

## B3.1A House Construction

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### B3.1 Subphase A—House Construction

Due to the earlier construction activity in this location, there were some limitations within which Building 3 could have been constructed. The ground on which Building 3 was set was covered with uniformly black midden, through which the walls of an earlier building in the north and south could be seen protruding (see Figure 6.1). As a result, the east and west walls of Building 3, parts of the north and south walls, the floors, and some features were constructed on midden (see the implications of this in Chapter 6, “The Foundation Ground for Building”). The south end of the midden was seen immediately below the eastern part of the south perimeter wall (F.1006) (see Figure 4.1). On the west side of Building 3, the midden seemed to blend with another (and probably later) such deposit in Space 85. The eastern edge of the midden was directly below the east wall (F.762), abutting red-clay packing that lay below the double east wall (F.1023). On the northern side of Building 3, we could not establish the limit of the midden.

The underlying midden itself mostly comprised charcoal and ash with large quantities of animal bone and obsidian fragments in a dark brown soil matrix. In some areas, the midden soil served as packing for the earliest features of Building 3, such as the northwest platform (F.1008). A strip of the midden soil (8585, 8586, 8589) measuring 40–50 cm wide and 20–30 cm deep was excavated along the four walls of Building 3 in order to completely expose the footing of the walls. These excavations showed that along the west wall, the midden was unusually rich in bone, stone, and shell remains. In the central part of the north wall, the midden was almost completely sterile, comprising very compact, black soil. The very first floor was placed directly on the midden. The first features built on it were the oven in the southwest corner (F.785), a hearth in the middle of the south area (F.778), and a bench in southeast corner (F.792).

The north and south perimeter walls of Building 3 were constructed partially on earlier walls. The house posts, which supported all walls, were inserted in the midden along the walls. Most likely, a freestanding post in the southeast of Building 3 served as an entry ladder. The large access hole or doorway (F.633) and the small access hole (F.768), both in the east wall, were established as the wall was erected.

The terrain below the house sloped down toward the north. The lowest point of the north wall (at its eastern end) was by far the lowest point of the whole building, excluding the postholes. While the rows of bricks were leveled in the upper portions of the walls, the lower courses of bricks were slumping (see Figures 6.2–6.5). The north wall itself, as well as the bottom course of bricks of the east and west walls, sloped down

from their margins toward their midpoint. Unlike the other walls of Building 3, the south wall did not show much slumping (see discussion of slumping in Chapter 6, “Wall Mechanics” section).

### *Bonding and Wall Foundation Deposits*

In all four walls of Building 3, three horizontal sections of different bricks and mortars, called “lifts” were observed, each of three to four courses of bricks (see Figures 6.2–6.5). Bonding occurred in some wall corners in the second course of bricks (see Figure 4.17). Bonding did not occur in every course of bricks but was observed in several courses. In the north wall (F.174), for example, the second course of bricks was bonded with the east wall bricks (F.762) in whose mortar two potsherds were found.

Another type of bonding was found at the meeting point of the south wall of Building 3, which rested on the earlier wall. A longitudinal channel was prepared in the top surface of the earlier wall while Building 3 south wall was placed to fit the channel.

The south perimeter wall (F.763) was a component of a double wall; its partner wall consisted of two short walls, F.1006 and F.1026, which made up one long wall parallel and just south of wall F.763. This situation was not apparent until the removal of F.763. The two lowest courses of bricks in the long wall bonded with wall F.1023. These three walls were built at the same time, overlying an earlier wall (F.1029), which served as the footing for the double walls (F.763, F.1006, F.1026) in the south of Building 3. The earlier wall (F.1029) had been truncated down to only four courses of bricks, which themselves were placed on even earlier midden deposits. After we removed F.763, it became apparent that Space 89 was bordered on the north side by a wall 2.5 m long (F.1006). Wall F.1026, which measured at least 3.0 m (but more likely had a total length of ca. 6.3 m) enclosed Spaces 88 and 87 on their north. It is not apparent why these contemporaneous walls (F.1006 and F.1026) were built as separate features and not as a continuous wall. One possibility is that the Neolithic builders achieved a stability with two shorter walls that was not attainable with single longer wall. The bricks in the two walls are also somewhat different, whereas the mortars are made of the same midden deposits in both walls.

In the southeast corner of the east perimeter wall (F.762), the first course of the east wall stopped at the beginning of the first course of the south wall, which extended eastward and under bricks that belongs to its pair-wall (F.1023) to its east. The east wall bricks in the second course from the bottom extended under the bricks of the south wall (F.763). All the bricks in this particular area had been very carefully selected and differ from other wall bricks. They were strong, well compacted, and had sharp edges and regular corners. They were of smaller size, ranging from 0.30 to 0.40 m in length.

Artifacts seemed to have been deliberately placed within the east wall, which had an unusually thick layer of mortar between F.762 and its pair-wall, F.1023 (0.12–0.15 m). Within this mortar, we found a 4 × 2.5 cm lump of red pigment in which was embedded a stone tool that had possibly been used in grinding pigments (8670). Twenty centimeters deeper in the same deposit, a bone point was found. In addition, fragmented clay balls were discovered under the bottom bricks at the north and south ends of the east wall, and in the middle of the wall, while coprolites were uncovered at its southern end (8679.S3).

During the excavation, the relationship of the two east pair-walls (F.762 and F.1023) remained somewhat unclear, mainly because the building to which F.1023 belonged was unexposed. It was only when F.762 was excavated that the wall F.1023 could be seen. F.1023 was equal in length to its pair (F.762) but much narrower—only 0.28–0.30 m wide—making it one of the narrower perimeter walls at Çatalhöyük. The base of wall F.1023 comprised a packing layer (ca. 0.10 m thick) of compacted beige-orangish clay mixed with midden. This wall base was unusual in that all other walls in the area were built directly on top of earlier walls or on midden deposits. The thick packing between the two walls comprised brown-orange soil (8652) and contained the above-mentioned lump of red pigment.

The west wall bonded with the south wall F.763 with a peculiar junction. A depression ca. 10 cm deep in the south wall brick allowed it to be keyed with a west wall brick that had a protrusion that fit into the depression. Clay balls were found under the bottom brick course at both ends of the wall, as well as in the middle of the wall.

Chapter 6 provides detailed descriptions of the bricks and mortars used in the construction of the walls, as well as a more detailed analysis of the walls themselves and issues such as construction material procurement and maintenance.

## *Wall Features*

The importance of timber posts at Çatalhöyük and their archaeological manifestations are discussed in Chapter 6 (“Posts” section). Two post-retrieval pits, F.766 and F.773, on the north perimeter wall indicated the location of posts (Table 5.2). Posthole F.766 was aligned with the north–south border between the north-central platform (F.162) and the storage area in northwest corner of Building 3. The post measured 0.17 m in diameter, and the hole in which it was set had been lined with a 1-cm-thick mortar layer from the bottom up to 30 cm above its bottom on the west, north, and east sides of the pit (8216, 8441). Chunks of white plaster clay found packed in the hole were presumably used as packing around the post. In Phase B3.1, the post was abutting the north wall, but from Phase B3.2 onward, bench F.772 and interior wall F.160 were integrated into this post.

Against the north wall, post-scars indicated the position of another post (F.773) cutting through the floors of the north-central platform (F.162), which combined a smaller posthole within a larger post retrieval pit. The smaller pit (8400) represented the wooden post in a shape of a split tree-trunk that measured 0.15 m north–south  $\times$  0.07 m east–west. Its base, which reached below the earliest house floor, was packed with plaster clay so that a clear impression of the post set in the clay could be seen.

In the south perimeter wall, post-scars indicated the position of a post (F.744) that measured 0.19 m in diameter, with its bottom depth at least 30 cm below the floor surface (8152). A lining of plaster clay evened out the interior surface of the posthole. The upper portion of the posthole was packed with several fist-size balls made of brickly clay; these functioned as packing around the wooden post (8246). This same post was incorporated in the later interior wall F.161 (Phase B3.4A).

Post F.750 was the single post on the west side of the building (Figure 5.5). It was located in the middle of the west wall but was not a permanent feature, existing only from Phase B3.1A to B3.2, after which it was removed and replaced with a storage basket (6642; see Figure 2.21) in Phase B3.3. Plaster scars on the wall were vestiges of a plastered post and corresponded in size to a wood post whose diameter measured 0.10 m at the base of the wall but widened to 0.40 m at 0.35 m from the base. The brown, brickly clay fill of the posthole (F.750) was mixed with large fragments of thick wall plaster, which seemed to have slipped from their original place on the west wall. The fill of F.750 was thus very similar to the fill of the post-retrieval pit F.602 next to the east wall. An additional indication of the presence of post F.750 was the existence of a depression in

the midden below Building 3 where the base of the post would have been. In an attempt to make its base harder, the depression was packed with hard, burned construction material. Thus, at the very beginning of the life history of Building 3, F.750 was a plastered post that was elaborated by plaster molding. In the later Phase B3.3, this feature was truncated and leveled off with compacted clay (8305), including the deposits called “Neolithic concrete” (8413).

In the east perimeter wall, two large posts, F.602 and F.168, were symmetrically positioned on the east wall flanking the centrally located platform, F.170. The northern post of the pair (F.602) was aligned with the original boundary of the two platforms, F.173 and F.170. The actual posthole inside the post-retrieval pit F.602 measured 0.17 m north–south  $\times$  0.09 m east–west; it represents the only example of a post with a pointed base. The depth of the post was ca. 0.30 m below the earliest and 0.80 m below the top house floors. Its fill included amorphous lumps of molding plaster that had been jammed in (see Figure 4.13). The post inside the southern post-retrieval pit, F.168, would have been aligned with the original boundary of the two platforms F.170 and F.167. The actual posthole was 0.20 m in diameter, and it reached a similar depth to that of F.602.

Other features in the east perimeter wall included an access hole or doorway (F.633) in its northern corner and a crawl hole (F.768) at its southern end, both of which were created as the wall was constructed.

Wall opening F.633 ([Figure 5.6](#)) also provided access between Building 3 and the building to its east (Space 41) during Phase B3.1 and was most likely blocked during the rebuilding of Phase B3.2. It was first recognized as the fill of a large cut with a sharp top break, steeply sloping sides, and a flat base. In 2002, when the plaster from the interior face of the east wall had been removed and all the floors in Space 201 had been excavated, it became clear that this feature was in fact a blocked opening. It measured 1.05 m north–south  $\times$  0.25–0.37 m east–west, and was preserved to a height of only 0.42–0.48 m due to the truncation of its top portion during the process of house abandonment. Wall opening F.633 was blocked by brick and mortar of the same kind as that used in the construction of the east wall, indicating that the blocking was introduced fairly early in the history of the house. The crumbly clay that was used in the blocking of F.633, alongside the brick and mortar, contained small-sized animal bones that are typical for redeposited fill, but it also included one complete bone point.

The bottom course of the east perimeter wall was interrupted in the area of the wall opening, F.633 (see Figure 6.3). Directly under the opening, the footing brick was

missing and replaced with a brick that was interpreted as a threshold or doorsill that was placed directly on the underlying midden, but actually at the height of the second course of east wall bricks (Figure 5.7). This was achieved by placing the doorsill brick on a pile of highly compacted midden deposits (8665). The doorsill brick was covered with white clay, and there was some indication that the entire doorframe had been plastered. Immediately under the earliest floor plaster coat of the doorsill, a layer of packing 0.05 m thick was excavated (8691), which included 0.06-m-long sandstone slab found at the bottom of the packing. Over time, four additional plaster coats were added (8689), each with a packing layer of sandy clay measuring 0.05–0.01 m thick. On each floor plaster surface, a thick black, greasy layer of deposits had been formed by foot traffic. The middle part of the step—which was the most walked on—had no surviving plaster. Instead, at this point there was a series of gray and black floor layers indicating where the house inhabitants had been stepping as they moved in and out of Building 3.

The plaster that covered the doorframe continued over to the nearby post (F.602) on the inside of Building 3, indicating that the two features had been installed and renovated at the same time. Traces of plaster that must have once covered the entire doorway were preserved along the sides of the horizontal “sill” and along the surviving vertical sides of the opening. The plaster that was preserved in the bottom corners of the doorframe comprised lumpy, greenish, greasy clay, which we find elsewhere on the site used for wall plaster when applied as a single thick layer.

There is the possibility that a horizontal wooden log, which would have been placed at the level of the doorsill, was included in the construction of F.633 (Figure 5.7). The ambiguous evidence of the beam is a short tunnel-like feature across F.633, coinciding with an animal burrow that was filled with reddish brown and gray soil with salts and phytoliths (6277), in which were found an obsidian tool (6277.X1), two bone tools, one of which is a complete point (6277.X2), and a sheep/goat tooth.

Judging by the shape that was left in the surrounding matrix at the northern end of F.633, a vertical wooden post, measuring 0.20 m north–south × 0.34 m east–west, and 0.60 m high, had been erected. The post had a sharp-edged quadrangular cross section and rested vertically on a 0.02-m-thick layer of whitish clay that was a part of the earliest floor coat in the feature. Under this layer, the base of the posthole was made of a fine layer of mud brick resting on the midden under Building 3. The post must have been taken out immediately before the access hole was blocked in Phase B3.2, and its hollow was filled in (8633) with sterile, very compact brown-reddish bricky clay.

Two features that are shared by both pair-walls F.762 and F.1023 to the east are an opening (F.1027) in the central part of wall F.1023, and the doorway (F.633) in the north part of wall F.762. The two openings, F.633 and F.1027, were very similar in size and shape. Opening F.1027 measured 0.86 m north–south × 0.28 m east–west and was 0.46 m high (Figure 5.8). The northern edge of F.1027 was aligned with the large plastered post (F.602) on the inside of Building 3. The packing that was used to fill in F.1027 comprised two parts. The northern part (8671) had a basal layer of solid, clean clay (0.25 m thick), which rested on the same midden deposits as Building 3 and was overlain by a compact clay packing with plaster fragments and chunks of mortar. The southern part (8688) of the packing of F.1027 comprised five courses of mud brick and mortar. The mud bricks (0.06–0.08 m thick) were made of yellow-beige sandy clay, while the mortar layers (0.02–0.04 m thick) were made of gray silty clay. At the bottom of the packing, two clay balls were found. The function of F.1027 is uncertain; it may have represented a large niche or an earlier access hole that had been blocked before or when F.762 was constructed, in which case those features would have belonged to another and an earlier building. Since there was evidence from their bonding that the two walls were constructed at the same time, this scenario is unlikely. Alternatively, it is possible that F.1027 was part of a special construction between the walls, possibly linked to the roof construction which at some point was abandoned and replaced with packing soil.

Wall opening F.768 was built into the southern end of the east wall (8662, 8335). The opening is square in plan (0.55 × 0.55 m) and was lined with wall plaster that began at the height of the house floor and stretched upward (8664) (Figure 5.9). Several plaster floor coats covered the sides and the base of the opening. Wall F.1023, belonging to the adjacent house to the east, served to block the opening in the later phase of the house. Wall opening F.768 functioned as an access hole between Building 3 and the adjacent house, and it was contemporary with doorway F.633.

## *Wall Plaster*

All four walls and the later interior walls of Building 3 were plastered with multiple layers of white clay (see Chapter 6; also Figure 4.16. The number of coats varied, as did their state of preservation. The north, east, and south perimeter walls had thicker layers of plaster (Figure 5.10). Those on the north and south walls were better preserved than those on the east wall. The interior faces of Building 3 walls were plastered after their completion with a base coat made of beige clay, followed by a white clay plaster coat and, over time, by numerous other coats in pairs (beige and white). Initially, the plaster was white, but this changed with time when particular walls or their sections were painted with red and black pigment (see Chapter 23). Some plaster coats were covered with black soot, not at the base of the wall but starting at ca. 0.60 m (measured from the earliest floor) on all four walls. For instance, on the north wall, which was most distant from the fire sources in the building, soot occurred along the entire wall in Phase B3.4A, but only prior to the occurrence of painting on the wall. In the southwest corner where multiple ovens were situated, we found the greatest concentration of soot, especially on the south wall where it was also visible in the post-scar F.774.

Both interior walls F.160 and F.161 contained multiple plaster coats. Wall F.160, located by the north-central platform F.162, had a sequence of painted plaster layers on its eastern face (Phase B3.4) contemporary with the last burials on platform F.162; this was the best preserved such plaster in the BACH Area. The initial sequence of white clay plaster coats was followed by the sequences of painted plaster; minimally two white plaster layers covered the painted coats. The first sequence of painted plaster comprised three bright red-orange (2.5YR 7/6) layers of sandy loam with organic inclusions. The second sequence was executed in darker red color (10YR 5/6), and the third, which belonged to B3.4B, was of the same red-orange shade as the first one. At least two white plaster coats covered the red painted plaster, the outermost of which was mainly present in the upper parts of the preserved wall as a 3-mm layer of white plaster.

The eastern face of F.161 had horizontal ridges built up over time as irregularities in the plaster (Figure 5.11). It is a common occurrence at Çatalhöyük houses that the surfaces of the wall plaster were (perhaps intentionally) rippled and uneven, even though the plastering was carefully carried out (Hodder 2006a).

The north perimeter wall was plastered over numerous times with white coats, several of which were painted with red pigment (3523). The painted portion of the north wall

covered an area 3.4 m long, stretching from interior wall F.160 to the northeast corner (8203, 8590). This span coincided with the north-central platform F.162 and the northeast corner platform F.173. However, it was impossible to establish whether the painted panel on the north wall continued onto the east wall, as is known from the “landscape painting” in Shrine VII.14 (Mellaart 1967:133, Figures 50, 60). The painted layers on this wall matched those on F.160 (see above); two different shades of red pigment were observed on this wall, a lighter red color (3522.S2) and darker red shade (3522.S1). It was not possible to establish with any certainty whether the two shades of red belonged to the same plaster coat or whether they came from two different plaster coats. Long exposure and weathering of the plaster made it too fragile to be excavated in layers, but we were quite certain that painted coats of plaster were applied in a series on this wall. The lower portion of the wall showed better preservation of painted plaster, due to the damper environment and greater thickness of the layers in this area. They were made of greasy gray clay of the same matrix as the plaster layers scraped off the Building 3 walls during the building closure (see Phase B3.5A).

The plaster on the south perimeter wall showed horizontal ridges in the lower portion of the wall, especially in the western half and running across post F.774. The ridges seemed to be associated with a number of clay moldings, whose clearer definition was prevented by their partial truncation. These plaster wall features would have been protruding from the wall plaster, representing fragments of wall features known from other buildings at the site as “wall-hooks” (see Mellaart 1967). All these wall “installations” would have been removed by truncation as the building went through its process of closure (see Phase B3.5A). At least one-third of over 100 plaster coats on this wall were blackened by soot (8593).

The east perimeter wall plaster coats were poorly preserved, being drier and flakier than the plaster on the other walls, especially in the painted section of the wall. It was apparent, however, that the wall had been coated numerous times with white plaster, often with a visible base layer of homogeneous brown packing. Some coats in the wall segment above the central-east platform F.170 were painted. This painted wall area was enclosed with two large posts (F.602 and F.168), which would have been framing the wall painting. Due to poor preservation, it was impossible to describe the wall painting further than to say that traces of geometric and possibly figurative designs were evident. An interesting example of painted plaster from the wall was brought to light from the post-retrieval pit F.168, in which several fragments that measured ca. 25 ×35 cm were found neatly stacked face down. These fragments had been well preserved in the moist

atmosphere of the deep pit but deteriorated soon after they were brought out into the dry and hot atmosphere, when the painted surface oxidized and disappeared. A series of triangles measuring  $3-4 \times 2-2.5$  cm were painted black on a buff-color background.

The west perimeter wall of Building 3 was treated in a noticeably different way. It was also plastered with white clay, but these coats were far fewer than on the other walls of Building 3. Moreover, the wall had no painted surfaces or plastered ridges. This could be the consequence of the short exposure of the plastered wall face before it was blocked (at least in its lower portion) by other features that adhered to it (bench/wall F.635 and F.1000). The white clay plastered face of the west wall was preserved in places, especially where it was attached to the earliest house floor.

### B3.1 Subphase A: Floor and Features

The general internal layout of Building 3 was constructed during this early phase (Figures 5.3,5.4). This included the following features.

- Construction of six platforms:
  - Northeast corner: F.173
  - North-central area: F.162
  - Northwest corner: F.1008, which extended southward abutting F.169
  - Southwest corner: F.169
  - Eastern-central area: F.170
  - Entry platform, southeast corner: F.167 .
- Construction of oven F.1011 on platform F.169
- Construction of hearth F.778 on the earliest floor directly on the midden before the first house floor
- Construction of entry bench F.1010 in the southeast corner directly on the midden before the first house floor
- Construction of bench F.792 abutting the south edge of F.170 directly on the midden before the first house floor

The initial floor in Building 3 was built as a continuous layer over the entire house, starting on platforms F.162, F.173, and F.170 and flowing southward toward the central house floor. From the house center, the floor climbed up platform F.169 and turned east toward the south end of the house. The floor in the western part of the building was built as a continuous floor from north to south, joining with the other floor plaster in the center and the southwest platform F.169. In this phase, all the house floors were coated with white clay plaster. However, in the South-and-West Zone, these “clean” (white) plaster floors were transformed into “dirty” floors through use. After the initial floor construction, the floors were recoated at different rates, or so it seemed as we excavated and recognized them (see details in Table 5.2).

The platforms at the beginning of the building’s life history were only slightly elevated in comparison with the central house floor. Their edges looked more like floor-

lips than the platform edges that we know from later phases. The house floor at the ladder entry area was originally constructed as a flat surface, but later remodeling modified it into a two-step and finally three-step platform.

## *South-and-West Zone*

Judging by the features, types of activity, and occupation debris on the house floors, most, if not all, domestic life took place in the South-and-West Zone of Building 3.

The floor in the northwest corner of Building 3 was so much higher in elevation than any other floor area in the house that it was designated as “platform-like” (F.1008), although it did not have any other elements that could qualify it as a platform. Its somewhat irregular shape was emphasized by its long, curved eastern edge, which started at the north wall by post F.776 and continued southward to the middle of the west wall. The midden deposits under F.1008 were higher in elevation, layered in large lenses of brown-orange bricky clay, and highly compacted. There is no apparent reason for building up the floor in the northwest corner of Building 3 beyond the possibility that the midden deposits were deliberately elevated and hardened in preparation for the storage features that were to be built later in this area (see Phase B3.1B). The clay used in the floor manufacture in this same area contained an abundance of tiny obsidian chips, one interpretation of which is that these were meant to prevent rodents from burrowing into an area of floor that was dedicated to food storage.

The western edge of the southwest platform F.169 was not well defined but blended with the house floor in the southwest corner. This arrangement continued until Phase B3.4. The packing (8515) of the earliest floor (11) of this platform included redeposited oven fragments that must have come from a feature that was not a part of Building 3. The northern edge of the platform was built as a continuation of the central floor of Building 3. The top surface of platform F.169 was slightly concave in this phase, whereas in later phases it was flattened as more packing and plaster coats were added to the area.

Oven F.1011 (8563, 8554) was the earliest such feature in Building 3. Built directly on midden deposits that were somewhat elevated, the large, oval-shaped oven was attached to the west and south walls of Building 3, slightly cut into the west wall ([Figures 5.12, 5.13](#)). It measured 0.70 m north–south × 0.50 m east–west with its opening on the north side. The oven rim, measuring 0.10–0.12 m thick, was made of light brown bricky clay, while the scorched oven floor was of well-compacted clay. The oven packing below this floor contained several burned stones 4–5 cm in diameter as well as black and red burned clay balls (8565). These artifacts were incorporated both to reinforce the oven floor and to act as heat enhancers. The evidence for the size and shape of the oven superstructure was fragmentary. Its walls and roof were severely truncated during the

subsequent subphase (B3.1B), when a new wall/bench (F.635) and a new oven (F.785 with F.789) were built immediately above. There are minimally two possible reconstructions of the earliest oven. It could have been the same shape as that of F.360 in Building 1 (Cessford 2007b:458, Figure 12.38), in which case its walls would have been 50–60 cm high with no top. The second and more likely reconstruction, based on the thickness of the oven rim, is that it had a domed roof that was flattened at the top, as has been suggested for the later oven in Building 3, F.785 (see Phases B3.1B, B3.1C).

Along the south wall of Building 3 were located the ladder entry and activities centered on hearths and food preparation. The size and shape of this activity area was always linked to that of the southwest platform (F.169) and the entry bench (F.1010). In the early phase of the building, this area had a squarish plan, extending from southwest platform F.169 on the west side to entry bench F.1010 on the east side, and to bench F.792 in the northeast. It was connected to the Central Floor Zone by a continuous floor; the only partition between these two areas was a shallow floor-lip running in an east–west direction.

This area appeared to have had more numerous floor plaster coats applied than other sections of this zone. Furthermore, the flooring was heavily puddled and reworked, possibly as a result of frequent trampling and from roof water dripping. Reworking was associated with numerous cuts of small diameter, such as F.751, which were interpreted as ladder emplacements (Figure 5.14). The ladder post in the entry area was maintained from this phase onward, with one or two instances of its relocation (e.g., F.755, Phase B3.4A). Feature 751 comprised a circular cut, 0.25 × 0.35 m, through (and/or incorporated into) the west edge of entry platform F.637/167 and entry bench F.1010. The fill of this cut contained fragments of brick building material, pieces of charcoal at the very bottom, and grains of salt/gypsum (6340, 6684).

The earliest hearth in Building 3, F.778-A, was located in this same activity area at the southern end of the house. Round in plan with a diameter of 0.50 m, it was placed within the earliest floor (15), and was renewed on the next floor (14) (Figure 5.15). The hearth's base and floor comprised loose, sandy soil, which turned red, yellow, and brown from exposure to fire. Its rim, however, preserved traces of the original white clay surface. Inclusions of ash, charcoal, scorched clay, obsidian chips, small pebbles, and fragments of bone and shell were detected in the clay. The earliest white plaster rim was constructed as a continuation of the surrounding next floor up (13) (8531). When excavators removed the floor of the hearth (8504), and its rim and base (8539), it was revealed that the feature was constructed directly on the midden beneath the building and

that the surrounding floors were connected to its base. A shallow depression was visible in the midden where the hearth base had been located, making it one of the earliest features constructed in the house.

In the thick, brownish packing of the earliest floor in the southeast corner of Building 3, we excavated a group of artifacts neatly arranged in a matrix of ash and charcoal-rich soil. The group consisted of two complete obsidian bifaces (8570.S6), the longer, narrower one pointing northward, and the shorter wider one pointing southward ([Figure 5.16](#); see also Figure 4.10; Chapter 19). The bifaces were mixed with numerous small pig bones. No cut was visible in the floor where the deposit was found. This suggests that it was placed there before the house floor was laid out, and it has thus been interpreted as a foundation deposit (Chapter 4).

Entry bench F.1010 and entry platform F.167 dominated the southeast corner of Building 3. The massive feature F.1010 (0.70 m north–south × 0.60 m east–west) served as a step-platform for entry into the house from the roof ([Figure 5.17](#)). Attached to the south wall of Building 3, from which it extended northward, the entry area was made of numerous layers of clay and packing that were located directly on the midden below Building 3. The construction sequence of the bench was the following: a ca. 10-cm-thick layer of sandy brown clay was set on the midden surface, followed by thick layers of dark brown and light gray packing, which were also used in the ladder emplacement holes. The compact, brown sandy clay packing was found only around and inside bench F.1010, and around the later (B3.1C) nearby obsidian cache (F.799). Layers of white plaster clay then overlay the packing. The plaster of the earliest house floor was built around the bench and slightly rising up its sides. In the beginning of the BACH excavation, F.1010 was regarded as a part of the larger platform F.167. As the excavation progressed, however, it became clear that in the early phases of Building 3, they were two independent but closely related features.

The original shape and size of F.1010 are not known, as its western section had been truncated during the closure of the house. It is likely, however, that the bench extended farther westward for at least ca. 0.20 m. During the closure of Building 3, the truncated portion was replaced by a set of large animal bones—mainly cattle scapulae—which were placed intentionally and with care (see more in discussion of Phase B3.5A, below). Feature 1010 was also very damaged by a north–south crack that ran through the middle of the feature, causing its western edge to slump down. Animals—presumably gophers—bored a hole inside this crack and filled it with black soil consisting almost entirely of

charcoal from the upper portions of Space 89, bringing into it a fragmented but very expressive miniature figurine (6260) (see Chapter 17; Figure 17.2).

Entry platform F.167 was constructed between bench F.1010 and the east wall of Building 3. Initially the entry platform was just an extension of the regular house floor that was bounded by bench F.1010 in the west and the plastered post (F.168) in the north, as well as the south and east walls of Building 3. In later phases, the floor area was changed considerably by the construction of a step platform that incorporated bench F.1010. On its earliest floor (30), we found a cluster of 29 mini clay balls (8468.X1–X4). Twenty-six of them were packed in a small area, while the remaining three were lying some distance away (32 cm and 4 cm southward, 15 cm southeast) (see Chapter 18; Figure 18.7).

### *Central Floor Zone*

Throughout the life history of Building 3, the Central Floor Zone remained unchanged in shape and size. The most noticeable characteristic of this space was its elevation, which was considerably lower than the surrounding platforms (see Figure 4.2). The only other house area at the same elevation was the southern end. During Phase B3.1A, no features appear in the Central Floor Zone. However, numerous floor layers that accumulated over this time period, and the wear they suffered, provide evidence of the high level of activity and intensity of use of this area. Immediately on top of the earliest floor (19), a layer of packing 0.05–0.06 m thick included a solid deposit of salt, which may represent the remains of matting that was spread on the earliest house floor (see also Cessford 2007b, for a similar situation in Building 5). Floor 18 was highly damaged just north of the southwest platform F.167, indicating that this area had the highest level of activity.

In Phase B3.1A, the floors in the Central Floor Zone were constructed to extend onto a discrete threshold between it and the activity area at the southern end of Building 3. The threshold was constructed from the same floor packing as the Central Floor Zone but was made thicker in this area. The packing was molded into a low threshold and covered by a white plaster coat. Through time, this feature became more clearly defined, and from Phase B3.3 we recognized it as F.645. A broad band of brown packing that belonged to the Central Floor Zone was molded up the edges of the platforms F.162, F.170, and F.169 but stopped before their tops.

### *Northeast Zone*

This zone is dominated by the three large platforms (F.162, F.173, F.170) positioned along the north and east walls of Building 3. Here, as in other parts of the building, the very first floor (11) on all three platforms lay directly on the midden underlying Building 3. Extensive islands of compact salt lay between the packing of the floors and the midden, possibly indicating a layer of organic material such as matting made of reeds or loose reeds, placed in this area prior to establishing the earliest floors. The platforms comprised flat, smooth white plaster surfaces that in Phase B3.1A had no other features on or cut into them.

The north-central platform (F.162) was the most prominent platform in Building 3. Its earliest floor and packing layer dipped down against the north wall. Along the eastern edge of the northeast platform (F.173), coinciding with the size and location of the doorway F.633, the clay packing was mixed with fragmented rock and hardened with brittle clay fragments that had a strength similar to fragmented rock. Apparently, high foot-traffic was anticipated, and the floor was reinforced to withstand its pressure. Some plaster floor layers of platform F.173 (Phase B3.1A–D) continued onto the threshold of the doorway F.633—that is, onto its stepping surface—while others stopped at the doorframe.

The southern limit of the Northeast Zone is created by a bench (F.792-A). Rectangular in plan, with sharp, straight vertical edges and a flat top surface, the bench was attached to plastered post F.168, from which it extended for 0.80 m toward the house center; its width measured 0.30–0.50 m. During the excavation of the bench, the coats of plaster and packing peeled off evenly, indicating that exceptional care had been put into its construction. It was built directly on the midden beneath Building 3, and comprised a packing of compact, light brown clay, 0.01–0.02 m thick (8578), covered by a white plaster coat. The packing appeared to be sterile except for a layer of ash that had been placed on the ground before the bench was built.