

**EXCAVATIONS AT THE PUERCO SITE
IN VALENCIA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

by

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With a contribution by

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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

“Puerco Site” was the name given to a Pueblo III site five miles (8 km) west or northwest of Pottery Mound, investigated during the 1958 archaeological field school at Pottery Mound (Ballagh 2021). Frank Hibben and five field school students spent two weeks (July 22 through August 1) at the Puerco Site. The students dug a north-south exploratory trench through the center of the site (Trench I), exposing three pits and a kiva. Further exploratory digging, including an east-west trench (Trench II) and smaller trenches to clarify feature relationships, exposed parts of at least one coursed-adobe room block and two masonry-walled rooms. Eight rooms, the pit complex, and the kiva were at least partly excavated. Excavation of the three pits revealed evidence for a roof over the largest, indicating use as a pit house. The focus of the investigation seemed to be the search for a kiva.

The Puerco Site was on a high point or rise, and all of the excavation took place in that area. Students were often moved from a room to a trench, or from one trench to another, to expedite the search for the kiva. The kiva was found two days before the end of the two week investigation, and four students worked together to complete its excavation in the time remaining. They accomplished the task in one day.

The students provided only minimal information on the relationships among their assigned features, and no field map of the site has been located, so the overall layout of the site is unknown. Nowhere in the students’ notes is there even a rough sketch indicating how the excavated room groups relate to each other or to the central trench that exposed the pit house complex and the kiva. The notebooks indicate that Rooms 1 and 2 shared a wall, but not which one; that Rooms 3, 4, and 7 were contiguous (in a south-to-north alignment), and that Room 8 abutted the west side of Room 3; and that Rooms 5 and 6 were connected at their respective southwest and northeast corners. The one hint about overall relationships is that Rooms 5 and 6 were found between Rooms 1 and 2 and the central trench.

On the final day at the site a datum was established, and Hibben trained the students in mapping the excavated portions of the site. (Given his contemporary maps, and contemporary practice in the Southwest, he must have been using a plane table and alidade.) If a map resulted from this work, it has not been found in the materials archived at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.

The student notebooks indicate that cultural materials were scanty, and that efforts to record them were as well. Because just one day was spent excavating the kiva, neither sherds nor bones were collected from that structure. In the descriptions that follow, the student notes on what was recorded are included for each feature and trench; for ease of comparison the information is also shown in Appendix Tables 1 (pottery) and 2 (faunal remains), with totals. While at least some sherds were reported for all features except the kiva, faunal remains were recorded only for Rooms 1 and 2, Pit 2, and Trench II.

Hibben never stated the exact location and identity of the Puerco Site. He reported working on three sites by name—the Puerco Site, the Lovelace Site, and the Huning Ruin—in the same area. Moreover, he identified each as a Pueblo III site with black-on-white pottery. This raises the question of whether the Puerco Site, the Lovelace Site, and the Huning Ruin were one, two, or three sites.

No excavation notes for the Lovelace Site have been located. All we know is that according to Hibben (1966:524), he directed “extensive” testing at the site, which was supposedly 3 1/2 miles north of Pottery Mound. He also wrote that “presumably” the site’s inhabitants were the original settlers of Pottery Mound (Hibben 1966:528). Given the lack of other evidence, such as field notes or collections, it is highly possible that “Lovelace Site” was a nonce name. Since Hibben worked at the Lovelace Site no later than 1966, and since we have no evidence of his working at the Huning Ruin until 1988, as a nonce name “Lovelace Site” would refer to the Puerco Site.

Less mystery surrounds the Huning Ruin. Hibben (1988) referred to it by its Laboratory of Anthropology number, LA 2569, and described the site’s location to the nearest quarter-section. Moreover, the trenches on a cursory excavation map for the Huning Ruin (Hibben 1988) can still be seen in aerial imagery, confirming that Hibben’s Huning Ruin is LA 2569.

Hibben may have learned of the site from the USGS 1954 South Garcia SE 7.5 minute quadrangle, which shows LA 2569 as “Indian Ruins.” Also, the original pipeline archaeology project through New Mexico and Arizona, in the early 1950s, included work at LA 2569, and the report was published before Hibben dug there (Fenenga and Cummings 1956).

The 1980s dig at the Huning Ruin was a perk for members of Hibben’s continuing education classes. He no doubt invited other interested members of the public to join in as well. In other words, the dig crew was large, enthusiastic, and untrained. Moreover, it received no formal in-field training and little supervision. Hibben had pioneered this *modus operandi* at Pottery Mound in the 1970s, while the site was still privately owned. In 1978 Pottery Mound was given to UNM, meaning that a state-issued permit was now required for any excavation at the site. After years of digging with or without a permit, Hibben was shut out of Pottery Mound for good in 1987. It should not be surprising that the following year he shifted his focus to the Huning Ruin. That site is also on state land and any work there required a permit, but Hibben proceeded without one. It is unclear how many years he continued to work at the site.

The question we faced was whether Hibben’s Huning Ruin and the Puerco Site are one and the same. Not only are both sites in the same general area, both included pit structures and a small round kiva. However, the remains uncovered by each dig differ. The following is based on the student notebooks cited later in this report, and on a letter written by Frank Hibben (1988) to William Robinson of the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research.

- The largest diameter measured in the Puerco Site kiva was 12 feet 9 inches, while the Huning Ruin kiva was recorded as 14 to 15 feet in diameter.
- Both kivas contained four main post holes, but the Huning Ruin kiva also had as many as nine smaller post holes.

- Correspondence between Hibben and Robinson (Hibben 1988; Robinson 1988) shows that extant, in-place post segments were found in the kiva at the Huning Ruin and submitted for tree-ring dating. The field notes and sketches from the Puerco Site identify post holes but give no indication of post remnants, nor any indication that the post holes were excavated. Given the haste with which the Puerco Site kiva was excavated, it is possible that smaller post holes were overlooked. However, failing to note the presence of in situ post remnants large enough for dating seems unlikely.
- Hibben (1988) wrote that the Huning Ruin kiva was exposed by a road grader (a road passed through the site at the time, and still does). In contrast, per Notebook 2003.25.5 from the 1958 UNM excavations, the Puerco Site kiva was exposed in a hand dug trench.
- The Huning Ruin kiva was keyhole-shaped, but not the Puerco Site kiva.
- A burial was found in one corner of the Huning Ruin kiva's keyhole recess; no burial was found in or near the Puerco Site kiva.
- The ventilator tunnel in the Huning Ruin kiva was reported as oriented due east, while the 1958 students emphasized, per Hibben, that the ventilator tunnel in the Puerco Site kiva was oriented 20 degrees north of east. Hibben consistently used magnetic north in the field, so this difference is not due to the choice between magnetic and true north.

We were left with two plausible scenarios.

- The Puerco Site and the Huning Ruin were two completely different sites, the former dug in 1958 and the latter in 1988. Under this scenario, we have an LA number and an exact location for the Huning Ruin but have neither for the Puerco Site. Similarly, we have student excavation notes for the Puerco Site but none for the Huning Ruin. This last fact is not surprising, as the 1958 dig participants were part of a formal academic program and kept field notes as part of their training, while the 1988 participants were continuing education students whose only obligation was to show up.
- The Puerco Site and the Huning Ruin are parts of the same site. In this scenario, Hibben took a few of his 1958 field school students to LA 2569 for a quick search for a kiva. In the field notes the site was referred to as the Puerco Site to distinguish it from Pottery Mound. Thirty years later, when the road through the site was graded, a stain was exposed and Hibben took a scratch group out for another archaeological foray. The two excavations exposed two different kivas.

In July 2021, Phillips visited LA 2569 in the company of David Eck and Anne Curry of the State Land Office. During the visit he made use of a recent Laboratory of Anthropology site record (Juarez et al. 2020) provided by Eck; based on that visit, we believe that the area shown as Group C on the site form (Figure 1.1) corresponds to most if not all of Hibben's 1958 Puerco Site dig. The Group C area includes multiple room-size depressions consistent with Hibben's habit of not backfilling his excavations. While the site map shows multiple wall alignments in the area, to Phillips they mostly appear to be where rocks in trenches and room fill were dropped to the sides of the excavations. It is not clear whether the kiva shown on the map is the one found in 1958, the one found in 1988, or another feature entirely.

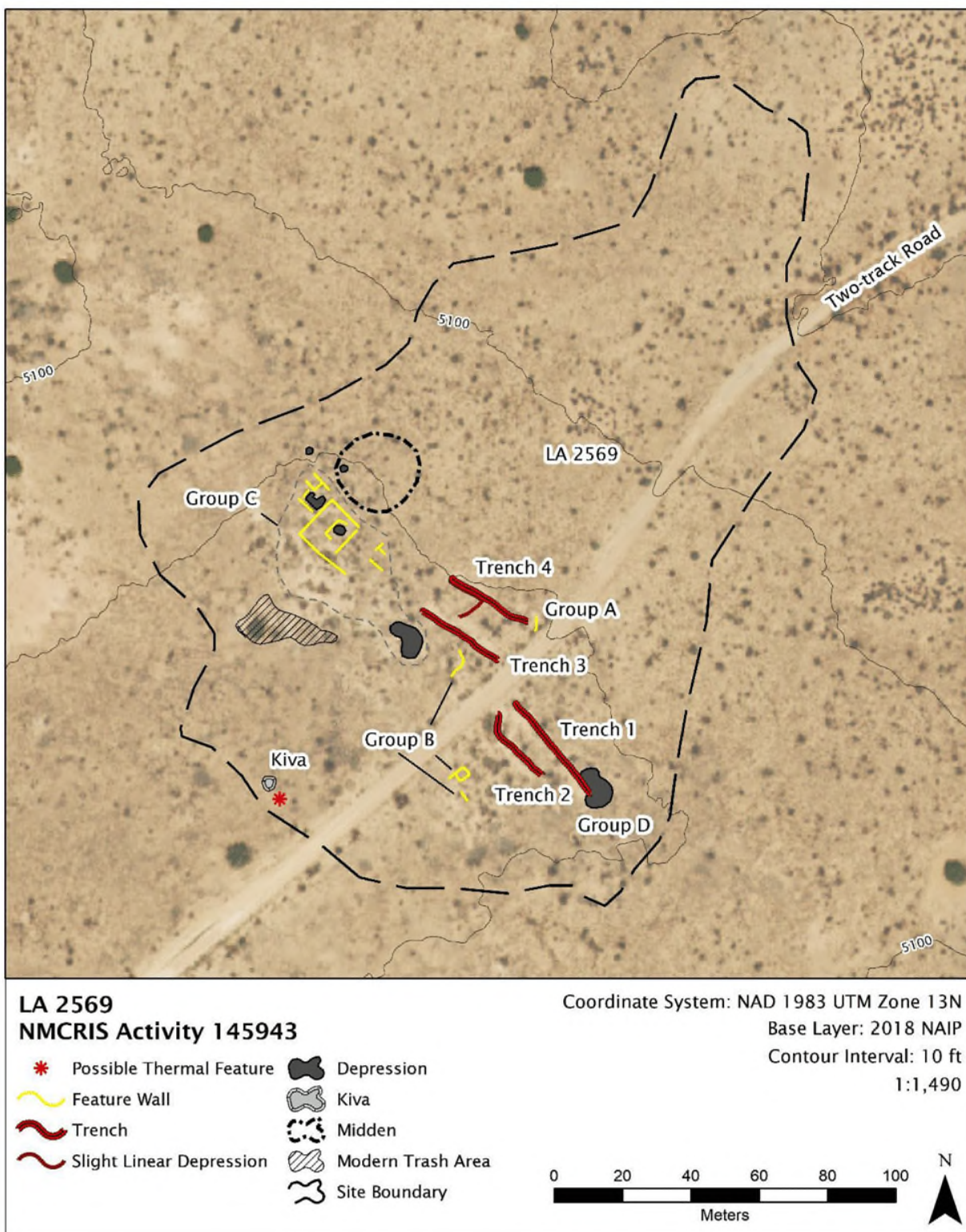


Figure 1.1. Plan of LA 2569. Source: Juarez et al. 2020.

One reason for identifying Group C as the 1958 dig is a student's comment that the Puerco Site was 35 yards from the local road.¹ That is, roughly speaking, the distance from the road to Group C. Group C is at the top of the local rise, again consistent with the student description of the Puerco Site. If Group C was *not* where the 1958 dig took place, it is unclear why that area shows signs of extensive excavation. The original pipeline project excavation (Fenenga and Cummings 1956) was in and along the local road, which was to be improved to provide access for the pipeline construction project. Hibben's work beginning in 1988 was triggered by a stain in the roadway; the trenches marked in red show where Hibben used a backhoe to dig back from the roadway, in order to expose additional features. Thus, one reason for identifying Group C as the Puerco Site dig is a negative one: the two other known field projects at the Huning Ruin were focused elsewhere within the site.

While the issue is not settled beyond all doubt, it is reasonable to conclude that Hibben's 1958 Puerco Site dig took place at what is now Group C at the Huning Ruin.

¹ Phillips used the local topographic map and aerial imagery to confirm that the local alignment of the road in question has not shifted during the period of concern, so that road can be used as a stable spatial reference.



Chapter 2

SURFACE ROOMS

The eight excavated rooms were in three clusters: Rooms 1 and 2, Rooms 5 and 6, and Rooms 3, 4, 7, and 8.

Rooms 1 and 2 were adjoining features near the top of the site. Neither the notes nor the sketch maps in Notebook 2003.25.5 (Room 1) or Notebook 2003.25.40 (Room 2) indicate which wall was shared or whether there were other adjoining rooms.

Rooms 5 and 6, exposed somewhere between Rooms 1 and 2 and the central trench (Notebook 2003.25.40), touched at a corner.

Room 3 (Notebooks 2003.25.7 and .25) and Rooms 4 and 7 (Notebook 2003.25.25) were in a south-to-north line; Room 8 (Notebook 2003.25.25) was a separate, later feature adjoining the west side of Room 3. There is no information in the notebooks about their locations in relation to the other rooms or to Trenches I and II.

Counts and descriptions of both pottery and faunal bone are provided within the feature descriptions. Lists with totals, by pottery type and faunal taxon, are in Appendix Tables 1 and 2.

Room 1 (Notebook 2003.25.5)

Room 1 was contiguous with Room 2; the shared wall was not identified. It was rectangular, with adobe walls, and measured 6 feet 2 inches (1.9 m) north-south by 4 feet 4 inches (1.3 m) east-west (26.7 sq ft; 2.5 m²) (Figure 2.1).¹

Excavation

Fill in the first level (to 12 inches [30 cm]) contained much fallen adobe but few sherds or bones. A floor was exposed at the bottom of the second level, at 16 inches (41 cm) below the surface in the northeast corner, 19 inches (48 cm) in the southeast corner, 17 inches (43 cm) in the southwest corner, and 21 inches (53 cm) in the northwest corner. The floor was not described, and no features were mentioned. No artifacts were present on or near the floor.

Artifacts and animal bones were even less common beneath the floor, in the third level. (The student was therefore surprised to come across a chicken bone with meat on it 4 inches [10 cm] below the floor.) A second floor was discovered at an average of 35 inches (89 cm) below the surface: 33 inches (84 cm) in the northeast corner, 37 inches (94 cm) in the southeast corner, 36 inches (91 cm) in the southwest corner, and 35 inches (89 cm) in the northwest corner. Floor 2 was described as hard and thick; the material was not identified.

¹ All of the room measurements along walls appear to have been interior measurements.

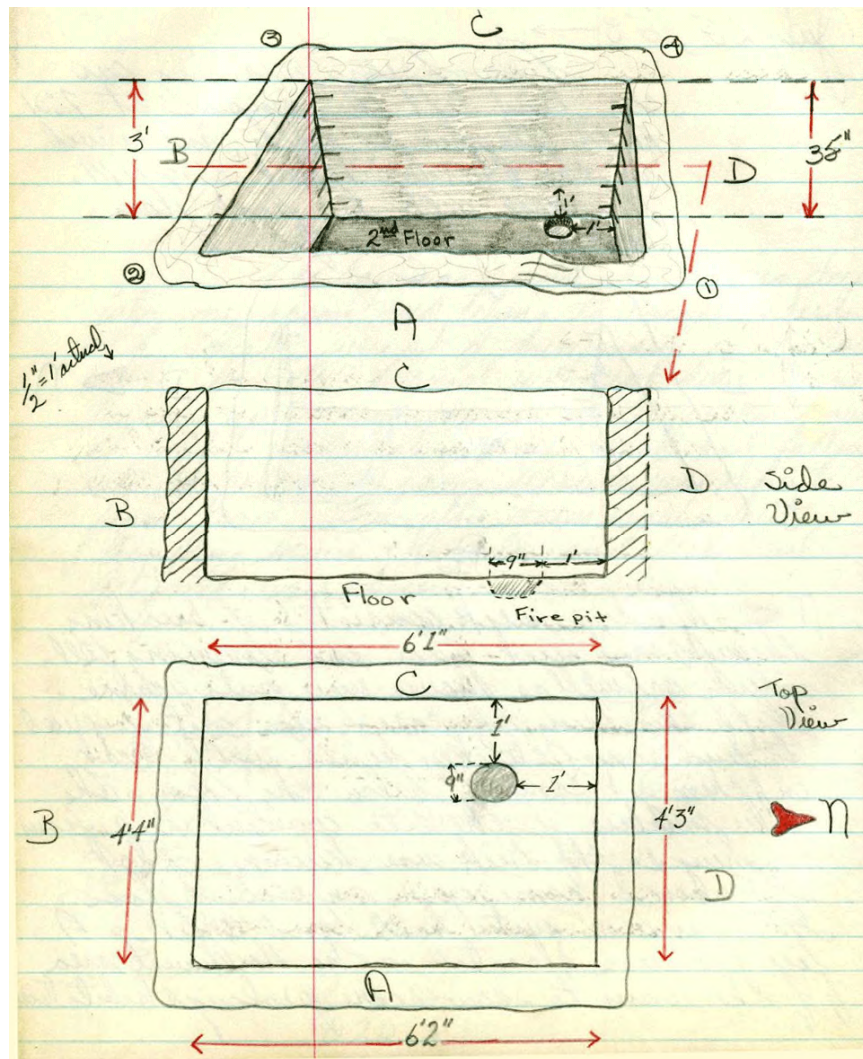


Figure 2.1. Perspective drawing, profile, and plan of Room 1.
Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.5.

A fire pit 9 inches (23 cm) in diameter was in the northeast corner of Floor 2 (Figure 2.1). Neither the pit nor its fill was described.

An exploratory pit 15 inches (38 cm) square was dug in the southeast corner of the room, to an unrecorded depth. Only sterile soil “the consistency of wet cement” was encountered. The student was reassigned to Trench I, and Room 1 was not further investigated.

Artifacts

Sherds collected from Room 1 totaled 152: 107 were found between the surface and Floor 1, and 45 between Floor 1 and Floor 2. The assemblage included 76 sherds of Socorro Black-on-white, eight of St. Johns Polychrome, 43 of plain utility ware, and 16 of rubbed-ribbed utility ware. The distributions were similar in the two floor levels. The most obvious difference between the two

assemblages was the presence of six Los Lunas Smudged sherds in the upper level and three Mesa Verde White Ware sherds in the lower level.

Sixty faunal specimens were collected, 47 from the surface and Level 1 and 13 between the two floors. Twenty were jackrabbit and cottontail, eight were unidentified rodent, eight were antelope, and 11 were turkey.

Room 2 (Notebook 2003.25.40)

Room 2 was also an adobe-walled room, similar in size and shape to Room 1. No good drawing of the room exists. The wall dimensions were: north, 49 inches (1.2 m); east, 76 1/2 inches (1.9 m); south, 48 inches (1.2 m); and west, 77 inches (2.0 m) (25.9 sq ft; 2.4 m²). The walls were 8 to 9 inches (20 to 23 cm) thick.

Excavation

The first excavation level extended 12 inches (31 cm) from the ground surface at the south wall and 20 inches (51 cm) down at the north wall, due to the sloping surface. The fill was hard-packed sand and adobe wall fall. Numerous sherds were found in the fill, but no animal bone.

Floor 1 was found at the bottom of the first excavation level, at a depth of 19 inches (48 cm) in the northeast corner, 13 inches (33 cm) in the southeast corner, 12 1/2 inches (32 cm) in the southwest corner, and 18 inches (46 cm) in the northwest corner. The floor was not described, and no features were mentioned.

A second excavation level extended 12 inches (31 cm) below Floor 1. No walls were found below the floor; from this point downward, "walls" were the vertical faces of the excavation unit, which extended downward from the walls found above Floor 1. The fill in this level was mostly soft sand. At a depth of 22 to 23 inches (56 to 58 cm), a flat rock with a layer of ash on it was found in the southeast corner of the room. A second flat rock with a layer of ash was found near the center of the north wall; the depth was not recorded.

A third level extended to 24 inches (61 cm) below Floor 1 (36 inches [91 cm] below the surface at the south wall). Chunks of charcoal were found in the fill at the west wall near the north wall, at a depth of 28 inches (71 cm).

Floor 2 was found just below the top of the third level, at 37 inches (94 cm) in the northeast corner, 27 inches (69 cm) in the southeast corner, 25 1/2 inches (65 cm) in the southwest corner, and 34 1/2 inches (88 cm) in the northwest corner. The floor was not described, and no features were mentioned. An 18 inch (46 cm) square test pit, 12 inches (30 cm) deep, revealed hard-packed sterile soil beneath Floor 2.

Given the failure to find walls below Floor 1, the student interpreted Room 2 as a feature built above an earlier occupation rather than as a room with two floors. The second floors in Rooms 1 and 2 were at similar levels.

Artifacts

The student recorded only pottery for the first excavation level (to Floor 1), and ground stone or architectural stone and a few faunal specimens but no pottery between Floor 1 and Floor 2.

The two stones mentioned above were in the fill above Floor 2. Each was flat and had a layer of ash on top of it, as if it had been used for a hearth. One was shaped like a parallelogram (possibly worked into that shape), with axes measuring 20 1/2 inches (52 cm) and 13 1/2 inches (34 cm). Based on the student's sketch, the second stone either had one flat edge at the unit's north wall or extended beyond that wall (which at this depth was not an actual wall). At the unit wall the stone was 14 1/2 inches (37 cm) wide. The rounded end of the stone extended 14 inches (36 cm) from the north wall.

The sherd assemblage totaled 96; 22 were Socorro Black-on-white, four were St. Johns Polychrome, 23 were plain utility, and 3 were corrugated utility. As in Room 1, this level contained Los Lunas Smudged, but at nearly 40 percent of the assemblage (40 sherds) compared to the 5 percent identified in Room 1.² Four sherds were Tularosa Black-on-white.

Three of the five faunal specimens were cottontail, one was unidentified rodent, and one was unidentified long bone.

Room 3 (Notebooks 2003.25.7 and 2003.25.25)

The work in Room 3 is described in Notebook 2003.25.7. The sketch plans of Rooms 4, 7, and 8 in Notebook 2003.25.25 show Room 3's location in this cluster. One of those plans, included as Figure 2.2, shows Room 3 as a rectangle with a truncated corner, south of and adjoining Room 4. The sketch plan suggests the presence of an unexcavated room to the south.

The interior dimensions of Room 3 were: north wall, 75 inches (191 cm); east wall, 127 inches (323 cm); south wall, 92 inches (234 cm); west wall, 87 inches (221 cm); wall segment between the north end of the west wall and the west end of the north wall, 40 1/2 inches (103 cm) (59.0 sq ft; 5.5 m²). Averaged wall thickness was 8 inches (20 cm). (See the description of the walls of Room 8, below.)

Excavation

Pothunters had visited the site, and there were no surface sherds in Room 3. The first 6 inches (15 cm) of fill was windblown sand that yielded a mano fragment and scattered sherds. A floor was found 8 inches (20 cm) below the surface in the northern part of the room. Small bits of adobe were found in the 2 inches (5 cm) of fill above the floor. The sand at floor contact was hard-packed. The fill from the surface to the floor was designated Level 1.

² The students' ability to identify pottery types was an issue throughout the Pottery Mound field school sessions. Students sometimes had trouble distinguishing Los Lunas Smudged from the general run of utility sherds, and occasionally were under the impression that all utility sherds were Los Lunas Smudged. Some such difficulty may have been involved here.

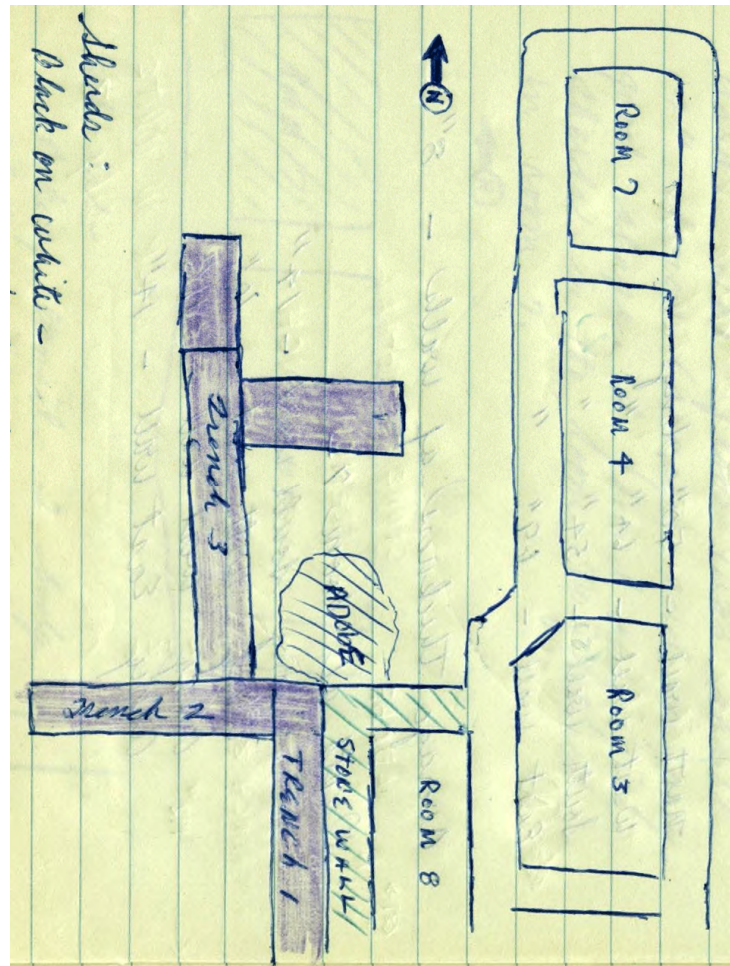


Figure 2.2. Sketch plan of Rooms 3, 4, 7, and 8 and nearby trenches. The sketch has been rotated so north is at the top of the page. The trenches designated with Arabic numerals are not related to Trenches I and II, the main north-south and east-west site trenches. Source: Cat. No. 2005.25.25.

Near the center of the room the floor dipped down toward the south wall, then disappeared entirely two-thirds of the way across the room (Figure 2.3). In the area where the floor was missing, the excavation was carried down to the bottom of the south wall, 14 inches (36 cm) below the surface. The fill in the vertical distance between where the floor had been and the bottom of the south wall was designated Level 2. The fill in this level was sterile sand; no artifacts were reported. The area beneath the extant floor was not excavated.

A fire pit was found in the center of the room, 9 inches (23 cm) below the surface. It was roughly circular in plan and was 3 inches (8 cm) deep. Neither the construction nor the fill was described, but the student's sketch (Figure 2.4) suggests the presence of a collar. The fire pit contained no artifacts.

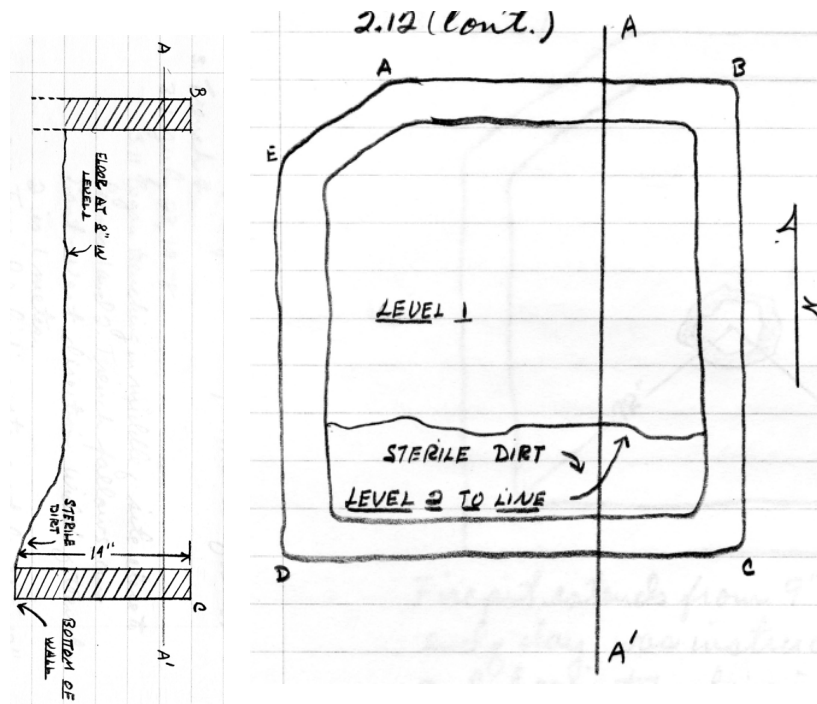


Figure 2.3. Plan and profile of Room 3. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.7.

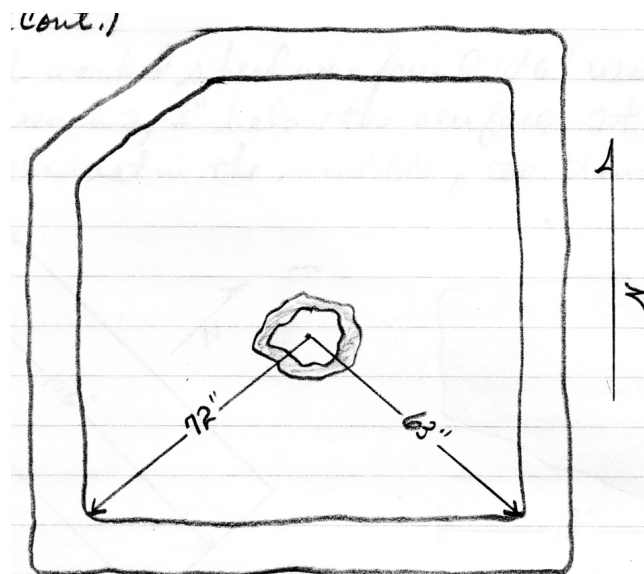


Figure 2.4. The hearth in Room 3. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.7.

Artifacts

The only artifacts recorded from Room 3 were a mano fragment and 18 sherds. The mano fragment, of basalt, was found 6 inches (15 cm) below the surface about 12 inches (30 cm) from

the north wall. The fragment was triangular in outline and measured 4 1/2 by 3 by 1 inch (11 by 7.5 by 2.5 cm).

Four of the sherds were identified as Socorro Black-on-white and two as Zuni Glaze-on-white. The rest were corrugated and plain utility wares.

Room 4 (Notebook 2003.25.25)

Room 4 was north of Room 3 and south of Room 7 (Figure 2.2). The wall dimensions were: north, 60 inches (152 cm); east, 120 inches (305 cm); south, 72 inches (183 cm); and west, 129 inches (328 cm) (57.1 sq ft; 5.3 m²). Wall thickness averaged 9 inches (23 cm). Room 4 is shown in plan in Figure 2.5.

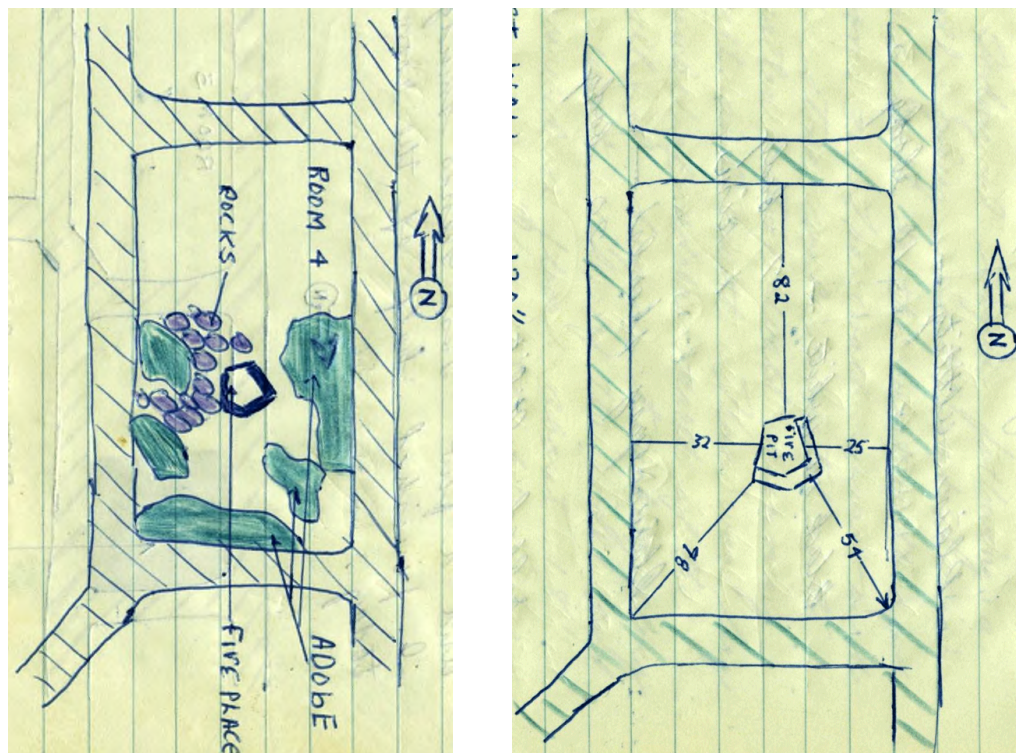


Figure 2.5. Two sketch plans of Room 4. The sketches have been rotated so north is at the top of the page. Source: Cat No. 2003.25.25.

Excavation

Much of the fill near the surface was hardened adobe, identified as roof and wall fall. This material was more prevalent in the south half of the room. Large rocks were found in the west side of the room. A “very good” floor was exposed at a depth of 20 inches (51 cm), with an 8 inch (20 cm) deep fire pit near the floor’s center. The fire pit was not further described but the

student's drawings (Figures 2.5) indicate that it was at least partly lined (based on the angular outline of the pit, with stones rather than adobe). Room 4 was not investigated below the floor.

Artifacts

The only artifacts recorded for Room 4 were 62 sherds. Eight were untyped black-on-white and 20 were untyped gray ware. The rest were utility wares, 24 ribbed and 10 plain.

Room 5 (Notebook 2003.25.40)

The area between Rooms 1 and 2 and Trench I included the remains of a room block, identified by a north-south wall segment with attached east-west wall segments (one east and two west of the north-south wall) (Figure 2.6). The lengths of these wall segments were not recorded. The area partly bounded by the north-south wall and the two adjoining walls on its west side was designated Room 5

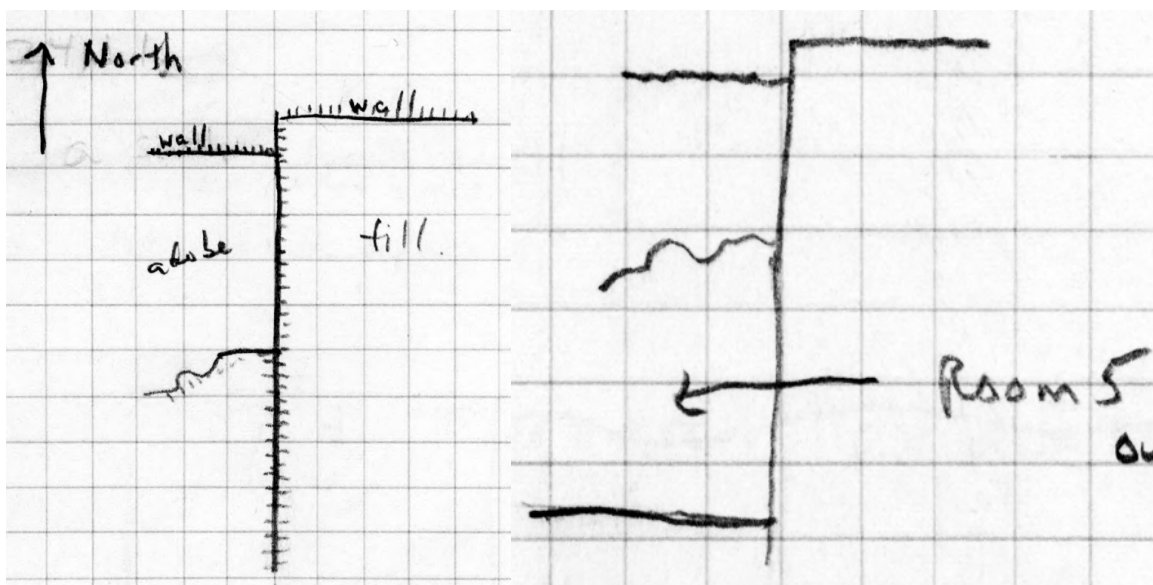


Figure 2.6. Two schematics of the Room 5 area. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.40.

Excavation

The west wall of Room 5 was exposed on the second day of excavation (Figure 2.7). At Floor 1, found at the bottom of the first 12 inch (30 cm) excavation level, the Room 5 wall measurements were: north, 90 inches (229 cm); east, 128 inches (325 cm); south, 79 inches (201 cm); west, 146 inches (371 cm) (80.4 sq ft; 7.5 m²). The west half of the south wall was masonry at 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 cm) down from the wall top. The wall abutments illustrated in Figure 2.7 indicate adjoining rooms to the north, south, and west (none excavated) and a rather complicated join at Room 5's southwest corner. Room 5's west wall did not extend below Floor 1.

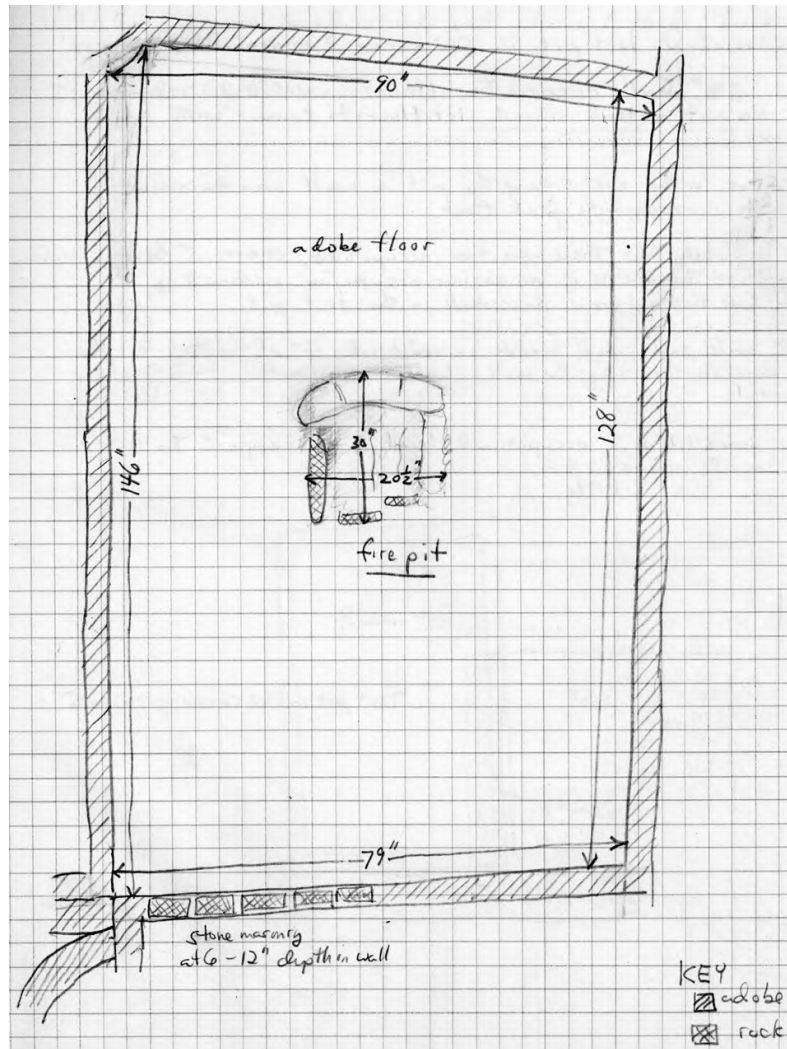


Figure 2.7. Room 5 at Floor 1. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.40.

The floor was adobe, with a central fire pit. At the room corners the floor's depth from the ground surface was: northwest, 11 inches (28 cm); northeast, 12 inches (30 cm); southeast, 14 1/2 inches (37 cm); southwest 11 inches (28 cm).

The fire pit was not described. The student's drawing (Figure 2.7) indicates overall exterior dimensions of 30 inches north-south by 20 1/2 inches east-west (76 by 52 cm). The north wall of the fire pit was curved; the other three walls were straight-sided. The west wall included a single flat stone; the south wall included two smaller flat stones. It is not clear whether the north and east walls of the fire pit were adobe-lined or missing their stone linings.

Artifacts

One ground stone artifact was collected from Room 5: a basin metate found 10 inches (25 cm) below the surface in the southeast part of the room. The metate was 14 inches long, 9 1/2 inches

wide, and 4 inches deep (36 by 24 by 10 cm). The material was not recorded. Forty-nine sherds were collected from this feature: 35 utility ware sherds, including three Los Lunas Smudged; 11 sherds representing three black-on-white types; and three sherds of St. Johns Polychrome. No animal bone was recorded for Room 5.

Subfloor Test Pit

Rather than continue to excavate Room 5 as a whole, a decision was made to dig a 20 by 20 inch (60 by 60 cm) test pit in the room's southwest corner. After the students found evidence of an earlier occupation, they moved to Room 6, then returned to the pit. Both phases of work on the pit are described here, with the artifacts found there.

The fill of the pit was soft brown sand containing sherds and charcoal flecks. A second floor was exposed at a depth (from the surface? below Floor 1?) of 34 inches (86 cm). The floor abutted an east wall whose top was 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm) below Floor 1. The distance of this wall from the west wall of Room 5 was not recorded.

The test pit was enlarged to 41 by 37 inches (104 cm north-south by 94 cm east-west) to better determine the nature of the underlying structure. This effort confirmed that an earlier surface lay 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm) below Floor 1. A storage pit had been dug 17 1/2 inches (44 cm) down from the second surface (Figure 2.8). The width of the exposed portion of the storage pit was not recorded but based on the student's sketch, it was at least 30 inches (76 cm) wide. Eight culinary sherds and 10 black-on-white sherds were collected from the test pit.

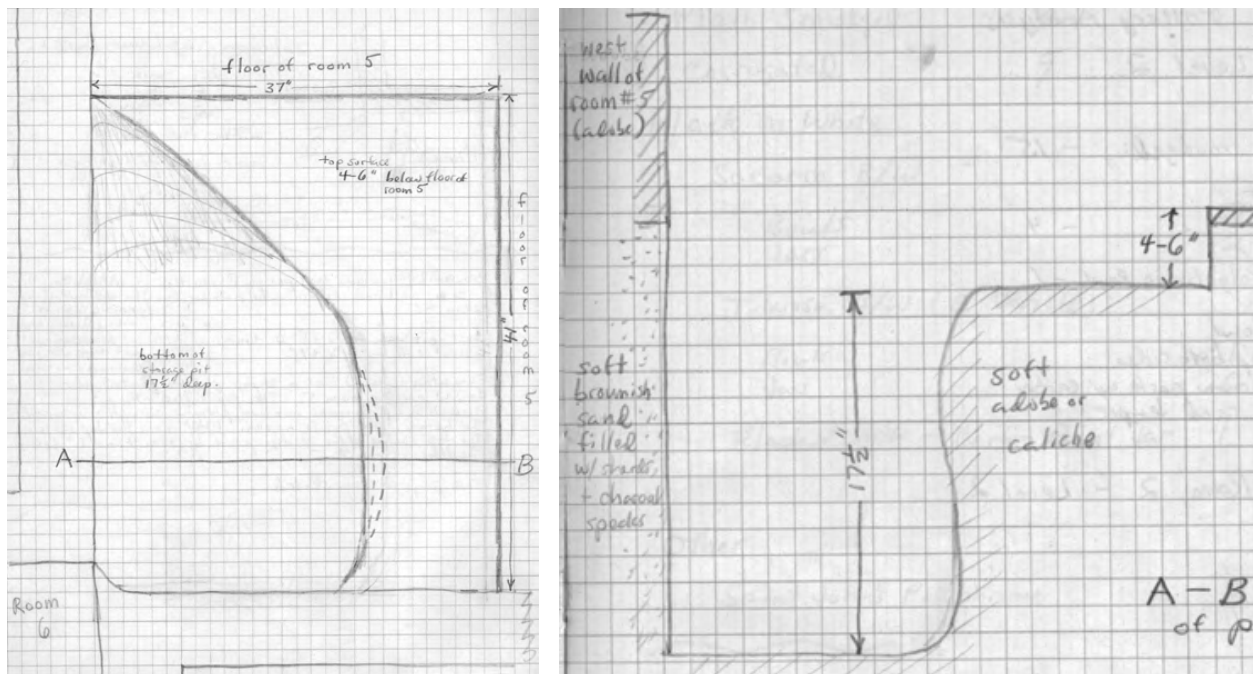


Figure 2.8. Plan and profile of the subfloor test pit in Room 5. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.40.

Room 6 (Notebook 2003.25.40)

The wall abutments at the northeast corner of Room 6, also the southwest corner of Room 5, indicated that the two rooms were built at the same time (Figure 2.9). Room 6 was smaller than Room 5, with wall measurements of: north, 58 1/2 inches (149 cm); east, 101 inches (257 cm); south, 59 inches (150 cm); east, 103 inches (262 cm) (41.8 sq ft; 3.9 m²).

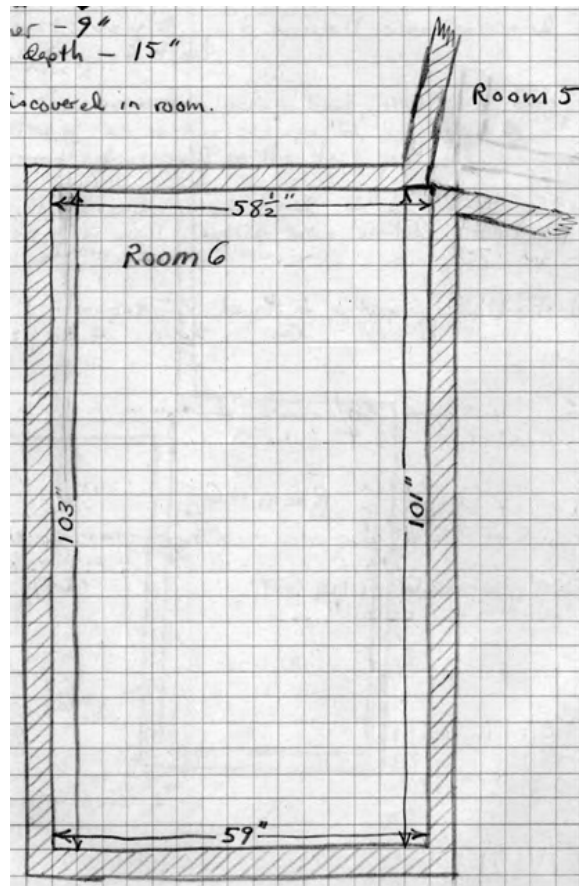


Figure 2.9. Plan of Room 6. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.40.

Excavation

The fill in Room 6 consisted of adobe wall fall, hard-packed earth, and large, flat stones. As in Room 5, a floor was exposed at the bottom of the first excavation level. The floor depth at the room corners was: northwest, 10 1/2 inches (27 cm); northeast, 12 inches (30 cm); southeast, 9 inches (23 cm); southwest, 6 inches (15 cm). The maximum floor depth was 15 inches (38 cm). No fire pit was found.

Artifacts

No lithic artifacts or animal bones were found in Room 6. Seven culinary ware sherds and three sherds of St. Johns Polychrome were recorded.

The student concluded that the room block including Rooms 5 and 6 represented an occupation constructed overlying the remains of an earlier one, and noted that this was in agreement with evidence from Rooms 1 and 2.

Room 7 (Notebook 2003.25.25)

Room 7, north of Room 4, was the last room excavated in the north-south line of rooms that included Rooms 3 and 4. One of the student's sketch plans indicates an unexcavated room to the north of Room 7 (Figure 2.10). Room 7 was small: north wall, 50 inches (127 cm); east wall, 69 inches (175 cm); south wall, 54 inches (137 cm); and west wall, 64 inches (163 cm) (24.0 sq ft; 2.2 m²). The average wall width was 8 inches (20 cm).

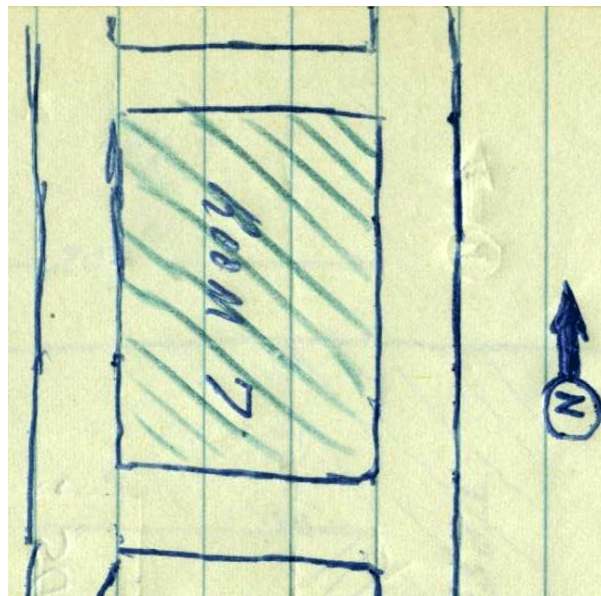


Figure 2.10. Sketch plan of Room 7. Room 4 is south of Room 7; an unexcavated room is indicated to the north. The image has been rotated so north is at the top of the page. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.25.

Excavation

The room fill was mostly hard adobe. A floor in good condition was found 14 inches (36 cm) down at the east and south walls, 10 inches (25 cm) down at the north wall, and 11 inches (28 cm) down at the west wall. No interior features were found. Room 7 was not investigated below the floor.

Artifacts

The only artifacts found in Room 7 were three untyped black-on-white sherds and two utility sherds.

Room 8 (Notebook 2003.25.25)

Room 8 appeared to have been added on to the coursed adobe room block of which Rooms 3, 4, and 7 were part. The north and west walls of Room 8 were stone, while the east wall was formed by the west walls of Room 3 and the unexcavated room south of Room 3.

Excavation

The south end of Room 8 was not excavated. The excavated area measured 79 inches (201 cm) north-south by 67 inches (170 cm) east-west (36.8 sq ft; 3.4 m²) (Figure 2.11). The east (adobe) wall was 12 inches (30 cm) wide; the north wall was 15 to 16 inches (38 to 41 cm) wide and the west (stone) wall was 19 to 20 inches (48 to 51 cm) wide.

A series of small exploratory trenches was excavated to further define Room 8 and then to follow a floor found 18 inches (46 cm) below the surface on the west side of the west wall of the room, i.e., outside of the feature (Figure 2.2). More floor area was exposed, but no walls. The student then joined the group excavating the kiva, and no further work was done on Room 8.

Artifacts

Two black-on-white body sherds were the only artifacts recorded.

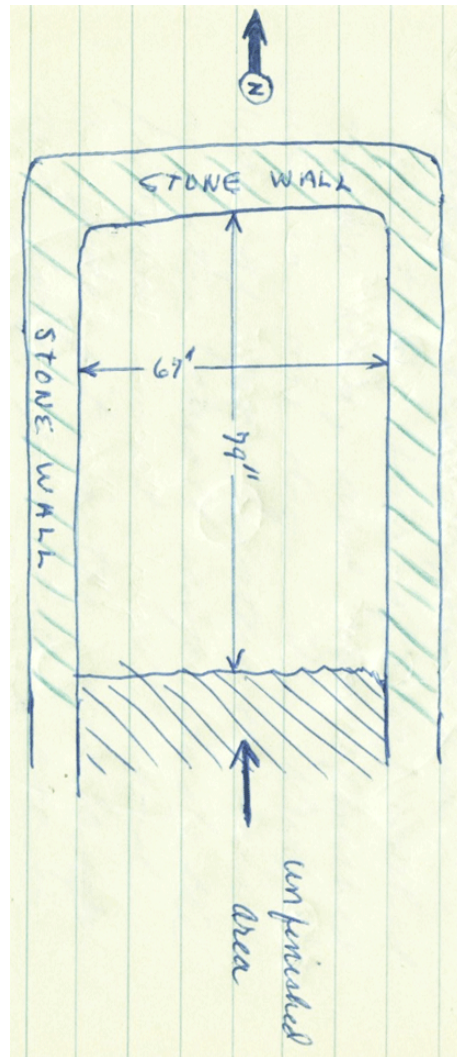


Figure 2.11. Sketch plan of Room 8. The image has been rotated so that north is at the top of the page. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.25.

Chapter 3

PIT STRUCTURES

Pit Complex (Notebook 2003.25.15)

On the third day of excavating Trench I, the student assigned to that task exposed a small pit in the east wall of the trench. A shaft connected this pit to a larger one west of the trench, which was connected via a second shaft to a third pit (Figure 3.1). All had been dug into the “native soil,” identified as caliche. Since all of the pits extended down from the modern ground surface, the uppermost part of each pit must have been removed by erosion. The student spent the rest of his two weeks at the Puerco Site investigating the pits and their contents. What appeared to be a fourth pit was partially and hastily excavated on the last or next-to-last day of work at the site.

Pit 1

The distance of Pit 1 from the north end of Trench I was not recorded. The bottom of the third of the pit within the trench was 3 feet 9 inches (114 cm) below the ground surface; the two-thirds east of the trench was 2 feet 6 inches (76 cm) deep. The pit was 2 feet 7 inches (79 cm) in diameter. The fill was hard-packed sand with no artifacts or ash. At 2 feet (0.6 m) below the surface a shaft 12 inches (25 cm) in diameter angled downward toward the west side of the trench into a second, larger pit.

Pit 2

Pit 2 was 6 feet 6 inches (198 cm) in diameter, with vertical walls. The shaft from Pit 1 led to an entry area, which was not described but appears from Figure 1 to have been half as long and as wide as Pit 1. Pit 2 extended 4 feet 2 inches (127 cm) from the surface to a rough floor of hard-packed clay. Beneath the floor was sandy fill, which was not explored. A small fire pit was found next to the south part of the wall, where a 2 foot square (0.2 m²) area of wall was fire-blackened. This pit contained 25 culinary sherds, nine Socorro Black-on-white sherds, and one sherd of St. Johns Polychrome. In addition, six toe bones, possibly bear, were found in the second excavation level. An opening in the west wall of Pit 2 led to a third, larger pit.

Pit 3

Pit 3 was 7 feet 9 inches (236 cm) in diameter. At the west end of the pit, a 2 foot 4 inch (71 cm) “ledge” of unexcavated matrix was left in place. Across most of the pit interior, the rough clay floor was 4 feet 6 inches (137 cm) deep. As in Pit 2, the floor overlay sandy fill that was not excavated. The hard sand fill above the floor contained sherds and small burned maize cobs but no animal bone.

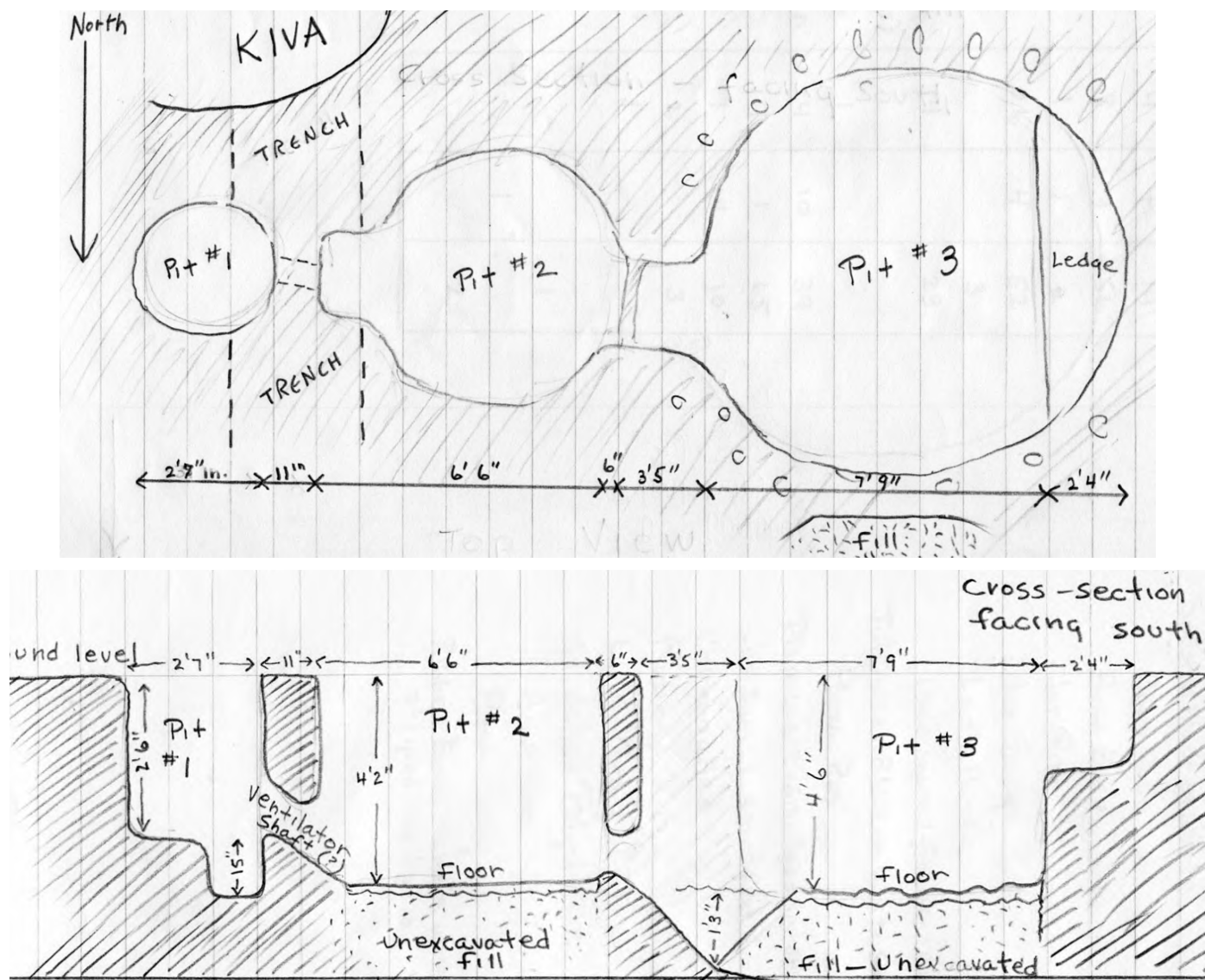


Figure 3.1. Plan and profile of the pit complex. In the plan, north is to the bottom of the page. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.15.

The remains of what appeared to be post holes for roof supports surrounded Pit 3. The student's notes state that there were 10 holes on one side of the pit and nine on the other, while Figure 3.1 seems to show nine and eight.

An area 18 inches (56 cm) north of Pit 3 appeared to be part of a fourth pit. The student placed an exploratory unit 3 feet long and 24 inches deep in the area, and found fill similar to that in Pits 1–3.

The 270 sherds from Pit 3 were the only artifacts recorded. They included 150 Socorro Black-on-white sherds, 119 sherds from culinary wares (65 of them Los Lunas Smudged), and a single sherd of St. Johns Polychrome.

Kiva (Notebooks 2003.25.5, 2003.25.7, 2003.25.25, and 2003.25.40)

Six inches (15 cm) below the 4 foot (1.2 m) level in Trench I, immediately south of the pit complex, a floor entirely covered the bottom of the 12 foot long, 3 foot wide (3.7 by 0.9 m) excavated trench segment. The student doing the work (Notebook 2003.25.5) speculated that he had uncovered the surface of a plaza or the floor of a structure whose walls were not yet visible. He carefully dug 6 inches (15 cm) into the north end of the trench segment, toward the pit complex, and exposed a slightly convex plastered wall that extended down to the floor. Further careful digging confirmed the presence of a kiva that extended to the south (Figure 3.1).

Excavation

The next morning it was all hands on deck, except for the student who was working on the pit complex. According to one student (Notebook 2003.25.5), “Until we could dig enough dirt out of the kiva to allow all of us to shovel at one time we split up the work into troweling and shoveling. By lunch time we were better than half through due to the continual stream of fill that poured forth.” Excavation levels were not used. Little information about the fill was recorded beyond that it was hard-packed sand with fragments of adobe and sherds, the latter mostly black-on-white. The floor was reached by the end of the day. Each of the four excavators drew a detailed floor plan. Each has merits (Figures 3.2–3.5); the one in Notebook 2003.25.5 provides the most detail.

The kiva was not quite circular; the north-south diameter, paralleling Trench I, was 12 feet 9 inches, and the east-west diameter was 11 feet 4 inches (113.5 sq ft; 10.5 m²). The extant wall height was 4 feet 6 inches (137 cm). The walls were plastered, and the floor was in excellent condition. Six features were identified: a central fire pit, a ventilator shaft, and four post holes.

The fire pit was round, 12.5 inches in diameter, and 4 inches deep. No further information was provided.

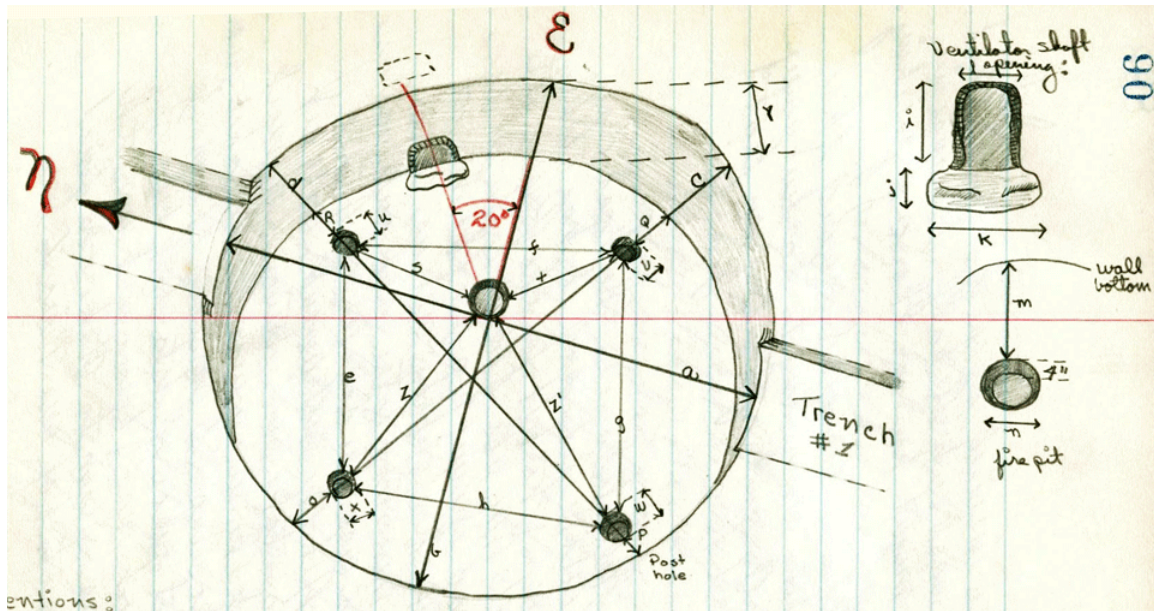


Figure 3.2. Perspective drawing and details of the kiva, from Cat. No. 2003.25.5.

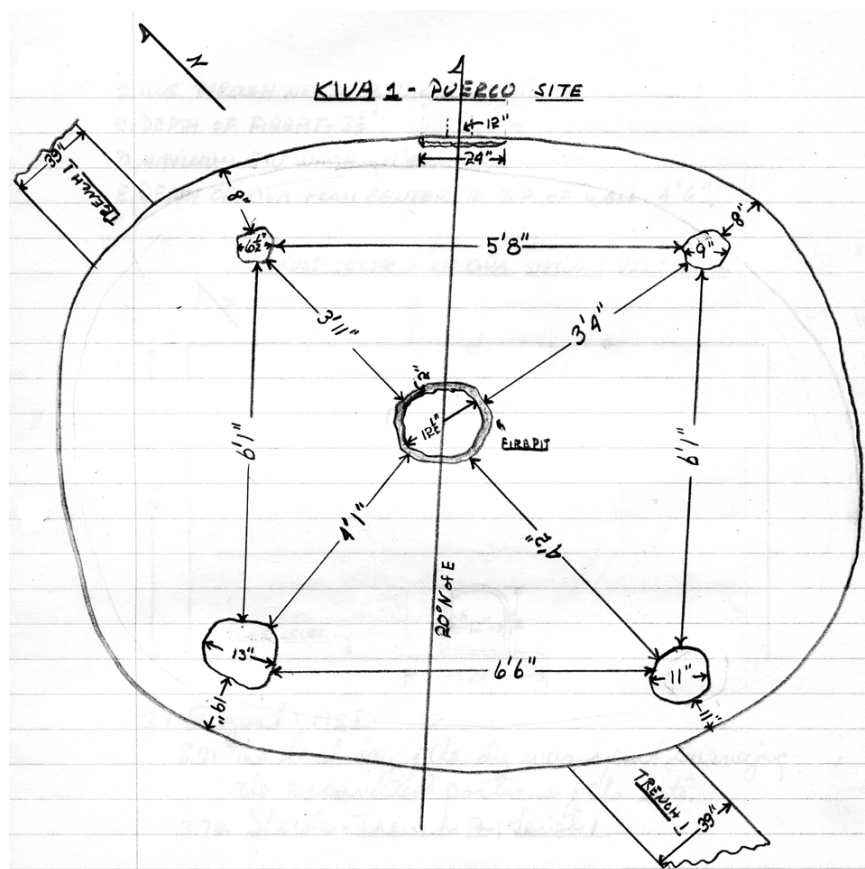


Figure 3.3. Plan of the kiva, from Cat. No. 2003.25.7.

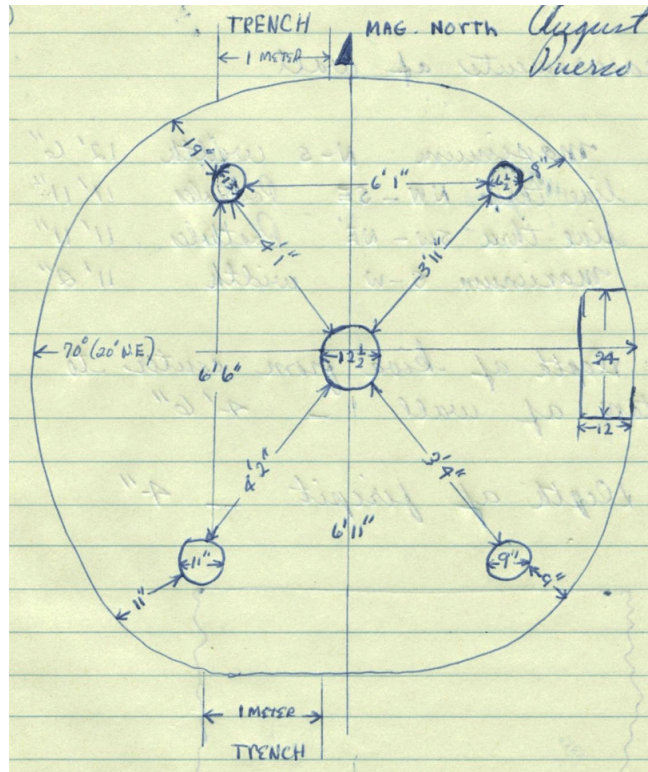


Figure 3.4. Plan of the kiva, from Cat. No. 2003.25.25.

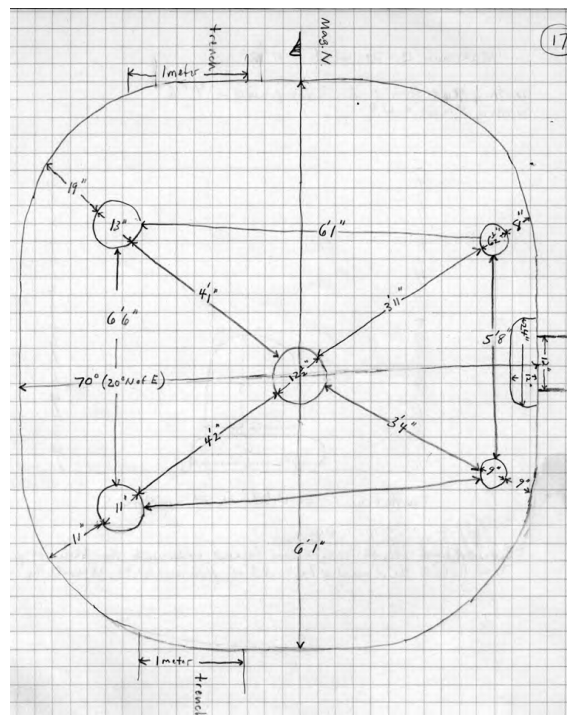


Figure 3.5. Plan of the kiva, from Cat. No. 2003.25.40.

The ventilator shaft opening was located 20 degrees north of the east-west axis of the kiva. (Hibben appears always to have used magnetic north on his projects.) Its construction was not described, but two notebooks (2003.25.5 and 2003.25.7) have sketches of the vent shaft (Figure 3.2). The opening in the kiva was fronted by, or perhaps built partly on, a stone (?) measuring 24 inches wide, 6 inches high, and 12 inches deep (61 by 15 by 30 cm). The opening was arched in shape, 15 inches (38 cm) high in the center, 12 inches (30 cm) wide at the base, and adobe or stone lined. The shaft itself had been covered by backdirt and there was no time to clear and excavate it.

The four postholes varied in width and distance from the wall. The largest, 13 inches (33 cm) wide, was 19 inches (48 cm) from the wall. The smallest, at 6 1/2 inches (17 cm) across, was 8 inches (20 cm) from the wall. The depths were not recorded; perhaps these features were not fully excavated.

Artifacts

None of the four notebooks contains a sherd tally as part of the kiva description. The next day, the final day of the 1958 field season, was spent mapping the site. Sherds from the kiva may have been collected and recorded back on campus, or, given the rush to dig the kiva, they may have been discarded with the fill. No animal bone was recorded.

However, what was recorded in Notebook 2003.25.5 as pottery from Trench I was in fact pottery from the kiva fill, and a significant sample at that. In digging his segment of the trench, the student had excavated and collected pottery from a north-south unit that extended almost entirely across the kiva, and that at 3 feet (0.9 m) wide was about one-fourth the east-west width of the kiva. Moreover, the unit extended down to, and stopped at, the kiva floor. The resulting sample included 195 sherds from Levels 2–4. No artifacts were recorded for the first level, and the student did not mention whether his Level 4 collection included the additional 6 inches down to the kiva floor. Fifty-eight percent of the sample (113 sherds) was Socorro Black-on-white, three sherds were Mesa Verde Black-on-white, and 11 were St. Johns Polychrome. The other 68 sherds (35 percent) were utility ware.

Chapter 4

MAIN TRENCHES

Trench I (Notebooks 2003.25.5 and 2003.25.15)

Trench I was aligned to magnetic north “on high ground,” 35 yards (32 m) west of the county road that provided access to the site. As laid out the trench was 40 feet (12 m) long and 1 m (3.3 feet) wide.

Excavation

Work started at the north end of the trench. The first excavation level was 18 inches (46 cm) deep (Notebook 2003.25.15). The fill in the center of the trench was hard-packed and included sherds and occasional stone artifacts. After the discovery of Pit 1, the student focused on exposing the full extent of the pit complex and did no further work on the trench itself.

Immediately south of Pits 1 and 2 (the exact distance was not recorded), the student who had excavated Room 1 was assigned the task of extending Trench I southward (Notebook 2003.25.5). His instructions were to look for relatively soft fill in hopes of discovering a burial. No structures were expected. The first afternoon’s work extended the trench 3 feet (0.9 m) south, to a depth of 2 feet (0.6 m). The student decided to take the trench down to 4 feet (1.2 m) and to expand the total length to 12 feet (3.7 m). The fairly soft fill included a few sherds and scattered pieces of animal bone. The fill included charcoal flecks and pockets of ash; a layer of ash sloped downward from north to south (Figure 4.1), indicating that the area had filled from the north

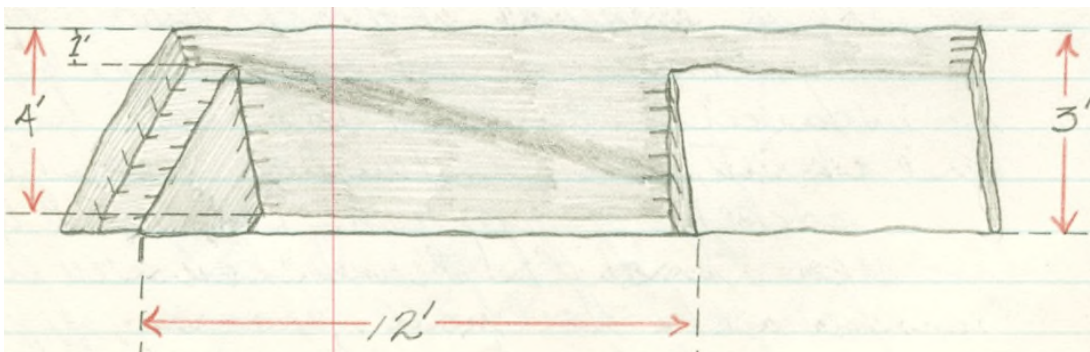


Figure 4.1. Perspective drawing of the southern section of Trench I, showing a sloping layer of ash. Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.5.

The floor and north wall of a round kiva were exposed in Trench I immediately south of the pit complex, at a depth of 4 feet 6 inches (1.2 m). Excavation of the trench per se ended at the kiva wall.

Artifacts

The initial excavation segment (Notebook 2003.25.15) yielded two broken manos (not described) and an “imperfect” projectile point that measured 1 1/4 inches long by 1/2 inch wide (3.2 by 1.3 cm). The material was not identified. The pottery count from this part of the trench totaled 69: 53 Socorro Black-on-white sherds, one Tularosa Black-on-white sherds, and 15 utility ware sherds, the last including seven Los Lunas Smudged and one possible Lino Gray.

Trench II (Notebook 2003.25.7)

Trench II was an east-west trench near Rooms 1 and 2. It was 1 m (3.3 feet) wide.

Excavation

Trench II was dug in two 12 inch (30 cm) levels. At 17 feet 3 inches (5.3 m) from the east end of the trench, the southeast corner of a masonry room was encountered (Figure 4.2). The room's south wall was in and paralleled the trench. The excavation exposed 105 inches (267 cm) of the south wall, 33 inches (84 cm) of the east wall, and a floor 6 inches (15 cm) below the surface. The floor was not described. The walls were 11 inches (28 cm) wide. No feature number was assigned to this room.

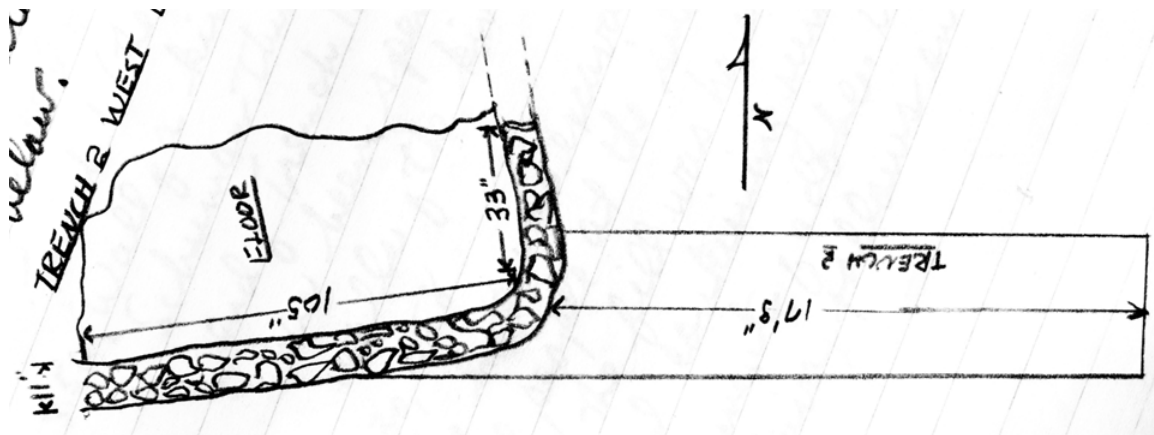


Figure 4.2. The room in Trench II. The sketch has been rotated so north is at the top of the page.
Source: Cat. No. 2003.25.7.

The student was then instructed to return to the east end of Trench II and extend it farther east, again in search of a kiva. Shortly thereafter the kiva was identified in Trench I and the student was moved there to help dig out that structure.

Human Remains

Scattered human remains found in this trench were identified in the laboratory. They consisted of the proximal portion and a blade of a scapula, two ribs, and the proximal portions of a humerus and a tibia.

Artifacts

The student described several items from Trench II individually:

- A perforated worked sherd measured 1 3/4 by 1 1/2 inches (4.4 by 3.8 cm) across. It was found at a depth of 3 inches (8 cm).
- A basalt mano fragment measured 4 1/2 by 4 inches by 1 inch (11 by 10 by 2.5 cm). It was found at a depth of 5 inches (13 cm).
- A jasper polishing stone measured 2 by 1 1/2 inches (5 by 4 cm). It was found at a depth of 12 inches (30 cm).

Trench II yielded 157 sherds: 21 Socorro Black-on-white, one Tularosa Black-on-white, four St. Johns Polychrome, six Glaze A (two red, four yellow), one Jeddito Yellow Ware, and 124 utility ware sherds. The last included eight sherds of Los Lunas Smudged, 18 corrugated or indented corrugated sherds, 42 smeared indented sherds, and two rubbed-ribbed sherds.

The recorded faunal assemblage from Trench II totaled 31 specimens. Ten were jackrabbit and cottontail and three were turkey. Dog and antelope were represented by one element each, and 16 were unidentified fragments.



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Appendix

TABLES

Table 1. Puerco Site Pottery Counts

Locus/Depth	Rooms										
	1		2		3	4	5		6	7	8
	Fl 1 17 in	Fl 2 35 in	Fl 1 15 in	Fl 2 30 in	8 in	20 in	Fl 1 12 in	Test 34 in	Fl 1 10 in	14 in	Not Rec.
Pottery Type											
Socorro B/W	53	23	22	4	4		9	9			
Mesa Verde B/W		3									
Tularosa B/W east			4				1				
St. Johns Polychrome	7	1	4	1			3		3		
Zuni Glaze on White					2						
Glaze A-1 Red											
Glaze A-1 Yellow											
Jeddito											
Los Lunas Smudged	6		40	15			3	1	1		
Lino Gray (?)											
Plain	31	12	23		6	10	6	5	5	2	
Corrugated			3		1		9				
Corr. Indented											
Smeared Indented					4		5	1			
Ribbed						24					
Rubbed Ribbed	10	6					12	1	1		
Indented Ribbed					1						
Unidentified											
Black-on-white						8	(a)1	(a)1		3	2
Gray						20					
Polychrome				(b)1							
Handle											
Totals	107	45	96	21	18	62	49	18	10	5	2

Table 1. Puerco Site Pottery Counts, *continued*

Locus/Depth	Pits*		Kiva**	Trenches		Totals
	2	3		I**	II	
Pottery Type						
Socorro B/W	9	150	113	53	21	470
Mesa Verde B/W			3			6
Tularosa B/W east				1	1	7
St. Johns Polychrome	1	1	11		4	36
Zuni Glaze on White						2
Glaze A-1 Red					2	2
Glaze A-1 Yellow					4	4
Jeddito					1	1
Los Lunas Smudged	1	65	9	7	8	156
Lino Gray (?)				1		1
Utility Plain	10	39	40	4	54	247
Corrugated	14	10		1	2	40
Corr. Indented					16	16
Smeared Indented					42	52
Ribbed						24
Rubbed Ribbed		3	14	2	2	51
Indented Ribbed			5			6
Unidentified						
Black-on-white						15
Gray						20
Polychrome						1
Handle		(c)2				2
Totals	35	270	195	69	157	1,159

Table 1 Notes:

*No sherds found in Pit 1; Pit 3 was a pit house.

** Sherds recorded in Notebook 2003.25.5 as from the south end of Trench I, Levels 2–4, are actually from kiva fill. The trench was 40 feet (12.2 m) long and 18 inches (46 cm) deep (Notebook 2003.2025.15); the kiva incorporated just over one-fourth of its length.

(a) Jar sherd, carbon paint

(b) Bowl rim sherd, brown paste with carbon streak and fine sand temper, deep red polished slip interior and exterior

(c) Ribbed bowl handle with striped decoration

Table 2. Puerco Site Animal Bone Counts

Locus/Depth	Room 1		Room 2		Pit 2	Trench II	Totals
	Floor 1 17 inches	Floor 2 35 inches	Floor 1 15 inches (N/R)	Floor 2 30 inches	Level 2		
Taxon/Element							
Jackrabbit							
humerus						2	2
ulna	3	1				1	5
vertebra	2	5					7
innominate	4	1					5
femur						1	1
metatarsal		6					6
Cottontail							
humerus	1						1
radius	1			1			2
vertebra						1	1
pelvis				1			1
innominate	2						2
fibula						1	1
tibia						1	1
tarsal				1			1
metatarsal						3	3
fragments	7						7
Rodent							
mandible (l)	3						3
mandible (r)	2			1			3
ulna	2						2
femur	1						1
Dog							
ulna						1	1
Bear							6
Antilocapridae							
maxilla						1	1
mandible	2						2
tooth	2						2
long bone	4						4
Turkey							
sternum	1						1
ribs	4						4
femur	1						1
tibia						3	3
tibia/fibula	1						1
splinters	4						4
Unidentified							
long bone				1			1
fragments						16	16
Totals	47	13	0	5	6	31	102

Table 2 Notes:

No faunal remains were reported for Rooms 3 through 8, the pit complex, Trench I, or the kiva.

N/R=none reported

