



FEATURE TYPES

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alcove. A small auxiliary chamber in a wall, usually found in pit structures; they often adjoin the east wall of the main chamber and are substantially larger than apertures and niches.

aperture. A generic term for a wall opening that cannot be defined more specifically.

architectural petroglyph (not on bedrock). A petroglyph in a standing masonry wall. A piece of wall fall with a petroglyph on it should be sent in as an artifact if size permits.

ashpit. A pit used primarily as a receptacle for ash removed from a hearth or firepit. In a pit structure, the ash pit is commonly oval or rectangular and is located south of the hearth or firepit.

bedrock feature. A feature constructed into bedrock that does not fit any of the other feature types listed here.

bell-shaped cist. A large pit whose greatest diameter is substantially larger than the diameter of its opening. A storage function is implied, but the feature may not contain any stored materials, in which case the shape of the pit is sufficient for assigning this feature type.

bench surface. The surface of a wide ledge in a pit structure or kiva that usually extends around at least three-fourths of the circumference of the structure and is often divided by pilasters. The southern recess surface is also considered a bench surface segment; each bench surface segment must be recorded as a separate feature.

bin: not further specified. An above-ground compartment formed by walling off a portion of a structure or courtyard other than a corner. Common construction materials and methods include vertical slabs and adobe, jacal, and coursed masonry.

burial pit. A pit aboriginally excavated for the interment of human remains.

burned spot. An area of localized fire-reddening and/or charring on a surface with no evidence of deliberate construction; the burned spot may be accompanied by an accumulation of ash and/or charcoal on the surface or by soot-blackening on a wall face above the surface.

cist. A pit feature that is not bell shaped but for which there is some basis for interpreting its aboriginal use as a storage pit.

corner bin. An above-ground compartment formed by walling off a corner of a structure or courtyard. Common construction materials and methods include vertical slabs and adobe, jacal, and coursed masonry.

deflector. An upright slab or short segment of masonry or jacal wall between a hearth and the opening of a ventilator tunnel. Deflectors are most common in pit structures but can also be present in surface rooms; they are thought to have shielded the fire from direct air flow from the ventilation system.

doorway. A passage through a wall that connects two open spaces (e.g., two rooms, a room and a courtyard) and is large enough to allow an adult to pass through.

firepit. A pit, usually basin shaped, in which localized burning occurred and construction was expedient and minimal.

floor vault. A large, formally constructed, rectangular pit, usually excavated into the floor of a pit structure, kiva, or great kiva. Its walls may be earth or masonry lined, and evidence for a roof or superstructure may be present. Vaults are often paired, one to the east and one to the west of the hearth; single floor vaults have been found directly north of the hearth.

hatchway. A constructed opening in a roof or ceiling that is large enough to allow the passage of an adult and also served as part of a structure's ventilation system.

hearth. A formally constructed pit that often shows signs of thermal alteration. Stone or adobe plaster may be incorporated into its construction.

human remains occurrence. Human burial or concentration of human bones (either articulated or disarticulated).

loophole. An opening through an exterior or free-standing wall, smaller than 20 cm in length or diameter. Loopholes are believed to have served as a means of sighting or viewing through the wall, or possibly as apertures through which arrows were shot.

mealing bin. A bin constructed to contain a metate, often made of shaped sandstone slabs and adobe. Also called a grinding bin or milling bin.

niche. A small, usually rectangular recess in a wall that does not extend through the wall and was not intended to seat a beam. In masonry kivas, niches are usually constructed of masonry, but in pithouses they may be entirely sculpted into the earth walls of the structures.

other. Reserved for features that fit none of the feature categories or types defined here.

paho mark. A small hole in the floor of a structure that is interpreted as an impression left by the planting of a prayer stick (*paho* is the Hopi word for prayer stick). Paho marks (which may occur in multiples) typically are conical, 1 to 2 cm in diameter and 2 to 5 cm deep, often occur in clusters, and often are filled with sand. Paho marks are often associated with a sipapu or rectangular central pit.

pass-through. Similar to a doorway, but too small for an adult to fit through (less than 50 cm in height or width); occurs at or below the vertical midpoint of a wall.

pilaster. A roof-support column in a kiva. Pilasters often are constructed of coursed masonry and rest on bench surfaces.

pillar. Masonry column on the floor in a great kiva; usually found four per kiva in a symmetrical arrangement for structural or symbolic roof support.

pit: not further specified. A cultural pit whose function is unclear.

pit: other. A pit feature that does not fit into any of the other feature types; implies that there are details of the feature that are unusual and/or not easily described.

pit: slab lined. A pit that has been at least partly lined with stone slabs but for which no functional determination can be made.

posthole. A pit, usually cylindrical, for which there is a basis for inferring use as a posthole. Remnants of a post are not necessary for this designation.

sipapu. A small pit, usually cylindrical, defined by its location near the north-south axis of a pit structure or kiva north of the hearth. The pit may be unaltered, plastered, or lined with a pottery vessel. Some sipapus contain sand, and there may be associated paho marks.

socket. A recess or hole in a wall used to seat a structural beam.

tunnel. An enclosed subsurface passage, longer than the thickness of a wall, that connects two or more structures or open spaces. Tunnels are often found in kivas, where they allow subsurface access to another kiva, tower, or room.

ventilator shaft. The vertical portion of a ventilation system, which is a specialized construction for allowing fresh air intake into a structure. Ventilation systems are normally found in pithouses and kivas, rarely in rooms. The ventilator shaft is outside the main chamber of the structure and is connected to the structure by a horizontal tunnel (see below).

ventilator tunnel. The horizontal portion of a ventilation system, which is a specialized construction for allowing fresh air intake into a structure. Ventilation systems are usually found in pithouses and kivas, rarely in rooms. In the Mesa Verde region, the tunnel usually opens through the south bench face at floor level, but subfloor ventilator tunnels that open just south of the hearth are also known. Subfloor ventilators are more common in Chaco-style kivas.

wall: other. A segment of a wall that is not part of a structure and does not conform to any of the other types of wall features.

wing wall. A low, east-west partition that divides the main chamber of a pit structure. A wing wall often consists of east and west segments with a deflector in between. Construction is variable and may be vertical slab and adobe, jacal, coursed stone and plaster, etc.