

Archaeological Investigations at the Spanish Governor's Palace, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas



by
Kristi M. Ulrich

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 4770

Prepared for:
Robey Architecture, Inc.
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Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
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Texas Antiquities Committee Permit No. 5486

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Abstract:

Over the course of two days in December of 2009, the Center for Archaeological Research-The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA-CAR) conducted archaeological investigations within the rear courtyard of the Spanish Governor's Palace located in downtown San Antonio. CAR was contracted by Robey Architecture Inc. to conduct the investigations prior to the planned installation of electrical conduits and fixtures. The proposed installation of conduits for lighting improvements was to affect the upper 18 inches (approximately 45 cm) of deposits. The archaeological investigations consisted of the excavation of five 50 x 50 cm units to sample the deposits in areas that were to be trenched. The units were excavated to a depth of 45 cm below the surface. The investigation found that although the excavations produced a relatively large quantity of artifacts, the strata appear to be highly disturbed by landscaping activities. Nonetheless, the excavations were able to identify the 1930s surface used at the time of H.P. Smith's reconstruction of the structures and indications are that deposits below this surface (18-20-inches below surface) contain less disturbed archaeological materials.

In addition to the courtyard investigations, CAR staff monitored the excavation of a small number of holes intended for the installation of floor outlets and pull-boxes within the Spanish Governor's Palace itself. While original plans also called for the excavation of sub-floor trenches within the structure, this was not necessary due to the availability of ample hollow space beneath the flooring stones that allowed cable installation with impacts only to the basal fill rather than intact strata underlying the fill. As a result of these conditions, no monitoring was carried out of the installation of the conduits under the floors in the interior of the Spanish Governor's Palace. And finally, because the electrical conduit housing a major cable running down the center of the courtyard was reused, no monitoring was needed for the installation of this cable.

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The author would like to acknowledge the individuals that aided in the successful completion of the archaeological investigation. Field personnel included Kelley Denham and Steve Smith. Project Archaeologist was Kristi Miller Ulrich. Lab processing and curation preparation was completed under the supervision of Lab Director, Marybeth Tomka. Bruce Moses and Barbara Meissner produced the figures for the report. Steve Tomka served as Principal Investigator.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The City of San Antonio and Robey Architecture, Inc. contracted the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) of The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to conduct limited archaeological investigations within the courtyard of the Spanish Governor's Palace and residence in San Antonio, Texas. The project was funded under the City of San Antonio's 2007 Bond Program. Prior to the archaeological investigations, CAR was contracted by the City of San Antonio and Robey Architecture, Inc. to complete a review of the previous archaeological work carried out within the premises of the site. The information aided in determining the extent of disturbance within the Spanish Governor's Palace complex prior to beginning the planned installation of electrical lines and fixtures throughout the compound. The review document

was used by the Texas Historical Commission to determine whether archaeological investigations may be necessary in association with this planned project and what form these archaeological services should take.

The City of San Antonio plans to install electrical lines within the rooms of the Spanish Governor's Palace, as well as in the rear courtyard as shown in Figure 1-1. Impacts derived from the installation of the electrical wiring will consist of trenching and the excavation of holes floor outlets and pull-boxes. According to the engineering schematics, the trenches allowing the installation of the wiring will be 6-inches deep and 6-inches wide within the structure. Floor outlets and pull-

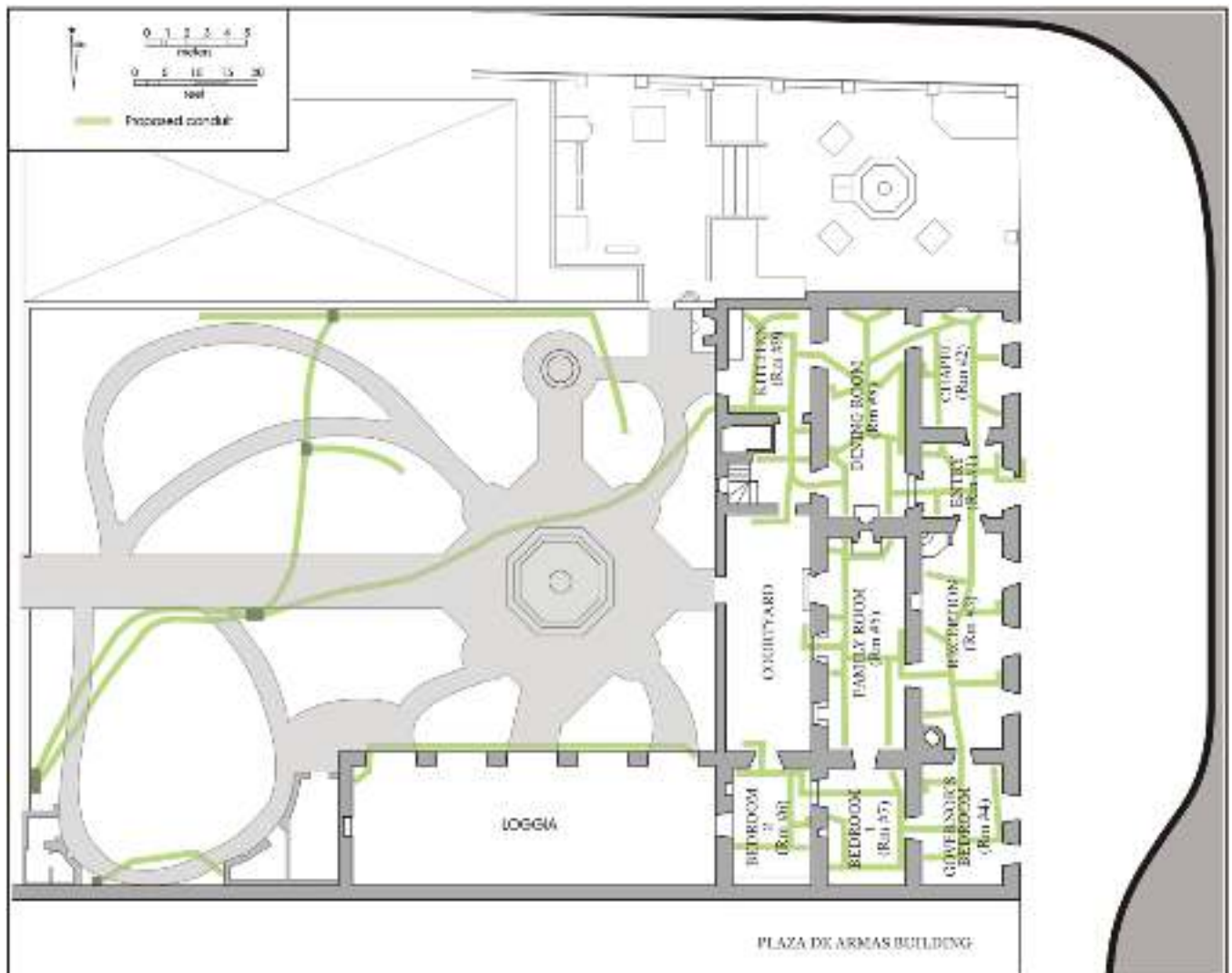


Figure 1-1. Plan map of the Governor's Palace and residence showing proposed conduit routes.

boxes will be installed to a depth of 7.25-inches below the floor and will necessitate holes measuring approximately 4.25 inches in diameter. The conduits connecting these pieces of hardware will be installed immediately below the existing pavers.

The project was to be completed in two phases. The first phase consisted of the excavation of the five 50-x-50 cm units within the Spanish Governor's Palace courtyard. The second phase was the archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the conduit routes within the Spanish Governor's Palace structure and a conduit route in the courtyard that was not examined during the unit excavations. Contractors wished to install new wiring through an existing conduit, though the condition of the conduit was unknown at the time to determine

if the route could be re-used. If the pre-existing conduit route was not suitable for re-use, the contractors speculated that the existing conduit would need to be removed through trenching and replaced. Archaeological monitoring of the trenching was to be required if the existing conduit needs to be removed.

Project Location

The Spanish Governor's Palace is located on the edge of Military Plaza in downtown San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. This location is in the heart of downtown San Antonio, and was a prime spot to witness much of the history, development and growth of the city. Today, the Spanish Governor's Palace welcomes visitors in for a unique view of early San Antonio architecture and history.

Chapter 2: Site Background and Previous Archaeology

Background

Much of the history of the Spanish Governor's Palace is clouded by the romanticized notions of the Spanish involvement and occupation of San Antonio during the 18th and 19th centuries. The building is often portrayed as the residence of the Spanish Governor during the early years of San Antonio. However, it is more likely that the structure only housed an office for the Governor, while it was the residence of another family.

The structure is believed to have been constructed circa 1749 based on the date carved in the keystone found above the main entrance. However, it is uncertain as to whether the date represents the start or completion of the original construction, or the date of subsequent renovations. In 1762, Governor Navarete recounted that he had an office within the captain's house. He went on to describe that the residence was constructed of "stone or rubble and mortar, and a very strong edifice" (Ramsdell 1959: 122). The structure appears on the 1764 Menchaca map of San Antonio. On this map, the structure was depicted as a long rectangular building, with a main entrance located across the plaza from San Fernando Cathedral. In front of the structure was a fence likely used to pen in livestock. A map drawn by José de Urrutia in 1767 indicates that the structure was referred to as the "*Casa del Capitan*" and very well may have been his residence. The structure was passed on to Luis Antonio Menchaca in 1778, and then later to his son, José Menchaca. José Menchaca conveyed the property to Juan Ygnacio Pérez in 1801.

When Juan Ygnacio Pérez obtained the property, the structure was recorded as having a living room, a kitchen, a bedroom, another room, and two hallways. The structure was entirely built of stone. A portion of the structure was owned by another individual until 1819 when it was obtained by Ygnacio Pérez. Pérez acted as interim governor between July 27, 1816 to March 20, 1817 (Hafertepe 2003). The property and structure remained in the hands of the Pérez descendants until it was purchased by the city of San Antonio in 1928. During the mid-to late-1800s, space within the building had been rented out as commercial property. The structure underwent various renovations to accommodate the businesses. Included in these renovations were a new tin roof, new windows, a wooden partition in the main room, a new wooden plank floor in the corridor, and replastering of the inside and outside of the building (Bexar County Deed Records [BCDR] XI:28). Additional renovations consisted of

a new stone wall in the rear room as well as a new fireplace. It is unclear as to whether the new stone wall was constructed on a foundation and therefore its construction would have resulted in any subsurface impacts.

At the time the city obtained the property, the structure was in disrepair. After several years, Adina DeZavala and the Conservation Society had convinced the city to purchase the property to preserve the Spanish Colonial history of San Antonio. DeZavala wrote several articles discussing how the structure was once the residence of the Spanish Governor and should be preserved. It was during this time that the structure began to be referred to as the Spanish Governor's Palace. Archival research indicates that the structure was not the Governor's sole residence, rather housed the governor's office for him to conduct business while in town (Hafertepe 2003). For a brief time the structure housed Juan Ygnacio Pérez who acted as Interim Governor, but was never referred to in the archives as the Spanish Governor's Palace.

Renovation of the Spanish Governor's Palace

Immediately after its purchase by the city in 1928, various plans were drawn up on how to restore the structure to its grandeur. Several different ideas were developed as to what the structure had originally looked like, and how the structure should appear when reconstructed. Prior to the city purchasing the property, Adina DeZavala had prepared a drawing that depicted a two-story structure with the style reminiscent of Mission San José. Ultimately, DeZavala's design was grander than the original (Hafertepe 2003).

The city requested that full documentation of the property be done prior to restoration activities. San Antonio contracted Harvey P. Smith, an up-and-coming architect who studied many Spanish colonial structures throughout Mexico, California, and Texas, to draw up plans for the reconstruction of the Palace. Based on archival research and the Gentilz painting that was believed to depict a dance held at the Palace, Smith concluded that a total of six rooms composed the structure. Smith was the first to identify the date on the keystone. This one piece of information is the only solid evidence we have concerning the age of the structure. Smith also proposed to excavate around the buildings to expose and outline the wall foundations. The mayor of San Antonio supported this idea and provided laborers. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly which walls Smith trenched along nor how deep and wide the trenches may have been.

Prior to any excavations at the Palace, all material deemed modern was removed from the grounds. This included remnants of the tin roof, rafters, the brick additions in the rear, and the wood flooring. A photograph of the courtyard taken during the reconstruction efforts reveals the amount of material present prior to the construction, and the location of some trenches along the courtyard walls (Figure 2-1). The entire back wall of the feed store that had been located within the structure was removed. Several structures located in the rear of the complex were also demolished because they were seen as modern. Smith reported in his newspaper article that only the front wall and small portions of two adjacent walls (which we assume are the north and south wall of the complex) were original, although his floor plan for the restoration efforts shows more walls may have been intact, according to Hafertepe (2003). The drawings indicate that the interior entrance walls of the main hall were original. The walls in the room to the right of the main entrance (likely the Chapel), and the outer walls of the room directly behind (we surmise is the Dining Room) were also intact according to Smith's plans (Hafertepe 2003).



Figure 2-1. Back yard and wall of the Spanish Governor's Palace prior to restoration. Looking from the west. From the San Antonio Light (22 December 1929) collection, the Institute of Texan Cultures.

To determine where the other walls were located, in an article for the San Antonio *Express*, Smith indicated that they started excavations from

...a few old walls in the rear that in a dilapidated condition, and digging down to the original footings of these, we started trenches out in various directions where we found that stone footings extended from the original walls, and in this way we located, and thereby had positive proof of, the rooms we added in the rear (Smith 1931, Architect Who Restores Palace Appeals to San Antonio to Keep Individuality All Its Own, 1 March: 4A)

During the course of excavations in the rear of the complex, workers uncovered a foundation approximately three feet below the surface. According to Smith, the foundation extended approximately forty feet from the main portion of the building. We assume that this refers to a westerly direction or behind the building but we cannot be certain. It is unclear to us what Smith was referring to as the main portion of the building. It is unknown what the foundation represents.

Smith speculated that it was the family's living quarters, but offered no reasoning.

Approximately one foot beneath the surface, Smith encountered an adobe layer that may have been the original floor. He does not exactly indicate where within the compound he encountered the adobe flooring, or if he encountered it on more than one occasion. Smith apparently was not satisfied with locating the adobe floor and continued to excavate to see if flagging stones or tile were used as flooring (Hafertepe 2003). Adobe floors were common in San Antonio during the 18th century, even in the higher class homes.

Archaeological Investigations at the Spanish Governor's Palace

Two archaeological investigations were conducted at the Spanish Governor's Palace (Figure 2-2). The first investigation was conducted in 1976 by The University of Texas at San Antonio-Center for Archaeological Research (UTSA-CAR) (Fox 1977). CAR archaeologists excavated test units just north of the north wall of the Palace (Figure 2-2, in red).

When CAR initiated the project, the property was covered with broken bricks, concrete rubble and other construction

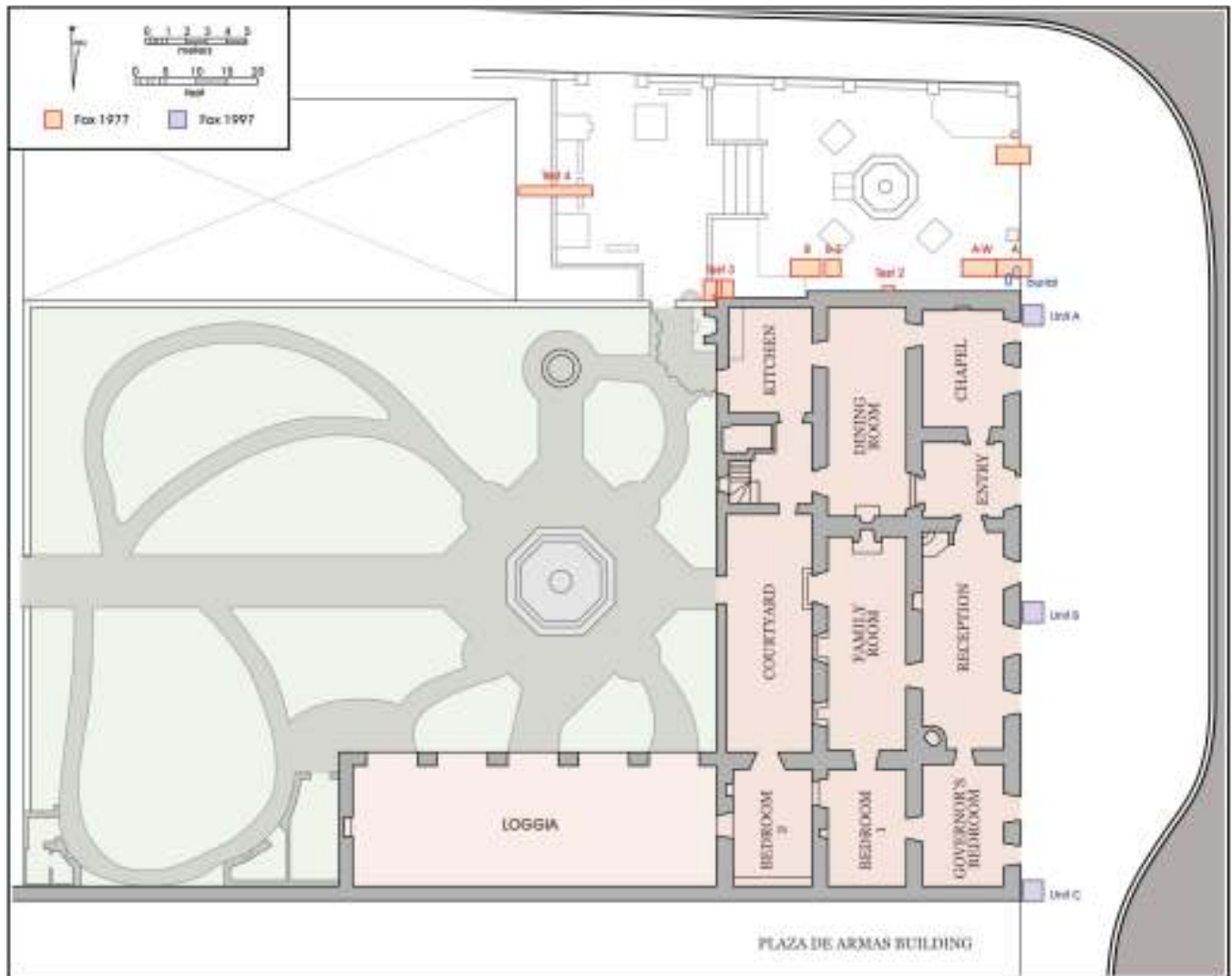


Figure 2-2. Plan map of previous archaeology at the Spanish Governor's Palace and residence.

debris. Four test pits (labeled Test 1 through Test 4) and three systematically excavated areas (Areas A, B, and C) were opened over the course of the project (Fox 1977). The location of Test 1 was not shown on original project maps. However, Test 1 is described as a shovel test located near the northeast corner of the site excavated to examine the extent of disturbance caused by the removal of a slab. The excavation indicated that in that area the soil was disturbed to a depth of 30 cm below surface.

Test 2 was located along the center of the north wall. The unit was excavated to examine the construction of the slab. Test 3 was excavated at the exterior of northwest corner of the Palace. The test unit was excavated to determine if the wall dated to the 18th century and extended further north. A wall was located, but appeared to be much narrower in comparison to Spanish Colonial walls. In addition, artifacts encountered dated to the 19th and early 20th century. Some

colonial material was found in mixed context and probably represents an admixture of materials during reconstruction. Test 4 was located north of the north wall of the Palace, and has no bearing on the current project.

Excavations in Area A revealed that at least two caliche floors were located along the north wall of the structure. The first caliche floor encountered at 47 cm (18.5 inches) below datum (soil surface was approximately 25 cm/10 inches below datum) appeared to date to the early 19th century and lacked 18th century artifacts. Artifacts encountered included building materials, glass fragments, nails, and scrap metal. Just below the first floor was a level of heavily burned material. The second caliche floor encountered at 58 cm (23 inches) below datum appears to date to the mid-18th century. The artifacts recovered above this floor were consistent with those recovered from other sites occupied in San Antonio during 18th century. In addition, ceramics recovered from below the

second floor are consistent with an early-18th century date. Puebla Polychrome, which ceased being manufactured in 1725, was recovered in the levels beneath second floor. The presence of this type of ceramic also indicates that people resided in the area prior to 1749. The artifacts may be related to the construction of the adobe presidio in 1721.

In addition to the floors, CAR archaeologist uncovered a human burial located near the eastern corner of the front wall. The burial was located approximately 74 cm below the surface, and cut through the first floor. The burial was that of a small infant and appears to date to the mid-19th century. It is unlikely that the burial was interred while the structures were in use. Instead, it was speculated that the burial occurred after the structure had been razed, and the lot left vacant.

Area B excavations were located along what was believed to be the back wall of the presidio, and in line with the back wall of the second room of the Governor's Palace. Two units were excavated. The first 20 cm of excavations in the larger of the units produced a mixture of 18th and 19th century artifacts. Below this level, to a depth of approximately 50 cmbs, were artifacts that dated from 1860 to 1880s. The excavation unit also encountered a basement that was filled in sometime between the 1860s and 1880s. Adjacent to the larger unit in Area B, a 1-x-1 meter unit was opened to examine a stone wall that was encountered at 38 cm below the surface. Artifacts recovered on top of the wall appeared to date to the 19th century. Just below this level (greater than 38 cm below surface), an intact Spanish Colonial deposit was encountered extending to a depth of 160 cm below the surface. Puebla Polychrome and San Agustin fragments were collected during the excavations. Puebla Polychrome ceased production ca. 1725, and San Agustin dates to as early as 1730. The presence of these wares supports the possibility of early 18th century occupation.

Area C was excavated in the northeast portion of the project area, though not adjacent to the Palace walls. Area C is located approximately 52 meters north of the north wall of the Palace, is not shown on Figure 2-2. The results of the excavations revealed 19th century artifacts and no trace of colonial floors.

In summary, excavations conducted during the 1976 project found that portions of the area north of the Spanish Governor's Palace appear to have been disturbed. Disturbances range from residential use to impromptu burial ground.

The second archaeological investigation that occurred at the Spanish Governor's Palace was conducted by UTSA-CAR in 1996 (Fox 1997) (Figure 2-2, in blue). The purpose

of the excavations was to gather more information on the foundation of the front wall of the structure prior to the city fixing the roof and exterior walls of the Palace. These units were excavated along the wall that was standing in 1928 when the city purchased the property, and contains the keystone for which has offered a date of construction or renovation. Three units were excavated during this project. Each of the units was centered on a drain spout coming from the roof to a pipe beneath the sidewalk. The current sidewalk was placed on top of a layer of gravel and the pavers that were installed during restoration. The layers of sidewalk and gravel base were removed prior to excavating the units.

Unit A, a 3-x-3 foot unit, was excavated adjacent to the north corner of the front of the building. The first six inches (7-13 inches below the sidewalk) revealed a mixture of plaster, mortar, window glass and wire nails. Level 2 (13-19 inches) produced a mix of English and Mexican ceramics, animal bone, and glass fragments. The top of the foundation of the wall was located in this level. Level 3 (19-25 inches) produced artifacts that were a mix of late-18th century and early-19th century artifacts. The last level excavated, Level 4 (25-42 inches), revealed the footer of the foundation.

Unit B, a 3-x-3 foot unit, was located near the center of the façade of the Palace. This unit was also excavated in 6-inch levels. Level 1 (7-13 inches below the sidewalk) produced fragments of metal scrap, animal bone and wire nails. Level 2 (13-19 inches) revealed the top of the foundation and artifacts that dated to the colonial period and early-19th century. Level 3 (19-25 inches) produced artifacts that were dated to the second half of the 18th century. Level 4 (25-31 inches) produced additional colonial artifacts, though only half of the unit was excavated from this point on. Level 5 (31-37 inches) also produced colonial material, though the density decreased. The base of the foundation was encountered in Level 6 (37-44 inches).

Unit C was a 40-x-36 foot unit excavated at the south end of the front of the Palace. The unit was excavated in 6-inch levels. Level 1 (7-13 inches) encountered a mixture of construction material and animal bone. Artifacts collected included glass fragments, nails, plaster, and metal scrap. Level 2 (13-20 inches) produced both colonial and native ceramics as well as glass fragments, metal scrap, nails, animal bone, and window glass. Level 3 (19-25 inches) encountered the top of the original foundation at 22 inches below the sidewalk. Unlike the other two units, the foundation found here was in line with the restored wall. Artifacts recovered from this level included colonial ceramics, animal bone and chert flakes. Level 4 (25-31 inches) continued to expose the foundation. Artifacts recovered from this level included colonial ceramics, chert flakes, a large amount of animal bone, and one rein chain

link. Archaeologists determined this to be an intact Spanish Colonial deposit. The next two levels, Levels 5 and 6 (31-40 inches), continued to follow the foundation, uncovering Colonial artifacts with no evidence of disturbance. The base of the foundation was located at 40 inches below sidewalk.

In summary, the 1996 archaeological investigation found that signs (e.g., materials remains) of the previous use the property may exist buried below the Spanish Governor's Palace. The quantity and types of Spanish Colonial artifacts recovered from the excavations supported the idea that the Spanish Governor's Palace does not represent the first use of the property. The project also revealed information concerning the construction of the east wall. The foundation footer is approximately 40 cm below the current sidewalk.

The archaeological investigations also produced information concerning the original construction of the Spanish Governor's Palace. The foundation was found to have been constructed by digging a trench approximately two feet deep for the footprint of the building. Stones were placed in the trench and then filled in with sand and lime mortar. A portion of the wall built on top of the foundation appears to be slightly off line. The reason why the wall was constructed off-line is unknown. In addition, the base of the foundation of the front façade appears to be deeper than the foundation along the back wall encountered in Test 3 during the 1976 excavation. This suggests that they were constructed at separate times.

Summary

Three projects have been conducted at the Spanish Governor's Palace between the 1930s and present. The first project, the reconstruction of the Palace by H.P. Smith, lacks information that is useful in precisely identifying the extent and location of the areas of disturbance. The architect spoke of his excavations as "archaeological" investigations of the site, though he did not record locations of trenches, nor the types and quantities of artifacts encountered while digging. The best information available is that Smith dug trenches in various directions from known standing walls and excavated approximately 4 feet below the surface. How much within the interior of the structure he disturbed is unknown. In addition, if Smith was excavating trenches to locate the foundation of certain walls within the compound, portions of the area in the center of the rooms could have been untouched. The interior of the rooms may still contain intact deposits, especially in the front rooms that had retained some of the original walls. Wood flooring had been removed when Smith initiated the restoration process. It is unknown exactly how much was removed of the matrix below the flooring to accommodate the new tile and flagstone floors. Smith also reported that

he encountered "adobe" flooring in one area approximately one foot below the surface. The area just outside of the kitchen (Figure 2-2) likely underwent a great amount of disturbance when Smith was searching for remnants of the fireplace. Doorways likely were disturbed subsurface, either in the creation of new doorways or to renovated the original doorways.

Excavations conducted in 1976 revealed that the area adjacent to the north wall exhibited pockets of undisturbed matrix. The first few levels produced artifacts that dated to the 18th and 19th centuries. The mixed context could be a result of the restoration efforts or the several renovations that occurred during the mid- to late-19th century. Below the areas of mixed context, appears to be relatively intact matrix containing colonial artifacts. Intact colonial deposits were encountered at 58 cm below datum (23 inches below datum). The datum was approximately 25 cm (10 inches) above the ground level. This means that intact colonial deposits could be encountered at approximately 13 inches below the surface. Above this depth, the artifacts encountered were a mix of 18th and 19th century material. Due to the long use of the structure, this is not abnormal.

The human burial uncovered in Area A poses a unique problem. The burial appears to have occurred during the mid to late-19th century. It does not represent the location of a cemetery but rather the impromptu use of the locality as a burial site. Such undesignated uses of this location could not have been predicted and it is not know if the documented instance has repeated in other places across the property.

An important aspect of the 1976 excavations is that they all occurred outside of the Spanish Governor's Palace compound. No excavation occurred within the rooms of the Palace. Therefore, all information gathered is related to what the deposits are like on the exterior of the building.

Excavations conducted in 1996 also found that the first 13 inches exhibited a mixture of 18th and 19th century artifacts. Below this level, the artifacts tend to reflect the different periods of occupation, with the lowest levels revealing intact Spanish Colonial deposits (19 inches below the sidewalk and below). In addition to noting intact deposits, CAR archaeologists were able to determine the construction method of the original building. Construction of the foundation was accomplished by excavating a trench approximately 24 inches deep outlining the entire building. From here, stones and mortar were placed in the trench to form the foundations. Walls were constructed on top of the foundation, and in one portion are slightly off center on the foundation.

As previously mentioned, the date carved in the keystone above the front door suggests that the structure was erected in 1749. However, the fact that the east (front) wall of the structure is slightly off line from the foundation is puzzling. This may suggest that the east wall may have been reconstructed at some point prior to the City obtaining the property in 1929. Additional information is necessary that could possibly corroborate this speculation.

Construction technique appears to be reminiscent of colonial methods exhibited at mission sites. The foundation of the façade of the Spanish Governor's Palace appears to be deeper than the foundations encountered during the 1976 excavations along the north wall, indicating that the foundations were possibly constructed at different times.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Archaeological Field Methods

The Center for Archaeological Research conducted archaeological investigations within the courtyard of the Spanish Governor's Palace. The investigation consisted of the hand-excavation of five (5) 50 x 50 cm units. The units were placed in strategic locations along the path of the proposed trenches for the installation of electrical conduits. Each unit was excavated in arbitrary 10 cm levels to reach a depth of at least 18 inches (approximately 45 cm) below the surface. The matrix removed from the units was screen through ¼ inch wire mesh. All artifacts recovered from each level were bagged with the appropriate provenience information. A small soil sample was collected from each level. Artifacts and soil samples were returned to the archaeological laboratory at the CAR for processing at the completion of the fieldwork. The units remained open at the completion of the excavation. CAR wanted to allow for members of the THC and the City of San Antonio Archaeologist to be able to view the profiles of the units prior to backfilling. The excavation of the units within the courtyard of the Spanish Governor's Palace was the just one phase of the project. Construction monitoring of the trenching within the structure was to occur at a later date.

Archaeological Laboratory Methods

All cultural materials and records obtained and generated during the project were prepared in accordance with federal regulation 36 CFR part 79, and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Additionally, the materials were curated in accordance with current guidelines of the CAR.

Artifacts processed in the CAR laboratory were washed, air-dried, and stored in 4 mil zip locking archival-quality bags. Organic materials and materials needing extra support were double-bagged. Acid-free labels were placed in all artifact bags. Each laser printer generated label contained provenience information and a corresponding lot number. Ceramics were labeled with permanent ink over a clear coat of acrylic and covered by another acrylic coat. Artifacts have been separated by class and stored in acid-free boxes identified with standard tags. Field notes, forms, photographs, and drawings were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper, labeled with archivally appropriate materials, and placed in archival-quality sleeves. All field forms were completed with pencil. Any soiled forms were placed in archival quality page protectors. Ink-jet produced maps; illustrations, etc. were also placed in archival quality page protectors to provide against accidental smearing due to moisture. At the time of completion of the project, all collected materials are to be housed at CAR.

Additional Considerations

In consultation with the THC, subsequent to proper analyses and quantification, artifacts possessing little scientific value were discarded pursuant to Chapter 26.27(g)(2) of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Artifact classes discarded specific to this project included burned rock and redundant building materials. Prior to discard, the provenience information and weights of the building materials were recorded. A representative sample of the building materials recovered at the site was retained and curated.

Chapter 4: Results

Five 50 x 50 cm units were excavated by hand during the course of the project (Figure 4-1). Each unit was located along the path of the proposed electrical conduits for the new lighting. The units were excavated to the proposed terminal depth of the impact that the trenches will affect when they are dug. Following is a discussion of the results of the archaeological excavations by unit.

Unit 1

Unit 1 was located in the southeast portion of the Spanish Governor's Place courtyard. The unit was placed in a flowerbed,

underneath one of the arches of the Loggia. The unit was excavated a total of four levels to a final depth of 57 cm below datum (bd). The datum was located 12 cm above the ground surface. The first level (12-27 cmbd) encountered disturbance due to landscaping and gardening activities. The top soil was humus rich, though somewhat clay-like in texture. No artifacts were encountered in this level. Level 2 (27-37 cmbd) encountered a gravel lens, and exhibited continued evidence of disturbance due to gardening and bioturbation. Again, no artifacts were encountered in this level. Level 3 (37-47 cmbd) was composed of a silty clay that had gravel in small quantity. This level produced some artifacts, including ceramic fragments, metal, glass, a fragment of debitage, and painted plaster (Table 4-1). The ceramic

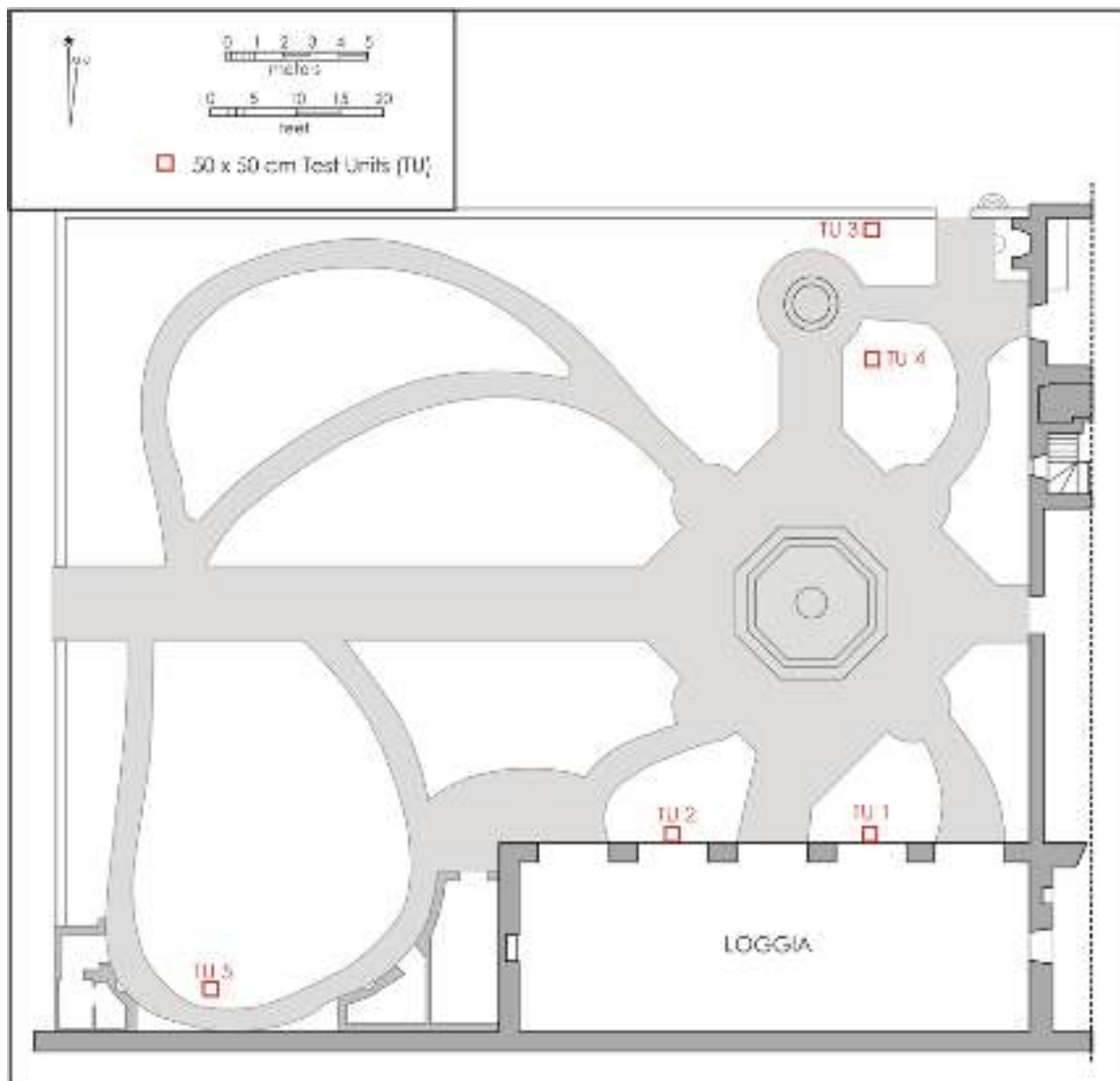


Figure 4-1. Plan map of the archaeological units excavated at the Spanish Governor's Palace and residence.

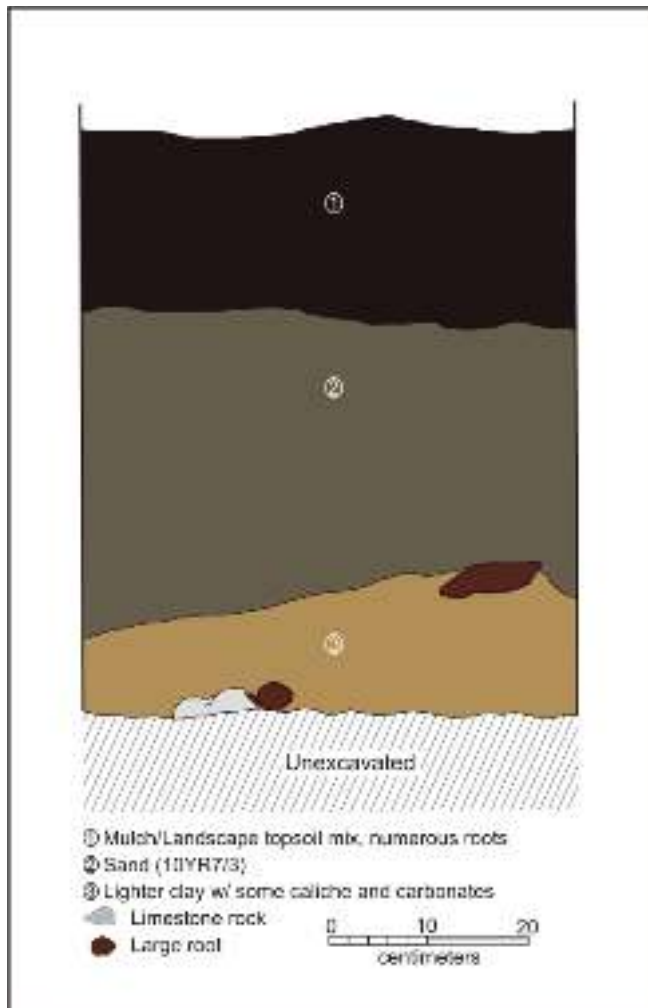


Figure 4-2. Profile of the west wall of Unit 1.

possible that these stones were related to the construction of the archways of the loggia, but also could be part of the foundation to the arch (Figure 4-3).

Unit 3

Unit 3 was located in the northeastern portion of the Spanish Governor's Palace courtyard, approximately one meter south of the courtyard's north wall (Figure 4-1). The unit was placed along the route of the proposed electrical conduit installation. A total of 6 levels were excavated in this unit, to a terminal depth of 58 cm below datum. The first level (5-10 cmbd) contained a large quantity of roots and leaves, though the soil was a blocky, silty clay. The level appeared to have been highly disturbed by landscaping activities. The landscaping activities of the courtyard were observed when several plants were removed to save them from the excavation process. One ceramic fragment and one plastic fragment were recovered from this level (Table 4-2). Level 2 (10-20 cmbd) continued with the same type of

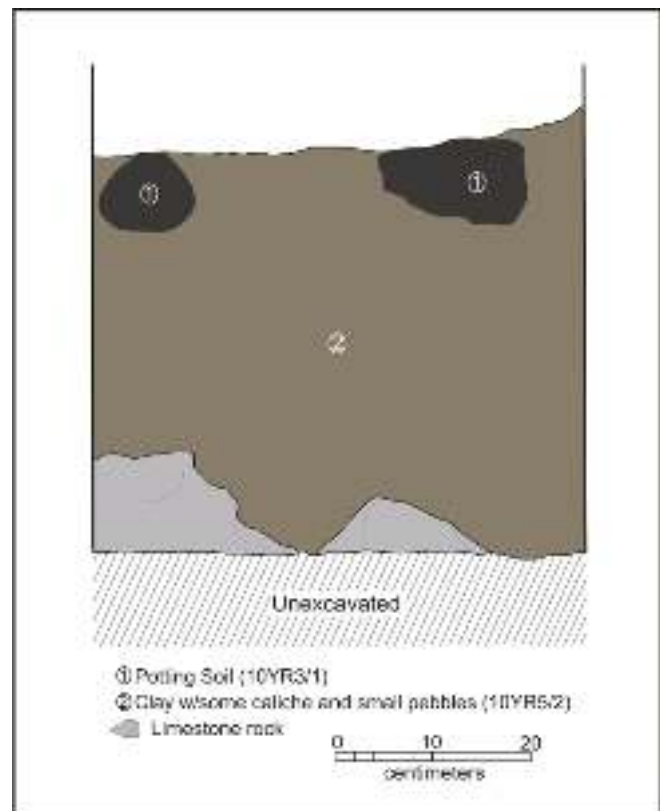


Figure 4-3. Profile of the north wall of Unit 2.

soil as the previous level, though a pocket of sand was noted in the northeast corner of the unit. Glass fragments were recovered from this level (Table 4-2). Level 3 (20-30 cmbd) noted a soil change to a more compact sandy clay. A pocket of sand was encountered in the northwest corner of the unit, and a pocket of gravel was encountered in the northeast corner. The density of gravel increased throughout the entire unit. Ceramic sherds were recovered from this level, including one flower pot fragment (Table 4-2). Level 4 (30-40 cmbd) exhibited another increase in gravels.

The soil was still compact sandy clay. Large limestone rocks were encountered in the northern portion of the unit, a portion of which is visible in the east wall profile (Figure 4-4). The density of cultural material also increased in this level. Material recovered included ceramic sherds, glass fragments, metal, nails, faunal remains and debitage (Table 4-2). One of the ceramic sherds collected was a colonial tin glazed fragment known as Puebla Blue on White. Puebla Blue on White was ceramic type imported from Mexico throughout the majority of the colonial period in San Antonio. Level 5 (40-50 cmbd) exhibited a decrease in the density of gravels, but artifact density increased. The matrix was compact clay with small carbonate flecks throughout. The last few centimeters noted a soil change where the matrix color darkened and charcoal flecks were more common. Cultural

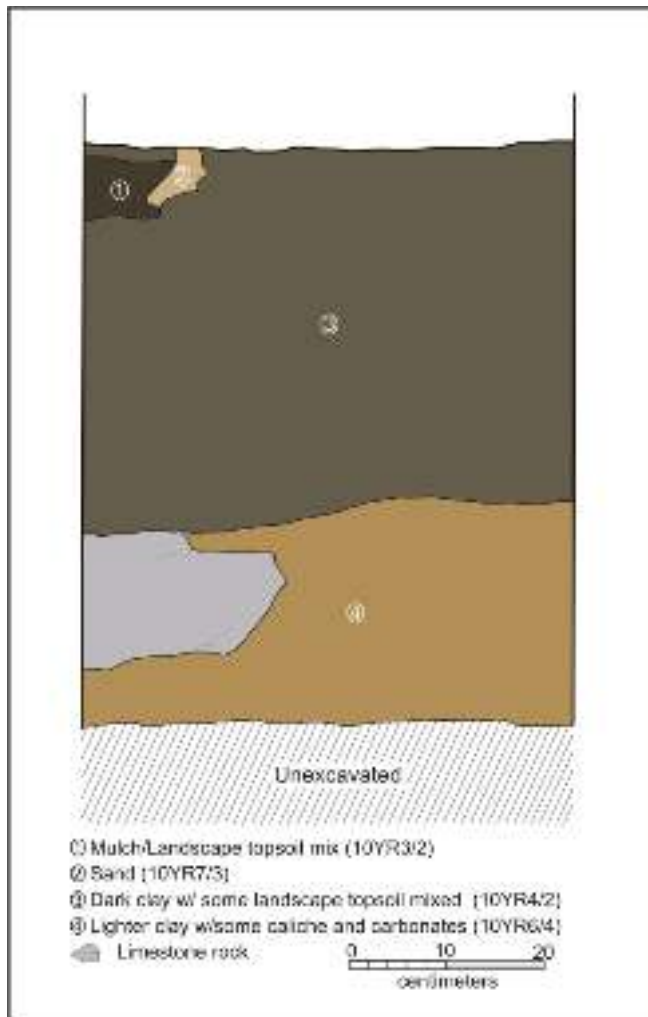


Figure 4-4. Profile of the east wall of Unit 3.

material collected included ceramic sherds, glass fragments, metal, fire-cracked rock, and debitage (Table 4-2).

One piece of Goliad and two fragments of lead glazed wares were recovered in this level. These are of interest because use of these wares occurred during the colonial period and into the early 19th century. One more level was excavated to reach the depth at which the electrical conduit would impact. Level 6 (50-58 cmbd) consisted of a dark sandy clay with flecks of charcoal. The matrix was less compact beneath the limestone rock level. This level appears to be less disturbed than previous levels. Cultural material collected included faunal material, metal, ceramic sherds, glass, and lithics (Table 4-2).

Unit 4

Unit 4 was located approximately 4 meters south of Unit 3. The unit was located on the north side of a large tree in a

flowerbed just to the southeast of the wishing well. A total of 5 levels were excavated in this unit, to a terminal depth of 50 cm below datum. The excavation of the first level, Level 1 (7-10 cmbd), revealed that landscaping topsoil that has been frequently disturbed by planting activities. A few wood and plastic fragments were noted in Level 1, though they were not collected. The soil was humus rich and loose.

Level 2 (10-20 cmbd) exhibited the same matrix. Lots of roots were noted, as well as bulbs, which could account for the soil being loose. A few plastic fragments were encountered in this level, though not collected. Level 3 (20-30 cmbd) continued to be very loose, humus rich soil. Pockets of loose soil, and soil with lots of white lime nodules, in this level appear to have resulted from plantings. The outline of little pits was evident within the unit, though not seen in the profile. The soil within the pits was similar to what is found in a potted plant (dark soil with little white balls). No artifacts were encountered in this level. Level 4 (30-40 cmbd) encountered a more compact clay. The artifact density increased and included glass, metal, brick, nails, and faunal remains. A large root crosses the entire unit from the southeast to the northwest corner. The root was left in place and excavations continued around it. Level 5 (40-50 cmbd) became more compact and included lime nodules which was noted in the soils profile of the north wall (Figure 4-5).

The amount of gravels increased in this level, and the soil below the root became exceptionally loose. A large limestone rock was uncovered in the north wall, but left in place. Artifact density appears to have lessened in this level, though bone and metal fragments were recovered (Table 4-3). A gold-plated crucifix was recovered from this level. The crucifix appears to be made of brass, due to the oxidization present on the artifact, and some portions still have the gold plating. Though this artifact was recovered between 40 and 50 cmbd, it appears to be more of a modern artifact than colonial. The excavation of this unit was terminated at the completion of Level 5. The installation of the conduit would not impact any further in depth.

Unit 5

Unit 5 was located in the southwestern portion of the courtyard, just to the east of the women's restroom. The first level, Level 1 (10-20 cmbd), encountered highly disturbed soils. Pockets of root balls and soil mixed with white nodules indicated that plants were commonly planted in the area (at the time, there was no plant above the surface associated with the root balls) (Figure 4-6). Glass fragments were recovered from this level.

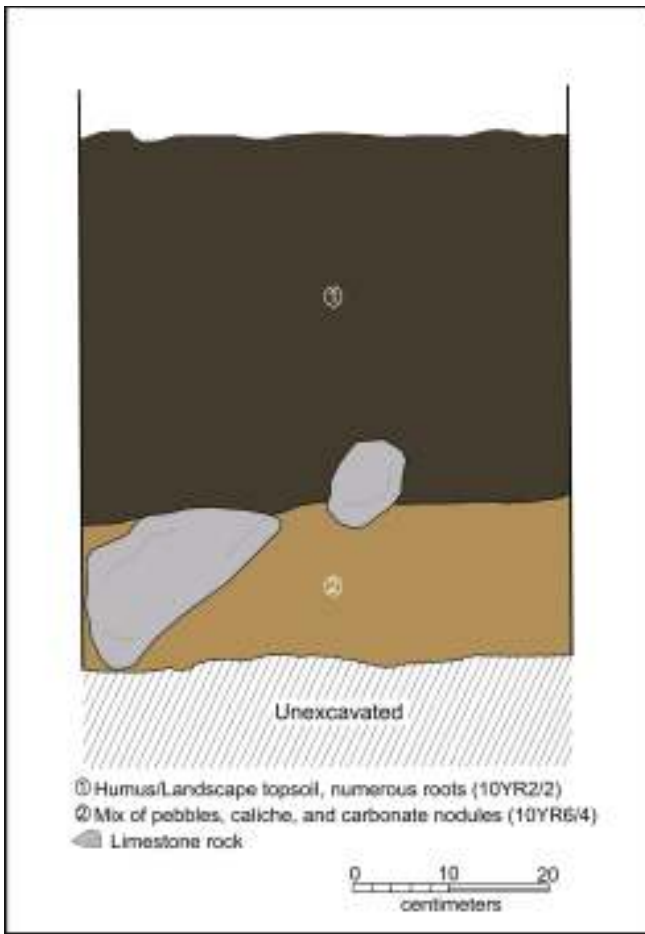


Figure 4-5. Profile of the north wall of Unit 4.

Level 2 (20-30 cmbd) still exhibited the disturbed soils as the previous level, though the soils had a higher clay content and included pockets of gravel. Carbonate nodules were present throughout the level. Cultural material collected from Level 2 included glass, faunal remains, nails (one cut nail, eleven wire nails), tar, and metal. The bottom of Level 2 appeared to have an increase in artifact density (Table 4-4). Excavations in Level 3 (30-40 cmbd) encountered a concentration of a friable, shiny black material, which appears to be hardened tar from an episode of tarring the nearby building's roof. The nodules of the tar were noted in the profile of the east wall of the unit (Figure 4-6).

In addition, pockets of lighter soil were noted in this level. The artifact density of the level appears to increase, with glass fragments, metal, bone and ceramics recovered (Table 4-4). The soil encountered in this level was fairly loose and a sandy clay. Level 4 (40-50 cmbd) experienced a change in the soil, with caliche in portions of the unit level. The eastern half of the unit exhibited the caliche, which

Table 4-3. Cultural Material Recovered from Unit 4

Excavation Level/Count/Weight	Bone	Soil Sample	Glass				Historic Stone Material			Metal			Other		Total	
			clear	dark olive	flat glass	flat glass, aqua	brick	brick/tile	sandstone	slag	cut nail	tin foil	wire nail	Personal Item (gold cross with bronze)		Terra Cotta Flower Pot
1 (0-10 cmbd)																
Count	1															1
2 (10-20 cmbd)																
Count	1															1
3 (20-30 cmbd)																
Count	1															1
4 (30-40 cmbd)																
Count	1	1	1	1	2	6			1	1						13
weight (g)	7.5															7.5
5 (40-50 cmbd)																
Count	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
weight (g)	2.1															2.1
Total Count	1	5	2	1	1	2	6	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	27
Total weight (g)	9.6															9.6

produced no cultural material. The western portion of the unit exhibited mottled soil that produced cultural material (Table 4-3). The caliche portion was more compact. Excavation of Level 5 (50-58 cmbd) revealed more caliche. Cultural material was recovered only from the non-caliche portion of the level.

Monitoring

CAR staff was called to the site on January 21st to examine a clear glass bottle base found during the excavation of one of the trenches in the courtyard. The bottle base had a clearly recognizable maker's mark consisting of an "O-in-a square." Also noted in the backdirt from which the bottle fragment was recovered, were a heavily rusted lid for a kerosene container, a stoneware sherd fragment, and a handsaw-cut stake bone. Subsequent research related to the maker's mark identified it as having been produced by the Owens Bottle Company, of Toledo, Ohio and first used in 1919. The company was in business between 1903-1929 and also had a plant in Fairmont, West Virginia. Owens Bottle Company merged with the Illinois Glass Company of Alton Illinois in 1929 to form the Owens-Illinois Glass Company.

A subsequent visit to the site found that the conduits had been installed and the flooring replaced. The excavations of the shallow trenches within the structure were not monitored by an archaeologist because they were not projected to penetrate

below the caliche construction fill. Flooring was replaced immediately after the wiring was installed but at the time of the visit evidence of the trenches could be seen because the mortar had not yet been replaced between the flooring rocks.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Five units were excavated within the courtyard at the Spanish Governor's Palace in downtown San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. These units positioned along the paths of the proposed electrical conduit lines to ascertain whether buried undisturbed cultural deposits exist in these areas. Two units (Units 1 and 2) were placed along the southeastern portion of the courtyard, just north of the Loggia (Figure 4-1). Two units (Units 3 and 4) were placed in the northeastern portion of the courtyard (Figure 4-1). The final unit (Unit 5) was placed in the southwestern portion of the courtyard, in the vicinity of the women's restroom (Figure 4-1). All units were excavated to the depth of the proposed impact, approximately 18 inches below surface (46 cm below surface). All units exhibited different degrees of disturbance from landscaping activities and the reconstruction of the complex by H.P. Smith.

It is possible that these are related to the foundation of the archway or derive from the reconstruction efforts undertaken by H.P. Smith.



Figure 5-1. Unit 1 at terminal depth showing limestone rocks at base.

Unit 1 produced the largest density of artifacts in the third and fourth levels. The artifacts appear to be a mix of late colonial through 20th century material. An increased number of wire nails was recovered in Level 4 (47-57 cmbd), which may be related to the reconstruction efforts led by H.P. Smith during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The presence of colonial ceramics in Level 3 (37-47 cmbd) and Level 4 (47-57 cmbd) may be a result of soil being moved around during the reconstruction. The upper levels of the unit exhibit signs of continuous disturbance, which is supported by accounts of the grounds keeper. The courtyard at the Spanish Governor's Palace is tended to on a regular basis, and often new plantings are added while others are removed. A few large limestone rocks were observed at the base of the unit (Figure 5-1).



Figure 5-2. Unit 2 at terminal depth showing limestone rocks at base.

Unit 2 produced very little cultural material. Just a couple fragments of aqua glass were collected. The production of aqua glass spans a long period of time limiting its utility as a temporal diagnostic. The soils appear to be disturbed with pockets of gravel found throughout the excavation. It appears that the area around Unit 2 no longer has intact

deposits. Similar to Unit 1, a few limestone rocks were observed in the base of Unit 2 (Figure 5-2).

Unit 3 also showed signs of disturbance consisting of colonial and 19th and 20th century ceramics co-occurring between 30 and 50 cm below datum.

An increase in metal artifacts was noted in Level 5 (40-50 cmbd) and Level 6 (50-60 cmbd) produced a high number of wire nails. The trend in artifact numbers and types may result from the activities carried out by H.P. Smith during the reconstruction of the compound. Wire nails were common during the late 1800s and throughout the 20th century. A layer of limestone was identified at the bottom of the unit (Figure 5-3). The rocks appear to be consistent with construction rubble suggesting that they delineate the construction surface used by H.P. Smith. If this reconstruction is correct, it implies that deposits below this layer may be less disturbed than those above it. The colonial materials above this layer of cobbles may derive from the trenching that was carried out by Smith's workmen to define the foundations of the walls surrounding the courtyard (see Figure 2-1).



Figure 5-3. Unit 3 at terminal depth showing the level of limestone rocks in north and east wall profiles.



Figure 5-4. Unit 4 at terminal depth showing root and limestone rocks in the northwest corner.

Unit 4 was positioned within a flowerbed and exhibited disturbed soils throughout the five levels. The first three levels (0-30 cmbd) produced no cultural material, and soils were disturbed by roots and landscaping activities. Levels 4 (30-40 cmbd) and 5 (40-50 cmbd) produced cultural material that appears to be related to the later use of the site and the reconstruction, but also had roots present that could have disturbed the deposits (Figure 5-4). No material collected appears to be related to the colonial period. One gold crucifix pendant was recovered from Level 5. The crucifix is corroded, but is likely to be modern. Similar to the other three units, limestone rocks were noted in the bottom of the unit,

although these appear to be slightly smaller in size (see Figure 5-4).

Unit 5 produced cultural material in all levels excavated. The classes of artifacts that were present in the highest densities were tar and tar paper, and wire nails. The upper levels of the unit were highly disturbed by landscaping, and outlines of potted plants were noted in the unit walls. Tar fragments were present in the unit from 20 cm to 50 cm below datum. A discussion with the arborist at the Spanish Governor's Palace, revealed that the tar may have derived from the resurfacing of the roof of the adjacent building. A continuous layer of caliche was encountered in the bottom level of the unit (Figure 5-5), similar to all other units excavated. This unit reveals highly disturbed deposits that extend to the depth of the impact of the installation of the electrical conduits.



Figure 5-5. *Caliche encountered at the base of Unit 5.*

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, excavations at the Spanish Governor's Palace have revealed that much of the upper 18-inches of deposits within the courtyard have been disturbed by modern landscaping activities. It appears that portions of the courtyard have been altered within the past two decades. As leaf matter from the trees in the courtyard decayed, it produced the humus rich soil that was encountered in the upper levels and also formed a large mound of detritus that had accumulated in the center of the courtyard. Sometime during the past two decades, the mound and the courtyard flowerbeds were leveled. Also, flower pots were sometimes broken and added to the soil during planting seasons to aid in the aeration of the soil.

The archaeological excavations have encountered evidence of the 1930s surface that was present at the time of the reconstruction of the Palace and courtyard by H.P. Smith. This surface was marked by limestone cobbles and caliche found in the bottom of all five units. The tops of the cobbles appeared approximately 14-15 inches below surface and the surface on which they sat was buried roughly 16-18-inches below the modern surface of the courtyard. The high densities of wire nails encountered

just above or intermixed in with the cobbles appears to be derive from the 1930s reconstruction activities. Wire nails were not commonly used until the very end of the 19th century and replace cut nails completely by the 20th century.

The disturbed nature of the deposits within the courtyard to the depth of the proposed impact indicates that the potential for encountering intact colonial deposits are highly unlikely. At the conclusion of the excavations within the courtyard, CAR recommended that no further excavations were necessary because the installation of the conduit lines is not likely to impact intact cultural deposits. During the review of the draft report, which was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) prior to the inception of the monitoring phase of the project, the THC concurred with the recommendation that no additional excavations were necessary in the courtyard.

CAR also recommended that matrix removed by the contractor during trenching from 15-18-inches below surface be set aside so that CAR staff could screen it through a ¼ inch wire mesh and recover any artifacts that may be worthy of public exhibition. At the conclusion of the trenching, the contractors stated that they only excavated the trenches to 15 inches below the surface and used the matrix removed to refill the trench. Therefore, CAR archaeologists were not notified by the contractors

to screen the material, or to view the trenches prior to backfilling.

Limited monitoring of the excavation of the holes for floor outlets and pull-boxes also was conducted during the project. Cultural material observed in these trenches consisted of mainly 20th century artifacts, though one bone fragment shows evidence of Spanish Colonial period butchering. No other evidence related to the Spanish Colonial period was noted during the monitoring. No monitoring occurred within the structure for the conduit trenches since they did

not penetrate beneath the layer of degraded lime mortar and caliche fill under the flooring rocks.

Finally, while archaeological services associated with the lighting improvement could have included monitoring of the excavation and replacement of an old conduit running through the center of the courtyard, such was not necessary when the contractor was able to reuse the existing conduit. Once CAR was informed of this development, we were able to finalize the technical report summarizing the results of these investigations.

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