THE POTTERY MOUND MONITORING PROGRAM, 2009

By

David A. Phillips, Jr.
Jean H. Ballagh

Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 13

Permit Nos. NM-09-202-S (survey and inventory),
-M (monitoring), and -T (test excavation) and ABE-09-202
NMCRIS Activity No. 116472

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology
MSC01, 1050, 1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001
www.unm.edu/~maxwell

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

FIGURES

Introduction

In December 2008 the Cultural Properties Review Committee, State of New Mexico, issued permits for archaeological monitoring and related activities at LA 416, Pottery Mound, to David Phillips, Curator of Archaeology, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico (UNM), Albuquerque. The permit period extended from January 1 through December 31, 2009. This report summarizes permit-related activities in 2009, as well as related developments. The permits allowed survey and inventory, monitoring, test excavations, and excavation of unmarked burials, but the work actually done included only monitoring, mapping, and surface collection. The permit numbers are NM-09-202-S (survey and inventory), -M (monitoring), and -T (test excavation), and ABE-09-202 (unmarked burials). The NMCRIS activity number is 116472.

UNM owns Pottery Mound; the parcel is surrounded by Pueblo of Isleta land. The work was performed by the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology for the University. The goals and methods of the monitoring program are described in a monitoring plan (Phillips 2007). This report refers to the portions of the plan relevant to the work actually done. Figure 1 shows the general location of the site. As this report will be distributed without restrictions, detailed location data are not included. The updated site form submitted with this report provides a site location map and details.

The site perches on a sheer bank of the Rio Puerco and is actively eroding. The most basic goal of the monitoring program is to document the erosion and, in time, to design and carry out measures to slow the erosion. The erosion periodically exposes human remains. Pursuant to guidance from Isleta Pueblo, in recent years the Maxwell Museum has rescued and documented the remains and has reburied them within the site (to date, this work has been done by Heather Edgar, Curator of Osteology, under a separate permit). No such exposure of human remains occurred in 2009, however. Other goals of the monitoring program include (1) periodic assessment of the site's research potential, (2) monitoring for vandalism, and (3) gathering information that will aid the interpretation of existing notes and collections.

Background to the Current Permit Activity

Except for a 1979 testing project by Linda Cordell and a few other (very minor) exceptions, all of the early work at Pottery Mound was done by Dr. Frank Hibben, a professor at UNM. Hibben's formal fieldwork included field schools in 1954 (Ballagh and Phillips 2006; Phillips and Ballagh 2008b), 1955 (Ballagh and Phillips 2008), 1957, and 1958 and an NSF-funded project in 1960–1961. Hibben continued to lead volunteer-based informal digs at the site through the 1980s. His primary publication on the site focused on the kiva murals (Hibben 1975). A more comprehensive introduction to the site is now available (Schaafsma 2007).

Beginning in 2004, the Maxwell Museum has sought to publish additional information on the site, and to conduct archaeological fieldwork as needed to monitor its condition and improve our ability to interpret existing collections and records. Readers are referred to three prior reports (Phillips and Ballagh 2007, 2008a, 2009) for a summary of monitoring activities before 2009.

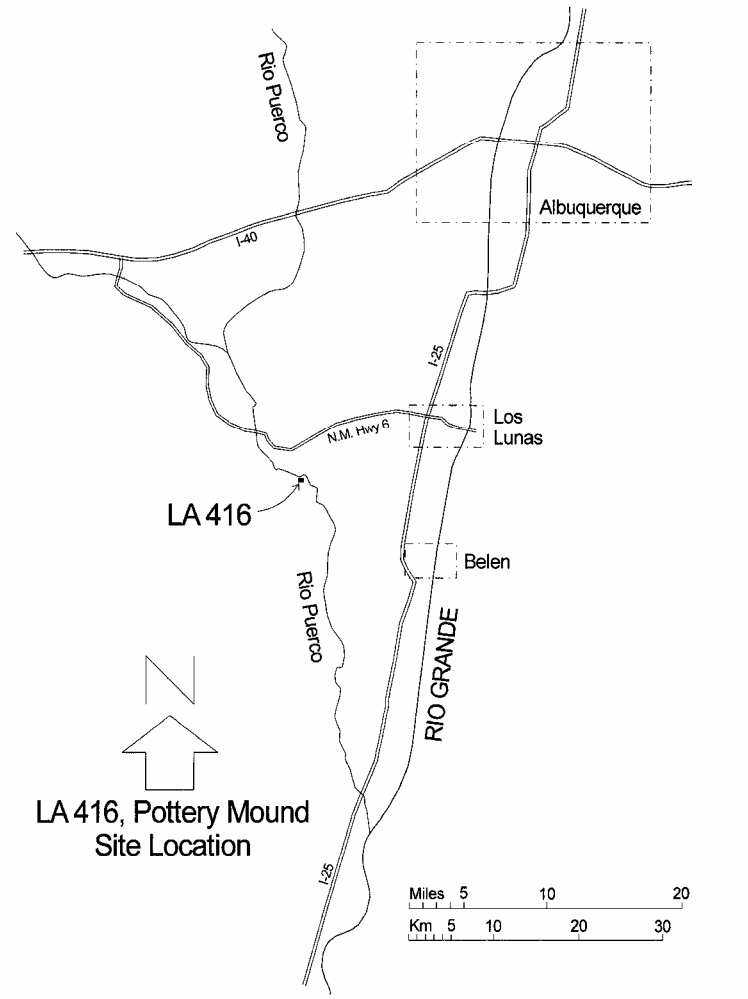

Figure 1. Project location.

Fieldwork under the 2009 Monitoring Permit

Field visits to Pottery Mound generally take place during the spring and fall dry seasons. In the winter and summer, heavy rains often make the access road impassable or nearly so.

On February 22, David Phillips led a tour of Pottery Mound for the SiteWatch conference.

On February 24, Phillips and Jean Ballagh resumed site mapping.

On March 31, Hayward Franklin began collecting a systematic sample of surface artifacts. The sample consists of 1 by 1 m units at the 25 m rebar grid points previously established over the site. This is only the second rigorously defined sample collected from the site surface, the prior such sample being a simple random sample of dog leash collection points collected by the UNM field school directed by Linda Cordell in 1979. (Cordell's dog leash sample is currently on loan

to Suzanne Eckert, of Texas A&M University, for analysis.) On this occasion, Phillips initially assisted Franklin with the surface collection and then assisted Ballagh with site mapping.

On April 21, Phillips and Ballagh reburied human remains from the site in the previously designated reburial area. The remains had been excavated by Heather Edgar and her assistants between November 2006 and November 2007. The remains included an infant (6–18 months) that was wrapped in matting, a young adult (20–35), and a young adult (20–35) that was commingled with two other individuals.

On May 5 and 26, Phillips and Ballagh continued to map the site.

On May 16, a public field trip to Pottery Mound was canceled at the last minute, due to objections by Isleta Pueblo's manager for the surrounding Comanche Ranch. Until the Pueblo changes its position on public visits to the site, the Museum will no longer offer such tours.

On October 6, after the summer rains had let up, Ballagh and Phillips resumed mapping the site and Franklin resumed the surface collection. The latter was hampered by the difficulty of locating rebar grid points within the site. On November 3, Phillips and Ballagh spent a day marking the grid points, and on November 24 Franklin again surface-collected sample units while Phillips and Ballagh mapped the site.

Surface collections made during 2009 are described in Appendix A.

The volunteer-based reorganization of boxed artifacts was completed in 2009. All of the Pottery Mound collections at the Maxwell Museum is now housed in appropriate archival materials and catalogued to at least the bag level. The team leader for this effort was Karen Armstrong. Lou Schuyler did data entry and data checking.

Discussion

At this point, the total station mapping of Pottery Mound has resulted in the collection of some 1,100 Cartesian grid points. One reason for this level of thoroughness is the wish to document minor and highly localized variations in surface elevation, which often represent the scars of Frank Hibben's excavation units, or his backdirt piles. Mapping those helps us to determine the locations of Hibben's features and units, relative to the current grid system and thus to each other. (None of Hibben's datums has survived, and there seems to have been no conscious program to guarantee spatial continuity among the plane table maps from various years.) Figures 2–5 reflect our current understanding of the modern site surface and its relationship to the excavation work of a half century ago.

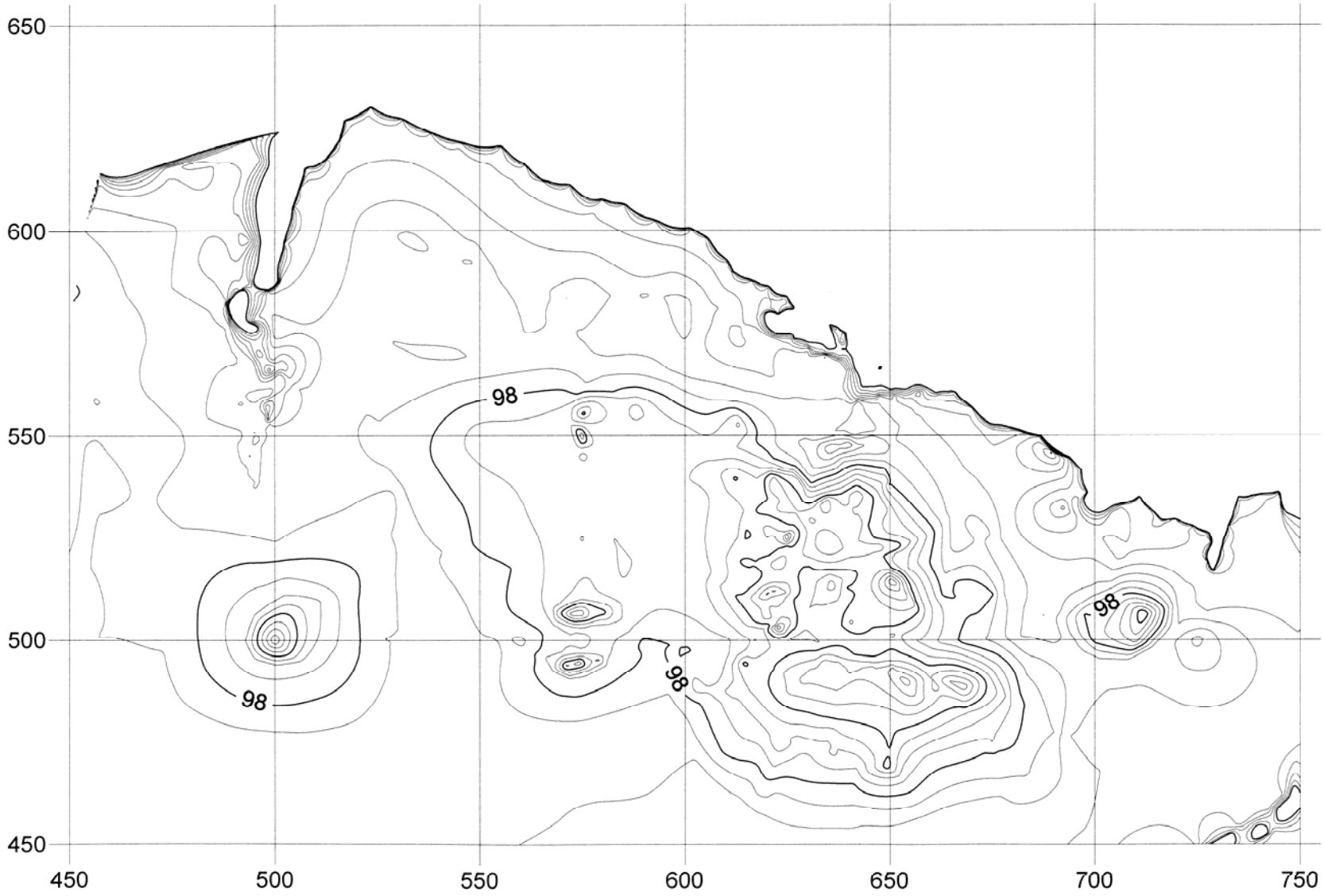

Figure 2. Contour map of Pottery Mound. Field data through October 6, 2009. Grid is in meters east and north, oriented to true north. Contour interval: 25 cm. Generated using Surfer 8.

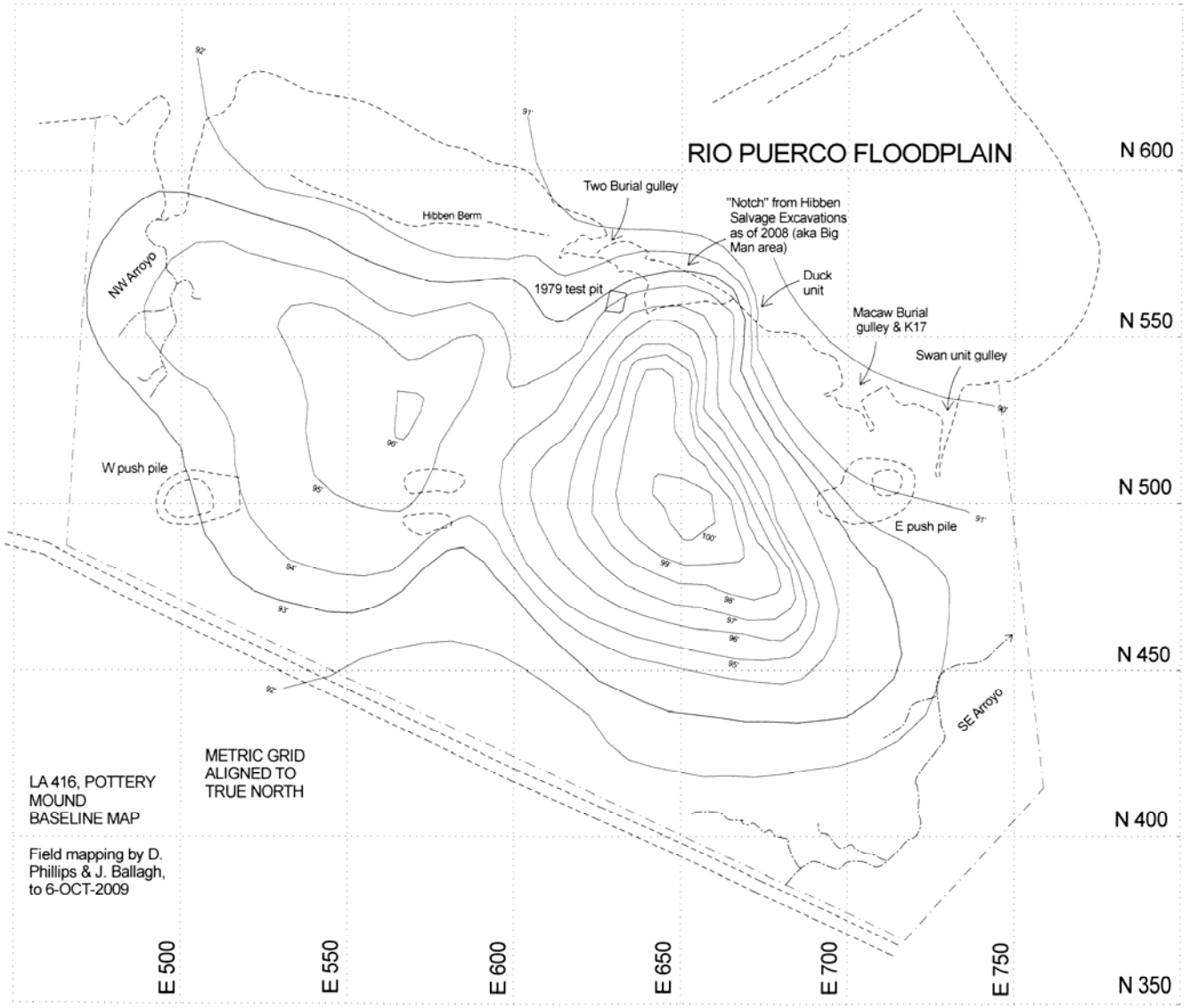

Figure 3. Best fit of Frank Hibben's 1954 contour map to current information. Contour interval: 1 foot.

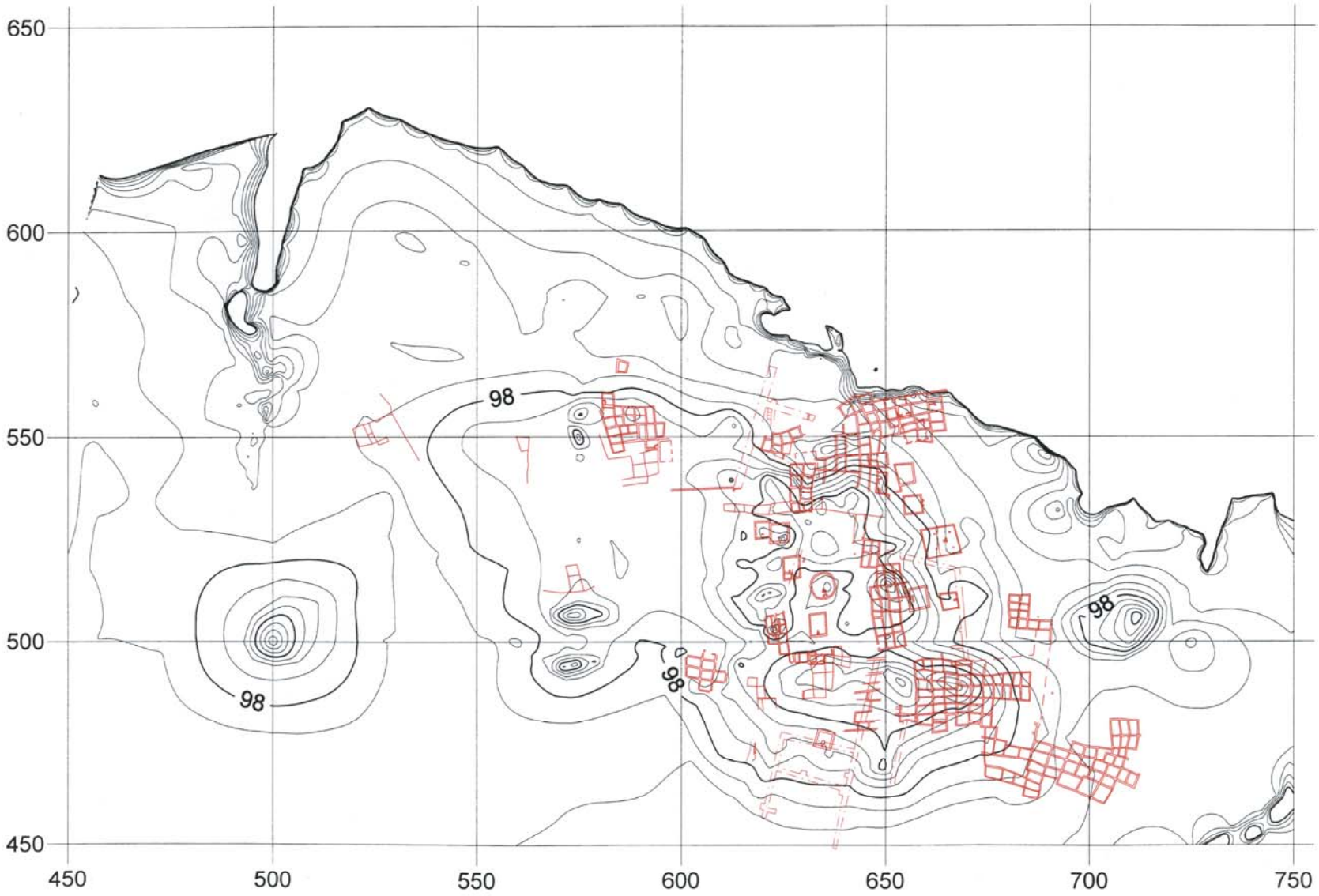

Figure 4. Best fit of Hibben rooms and trenches to the current contour map. Grid is in meters east and north, oriented to true north. Contour interval: 25 cm.

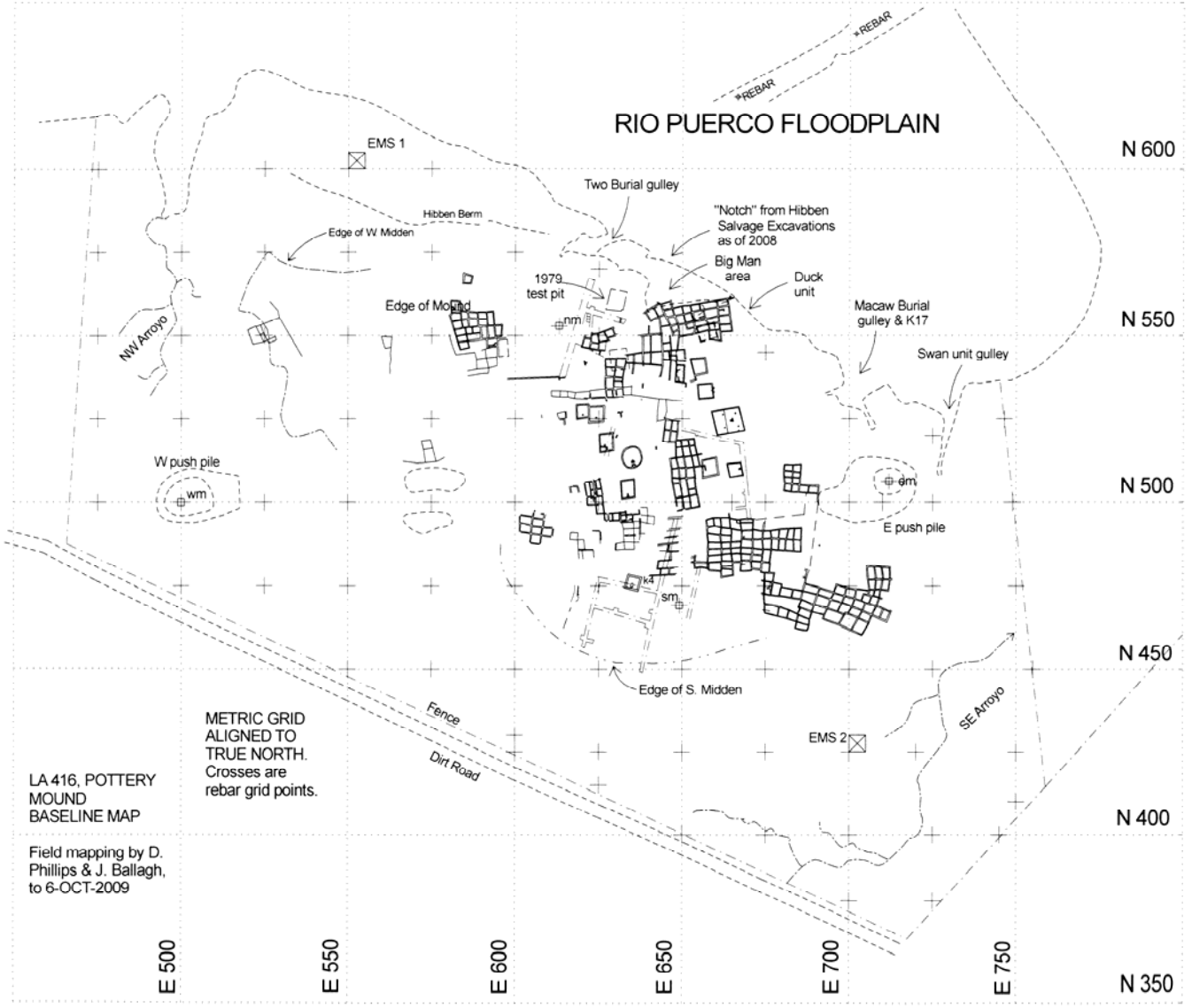

Figure 5. Best fit of Hibben rooms and trenches to the current planimetric map. Grid is in meters east and north, oriented to true north.

In Figure 2, the 98 m contour indicates the approximate break between the mound and the surrounding terrain (and also the east and west push piles for the South Bulldozer Trench, which extends along the N 500 grid line). The difference between the east and west halves of the mound is apparent—the east half being taller than the west half. The north-south dividing line between these halves falls about E 610.

Figure 2 also shows the uneven nature of the mound surface, particularly in its east half. This unevenness reflects the distribution of excavation areas and backdirt piles; originally the mound was much smoother. In 1954, Frank Hibben prepared a plane table contour map that indicates the condition of the mound at the start of his excavations; Figure 3 shows the best fit between his plane table map and the current map. Given the methods and standards of the early 1950s, and given the changes to the site since then, Hibben's contour map corresponds rather well with the current contour map.

Comparing the two contour maps, two changes stand out. First, the South Bulldozer Trench, excavated in 1961, cut the mound along the N 500 grid line, leading to the addition of the east and west push piles and a prominent pair of backdirt piles between E 550 and E 600. Second, excavations in various years have chewed off the north end of the higher east half of the mound. Figure 3 is also noteworthy for suggesting that most of the mound's original footprint falls outside the floodplain of the Rio Puerco. This conclusion stands in contrast to David Wilcox's (2007, Figure 11.1) suspicion that the Rio Puerco has destroyed a significant portion of the original mound.

Figure 4 represents our current best fit of Hibben room and unit information to the current information, superimposed on the current contour map. The resulting composite map is not entirely satisfactory—the rooms shown east of Kivas 10 and 12 may be too far to the east, for example. The most significant change from the master maps published in Schaafsma (2007) is the locations of the Duck Unit, Big Man Area, and Macaw Area. In the 2007 maps the Duck Unit (rooms) and Big Man Area (midden and burials) are shown north of, and well west of, Room Block A. We now believe that the Duck Unit is a continuation of Room Block A (excavated in 1954 (see Ballagh and Phillips 2006), probably to the east (but possibly to the north). The Big Man Area, part of the site's north midden, lay immediately north of (or possibly northwest of) Room Block A. The Macaw Area, shown just east of Room Block A in 2007, is actually well east and south of those rooms (see Figures 3 and 5).

Figure 5 shows Hibben rooms and units at the same locations as in Figure 4, this time superimposed on the current planimetric map. Figure 5 also shows a few additional wall alignments, based on the current mapping, and can serve as a point of departure for our still-murky understanding of site structure. To begin with, we can suggest two models of site history.

- The remains are from two occupations. The first occupation began on a low erosional remnant of naturally deposited clay—Hibben's (1966) platform mound. The site was abandoned long enough for rooms to fill with sand; when it was reoccupied, upper walls sometimes were built on room fill (see Adler 2007b). The "two occupation" scenario not only accounts for upper walls offset from lower walls, but also for rooms built over kivas.

- Occupation was continuous or nearly so, but with abandonment and room filling happening locally within the site.

In our future work we hope to confirm one or the other of these two models of site history. Meanwhile, one of the more frustrating aspects of the old records from Pottery Mound is the lack of absolute vertical provenience controls—something that would have made it much easier to compare depositional sequences across the site.

We suspect that Pottery Mound, during its second occupation (first model), or alternately in its "mature" form (second model), was shaped something like back to back letters C (Figure 6). In other words, two plazas, roughly east and west of each other, mostly surrounded by irregular blocks of rooms. Our suspected east plaza would have contained Kivas 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8/9 (with Kivas 3 and 11 part of the first/earlier occupation). Kiva 17 could also have fallen within the east plaza, if the Swan Unit rooms formed part of the eastern room block(s) defining the plaza. Kivas 10, 12, 15, and 16 would have been in the suspected west plaza (with Kivas 7 and 13 part of the first/earlier occupation). This scheme excludes Kiva 4 (outside the room blocks, to the south) and Kiva 14 (first/earlier occupation?). If this spatial model is correct, during its second or mature stage the site included an east plaza dominated by Rio Grande style (east-oriented) kivas and a west plaza dominated by Western Pueblo style (south-oriented) kivas (Adler 2007a). Climbing a bit farther out on the limb, we can suggest that at its peak, Pottery Mound's layout represented a conscious meshing of the eastern and western Pueblo worlds.

Condition and Research Potential

In 2009, changes to the site were minimal and vandalism was not a problem. Pottery Mound continues to show substantial potential to continue to scientific research.

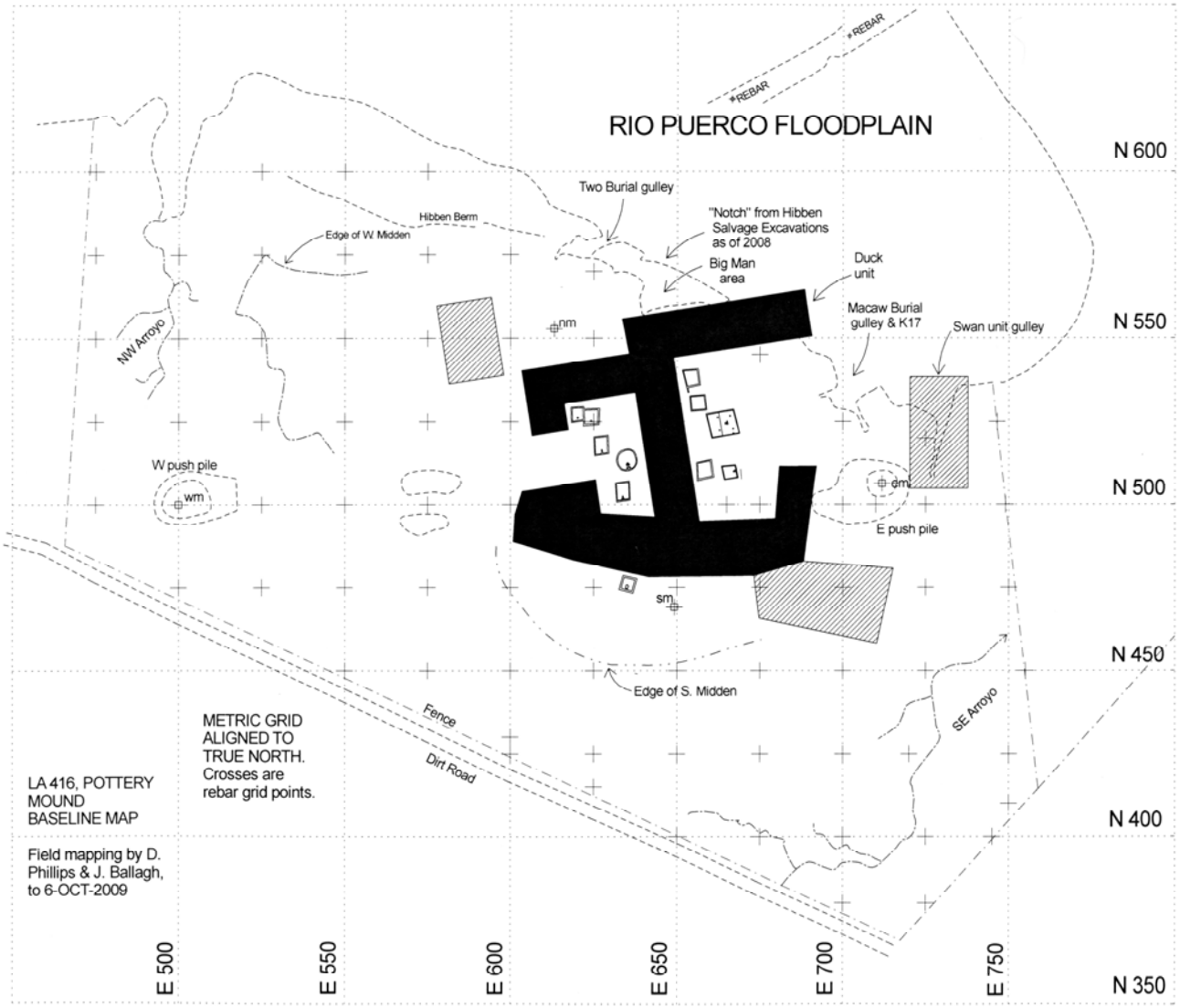

Figure 6. Highly speculative reconstruction of Pottery Mound's layout. The solid black room blocks form is the hypothesized principal structure late in the site's history; the hachured room blocks may represent earlier room blocks.

References Cited

Adler, Michael A.

2007a The Architecture of Pottery Mound Pueblo. In *New Perspectives on Pottery Mound Pueblo,* edited by Polly Schaafsma, pp. 29–53. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

2007b Appendix C, Profile of the 1961 Bulldozer Trench. In *New Perspectives on Pottery Mound Pueblo,* edited by Polly Schaafsma, pp. 267–276. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Ballagh, Jean H., and David A. Phillips, Jr.

2006 *Pottery Mound: The 1954 Field Season.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 2. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

2008 *Pottery Mound: The 1955 Field Season.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 8. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Hibben, Frank C.

1966 A Possible Pyramidal Structure and other Mexican Influences at Pottery Mound, New Mexico. *American Antiquity* 31:522–529.

Hibben, Frank C.

1975 *Kiva Art of the Anasazi at Pottery Mound.* KC Publications, Las Vegas.

Phillips, David A., Jr.

2007 *Archaeological Monitoring Plan for LA 416, Pottery Mound, Valencia County, New Mexico, Calendar Year 2008.* Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Phillips, David A., Jr., and Jean H. Ballagh

2007 *The Pottery Mound Monitoring Program, 2006.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 3. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

2008a *The Pottery Mound Monitoring Program, 2007.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 6. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

2008b *Pottery Mound, The 1954 Field Season: Comments on the Rendered Map.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 1, Addendum 1. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

2009 *The Pottery Mound Monitoring Program, 2008.* Maxwell Museum Technical Series No. 11. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Schaafsma, Polly (editor)

2007 *New Perspectives on Pottery Mound Pueblo.* University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Wilcox, David R.
2007 Discussion of the Pottery Mound Essays and Some Alternative Proposals. In *New Perspectives on Pottery Mound Pueblo,* edited by Polly Schaafsma, pp. 229–250. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Appendix A

2009 COLLECTIONS FROM POTTERY MOUND

The following four items were collected during site mapping. The "Z" reading is the elevation reading (increasing with height).

Maxwell Accn. No.	Description
2009.11.1	Obsidian projectile point, 2.3 by 1.2 by 0.2 cm, side-notched, concave based. Found on the surface of the east push pile for the South Bulldozer Trench.
2009.11.2	Hopi sherd, recently broken into three conjoining pieces, unpainted smoothed yellow. Site surface, E 613.42, N 419.43, Z 99.00.
2009.11.3	Hopi sherd, black-on-yellow. Site surface, E 606.41, N 542.15, Z 98.61.
2009.11.4	Hopi sherd, polychrome. Site surface, E 659.11, N 492.17, Z 99.17.

The table on the next page summarizes 2009 work on the partly completed systematic sample of surface artifacts, by Hayward Franklin.

Systematic Surface Sample (1 by 1 m units) Collected in 2009:
Preliminary Summary

Collection Unit	Location	FS No.	Material	Date	Comments
G1	E. 525, N. 550	1	Sherds	3/31/2009	First square collected on project
same	same	2	Stone		Clear
G2	E. 550, N. 550	3	Sherds	3/31/2009	In brush
same	same	4	Stone		
G3	E. 550, N. 525	5	Sherds	3/31/2009	Clear
same	same	6	Stone		
G4	E. 525, N. 525	7	Sherds	3/31/2009	Partial brush. Sherds only
G5	E. 525, N. 575	8	Sherds	3/31/2009	Clear
same	same	9	Stone		
G6	E. 525, N. 600	10	Sherds	3/31/2009	Clear. Sherds only
G7	E. 500, N. 575	11	Sherds	3/31/2009	Clear
same	same	12	Stone	3/31/2009	
G8	E. 500, N. 550	13	Sherds	3/31/2009	Clear. Sherds only
G9	E. 500, N. 525	14	Sherds	3/31/2009	Partial brush
same	same	15	Stone		
G10	E. 550, N. 575	16	Sherds	10/6/2009	Washed-over area, heavy plant cover
G11	E. 575, N. 575	17	Sherds	10/6/2009	Fairly open area, wash over
same	same	18	Stone		
G12	E. 575, N. 550	19	Sherds	10/6/2009	Open, side of mound, abundant
same	same	20	Stone		
G13	E 575, N 525	21	Sherds	10/6/2009	Many artifacts, side of mound
same	same	22	Stone		
G14	E. 575, N. 500	23	Sherds	10/6/2009	Trough between 2 mounds, very poor for collection
same	same	24	Stone		
G15	E. 550, N. 500	25	Sherds	10/6/2009	Washed out area, very poor for collection
G16	E. 575, N. 475	26	Sherds	10/6/2009	Off south end of site, very poor for collection
same	same	27	Stone	10/6/2009	