



## KIN KLIZHIN



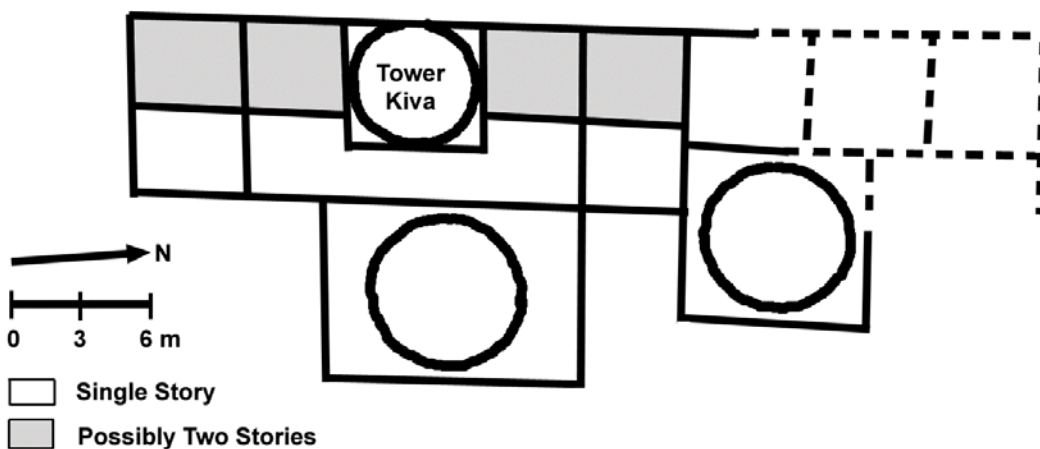
Illustration by Cory Ench of Kin Klizhin as it may have appeared in AD 1100, based upon a model by Ron Cox.

**THE NAME** – *Tsin Lizhin* or "black wood" in Navajo, possibly in reference to the charcoal or charred timbers found at the site. The name is a variant of the Navajo *Tsin Nilt'iz* or "hard wood," "black wood "or" charcoal place."

**THE LOCATION**- Kin Klizhin is a small Chacoan great house (monumental public building) that lies about 7 miles south and west of the immediate Chaco Canyon area. Located on Kin Klizhin Wash, at an elevation of 6,520 feet, Kin Klizhin was connected to Chaco's core by a Chacoan road.

**THE GREAT HOUSE** – Archaeologists call Kin Klizhin a "Chacoan great house," a civic and ceremonial center utilized by many surrounding communities. Farming was an important aspect of the community, and the

people may have provided food to the people of Chaco Canyon.



The building was constructed so that the rooms provided a stepped buttress for the tower kiva (elevated ceremonial rooms). The building contains 8 ground floor rooms, 6 possible second-story rooms, and 2 enclosed surface kivas. In

modern Puebloan cultures, kivas are multi-functional buildings used for religious worship, prayer vigils, preparation, and ceremonies. The most spectacular part of the site is a 3-or 4-story tower kiva.

**CHACOAN OUTLIERS** – The great houses and associated communities located some distance from Chaco Canyon are called "Chacoan outliers" or "outlier communities." Outliers share many typical Chacoan traits, such as architecture, masonry, roads, great kivas, enclosed plazas, pottery, etc. Some researchers believe the outliers were established by the people of Chaco Canyon as they expanded their world and influence into surrounding areas. Others believe that local populations embraced the Chacoan world and culture and emulated

the great houses and their impressive architecture. The relationship between the outliers and Chaco Canyon is not well understood. Were the outliers independent or did they support and serve the people in the canyon?

**DATES** – Three tree-ring dates (A.D. 1086, 1087, and 1087) collected by Florence Hawley in 1932 indicate that a major construction period occurred about A.D. 1087.

**TOWER KIVA** – The tower kiva is located in the central part of the building at the back west wall. This circular 3- or 4-story room (15 feet in diameter) was housed within a solidly-filled, rectangular masonry enclosure--adding to the massiveness and stability of the tower. Today, the walls of the tower kiva stand 27.5 feet above the ground.

The interior of the tower kiva may have contained 3 or 4 floors and had a very special ceremonial function. Four stacked kivas may have been symbolic of the 4 worlds central to Puebloan belief. Some researchers suggest that the towering structures may have been used for signaling to other communities. Less than a dozen tower kivas are known to exist in the Chacoan world--several of them located just south of the Chaco Canyon core. They occur late in Chacoan times.

**PLAZA** – The great house is fronted on the east by a D-shaped plaza enclosed by a wall. Most of this wall is covered by wind-blown sand and reduced to fallen, scattered masonry. The plaza does not appear to contain any structures. Plazas are important areas at modern pueblos, where many activities take place--public ceremonies, trading, community gatherings, and daily activities.

**MASONRY** – The masonry of Kin Klizhin is typical Chacoan core and veneer masonry--a distinguishing feature of Chacoan great house construction. The core consists of roughly shaped pieces of sandstone laid in a mud mortar. The core is then faced on both sides with carefully selected and shaped stones to create the veneer. The veneer helped to distribute the weight of the massive walls, and allowed the people to build 4 and 5 stories high. Several types of veneers were used, and styles changed over time.

This masonry consists of hard, dark brown sandstone blocks with no evidence of preparation. The people created a banded veneer by placing large blocks of sandstone horizontally in rows. Occasional chinking spalls (small pieces of stone filling small spaces) were used.

**PREHISTORIC ROADS** – Analysis of aerial photographs revealed that a prehistoric roadway passes Kin Klizhin. This road originates in Chaco Canyon, heading south from South Gap (a natural break in the mesa). After leaving the gap, the road turns west and leads directly to Kin Klizhin. From Kin Klizhin the road continues due west to the Kim-me-ni-oli (Kin Bineola) Valley and passes one mile north of Kin Bineola. The roads may have been used to direct travelers to Chaco for ceremonies and trading, or to symbolize the importance of the people's connections to Chaco--at the center of their world.

**PREHISTORIC DAM** - Below the site, the community erected a large masonry and earthen dam on Kin Klizhin Wash to divert flood waters into a canal and ditch system to water fields just downstream of the dam. This dam was modified in historic times and provided Navajo farmers with water for their cornfields.

**HELP US PRESERVE THIS FOR THE FUTURE** - The cultural sites of Chaco Culture National Historical Park are fragile and irreplaceable, and form a significant part of our cultural heritage. They are part of the history and traditions of the Hopi, the Pueblo peoples of New Mexico, and the Navajo, who continue to respect and honor them.

You can help protect and preserve this significant part of our global cultural heritage by following these basic rules:

- ***Do not collect pottery or other protected artifacts, plants, or rocks anywhere in the park.***
- ***Do not walk, climb, sit, or lean on fragile walls.***
- ***Stay on designated trails.***
- ***Pets are not permitted in sites.***
- ***This site closes at sunset. Camping is not permitted.***

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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