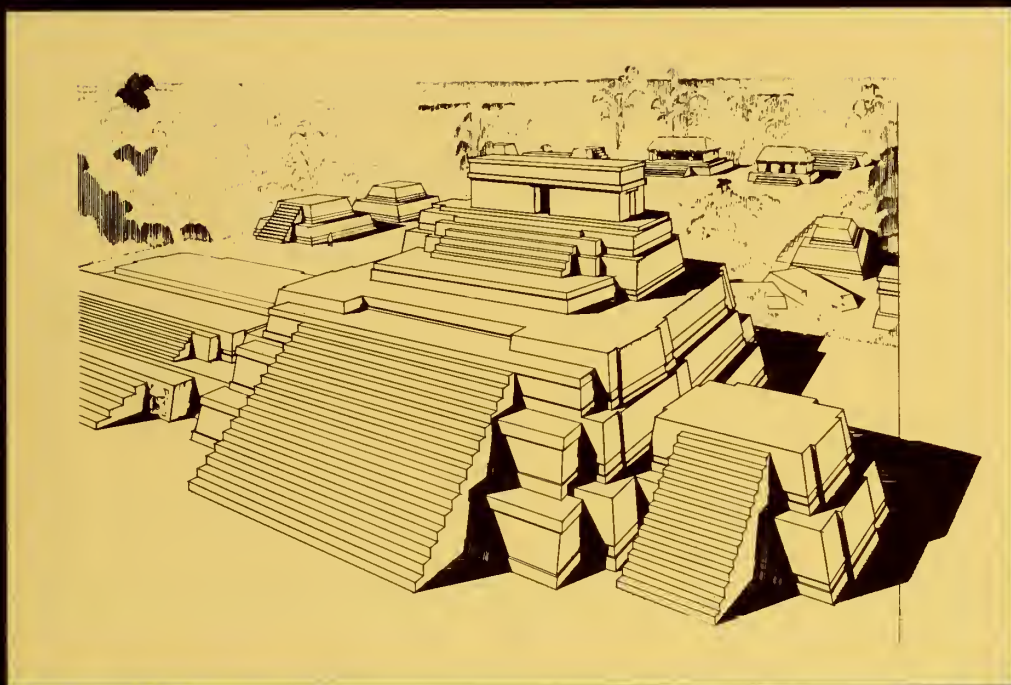


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A Lexicon for Maya Architecture



H. Stanley Loten and David M. Pendergast

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Introduction

As is true of archaeological projects everywhere, those in the Maya area are disparate in aims, techniques, and reporting. Given the diverse backgrounds of Mayanists, the variety of their academic and field experience, and the several purposes they seek to serve in their fieldwork, it is obvious that one cannot expect uniformity in their descriptions of the results of excavation. It is equally obvious that no two Maya sites are exactly alike, and hence the requirements for reporting will vary to some degree from centre to centre.

Though variety may add spice, there are spheres of reporting in which uniformity is not only desirable but essential if Mayanists are to communicate with one another, or to have any hope of making their work intelligible to other Mesoamericanists. The spheres that admit of some standardization are generally those that embody descriptions of materials recovered. While uniformity in the form and style adopted for such descriptions is not likely to be achievable, the terminology employed can often be truly useful only when it is uniform.

Some classes of material culture have already seen attempts to develop generally acceptable and understandable descriptive terms. However, in Maya architecture, which is the largest artifact class and the one with the greatest number of components, description continues to pose major problems. This lexicon is intended as a step towards solution of the headaches that beset those of us who describe the architectural efforts of the ancient Maya, and the great many more of us who attempt to read the descriptions.

Imprecision in architectural description stems from three sources: failure to understand the processes that produced a particular configuration of features; use of reams of prose to describe a component for which a standard term exists in general architectural nomenclature; and misuse of standard terms, often in such a way as to convey to most readers an entirely false impression of both the form and the function of the feature described. A standardized Maya architectural nomenclature will not solve all problems in the first category, though it may prove to be an anodyne for at least part of the pain. What it will do is resolve difficulties of the second and third sorts, and permit all of us to be sure that the feature described by a colleague is the one we know by the same name.

We have attempted to omit purely classificatory terms from the list, and have avoided discussion of the problems inherent in classification of Maya structures. This is partly because classification is properly the second stage of architectural study, whereas the lexicon is intended to be a useful tool for the first stage, which is description. In addition, the approach to classification has been addressed by a number of Mayanists, most recently

by Ashmore (1981:43–51). Many site reports also deal with problems raised by description (see, for example, Andrews and Andrews 1980; Satterthwaite 1943; Shook and Coe 1961; Smith 1950 and 1982), but there have been no previous attempts to provide a dictionary of terms that can be applied throughout the Maya area. Perusal of the literature makes it obvious that each subarea in Maya territory has its own set of classificatory terms. Indeed, most Mayanists have terms of which they are inordinately fond, and which they will probably continue to use in defiance of any steps towards creation of order out of the chaos of non-communication. The lexicon cannot magically effect order in classification, but it may make the descriptions of things classified more usable than they have generally been.

The set of definitions that follows is not intended to be a plea for adoption by Mayanists of one set of researchers' terms and rejection of others, though some of the terms are indeed of our own devising. It is, rather, a compilation of terms that are part of every architect's verbal toolkit, combined with a good many that are specific to Mayanists' needs. We have assumed that those who have need of the lexicon's assistance will have struggled with enough Maya architecture to be able to relate explanations of terms to their own experience; we have, however, included sketches wherever they seemed necessary, and have added a selection of photographic illustrations of some features discussed. Although misuse of terms has posed a very large problem in past reporting, we have attempted to avoid hectoring readers of this work, in the thought that a clear explanation of how a term should be used will be more effective than a long harangue on the word's abuses.

If the lexicon serves its intended purpose, evidence of its usefulness will come, we expect, in two forms: first, this paper will be cited in various excavation reports; second, those whose needs it meets only in part will devise new terms to fit their own problems, or they will turn to dictionaries of architectural terminology for assistance. If these two things happen, communication among us on matters architectural will be improved, and if the addition of terms occurs with sufficient frequency, we can certainly contemplate production of an expanded version of the lexicon in future. In the meantime, we can only hope that a standard nomenclature will offer some relief to those who must confront the rigours of describing the intricacies of an architecture devised by people to whom buildings, and the frequent transmutation of them, were the very stuff of life.



The Lexicon

AGGREGATE The inert material that is mixed with binder of mortar, clay, or other material to form concrete. Aggregate usually consists of quarried stone fragments, nodules, or rubble, ranging from pea to fist size. Aggregate and binder are placed as a wet mass—as distinct from the individual placement of stones in mortar. Some large core masses may be classified as “aggregate core” or “concrete” if it appears that the material was placed as a wet mass.

ANGLE OF REPOSE The surface angle at which loose material is stable without use of a binder or retaining element. The angle of repose decreases as fineness of grain increases; dry-laid boulders or rubble masonry can achieve a near-vertical angle.

APRON A facing profile, usually of a terrace or a platform, which is produced by outsetting of the upper part of the facing from a point near mid-height (Figure 1). The term “apron” applies to the outset upper portion, which usually has a battered surface. The lower portion of the facing is the subapron, and the under-surface between the apron and the subapron is the apron soffit.

ARCH An assemblage of masonry units, with its centre higher than its points of support, that spans a void but does not roof a space such as a room (Figure 2). Arches occur in walls, over doorways or other openings, but when extended over a larger space they are properly termed VAULTS. The term “arch” is often erroneously associated with the presence of radiating voussoirs and structurally employed keystones, attributes that are not integral to the definition, and are rarely found in Maya construction. Given the distinction between arch and vault, the term “vaulted doorway”, which has crept into the literature, is clearly incorrect.

AXIS, PRIMARY A line through the centre of a structure from front to rear, generally perpendicular to the exterior front wall face of the Building and bisecting the central front doorway (Figure 3). Other reference lines, such as the front base line of the platform, can be used to determine the primary-axis location when the Building component is absent or insufficiently preserved. The line defined by the positions of axial caches often does not coincide with that calculated on the basis of architectural features; this suggests that the primary axis was a line perceived rather than precisely measured by the Maya.

AXIS, TRANSVERSE A line roughly perpendicular to the primary axis, whether through the centre of a structure or elsewhere (Figure 3). While a structure can have only one primary axis, it may have any number of transverse axes.

- BACKING MASONRY** The material that lies immediately behind a facing and in front of a core face, and that was installed as part of the facing (Figure 4; Plate 1).
- BALLAST** A layer or bed of inert material, such as stone, installed as a base for a floor (Figure 4; Plate 2). The ballast is normally composed of material with finer grain than that of underlying core.
- BALUSTRADE** A ramp-like border or edge treatment at the sides of a stair (Figure 5). A balustrade may form a plane on the line of the tread nosings, but usually it rises above the steps to form a kind of sloping parapet wall.
- BASAL MOULDING** A moulding at the foot of a feature such as a wall, an outset, a bench, or a terrace (Plate 3).
- BASAL PLATFORM** The component that forms the base of a substructure and completely supports the component above it, extending horizontally well beyond the limits of the upper elements.
- BASE SURFACE** The surface that appears to support a structure (Figure 6), as distinct from the surface that actually provides the support (see **SUSTAINING SURFACE**). A secondary floor abutted against a structure has the effect of establishing a new base surface, but the primary floor or other sustaining surface remains unchanged.
- BATTER** A slight slant from base to top in an essentially vertical face (Figure 4). Terrace faces, stair risers, walls, bench faces, and upper zones are said to have batter if they are not vertical (see **APRON**), whereas features that are inherently not vertical, such as stairs and vault soffits, are described as sloping. Batter is measured as an amount of horizontal displacement in a given vertical distance, usually backwards from base to top. If the displacement is forwards, the batter is termed negative.
- BEAM** A horizontal wood member that spans the space between two points but does not necessarily bear any superimposed load (Figure 13). A lintel may be made up of a number of individual lintel beams.
- BEAM-AND-MORTAR ROOF** A roof that consists of a system of beams that support a topping of either masonry or concrete-like material, usually with a plaster finish.
- BEARING WALL** A wall that supports part of a structure, usually the roof.
- BENCH** A relatively small platform-like feature associated with a Building, usually within a room but occasionally abutting an exterior wall face. Though they are sometimes primary Building features, benches are very often secondary additions. The term "bench" is simply a unit designator, and does not carry with it any implication of specific use; the variety in form, location, and core contents of benches suggests, in fact, that the feature saw a wide range of uses.
- BOND** The patterning of end-joints in face masonry. The absence of any discernible pattern is "random bond"; where a pattern exists, the bonding is usually described as a ratio of **HEADERS** to **STRETCHERS**.
- BOOT-SHAPED STONE** A specialized vault-soffit facing stone that has its butt surfaces deeply undercut to produce **TOOTHING** (Figure 8).

BUILDING As a general term, any piece of construction; as a specific term, with an initial capital letter, the component of a structure that incorporates the principal rooms, though rooms may also be present in components other than the Building (Figure 9). To qualify as a Building, the component must have at least one doorway; the location of the doorway is generally the most significant factor in identification of the Building front. The term SUPERSTRUCTURE has been treated as synonymous with Building, but it can, and in fact often does, embrace a broader range of components.

BUILDING PLATFORM A substructure component that directly sustains, or appears to sustain, a Building (Figure 9). The Building platform duplicates or very closely approximates the Building in its perimeter plan.

BUTT The inner end of either a facing stone or a wooden beam, or of any other feature, that penetrates into core masonry.

CACHE An artifact or group of artifacts intentionally placed in a specific location unrelated to a burial, often but not always on the primary or a transverse axis. The artifacts that comprise a cache were presumably intended as an offering, but the term "cache" is preferable because it is a designator without functional implication. Caches may lie in the core of a structure or in a pit cut into antecedent construction; they were usually sealed immediately after placement.

CAUSEWAY A specialized, linear platform that links one structure group with another some distance away, or joins one site to another. The Mayan term widely used for such a platform is *sache*. The low walls that often mark the edges of causeways are called "causeway parapets".

CHOP The partial demolition of a structure in ancient times, usually in preparation for subsequent construction. The edge or surface that resulted from the activity is termed the "chop line". Use of the term is restricted to description of ancient activity and should not be extended to dignify the effects of modern looting.

CIST A small pit, generally with stone lining and cap, used either as a cache container or for storage. This definition is preferable to the broader one that also encompasses a stone-lined and capped class of GRAVE.

COLLAPSE DEBRIS The material that has resulted from decay of a structure since its abandonment. Outflow of collapse debris, in combination with toppling of upper portions of a structure, produces a mound configuration. A number of variants of the term, such as "collapsed debris", have appeared in print, but the term as presented here is preferable as an identifier of the debris produced by collapse.

COMPONENT A major subdivision in the exterior form of a structure. Standard components are roof comb, Building, Building platform, main platform or pyramid, supplementary platform, frontal platform, and basal platform. Additional components can be distinguished on the basis of their three-dimensional unity and their separation from other exterior subdivisions. All elements that make up a component, such as stairs,

outsets, and terraces, must be fully contained by the component, and must not extend to other components. Generally each component has a three-dimensional form that suggests that the feature could be viewed as a structure complete in itself. A unit that lacks such three-dimensional quality should be defined as a subcomponent. For example, a substructure terrace may have a three-dimensional unity, but its stair may extend unbroken up the faces of additional terraces; in such a case, it is the stair that provides the basis for definition of a component. The smaller subcomponents that are parts of the whole are identified as TERRACES, and numbered from the bottom up.

CONSTRUCTION STAGE A portion of a structure, usually comprising one or more components, completed before the next stage was begun, and allowed to stand for some time before construction was recommenced. The surface that marks the completed top of a construction stage is the "pause line"; while it is not generally as well finished as final building surfaces, it is sufficiently durable to have permitted the partly built structure to weather a temporary cessation in the construction process, and also to have served as the scene of ceremonial activity. A pause line is not associated with permanent Building or other construction features, but may bear postholes or other traces of an impermanent structure.

CONSTRUCTION STAIR A stair used during construction, presumably to facilitate transport of building materials to upper parts of a structure, but designed to be concealed within the finished structure. The surfaces of a construction stair have a considerably more finished appearance than those of a stair core face (Plate 1), but are generally less well finished than the stair of a structure itself.

CORBEL A stone that projects beyond its point of support; the projecting portion carries a load in addition to its own dead weight (Figures 8 and 10).

CORBELLED VAULT A vault in which corbelling is essential to the stability of the vault as a whole. Although the form of Maya vaults resembles that of corbelled vaults, in most Maya vaults only the soffit facings are corbelled, and mortar provides stability. For vaults of this type a term such as "concrete vault" might be appropriate.

CORD HOLDER A device usually found in walls adjacent to doorways, with a vertical pair at each jamb, but occasionally found in apparently random locations not obviously related to any other architectural feature (Figures 7 and 11; Plate 4). The holder is generally a rectangular or square recess, but occasionally the recess is framed by a circular ceramic inset made from a jar neck, or it may have a plastered circular or other form. The recess usually contains a vertical or horizontal peg of stone, bone, or other material, but in some cases a hole drilled in a stone slab takes the place of the peg; in the pegged forms, often only the peg sockets remain.

CORE Internal or hearting masonry of a unit such as a platform, wall, bench, vault, stair, or outset (Figures 4 and 12; Plate 2). Core was amassed, generally in task units when large quantities of material were involved, and was not dumped into a form created by the unit exterior

(see FILL). Whereas the core masonry of smaller units generally requires a facing for stability, that of platforms is normally stable in itself.

CORE FACE The surface of a body of core—often composed of stones different in size from those of the core—carefully laid but not dressed or finished (Figure 4; Plate 1). Core faces may encase task units, in addition to comprising the surface of structure-component hearting. Core faces of components may approximate, or occasionally duplicate almost exactly, the plan configuration of the finished construction.

CORNER, INSET A corner of a terrace that is set back from the lines of the two terrace faces that adjoin the corner (Figure 3). A corner set back from only one face of a terrace is partially inset, but a corner set back from the line of an outset rather than from that of a terrace face is not considered to be inset.

CORNICE A masonry moulding at the top edge of a unit such as an upper zone, a terrace, an outset, or a bench (Figure 7; Plate 3).

COURSE LEVEL A roughly horizontal layer of either facing or core masonry in which adjacent stones are set on a common bedding plane (Plate 2).

COURTYARD A relatively small exterior space bounded by either the wings of a single structure or the contiguous parts of different but conglomerated structures. A PLAZA is generally larger than a courtyard, but the principal distinction between the two consists in the wider spacing of structures around a plaza.

CRYPT (1) A chamber for a burial, either built for the purpose or reused. It houses a burial that does not occupy all the space provided. A chamber reused as a crypt is generally a Building room, and techniques employed in crypt construction are most frequently those of standard Maya Building construction. There are, however, some striking exceptions to the rule at, for example, Altun Ha (Pendergast 1979:61) and Lamanai (Pendergast 1981:39). (2) In northern Yucatán, a masonry-lined and capped grave not appreciably larger than the volume of its contents.

DOORWAY An opening with its sill at or near floor level, which provides access to a space by piercing a wall or other feature (Figure 11).

DOORWAY ARCH A masonry span in the form of an arch over a doorway (Figure 2).

DOORWAY JAMB A face that runs through a wall at a doorway opening, and forms one side of the doorway; also called "doorjamb". A doorway at the intersection of two perpendicular walls that has only one true jamb is called a "wall-jamb doorway".

DOORWAY SILL A device that has the effect of raising the floor level of a doorway above that of the spaces on either side. Also called "ship's sill", or simply "doorsill".

DOUBLE-VAULT MASS The entire body of masonry that forms two back-to-back vault units (Figure 7). Such a masonry body may have been built as a single entity, or may occur with a vertical joint at its centre.

DROPPED MEDIAL COURSE A horizontal run of medial corbel stones that forms the lower edge of a medial moulding and is set at a level below that of the vault spring.

DRY-STONE CORE Masonry, usually quarried or rubble stone, laid without mortar. This is the most stable type of construction, because the bond is mechanical rather than chemical.

DWARF WALL An interior wall lower than either the ceiling or the vault-spring level. A dwarf wall can be distinguished from a bench or other lower interior feature by the fact that, like all walls, it has two opposing faces.

ENCLOSURE An exterior space that is roughly the size of a Building room and is enclosed by walls.

FAÇADE SCULPTURE Either a single isolated panel of sculptural detail, or any specific motif within a sculptural field. The term is not generally applied to upper-zone decoration as a whole, but is used to denote elements in such decoration. As well as on the upper zone, façade sculpture occurs most frequently on stair-side outsets.

FACING The body of masonry that includes surface plaster, facing stones, and backing masonry, if present, and forms the complete exterior skin of a structure (Figures 4 and 12). The facing normally overlies core faces that approximate or nearly duplicate the form of the structure's exterior.

FACING STONES The typical stones that make up the outermost element of a facing, as opposed to specialized stones such as base courses, levelling courses, corner stones, corbels, and sculptural stones. Facing stones either are "hard", and may or may not be modified by splitting, chipping, or battering, or are "soft", and cut to shape. Shape categories are defined on the basis of cross-section: "slab" facings employ stones with depths more than twice the face height; "block" facings are composed of stones of approximately equal depth and height; "vertical slab" (or "vener") facings embody stones with heights more than twice the depth. Subcategories reflect the degree of precision employed in shaping the exterior surfaces of the stones; the three divisions are "unshaped", "subrectangular", and "rectangular". Surface dressing may have been done either before the stones were set in place, or afterwards ("post-dressing"). Facings made either of unmodified stone or of unshaped broken stone are termed rubble facings, and are not dressed. Small unshaped stones termed "spalls" may be set in as chinking in the joints of any type of facing. Most shaped facing stones are cut to follow the natural bedding planes of the material, but occasionally planes can be seen to run diagonally or vertically. Cutting of flat-slab facing stones usually produced a distinct taper towards the butt in order to ensure a good bond with the backing mortar. Facing stones set in distinct horizontal layers are termed "coursed". Coursing may be "continuous", with levels that can be

traced around the full perimeter of a unit, or "partial", with levels that can be traced only partway. Where coursing is consistent in wall surfaces, the course levels may extend through the wall from one face to the other. In common with many other features mentioned, the form of coursing may have temporal significance, either for single sites or for larger areas.

FILL Loose material, generally placed by dumping, with little or no capacity to maintain its own stability above its natural angle of repose. If fill is to be built up to any appreciable height, it must be retained at the edges, and this appears to be a strategy that was foreign to Maya limestone construction. As a result, the term "fill" is generally applicable only to those instances in which an excavated pit or other feature served as a receptacle for dumped material.

FILL RETAINING WALL A true wall, designed to resist lateral pressure from amassed material that lacks natural stability. Such units are very rare in Maya architecture, and generally involve walls of minimal height, which in at least some instances were not initially constructed as fill retaining walls.

GRAVE A burial housing that is not appreciably larger than the volume of the contents. A grave may be capped and/or lined with masonry (often reused facing stones), or may lack these features, whether it is cut into an existing structure and capped by subsequent construction, or is contained within core.

GROUP A cluster of structures around, and at least partly enclosing, an open space; a cluster of structures that form a system of connected open spaces; or a cluster of structures associated by proximity. In all but the last instance, the term is usually qualified by a description of the open space, for example, "plaza group", "courtyard group", or "plazuela group".

HALF-VAULT UNIT The part of a vault that runs the length of the space covered, and spans roughly half of it (Figure 12).

HEADER A facing stone set so that its length penetrates backing masonry and one of its ends forms part of the façade (see **STRETCHER**).

HIP MOULDING A vertical or corner framing element in the upper zone, usually combined with medial and superior mouldings to form a frame around the entire upper-zone surface (Figure 9).

INSET PANEL A rectangular recess near mid-height in a wall, usually with a vertical channel at each side (Figure 9). In northern Yucatán, such panels may occur in the upper zone and lack the vertical channels.

LARGE AGGREGATE Stones, boulders, or rubble larger than fist size, mixed with a binder and laid down as a wet mass.

LIFT JOINT A joint prepared so that a unit such as a floor can be installed in two or more operations. The joint characteristically consists of a finished edge on the earlier portion, against which the plaster of the subsequent operation is faired or feathered.

LINTEL A horizontal member that spans an opening in a wall, usually a doorway or window (Figures 7 and 11). A lintel may be of wood or of stone, and may be composed of a single beam or of a number of beams.

LINTEL BED The surface that bears the butt of a lintel (Figure 11). Lintel beds may be of finished plaster, or of unsmoothed mortar; when of the former type, they may serve as sites for caches.

MASONRY Stonework either with or without mortar, in which the elements are placed individually rather than as a mass.

MEDIAL CORBEL The corbel stones that support an upper zone or form part or all of a medial moulding (Figure 10).

MEDIAL MOULDING The horizontal moulding at the lower edge of an upper zone (Figure 11); the moulding may be one or several courses high. The medial moulding is generally an expression on the Building exterior of the vault-spring line on the interior.

MORTAR A cementitious binder used with either masonry or aggregate. Lime mortar of good quality is white to light grey, tight, and adhesive; it was usually used in floor, wall, and vault surfaces, and with facing stones. Lime mortar of poorer quality, often used in core construction, is usually medium yellow to light brown, less tight, and not as adhesive. Clay was sometimes used as mortar, occasionally with aggregate, for core masonry.

MORTAR ROOF A roof of mortar and stone, usually finished with plaster, which overlies either a masonry vault or a system of wooden beams.

NICHE A recess in a wall or other unit. A niche is distinguished from other types of recesses by a depth that is relatively great in comparison with width. The resulting sill is more or less rectangular; it may be above or near floor level.

NOSING The outer edge of the tread of a step; the junction between tread and riser. Also "nose".

OLD LAND SURFACE A layer of compacted topsoil beneath a structure, often but not always a use surface distinguished by packing and the presence of cultural material. An old land surface may appear to be entirely natural in contour, or it may clearly have been altered by removal or addition of material to produce a level. Alteration may have been undertaken in order to make the surface usable for activity, or in preparation for construction; in any case, the contours can rarely if ever be shown to be those of topsoil entirely unaltered by the Maya before permanent construction was begun.

OUTSET A unit that projects horizontally beyond the face of a terrace (Figure 3; Plates 3 and 6). Outsets located on the primary axis at the rear of a structure are called "rear centre outsets"; they occur on both Building and roof-comb components, as well as on terraces. Outsets on the sides of the substructure are called "side outsets"; those immediately adjacent to a stair are "stair-side outsets".

PARTITION An interior wall that carries no part of the load imposed by the vaults, roof, and upper components. Such a wall subdivides interior space, but is not essential to the structural stability of the Building. A partition is generally of masonry, but may be of perishable materials (see SCREEN WALL).

PATIO (1) An unroofed space contained within a Building or bordered by low walls that form part of the Building. (2) An exterior space, bounded by architectural features, that is larger than a room but smaller than a courtyard; in this sense the term is equivalent to PLAZUELA.

PERIMETER FLOOR A floor associated with a structure, but extending outward from it in an area where there is no known plaza or platform construction. A perimeter floor may be either the sustaining surface of the structure, or a secondary addition.

PLASTER Burnt lime that is very hard, fine-grained, and contains no aggregate. The standard material for interior and exterior finished surfaces, plaster also occurs in modelled and moulded form in upper zones, where it is often termed "stucco". The finish of upper-zone plaster may be poorer than that of plaster on interior and lower exterior walls, whereas floor plaster is often harder than that on other surfaces, apparently as a result of polishing. Detailed descriptions of plaster production and application techniques can be found in the extensive studies by Littman (1957, 1958a, 1958b, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1966, 1967).

PLATFORM Either a complete structure or a component that is formed so as to provide an essentially horizontal upper surface that supports another component or serves as an activity area in itself.

PLAZA A relatively large exterior space that is delimited by structures that are commonly but not invariably of large size. The number of structures bordering a plaza and the degree of separation among them vary considerably.

PLAZUELA An exterior space that resembles a plaza, but is of smaller size; a plazuela is distinguishable from a COURTYARD on the basis of the different relationships of bordering structures.

PLINTH A base for a feature such as a sculpture or a free-standing object; not a base for, or the basal moulding of, a structure or Building, and not a common feature of Maya architecture.

PORTAL ARCH An arched or vaulted opening larger than a normal doorway; such an arch provides access to a plaza or courtyard, or to a *sacbe*.

PORTAL STRUCTURE An assemblage of components with plan features that provide for circulation through the Building, so that the structure serves as an entryway and exit for a plaza or causeway, or for any area that the structure borders.

POST A vertical support, or column, of wood; when of stone, the element is usually termed "column".

POSTHOLE The socket for a post. A primary posthole is generally characterized by a slight floor turnup around its perimeter, whereas a secondary posthole is cut into the floor, and generally has rather ragged edges with no turnup. In the latter case, the presence of a very shallow hole might lead one to conclude that the post was part of an overlying structure, rather than of the structure in which the posthole can be seen.

PRIMARY Term used to describe part of an original structure, rather than a modification of that structure (see **SECONDARY**).

REVEAL The side, top, and bottom faces of a recessed panel or niche; a reveal is analogous to a doorway jamb, but does not pierce the wall.

RISER The vertical face of a step in a stair (Figure 5). The top edge is the "nosing" (or "nose"); the bottom edge is the "toe". The vertical dimension of a riser is given as "height".

ROD ROW A series of holes, approximately 3 cm in diameter, that extend horizontally across the top of a wall, either interior or exterior. The holes are casts left by wooden rods that were set in during construction and have since rotted out. The holes usually angle upwards into the mortar of the medial-corbel course or the vault-soffit facing; their average depth is about 15 cm, and they taper to a blunt point. Spacing between holes in a rod row is generally on the order of one metre.

ROOF COMB A component that stands on the roof of a Building and provides a surface for the display of façade sculpture (Figure 9). A roof comb may or may not have interior spaces, but if such spaces are present, they were not meant to be accessible.

ROOF PARAPET A low wall around the edge of a roof (Figure 7).

ROOM An interior space accessible through one or more doorways. The long dimension of a "transverse" room is parallel to the primary axis. Whether transverse or perpendicular to the primary axis, rooms that are parallel, one behind the other, are in "ranges", and are numbered from front to rear, or from exterior to interior. Rooms located along the primary axis are "axial" rooms.

SCREEN WALL A very thin, non-bearing wall or partition, generally of masonry when within a masonry Building, but occasionally of wattle and daub. Such walls are generally secondary elements in Buildings.

SECONDARY Added to a structure as a modification of the primary effort (see Plate 3). As secondary elements may be found in several unconnected

areas of a structure and hence cannot be related stratigraphically, they are organized for descriptive purposes into levels of modification. The first level is the primary structure; the second embraces all initial modifications to the primary structure; the third comprises all modifications that overlie those of the second level; and so on. This approach provides a workable framework for description when stratigraphic or other evidence does not make clear the actual temporal relationships among non-contiguous secondary elements.

SECOND STOREY A component that stands on the roof of a Building, contains accessible rooms, and generally presents the formal features of a Building. A component that stands on a Building roof but lacks the features of either a second storey or a roof comb is termed a "roof structure".

SIDE INSET A recess that runs the full height of the exterior side-wall surface of a Building (Figure 9).

SLOPE The inclination of a stair or vault soffit measured as an acute angle from the horizontal.

SMALL AGGREGATE Stones from pea to fist size, used as inert material in a mortared mass.

SOFFIT A roughly horizontal under-surface of a feature such as a medial moulding, apron, capstone, or vault spring (Figure 7). A soffit normally underlies a face that is vertical or nearly vertical. The term "vault soffit" is regularly used in reference to the face of the vault that extends from vault spring to capstones but is usually far from horizontal.

SPINEWALL A major interior wall set athwart the primary axis, and usually running the full length of the Building (Figure 7). In a vaulted Building, the spinewall bears a double-vault mass.

STAIR A single flight of steps uninterrupted by a landing (Figure 5); the term is also applicable to an isolated single step that is not part of a flight of steps. While the term "stairway" is properly applied to the enclosed space within a Building through which a stair passes, it has also been used to designate a means of access composed of a number of separate stairs in the same general alignment. In the latter sense, "stairway" is essentially equivalent to "staircase", a term not usually employed to describe a Maya architectural feature. Often each stair of a stairway is part of a different structure component. An "outset stair" projects entirely beyond the lines of the unit of which it forms a part, whereas an "inset stair" is wholly or partly recessed into the unit. The horizontal distance from top to bottom of a stair (as seen in plan) is the "run", and the full vertical height is the "rise". The lateral dimension of the stair is the "width". Vertical facings that form the sides of a stair and do not rise above the plane of the step nosings are the "stair sides" (see BALUSTRADE).

STAIR BLOCK A type of platform or bench-like unit, set in or on a stair or landing, usually athwart the primary axis (Plate 6).

STRETCHER A facing stone set with its longest dimension parallel to the structure face (see HEADER).

STRUCTURE As a general term, without an initial capital letter, any piece of construction (synonymous with **BUILDING**); as a specific term, with an initial capital, a single complete architectural entity with all its modifications. In a construction sequence, separate Structure designations are used whenever it can be shown that an architectural entity was entirely submerged within the mass of subsequent construction.

SUBFLOOR A surface at the top of a core body, prepared to receive a floor with its ballast and body material (Plate 2). A subfloor is usually a layer of mortar with no smooth surface or topping of plaster, and it always lacks walls and other features associated with a floor proper.

SUBSTRUCTURE The complete set of components that support a Building. The same set of components may exist as an entity without a Building at the summit, but in that case the term "substructure" can hardly be applied since there is no superstructure.

SUPERIOR MOULDING A moulding that runs along the top edge of an outset, an upper zone, or a bench (Figure 7); synonymous with **CORNICE**.

SUPERSTRUCTURE The complete set of components that make up and/or are associated with a Building, and are supported by a substructure. The superstructure usually consists of a Building alone, a Building plus roof comb, or a Building plus a second storey; it can, however, include free-standing walls, altars, roof-comb-like units without associated Building, terrace or platform-like units without usable upper surfaces, and a variety of other permanent or impermanent fixtures, among which are thatched Buildings and other units.

SUSTAINING SURFACE A floor or other surface that directly supports an architectural feature.

TASK UNIT A subdivision that is related to the process of construction within a larger unit. Task units are not visible on finished surfaces of structures. The units represent contributory segments into which the total task of construction was divided in order that the effort be manageable. One task unit can be distinguished from another by differences in masonry characteristics and/or mortar colour, and sometimes by the presence of core faces. If delimited by core faces, the units are likely to reflect the arrangement of tasks rather than the plan configuration of the building.

TENON A stone employed as a tie between two bodies of masonry; also a projecting neck at the back of a stone sculpture inserted in a façade.

TERRACE A platform-like subcomponent that has the appearance of a large step in a substructure or platform. The bottom edge of a terrace is the "foot", and the top edge is the "verge".

TOMB An elite interment; the term encompasses the crypt together with its funerary contents and furnishings, as well as any pre-interment or post-interment offerings or other features that are evidence of activities directly associated with the inhumation.

TOOTHING A gradual narrowing of facing stones from face to butt to produce a reverse surface that provides a secure bond with backing masonry.

TRACE STONES A line of stones that sets out the plan configuration of a structure at its base level. The practice of setting out trace stones seems to have been followed when construction was undertaken on rough ground, where a layout line could not very well have been employed.

TRANSVERSE WALL An interior wall that parallels the primary axis and runs from front to rear in the Building.

TREAD The roughly horizontal surface of the step of a stair, more or less at right angles with the riser (Figure 5). The front-to-rear dimension of the tread is its "depth".

UNIT As a general term, any element of a structure; as a specific term, any element that does not admit of categorization, or cannot be shown to be part of an identifiable structure.

UPPER ZONE The portion of a Building exterior that corresponds to the vaults on the interior (Figure 12); often, but not invariably, the location of major façade sculpture.

VAULT The entire assemblage of masonry—including capstones, vault backs, vault beams, facings, and in some cases even the medial corbels—that constitutes the vault construction (Figure 13). Most vaults consist of four major units: two "half-vaults" that run the length of the space covered, and two "end-vaults" that close the space at its ends. The large stones, often of special shape, that form the vault soffits are called "vault stones".

VAULT BACK A sloping surface within the body of a Building roof that usually separates the vault masonry from the backing masonry of the upper zone (Figure 12). Vault backs are not always present. Well-finished vault backs have often proved to be cleavage lines in façade collapse.

VAULT BEAM A wooden member set horizontally into the masonry of a vault so that its middle portion spans the width of the space covered by the vault (Figure 13). The term "tie beam", often used to designate a vault beam, should be avoided because a vault beam usually lacks the kind of anchorage that would be required for the stabilizing function.

VAULT MASS The entire body of material that forms a half-vault or end-vault unit.

VAULT SPRING The line from which a vault rises (Figure 13); usually at or just above wall-top level. Vault springs may be "inset", "outset", or "suppressed".

VENT An opening that runs through a wall, and that because of its shape and/or small size is not likely to have served as a window (Figure 9). Vents

are distinguishable from beam sockets by the fact that they pierce the wall, and are spanned by one or more lintel stones. The opening is usually close to horizontal, and may be located at any height in the wall. The surfaces that extend through the wall are usually not plastered.

WALL A vertical linear unit of construction that has two parallel faces (Figure 6); not the facing of a platform, terrace, or other unit. A wall face constructed out of plumb (that is, not truly vertical) is "battered".

WALL PIER A section of wall between two doorway openings, not infrequently with a width no greater than that of the doorways (Plate 5).

WALL TOP A hard capping surface at the top of a wall that seals the wall body and connects plaster on the wall faces. Construction of wall tops was not universal among Maya builders, but in some cases in which a finished wall top is not present, a pause line may be identifiable.

WATTLE AND DAUB A perishable wall construction of light wooden members covered with thick clay, or occasionally with lime mortar, and usually whitewashed. Evidence for the presence of a wattle-and-daub structure usually consists of bits of daub hardened during burning of the building.



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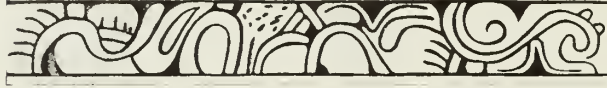
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Figures and Plates

APRON VERGE

Figure 1

APRON

APRON CORBEL

APRON SOFFIT

SUBAPRON

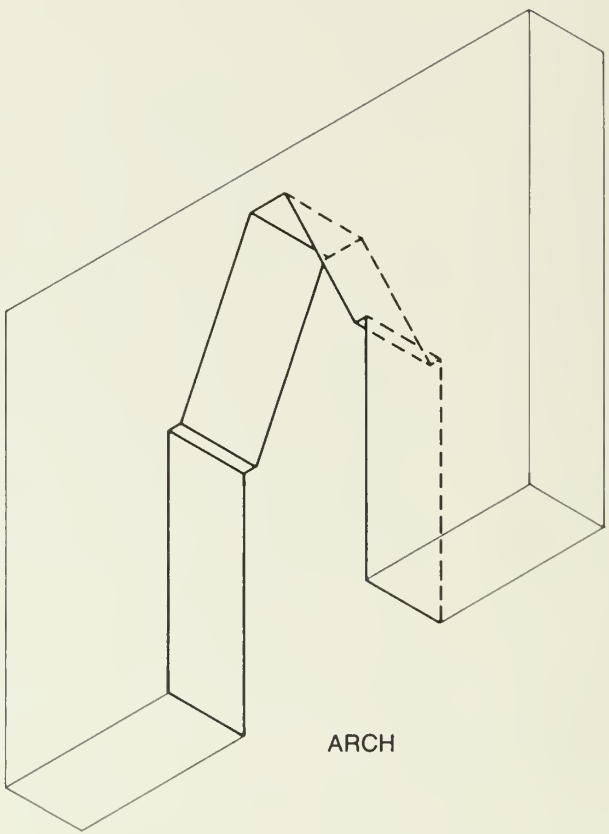
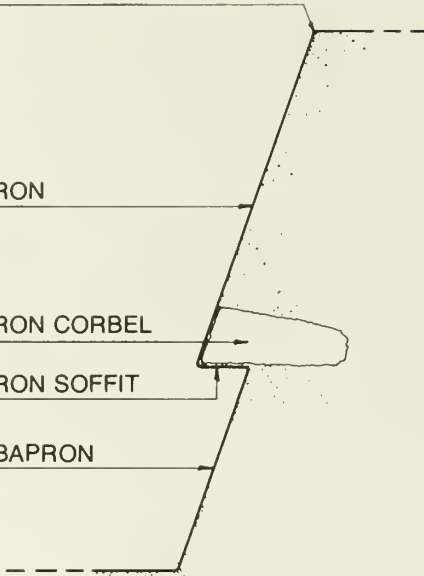


Figure 2

ARCH

Figure 3

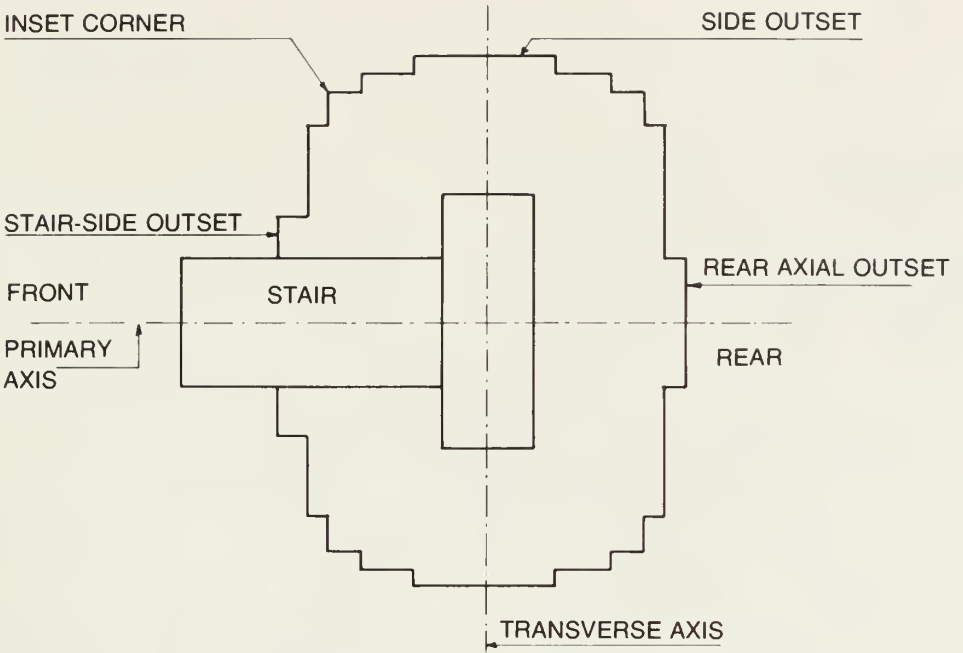


Figure 4

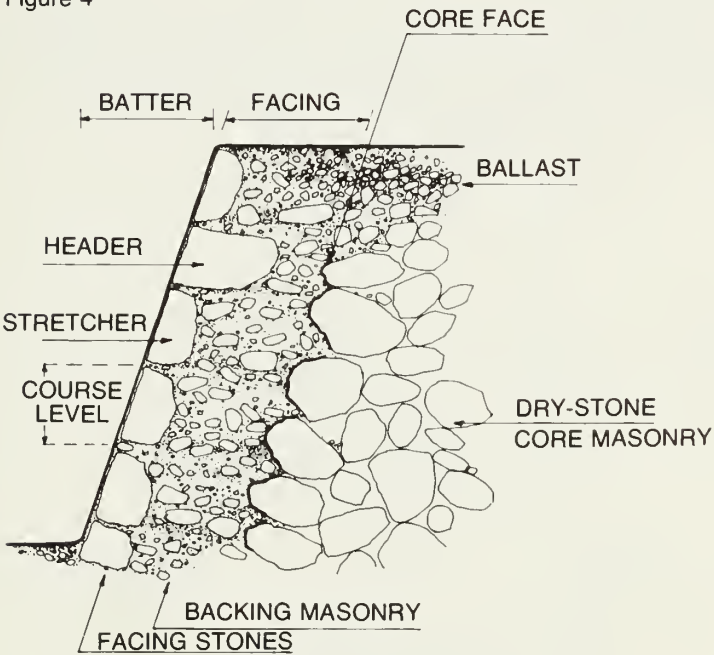


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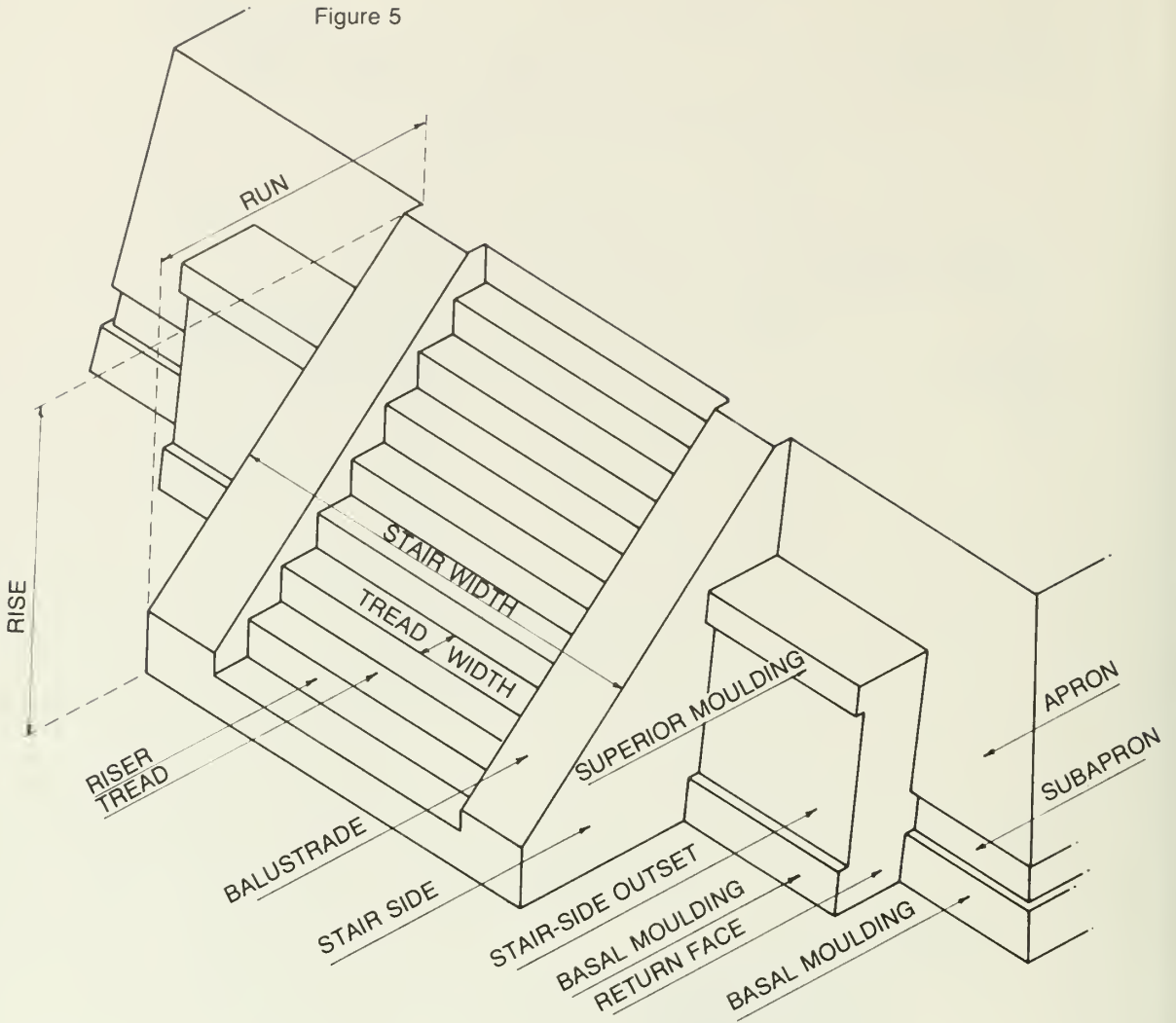


Figure 6

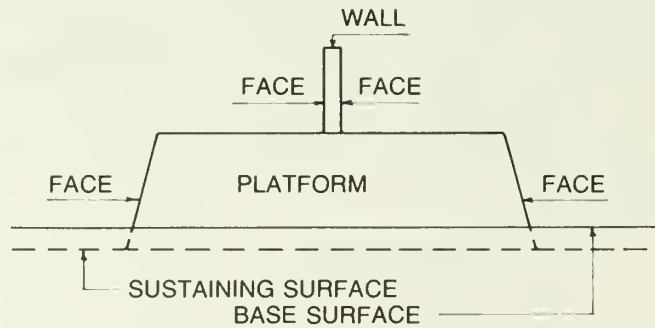


Figure 7

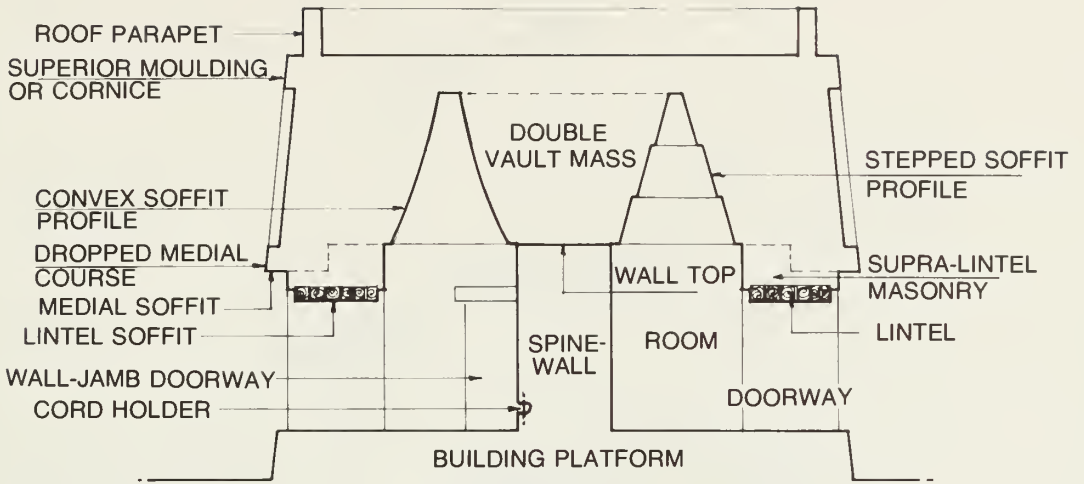


Figure 8

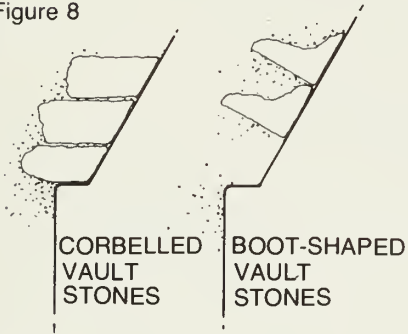


Figure 9

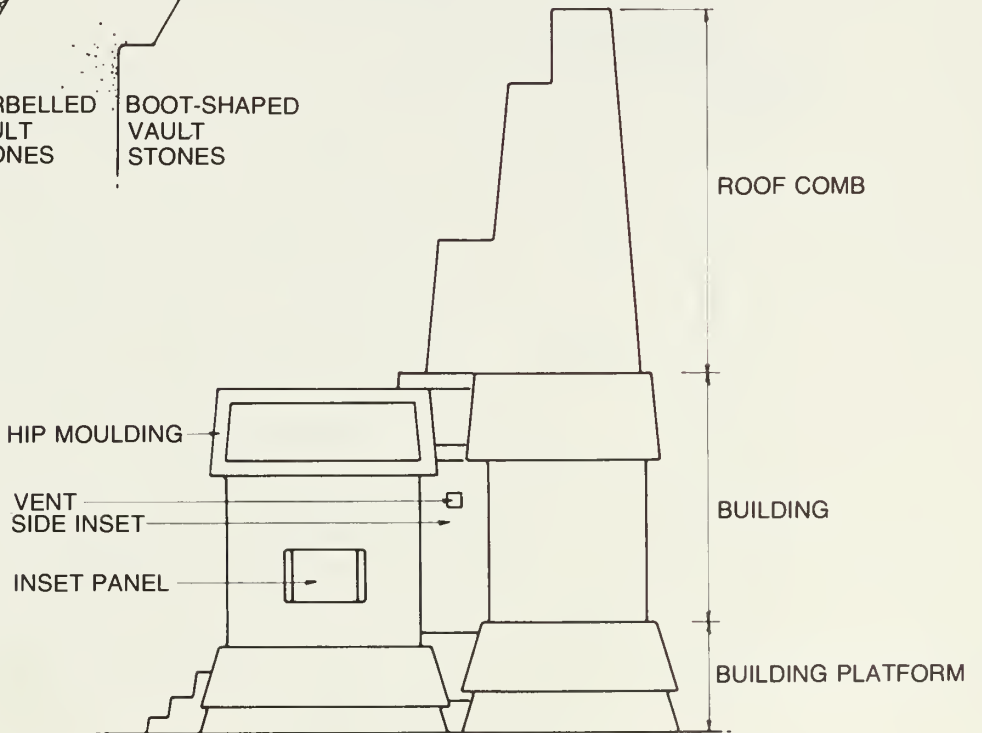


Figure 10

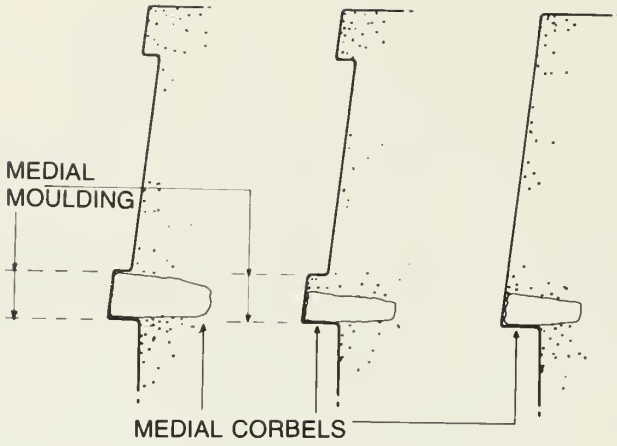
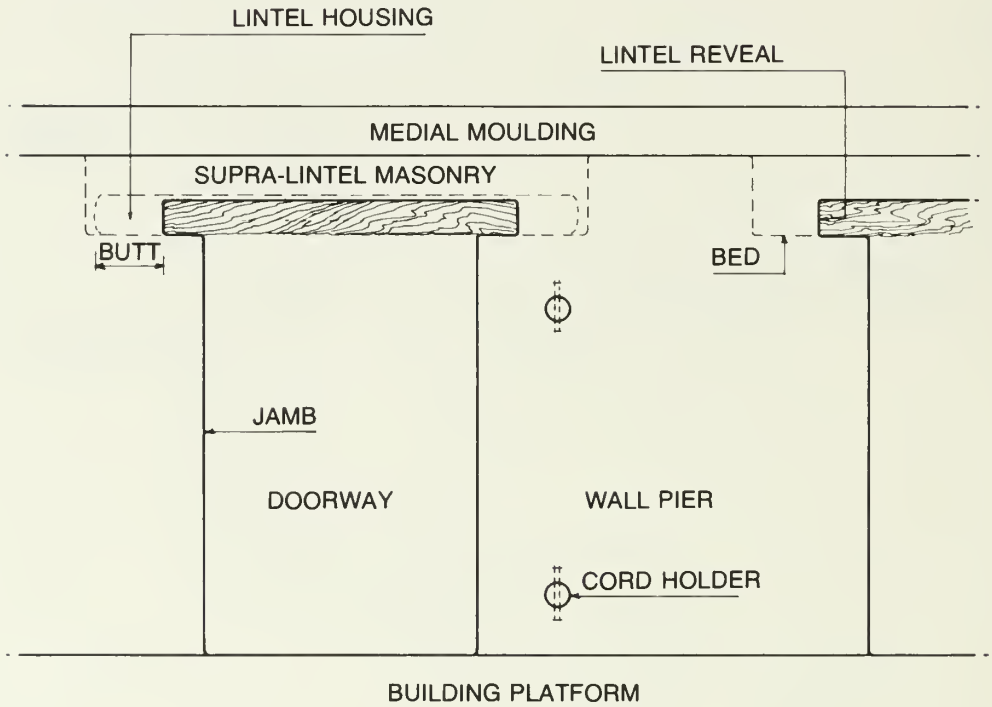


Figure 11



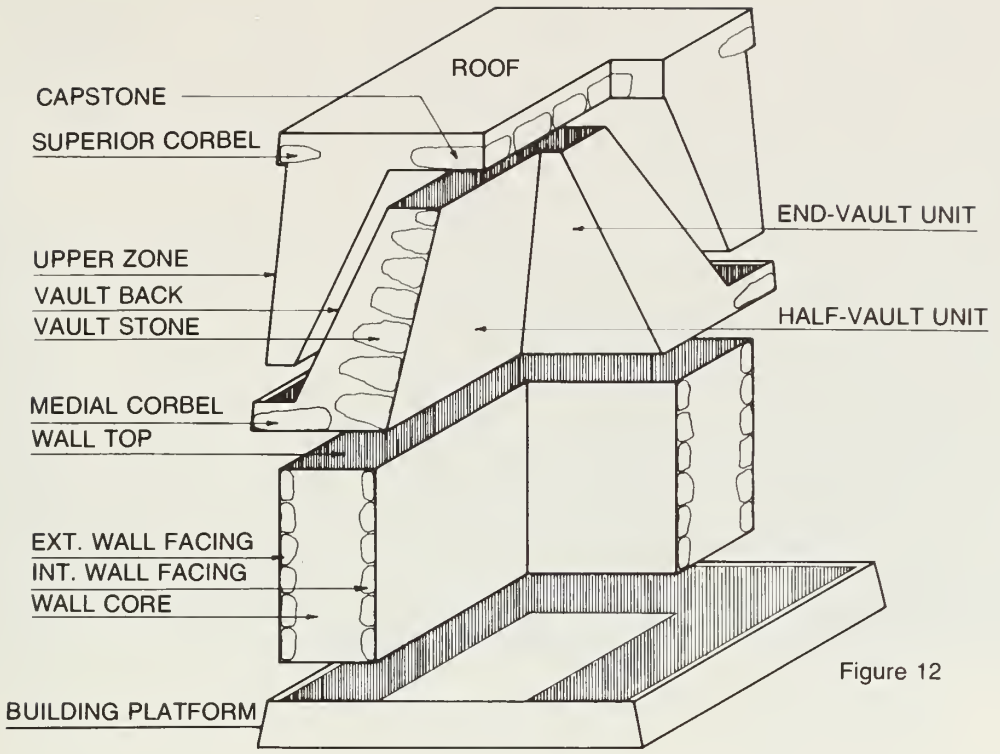


Figure 12

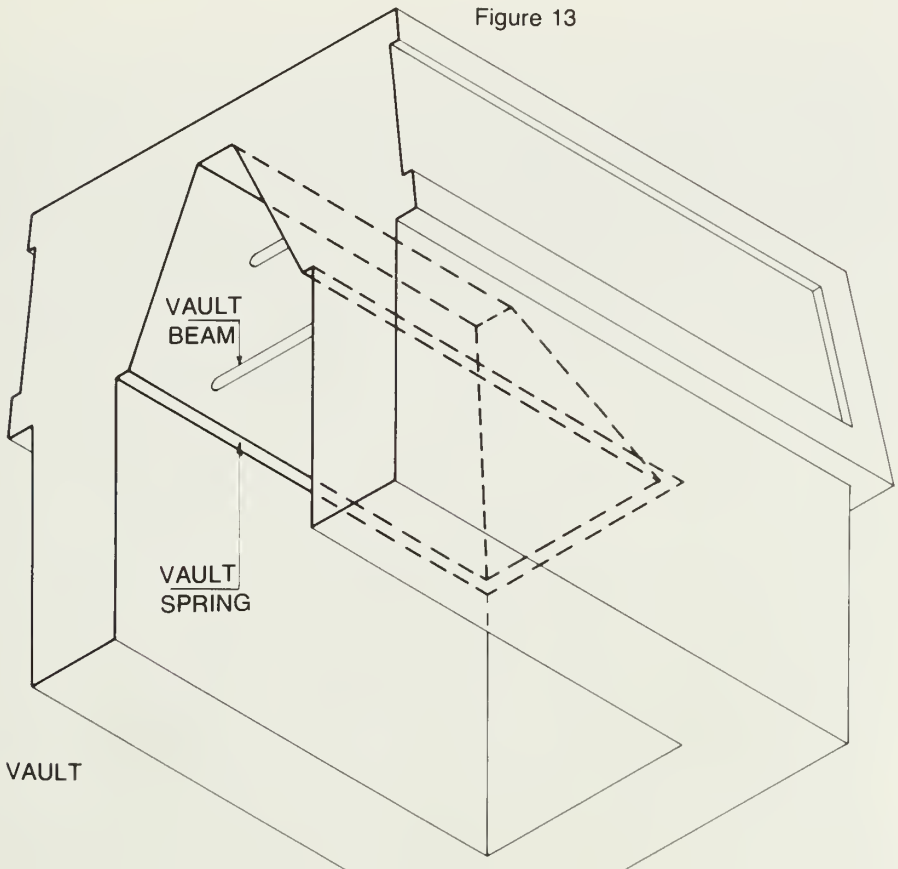


Figure 13



Plate 1 Section through a stair face and backing masonry, showing a core face that duplicates the form of the façade.

Plate 2 Beneath the core of later construction, the section reveals a floor with accompanying ballast that rests atop a subfloor. The subfloor is underlain by a core face that does not duplicate the exterior face of the structure; distinct course levels are visible in the core face.





Plate 3 Stair-side outlets with superior moulding, or cornice, and basal moulding (visible on the upper outlet). In front of the lower outlet are the remains of a secondary outlet.

Plate 4 An interior doorway flanked by cord holders that are slightly rounded. The lower holder retains a stone pin, set diagonally in the opening.





Plate 5 Doorways, many of them sealed by secondary units of masonry. Between the doorways are wall piers almost identical in width to the entryways themselves.

Plate 6 A stair block of standard size graces the lower stair of this structure; the upper stair boasts one of the more massive examples of a stair block. The lower block resembles the stair-side outsets in the foreground in that it possesses both a cornice or superior moulding and façade-sculpture adornment.



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