



FEATURE FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Revised 2/2001

Complete a feature form for every feature found in an excavation unit. The feature form should be accompanied by scale drawings on graph paper of the plan and cross section (the “plan” is the view *down*, even for a wall feature); please use map stamp and fill in all applicable blanks. If the feature is masonry, also complete a masonry form.

Site Number: Site where feature is located

Site Name: Record the site name

Initials: Initials of the recorder(s)

Date: Month, day, and year the feature is recorded

Study Unit Type and Number: Study unit where feature is located

Feature Type: Select a type from the “Feature Types” list of definitions

Feature Number: Feature numbers are assigned sequentially by study unit as features are discovered. A separate feature catalog is kept for each study unit.

Study Unit Horizontal: Horizontal designation from PD form

Study Unit Vertical: Associated surface or stratum. Pilasters and benches are not associated with surfaces or strata, so their vertical designation would be “not applicable.”

PD Table: A feature can be assigned a single PD number or multiple PD numbers, depending on the excavation strategy used. For example, if a pit feature has several strata of fill, the excavator should assign a separate PD to each stratum. Thus, recording a feature requires filling out both a feature form and one or more PD forms. Please list all PDs assigned to this feature on this table. Each PD will have horizontal and vertical designations, and this information needs to be entered in the second and third boxes on the table. The same codes defined for study unit horizontal and vertical are also used for feature horizontal and vertical.

Dimensions: Take the reading of the longest, deepest, widest, or highest spot. *For benches, pilasters, ventilator tunnels, and ventilator shafts, record only the vertical measurement on the feature form; the plan map will be used for the other measurements (please make the plan map as accurate as possible).* For niches, doorways, apertures, and pass-throughs, record the vertical measurement as the “height” of the opening; “length” and “width” are measured as though you are looking *down* on the feature (that is, as it will appear on the structure plan map). *All dimensions in the “actual” column on the feature form must match the dimensions shown on the plan map.* If they do not match, determine where the discrepancy lies and fix it. If there is a justifiable reason why they do not match, state it in the “Comments” column. If you can measure the entire dimension of a feature, enter a check or a “yes” in the “Complete?” column. If only a portion of the feature can be measured, enter “no” in the “Complete?” column. If you think the feature originally had different dimensions, enter these estimates in the “Inferred” column, and give the rationale for your inference in the “Comments” column.

Excavation/Sampling Strategy Description

Excavation procedure: Be specific; was it divided horizontally and/or vertically?

Portion excavated: Which portion and why

Feature Description

General description: Feature type and subjective statement about the constructional quality of the feature

Degree of preservation: Choose excellent, good, or poor. If preservation is not “excellent,” state the cause of deterioration and amount of damage (next prompt).

Cause and amount of deterioration: For example, weathering, intentional dismantling, animal disturbance

Actual shape in plan view: Choose elliptical, irregular, rectangular, round, square, quarter-round, other, or unknown. Choose “unknown” if only a portion of the feature was excavated. If you choose “other,” add a few words of description.

Actual shape in cross section: Choose basin-shaped, other, irregular, rectangular, or unknown. Choose “unknown” if only a portion of the feature was excavated; if you choose “other,” add a few words of description.

Inferred shape in plan view: If only a portion of the feature was excavated, choose the shape you infer the feature plan to be.

Inferred shape in cross section: If only a portion of the feature was excavated, choose the shape you infer the feature cross section to be.

Horizontal Location: Record both general and specific horizontal locations. For example, in a test unit document where the feature is in the test unit and where the test unit is in relation to the structure or open area.

Vertical Location: Record the surface or wall with which the feature is associated. “Associated” for pits means the surface into which the feature was excavated; for walls, it means the surface that the wall is resting on. For features in walls, record the vertical distance from the structure floor to the floor of the feature. If the feature is located in the upper lining wall of a kiva, take a vertical measurement from the bench surface to the floor of the feature.

Description of How Feature Was Constructed: Include description of materials used and description and interpretation of the sediment the feature was excavated into or rested on.

Thermal Alteration: Record the presence or absence of fire-reddening or charring (gray to black). If either is present, describe its extent.

Sooting: Record the presence or absence and degree of sooting on or in this feature; if present, describe. Soot is a fine black powder formed by combustion, consisting chiefly of the carbon that

colors smoke; sooting usually occurs on structure walls and the underside of roofs. Do not confuse it with charring, which is a thermal alteration (above).

Description of Modification/Remodeling: Record the presence or absence of any prehistoric changes to the feature; if present, describe.

Sealed? Record yes or no. “Sealed” means the feature was intentionally filled and implies that you think the feature had been thereby taken out of use.

Fill Table: If there is enough space to include all stratigraphic information on the feature form, please do so. If not, use a continuation form. Use brief, subjective descriptions of sediment color and texture, unless the feature is very large (e.g., a bell-shaped cist large enough to get into). For very large features, a detailed stratigraphic profile similar to a structure profile should be drawn and described. Include abandonment context in the “Interpretations” column.

Artifacts and Samples Recovered: General list of artifacts and samples by stratum

Interpretations

Use history: Include use, remodeling, and abandonment context interpretations.

Associated features: List any features within this feature and any features that *worked in conjunction* with this feature (e.g., a hearth and deflector). Proximity alone is not a valid criterion for association.