the west, in contrast, was fashioned of stone slabs. There was no evidence that the latter stones had been purposefully faced.

Structure 75-Sub2 is a 0.8m-long section of a low wall (U.20) that was found 3.35m west of Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup>. Unit 20 was oriented approximately 65 degrees. We cannot say much more than this concerning Str. 75-Sub2. Most likely it was part of a surface-level building.

## Time Span 2

During TS.2, Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit was blanketed by a deposit of cobbles that were apparently not packed round with dirt (F.2). Consequently, the stones when excavated were unconsolidated and loose. It seems unlikely that F.2 was introduced as fill in preparation for raising the platform's summit if only because these cobbles would not have provided a stable base for constructions raised atop them. The large number of rocks comprising F.2 also argues against their having comprised debris that tumbled from final-phase architecture. More likely, it appears that F.2 was purposefully introduced to terminate the use of Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup>, an effort which seems to have been successful as no constructions were apparently raised atop this unstable foundation.

It may be that during TS.2 at least some of the facing stones that formerly graced Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> were ripped out and reused in other parts of the center. As noted in the introduction, architecture pertaining to this building was unusually poorly preserved by the standards of the edifices we investigated at El Coyote. There are many potential reasons for this but one may be that the rocks that once faced the edifice's terraces were appropriated for other purposes at El Coyote. If so, then the introduction of F.2 may have marked the formal termination of the platform's use, opening it up for exploitation as a source of building stones.

### Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup> and its environs as much as 0.25m of a brown soil (S.2) was laid down. Stratum 2 was, in turn, blanketed by 0.18-0.45m of a dark brown humus layer. Embedded within S.1 and 2 are stones (F.1) that likely fell from final-phase construction. The F.1 rocks are densely concentrated where they overlie architecture, their frequency dropping noticeably away from Str. 75-1<sup>st</sup>. In some places the F.1 cobbles are particularly concentrated and flat laid. This was especially the case on the north side of the building where F.1 overlies U.5-7, what might well have been the formal means of accessing the superstructure. In this case it may be that the stones comprising F.1 were intentionally set to obscure the earlier architecture, possibly in association with the introduction of F.2 during TS.2. In the case of F.1, however, the stones are embedded in dirt.

### Structures 73, 74, 82, 85, and 111

Structures 73 and 82 are monumental platforms that run parallel to each other and are 6m apart. Surface evidence suggested that Strs. 73 and 82 defined the southwestern and northeastern sides of a ballcourt that is located in the southwest corner of El Coyote's *Monumental Core*, transitional between this aggregate and the dense concentration of modest platforms that comprise the *Southwest Group*. Structure 111 is a relatively low construction that runs between Strs. 110 and 112 immediately north of Strs. 73 and 82 and closes off the north end of the putative ballcourt. Structures 74 and 85, in turn, are low constructions that are about 2.5m distant from, and run parallel to, each other. Together we inferred that they marked the court's south end. Structure 74 is built into Str. 75's northeast corner while Str 85 projects west from slightly north of the center of Str. 81's west side.

The land over which Strs. 73 and 82 are built slopes up, at first gradually and then more precipitously from east to west. The steepness of the western ascent may have been artificially enhanced by construction associated with Structures 72, 104, and 110 that are immediately west of Str. 73. These three edifices define, together with the northwest half of Str. 73, all sides a raised patio. G. Silliman directed excavations that cleared ca. 150m<sup>2</sup> in this area and were carried down to maximum depths of 1.4m and 2.37m beneath modern ground surface into and outside construction, respectively. At least one major building phase was identified for all three edifices. Structure 73 and 82 were significantly modified at least once during their use. Signs of occupation predating the erection of the last two massive platforms were also recorded. Because Strs. 73, 74, 82, 85, and 111 were, by at least TS.4, likely parts of the same complex, we are describing them together.

### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	Str. 82-Sub1	U.1	-	F.5, 7	
	Str. 73-Sub1	-	S.5	F.6	
2	Str. 73-Sub2	U.5, 32	-	-	
	Str. 73-Sub3	U.6-7, 35	-	-	

	Str. 73-Sub4	U.2-4	S.4	-
	Str. 82-Sub2	U.48, 51	-	-
3	Str. 82-Sub3	U.41, 42, 51	-	-
	Str. 82-Sub4	U.51-53	-	-
	Str. 82-Sub5	U.50, 51	-	-
	Str. 73	-	S.3, 6	-
4	Str. 73-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.8-14, 27, 37-38, 55	-	-
	Str. 82-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.15-21, 23-27, 39-40, 58	-	-
	Str. 85-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.47	-	-
5	Str. 73-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.27, 31	-	-
	Str. 82-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.27-30, 33, 56, 57, 59	-	-
	Str. 111-st	U.27, 43-46	-	-
	Str. 73-Sub5	U.22, 36, 49, 60-70	-	F.2
6	Str. 73-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.34	-	-
	Str. 82-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.33	-	-
	Str. 74-1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-	F.9
	Str. 85-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.54	-	F.8
7	Str.73-1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-	F.10-11
	Str. 111-1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-	F.4
	Str. 73-Sub5	-	-	F.3
8	-	-	S.1-2	F.1

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the investigations of Str. 82 was located 0.82m beneath Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest flank (U.39). These remains took the form of one clear stone foundation (U.1) that stands 0.26m high by 0.84m wide (Str. 82-Sub1). As U.1 was followed for only 0.4m north-south we could not determine its orientation with any certainty. Remnants of what might have been additional stone construction (F.5 and 7) lie immediately east and west of the foundation. Feature 5 is 0.26m east of U.1 and consists of a relatively dense concentration of cobbles set in a hard-compacted, fine-textured, yellow-brown clay. This entity is at least 0.36m thick (it is not clear that we encountered F.5's base) and was traced for 0.8m to the east before excavations ceased. Feature 7 is very similar in content and appearance to F.5. The former is 0.08m west of U.1, is at least 0.14m thick, and was

followed for 0.58m north-south before it left our excavations in both directions. Neither F.5 nor 7 appeared to be parts of formal constructions, though we cannot be certain of this claim as they were both exposed over very limited extents. In general, TS.1 occupation, as revealed in our investigations, was associated with at least several modest surface-level buildings. Constructions dating to this interval were fashioned of river-rounded stones that were set in a mud mortar.

'Structure 73-Sub1' is used to designate faint signs of occupation located immediately off the southwest flank of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>. Those subtle indications of a human presence take the form of a 0.02m-thick layer of fine-textured, hard-compacted, earth that was burnt reddish-brown (F.6). Feature 6 was traced for 0.4m east from the western limits of excavation over which distance it ascended 0.05m. Feature 6 is embedded within a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown clay (S.5) that contains a few small (0.04m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions. At least 0.17m of S.5 underlies F.6 while the latter is blanketed by 0.1m of the same material (S.5's base was not encountered). It would appear that F.6 represents a break in the deposition of S.5 caused by the burning, intentional or otherwise, of a living surface.

The recovery of evidence pertaining to Str. 73-Sub1 and 82-Sub1 points to the long-term use of the area that would eventually be occupied by Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, 74-1<sup>st</sup>, 82-1<sup>st</sup>, 85-1<sup>st</sup>, and 111-1<sup>st</sup>. From the limited data we have on these early occupations, it appears that it involved the erection of relatively modest constructions.

### Time Span 2

Raised during this span are two long constructions extending in a line southeast from beneath Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>. The northwestern member of the pair (U.5, Str. 73-Sub2) is a low wall that rises above a cobble floor (U.32) and extends 8.01m southeast from under the base of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s southeast basal wall (U.38). This unit is 1.68m wide and oriented 339 degrees, 15 minutes. Its southeast analogue (U.6-7, Str. 73-Sub3) is 1.08m distant, offset 1m to the northeast of Str. 73-Sub2's northeast face, and rises 0.61m from northeast to southwest by means of two low risers. The basal example (U.6) is 0.34m high and is backed by a 1.14m-wide cobble surface that ends in a 0.27m-tall summit step-up (U.7). The 3.48m wide (northeast-southwest) portion of the summit exposed in our excavations lacked any signs of foundations or built-in furniture but was paved with cobbles (U.35). Overall, the southeastern construction was traced for 6.1m from its north corner along an azimuth of 335 degrees and for 1.05m southwest of that corner. The construction's southwest and southeast faces were not revealed in our investigations. All architecture pertaining to Strs. 73-Sub2 and 73-Sub3 was fashioned using river cobbles that were set in a brown mud mortar. The flatter faces of U.5-7 were oriented outwards.

Structure 73-Sub4 consists of three sequentially laid plaster floors (U.2-4) whose construction interrupted the deposition of a fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, brown clay that contained numerous soft white inclusions that measures 0.04m or less on their longest dimension (S.4). Stratum 4 closely resembles S.5, the two being distinguished by the latter's harder compaction and the much greater frequency of white inclusions in the former. Unit 2, the earliest of the three floors recognized in the Str. 73-Sub4 sequence, rests on the S.4/5 interface at a point 0.1m above F.6. This floor is 0.02m thick and was traced for 0.8m southwest from its intersection with Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest basal facing (U.8). Fully 0.09m separates 0.02m-thick U.3 from its predecessor while U.4 rests 0.09m above U.3. Unit 3 was followed for 0.63m northeast from the southwest excavation margin at which point this floor seems to have terminated 0.14m southwest of U.8. Unit 4, in turn, runs for 0.5m southwest from its

junction with U.8 after which it was not clearly identified to the southwest within our excavations. Unlike U.2 and 3, U.4 supports on the northeast a 0.08m-thick deposit composed of four refurbishings of the plaster surface, each 0.02m thick. This mound extends 0.24m southwest of U.8 at which point it pinches out against the underlying plaster floor which is, itself, 0.02m thick. Said mound grew from northeast to southwest through the addition of successive layers of plaster, the first addition measuring 0.6m northeast-southwest. It may be that the aforementioned additions to U.4 were part of a wall base or some other construction that was truncated by the construction of U.8. The bulk of U.4 southwest of the plaster 'mound' was covered by 0.06m of S.4.

It appears that Str. 73-Sub4 consists of three sequential constructions, probably surface-level buildings, each of which incorporated white plaster floors. The last in the sequence, U.4, was refurbished at least four times, those additions ultimately creating a 0.08m-tall eminence that covered at least 0.5m northeast-southwest. Units 2-4 were seemingly cut by the construction of U.8 on the northeast; at their highest point (the top of U.4), these entities are 0.44m above the base of U.8. As there is no sign that U.8 was raised in segments over an extended period, it is likely that the digging of the wall's foundation resulted in the disruption of architecture pertaining to TS.2.

Structure 82-Sub2 encompasses the deposition of 0.4-0.47m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay (U.51) that covers U.1 along with F.5 and 7 off Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest face. Though we cannot rule out the possibility that this soil was laid down naturally, it seems more likely that it was introduced as fill to bury TS.1 architecture. Sealing the top of U.51 is a 0.2m-thick plaster floor (U.48). Unit 48 extends 1.05m east of the west excavation wall after which point it tapers out. There was no clear evidence for any disruption of prehistoric deposits in this area and we are at a loss to explain why U.48 terminated at this point.

### Time Span 3

During this interval in the environs of Str. 82, an additional 0.2m of U.51 was added, covering the U.48 floor. Built atop this yellow-brown clay are what appear to have been three relatively modest constructions (glossed here as Strs. 82-Sub3 through 82-Sub5). Structure 82-Sub3 is represented by a 0.08m-high by 0.3m-wide stone foundation (U.41). A 0.03m-thick (maximally) plaster surface (U.42) abuts U.41 on the east and lenses out 0.27m east of that construction. Unit 42 was also identified extending 0.1m west of U.41. It seems likely that Str. 82-Sub3 was a surface-level building, U.41 being a foundation that defined the building's east side. The edifice's interior floor, along with parts of its exterior perimeter, were apparently surfaced with plaster.

Structure 82-Sub4 is ca. 0.8m south of U.41. It is represented here by U.52, a relatively substantial stone wall that projects 0.28m into U.51 and rises 0.22m above the inferred top of that earth fill; U.52 is at least 0.35m wide north-south (its full width may not have been revealed by our excavations). Unit 52's construction possibly cut through the U.48 floor which stops 0.03m north of that wall. A 0.03-0.05m-thick plaster floor (U.53) was traced for 0.45m north of its abutment with U.52, dropping 0.09m over that distance. Unit 52 might be either a substantial stone foundation or the facing of a platform that extended south beyond excavation limits.

Structure 82-Sub5 consists of a small remnant of plaster (U.50) that is 1.73m east of U.41. Unit 50 is 0.02m thick and was followed for 0.31m west of the eastern excavation limits. This entity has a roughly basin shape over the limited area it was cleared. Its interior rises continuously 0.05m over its



exposed distance from east to west, U.50's exterior demonstrating a convex form to match its concave interior. Not enough of this entity was revealed to test the proposition that it was a basin sunk into the top of U.51, though that interpretation remains a possibility. Unit 50's top is equivalent in elevation to the upper surface of the U.42 plaster floor 1.5m to the west.

Overall, TS.3 seems to represent a continuation of activity patterns begun in TS.2 in the vicinity of what would become Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest face. The living surface was raised here about 0.2m and at least two constructions were erected on this newly elevated surface. One (Str. 82-Sub3) was almost certainly a surface-level building while Str. 82-Sub4 about 0.8m to the south might have been a low, stone-faced platform. Not enough of either construction was uncovered to determine its orientation or to be even sure of their forms. The limited portions of the putative footing (U.41) and facing (U.52) associated with these buildings were fashioned of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks were directed outwards; this is especially evident in the larger U.52. Structure 82-Sub3 and 82-Sub4 were associated with plaster surfaces; it looks like the perimeters of these buildings were delimited by floors made of this material while the former's interior may have been graced with a floor surfaced in this manner. What is glossed as Str. 82-Sub5 might have been a plaster-lined hemispherical basin that is at least 0.05m deep by minimally 0.31 wide and which is defined by gently curving sides. Whatever its form this construction seems to be isolated 1.5m east of Str. 82-Sub3's exterior plaster floor and may have been part of activities conducted in extramural locations during TS.3.

No architecture in Str. 73's vicinity is definitely assigned to TS.3. The best evidence we have for activities occurring in this area now consists of the deposition of S.3, fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, brown clay that contains many small white inclusions that are 0.04m or less on their longest dimension (very similar to S.4). Fully 0.28m of this soil blankets the U.4 plaster surface now, resulting in the creation of a relatively level upper surface. A lens of fine-textured, soft-compacted, dark black to dark brown earth (S.6) intrudes 0.7m into S.3 from the southwest. Stratum 6 is 0.08m thick where it emerges from the southwest excavation wall of the deep probe sunk next to (southwest of) Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest basal facing (U.8). Stratum 6 pinches out on the northeast at a point 0.08m southwest of U.8. The numerous charcoal flecks found embedded in S.6 contribute to its dark brown-to-black color and suggest that it represents occupation debris that originated from a nearby activity area. Stratum 6 sits 0.01-0.03 m above the U.4 plaster surface (TS.2).

### Summary of Time Spans 2 and 3

It is difficult to parse the various occupation periods represented by the features and constructions assigned here to TS.2 and 3. In the limited deep probe dug off Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest flank it is possible to distinguish at least two intervals of occupation and to determine their temporal relations. On the other hand, Strs. 73-Sub2 and 73-Sub3, roughly 23m to the southwest of their Str. 82 counterparts, cannot be easily tied into the aforementioned sequence. The same problem pertains for Str. 73-Sub4 which is 12m northwest of the closest exposed portion of Str. 73-Sub3 and 25m southwest of the Strs. 82-Sub2 through 82-Sub5. All we can infer at this point is that the constructions assigned to TS.1-3 predate the erection of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>. The correlation of the building phases provided here, therefore, remains tentative outside of this broad generalization.

Overall, the area that would eventually be covered by Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, 74-1<sup>st</sup>, 82-1<sup>st</sup>, 85-1<sup>st</sup>, and 111-1<sup>st</sup> had apparently been occupied for a considerable span prior to the raising of those edifices. Most of the uncovered architecture dating to these early spans was modest, many of the buildings likely being

raised directly on ancient ground surface. Structures 73-Sub2 and 73-Sub3 are exceptions to this pattern. These edifices, though low, are relatively extensive and speak to the mobilization of significant amounts of labor in their construction. The extensive use of plaster to make floors associated with some TS.2-3 constructions is also testimony to the ability of whoever commissioned these constructions to command the resources and skilled labor to fashion such surfaces. The portion of Op. 20 investigated here, therefore, seems to have been an enduring focus of relatively high-prestige activities before TS.4. As indicated below, it would continue to fulfill these roles through at least TS.5.

#### Time Span 4

During this period, Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> reached close to their final forms, burying all architecture pertaining to TS.2 and 3. We cannot precisely correlate the building phases of Strs. 73 and 82 with each other, though we can be reasonably certain what the edifices looked like at TS.4's conclusion.

Structure 73-1<sup>st</sup>, on the southwest is a platform that is bounded by stone facings on all sides (U.8, 12, 37, 38). Only the southwest and northeast flanks were investigated in any detail, work on the remaining sides was limited to determining the dimensions of the edifice's basal footprint. The building was bounded on the southwest by a single vertical wall (U.8) that rises 1.64m above the top of S.4 (the presumed level of ancient ground surface at this time) to the summit in a single ascent. The latter was surfaced with a 0.02-0.03m thick plaster floor (U.9) that rests 0.45-0.6m below the top of U.8. The reason for the variation in these numbers is that U.9 ascends 0.15m over the 1.07m it was exposed southwest-to-northeast from its abutments with U.8 and 10 on the southwest and northeast, respectively. Unit 9 is underlain by a 0.06m-thick subfloor composed of numerous pebbles, 0.03m or less in diameter, which are set in a coarse-textured tan soil (Included in U.9). That subfloor, in turn, rests atop a fill (U.11) composed of a dense packing of small to large rocks that are embedded in a coarse-textured, yellow-brown soil. Str.73-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit encompasses 1.07m northeast-southwest and ends on the northeast in a stone-faced vertical descent of at least 1.38m (U.10). Units 8 and 10 are both usually broad, by local standards; the former covers 0.9m across while the latter is 1.12m wide. Fronting U.10 on the northeast are three terraces (U.12-14). Unit 12, the basal riser, is 0.37m tall by 1.7m wide. Unit 13, ascends 0.86m above U.12's tread and measures 1.14m across. Unit 14 is an estimated 0.55m tall (it was not well preserved when excavated) and runs 3.8m southwest to U.10. The U.9 floor is an estimated 0.9m above U.14's extensive tread. There are no signs that U.14's surface was paved with plaster.

Structure 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s terraces likely ascended above a white plaster floor (U.27). This relationship is not clear owing, in large part, to the poor state of the floor's preservation where it borders Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>. What we can see fronting the latter platform are the uppermost stones of a subflooring that likely supported the same plaster surface that was recorded fronting Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>.

Structure 82-1<sup>st</sup>, lying 8.55m northeast of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, is a platform bounded by U.15, 17, 39, and 40. Approximately 0.35m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay (U.57) was deposited atop Strs. 82-Sub3, -Sub4, and -Sub5, forming a newly elevated surface atop which Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest basal facing (U.39) was raised. We do not know how extensive this fill unit was because digging was not carried down deep enough off the platform's other flanks to test for its existence. As with Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, the most thoroughly investigated flanks of the building are its southwest and northeast faces. Two terraces (U.15-16) ascend the platform on the southwest and four terraces (U.17-20) rise up

its northeast flank. Unit 15, the basal southwestern riser, is 1m high by 1.7m wide. It gives way on the northeast to U.16, which ascends 1.40m above U.15's tread. Unit 16 reaches its full height in three increments. The basal segment rises 0.35m before stepping back 0.16m to the northeast. The next portion of U.16 ascends 0.63m before stepping back 0.31m to the northeast. The uppermost segment of U.16 stands 0.42m above the previous indentation in the wall. Unit 16 is an estimated 1.2m wide. The basal riser on the northeast is U.17. This facing is 0.22m tall by 0.9m wide and gives way to U.18. The latter stands 0.5m above U.17's tread and measures 0.95m across northeast-southwest. Unit 19, the next ascending terrace, is 0.51m tall by 1.03m wide and gives way to U.20, the ascent leading directly to the summit. Unit 20 is 0.8m high and 1.43m wide. The top of the last riser is 0.64m lower than that of U.16 on the southwest. It did not seem, on excavation, that U.20 ever stood much taller. It may be that, by the end of TS.4, U.16 rose to the height of its second step-back (i.e., 0.98m) and that the highest 0.42m of that wall were added later. This interpretation is supported by the observation that U.16's uppermost segment rests on stone fill (U.33) that was introduced possibly as early as TS.5. It also brings the heights of U.16 and 20 into closer harmony. If this was the case, then Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup> would now have been 1.98m tall on the southwest and 2.03m high on the northeast. The significant girths of U.16 and 20 suggest that they are two of the walls that defined Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s core. Units 15 and 17 both are fronted by plaster floors (U.27 and 21).

Structure 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure apparently consists of a single, plaster-floored (U.23) room that encompasses 3.5m by at least 15.5m. A stone-faced bench (U.25) and shelf (U.24) rest on the U.23 floor and are set in a northeast-southwest line against the northwest room wall (U.58). Unit 25 on the northeast is 0.4m high and measures 1.05 northwest-southeast by 2.14m northeast-southwest. Unit 24 is 0.75m to the southwest. It stands 0.43m tall and covers 1.05m northwest-southeast by 1.42m northeast-southwest. The southeast room margin is largely filled by a ca. 0.2m-high stone faced bench (U.26) that is minimally 0.7m wide by 3.5m long northeast-southwest.

It is likely that Strs. 73-Sub2 and -Sub3 were covered by 0.26-0.56m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay (U.55) about this time. Unit 55 contains numerous white inclusions that are 0.01m or smaller in diameter. Such an addition would have raised ground surface in the area southeast of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, bringing it up to about the same level as the U.27 floor.

By the end of TS.4, Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-filled platform that stood 1.64-3.16m high, measured 9.9x18.5m, and was oriented ca. 342 degrees. The height discrepancy noted here owes a great deal to the east-to-west rise in the terrain over which Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was built. The platform's southwest flank is defined by a steep ascent that rises 1.64m directly to the highest point of the building. Three terraces ascend the edifice's northeast flank. These stone-faced risers are 0.37m, 0.86m, and 0.55m high (in ascending order) and are 1.71m, 1.14m, and 3.8m wide, respectively. The uppermost terrace is backed on the southwest by a 1.38m-tall wall (U.10) that, together with the basal southwestern facing (U.8), defines a 3.06m-wide elevated space. The area contained between U.8 and 10 covers 1.07m and is surfaced with plaster. The architectural and behavioral significance of this prominent construction is unclear. The presence of a large wall backing a broad terrace was noted on Str. 70-1<sup>st</sup> (TS.3) and the construction made up of U.8 and 10 is roughly analogous to this arrangement. Nonetheless, the narrow space delimited by U.8 and 10 and its plaster surface differs from the situation on Str. 70-1<sup>st</sup> where an extensive superstructure backed and overlooked the broad terrace.

Structure 82-1st, 8.82m to the northeast, presents a very different aspect. The latter building runs more-or-less parallel to its near neighbor, stands 1.98m (on the southwest) and 2.03m (on the northeast) tall, measures 11.1x24.9m and is aligned approximately 338 degrees. The building's northeast flank is graced with four risers that ascend in increments, from base to summit, of 0.22m, 0.5m, 0.51m, and 0.8m. The lower three ascents are constituted by terraces that measure 0.9m, 0.95m, and 1.03m across while the final ascent consists of the northeast core platform wall that is 1.43m wide and leads directly to the summit. Two risers ascend the southwest flank. The basal terrace is 1m tall by 1.7m wide whereas the next riser is 0.98m tall and leads directly to the summit. This last wall is about 1.2m wide and seemingly defined the core platform's southwest flank. Structure 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure consists of a plaster-floored room that encompasses 54m<sup>2</sup> and contains three pieces of built-in furniture. The entire southeast end of the room is taken up by a 0.2m-high stone-faced bench that is 0.7m wide by 3.5m long northeast-southwest. The compartment's northwest margin is largely filled by two stone-faced constructions that are 0.75m apart and which project 1.05m southeast from the northwest room wall. The northeast member of this dyad is 0.4m tall by 2.14m long northeast-southwest. Its counterpart to the southwest is 0.43m tall by 1.42m long. The former is long enough to have served as a bench while the latter might have been a shelf.

The area between Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> was surfaced with plaster and a fragment of a similar flooring was noted off the latter's northeast flank. Though such a flooring might be consistent with the use of the space between the platforms as an alley for the ball game there are no other signs that Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> functioned in that way during TS.4. There are no sloping zones bordering the putative alley at this time, for example, and the two buildings present very dissimilar aspects.

Constructions raised during TS.4 were primarily fabricated using cobbles, the flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. Great care seems to have been taken to find rocks with relatively vertical aspects to incorporate in wall constructions. Unit 12, Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s basal northeastern riser, was apparently crafted in part at least using faced blocks while a piece of masonry was incorporated into U.24, the shelf that fills the west corner of Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure. All of the stones are set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 5

During this interval El Coyote's residents apparently took advantage of the size and organization of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1st to convert them into a ballcourt by the simple expediency of appending outset sloping zones to those sides that faced each other. The transformation is clearest on Str. 82-1st's southwest flank where a 18.2m long (northwest-southeast) by 1.73m wide extension (U.28) was added near the edifice's center (the sloping zone intersects Str. 82's southwest face 2.3m and 4m shy of its south and west corners, respectively). The fill backing U.28 (U.29) consists of a dense packing of small to large cobbles that are horizontally set and embedded within fine-textured, soft-compacted, brown clay. Rising 0.28m above the white plaster floor (U.27) in one vertical ascent, the outset is backed by a slanting stone surface that runs at an angle of 0.25-0.33 degrees. Any formal surface that once covered this zone has long since disappeared. A 0.05-0.09m-thick plaster level (U.30) does slope down irregularly 0.52m over 1.02m southwest from the top of the second ascending TS.4 terrace (U.16). It may be that U.30 is all that survives of an extensive sloping zone that originally rose 1.8m over 2.74m southwest-to-northeast, ending at what was then the top of U.16.

A comparable outset (U.31) on Str. 73-1st projects 0.5m northeast of the basal platform terrace and extends 18.5m from the platform's east to south corners. This addition stands 0.26m high and leaves only 0.13m of the earlier basal facing (U.12) still visible to the southwest. Str. 73-1st's sloping zone, if present, is much less clearly defined than it is on Str. 82-1st. The plastered alley surface (U.27) thus created is 6.59m wide by 18.2-18.5m long and is aligned ca. 337 degrees.

Structure 73-1<sup>st</sup> may also have been expanded along its southwest face for at least 2.6m to the southeast at this time (marked by what seem to be continuations of U.8 and 10). An unambiguous south corner was not identified nor is it at obvious how these putative additions relate to the still extant east corner dating to TS.4.

It may be that Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit was raised about 0.44m at this time through the deposition of a construction fill (U.33) consisting of a dense packing of small to large rocks, laid flat, and set in a fine-textured, soft-compacted, brown clay. Unit 33, if introduced now, would have covered the U.23 plaster floor and most likely submerged the two benches (U.20 and 25) and shelf (U.24) which formerly graced the summit. The superstructure might then have contained one extensive (54m<sup>2</sup>) room that was surfaced with cobbles (the top of U.33). In order to contain this newly added fill U.16 was raised 0.42m on the southwest (the uppermost increment in that wall). As the base of U.16's northeast face rests on the U.33 fill, it is likely that this top-most part of the wall was introduced now. There is no clear evidence that U.20, the core platform's northeast facing, was raised to a greater height now though this seems likely if only to preserve the integrity of the newly elevated summit surface.

A 0.08m-high by 0.3m-wide L-shaped cobble wall (made up of U.56 and 59) abuts Str. 82-1st's northwest face at a point 0.35m northeast of its west corner. Unit 59 projects 0.5m northwest of Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest basal facing before cornering with U.56. The latter wall extends at least 1.65m to the southwest running at an orientation of ca. 238 degrees (its southwest end was not found). The architectural significance of this unit is as enigmatic now as it was in the field. Possibly, U.56 and 59 were parts of the foundations for a surface-level edifice whose builders took advantage of the substructure's massive walls to close off the southeast side of their construction.

Structure 111-1<sup>st</sup> was probably raised at about this time. This construction spanned the northwest end of the putative ball court alley, lying 2.9m and 5.5m northwest of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>, respectively. Three stone-faced risers front the building on the southeast. The basal step-up, U.43, rises 0.26m above a plaster floor (the presumed northwest continuation of U.27) and runs back 0.32m to U.44. That construction looms an estimated 0.39m above U.43's tread and is approximately 3m wide northwest-southeast. Unit 46 stands an estimated 0.5m above what we infer was U.44's tread and extends back minimally 0.71m to the northwest. It may be that U.46 defines the southeast limit of Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit as the land levels out to the northwest of it. The best preserved component of Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> (U.43, the basal riser) was traced for 8.5m over which distance it was aligned roughly 71 degrees. At some point towards the end of TS.5 a cobble floor (U.45) was laid over and obscured U.27 at least for 1.15m southeast of U.43. Unit 45 abuts U.43, is 0.12m thick, and rests on 0.1m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown clay (Included in U.45) above U.27. No sign of U.45 was recorded in the vicinities of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> and it may be that the stone floor was only laid down in the immediate vicinity of Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup>. Unit 43 might still have projected 0.04m above the top of U.45.

Structure 111 was mapped as a faced ascent that joined Strs. 110 (on the southwest) and 112 (on the northeast). We did not clear enough of the edifice to determine if this was the case. At the very

least it appears that Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> possibly served to formally demarcate the northwest flank of the ballcourt in much the same way that F.11 defined the south side of the main ballcourt identified at La Sierra in the Naco valley (see PVN Op. 30).

Structure 73-Sub5 was appended to Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest face. It consists of five stone-faced and -surfaced risers (U.22, 49, 60-62) that ascend from northeast to southwest to a stone platform (U.63) that fronts Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s west basal corner on the northwest. Underlying these steps is at least 0.12m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay that contains some soft, small (0.01m or less in diameter) white inclusions (U.36; its base was not encountered). We could not be sure in the field if this soil was purposefully introduced to shore up construction here or if it simply represents the soil above which Str. 73-Sub5 was raised. We have designated this earth layer as U.36 on the assumption that at least some of this clay was brought in to level the terrain above which Str. 73-Sub5 was erected and to provide a firm foundation for that construction.

Structure 73-Sub5's basal step (U.22) is 0.1m tall by 1.9m wide northeast-southwest. It is succeeded on the southwest by U.49, a 0.17m-tall riser that measures 0.82m across. Unit 60 rises 0.21m above U.49 and stretches back 0.5m to the southwest where it is succeeded by a 0.3m-high by 1.41m-wide step (U.61). Unit 62 ascends 0.52m above its predecessor and runs 1.83m back to the southwest where it terminates in the U.63 platform. The latter stands 0.83m tall and encompasses 2.72m northeast-southwest. We infer that U.63 was roughly 1.5m wide northwest-southeast. Backing this platform on the northwest is a fill (U.64) composed of flat laid, densely packed small to large rocks set in a brown soil. An elevated patio surface defined by Strs. 110, 104, 72, and 73 lies immediately southwest of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s west corner and it may be that the U.64 fill was part of the hearting for that construction.

Abutting the northwest face of these risers were the fragmentary remains of what appear to have been four steps (U.65-68, 70) composed of plaster surfaces that are each about 0.02m thick. These surfaces abut U.60-63 and were set on a fill composed of stone and earth (U.69). Excavations were not carried far enough to the northwest to see if we could trace U.65-68 and 70; given their poor states of preservation, it is unlikely that there would have been much left to trace. What we could discern of these plaster risers is that they were 0.23m (U.65), 0.27m (U.66), 0.14m (U.67), and 0.3m high (U.68 and 70), in ascending order from northeast to southwest, by 0.6m, 0.33m, 1.4m, 2.04m, and at least 0.5m wide, respectively. The uppermost of these risers, U.70, peters out on the southwest and we are unsure how far it originally continued in this direction. Remnants of plaster (F.2) were found extending 0.24m southwest of the U.63 platform, rising 0.11m over that distance from northeast to southwest. It may be that F.2 represents the southwestern continuation of U.70, thereby making the latter at least 2.05m wide.

By the conclusion of TS.5 Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> retained its basic form, dimensions, and orientation. There are signs that Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was expanded at least 2.6m to the southeast along its southwest face. It is unclear how the inferred changes to the southwest flank were articulated with constructions on Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast side which remained unmodified from TS.4. The major change to Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s form was the addition of a 0.26m-tall facing that projects 0.5m northeast of the earlier basal riser (U.12) and runs for 18.5m along the entirety of the platform's northeast face. This construction is matched by the erection of a 0.28m-tall, 1.73m-wide extension (U.28) that was appended to Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest flank where it extends for 18.2m northwest-southeast. This outset is backed by a slanting stone surface that ascends at an angle of 0.25-0.33 degrees. A portion of this putative sloping zone was still coated with

white plaster when excavated. It seems reasonable to infer that the entirety of the ascent from U.28 to what had been Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit during TS.4 was surfaced with this material. Based on these modifications to Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>, it is likely that they now defined the southwest and northeast sides of a ballcourt the plaster-surfaced alley (U.27) of which measured 6.59m across by 18.2-18.5m long and was oriented ca. 337 degrees. The extent of the U.27 plaster floor is unclear. It is inferred to have spanned the distance between Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> and to have reached as far as Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> on the northwest. A probe dug approximately 5m south of Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>, however, failed to locate U.27. Instead, a 0.19m-thick cobble floor (U.47) was found resting on at least 0.15m of S.3 (the latter's base was not uncovered here). Unit 47 occupies the approximate stratigraphic position of U.27 and it may be that it represents a subfloor from which the plaster had eroded. Excavations about 3m to the southwest of the trench in which U.47 was uncovered did not turn up signs of this or any other preserved formal flooring. It appears, therefore, that southeast of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup> the nature of extramural flooring changed from what pertains within the area bordered by these buildings and Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> on the northwest.

At least the northeast flank of the playing area was bordered by a sloping zone that ascended 1.7m over 3.2m (southwest-to-northeast) from U.28's vertical face. Evidence for a comparable sloping zone fronting Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was not as clear and we cannot establish its presence based on the data in hand. The putative ballcourt's north end is bounded by Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> which is 2.9 and 5.5m northwest of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>, respectively. This construction is at least 8.5m long over which distance it is aligned ca. 71 degrees. Structure 111-1<sup>st</sup> ascends in increments of 0.26m, 0.39m, and 0.5m from southeast-to-northwest, these risers measuring 0.32m and 3m across, the latter surface ending in the 0.5m-high step up to the summit. The summit was apparently coterminous with the area intervening between Strs. 110 and 112.

Beyond the addition of the aforementioned sloping zone on Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest side, the platform's summit was raised about 0.44m by the addition of a densely-packed cobble fill. This building effort would have submerged the furniture that was found within the superstructure during TS.4, creating a cobble-floored room that covers 54m<sup>2</sup> and was largely featureless. A small surface-level building was likely erected off the platform's west corner at this time. The full dimensions of this construction were not determined.

Structure 73-Sub 5 was erected off, and abuts, Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest flank. The core of this construction is a series of five risers that ascend to a total height of 1.3m in increments of 0.1-0.52m from northeast-to-southwest. The treads measure 0.5-1.9m across. The uppermost step gives way to a stone-surfaced landing that measures 1.83m across northeast-southwest and terminates in a 0.83m-tall stone-faced platform (U.63) that fronts Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s west corner on the latter's northwest face. Unit 63 measures 1.5x2.72m and did not support any surviving architecture on its summit. Abutting this core on the northwest are the fragmentary remains of five other risers, these consisting of plaster surfaces set directly on an earth-and-stone fill. These ascents are 0.14-0.3m high by 0.33-2.04m wide and reach a total height of 1.24m. The uppermost riser measures an estimated 2.05m across and may have been a landing that borders the U.63 platform on the northwest. It appears that Str. 73-Sub5 constituted a formal means of accessing the ballcourt from the northwest, likely connecting this space with the patio defined by Strs. 110, 104, 72, and 73 to the northwest. Why there were two parallel sets of steps placed next to each other is unclear. It may be that the stone risers were fashioned primarily to direct traffic up

to the U.63 platform, the plaster-coated ascents running parallel and next to those constructions, thereby providing passage around the aforementioned platform.

Most of the constructions raised now consisted of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The principal exceptions are U. 31 on Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and U.28 on Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>. These outsets are uniformly faced with masonry blocks.

### Time Span 6

During this interval an additional ca. 0.3m of the cobble fill (U.33) that was introduced atop Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup> during TS.5 now blanketed that platform's summit. At about the same time we infer that U.10 atop Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was blanketed by about 1.2m of a densely packed fill (U.34) that was set against that wall's northeast face. Most likely U.34 covered the extensive surface that backed U.14. There are no clear signs that these additions were contained by fill retaining walls and it may be that U.33 and 34 were parts of constructions that were never completed or were introduced to terminate the use of both edifices (see TS.7).

The remaining uncovered architecture that may date to this interval was revealed south of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>. About 4m southeast of Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 7m in the same direction from Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup> are Strs. 74-1<sup>st</sup> and 85-1<sup>st</sup>, respectively. They are symmetrically placed to face each other. The former projects ca. 4m east from Str. 75 while the latter extends the same distance west from Str. 81, about 3m separating this entities from each other. As Strs. 74-1<sup>st</sup> and 85-1<sup>st</sup> are in line with the alley created by Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>, we hypothesized that they might have closed that space off in this direction, much as Str. 111-st delimited the northwest end of the playing zone.

Structure 74-1<sup>st</sup> consists of a pile of generally flat-laid small to large cobbles, set in a fine-textured soil that is 0.45m thick and extends for at least 4.1m east-west (the west end of this possible construction was not uncovered). Though no facings were identified within this collection of rocks during excavations one vertical stack of stones (F.9) standing ca. 0.45m tall was discernible in our field drawings. If F.9 is a remnant of Str. 74-1<sup>st</sup>'s east basal facing, then that edifice was a 0.45m-high platform backed by a dense packing of cobbles (all included in F.9) that measures at least 2.6m east-west (the stones for 1.5m east of F.9 would then probably have fallen from the adjacent building). In any case, F.9 rests on U.55 (see TS.4).

Structure 85-1<sup>st</sup> presents comparable interpretive challenges to those offered by its neighbor to the west. Here the earlier U.47 floor was blanketed by about 0.17m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay that contains numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions (U.54). It was atop U.54 that F.8 was raised. Like F.9, F.8 is a pile of small-to-large cobbles. In this case, these rocks have accumulated to a maximum thickness of 0.73m and were traced for 1.7m west from the eastern limits of excavations. A possible wall, represented by a vertical stack of cobbles standing 0.73m tall, was very tentatively identified within this collection 0.9m west of the east excavation limits. It may, like F.9, have been the remnants of a poorly preserved retaining wall for a platform the cobble fill of which continues for minimally 0.9m to the east.

Excavations into Str. 74-1<sup>st</sup> and 85-1<sup>st</sup>, therefore, failed to find any clear signs of architecture. In general, they appear to be purposefully laid piles of cobbles that were not retained by obvious facing walls. There is no reason to think that they were integral to the function of the ballcourt immediately to



the northwest. Their construction, however, might have served to seal off, or at least severely reduce access to, this space after the ballcourt was abandoned. Structures 74-1st and 85-1st may, therefore, have never been intended to function as free-standing, formal architecture. Instead, they might well have been introduced simply to control or interdict access northwestward towards Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and 82-1<sup>st</sup>.

### Time Span 7

It is very likely that Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup> was abandoned by this point. The primary evidence suggesting that this building was no longer in use comes in the form of dense deposits of flat-laid cobbles that were set against prominent aspects of its final-phase architecture. Feature 11, a 0.74m-thick deposit of cobbles set in a brown soil, was deposited against the platform's southwest basal facing (U.8). Feature 11 was followed for 1.54m to the southwest before excavation ceased. Fully 0.56m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay containing numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions underlies the aforementioned rocks and overlies S.4. This earth, included in F.11, contains relatively few rocks. The behavioral significance of F.11's earth component is unclear. It may have been introduced as part of the same fill episode during which the overlying rocks were deposited. Alternatively, this soil was brought in earlier by natural or human-instigated processes. On Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast flank, U.31, 12, 13, and 14 were covered by a dense concentration of stones (F.10) that would have largely obscured the building's form on this side.

Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> was also largely obscured by the deposition of F.4. This dense concentration of cobbles covers the U.44 tread by as much as 0.4m and would have largely hidden U.46's southeast face. No comparable stone piles were noted covering Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s flanks though F.1's stones (see TS.8) largely covered TS.4 and 5 constructions here. It may be that some of these rocks were originally placed so as to hide final-phase architecture and were eventually displaced as they slid down the platform's steep flanks.

Structure 73-Sub5's lowermost three risers (U.22, 49, and 60) were blanketed by a dense concentration of small to large cobbles (F.3), most of these stones being flat-laid. Feature 3 is roughly 0.6m thick.

The events tentatively chronicled during TS.7 suggest that concerted efforts were devoted to masking the original appearances of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, 111-1<sup>st</sup>, 73-Sub5, and, possibly, 82-1<sup>st</sup>. Such additions might have continued similar efforts begun during TS.6 with the covering of U.10 on Str. 73-1<sup>st</sup> and Str. 82-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit with large amounts of stones. The erection of Strs. 74-1<sup>st</sup> and 85-1<sup>st</sup> might have been part of the same project, their erection serving to seal off the ballcourt's main alley from the southeast. There is no evidence that the alley itself was purposefully buried. In fact, this space may have remained open even as the contours of its flanking buildings were rounded and obscured by the selective placement of stones and earth. Such transformations might have served to convert formal architecture into something approximating natural hills, especially as vegetation took root on these slopes.

### Time Span 8

Following abandonment of Strs. 73-1<sup>st</sup>, 74-1<sup>st</sup>, 82-1<sup>st</sup>, 85-1<sup>st</sup>, and 111-1<sup>st</sup>, between 0.12-0.4m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown clay (S.2) containing numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions was laid down. Stratum 2, in turn, was covered by 0.36m of a very

similar soil (S.1) that was distinguished by its darker brown hue. Embedded in S.1 and 2 are stones (F.1) that have likely fallen from architecture pertaining to TS.4-7. Feature 1 is not well represented in the environs of Str. 111-1<sup>st</sup> but consists of a moderately dense concentrations of rocks in all of the other excavated areas.