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PVC Op 14, 15, 16-El Coyote-Structures 11, 54, 55, 57, 68, and 70 Excavation Report

Edward Mark Schortman
schortma@kenyon.edu

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PVC Op 14, 15, 16-El Coyote-Structures 11, 54, 55, 57, 68, and 70

Structures 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, 68, and 70 define a plaza encompassing 50x70m (3,500m²) in the southwest portion of El Coyote. Structures 57 and 67 are situated within that open space and, based on excavations conducted at the former, are likely part of a late encroachment on, and repurposing of, the plaza. El Coyote's Principal Plaza is 110m to the northeast while the Southeast Group, described in <https://digital.kenyon.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=72139&context=honduras> is 140m to the southeast. Five of the nine edifices (Strs. 11, 54, 55, 57, and 70) identified on ground surface were investigated over the course of the 2000 field season with Str. 68 being partially cleared during 2002. One construction, Str. 15-Sub1, that was not recognized during the mapping of El Coyote was also excavated, this work occurring during 2000. In all, ca. 734m² were cleared in the course of this work.

Structure 11

Structure 11 is 3.35m northwest of Str. 57 on the northwest flank of the patio that is also defined by Strs. 54, 55, 12, 68, and 70. The ground here slopes up from southeast to northwest and southwest to northeast towards the bordering hills. Excavations conducted in Subop. 14A-E, directed by L. Schwartz, revealed all of Str. 11's summit and enough of its basal walls to permit reconstruction of the platform's overall dimensions. Examination of what was mapped as a projection off the substructure's southwest flank also unearthed a low platform that apparently stood apart from, and postdated construction of, Str. 11-1st. A total of ca. 91m² was cleared, digging being carried down to maximum depths of 1.83m and 1.73m beneath modern ground level within and outside architecture, respectively. Two building phases were recognized as a result of these studies which were pursued from March-May, 2000.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	Str. 11-1 st	U.1-12, 15-19,	S.3	F.5	
3	Str. 11-1 st	U.13-14, 20	S.3	F.2	
4	Str. 11-1 st	-	S.3	F.3, 4	
5	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in Str. 11's vicinity is the deposition of at least 0.22m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay that contains many small (0.01m in diameter or less) white inclusions (S.3). Stratum 3's base was not encountered. In addition, this earth continued to accumulate through TS.4, making it difficult to determine exactly how much of S.3 was laid down during TS.1. This is especially the case on the building's northwest side where S.3 would eventually come to cover all but the uppermost 0.73m of U.1, Str. 11-1st's northwest basal facing. Most likely, S.3 is made

up of material that eroded down the slopes of the low hills that border El Coyote on the west, the construction of Str. 11-1st creating an obstacle to the free flow of this soil from west to east. The amount of S.3 assigned to TS.1 is based on the layer's relation to TS.2 architecture, that portion of the stratum underlying construction being placed in this early interval.

Time Span 2

During this period, Str. 11-1st's core platform was constructed. This entity is bounded by walls (U.1-3, 10) that are 1.1-1.65m wide and rise 1.91-2.12m directly to the earthen-floored summit (these heights are based on measurements made of the southeast and northwest facings, both of which were traced to their bases). Unit 1, the northwest facing, rises in a single vertical ascent for 1.25m before stepping back (to the southeast) 0.14m. Subsequently, U.1 ascends for the remaining 0.87m to the surviving top of the wall. Consequently, U.1 was marked by a narrow step-back along its northwest face. There is no evidence that the upper 0.87m of U.1 was added later; both the top and base of the wall seem to have been parts of the same construction effort. Unit 10, the southeast core platform facing, rises 1.47m in a steep ascent on its interior (northwest) side before stepping back (southeast) 0.14m. The wall then continues for an additional 0.45m to its top. The core platform covers 5.95m northwest-southeast by 10.7m northeast-southwest, its basal walls containing an earthen fill. The basal layer of that fill (U.16) is a moderately fine-textured, soft-compacted, reddish-brown clay that contains numerous rocks. Unit 16 is at least 0.18m thick (its base was not revealed) and is overlain by a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, reddish-brown clay that contains a few pebbles together with many small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft, white inclusions (U.17). Unit 17 is 0.45m thick and, like U.16, has a flat upper surface. Blanketing U.17 by 0.15-0.18m is a soil (U.18) that is nearly identical to its predecessor save for the greater concentration of pebbles found within its limits. The next unit in the stratigraphic sequence (U.19) is a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay that contains many small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions. Very similar in appearance to S.3, U.19 covers U.18 by 1.03m. Very few rocks with diameters exceeding 0.01m were noted in these fill units above U.16.

Structure 11-1st's southeast side was ascended by six stone-faced terraces that end in a ca. 0.3m-high step-up to the summit (the top of U.10). Unit 4, the basal riser, is 0.2m high by 1.2m wide northwest-southeast. Limited excavations at the platform's south and east corners suggest that U.4 originally ran the full length of the building's southeast side. Unit 4 terminates on the northwest at U.5. The latter ascends 0.55m above U.4's tread and runs back (northwest) for 0.6m. Unit 6 then ascends 0.4m above U.5 and is 0.4m wide. It is succeeded on the northwest by U.7, which rises 0.3m above U.6, its tread measuring 0.99m across. Its successor, U.8, is 0.37m tall by 0.52m wide, and is succeeded by U.9. The latter stands 0.65m above U.8 and is 1.53m wide northwest-southeast. Unit 9, in its turn, ends at the summit step-up (the top of U.10). Remnants of what might have been a white plaster floor (F.5) were noted fronting U.4, the lowest riser. These materials were so fragmentary, however, that we are not sure that such a surface existed here. A ca. 0.25m-tall wall (U.15) continues the line of U.4 to the northeast beyond Str. 11-1st's east corner for at least 2.7m (excavation ceased at this point). Unit 15 extends 0.8m northeast from Str. 11-1st's east corner before stepping back (northwest) for 0.35m at which point it again turns northeast for the remaining 1.9m it was exposed. Unit 15 may have been the southeast basal facing for a construction that once linked Str. 11-1st with Str. 12; the latter is 10m northeast of the former. Excavations northwest of and behind U.15 did not reveal additional

architecture though a construction fill (include in U.15) composed largely of small rocks was tentatively distinguished in this area from the large amount of tumbled stone that was found between Strs. 11-1st and 12.

Structure 11-1st's superstructure consists of an earthen-floored room that covers 2.9x8m. A 0.34m-tall stone-faced, earth-surfaced bench (U.11) fills the southwest portion of the enclosure. Unit 11 measures 3.1m northeast-southwest by 2.9m northwest-southeast. A 0.4m-high by 0.4m-wide stone-faced and -surfaced shelf (U.12) runs along the entirety of the summit room's northwest flank. Unit 12 seems to have been built into, and hence was integral to, the core platform's northwest basal facing (U.1). The Unit 11 bench abuts U.12.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 11-1st was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that was 1.91-2.12m high, measured 11.26x10.7m, and was aligned roughly 110 degrees. The building's core platform covers 5.95x10.7m and is ascended on all sides save the southeast by steep ascents that rise directly to the earthen-floored summit. The building's southeast is fronted by seven risers, six terraces and a 0.3m-high step-up to the summit. The terrace facings are 0.2–0.55m high whereas their treads measure 0.4-1.53m across. Excavations suggest that the basal riser in this sequence ran the full northeast-southwest length of Str. 11-1st. Though we presume that the remaining five ascending terraces did the same this inference was not tested through excavations. A ca. 0.25m-high wall extends the line of Str. 11-1st's basal terrace at least 2.7m northeast of the building's east corner. Though architecture here was severely disturbed, this wall was likely part of construction linking Str. 11-1st to its near northeast neighbor Str. 12. Structure 11-1st's superstructure contains one earthen-floored room that covers 23.2m². The compartment's southwest end is completely taken up by a 0.34m-high stone-faced, earth-surfaced bench that measures 2.9x3.1m. A 0.4m-wide by 0.4m-tall stone-faced and -surfaced shelf runs the full length of the enclosure's northwest wall. This shelf is built into the southeast side of the core platform's northwest retaining wall and is abutted by the bench. A deep probe dug into Str. 11-1st's summit revealed no signs of earlier construction. The substructure, therefore, was apparently raised as part of a single building effort.

All TS.2 walls and risers were built primarily of cobbles that were set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks were generally directed outwards. This was especially the case for U.4, the basal riser in the southeastern terrace system, where special care was apparently lavished on choosing stones that were notable for having flat faces. Though we did not see clear evidence that these or any other rocks used to create Str. 11-1st were purposefully faced, we cannot rule out that possibility, especially for the U.4 rocks.

Time Span 3

Renovations were carried out on and around Str. 11-1st during TS.3. One such effort involved expanding the platform 0.5m and 0.8m to the southwest and northeast, respectively, burying at least parts of Str. 11-1st's northeast (U.3) and southwest (U.2) basal facings in the process. The additions, designated U.13 and 14 on the southwest and northeast respectively, were not integrated with the walls they covered and may have been introduced to buttress the earlier units against the forces of erosion. It is possible that neither U.13 nor U.14 extended the full length of Str. 11-1st's southwest and northeast flanks. These constructions might have stopped 2.9m and 2.5m southeast of the platform's west and north corners, respectively. We did not pursue excavation on U.13 and U.14 far enough to be certain of these reconstructions.

At some point late in the sequence, the summit room was apparently filled with a 0.4m-thick layer of medium to small rocks set in a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil (U.20). Unit 20 raised the level of the floor northeast of the U.11 bench to a point equivalent to the top of that construction. It also seems to have all-but-buried the U.12 shelf. Unit 10, the core platform's southeast basal facing, was raised 0.4m at about this time, presumably to retain the newly added fill. Numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions (F.2) were found scattered across the top of U.20. It seems likely that F.2 represents the much-eroded remains of a white plaster floor that now capped Str. 11-1st's summit. The platform's superstructure still consisted of one room that encompassed 23.2m² but now that compartment lacked any surviving built-in furniture.

In sum, Str. 11-1st, by the end of TS.3, retained its basic form and orientation. Additions to the platform's northeast and southwest sides expanded its basal dimensions to 12m long northeast-southwest. The filling in of the platform's summit created a single, featureless room that encompassed 23.2m² and may well have been surfaced with white plaster. Though we cannot be sure, it seems that S.3 continued to accumulate against Str. 11-1st's northwest flank during this interval as it likely had during TS.2. All constructions raised now were composed of cobbles set in a mud mortar and with their flatter aspects directed outwards.

Time Span 4

Three events that occurred relatively late in Str. 11-1st's history were identified in our investigations. One involved the raising of an ephemeral structure atop casually built stone foundations set on Str. 11-1st's summit. The footings (F.3), roughly 0.15m high, are located in the northeast half of the summit room. The remains appear to be those of a squatter settlement whose builders took advantage of the convenient eminence created by the ruins of Str. 11-1st atop which they raised at least one edifice. So poorly preserved is this architecture that we were unable to reconstruct the form and dimensions of the building set atop the earlier platform.

Stratum 3's continued deposition off Str. 11-1st's northwest side resulted in covering all but the uppermost 1.07m of U.1. A pit (F.4) was dug approximately 0.6m into S.3 during this interval. Feature 4 was not distinguished by marked changes in soil texture or color. Rather, its outlines were tentatively identified by the distribution of architectural debris and artifacts that seem to have fallen into the declivity from the southeast. Based on this patterning of materials, it appears that F.4 was dug against the core platform's northwest basal facing (U.1) and measured about 1m across northwest-southeast. The behavioral significance of F.4 remains unknown.

In general, after Str. 11-1st had been abandoned for an undetermined amount of time, people apparently moved to take advantage of the raised living surface the ruined building provided. They erected at least one modest construction defined by cobble foundations on the platform's summit and dug a pit measuring 1m across by 0.6m deep off what had been the edifice's northwest flank.

Time Span 5

After its final abandonment, Str. 11-1st was largely covered by the deposition of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil that contains numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter), soft white inclusions (S.2). Stratum 2, in turn, was blanketed by 0.15-0.25m of a very similar earth that is distinguished by its darker brown hue and reduced frequency of white flecks (S.1). Embedded in S.1 and

2 is dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely fell from final-phase architecture. Feature 1 was especially concentrated overlying construction and for distances of 2m southeast and 1.3m northwest of the platform.

Structure 11-Sub1

Structure 11-Sub1 was initially mapped as a projection that extends southwest of Str. 11-1st. It proved, on excavation, to be a distinct building that was raised atop architectural debris that fell from the latter edifice. Digging here within Subop. 14E under the direction of L. Schwartz uncovered ca. 16.5m², enough to allow estimating the building's overall dimensions. One major construction phase was identified in the course of this work.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Date
1	-	-	-	F.2	
2	Str. 11-Sub1	U.5	-	-	
2	Str. 11-Sub1	U.1-4	-	-	
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the vicinity of Str. 11-Sub1 was the deposition of stone debris (F.2) that almost certainly originated from Str. 11-1st, 2.4m to the northeast. If this interpretation of F.2 is correct, then it appears that the construction of Str. 11-Sub1 dates to a period roughly equivalent with Str. 11-1st's TS.4.

Time Span 2

There are hints that the version of Str. 11-Sub1 that took shape during TS.3 was not the first iteration of the edifice. The primary evidence in support of this inference is U.5, a 0.45m-wide wall that extends at least 0.55m southwest from under Str. 11-Sub1's southwest wall (U.1). Unit 5 emerges from beneath U.1 at a point 1.75m northwest of Str. 11-Sub1's south corner and its full dimensions were not ascertained. Based on the available date, we cannot reconstruct the form and size of the edifice in which this element functioned. Unit 5 was fashioned of cobbles set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Structure 11-Sub1 appears to have been raised directly atop F.2 and U.5. It is bounded by stone foundations (U.1-4) that are 0.11-0.47m high by 0.8-1.6m thick (the width of the northeast wall, U.3, was not determined). The discrepancy in wall heights owes a great deal to Str.11-Sub1 having been built over a southwest-to-northeast rise in the land, its northeast perimeter footing (U.3) being the lowest while U.1 on the southwest is the tallest of the recorded foundations. Units 1-4 contain one room that covers 2.5m by an estimated 2.15m (5.4m²). This enclosure contains no built-in furniture though the particularly broad southeast footing (U.4, measuring 1.6m across) might well have served as both a support for an upper wall and bench. Overall, Str. 11-Sub1 encompasses 4x4.8m, and is aligned ca. 290 degrees. All constructions pertaining to TS.3 are made primarily of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. The naturally flatter aspects of the rocks used to make these walls were generally directed outwards.

Time Span 4

Following its abandonment, Str. 11-Sub1 was largely covered by a fine-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil (S.1) that contains a scattering of small (0.01m in diameter or less), soft white flecks. Embedded in S.1 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely originated from Str. 11-1st's final-phase architecture. It appears that the erection of Str. 11-Sub1 temporarily interrupted the accumulation of architectural debris off Str. 11-1st's southwest flank, the area likely being kept clear of such detritus during TS.2 and 3. The deposition of this debris likely resumed after the area was no longer being occupied.

Structure 54

Structure 54 anchors the southeast end of what eventually became a continuous construction that extends at least 16.8m northwest-southeast overall and includes Str. 55 on the northwest. Because of such continuity, the numbering of construction units across these buildings is maintained within the same sequence. The architecture linking Strs. 54 and 55 is described under the latter's heading. The Str. 54/55 complex seals off the south flank of the patio defined on its remaining sides by Strs. 11, 12, 56, 68, and 70. The land on which Str. 54 was built rises 0.85m over 8m from south to north. Excavations conducted here within Subop. 15B, E, F, and I under the direction of R. Smith and A. Wright uncovered ca. 72m² and were carried down to maximum depths of 0.7m and 1.22m below modern ground surface outside construction and into architectural fill, respectively. One unambiguous building phase was identified 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. 54-1 st	U.1-13, 59	-	-	
3	-	-	S.1-2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The first activity attested to in the environs of Str. 54-1st was the deposition of a moderately fine-textured, very hard-compacted, dark brown soil that contains numerous white inclusions that are 0.01m or less in diameter (S.3). Stratum 3 was encountered in excavations off Str. 54-1st's south side where it was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.13m (its base was not encountered).

Time Span 2

Structure 54-1st is a stone-faced platform that is bounded by basal facings that rise 0.41-1.04m high (U.1, 2, 9, 10, 13); the height discrepancies are due, in part, to the south-to-north rise over which the edifice was raised. The building was entered from the south where two stone-faced steps (U.3 and 4) are more-or-less centered on Str. 54-1st's superstructure. The basal riser (U.3) is 0.12m tall, ca. 1.5m long east west (its west edge was not clearly defined), and has a stone-paved tread measuring 1.17m across north-south. The next ascending step (U.4) is 0.28m high, 1.85m long, by 0.75m wide (north-south) and is also surfaced with stone. These steps give way on the north to a 1.89m-wide earth-and-stone surface that is fronted by U.1 on the south and is open on the west (that surface is included in U.1). On the east, a 0.4m-high by 0.3-0.45m-wide wall (U.59) blocks off all but the southernmost 0.45m of this surface. To the north, U.6 rises 0.16m above the U.1 surface and marks the south edge of Room 1. This compartment is floored with stone (U.5) and encompasses 1.41m north-south by 3.5m east-west. Open to the south overlooking the U.3 and 4 steps, Room 1 is bounded on its remaining flanks by cobble walls that stand 0.5-0.8m tall and are 0.45-0.97m wide (U.7, 10, 59). Room 2 covers 1x2.33m, its floor ca. 0.4m above U.5, and backs the Room 1 on the north. Most of this compartment's space is taken up by a 0.15m high stone-faced bench (U.8). The latter runs across Room 2's full north-south width and extends 1.65m out from the eastern room wall (U.9). An earthen-floored compartment (Room 3), measuring 0.6x0.85m, lies immediately west of Room 2 and is separated from it by a 0.35m-tall by 0.42m-wide north-south-running wall (U.11); this construction was seemingly added late in the history of Str. 54-1st's occupation. Rooms 1 and 2 are bounded by unusually broad, by El Coyote's standards, walls (0.81-1.05m across).

Appended to Str. 54-1st's east face is a 0.45m-tall by 0.45-0.7m-wide addition (U.12) that extends 2.45m north from the platform's southeast corner. This unit covers the lower 0.3m of the platform's basal wall (U.9).

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 54-1st was a platform that stood 0.6m and 1.35m high (on the north and south, respectively), measured 5x6m (excluding the steps and the U.12 addition), and was oriented approximately 11 degrees. The superstructure was reached by ascending two stone-faced and -surfaced risers that together projected 1.92m south from near the center of the platform's south face. These risers ascended 0.12m and 0.18m leading to a 1.89m-wide surface that ran for the full east-west width of the building and fronted Room 1. The latter's stone floor is set 0.16m above the southern surface, covers 4.9m², and lacks any built-in furniture. Backing Room 1 on the north are two diminutive earthen-floored enclosures (Rooms 2 and 3). Room 2, on the east, covers 2.3m², its floor resting 0.4m above that of Room 1. Most of Room 2's area is taken up by a 0.15m-tall stone-faced bench that runs the full 1m north-south width of the compartment and projects 1.65m west from the enclosure's east wall. Room 3 to the west encompasses 0.5m² and lacks any built-in furniture.

The building likely changed relatively little over its period of occupation though there are signs of several modifications that were made to the edifice. Specifically, Room 2 probably originally covered 1x3.2m (including the U.8 bench). The introduction of a north-south running foundation (U.11) subdivided this space into the two compartments noted above. Similarly, the 0.45m-high by 0.45-0.7m-wide construction (U.12) appended to Str. 54-1st's east side was likely added relatively late in the occupation sequence. The behavioral significance of this 2.45m-long construction is unclear; it may have served as a bench where people working under the eaves of Str. 54-1st's roof could sit.

All construction associated with Str. 54-1st is composed primarily of cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. The naturally flatter aspects of those rocks used in facings and footings are generally oriented outwards.

Time Span 3

Following Str. 54-1st's abandonment, as much as 0.46m of a moderately fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil (S.2) was laid down atop S.3. Like its predecessor, S.2 also contains many small white inclusions. Stratum 2 was, in turn, covered by 0.1m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown humus (S.1). Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a variably dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely fell from Str. 54-1st's final-phase architecture. The rocks comprising F.1 were densely packed against the building's north side where they were traced for 2.3m in that direction. Feature 1 was not as evident off Str. 54-1st's south flank.

Structure 15-Sub1

Situated 2.33m north of Str. 54 is an extensive stone pavement that was not visible on ground surface. The terrain here rises 1.25m over 17m from east to west; it is more-or-less flat for the 12m that was dug within Subop. 15A running north-south. These investigations took the form of two 1m-wide trenches that were excavated to determine the general dimensions of the stone surface. The north-south arm was 12m long while its east-west counterpart measured 17m and crossed the north-south trench near its center. In all, work in Subop. 15A uncovered ca. 28m², excavation being pursued to maximum depths of 0.77m and 1.22m outside and within construction, respectively. These investigations, overseen by A. Wright and R. Smith, revealed two discontinuous segments of pavement each raised during different time spans.

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, 4	-	
2	Str. 15-Sub1-2 nd	U.1-2	-	-	
3	Str. 15-Sub1-1 st	U.3-7	-	F.2	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the course of investigations conducted within Subop. 15A was the deposition of a very fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, dark black soil (S.4) that contains numerous large artifacts. Stratum 4 is at least 0.19m thick (its base was not found). The sizes of the items found in the lowest stratum and their generally good states of preservation suggest that it represents a trash deposit associated with occupation predating Str. 54-1st and the northern pavement.

Blanketing S.4 by 0.06-0.15m is a fine-textured, soft-compacted, dark brown clay (S.3). Stratum 3 may well represent an upward continuation of S.4 but without the high quantities of artifacts and organics found in the latter. Both S.3 and 4 ran relatively level for the 1m they were exposed within the two deep probes where they were exposed.

Time Span 2

Excavations in the easternmost 9m of Subop. 15A revealed the existence of a stone pavement (U.1) and stone wall (U.2), the latter probably part of a construction that was associated with that surface (all included in Str. 15-Sub1-2nd). Unit 1 was traced for 3.45m east-west; it did not seem to continue beyond these points. Unit 2 was found 2.34m to the west of U.1. This stone wall is 0.27m tall by 0.35m wide and was not sufficiently well preserved to infer its orientation. As it stands, U.2 might have been the foundation for a surface-level building or the eastern facing of a low platform. Its relation to U.1 is inferred based on their similar stratigraphic positions, at about the same elevation and buried by TS.3 construction. Units 1 and 2 were fashioned of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

This interval marked the investment of considerable labor in raising the plaza surface north of Str. 54-1st. In the area underlying what would be the U.3 stone pavement, 0.74-0.84m of densely packed small to medium-size cobbles set in a moderately fine-textured, very hard-compacted, brown soil (U.4) was introduced, covering S.3. The northern, southern, and western edges of the overlying U.3 surface were fairly clear. The floor's eastern margin was, however, not well preserved. Based on the distribution of apparent fill stones (a continuation of U.4), we infer that the efforts to raise the plaza level continued eastward to a point where U.4 overlaid the westernmost 1.52m of U.1. This would have left the remaining 1.93m of the U.3 pavement still visible and likely in use. Though far from certain, it appears that this eastern extension took place in what were probably two closely spaced, sequential stages. First, about 0.42m of a dark brown clay containing numerous medium-to-small cobbles (U.5) was deposited. Unit 5 blanketed U.2 and the western portion of U.1. About 0.36m of U.4 was then laid down over U.5 to bring the upper surface equal to the top of U.3 where it is exposed elsewhere in Subop. 15A. If this reconstruction is correct, then U.3 would have ended on the east in a ca. 0.8m-high vertical ascent that was fronted by the segment of the U.1 stone floor that was not covered by U.4 and 5. No trace of this putative facing was uncovered. It was very tentatively indicated by the flat-laid

dispositions of stones embedded in U.4 and 5 west of its inferred location, rocks (comprising F.1; see TS.4) found to the east tilting down and away from the U.3-5 construction.

In the areas excavated south and west of U.3 different fills were recorded off the edges of this pavement. On the south, U.6 consists of a dark brown soil in which were found relatively few, mostly small, cobbles. Unit 6 was exposed to a maximum thickness here of 0.47m here where it was shown to underlie U.3. On the west, 0.13-0.21m of U.6 was found directly below U.3's edge and overriding a moderately fine-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown clay (U.7). Unit 7 resembles U.5 on the east but the 0.22m of it that was exposed on the west lacks the rocks that distinguish its eastern counterpart.

Overall, Str. 15-Sub1-1st is a cobble pavement (U.3) that encompasses 11.03m north-south by an estimated 12.8m east-west and which was aligned very approximately 15 degrees. Numerous artifacts, mostly pottery sherds (F.2), were found embedded in this surface. Unit 3 was underlain by 0.74-0.84m of stone fill and may have been fronted by a 0.8m-high vertical facing on the down-sloping, east-side. That flank was apparently fronted for 1.93m by the surviving portion of the U.1 pavement that was not covered by TS.3 construction. Unit 3's remaining margins were set even with the newly elevated plaza surface which was apparently floored with earth where it bordered Str. 15-Sub1-1st. All-in-all, Excavations in Subop. 15A indicate that roughly 111.5m³ of stone-and-earth fill was introduced to create Str. 15-Sub1-1st. This figure does not include the earth that was used to level the plaza where it bordered Str. 15-Sub1-1st on its north, west, and south flanks.

Time Span 4

After its abandonment, Str. 15-Sub1-1st and its environs were blanketed by 0.12-0.18m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown humus layer (S.1). Off Str. 15-Sub1-1st's putative east flank, 0.15-0.3m of a moderately fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil (S.2) was laid down. Stratum 2 covers the U.1 floor and slopes down and away to the east from what we infer was Str. 15-Sub1-1st's east face. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a light to moderately dense concentration of rocks that fell from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is especially evident within S.1 and 2 east of Str. 15-Sub1-1st where it was followed for 3.88m in that direction. Very few displaced rocks were found overlying U.3 or off its remaining flanks.

Structure 55

Structure 55, located 2.2m south of Str. 57, occupies the northwest terminus of the 16.8m of continuous construction that ends with Str. 54 on the southeast. Structures 55 and 54 probably started out as separate buildings that gradually coalesced into a single edifice over the course of numerous renovations. Together, Strs. 54 and 55 define the south side of the patio delimited by Strs. 11, 12, 56, 68, and 70 on its remaining sides. The terrain over which Str. 55 was raised ascends 0.4m over 8.8m south-to-north. Excavations here with Subop. 15J-N, directed by R. Smith, uncovered ca. 95m² and were carried down to maximum depths of 0.56m and 0.78m below modern ground surface outside and within architecture, respectively. One major building episode that was augmented by several significant renovations was identified in the course of these investigations along with the remains of several constructions that were not integrated with Str. 55-1st and were not visible on ground surface. As noted in the section dealing with Str. 54, the numbers given to construction units comprise a continuous sequence across both buildings.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	Str. 55-Sub1	U.31, 32	-	-	
2	Str. 55-1 st	U.26-30, 33-36, 56, 57	-	-	
3	Str. 55-1 st	U.37-48	-	-	
4	Str. 55-1 st	U.14-23, 58	-	-	
5	Str. 55-1 st	U.49, 51	-	-	
	Str. 55-Sub2	U.50, 51			
	Str. 55-Sub3	U.25, 60			
	Str. 55-Sub4	U.52			
	Str. 55-Sub5	U.54			
	Str. 55-Sub6	U.55			
	Str. 55-Sub7	U.53			
6	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

During this interval what appears to have been at least one surface-level building was raised in the area that would soon be covered by Str. 55-1st. This edifice, Str. 55-Sub1, is defined by stone foundations (U.31 and 32) that are 0.19-0.24m tall by 0.45-0.61m wide. It is not clear if U.31 and 32 were parts of the same construction or belonged to different, contiguous edifices. If they are parts of Str. 55-Sub1, then the putative building's earthen-floored interior covers 1.65m north-south and was aligned roughly 108 degrees; no more than 1.25m of either U.31 or 32 was exposed. Both walls were fashioned primarily of river cobbles that were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 2

Structure 55-Sub1 was covered by the construction of a 0.3-0.67m high stone-faced platform that is bounded by vertical stone facings (U.26-29) on all sides (the height discrepancies reflect the uneven terrain over which the building was raised). The fill contained by these basal walls consisted in part, at least, of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay that contains many white inclusions that are 0.01m or less in diameter (U.56). Unit 56 was exposed in only a limited portion of Str. 55-1st. The edifice's earthen-floored superstructure was divided into two rooms set in an east-west line by the construction of U.36, a wall that is ca. 0.5m tall by 0.55m wide and runs across the summit from north-to-south. Room 1, on the west, covers 3.14x2.5m and contains a 0.25m-high stone-faced and -

surfaced bench (U.30) that is 0.79m wide north-south and takes up the entire 2.5m of the enclosure's southern wall. Fronting this unit on the north is 2.14x2.5m of open floor space. Room 2 on the east encompasses 2x3.25m. A ca. 0.25m-tall by 0.65m-wide stone-faced shelf fills the entirety of the compartment's east wall (3.25m long north-south). Though poorly preserved this shelf may have had a C-shape; its main north-south element (U.33) anchored two shorter segments that project 1.15m and 1m west from the south (a continuation of U.33) and north ends (U.35) of the shelf's main body. The space west of U.33 is partitioned into three earthen-floored bins set in a north-south line. These cubicles are bounded by U.33's north-south segment on the east and divided by two walls (U.34 and U.57). Unit 34 is 0.3m-tall by 0.2m-wide and projects 0.75m west of the shelf. Unit 57, a 0.12m-high by 0.3m-wide wall, extends 0.9m east from Room 2's west foundation (U.36). The bins defined by these constructions encompass, from south-to-north, 0.5x1.1m, 0.45x1.3m, and 0.5x1.3m. Gaps of 0.35m (in the southern cubicle's northwest corner), 0.6m (the middle bin's northeast corner), and 0.65m (in the northern cubicle's northwest corner) might have provided access to, or at least the passage of air through, these compartments. The placing of the breaches in the bordering walls defines a sinuous course for the movement of air through the bins.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 55-1st was an earth-filled, stone-faced platform that stood 0.3-0.67m tall, measured 4.18x5.95m, and was oriented ca. 284 degrees. The superstructure consists of two earthen-floored enclosures set in an east-west line. The western compartment, Room 1, covers 7.9m² and has a 0.25m-high by 0.79m-wide stone-faced bench built along the entire 2.5m that defines the enclosure's south side. Room 2, on the east, encompasses 6.5m² and has a 0.25m-tall by 0.65m-wide stone-faced shelf built along its east wall. This entity is 3.25m long and has constructions that project 1m and 1.15m west from its north and south extremities to give it a C-shape. Three cubicles are arrayed in a north-south line immediately west of the shelf and cover, from south to north, 0.6m², 0.6m², and 0.7m². Gaps of 0.3-0.65m might have provided access to the interiors of these bins. More likely, they functioned to ventilate these small spaces. If that was the case, the placement of the breaches would have defined a sinuous passage for the movement of air across the three cubicles. All constructions raised at this time were fashioned primarily of river cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks are directed outwards.

Time Span 3

Time Span 3 witnessed the expansion of Str. 55-1st by 0.59m, 1.25m, and 1.7m on the north, east, and south, respectively. This was accomplished by the raising of new basal facings (U.37-40) off these flanks; no comparable expansion of Str. 55-1st's west side (U.29) was recorded. The platform's earlier basal facings on the east (U.27) and south (U.28) may no longer have projected above the fill retained behind their TS.3 counterparts (U.38 and 39, respectively). Unit 26, the original north basal wall, may still have stood 0.15m above the level of the northern addition (U.37).

The TS.2 superstructure was much changed in the course of this interval. Room 1 retained its southern bench though its floor space was nearly bisected by the addition of a north-south running foundation that abuts the north face of the U.30 bench and is 0.17m high by 0.2m wide (U.44). The western and eastern subdivisions created by the introduction U.44 measure 1.4x2.14m and 0.95x2.14m, respectively. Room 2 does not seem to have been modified during TS.3 to any great extent. It is on the southern summit that some of the most dramatic changes were visited on Str. 55-1st.

The substructure's southern expansion created space sufficient for at least three enclosures set in an east-west line and backed on the north by Rooms 1 and 2. Located slightly east of Str. 55-1st's axis is a stone surface (U.43; Room 4) measuring 1.35x2.04m and open on the south. Room 4 is bordered by walls that are 0.3m tall and 0.3-0.34m wide on the east and west (U.48 and 47) and terminate on the north at Room 2. Room 4's floor is at about the same elevation as that of Room 2 to the north. Immediately to the east of this compartment is Room 3. This earth-and-stone-floored enclosure covers 1.4x2.9 and has a 0.5x0.75m extension that projects north from its northeast corner. That extension is bounded by a 0.25m-high by 0.45m-wide wall (U.45) on the north. West of Room 4 are the remains of what might have been another enclosure (Room 5). This entity measures 0.9x1.45m and is open on the south. Limited excavations in this area render our reconstruction of Room 5's existence and size tentative. None of these southern enclosures contains built-in furniture. A 0.3m-high outset (U.41) projects 0.39m south of Str. 55-1st's south basal facing (U.39). Unit 41 is 1.55m long east-west and spans the full width of Room 4's south face. This construction may have marked a formal point of entry to Room 4 and, from there, to the rest of the superstructure. Another similar construction (U.42) is 0.5m west of U.41 and extends 0.5m south of U.39. Unit 42 is about 0.3m high by 1.15m long east-west and might have served as step-up into the putative Room 5. Along the remainder of Str. 55-1st's east, and all of its north, sides the TS.3 addition of U.38 and 37 created a 1.25m- and 0.59m-wide space bordering Rooms 1 and 2. A stone pavement (U.46) was found 0.29m south of U.41 and extends at least 1.7m further in that direction (we did not locate U.46's south edge).

As TS.3 drew to a close, Str. 55-1st retained its original height and general orientation. Now it measured 6.47x7.2m, the expansion of the building creating open summit surfaces measuring 0.59m wide on the north, 1.7m on the south, and 1.25m wide along the northern 3.4m of Str. 55-1st's east side. The superstructure now contained six distinct enclosures. Room 1 was divided into two compartments, one on the west covering 3m² while its eastern counterpart encompasses 2m². The Unit 30 bench looks into both spaces. Room 2 on the east was apparently not modified at this time. Structure 55-1st's southward expansion created spaces for three new enclosures, arranged in an east-west line and bordering Rooms 1 and 2 on this side. Room 4, the central member of the triad, has a stone floor that covers 2.8m² and was open to the south where it was fronted by a 0.3m-high stone step that projects 0.39m south of the newly established southern basal facing. This step spans Room 4's full east-west width. Most likely, Room 4 comprised a formal entryway to Str. 55-1st's superstructure. Lying east of Room 4, Room 3 measures 4.4m² while Room 5 to the west encompasses an estimated 1.3m². Rooms 3 and 5 have earthen floors and the latter may have been entered by stepping up and over a 0.3m-tall, 0.5m wide (north-south), by 1.15m-long stone step that is located off Room 5's southeast corner. A stone floor lies 0.29m south of the step leading into Room 4 and was traced for 1.7m south before excavation ceased. All constructions raised now were made primarily from cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks were generally directed out or, in the case of Room 4's floor, up.

Time Span 4

It was during this interval that we hypothesize that the ever-diminishing space separating Strs. 54-1st and 55-1st was filled in by a platform that stood 0.85m and 0.6m high on the south and north, respectively, and was 4.7m wide. This building is bordered by Str. 55-1st on the west, Str. 54-1st on the east, U.7 and 23 on the north, and U.20 and 58 on the south. Unit 7, Str. 54-1st's north basal facing was extended 4.05m westward from that building's northwest corner to intersect Str. 55-1st's east basal wall

(U.38) at a point 1.55m south of that platform's northeast corner. Unit 23 fronts U.7 over the latter's westernmost 2.4m, creating through its addition a 0.15m northward expansion of the earlier facing. On the south, U.20 joins Str. 55-1st at its southeast corner. Unit 58 corners with U.20's east end and runs back (north) for 0.7m where it intersects U.13, Str. 54-1st's western basal facing.

Raised atop this TS.4 addition are two earth-and-stone floored rooms placed in an east-west line. The western enclosure (Room 6) covers 1.45x1.7m and was entered over a 0.3m-high stone-faced step (U.18) on its open southern flank; the remaining sides are bordered by foundations (U.16 and 17) standing 0.3m high and measuring 0.45-0.7m across along with Str. 55's eastern basal facing. A 0.65m-wide gap in the compartment's northeast corner facilitated passage onto the addition's 0.35m-wide northern summit surface. Room 6's eastern neighbor, Room 7, is also open on the south where a 0.3m high stone riser (U.22) fronted the compartment's 1x1.55m interior. Rock footings (U.14-16) that are 0.3m high by 0.45-0.5m wide delimit this space on the remaining sides. Neither room contained built-in furniture. Fronting these two enclosures on the south are two low terraces (U.20 and 19) that run the full east-west width of the building, each rising 0.3m towards the summit. Unit 20, the basal riser, is 1.15m wide while its successor on the north, U.19, measures 0.85-1.15m across north-south (the discrepancy in measures of U.19's width result from the fact that Room 6 extends 0.3m further onto the upper terrace than does Room 7). Room 7's eastern footing (U.14) extends 1.15m south of the U.22 step-up, closing off the U.19 terrace on the east. Abutting U.14 on the east is a low wall (U.24) that is 0.35m wide. Unit 24 spans the 0.65m between U.14 on the west and the footing bordering Str. 54-1st's Room 1 on the west (U.10). Why U.24 was added is unclear; its insertion between Rooms 1 and 7 would have created two cubicles set in a north-south line within this narrow (0.65m across) corridor; the northern example covers 2.5m north-south while its southern analogue is 1m north-south. A 0.25m-high by 0.5m-wide step (U.21) intersects the basal riser (U.20) 0.6m east of its junction with Str. 55-1st's southeast corner and extends 2.3m eastward to where it comes within 0.15m of Str. 54-1st. Unit 21 likely was a step formalizing access to Rooms 6 and 7 from the south.

By TS.4's conclusion, Strs. 54-1st and 55-1st were joined by the construction of a stone-faced platform that stood 0.6m and 0.85m high on the north and south, respectively, measured 4.7m across north-south, and was aligned approximately 103 degrees. This edifice was apparently entered by passing up and over a 0.25m-high by 2.3m-long (east-west) stone step that projects 0.5m south from the structure's southern basal facing. This riser gives access to two terraces that ascend in increments of 0.3m to the summit. The basal member of this set is 1.15m wide while the next ascending riser measures 0.85-1.15m across (wider on the east where it fronts Room 7). The upper tread ends in 0.2-0.3m-high stone risers that front Rooms 6 and 7 on the south. Room 6, the western member of the dyad, encompasses 2.5m² while its eastern neighbor (Room 7) covers 1.55m². Both compartments have earthen floors, are open to the south, and lack built-in furniture. The rooms are bordered by stone footings that are 0.3m tall by 0.45-0.7m wide. A 0.65m-wide gap in Room 6's northeast corner likely provided another means of entering the enclosure, this time from the 0.2-0.35m-wide ledge that borders Rooms 6 and 7 on the north. Two additional cubicles may have been located east of Room 7, between it and Str. 54-1st's Rooms 1 and 3. These compartments are set in a north-south line and measure 1.6m² (northern example, open on the north) and 0.65m² (southern cubicle, open on the south). All constructions pertaining to TS.4 were made primarily of river cobbles that were set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these stones are generally directed outwards.

Time Span 5

This interval witnessed the raising of what were apparently fairly small-scale constructions around Str. 55-1st. As far as we can tell, that platform was not much modified during TS.5.

Off Str. 55-1st's north side, minimally 0.2m of a brown clay was laid down (U.51). Unit 51 contains a dense concentration of artifacts, most of which are ceramic fragments. Many of the sherds were found lying flat. The quantity of cultural material found here is comparable to that recovered in excavations along Str. 57-1st's south flank (F.3) which is 3.26m to the north. Unit 51 buries all but the uppermost 0.2m of Str. 55-1st's north basal wall (U.37). Given these observations, it may be that U.51 and its northern counterpart F.3 constituted fill that was introduced to raise the plaza surface late in the occupation history of Str. 55-1st. Set atop U.51 is a stone floor (U.49) that projects 0.85m north of U.37 and measures 1.15m east-west. Unit 49 was appended to Str. 55-1st's north face at a point 0.95m east of the platform's northwest corner.

Structure 55-Sub2's construction is roughly contemporary with this addition. It consists of a 0.16m-high by 0.44m-wide stone wall (U.50) that is located 0.75m north of Str. 55-1st. This unit was traced from its western terminus for 2.95m at an angle of 103 degrees; it undoubtedly continues further eastward. Unit 50 may be part of a surface-level edifice lying undetected between Strs. 55-1st and 57-1st to the north. More likely, it was introduced to formalize the boundaries between these edifices. Like U.49, U.50 was erected atop U.51.

Structure 55-Sub3, in turn, consists of two parallel walls (U.25 and 60), each about 0.15m high and 0.25m wide. These constructions are 0.2-0.3 m south of Str. 54-1st's southwest corner and were traced for 0.55m over which distance they were aligned roughly 33 degrees. The close spacing of U.25 and 60, at 0.4m apart, tentatively suggests that they might be parts of two contiguous surface-level constructions.

Unit 52, a 0.15m-high by 0.25m-wide 'L-shaped' wall, constitutes the exposed portion of Str. 55-Sub4. This construction is 0.4m west of Room 1 in Str. 55-1st and is aligned ca. 10 degrees. The exposed north-south-running segment of U.52 is 1.55m long while a 0.4m-long portion of the unit seems to form the northeast corner of the edifice of which U.52 was a part. Most likely Str. 55-Sub4 was a surface-level building.

Structure 55-Sub5 is represented by a 0.2m-high by 0.18m-wide stone wall (U.54) that was traced for 1m over which distance it was oriented approximately 20 degrees. Unit 54 is 3.25m west of Str. 55-1st's Room 5 and may have been part of a footing that defined the east side of a surface-level building.

Structure 55-Sub6's U.55 is a low wall that is 0.23m wide and runs over the U.30 bench in Str. 55-1st's Room 1. Aligned ca. 13 degrees, this construction was followed for 1.3m. It terminates on the north at a point 0.1m south of U.30's north edge. Unit 55 may be the remnants of a foundation from a building that was raised atop Str. 55-1st after that platform had been abandoned. If so, then it is likely that Str. 55-Sub6 was erected directly on the elevated surface that was the summit of Str. 55-1st's ruin.

The sole representative of Str. 55-Sub7 is a 0.4m-tall by 0.59m-wide wall (U.53) that was exposed for 1.6m off Str. 55-1st's south side. Unit 53 is oriented ca. 5 degrees and seems to cut across and possibly truncate Str. 55-1st's south basal facing at a point approximately 0.35m east of the inferred location of the platform's southwest corner (this particular corner was not revealed in our excavations). Unit 53's architectural significance is unclear. It may have been part of a late modification that was made to Str. 55-1st or a foundation from a surface-level building that was raised in an area from which stones were being taken after that platform was abandoned (Str. 55-1st's architecture was not well-

preserved in this sector, possibly a result of stone-looting in antiquity). As of this writing, we are leaning to the latter interpretation if for no other reason than that we have trouble imagining U.53 as part of Str. 55-1st architecture.

All of the constructions described above was fashioned using unmodified river cobbles that were set in a brown mud mortar. Those rocks were generally, though not invariably, oriented so that their naturally flatter aspects were directed outwards. The rocks comprising U.54, in particular, did not demonstrate such care in their placement.

Time Span 6

After Str. 55-1st's abandonment, 0.29-0.33m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (S.2) that contains numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) white inclusions was laid down. Stratum 2 was, in turn, blanketed by 0.07-0.21m of a very similar soil (S.1; the humus horizon) that was distinguished by its darker brown hue and decreased density of white inclusions vis a vis S.2. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely tumbled from final-phase architecture. Feature 1 was especially concentrated within 1m of Str. 55-1st's south flank.

Structure 57

Structure 57 is a low platform situated in the southwest corner of the plaza defined by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 68, and 70. Structure 55, as mapped, lies 2.2m to the south whereas Str. 11-Sub1 is 6m to the west. Excavations conducted here within Suboperation 15C, D, G, and H under the direction of M. Esqueda and L. Schwartz uncovered 85m² and were carried to maximum depths of 1.02m and 0.43m below ground surface outside architecture and into construction fill, respectively. A single building phase marked by at least one major renovation was revealed in the course of this work which was conducted from February 1-March 2, 2000.

Time Span

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.4	-	
2	-	-	S.2, 3	-	
3	-	-	-	F.3	
4	Str. 57-1 st	U.1-16, 19, 20	-	-	
5	Str. 57-1 st	U.17, 18	-	F.2	
6	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity for which we have evidence here is the deposition of at least 0.21m of a very fine-textured, hard-compacted, red-brown, greasy clay (S.4; its base was not encountered). Stratum 4 was only found northeast of construction where its top is 0.13m below the base of TS.4 architecture (U.3). This soil maintained a level upper surface for the 2.65m it was exposed northeast-southwest. No artifacts were retrieved from S.4, implying that there was little or no cultural activity in the immediate area while the soil was accumulating. Though S.4 does not match the earthen fills described under Str. 15-Sub1 (U.6 and 7), we cannot rule out the possibility that this red-brown clay was introduced as part of the effort to raise the level of the plaza.

Time Span 2

During this interval, 0.2m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown clay (S2) was laid down over S.3. Stratum 2 contains numerous small (0.01m in diameter or less) white flecks. On the southwest, at least 0.41m of a very similar soil (S.3) was deposited about this time (S.3's base was not revealed in our excavations). The primary differences between S.2 and 3 is the far greater concentration of white flecks in the former. If S.2 and 3 represent slight differences within the same deposit, then the ground surface they formed ascended 0.3m over 6.4m from southwest to northeast. The artifacts recovered in these layers point to a human presence in the area while S.2 and 3 were being laid down. As was the case with S.4, it is possible that S.2 and 3 were parts of fill units that were intended to raise and level the area surrounded by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, 68, and 70.

Time Span 3

It was at this time that a 0.1-0.14m-thick deposit of cultural materials, composed especially of *bajareque* (F.3), was laid down atop S.3 on the southwest. Feature 2's deposition would have brought the top of ancient ground level to within 0.15m of the top of S.2 on the northeast, helping to level out the area where Str. 57-1st would be built. As there is no evidence that F.3's contents were associated with the use of Str. 57-1st, it seems likely that these materials served as fill laid down prior to that building's erection.

Time Span 4

Structure 57-1st is a platform that is bounded by vertical stone facings (U.1-4) that rise 0.3-0.44m directly to the earthen-floored summit. The fill contained by these facings consists of a dense concentration of small to medium-size stones set in a dark brown soil matrix (U.19). Structure 57-1st's superstructure consists of three rooms bounded by stone foundations that are 0.15-0.25m high by 0.2-0.5m wide (U.6-12). These compartments are set in a line running northwest-southeast across the summit. The central enclosure (Room 1) covers 3.5x3.7m and lacks any built-in furniture. A stone-floor, set 0.15m into the summit (U.16), covers 1x1.55m in Room 1's north corner. Unit 16 is built against the southwest edge of the northeast basal facing (U.3), access to it from ground level on the northeast being unimpeded by any construction. Room 2 on the northwest encompasses 1.8x2.5m. It contains a ca. 0.25m-high stone block (U.20) that is 0.6m wide northeast-southwest and projects 0.8m southeast into

the enclosure from the northwestern room foundation (U.6). Unit 20 is located at a point 0.6m southwest of Room 2's north corner and may have served as a shelf. Room 3 borders Room 1 on the southeast and measures 1.35x1.95m. Like Room 1, this compartment contains no built-in furniture. Passage among these compartments was relatively easy; a 1.8m-wide gap facilitated movement between the central and northwestern rooms whereas a door measuring 0.5m across connects the central and southeastern enclosures.

What might have been three distinct steps, each composed of a single large rock, are located off the platform's northeastern face (U.13) and northern corner (two risers, one [U.14] just southeast, the other [U.15] 0.6m southwest, of the corner). These stones are 0.3-0.35m wide, 0.35-0.5m long, and 0.1-0.16m high. The ascent from each stone to the summit is roughly 0.23m. Unit 13 leads directly into Room 1 but is not lined up with U.16. Units 14 and 15 issue onto the platform's north summit corner at the point where U.6 and 9 meet to define the north exterior corner of Room 2. There were no signs of a door in these footings that might have provided access into the compartment. It could be that what we have glossed as 'steps' actually served as seats for people working outside the superstructure but under the eaves of its roof. Set against Str. 57-1st's southeast face (U.4) is a low stone riser (U.5). Unit 5 is 1.9m long northeast-southwest, 0.2-0.4m wide (expanding from southwest to northeast), and joins U.4 at a point 1.4m southwest of the platform's east corner. It may be that U.5 is a step leading directly into Room 3, which is completely open on this side.

All-in-all, by the conclusion of TS.4, Str. 57-1st was a stone-faced, stone-filled platform that stood 0.3-0.44m high, measured 3.7x8.1m, and was oriented roughly 292 degrees. The superstructure consists of three rooms set in a northwest-southeast line across the earthen-floored summit. These spaces are delimited by stone foundations that are 0.15-0.2m high by 0.2-0.5m wide. The central room is open to the northeast and southwest and covers 13m². A stone pavement measuring 1x1.55m is set 0.15m into Room 1's floor in the compartment's north corner. Room 2 on the northwest encompasses 4.5m² and contains what looks to have been a stone shelf. That construction is 0.25m high, measures 0.6m across, and projects 0.8m southeast into Room 2 from the latter's northwest foundation. Room 3 borders Room 1 on the southeast, encompasses 2.6m², and contains no built-in furniture. Movement among these summit spaces was fairly easy. There is a 1.8m-wide door linking Rooms 1 and 2 while a passage measuring 0.5m across provided access to Room 3 from Room 1. What may have been a low stone step measuring 0.2-0.4m-wide runs for 1.9m along the platform's southeast face. This ascent leads directly into Room 3 and, from there, into the rest of the superstructure. Three rocks were set against the platform's northeast and northwest basal facings. These stones are 0.1-0.16m high, 0.3-0.35m wide, and 0.35-0.5m long. One is situated 0.6m southwest of Str. 57-1st's north corner, another projects northeast from that same corner, while the third is 6m southeast of that north corner. While these rocks might have served as steps providing access to various points on the summit, they could just have easily been seats for those working outside the superstructure but under the eaves of its roof.

Most floors and facings were made of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud matrix, their naturally flatter aspects directed outwards. Several purposefully shaped blocks were also incorporated in construction; the platform's south corner, for example, is composed of 'L-shaped' cut stones set on end. Sporadic use of faced stones in Str. 57-1st architecture, some of which were obviously parts of other buildings (the aforementioned 'L-shaped' blocks were probably components of a staircase), strongly suggests that they were recycled from earlier architecture elsewhere at the site.

Time Span 5

Two apparent 0.15-0.3m-high stone-faced and –surfaced additions (U.17 and 18) were made to Str. 57-1st's southwest flank during this interval. The northwestern of the two constructions (U.18) projects 1.75m southwest of the platform's west corner and runs for 3.75m to the southeast before turning northeast to intersect Str. 57-1st's southwest basal facing (U.1). The southeastern addition (U.17) extends 0.8m southwest of Str. 57-1st's south corner before turning to run 0.7m to the northwest. The southeastern addition then jogs 0.5m to the southwest before resuming its northwest course for 1.6m after which it runs back northeast to rejoin the platform. The overall results of these modifications were to give Str. 57-1st an inset south corner (that indent measuring 0.5x0.7m), an increase in its basal dimensions to 5.3x8.1m, and a crenelated appearance with 2.1m separating the two southwestern additions. Units 17 and 18 were made of river cobbles that were set in a mud mortar. The flatter faces of these rocks were directed outwards.

A dense artifact deposit (F.2) was found extending for at least 2m southeast and southwest of the platform. This material continues for at least 2.2m away from the newly reconstituted platform and may represent debris associated with Str. 57-1st's last period of use.

Time Span 6

Following Str. 57-1st's abandonment 0.14-0.2m of a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown soil (S.1; the humus horizon) was laid down. Stratum 1 covers all but the uppermost portions of Str. 57-1st's construction and contains a light concentration of rocks (F.1) that most likely fell from final-phase architecture. The relative paucity of construction debris comprising F.1 tentatively suggests that stones were a minority component of the building's superstructure.

Structure 68

Structure 68 closes off the east side of the plaza that is also delimited by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, and 70. The last of these buildings is 13m to the northwest while Str. 54 lies 20m southwest of Str. 68. The ground surrounding Str. 68 rises 1.33m over 20m from east-to-west. It appears that the original ground surface above which this building was erected also ascended from north to south, this time rising 1.2m across 16.1m. Excavations here within Subop. 16AA-AJ cleared about 168m² on and around Str. 68, digging being pursued to maximum depths of 0.88m and 1.1m below modern ground surface beyond and within construction, respectively. One primary building phase to which was appended at least one significant addition on the west was recorded in the course of this work which was directed by A. Slaven from March 14-May 11, 2002.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction Phase	Units	Strata	Features	Dates
1	Str. 68-1 st	U.1-15, 22	-	-	
2	Str. 68-1 st	U.16, 18-21,	-	-	

		23-28, 30, 32, 37, 38		
	Str. 68-Sub1	U.17		
	Str. 68-Sub2	U.31		
3	Str. 68-1 st ?	U.29, 36	-	F.2, 3
	Str. 68-Sub3	U.35, 39		
	Str. 68-Sub4	U.33-34, 39		
4	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1

Time Span 1

During this interval, Str. 68-1st emerged as a sizable platform. The building's core is delimited by stone facings (U.3, 4, 11, 13) on all sides. The only one of these walls that we exposed to its full height is the southern example (U.3) that has a preserved height of 1.26m and measures an estimated 2.63m across. We presume that U.4, 11, and 13 were of comparable dimensions but we were not able to establish this inference through direct observations. The area defined by U.3, 4, 11, and 13 covers 7x9.2m, the upper portions of these walls defining the borders of the superstructure which consists of one compartment (Room 1) that encompasses 4.3m by an estimated 6m. What appears to have been a 0.54m-tall stone-faced and surfaced bench (U.12) runs for 4m along Room 1's west wall. Unit 12 is 0.7m wide east-west. The considerable girth of the basal facing bordering the summit room on the south (U.3, 2.63m wide) suggests that it might have served as a retaining wall, support for one of the superstructure's perishable upper walls, and as a bench. If this was the case, U.3 and 12 together would have comprise a ca. 0.5m-tall 'L-shaped' bench the stem of which covered ca. 6m east-west by at least 2m north-south while its thinner leg projected 4m north from the stem's west end and was 0.7m wide. Not enough of the east summit was revealed to determine if a construction comparable to U.12 was to be found extending north of the bench's east end. The 1.4m intervening between U.12's west side and the western basal wall (U.4) was surfaced with stones. This pavement is estimated to have measured 4m north-south. A 0.1m-high riser (U.22) marks the west side of this surface. Unit 22 is 0.37m east of U.4's exterior (west) face. As U.4 was at least 0.85m high at this point it seems unlikely that U.4 and 22 combined to form steps leading to Str. 68-1st's summit. The architectural significance of U.22, therefore, remains unknown.

The summit was reached by passing up and over seven risers that ascended the building's north face (U.1, 5-10). The basal riser (U.1), is estimated to have stood 0.7m tall and to have run the full east-west width of the platform's north face. Unit 1 is 0.7m wide and is succeeded on the south by U.5 which is 0.28m tall by 0.68m wide. Unit 6 looms 0.28m above U.5's tread and encompasses 0.31m across. The next ascending riser, U.7, is 0.3m high by 0.48m wide and gives way on the south to U.8 which is 0.4m tall by 0.42m wide. Unit 9, in turn, ascends 0.17m above U.8's tread and measures 0.43m across. The penultimate riser in the sequence, U.9, is 0.18m high by 0.52m wide while the final step, U.10, is 0.2m tall by 0.43m across. The uppermost 0.2m of U.11, the core platform's north facing, stands 0.2m above U.10's tread. Units 6 and 8 were traced for 4.5m and 5m to the east, possibly indicating that U.5-10 each extended the full width of Str. 68-1st's north face. The remaining ascents were not cleared sufficiently to test this proposition.

On the east, Str. 68-1st is faced by three terraces (U.2, 14, 15) that lead up to U.13, the core platform's east facing. None of these ascents was well preserved and their locations and heights are inferred from those segments of them that survived to be recognized in our excavations. Unit 2, the basal eastern facing, stood an estimated 0.93m tall and was 1.93m wide. Its successor on the west, U.14, is inferred to have risen 1.12m above U.2's tread and to have encompasses 1.8m east-west. The next riser on the west, U.15, is 0.24m tall and terminates 0.7m to the west in the eastern face of the eastern summit wall, U.13. The latter projects an estimated 0.4m above U.15's tread.

As TS.1 drew to a close, Str. 68-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood 1.26-2.71m tall, measured 10.75x13.6m, and was aligned roughly 115 degrees; the height discrepancies owe a great deal to the north-to-south rise in the land over which the building was raised (1.2m over 16.1m in this direction). The north face was mounted by seven stone-faced risers that ascend towards the summit in increments of 0.17-0.7m (most fell within 0.17-0.4m in height) and that were 0.3-0.7m wide. It is likely, but not established, that all of these risers ran for the full east-west length of Str. 68-1st's north face. The southern basal wall rose directly to the summit, the construction's south face stepping back 0.18m to the north at a point 0.36m up from its base. On the east the platform was ascended by three terraces the two lowest being 0.93m and 1.12m tall by 1.93m and 1.8m wide. The next riser stands 0.24m high and ends 0.7m to the west in the core platform's 0.4m-tall rise to the summit. The latter supported a superstructure that consists of one room that encompasses 26m². A 0.5m-tall stone-faced and – surfaced 'L-shaped' bench dominates this space. It is composed of the broad (2.63m across) top of the southern core facing (U.3) that measures about 6m long east-west. A 0.7m-wide construction projects 4m north from U.3's west end giving the bench its L-shape. Not enough of the room's east margin was cleared to determine if there was a comparable projection on that side of U.3 as well. Immediately west of Room 1 and bordering the bench on that side is a stone surface that sits ca. 0.5m above the main compartment's floor and encompasses 1.05x4m (4.2m²). All constructions raised now were made primarily of river cobbles that are set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks are directed outwards. The exceptions to this pattern are U.5-7, the second through fourth risers on the platform's north face. The exposed segments of these constructions were fashioned of faced, white blocks possibly composed of limestone.

Time Span 2

The platform raised during TS.1 was modified slightly during this span. One such change took the form of a 0.31m-high facing (U.16) that was appended to Str. 68-1st's north side. Unit 16 projects 0.6-0.8m north of U.1 and was traced for 5m to the west of its intersection with Str. 68-1st's northwest corner before excavation ceased. Unit 1 continued to project 0.39m above U.16's tread, the risers ascending to the summit now numbering eight. On the south the poorly preserved remains of a stone-faced terrace that stood at least 0.54m high (U.30) were recovered. Unit 30 projects 2.9m south from U.3 and was exposed for 1m running east-west. The possibility that U.30 ran the full length of Str. 68-1st was not tested. Backing U.30 on the north is a hard-compacted brown clay that contains numerous small white flecks (U.37). Unit 37 covers the lowest exposed 0.19m of U.3's south side and is blanketed by a brown soil that contains many small to medium-size rocks (U.38). The net effect of adding U.30, 37, and 38 was to create a 2.9m-wide elevated surface that is backed on the north by the south basal facing (U.3) of Str. 68-1st's core platform. As the latter still projected 1.26m above U.30's tread, it is highly unlikely that the superstructure could have been accessed from this side. More reasonably, the

southern terrace provided a raised venue for the performance of activities for which the bulk of Str. 68-1st formed the backdrop (cf. Str. 70-1st, TS.3).

The major changes that took place during TS.2 consisted of adding at least two rooms off the building's west side. Unit 18, a 0.1m-high terrace facing, defines the north side of this complex. It abuts U.4 at a point 0.2m south of Str. 68-1st's northwest corner, running for 6m to the west where it intersects U.31. The architectural significance of the latter construction is unclear; it may be the eastern facing for a building (Str. 68-Sub2) that was not identified on ground surface. A stone surface (U.32) fronts U.18 over an area extending 3.35m east from U.31, projecting at least 0.9m north of U.18. Unit 32's north margin was not uncovered.

Lying 1.9m back (south) from U.18 is a 0.96m-tall stone-faced step-up (U.19). Unit 19 measures 1.15m across north-south and was traced for 2.75m west from its abutment with U.4, the core platform's western basal wall. It looks as though U.19 was originally 2.5m long before being expanded an undetermined distance to the west. Unit 19 forms the north side of Room 2, which is bounded on the remaining sides by U.4, 20, and 21. Units 19-21 are stone constructions that rise to a maximum height of 0.69m above the compartment's stone pavement (U.23) and enclose an area covering 3x4.5m. A stone step, rising 0.2m above U.23, was built into Room 2's western wall (U.20) at the enclosure's southwest corner. This riser extends 0.32m into U.20 and is 0.24m wide north-south. Complete clearing of Room 2 failed to reveal any built-in furniture. The enclosure is bordered on the east, south, and west by stone pavements set equal to the top of its bordering walls (U.24, 25, top of U.4). As noted in the discussion of TS.1, 0.37m intervenes between U.4's west face and a 0.1m-high riser (U.22) leading east towards Room 1. This narrow area is surfaced with rocks. On the west, a stone pavement (U.24) extends at least 1.4m to the west of U.20, our excavations ending before the floor did. Unit 25, in turn, extends 1.15m south of U.21, Room 2's southern wall, where it ends in a 0.58m-tall facing that looks south into Room 3 (see below). There might have been a 0.1m-high step-up (U.26) within the U.25 surface at a point 0.5m south of U.21. The reality of this riser remains in question.

Room 3 lies 1.15m south of Room 2 and was only partially cleared. From what we can tell about this compartment, it was bordered on the west by U.27, a 0.66m-tall wall that ran for at least 7.5m south from its northern intersection with U.25's south face (U.27's south edge was not uncovered). Unit 28, a 0.52m-tall wall, intersects U.27 at a point 5.7m south of the latter's north end. Unit 28 defines Room 3's south margin and was followed for 0.7m to the east at which point it disappeared beneath later architecture (see TS.3). The continuation of U.27 south past U.28 hints at the existence of another enclosure that borders Room 3 on this side. Overall, Room 3 measures 5.7m north-south by an estimated 4m east-west and lacked built-in furniture within the limited area that we cleared of the compartment's interior. The enclosure's eastern limit is inferred to have been constituted by the southward extension of U.4 that would be needed to join up with the newly erected southern terrace (U.30). Unit 4's extension, let alone its corner with U.30, was not established through excavations. It should be noted that, unlike Room 2, which was raised slightly above ground surface on the north, Room 3 was apparently built directly on ground level. This distinction is likely accounted for in part by the north-to-south rise in the terrain over which these rooms were raised.

A 0.3m-tall by 0.89m-wide stone wall (U.17) was recorded 2.82-3.25m north of U.1, the core platform's northern terrace. Unit 17 was followed for 1.8m over which distance it was aligned 120 degrees (the exposed western 1m) and 135 degrees (along the remaining 0.8m on the east). There is no evidence that U.17 was integrated with Str. 68-1st; most likely it is part of a free-standing edifice (Str. 68-Sub1) that was not detected on ground surface.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 68-1st's core platform remained largely unchanged save that it was now ascended on the north by eight stone-faced risers (nine including the step-up to the summit) and measured 11.2m north-south by 13.6m east-west. It was now fronted by a, minimally, 0.54m-tall by 2.9m-wide earth-and-stone-filled terrace on the south. Appended to the platform's west side are at least two rooms, the exposed examples being set in a north-south line. A 0.1m-tall stone-faced riser (U.18) runs 6m between its abutment with the core's northwest corner and what seems to have been the east facing of Str. 68-Sub2. A stone floor encompassing 3.35m east-west extends minimally 0.9m north of that facing, terminating on the west at Str. 68-Sub2's east basal wall. Located 1.9m south of U.18 is Room 2. Bordered by substantial stone foundations (as much as 0.69m tall) this stone-floored compartment covers 14m² and lacks any surviving built-in furniture. A step is set 0.2m above Room 2's floor in the compartment's southwest corner. This riser is 0.24m wide north-south and extends 0.32m into the hearting of the room's west wall. The eastern, southern, and western walls are capped by stone surfaces; the aforementioned step suggests that these served as areas whose uses were tied into the activities conducted in Room 2. Room 3 is 1.15m south of Room 2, has an earthen floor bounded by stone walls that are 0.52-0.66m high, and encompasses an estimated 23m². Only the western and part of the south walls bordering this compartment were uncovered. While Room 2 may have been raised slightly above ground level on the north, Room 3 was apparently erected directly on ancient ground surface on the south. This difference probably reflects accommodations made to the north-to-south rise of the land here. Yet another room may lie immediately south of Room 3 though this putative compartment was only glimpsed in the limited excavations we conducted here. A construction raised directly on ground surface (Str. 68-Sub1) lies 2.82-3.25m north of Str. 68-1st's core platform. The surviving element of this edifice is a stone wall that is 0.3m tall by 0.89m wide and runs at two slightly different orientations; the western exposed 1m of this unit is aligned roughly ca. 120 degrees while its eastern uncovered segment is oriented ca. 135 degrees. The behavioral significance of this wall is uncertain.

All constructions raised during TS.2 were fashioned primarily of river cobbles that were set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks were directed outwards. Unit 32, in contrast, consists primarily of white angular rocks, possibly limestone. These stones do not seem to have been purposefully shaped.

Time Span 3

The major change made to Str. 68-1st at this time was the addition of a 0.62m-high construction (U.29) off the core platform's south side. It is unclear if U.29 ran back to and joined Str. 68-1st's south face. The construction's north end is not clearly defined. Based on the dense packing of rocks that back U.29 (all included in U.29), it looks as though this construction was 0.9-1.75m wide and stopped 0.3-1.5m short of Str. 68-1st's putative south margin (U.30). Unit 29's south edge does not define a straight line but, starting on the west, runs for 3.9m at ca. 96 degrees after which it steps out 0.35m to the south before resuming its eastward course for 4.85m at approximately 110 degrees. These variations may result, in part, from U.29's casual construction and resulting poor degree of preservation. If U.29 was connected to Str. 68-1st's core it would have expanded that building 1.8-3m south of U.30, the former basal eastern terrace. The latter would still have risen 0.54m above the putative surface backing U.29. More likely, the latter is a poorly understood stone block that was 0.3-1.5m south of the core platform and was 0.62m high, encompassing 8.75m east-west by 0.9-1.75m wide. Built against U.29's west side is

a 0.23m-high box (U.36) defined on the south, west, and north by vertically set slabs of white, possibly limestone, rocks. Unit 36 measures 0.5m north-south by 0.84m east-west.

The remaining distinct constructions dating to this span are Strs. 68-Sub3 and 68-Sub4. Both of these diminutive edifices were raised atop roughly 0.2m of earth (U.39) that was used to fill the interior of what had been Room 3. It is likely that the enclosure's walls were still visible to heights of 0.3-0.45m at this point. Structure 68-Sub 3 is a 0.3m-tall stone faced platform (U.35) that measures 1.7-2.4m north-south by 1.7 east-west. The differences in U.35's north-south lengths results from the angle taken by its north wall. Whereas the building is general oriented 263 degrees, the north facing is aligned roughly 55 degrees. This divergence results in U.35's west facing being 1.7m long while its eastern wall is 2.4m in length. Structure 68-Sub3's summit is clear of any surviving architecture.

Two stone foundations (U.33 and 34) are all that we could identify of Str. 68-Sub4. Units 33 and 34 are 0.25m high by 0.45m (U.34) and 0.65m wide (U.33). Unit 34, the southern footing, projects 1.25m east from U.35's northeast corner at an orientation of about 105 degrees. Unit 33 corners with this foundation and extends 1.7m to the north on its exterior (east) face at an alignment of ca. 20 degrees. It is not clear that the northern limit of U.33 was identified in our excavations. In general, Str. 68-Sub4 seems to have consisted of at least one earthen-floored room that was set against Str. 68-Sub3's east side and contained a space that covers, minimally, 0.8x1.1m; the full size and form of this edifice were not revealed in our work.

Structures 68-Sub3 and 68-Sub4 were almost certainly raised after Room 3 was no longer in use. It may be that the rest of Str. 68-1st was also largely abandoned by this time. The relation of U.29 and 36 to the large platform is less clear. If U.29 was a terrace designed to extend Str. 68-1st a total of 1.8-3m to the south, then it would be reasonable to argue that at least the core platform was still in use when this construction was added to it. If, however, U.29 is a free-standing, large block of stones, then there is no reason to presume that this construction was contemporary with the last period of Str. 68-1st's use. All architecture raised during TS.3 was fashioned primarily of a mix of river cobbles and angular rocks, the latter tending to be white in color. The rocks were set in a mud mortar and, though some were oriented with their flatter aspects looking outward, this was not invariably the case.

Features 2 and 3 comprise dense concentrations of flat-laid stones, mostly river cobbles, that were laid against Str. 68-1st's east flank (F.2) and across its summit, filling Room 1 (F.3). Feature 2 covers U.2 (the platform's east basal wall) to its full reconstructed height, extending 3.2m east of that facing. The architectural and behavioral significance of these entities is unclear. The horizontal disposition of the stones comprising F.2 and F.3 suggests that they had not fallen from final-phase architecture (see F.1, TS.4). The large number of the rocks in F.2 and 3, along with their dense packing, especially atop the platform, indicate that they arrived in these locations as the result of purposeful human actions. Features 2 and 3 may have been fill for architecture that was never completed before the building was abandoned. Alternatively, these rocks may have been introduced to formally terminate at least parts of Str. 68-1st.

Time Span 4

After Str. 68-1st was abandoned, as much as 0.5m of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil containing numerous white flecks (S.2) was laid down. Stratum 2, in turn, was blanketed by 0.14-0.4m of a similar earth that is distinguished by its dark gray color (S.1; the humus horizon). Embedded in

S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks that fell from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 was traced for 1.5m and 3m south and north of Str. 68-1st's core platform, respectively.

Structure 70

Structure 70 is 23.85m northeast of Str. 11 and seals the northeast side of the plaza defined on its remaining sides by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, and 68. Structure 54 lies 35.2m to the south. The ground above which Str. 70 rises ascends 3.77m over 16m southeast-to-northwest. Digging here in Subops. 16A-K uncovered ca. 178m², excavations being pursued to maximum depths of 2.42m and 2.13m below modern ground surface within and outside construction, respectively. Three major building phases were recognized in the course of this work that was directed by M. Esqueda during the 2000 field season.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	-	-	S.5-8	-	
2	Str 70-2 nd	U.1-7, 9, 10	-	F.4	
3	Str. 70-1 st	U.8, 11-27, 30-34	S.4?	-	
4	Str. 70-Sub1	U. 28, 29	S.4	F.2, 3	
5	-	-	S.1-4	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the environs of Str. 70 was the deposition of S.7 and 8. The latter consists of a coarse-textured, granular, green, rocky material that appears to be the residue of decayed bedrock. Interspersed throughout the layer are soft white rocks that seem to be fragments of limestone. A few patches of purple to lavender clay were also found scattered within the deposit. No artifacts were recovered during excavations within S.8. This soil is at least 0.44m thick (S.8's base was not encountered) and was only revealed in the base of excavation off Str. 70's southeast side where it rises 1.77m over 8.2m from southeast-to-northwest. Stratum 7 was uncovered at the bottom of a deep probe sunk into Str. 70's summit. This exposure is 1.1m northwest of the northwestern-most point where S.8 was identified. Stratum 7 consists of a very fine-textured, red-brown, hard-compacted clay that is mottled with gray ash and is at least 0.35m thick (this soil level's base was not encountered in our excavations). Unlike S.8, S.7 rises 0.15m over the 0.85m it was exposed from northwest-to-southeast. Stratum 6, in turn, is 0.28-0.4m thick where it overlies S.7, has a level upper surface over the 0.85m it was exposed southeast-northwest, and is distinguished from its predecessor by the presence within it of

numerous small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions. A few charcoal flecks are scattered throughout S.6. Stratum 5 is a, minimally, 0.59m-thick deposit of red-brown clay that closely resembles S.6 save for the lack of carbon flecks (S.5's base was not found). This soil level was identified off Str. 70's northwest flank where it ran beneath TS.2 architecture and buried the lower 0.3m of U.2, the platform's northwest basal facing. Stratum 5 is most likely a northwest continuation of S.6; the two exposures are separated by 3.8m of unexcavated earth. If this is the case, then the ground surface that formed atop S.5 and 6 ascended 0.45m over 3.8m from southeast-to-northwest. The recovery of cultural material from S.5-7 points to human occupation in the area that would eventually be covered by Str. 70. It may well be that these last three strata were introduced by Str. 70's builders to level out the terrain over which the platform would be erected.

Time Span 2

Structure 70-2nd is a platform defined by stone facings (U.1-4) that are 0.4-1.42m tall (higher on the downslope, southeast side). The building measures 5.75m southeast-northwest and was oriented ca. 18 degrees (the construction's northeast-southwest dimension is not known for this building phase). The fill retained by U.1-4 consists of fine-textured clays that vary in color from dark brown (U.6) to tan (U.5). Units 5 and 6 both contain many small (0.01m in diameter or less) soft white inclusions and were revealed in two deep probes separated by 1.05m. These limited exposures of Str. 70-2nd's core hint at the use of multiple sources for the earth that comprised the platform's hearting. Structure 70-2nd's summit was burned bright orange in spots. The best preserved of these examples (U.7) caps U.6 and was 0.02m thick. Unit 7 was not found continuously throughout the 1x0.83m in which it was found nor did it appear in the probe that revealed U.5. It may be that this burning resulted from specific activities conducted in different parts of the summit and were not part of an effort to harden the entirety of the superstructure's floor. No built-in furniture, such as benches or shelves, were recorded in the 1m-wide trench that we dug across Str. 70 running southeast-northwest.

There are scant hints of other buildings that may have been contemporary with Str. 70-2nd. A 0.12m-high wall (U.10) was traced for 0.7m northwest-southeast directly beneath Str. 70-1st's northeast basal facing. Located 0.15m northwest of U.10 were fragments of a hard-compacted, fine-textured earth that had been burnt orange (F.4). Feature 4 was largely covered by TS.3 construction (U.16) and so little can be said about its extent or behavioral significance. At present, F.4 tentatively suggests that fires were maintained in association with a construction of which U.10 was an element. Stratigraphic relations indicate that U.10 and F.4 predate TS.3 architecture, but whether and how they relate to Str. 70-2nd are unknown. A 0.25m-high by 0.49m-wide wall (U.9) runs parallel to, and 0.71m northwest of, Str. 70-2nd's northwest basal facing (U.2). Unit 9 was followed for 0.9m northeast-southwest and seems to be a foundation for a surface-level building. Stratigraphic considerations lead to its inclusion in TS.2. Units 9 and 10, in sum, were likely parts of surface-level buildings that were erected and used at about the same time as Str. 70-2nd.

All constructions raised during TS.2 consist primarily of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. The naturally flatter aspects of the rocks employed in walls are generally oriented outwards.

Time Span 3

During this span the platform's northwest basal facing (U.2) was raised 1.22m, possibly in two sequential episodes. The latter inference is based on changes in construction, each marked by a stepping back to the southeast of the wall's exterior (northwest) face. The lowest of these additions is set 0.11m southeast of the TS.2 version of U.2's exterior, northwest, face and rises 0.35m at which point the next ascending segment is set a scant 0.05m to the southeast and rises 0.87m to the wall's full height. No comparable changes were noted in U.1, the platform's southeast basal wall. This particular facing was, however leaning out markedly to the southeast when uncovered, thus precluding the identification of any subtly marked shifts in its original construction. In fact, a 0.6m-tall stone buttress (U.30) projects 0.61m southeast from near the center of U.1's front and seems to have been built to slow the outward collapse of this crucial architectural component. It is very likely, therefore, that U.1 originally rose to a point equivalent to the top of U.2 on the northwest, making the southeast facing an estimated 2.65m tall by the end of TS.3, much of its uppermost stones having long succumbed to the siren song of downslope erosion after the building was abandoned (see F.1, TS.5). Structure 70-1st's northeast and southwest basal walls (U.4 and 3) were almost certainly raised at this time, the fill contained by the upward extensions of U.1-4 consisting of a moderately dense concentration of rocks set in a brown soil (U.8). Unit 4, which defines the platform's northeast flank, steps out 0.9m to the northeast at a point 4.05m southeast of Str. 70-1st's north corner; U.4 subsequently continues southeast to define the building's east corner at its inferred intersection with U.1 (this corner was not clearly identified but is extrapolated from the exposed segments of U.1 and 4). The superstructure raised atop this platform seems to have contained one extensive stone-and-earth-floored room that covers 4.27m northwest-southeast by roughly 14.25m. No evidence of internal divisions or built-in furniture was recorded in our excavations of the summit. The entirety of the superstructure's northwest wall was cleared in the course of this work along with approximately half of the southwest foundation and a 1m-wide swath cut northwest-southeast across the building's center.

A series of three stone-faced steps or terraces (U.11-13) were raised about this time off Str. 70-1st's down-sloping southeast side. These risers front the southeast basal wall (U.1) and are 0.26-0.35m high. The treads of the lowest two ascents (U.11 and 12) measure 0.35m and 0.44m across, 3.47m intervening between the highest step-up (U.13) and U.1. This last space appears to have been coterminous with the top of the underlying rock level (S.8), the latter possibly modified to fit it for use as a terrace tread. The full northeast-southwest length of the terrace system was not determined. The southwest ends of U.11 and 12 were identified where they joined U.13; U.11 and 12 were followed for 2.8m to the northeast where excavation ceased. Unit 13, in turn, most likely fronts Str. 70-1st for its entire northeast-southwest length (this upper terrace was followed for 12.65m during which it changed direction slightly from 20 degrees to 11 degrees, the last alignment pertaining for its northeastern-most exposed 3.7m). As a result of these additions, Str. 70-1st was bordered on its southeast flank by a broad and long terrace (U.13) that was reached by ascending two steps (U.11 and 12) that projected 0.79m southeast from the main body of U.13 near what would have been the center of that construction. No steps leading to Str. 70-1st's summit from U.13 were recorded, roughly 2.65m intervening from the top of that terrace and the platform's summit. In general, the uppermost southeast terrace appears to have been an extensive venue for performing activities for which the bulk of Str. 70-1st's platform served as a backdrop.

A ca. 0.4m-high by 0.45m-wide wall (U.15) projects 0.9m northeast of Str. 70-1st's east corner. Located 0.8m northwest of that unit are three variably preserved stone-faced steps (U.16, 17, and 19). These risers are set on a fill (U.32) that consists of a fine-textured, hard-compacted, yellow-brown clay

that also covers U.10 (see TS.2). The steps ascend southeast to northwest in increments of 0.18-0.36m along the platform's northeast face (U.4); the latter forms the staircase's southwest margin. Earth-and-stone-paved treads are 1.9m and 0.55m wide (from bottom to top) and culminate in a broad earth-and-stone-surfaced landing that measures roughly 3m across northwest-southeast. Bordering the second and third ascending risers (U. 17 and 19) on the southwest is a line of cobbles set against, but not into, U.4 (U.34) . These stones are arranged in a slating line equal to the top of the U.17 and 19 risers and appear to have been appended to the base of the U.4 facing with mud. This is the only time we encountered at El Coyote (or elsewhere, for that matter) an example of cobbles used as part of a decorative frieze. A 0.18m-high platform (U.18) extends 0.9m southeast from the second step (U.17). Measuring 1.2m across northeast/southwest, this unit is 0.85m northeast of U.4. Unit 18 encompasses 0.9m southeast-northwest, its south corner indented 0.1x0.2m. It is unclear whether the steps described above intersected Str. 71 to the northeast. The available data suggest that this is a possibility but we did not establish the proposition's validity.

The aforementioned landing was apparently surmounted by yet more stairs (U.33, 20, 21). These ascend from northeast to southwest, issuing onto the substructure's summit at its north corner. The staircase's southeast face does not end formally but seems to have been truncated in antiquity, its stones most likely recycled for use in some of the many late constructions found throughout El Coyote. The surviving three risers ascend in units of 0.2-0.4 m, their treads spanning 0.85-1.1m. The longest extant step (U.20) measures 1.95m northwest-southeast, beginning on the northwest in line with Str. 70-1st 's north corner. No other formal access features leading to the summit were recorded.

A 0.67m-wide wall (U.22) was found extending, minimally, 16.75m to the west/northwest from its abutment with Str. 70-1st 's west corner (U.22's west terminus was not found). Unit 22 varies somewhat in its alignment, between 271-286 degrees (four changes in direction were identified). The wall's south face is 0.33m tall while on the north it is 0.18m high; this discrepancy suggests that U.22 was built over a south-to-north rise. Unit 22's consistent and great length coupled with its location suggests that it was built to close off the north side of the patio defined by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, and 68. If this is the case, then Str. 70-1st's position north of the line implies that it was separated from this aggregate.

Limited excavations 9m southeast of Str. 70-1st were intended to ascertain the nature of the terracing that faced the southeast-to-northwest rise here and seemed, on the surface, to unite Strs. 70-1st and 68. This work uncovered a series of at least four stone-faced risers (U.23-26), ascending from southeast to northwest in increments of 0.26m, 0.24m, 0.68m, and 1.01m; heights of the upper two elements (U.25 and 26) were inferred from their heavily disturbed remains and are only approximations. The lowest tread (U.23) measures a scant 0.21m across while the remaining two surfaces (U.24 and 25) are 1.81m and 1.39m wide (the caveats given earlier concerning terrace heights also apply to the last two figures). Units 23 and 24, the two best preserved risers, were followed for 1m over which distance they were aligned roughly due north-south. The terraces give way on the northwest to a stone fill (U.27) largely devoid of earth. This unit was traced for 4.37m to the northwest and, on the northeast, up to Str. 70-1st's southwest face. The exposed portion of U.27 covers 4.37x7m. It may be that U.27 was part of the same pavement located immediately north of Str. 54. Such a connection was not established and it should be noted that the stones comprising the latter surface were set in a mud mortar, unlike their analogues unearthed southwest of Str. 70-1st. At the very least, the rock fill identified in these excavations points to the mobilizing of significant labor in the interests of formalizing and stabilizing the northwest-southeast drop lying southwest of Str. 70-1st.

Yet another terrace (U.14) was recorded 2m northeast of U.23-26, ascending the rise opposite Str. 70-1st's south corner. Here, a ca. 0.4m-high stone riser was traced for 3.5m northeast-southwest at an angle of ca, 13 degrees. This entity does not line up with U.11-13 or U.23-26. It may be that U.14 was part of an extensive, if not necessarily integrated, set of terraces that served to preserve the integrity of the terrain on which Str. 70-1st was built.

By TS.3's conclusion, Str. 70-1st's stone-and-earth-filled core platform stood 1.62m (on the northwest) to 2.65m high (on the southeast), was oriented roughly 18 degrees, and measured 5.78x16.9m. The southeastern core basal facing (U.1) was bolstered by the addition of a stone buttress measuring 0.6m tall by 0.61m wide. This construction was placed near the center of that wall, possibly after the facing had already started to tilt out to the southeast. The superstructure consists of at least one very extensive earthen-floored room on its summit that was entered from a staircase on its north corner. This enclosure covered 60m² and, within the areas excavated, lacked any built-in features such as benches or shelves. The building's southeast flank was faced by a 3.47m-wide terrace that seems to have run for the full length of Str. 70-1st on this side. The core platform rose 2.65m above this construction forming what was likely an impressive backdrop to the activities enacted there. Access to the southeast terrace was achieved by passing up and over two stone risers that project 0.79m southeast from near the center of the broad southeastern terrace and ascend to the latter's summit in increments of 0.26-0.35m. Three stairs mount in increments of 0.18-0.36m the southeast-to-northwest rise immediately northeast of Str. 70-1st. These steps lead to a landing measuring 3m northwest-southeast. Unusual for excavated structures at El Coyote, the two uppermost steps (U.17 and 19) are bordered on the southwest by a low frieze composed of unshaped river cobbles set at a consistent angle and affixed to Str. 70-1st's northeast face with mud mortar. The only known means of reaching the platform's summit is a staircase composed of three stone risers that ascend in increments of 0.2-0.4m from the aforementioned landing to the superstructure's north corner.

A 0.67m-wide wall extends for at least 16.75m to the west from Str. 70-1st's west corner. This construction is higher on the south (0.33m) than it is on the north (0.18m) suggesting that it was built over a south-to-north ascent. The wall's behavioral significance is unclear; it may have marked the north edge of the plaza delimited by Strs. 11, 12, 54, 55, 56, and 68. Excavations 9m southeast of Str. 70-1st revealed additional terraces that were seemingly erected to slow erosion down the northwest-to-southeast descent over which Str. 70-1st was erected. A rough stone pavement, created from the top of a large fill unit, probably fronted Str. 70-1st on the southwest; the remaining sides of the building faced over earth.

All constructions raised during TS.3 were fashioned primarily of river cobbles the flatter aspects of which were directed outward. All of the stones were set in a mud mortar save for the putative stone surface that lies southwest of Str. 70-1st. Here the rocks comprising this floor were largely dry-laid, very little earth being found in the interstices among the rocks.

Time Span 4

Time Span 4 is thought to postdate Str. 70-1st's abandonment. Unlike some of its neighbors (e.g., Str. 11), there are no obvious signs that late squatters established residences atop the platform's summit. Instead, a casual construction (Str. 70-Sub1) was built 1-1.2m southwest of Str. 70-1st where it rests atop the U.27 surface. The component walls (U.28 and 29) are roughly 0.4m high and define the north and south sides of a building that measures 2.4m across. Structure 70-Sub1 was aligned

approximately 277 degrees. Too little of this edifice was exposed to determine whether it had been a low platform or surface-level edifice.

A cobble deposit (F.3), was encountered 0.53m south of the U.22 wall at a point 13m west of Str. 70-1st's west corner. Features 3's rocks rest on the junction between an underlying hard-compacted, fine-textured, brown soil (S.4) and the overlying S.1, a very similar earth distinguished by its darker brown hue; this interface apparently defines the level of the ancient ground surface above which the U.22 wall was raised. Over the 3.77m that F.3 covers north-south, there were no signs of preserved architectural features. No comparable rock concentrations were uncovered along U.22 and it may be that F.3 consists of stones that were collected with the intention of using them to raise a construction that, though contemplated, was never finished.

The other possible construction that was introduced at this time consists of a dense deposit of flat-laid stones (F.2) that covered the U.23-26 terraces southeast of Str. 70-1st. Originally identified as architectural debris, F.2 is now tentatively interpreted as purposeful construction based on the horizontal disposition of its component stones and their dense packing above and in front of U.23-26. Whether these rocks were part of a building project that was never completed (possibly an augmentation of the terrace system) or were introduced to terminate definitively the use of U.23-26 is unknown.

The remains of a flexed burial (16G/56) were found overlying the U.17 and 19 steps. The bones were found dipping down northwest-to-southeast above these risers as though the remains were laid down within debris that was beginning to accumulate over the steps.

It appears that Str. 70-1st was largely abandoned by the beginning of TS.4. That forsaking of the platform might have been precipitous if F.2 and 3 signify efforts to renovate aspects of the building and its surrounding constructions that were never finished. In any case, Str. 70-Sub1 was probably a relatively humble platform or surface-level building that was raised 1-1.2m south of Str. 70-1st after the main building was no longer being used. Its bordering walls are about 0.4m high, the edifice measuring 2.4m across, and it is aligned approximately 277 degrees.

All constructions, dubious and otherwise, pertaining to TS.3 consist for the most part of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar. Less attention was devoted to selecting rocks with at least one flat face or to orienting those vertical faces outwards.

Time Span 5

After occupation in the vicinity of Str. 70-1st ceased, most of the building was blanketed by the deposition of S.1-4. As noted in the discussion of F.3, the laying down of S.4 likely began at the end of TS.3 or the start of TS.4. This hard-compacted, fine-textured, brown soil was found covering U.1 to a maximum thickness of 0.82m. On Str. 70-1st's northwest side, S.4 is replaced by S.3, a moderately hard-compacted, fine-textured, gray-brown clay that contains some small (0.01m or less in diameter) soft white inclusions. Stratum 3 blankets S.5 by 0.8m and covers the lower portions of U.2. In this area, S.3 is covered by around 0.5m of a very similar clay (S.2) that is marked by a greater concentration of small, soft white flecks than was noted in S.3. Given their similarities, it may be that S.2-4 are parts of the same depositional episode that are distinguished by slight differences in their colors and the frequency of small white flecks that they contain. Capping S.2-4 by as much as 0.5m is a hard-compacted, fine-textured, dark brown humus horizon (S.1). Embedded in S.1, 2, and 4 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks (F.1) that likely tumbled from final-phase architecture.