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PVC-El Coyote-Op 47-Excavation Report

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Operation 47

Operation 47 adjoins Op. 20 on the northeast. This collection of buildings, 50m south of the center's monumental core, is dominated by a plaza that encompasses ca. 1,000m² and is delimited on all sides by five monumental platforms (Strs. 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, and 119). The steep descent from the upper to the lower terrace that supports the Southeast Group (Op. 18, 19, and 50) borders Op. 47 along its southeast flank.

Structures 81, 84, 85, and 86 were dug during the 2002 field season. The last three are joined and define the plaza's southeast flank. Fully 306m² were cleared in the course of this work which was directed by P. Dresch (Strs. 84, 85, and 86) and A. Miner (Str. 81).

Structure 81

Structure 81 is a sizable platform that closes off the southwest corner of the aforementioned monumental plaza. Structure 82 (investigated within Op. 20) is about 2.5m to the north, the two edifices possibly connected by a low construction (this possibility was not investigated in 2002). Structure 85 is 11m to the southeast whereas elements of Str. 86 are within 3.5m to the southeast. The land over which Str. 81-1st was built rose 1m across 13.5m from southeast to northwest. Excavations conducted here within Subop. 47D, E, F, L, N, O, and S cleared roughly 121m² in the course of exposing about 80% of the platform's summit and 45% of the remainder of the edifice. Digging proceeded to maximum depths of 0.8m and 1.8m below modern ground surface into and beyond architecture, respectively. One major building phase was identified in the course of this work that was overseen by A. Miner from March 20-May 16, 2002.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.6	-	
2	-	-	S.3-5	-	
3	Str. 81-1 st	U.1-5, 7-14, 16-22, 24-28, 30-35	-	-	
4	Str. 81-1 st	U.6, 15, 23, 29	-	-	
5	Str 81-1 st	-	-	F.1-4	
6	-	-	S.1, 2	F.5	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the environs of Str. 81-1st was the deposition of at least 0.02m of a hard-compacted, tan, rocky soil (S.6). Stratum 6 was encountered only in the base of a deep probe dug off the platform's southwest side, its base lying beyond excavation limits. Stratum 6's upper surface was level for the 0.78m it was traced northeast-southwest. Not enough of S.6 was uncovered to determine if it contained cultural material. We curtailed the investigation of this soil as its rocky content suggested that it was the culturally sterile layer that was identified underlying architecture elsewhere at El Coyote.

Time Span 2

Fully 0.09m of a hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, brown clay (S.5) caps S.6 in the deep probe dug southwest of Str. 81-1st. Stratum 5, in turn, was blanketed by 0.5m of a similar dirt that is distinguished by its finer texture (S.4). The upper surfaces of S.4 and 5 are flat for the 0.78m (S.5) and 1.4m (S.4) they were uncovered running northeast-southwest. Capping S.4 by 0.22m is a hard-compacted brown clay that is mottled with small white flecks (S.3). Strata 3-5 are sufficiently similar to be included in the same time span on the assumption that they were from similar sources laid down under comparable conditions. Stratum 3 was found underlying architecture off Str. 81-1st's southeast side as well as its southwest flank. Digging was not carried deep enough on the northeast and northwest to test for the presence of this soil.

Time Span 3

Structure 81-1st emerged now as a platform defined by vertical basal walls (U.1-5) on all sides. The fill contained by these facings (U.30) was investigated to a limited extent. In the areas it was exposed, U.30 consists of a dense concentration of medium-size rocks set in a soft brown clay matrix. At least on the summit, those rocks were capped by a 0.13m-thick layer of hard-packed, brown clay that is mottled with white flecks but generally lacks stones (U.20). Unit 20 was clearly revealed in two locations directly underlying the superstructure where it forms a relatively level upper surface. A very similar fill (U.33) was founded embedded 0.52m below the upper surface of the southeast basal facing (U.4). Here U.33 is completely covered by U.30 fill.

The southeast and southwest basal facings (U.4 and 5) are an estimated 2-2.2m tall (these walls were not well preserved) while their northeast (U.1 and 2) and northwest counterparts (U.3) rise to 1.28m and 0.9m tall. The northwest flank was explored to only a minimal extent so we cannot say what intervened between the preserved top of U.3 and the summit. The northeastern basal risers (U.1 and 2) flank the northeast outset and give way to a series of risers leading to the superstructure. A niche (U.19) measuring 0.36m deep northeast-southwest by at least 0.6m northwest-southeast was built into U.5, the platform's southwest basal wall (the niche's southeast edge was not found). Unit 19's floor is 0.46m above U.5's base and is at least 0.26m high.

The aforementioned outset is located almost exactly in the center of the platform's northeast side and projects 1.5m in that direction from the body of Str. 81-1st. Its northwest and southeast flanks are delimited by vertical walls (U.21 and 22) and the outset, along with the rest of the building's northeast face, is fronted by a plaster floor (U.26). Unit 26 was well preserved for 0.58m northeast of

outset and for up to 1m in the same direction from U.1 and 2. The subfloor, consisting of a dense packing of small (0.03m or less in diameter) pebbles set in a brown soil matrix, was followed for an additional 3.06m northeast of the well-preserved segment fronting the outset before excavations ceased. Unit 26's full extent was not determined though it was apparently extensive. Another plaster floor (U.28) extends at least 5.65m southeast of the platform. As was the case with U.26, the further away from the building U.28 was traced the patchier the plaster became, revealing the underlying cobble subfloor. That foundation consists of flat-laid, medium-size cobbles set in a brown soil matrix. A 0.25m-tall stone platform (U.27) fronts the building's northwest basal wall (U.3), extending 1.3m northwest from Str. 81-1st's north corner before turning to run at least 1.75m southwest in front of, and parallel to, U.3. Unit 27 is surfaced with cobbles (included in U.27) and is bordered by the U.26 floor on the northeast and northwest.

Returning to the northeast outset, it consists of at least two stone-faced risers, though whether they were steps is far from clear. The basal riser (U.11) ascends 0.5m above U.26 and extends back for 1.98m to the southwest where it terminates in U.13. Unit 11's tread is surfaced with stones (U.12). Unit 13 rises 0.38m above U.12 and extends minimally 0.4m to the southwest. The amount and density of stones intervening between U.13 and the next construction along this line (U.14) frustrated further clearing of the former. It remains unclear how many, if any, risers intervened in the 1.49m between the southwestern-most segment of U.13 and U.14. Unit 14 is a vertical facing located 1.89m southwest of U.13's northeast face. It is at least 0.9m tall (its base was not revealed) and gives way on its summit to a 0.35m-wide tread. Unit 14's substantial size hints at its function as the core platform's northeast facing. The wall does not line up with U.1 and 2, the basal walls on this side, being set back (southwest) 1.95m from them. Whereas U.3-5 apparently delimited the core platform on the building's remaining sides, it may be that U.1 and 2 did not serve this function on the northeast. They might have been built contemporary with the outset; there is no evidence that U.1 or 2 continued behind (southwest) of the outset and we dug sufficiently deep here to have encountered evidence of those walls if it had existed in this area. Instead, U.2 apparently terminated on the northwest in U.35. The latter is a wall measuring at least 0.85m high (its base was not securely identified) by 0.95m wide. Unit 35's northwest face lines up with the outset's southeast flank (U.22) and may have continued that line for 1.95m southwest to intersect with U.14. While the architectural role of U.35 is unclear, its significant height and relations to U.14 and 22 hint that it might have been a wall that marked the northwest terminus of U.2, serving to retain fill contained by U.2 on the northeast and U.14 on the southwest. Once the outset was built against U.35's northwest side, the latter's still-visible top might have served to formalize the southeast flank of the outset as it led towards the summit. There was no comparable construction northwest of the outset. Here the outset's northwest basal wall (U.21) abuts U.1, the latter being succeeded by a low riser (U.24) located 0.85m to the southwest. Unit 24 parallels U.1 for the 3.15m it was uncovered running northwest-southeast. On the northwest U.24 corners with U.25, a comparable construction that extends 0.85m northeast to join U.1. Unit 24's southeast terminus was lost in the overburden of F.3 (see TS.5). No trace of it was found in the axial trench cut over and into the outset so it seems reasonable to argue that U.24 terminated before reaching the outset. In any event, U.1, 24, and 25 defined a flat surface encompassing 0.85m by an estimated 3.8m (northeast-southwest) set atop the northeast edge of U.1. The bulk of the platform then rose to the southwest towards the summit.

The superstructure's northeast foundation (U.7) rises an estimated 0.66m above U.14's narrow tread and is 0.93m wide. The building's remaining foundations (U.8-10) are 0.57-0.8m tall by 0.55-0.65m wide. The room they enclose covers 4.24x10.05m and is almost completely taken up by a C-shaped bench (U.16-18) that is open to the northeast where it overlooks the outset. This construction is 0.4m high by 1.5m, 3.25m, and 3.35m wide on the southwest, southeast, and northwest, respectively. The northwest facing of U.17, the bench's southeast arm, steps out (northwest) for 0.2m at a point 2.4m northeast of its junction with U.18, the southwest crosspiece of the 'C.' Following this step-out, U.17 continues to run straight to its northeast terminus in U.7. Unit 17 is surfaced with a formal stone floor (U.32). The other elements of the bench are not clearly paved. A 0.15m-high step-up (U.34) is located 1.15m northwest of the southeast face of the bench's northwest arm (U.16). Unit 34 was traced for 1m over which distance it paralleled U.16. As U.34 peters out on the southwest and northeast it is unclear if it is a formal construction, marking a step-up to the northwest, or a fortuitously well-preserved segment of cobble fill that projects slightly above the rest of the bench's hearth. The area of summit floor left exposed where it is surrounded by the bench measures 2.75x3.4m and seems to have been surfaced with earth (U.31). At least parts of that soil were exposed to high heat. Fragments of burnt earth, lying flat near the base of the summit bench, are scattered across the open floor bounded by U.16-18. It looks as though this floor, which covers 9.4m², center was hardened and formalized through purposeful burning.

By the conclusion of TS.3, Str. 81-1st was a stone-faced, stone-and-earth-filled platform that rose 2-2.34m tall to its summit. The building covered 10.2x14.7m (excluding the outset and U.27) and was aligned ca. 63 degrees. A niche covering 0.36m northeast-southwest by at least 0.6m northwest-southeast was built into the platform's southwest basal wall near the center of that facing. This indentation is set 0.46m above the wall's base and was minimally 0.26m high. In line with the niche is an outset measuring 4.85m across northwest-southeast that was built into the edifice's northeast face. It projects 1.5m northeast from the center of the edifice and was apparently built contemporary with the raising of Str. 81-1st's northeast basal facings (U.1 and 2) rather than being appended to the completed platform on this side. Two risers were recorded in the outset. The basal example ascends 0.5m and measures 1.98m across. It is succeeded on the southwest by the next step, a 0.38m-high riser that is at least 0.4m wide. What other steps might have intervened in the 1.89m between this construction and what appears to have been the core platform's northeast facing (U.14) is unknown. It seems reasonable to argue that the outset was a staircase leading up to the summit but we were not able to establish this proposition. It is possible that much of the putative staircase was ripped out in antiquity. The summit covers an estimated 8.4x14.75m and supports a room bounded by substantial foundations that are 0.57-0.8m tall by 0.55-0.93m wide. These footings delimit a space that encompasses 43m². Most of this area is taken up by a 0.4m-high stone-faced, stone-filled, C-shaped bench the open segment of which faces to the northeast over the outset. The bench's northwest and southeast arms cover 3.35m and 3.25m wide and are 4.4m long northeast-southwest. The southeast segment was paved with rocks and a 0.15m-tall construction may have been raised atop the northwest arm at a point 1.15m back (northwest) of that element's southeast face. The connecting southwest segment is 1.5m wide by 3.4m long where it spans the distance between the northwest and southeast arms. The 9.4m² of open space defined by the bench on all sides save the northeast was surfaced with earth that seems to have been purposefully burnt. Extensive plaster floors overlying stone footings surround the building on all sides save the southwest. A 0.25m-high stone-faced and –surfaced platform

fronts Str. 81-1st's northwest basal facing. This construction projects 1.3m northwest of the edifice and was followed for 1.75m to the southwest before digging ceased.

All constructions raised now, except for the plaster floors, were fashioned almost exclusively of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of those rocks set on the exteriors of walls and facings generally had their flatter aspects directed outwards. A single faced piece of basalt was recorded within U.21, the outset's northwest facing.

Time Span 4

During this interval several minor additions were made to Str. 81-1st. On the outset, U.13, the second ascending riser, was covered by U.15. This addition is set 0.92m southwest of U.11's northeast face. It rises 0.34m above U.12 (U.11's stone-paved tread) and runs back to the southwest for 1.37m (its southwest edge was not uncovered). Unit 23, in turn, rests on the U.26 plaster floor and is set against the outset's northwest facing (U.21). It extends 1.65m northeast from its abutment with U.1, projecting 0.15m northeast of U.11, the outset's basal riser. This addition is 0.7m tall at its southwest terminus, dropping in a continuous fashion to 0.2m high at its northeast end. The construction of U.23 broadened the northeast outset by 0.3m and may have functioned to reinforce the latter on its northwest side.

A 0.3m-high stone-faced construction (U.6) was erected atop the U.28 plaster floor at a distance of 0.26-0.45m southeast of the platform's southeast basal wall (U.4); the distance between these entities narrows from northeast to southwest. Unit 6 measures 1.53m across northwest-southeast and was traced for 2.05m at an azimuth of ca. 319 degrees. It may have joined U.4 at a point 1.9m southwest of the building's east corner though this point was not firmly established. Unit 6's summit looks to have dropped 0.1m across its northwest-southeast width but the building was not well enough preserved to be sure of this point.

A similar construction (U.29) was identified 4.63m southwest of Str. 81-1st. Unit 29 is a 0.23m-high stone-faced platform that measures 1.7m across northeast-southwest. Only a 1m-wide swath of U.29 was uncovered over which distance it was oriented roughly 75 degrees.

The changes made to Str. 81-1st during TS.4 left the edifice's basic form, dimensions, and orientation intact. Its northeast outset was expanded slightly (0.3m) to the northwest by the addition of a wall that borders that construction's northwest wall. The addition of a new riser (U.15) on the outset resulted in the narrowing of the basal step's tread to 0.92m across and the covering of what had been the second ascending step during TS.3. The new riser now stood 0.34m high and was at least 1.37m wide. Two low (0.23m and 0.3m high) stone-faced and -filled platforms were erected 0.26-0.45m southeast and 4.63m southwest of the platform. These constructions measure 1.53m and 1.7m across and are aligned ca. 319 and 75 degrees. Constructions erected now were fashioned primarily from river cobbles set in a mud mortar. In the cases of U.15 and 23 on the northeast outsets, the facing rocks of these additions are oriented so that their flatter aspects look outward. This care in setting stones was not as obvious on U.6 and 29, the low southeast and southwest platforms. Shaped stones were noted in U.15's outer facing and the latter was capped in part by a large, 0.95m long northeast-southwest, 0.15m-thick, stone slab that, if not faced, was apparently chosen carefully for its flat upper surface.

Time Span 5

During TS.5, Str. 81-1st was covered by large amounts of stones that are, with the exception of F.4, set in a brown soil matrix (F.1-4). On the southeast, U.4 and 6 were blanketed by a dense concentration of small to medium-size cobbles (F.1) that extends at least 5.68 m southeast of the platform's southeast basal wall to cover the U.28 floor by 0.15m; U.6 was blanketed by 0.6m of F.1 while U.4 was largely covered by these rocks. Feature 3 completely submerged U.14 and 15 on the building northeast side, masking both so that they would have been virtually invisible. Feature 2 covers all of the surviving portions of the structure's southwest basal facing (U.5), extending for 4.44m southwest of that wall. The summit, in turn, was blanketed by a 0.44m-thick (above the U.31 floor) deposit of medium-to-large rocks (F.2) that are surrounded by very little dirt. Not enough of the building's northwest face was uncovered to test for the presence of comparable rock deposits.

What distinguishes these rock layers from tumbled architectural debris is the flat-laid disposition of their component rocks and the density of these stones. What F.1-4 signify is difficult to determine. Features 1-3 could be parts of construction fill that were introduced to support late additions to the edifice, modifications that were never completed (as indicated by the absence of formal facings that could have retained the rocks). Feature 4, its rocks lying loose without earth to bind them together, is unlikely to have served as a stable fill unit. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, F.1-4 were brought in to bury at least parts of Str. 81-1st, transforming it from a constructed platform into a rounded eminence without obvious cultural aspects. Once dirt collected on this surface and vegetation sprouted from it, what had been Str. 81-1st might well have appeared more like a natural hill than the sizable platform it had been.

Time Span 6

After its abandonment, Str. 81-1st was covered by as much as 0.51m of a soft brown clay (S.2; this is most evident on the building's northeast side, especially northeast of U.11 which was largely unencumbered by the F.3 rocks). Capping S.2 by 0.2-0.39m is a very similar dirt (S.1) that is set apart from its predecessor by its greater quantity of small roots. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.5) that likely fell from still-exposed portions of TS.3 and 4 architecture along with rocks that were eroding out of the enveloping F.1-4.

Structures 84-86

Structure 85 is a sizable range structure that is situated on the crest of the steep slope leading down to the lower terrace and the Southeast Group (Op. 18, 19, and 50) immediately to the southeast. Structure 119 is 25m northwest and across the Op. 47 plaza. Structure 81 is 11m to the northwest. The ground over which these buildings was raised ascends 1.35m over 12.2m from northwest-southeast towards the terrace lip. Structure 86 had, by the end of construction here, been appended to Str. 85's southwest flank though there is evidence that these two edifices likely started out as distinct buildings. Structure 84, in turn, was added to Str. 86's southwest corner, linking the latter to Str. 83 on the southwest. It was not our intention to reveal parts of these three edifices. Attempts to locate Str. 85's

southwest margins resulted in the recognition that this could not be done without uncovering significant parts of Str. 86 which, in its turn, could not be understood until at least segments of its southwestern neighbor, Str. 84, were cleared. Needless to say, comprehending the last building's form and function would have required pursuing additional work on Str. 83 further to the southwest but we had to bring the work to a conclusion before money and excavators expired. Fully 185m² was cleared within Subop. 47B, I, J, T, U, and W (Str. 85), 47C, G, H, K, M, P, and Q (Str. 86), and 47R and V (Str. 84). The work was conducted from March 20-May 16, 2002 under the direction of P. Dresch, digging reaching maximum depths of 1.48m and 0.9m below modern ground surface within and outside construction, respectively. Evidence for the protracted use and modification of these edifices was recognized in the course of this work.

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. 85-Sub1 Str. 86-Sub1	U.22 U.48	-	-	
3	Str. 85-1-1 st Str. 86-1 st	U.1-2, 6-8, 13-15, 37, 54 U.3-5, 15, 26-36, 39, 50-53	-	F.7	
4	Str. 85-1-1 st Str. 85-Sub2 Str. 85-Sub3 Str. 86-1-1 st Str. 86-Sub2 Str. 86-Sub3	U.1, 12, 49 U.16-17 U.18-21, 55 - U.23, 24, 38, 56 U.25	-	-	
5	Str. 86-1-1 st Str. 84-1-1 st	U.45, 58, 59 U.40-44, 46-47, 57	-	-	
6	Str. 85-1-1 st Str. 85-Sub4 Str. 86-1-1 st	- U.9-11	- -	F.2-4 - F.5-6	
7	-	-	S.1-2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the environs of Strs. 84, 85, and 86 is the deposition of at least 0.27m of a hard-compacted brown clay that is mottled with white flecks (S.3). Stratum 3 was only recorded where it borders Str. 86-1st on the northwest. Here the soil rises 0.22m for 2.06m from northwest to southeast. Stratum 3 contains small, rounded to angular pebbles that measure as much as 0.08m on their longest dimension. The density of these rocks varies considerably, from many packed tightly together to none in evidence, even within the limited portion of the layer that was exposed.

Time Span 2

Structure 85-Sub1: Structure 85-Sub1 was represented by a stone line (U.22) that was flush with the base of excavations. Unit 22 was traced for 4.4m along an azimuth of 49 degrees where it ran below TS.2 architecture (U.14) 0.15m northwest of Str. 85-1st. The construction's northeast end was tentatively identified where it turned and disappeared beneath U.1, 0.15m to the southeast. Unit 22's southwest end was not uncovered in 2002.

Structure 86-Sub1: The remnant of Str. 86-Sub1 that was uncovered consists of another stone line (U.48), this one located 0.5m southwest of Str. 86-1st's southwest basal wall (U.4). Unit 48 was revealed for 0.8m over which distance it was oriented roughly 141 degrees. We did not identify U.48's southeast or northwest ends.

Based on the evidence in hand, it appears that the area where Strs. 85-1st, 86-1st, and 84-1st would be raised was covered during TS.2 by relatively modest constructions raised on ancient ground surface. Their foundations (U.22 and 48) were fashioned of river-worn cobbles set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Structure 85-1st: Structure 85-1st was, during this interval, a platform delimited by stone facings. The northeast example (U.2) is at least 0.96m tall while the basal wall on the northwest (U.1) ascends 1.11m. The edifice's southeastern flank was not investigated because its location, perched atop the steep descent to the lower terrace, suggested that this side had long been lost to erosion. This inference is supported by observations of Str. 85-1st's surface here, covered as it was by stones that were tumbling down to the southeast. On the southwest, construction raised during the unification of Strs. 85-1st and 86-1st has largely obscured the earlier versions of these buildings at the point of juncture. The most substantial wall on this side (U.37) is tall (0.9m high) and wide enough (1.05m across) to have served as a retaining wall for Str. 85-1st's core platform. There is, however, no sign of a change in construction within U.1 that might have marked its corner with U.37. That U.1 was extended at some point to join Str. 86-1st is tentatively indicated by the way it steps back (southeast) 0.15m to join the latter's northwest basal wall (U.5). This slight change in direction gives the impression that U.1's builders were accommodating a pre-existing element of Str. 86-1st (U.5) as they brought U.1 to a point where the two facings could be linked. Weak as these arguments are, they together suggest that Strs. 86-1st and 85-1st began as distinct buildings that were later connected, those efforts serving to obscure the latter's southeast basal facing. Be that as it may, we begin our account of Strs 85-1st and 86-1st during the period when they were already joined.

Investigations of Str. 85-1st's façade and summit were restricted to excavations conducted on its northwest side. Here, at a point 7.5m southwest of the platform's north corner, U.1 steps back (southeast) 0.2m before resuming its course to the southwest. Just 0.1m southwest of that inset, a 0.15m-high stone-faced and surfaced outset projects 1.83m northwest of U.1. This construction is defined by U.13 and 14 on the northwest and northeast, the former running for 2.5m to the southwest at which point excavation ceased before encountering the outset's southwest flank. A prepared floor composed of white plaster laid over a foundation of small pebbles (0.05m on their longest dimension) overlying a layer of medium to large cobbles (U.15) runs under U.13 and 14. Unit 15 was traced for 4.77m northwest of the U.13/14 outset and seems to have fronted the northwest, patio-facing sides of Strs. 85-1st and 86-1st. The northwest limits of U.15 lie beyond the area exposed in our excavations. Unit 15 closely resembles U.26, exposed in Str. 81-1st to the northwest and it is very likely that the entirety of the plaza was surfaced with plaster.

Unit 1 rises 0.96m above the U.13/14 outset and runs back 1.42m to the southeast where it is succeeded by U.6. A 0.03m-thick lens of white plaster (F.7) extending 0.52m northwest from its abutment with U.6 suggests that U.1's tread was formerly surfaced with this material. Unit 6 ascends 0.36m above F.7 and is 1.26m wide. Unit 7, the next ascending riser, extends 0.32m below U.6's tread and projects 0.62m above it. This construction seemingly marks the northwest margin of the summit; it was followed for 7.4m northeast-southwest before excavation ceased. Unit 7's southwest-most exposed portion is 1.5m northeast of the line defined by the aforementioned U.37. It looks as though these two constructions were converging to form the summit's west corner. Tentative as this view is, the observations on which it is based tend to support the inference that U.37 defined Str. 85-1st's southwest margin during TS.2.

Unit 8, 0.49m southeast of U.7's northwest face, may have been an earlier version of the latter. Unit 8 appeared as a line of cobbles running parallel to U.7 and flush with the summit surface. We did not investigate the former construction further and so cannot be certain of its architectural significance. Structure 85-1st's summit may have been paved with cobbles but we could not be sure if this was the case in large part because it was difficult to clear the area of the large numbers of unconsolidated stones (F.4, TS.6) that covered it. The summit measures minimally 4.4m across northwest-southeast. No formal construction marking the superstructure's southeast flank was found as beyond this point the building falls away rapidly. It may be that undetermined portions of the summit have been lost to erosion down the precipitous terrace slope to the southeast.

Overall, as TS.3 came to a close, Str. 85-1st was a 2.09m-tall (on the northwest) stone-faced platform that encompassed an estimated 20.5m northeast-southwest by at least 9m northwest-southeast, and was aligned approximately 50 degrees. The edifice was ascended by three risers on the northwest, each measuring 0.96m, 0.36m, and 0.62m tall by 1.42m and 1.26m wide. The third riser is the step-up to the summit while the other two seem to have been terraces that likely ran the length of Str. 85-1st's northwest side. Fragmentary remains suggest that at least the first ascending terrace tread was coated with white plaster. The summit encompasses at least 4.4m across and may have been surfaced with stone. A 0.15m-tall outset projects 1.83m northwest of Str. 85-1st's northwest basal facing at a point 7.5m southwest of the building's north corner. This construction is at least 2.5m wide northeast-southwest (the southwestern terminus was not uncovered) and was fronted by an extensive white plaster floor that may well have covered the entire surface of the patio that Str. 85-1st borders on the southeast.

Structure 86-1st: Structure 86-1st was mapped as a southwestern extension of Str. 85-1st. This interpretation was generally borne out by excavations though there are some hints that the former may have originally stood apart from its larger northeastern neighbor. Specifically, differences in the orientations of their respective northwest basal facings (Str. 86-1st, U.5; 59 degrees; Str. 85-1st, U.1; 50 degrees) weakly suggests that these were originally two distinct buildings. Time did not permit investigating this possibility. The version of Str. 86-1st that we have available for study is that which was already appended to Str. 85-1st.

This entity is a platform bounded by basal walls (U.3-5) that are 1.1m (northwest), 0.7m (southwest), and 0.46m (southeast) tall; it ends on the northeast at U.37. The variations in wall heights, especially between U.5 on the northwest and U.3 on the southeast, are likely due to the rise in ground surface here from northwest-to-southeast. The fill contained by these walls was probed immediately northeast of U.29. Here it consists of three layers of brown to gray clay (U.50-52) that are distinguished by their degrees of compaction, variations in color, and the presence and prevalence of small white fragments in them. Very few rocks were recorded in U.50-52.

The building is fronted on the southwest by a 0.15m-high portico (U.26) that runs 5.55m northwest-southeast. Unit 26 intersects the platform at its south corner, projects 1.12m to the southwest from that point, and is surfaced with plaster (U.27). The northwestern limits of U.26 and 27 were not clear; in fact the area where we thought Str. 86-1st's west corner should be was abundantly confusing with very little intelligible architecture present. Whether this was due to stone-robbing in antiquity or to aspects of the building's form that we do not understand remains unclear. The U.27 floor abuts U.4, the building's southwest basal facing. The latter rises 0.7m above U.27 and runs back 0.9m to the northeast where its tread terminates in U.29. Unit 4's tread seems to have been surfaced with stones. Embedded in that surface, 0.41m northeast of U.4's southwest face, is U.28. Unit 28 was identified based on a linear patterning in its component rocks that parallel U.4. It may be that U.28 was an earlier version of Str. 86-1st's southwest basal facing, one that was replaced by U.4. Unit 29 is a substantial wall, originally standing 1.45m tall and measuring 0.77m across. Only 0.25m of U.29 projects above U.4's tread. Unit 29's considerable size, much of it hidden from view, suggests that it served as a core construction on which U.4 and its possible predecessor (U.28) were anchored. It also functioned to retain the platform's earthen fill to the northeast (U.50-52). Unit 30, 0.52m to the northeast of U.29, marks the end of the latter's tread and rises 0.1m above that level. This appears to have been the southwest margin of Str. 86-1st's summit. Lying 0.91m to the northeast is an enclosure (Room 1), defined by U.31-34, that covers 2.04x3.5m and is surfaced with stones (U.35). Unit 35 is 0.04m lower than the summit surface. Unit 39, which corners with U.31 on the northwest, may mark the back (northwest) side of the room's northwest wall (U.34). Units 31-34 rise 0.32-0.4m above U.35 and probably did not serve as foundations for perishable upper walls. More likely they delimit the compartment, the flat surfaces backing them providing work spaces elevated above the U.35 floor. The southwestern example (U.31) measures 1.22m across while the remaining walls give way to areas encompassing 1.37m (on the northeast), 1.55m (on the northwest), and at least 1m wide (on the southeast). A 1.16m-wide stone surface (U.53) intervenes between the top of U.5 (the platform's northwest basal facing) and Room 1's northwest side (marked by U.39).

Located 1.37m northeast of U.32, Room 1's northeast boundary wall, U.36 ascends 0.1m above that level and runs back 0.3m (northeast) to U.37. This wall, as noted in the discussion of Str. 85-1st, may have been the latter's building southwest basal facing. It stands 0.5m above U.36's tread, is 1.05m

wide, and retains a fill composed of medium to large rocks set in a brown soil (U.54). Unit 37 seemingly marks Str. 86-1st's northeast boundary. It is possible that Str. 85-1st's summit could have been reached by ascending U.37.

As TS.3 drew to a close, Str. 86-1st was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that stood 0.46-1.2m high, taller on the northwest and southwest than on the southeast which benefitted from the northwest-to-southeast rise in the terrain. The platform measures 8x8.17m (excluding the U.26 portico and treating U.37 as the edifice's northeastern terminus) and is oriented between ca. 59 degrees (northwest flank, U.5) and 60 degrees (southeast side, U.3). The building was apparently ascended on the southwest where it was fronted by a 0.15m-high portico that projected 1.12m from the southwest basal facing. A series of three risers ascended from southwest to northeast above the portico's plaster surface (including U.4, the southwest platform facing). These terraces rose 0.7m and 0.25m southwest-to-northeast towards the summit which is marked on the southwest a 0.1m-high step-up. The superstructure consists of a stone-floored enclosure (Room 1) covering 7.1m² and surrounded by walls that rise 0.32-0.4m above that pavement. These walls define the limits of flat surfaces that extend 1-1.55m away from the compartment. There is no indication that Room 1 was enclosed by perishable walls. The relatively broad surfaces surrounding it might have served as work areas and means of passing northeast to Str. 85-1st's summit. The latter destination might have been reached by passing up and over U.36 and 37, 0.1m and 0.5m-high risers that ascend from southwest to northeast. At least one more riser was likely needed between U.37 and the top of Str. 85-1st to reach the latter location. Our excavations ceased before we could test for the location of such a step.

All TS.3 architecture was fashioned primarily of river cobbles that were set in a mud mortar. The rocks comprising the outer facings of walls and terraces had their flatter aspects generally directed outwards. Several cut blocks were recorded in U.4, Str. 86-1st's southwestern basal wall, and in U.28, U.4's putative predecessor.

Time Span 4

Structure 85-1st: A 0.22m-high wall (U.12) was raised now against U.2, Str. 85-1st's northeast basal facing. Unit 12 begins 1m northwest of U.2's southeastern-most exposed point. Unit 12 projects 0.5m northeast of U.2 and was traced for 1.5m northwestward along an azimuth of 312 degrees before excavations ceased. We do not know how much further to the northwest U.12 continued. It is clear that it was no longer present by a point 2.5m southeast of the platform's north corner.

The building's northwest façade was still ascended by three risers (including U.7, the summit step-up). Unit 6, the second ascending terrace, was now replaced by U.49. This 0.43m-high facing projects 0.58m northwest of U.6, thereby narrowing U.1's tread to 0.84m but expanding the second ascending terrace to 1.84m wide.

There seem, therefore, to have been few changes made to Str. 85-1st during TS.4. The building retained its earlier orientation and basal dimensions. The terraces mounting Str. 85-1st's northwest face still numbered three, though now they were, in ascending order, 0.96m and 0.43m tall by 0.84m and 1.84m wide, the summit step-up still projecting 0.62m above the second terrace's tread. A 0.22m-high wall was appended to Str. 85-1st's northeast facing. This addition was part of a complex of diminutive constructions erected immediately to its southeast (Str. 85-Sub2) and northeast (Str. 85-Sub3).

Structure 85-Sub2: Structure 85-Sub 2 was apparently a building that was erected on ground surface and bounded by stone foundations on the northwest and southwest (U.16 and 17) that are 0.1m-tall by 0.25m wide. Units 16 and 17 intersect to form the putative building's west corner at the southeastern-most exposed point of U.2. As an aside, the position of Str. 85-Sub2 suggests that U.2 originally ended here, forming Str. 85-1st's east corner with the platform's southeast basal facing, a wall we did not identify. Units 16 and 17 were followed for, respectively, 1.7m and 0.85m, the former being oriented ca. 130 degrees. The full dimensions of this edifice were not determined.

Structure 85-Sub3: This construction seems to have been a set of three steps (U.19-21) that mount the crest of the terrace slope and which were bounded on the southwest by a 0.52-0.7m-tall wall (U.18). Unit 18 is 1.15m northwest of U.12 and aligned approximately 309 degrees. A fill (U.55) of densely packed stones was laid in between U.12 and 18. The U.19-21 steps are, moving up from southeast to northwest, 0.12m and 0.1m tall by 0.35m and 0.5m wide. The uppermost exposed riser stands 0.25m above the tread of its predecessor. Units 19-21 were traced for as much as 0.65m northeast from their termination against U.18 on the southwest; their northeast end points were not uncovered.

Summary of Str. 85-1st: Time Span 4 was seemingly an interval in which Str. 85-1st was changed relatively little. Many buildings of all sizes at El Coyote became, after reaching their final forms, foci around which relatively modest constructions were raised. This activity is not much in evidence for Str. 85-1st save off its east corner where a staircase, surface-level building, and a possible raised seating and/or work station (U.12) were built within an area encompassing at least 2.5x5m. The fill introduced as part of this work (U.55) suggests that these were considerable undertakings. Nonetheless, Str. 85-Sub2 and -Sub3 did not significantly impact Str. 85-1st, at least not architecturally.

Structure 86-1st: No changes were recorded as having been made to Str. 86-1st during TS.4.

Structure 86-Sub2: Structure 86-Sub2 is defined by 0.1m-high by 0.4m-wide stone walls on the northeast (U.23) and southwest (U.24). Structure 85-1st's northwest facing, U.5, defines the entity's southeast side while its northeast flank was apparently left open. Unit 24 runs for 1.6m southeast from its intersection with U.23 and stop an estimated 2.5m northwest of Str. 86-1st. Unit 23 extends 5.95m northeast from U.24's northwestern-most point, running at an orientation of ca. 60 degrees. There is no evidence that these walls ever continued further. Originally defined as an outset of Str. 86-1st, it seems more likely that U.23 and 24 were raised to partially enclose a space covering an estimated 3.96x5.95m. This 93m² area was at least partially surfaced with stones (U.56). Unit 56 was recorded for 1.3m southeast of U.23. The rest of the space was likely surfaced with earth. Contained within this area is a stone-outlined box (U.38) that stands 0.3m high and encompasses 0.65m northwest-southeast by 0.75m northeast-southwest. The walls contain an open space that, when exposed, was filled with dirt and covered 0.25x0.55m. Large numbers of pottery fragments were found in U.38's vicinity during excavations.

Structure 86-Sub2 seems to have been less a distinct building than an extensive (93m²) earth-and-stone-surfaced space that was partially delimited on the northwest and southwest by walls that were by 0.1m high by 0.4m wide. The only construction recorded within Str. 86-Sub2 was a stone-lined quadrilateral that stood 0.3m tall and encompassed 0.65x0.75m. The area enclosed by these walls covered 0.1m² and was likely surfaced with earth. Considerable quantities of ceramics were found around this 'box.'

Structure 86-Sub3: This edifice was represented by a 0.1m-high by 0.3m-wide stone wall (U.25) that was exposed for 1.1m along an azimuth of 332 degrees. Unit 25 is 0.4m northeast of U.23 and may have been part of a surface-level building that continued beyond our excavations.

All constructions raised during TS.4 were fashioned of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of the rocks that face the exteriors of these constructions are generally arranged so that their flatter aspects look outwards.

Time Span 5

Structure 86-1st: Remnants of a stone semi-circle (U.45) were recorded off Str. 86-1st's southeast flank (U.3). Unit 45 intersects U.3 at a point 4.45m northeast of the platform's south corner; U.3 bounds U.45 on the northwest. It's encircling line is 0.2m tall by 0.25m wide and defines an estimated diameter of 2.2m (the inferred northeast half of U.45 was not cleared). Unit 45's architectural significance is unclear.

A low stone wall that measures 0.25m across (U.58) was found overlying U.26, Str. 86-1st's southwest portico. Unit 58 is a seemingly free-standing wall that is 1.5m long and aligned ca. 52 degrees. It extends 0.5m southwest of, and off, U.26's southwest margin, stopping 0.2m southwest of Str. 86-1st's southwest basal facing (U.4). The significance of this addition is unclear as is the reason that the plaster surface (U.27) of the portico does not continue northwest of U.58. It may be that this wall was part of a late construction built atop Str. 86-1st's southwest portico after that part of the building was no longer being maintained. The area northwest of U.58 might have come in for relatively heavy use at this time, possibly being the interior of a room that the wall bordered on the southeast. As noted in the discussion of Str. 86-1st during TS.3, the area where we anticipated finding the edifice's west corner was heavily disturbed, there being little preserved architecture in this 2x2m zone. As U.58 defines the southeast side of this area, it may be that whatever activities were associated with its construction and use contributed to the damage that occurred northwest of it.

Structure 84-1st: A fill unit composed of cobbles embedded in a brown clay (U.47) was observed continuing between Strs. 84-1st and 86-1st, overlying U.26 southeast of U.58 to a depth of 0.34m. No formal facing that might have retained this fill was noted on the northwest. Structure 84-1st was apparently raised atop U.47. It is bounded on the northwest by a 0.5m-high basal wall (U.46). Unit 46 is 0.5m southeast of the south corner of U.26, Str. 86-1st's southwestern portico. As U.46 was exposed near the end of the field season, it was traced for only 0.6m running northeast-southwest before digging stopped. A 0.25m-high step-up to the summit (U.57) lies 0.75m southeast of U.46 and leads to the summit. The latter, as far as our excavations revealed it, supports one sizable compartment (Room 2) that is defined by stone foundations (U.40-42). The footings are 0.25-0.4m high by 0.45-0.95m wide and delimit a northeast-southwest-trending space covering 4.4x7.85m. A 0.6m-wide door in Room 2's north corner provides one point of access into the interior though, in our admittedly limited investigations, it appears that Room 2 was open to the northwest where it overlooks U.46 and 57. The northern entryway trends northeast-southwest and is bordered by U.3 on the northwest and a 0.25m-high by 0.8m-wide wall (U.44) on the southeast. The passage defined by U.3 and 44 is 1m long. Lying 1.15m southwest of the entryway a 0.12m-tall wall (U.59) projects 0.65m southeast from Str. 86-1st's south corner. Unit 59 might have directed traffic from the north door into Room 2, deflecting movement southeast into the compartment. No built-in furniture was identified within Room 2 though most of our work concentrated on exposing the walls bordering the compartment and we did not have time to clear

much of its interior. The considerable width of the southwest footing (U.40, 0.95m across) may hint at its use both as a support for perishable walls and a shelf or bench (this wall was traced for only 1.19m to the northwest when digging was halted).

A 0.12m-high, stone-surfaced portico (U.43) fronts Room 2 on the northeast. Unit 43, for the most part, projects 1m northeast of Room 2's northeast footing (U.42). The portico extends 0.75m southeast from its intersection with U.3 before turning to run 0.6m to the northeast. From this point the portico is 1m wide and continued for at least 2.2m to the southeast where we lost evidence of the construction to the unfortunate effects of gravity. The indentation in U.43 is 0.4m wide northeast-southwest and is set directly in front of the northern door. The U.45 semicircle is 1.05m northeast of U.43.

It appears that Str. 84-1st was raised atop stone-and-earth fill (U.47) that was introduced southwest and southeast of Str. 86-1st. Structure 84-1st's northwest face was seemingly built into U.47, the remainder of the edifice resting atop it. By the conclusion of TS.5, therefore, Str. 84-1st was fronted on the northwest by two risers that ascended to a full height of 0.75m. The edifice measured, minimally, 4.4m northwest-southeast by 10.5m northeast-southwest and was aligned approximately 61 degrees. Based on present evidence, it seems that Str. 84-1st's superstructure consisted of a large earthen-floored compartment that was bordered by stone footing that were 0.25-0.4m tall by 0.45-0.95m wide. The space delimited by these foundations encompassed 35m². No signs of built-in furniture were recovered within Room 2 though it is possible that the 0.95m-wide southwest foundation was ample enough to have supported a perishable upper wall and to have served as a shelf or bench. The enclosure was likely entered from the northwest, where passage up the aforementioned two risers was seemingly unimpeded, and through a 0.6m-wide door in the compartment's north corner. A 0.12m-high, stone-surfaced portico (U.43) bounds Room 2 on the northeast, projecting 1m northeast of the compartment's northeast foundation. Unit 43 steps back 0.6m to the southwest, narrowing to 0.4m across in the area where it fronts the north doorway. It is likely that U.43 fronted Room 2 along its entire northeast flank, though the southeast end of the portico was lost to erosion over the steep southeast drop to the lower terrace.

Time Span 6

During this interval at least parts of Strs. 85-1st and 86-1st were covered with dense deposits of stone (F.2-6; the situation with Str. 84-1st is unclear on this point).

Structure 85-1st: Structure 85-1st's northwest basal facing (U.1) was largely obscured by a deposit of flat-laid, small to large cobbles that are set in a brown soil (F.3). Feature 3 was preserved to a maximum thickness of 0.83m where it borders U.1 and continues for 1.1m to the northwest where it stops abruptly. In the exposed section of F.3, these rocks overlay a good deal of the U.13/14 outset. Unit 7, the step-up to the platform's summit, was also almost completely covered by a very similar deposit of rocks set in a brown dirt (F.2). Feature 2 was recorded extending 1m northwest of U.7. Structure 85-1st's summit, in turn, was blanketed by a 0.6m-deep layer of small to large rocks that were generally not bound together with earth (F.4). Because of the lack of earth, F.4's stones were poorly consolidated and prone to moving at the slightest provocation. This makes it all the more surprising that a structure (Str. 85-Sub4) was apparently raised atop F.4 on the north edge of Str. 85-1st's summit. This entity is bordered by stone foundations that are 0.4m high by 0.3-0.5m wide (U.9-11). All-in-all, Str. 85-Sub4 is aligned ca. 61 degrees and covers 2.5m northwest-southeast by 3.2m northeast-southwest;

its northeast flank was not found. The interior space bordered by U.9-11 encompasses 1.8m by at least 2.6m. It appears that, late in TS.6, some enterprising people took advantage of the high eminence provided by the now-abandoned Str. 85-1st to build what may have been their residence.

Structure 86-1st: Units 36 and 37, on the northeast margin of Str. 86-1st's summit, were blanketed by another collection of flat-laid rocks set in a brown soil (F.5). A comparable deposit (F.6) largely buries the summit of Str. 86-1st, northwest of Room 1's northwest facing (U.39).

Summary: The apparent care evident in laying down the rocks comprising F.2-6 suggests that they were introduced purposefully to cover parts, but not all, of Strs. 85-1st and 86-1st. Why these particular aspects of both buildings were chosen for this treatment is unclear. The embedding of the F.2-3 and 5-6 rocks in earth undoubtedly enhanced the stability of the deposits and may point to their use as fill for late constructions that were never completed. The unfinished nature of this possible building phase is suggested by the lack of formal facings that could have retained the putative fill. The instability of the rocks capping Str. 85-1st (F.4) suggests a different interpretation as they, at least as F.4 was found, would not have provided a stable foundation for further substantial construction. We are inclined, therefore, to view F.2-6 as deposits laid down to intentionally hide aspects of final-phase architecture, perhaps as parts of efforts to terminate formally the use of both platforms. At some point after these events transpired a modest construction was, in fact, erected on top of U.4 (Str. 85-Sub4).

Time Span 7

After their abandonment, Strs. 85-1st, 86-1st, and 84-1st were blanketed with as much as 0.42m of a fine-textured brown clay (S.2). Stratum 2 was, in turn, covered by 0.09-0.2m of a very similar dirt that was distinguished by its darker brown hue (S.1). Embedded in S.1 and 2 is moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely fell from F.2-6 and the still-visible aspects of TS.4 architecture. Unlike F.2-6, the rocks comprising F.1 were in various attitudes of tumbling down and away from construction.