

Intensive Pedestrian Survey for the Majestic Ranch Apartments, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas



by

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with a contribution by

Raymond Mauldin

NON-REDACTED

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Prepared for:
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Technical Report, No. 82

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Abstract:

In May of 2019, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the proposed location for the Majestic Ranch Apartments development in northwest San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The work was conducted in response to a request by Poznecki-Camarillo, Inc. in order to fulfill the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the City of San Antonio's Unified Development Code. The project was located on private property; therefore, the project did not fall under the Antiquities Code of Texas or require an Antiquities Permit. Dr. Paul Shawn Marceaux served as Principal Investigator, and Sarah Wigley served as Project Archaeologist.

CAR surveyed a six-hectare (14.8-acre) project area located at 4862 Callaghan Road and 118 Woodside Drive. No artifacts or cultural features were encountered during shovel testing. The entire project area was found to be disturbed. The CAR recommends that construction proceed as planned. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with Texas Historical Commission guidelines.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In May of 2019, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of six hectares (14.8 acres) located on Callaghan Road in northwest San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The CAR was contracted by Poznecki-Camarillo, Inc. (PCI) to conduct an archaeological investigation of the proposed site of the Majestic Ranch Apartments.

The Majestic Ranch Apartments Project is a proposed 288-unit multi-family rental housing development. The development is funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and requires review by the State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The project is located on private property and does not require review under the Antiquities Code of Texas, and therefore, it did not require an Antiquities Permit. The project falls under COSA's Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634) at the municipal level. After consultation with the City of San Antonio's (COSA) Office of Historic Preservation, it was determined that no impact was planned to the City-owned easement along Zarzamora Creek. Dr. Paul Shawn Marceaux, CAR Director, served as Principal Investigator, and Sarah Wigley served as the Project Archaeologist.

Area of Potential Effect

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located at 4862 Callaghan Road and 118 Woodside Drive. The project area is bounded by Callaghan Road to the north, East Horseshoe Bend to the east, Majestic Drive to the southeast, Silvercrest Drive to the southwest, and Woodside Drive to the west. The project area is bisected north-south by Zarzamora Creek with 4862 Callaghan Road located east of the creek and 118 Woodside Drive located to the west (Figures 1-1 and 1-2).

Seven shovel tests (STs) were excavated during the course of the survey. No artifacts or cultural features were encountered, and all STs showed evidence of disturbed fill. This is consistent with the findings of CAR's 2006 survey along Callaghan Road and Zarzamora Creek, which suggested that the property was the location of a construction dump (Thompson 2007). The entire project area appears highly disturbed to a depth of at least 60 centimeters below the surface (cmbs). The CAR recommends that construction proceed as planned.



Figure 1-1. The APE on an aerial map.

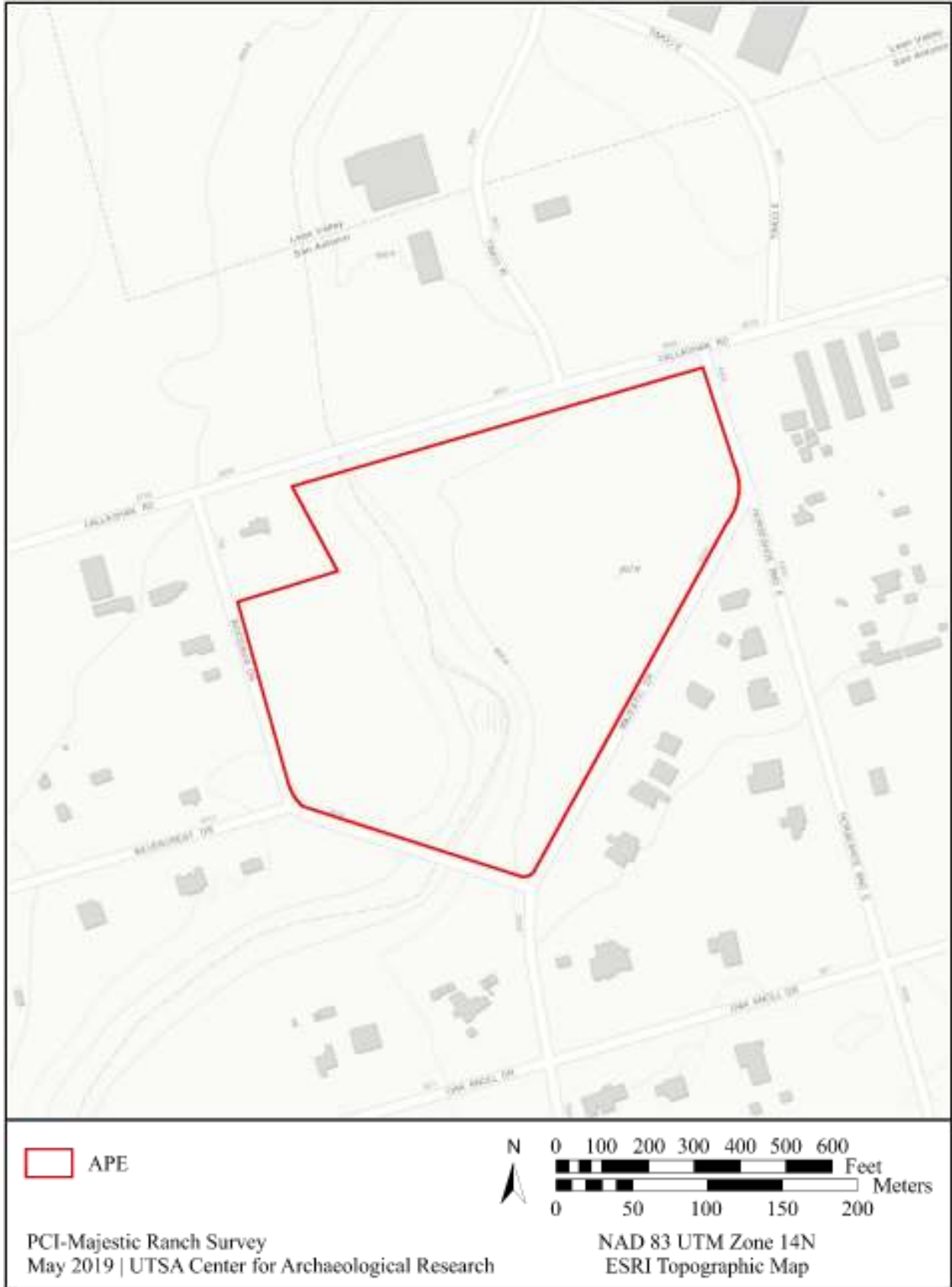


Figure 1-2. The APE on a topographic map.

Report Organization

This report contains four chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 discusses the natural environment of the project area, provides a general archaeological background, and reviews the archaeological background and previous archaeological investigations conducted within the vicinity of the project area. Chapter 3 details the field and laboratory methodologies employed in the completion of this investigation. Chapter 4 presents the results of this investigation, and Chapter 5 provides a project summary and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Project Background

Sarah Wigley and Raymond Mauldin

This chapter presents a background discussion of the project area in order to provide context for the results of this investigation. This discussion includes the project area's natural environment, archaeological background, and previous archaeology conducted within the vicinity of the project area. Located in northwestern San Antonio, just inside Loop 410, the APE is bounded by Callaghan Road to the north, East Horseshoe Bend to the east, Majestic Drive to the southeast, Silvercrest Drive to the southwest, and Woodside Drive to the west. The project is bisected north-south by Zarzamora Creek. Zarzamora Creek, also known as Salsamora Creek, rises in northwestern San Antonio and runs southeast eight miles through western San Antonio to San Pedro Creek (Texas State Historical Association 2010). Zarzamora Creek is channelized within the project area.

Environment

San Antonio is positioned where the southernmost Great Plains meets the Gulf Coast, demarcated by the Balcones Escarpment. It is also near a significant climate boundary, partitioning a humid-subtropical from an arid zone (Petersen 2001). The city's location near these significant geological and climactic boundaries results in a varied resource base. The area contains a number of reliable freshwater sources, including the San Antonio River, freshwater artesian springs, and the Edwards Aquifer. The growing season averages 270 days (Petersen 2001:22). The temperature reaches average lows of 4°C in January and average highs of 36°C in July (Long 2017). Though highly variable, the average annual rainfall is approximately 76.2 cm, with seasonal peaks in the spring and fall (Petersen 2001:22). The project is located within the Balconian biotic province, which is described as an intermediate ecological area between the eastern forest and the western desert (Blair 1950). The elevation of the project area is roughly 246 meters (m) above sea level.

The naturally occurring soils in the project area are primarily Houston Black gravelly clay (HuB; Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS]). These soils make up more than 40 percent of the project area and are found on ridges with one to three percent slopes. They are moderately well drained and reach depths of more than 203 cm. A small section directly south of Callaghan Road consists of Whitewright-Austin complex soils (BsC), which are found on one to five percent slopes and reach depths of more than 203 cm. Surrounding the creek and comprising nearly 40 percent of the project area are Tinn and Frio (Tf) soils. These soils are found on flood plains with zero to one percent slopes. These soils are moderately well drained and reach depths of more than 203 cm. West of Zarzamora Creek the natural soils are composed of Lewisville silty clay (LvA), which are found on stream terraces with zero to one percent slopes. They are well drained and reach depths of more than 203 cm (NRCS 2019).

The project area is located near the southern boundary of the Blackland Prairie ecoregion. The Blackland Prairie is a temperate grassland that was historically a true tallgrass prairie. Grass species include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*). Mottes of live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and hackberry (*Celtis* spp.) are native as well. Much of this ecoregion is classified a prime farmland, and during the first half of the nineteenth century, more than 80 percent of the native vegetation was lost to row crop agriculture (NRCS 2019).

Archaeological Background

While CAR recorded no new archeological sites on this project, both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites are present in the immediate project area. Consequently, a brief summary of the prehistoric and historic sequences is provided. Black (1989), Johnson and Goode (1994), Collins (2004), and Hester (2004) provide detailed overviews of the prehistoric archaeological sequence, which spans roughly 13,000 calendar years in Central and South Texas. The historic sequence, which begins with the first European contact in AD 1528, is covered by multiple authors, including Ramsdell (1959), Campbell (2003), Fehrenbach (2010), and Chipman and Joseph (2010; see also Foster 2008; Wade 2003).

The prehistoric sequence is commonly divided into three broad periods. The first of these is the Paleoindian period. While earlier claims have been made (see Collins 2003; Waters et al. 2011), the period likely began sometime around 11,500 radiocarbon years before present (RCYBP), a time frame that when calibrated (see Fiedel 1999) is roughly 13,500 calendar years before present (BP). Traditionally, the period was characterized as having low population levels organized into small groups of highly mobile hunter-gathers focused on Pleistocene fauna (e.g., Wormington 1957). These early views, especially of the subsistence base, have been increasingly challenged, with recent summaries (see Bousman et al. 2004; Collins 2003, 2004; Jennings 2012) stressing a more generalized hunting and gathering subsistence base for this period (but see Waguespack and Surovell 2003).

The Archaic period (ca. 8800 to 1200 RCYBP) is divided into Early (8800-6800 RCYBP), Middle (6800-4200 RCYBP), and Late (4200-1200 RCYBP) sub-periods in Central Texas (Collins 2004). The Archaic sees a number of changes, including increasing population, intensification of hunting and gathering, reduced mobility, and technological shifts. The latter includes the use of heated rocks in cooking, a practice that often produced large burned rock middens (see Acuña 2006; Black and Creel 1997; Carpenter and Hartnett 2011; Thoms 2008), new projectile point types (see Turner et al. 2011) that seem to be more spatially restricted, and an expansion of ground stone technology (see Hester 2004, 2005; Johnson and Goode 1994).

The final prehistoric period, the Late Prehistoric (1200-325 RCYBP), has been the focus of a variety of studies (e.g., Dering 2008; Kenmotsu and Boyd, eds. 2012; Ricklis 1996; Rush et al. 2015). The period is traditionally divided into two sub-periods, Austin (1200-700 RCYBP) and Toyah (700-325 RCYBP). While many of the preceding Archaic characteristics continue into the Austin sub-period, the beginning of the Late Prehistoric is defined by the introduction of the bow and arrow at around 1200 RCYBP (Jelks 1962; Prewitt 1981). The Toyah sub-period has commonly been seen as a radical departure from the Austin sub-period. The Toyah sub-period sees the use of ceramics and a number of changes in the chipped stone technology. These changes include the use of beveled knives, end scrapers, and gravers (see Johnson 1994). The period is often characterized as reflecting an increased focus on bison (see Collins 2004; Johnson 1994:259), though recently this view has been questioned, with Dering (2008) suggesting that subsistence was based on a diversity of plants and animals (see also Karbula 2003; Mauldin et al. 2012).

The end of the Late Prehistoric occurs around AD 1625. The Historic period in Texas, defined by the arrival of Europeans in the region, begins in AD 1528 (Favata and Fernandez 1993). There is, then, some temporal overlap between the two sequences (see Kenmotsu and Arnn 2012). For this short summary, the historic period is divided into four sub-periods. These are the Proto-historic (AD 1528-1700), the Colonial/Mission Period (AD 1700-1821), the Mexican Period (AD 1821-1836), and the Republic of Texas/Early State Period (AD 1836-1900). Fisher (1996), Campbell (2003), and Fehrenbach (2010) provide useful summaries of the general region as well as the San Antonio area for the post-1900 period.

Direct Spanish contact with Native American groups initially occurred in AD 1528 when Cabeza de Vaca and his associates were shipwrecked on the Texas coast (Favata and Fernandez 1993). Spanish, and to a lesser extent French explorers, made multiple excursions into what was to become Texas over the next 175 years (see Chipman and Joseph 2010; Wade 2003). In 1685, France established a settlement, subsequently known as Fort Saint Louis, in what is now Victoria County on the Texas coast. While this initial attempt ended in failure in 1689 (Foster 1998), it resulted in increased Spanish interest in the region, including attempts to establish missions in East Texas to counter the French interest (Chipman and Joseph 2010). While these East Texas missions soon failed, the Spanish did establish Mission San Juan Bautista, near present day Eagle Pass, by AD 1700 (Weddle 1968).

The Colonial/Mission period (AD 1700-1824) saw the gradual expansion of Spanish influence. Principally, in response to perceived French threats, a series of Spanish expeditions in the early 1700s were initiated into Texas, including the Alarcon Expedition (1718-1719) that resulted in the founding the Villa de Bexar, which became the San Antonio, and the Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) in 1718 (Cox 2005; de la Teja 1995; Foster 1995; Habig 1968; Hoffman 1935, 1938). In 1731, several failed East Texas

missions were reestablished in the San Antonio area (Habig 1968), and new settlers from the Canary Islands arrived (de la Teja 1995; Poyo 1991). However, by the close of the eighteenth century, San Antonio missions were on the decline, with several virtually abandoned. Secularization of the missions soon followed (Carlson 1994; Cox 1997).

The Mexican period (AD 1821-1836) essentially begins with the transfer of Texas from Spanish to Mexican control with the successful completion of the Mexican Revolt (1810-1821; see Henderson 2009). One component of the transfer that directly impacted Texas was the adoption of a Mexican Constitution (1824). The Constitution enacted a series of reforms that essentially provided free land to heads of household. This produced a dramatic influx of settlers into Texas, so much so that by 1830, laws were changed to outlaw immigration from the United States (Campbell 2003; Cox 1997; Henson 1982). Increasing tensions in the region between newly arrived settlers, original settlers, and the Mexican authorities eventually resulted in revolt (de la Teja 1997). Attempts by the Mexican government to reassert control included the arrival of an army under the direction of Antonio López de Santa Anna. In early March of 1836, rebel forces inside the Alamo were defeated by the Mexican army. Santa Anna pursued the Texas forces, but he was subsequently defeated and captured by Texans in late April of 1836 at the battle of San Jacinto (Cox 1997; Davis 2004).

The Republic of Texas was established in 1836 during the conflict with Mexico. However, disputes with Mexico and the new Republic continued throughout the late 1830s and into the early 1840s. San Antonio was occupied on two occasions by forces loyal to Mexico in 1842, and continuing tensions were only exacerbated by the annexation of Texas into the United States (Fehrenbach 1983). This annexation, as well as continuing disputes regarding the location of the southern border, resulted in a declaration of war by the United States in May of 1846. Following multiple engagements through 1847 (see Marley 2014) the war was ended by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 (Bauer 1992; Wallace 1965).

Following the war with Mexico, the state's population once again was bolstered by significant emigration from Europe with German, Czech, and Polish immigrants arriving in large numbers, as well as people relocating from the southern United States (Campbell 2003). The availability of farmland and the state's pro-slavery stance fueled much of this growth (Campbell 1989; Cox 1997; Meinig 1969). Not surprisingly, Texas seceded from the United States and sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War (Campbell 2003). Following the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 and the readmission of the state to the United States, population growth continued. By AD 1900, the state's population surpassed three million people (Meinig 1969).

Previous Archaeology

No sites have been recorded within the project area, and there are no recorded sites within a 1-km radius. However, there are five archaeological sites within 3 km of the project area documented in the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Texas Historical Commission [THC] 2019; Figure 2-1). These sites are summarized in Table 2-1.


Site 41BX46 is a Middle Archaic burned rock midden recorded by Bill Fawcett and Paul McGuff in 1970. The site is located east of Zarzamora Creek 1.7 km northeast of the project area. Salvage work was recommended, but there is no record that this occurred (THC 2019).

Site 41BX487, the Jon Scheele Site, is a burned rock midden site recorded by Sylvia Bento in 1978 as part of a class project. The presence of prehistoric artifacts, including a Kinney point, and historic artifacts were noted (THC 2019). Kinney points date to the Middle Archaic period (Turner et al. 2011). The site is located east of Zarzamora Creek and is 2.9 km northeast of the project area (THC 2019).

Site 41BX1429, the Onion House, was recorded by the Southern Texas Archaeological association in 2001. The site consists of three historic stone buildings. The presence of metal, glass, and brick was noted. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The site is located east of Bandera Road and is 2.8 km northwest of the project area (THC 2019). The Onion House is an example of early historic settlement in the Leon Valley area (Campbell and Jones 2008).

Site 41BX1879 was recorded by Raba-Kistner Consultants in 2010. It a prehistoric temporary campsite with buried deposits containing burned rock and lithic debitage. The site is located north of Huebner Creek and is 2.5 km northwest of the project area (THC 2019).

Site 41BX1880 was recorded by Raba-Kistner Consultants in 2010. The site is a burned rock midden that showed evidence of significant looting. It is located west of Huebner Creek and is 3 km west of the project area (THC 2019).



Redacted Image

Figure 2-1. Archaeological sites within 3 km of the APE.

Table 2-1. Sites within 3 km of the Project Area

| Site | Name | Time Period | Site Type |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 41BX46 | N/A | Middle Archaic | Burned rock midden, lithic debris |
| 41BX487 | Jon Scheele Site | Prehistoric, Historic | Burned rock midden, chipped stone tools; Historic scatter |
| 41BX1429 | Onion House | 1862-1983 | Historic stone house and outbuildings |
| 41BX1879 | Huebner Site 1 | Prehistoric | Temporary campsite |
| 41BX1880 | Huebner Site 2 | Prehistoric | Burned rock midden, chipped stone tools |

Two projects have been completed in the immediate vicinity of the project area. The CAR conducted a survey of Callaghan Road and Zarzamora Creek along the northern boundary of the project area in 2006 (Thompson 2007). No sites were recorded. Shovel testing within the northern portion of the project area was attempted during the course of this survey, but the testing was obstructed by dense construction material. The area was hypothesized to be entirely construction dump east of Zarzamora Creek based on the level of disturbance encountered (Thompson 2007). In 2005, Anthony and Brown conducted a small survey about 320 m south of the project area, east of Zarzamora Creek. No sites were recorded (THC 2019).

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Chapter 3: Field and Laboratory Methodology

Field Methods

In order to identify and document potential cultural resources, CAR staff completed a pedestrian survey with shovel testing within the project area. Seven shovel tests were excavated. This rate is consistent with THC guidelines for the size of the project area. It was not necessary to excavate additional shovel tests as no shovel tests were positive for cultural material.

Shovel tests were approximately 30 cm in diameter and excavated to depths of 60 cm below the ground surface, terminating before that depth if excavators encountered an obstruction or clear indicators of disturbance. Shovel tests were excavated in 10-cm arbitrary levels, and all soil matrixes were screened through one-quarter inch hardware cloth. At the conclusion of each shovel test, the excavator recorded natural stratigraphic levels when possible and refilled the hole with the screened soil. No surface or subsurface artifacts were encountered during the course of this survey.

The Project Archaeologist maintained a daily log, and all archaeologists completed standard shovel test forms. Activities and were documented and supported by digital data, including photographs, where appropriate. CAR staff recorded all shovel tests and attributes specific to those tests with a GPS unit.

For the purposes of this survey, an archaeological site was defined as containing: (1) five or more surface artifacts within a 15-m radius (ca. 706 m²); (2) a single cultural feature, such as a hearth, observed on the surface or exposed in shovel testing; (3) a positive shovel test containing at least three artifacts within a 10-cm level; (4) a positive shovel test containing at least five artifacts; or (5) two positive shovel tests within 30 m of one another. An archaeological site must contain cultural materials or features that are at least 50 years old within a given area. No archaeological sites were documented during this survey.

Laboratory Methods

All records generated during the project were prepared in accordance with Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 79 and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Field forms were printed on acid-free paper and completed with pencil. No artifacts were collected during the course of this survey.

All field notes, forms, photographs, and drawings were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper, labeled, and placed in archival-quality page protectors to prevent accidental smearing due to moisture. All project-related materials, including the final report, are permanently stored at the CAR's curation facility.

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Chapter 4: Results

In May of 2019, CAR conducted a pedestrian survey of a six-hectare (14.8 acre) area intended for development located on Callaghan Road in west San Antonio. This chapter provides the results of this investigation. It concludes with a summary of the project and CARs recommendations.

Results

Seven shovel tests were excavated within the APE (Figure 4-1). None were positive for cultural material. All shovel tests encountered disturbed soils. The majority of shovel tests reached a terminal depth of 60 cmbs (Table 4-1). Two shovel tests were terminated after encountering limestone, and one was terminated at 58 cmbs after encountering flowable fill.

Construction related material was encountered in all shovel tests in the APE. Shovel Test 1 (Figure 4-2) contained mottled dark gray (10YR 4/1) and very pale brown (10YR 8/3) clay caliche fill and asphalt in the upper levels. A dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay trash deposit containing roofing shingles, nails, and glass was encountered in Level 6 (50-60 cmbs). The finding of a trash deposit at this depth suggests that this is an old surface that was used as a dump. Apparently, the current surface has been raised through repeated fill and dumping episodes. The evidence of repeated dumping correlates with the other shovel tests excavated within the project area. Shovel Test 2 (Figure 4-2) was excavated almost entirely (15-58 cmbs) within very pale brown (10YR 8/4) sandy clay fill before encountering flowable fill at 58 cmbs. Shovel Test 5 (Figure 4-3) contained black (10YR 2/1) oil and metal stained gravelly clay deposits below 20 cmbs.

While Thompson (2007) had suggested that only the deposits east of Zarzamora Creek were disturbed, STs 6 and 7 excavated west of the creek showed evidence of disturbance as well. Shovel Test 6 contained gray (10YR 5/1) and white (10YR 8/1) mottled clay to a depth of 54 cmbs, encountering potentially intact dark gray (10YR 4/1) blocky clay at a depth of 54-60 cmbs. Shovel Test 7 contained mottled clay to 60 cmbs and gravel deposits with asphalt from 40 to 60 cmbs. These findings are consistent with the report of a local caretaker documented during the 2006 survey, who stated that landowners in the area dumped along the creek deliberately in order to alleviate flooding (Thompson 2007).



Figure 4-1. Shovel test distribution within the APE.

Table 4-1. Shovel Test Summary

| ST | Cultural Material Present | Depth (cmbs) | Reason for Termination |
|----|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1 | No | 60 | Complete |
| 2 | No | 58 | Flowable fill |
| 3 | No | 60 | Complete |
| 4 | No | 40 | Limestone |
| 5 | No | 47 | Limestone |
| 6 | No | 60 | Complete |
| 7 | No | 60 | Complete |



Figure 4-2. Shovel Test 1 (60 cmbs), note trash deposit at bottom.



Figure 4-3. Shovel Test 2 (60 cmbs), note fill.



Figure 4-4. Shovel Test 5 (30 cmbs), note dark stains.

Overall, the appearance of the landscape within the APE suggests significant modification. The landform within the project area as a whole appears to be artificially raised (Figure 4-5). The northern portion of the project area along Callaghan Road is paved (Figure 4-6). The creek within the project area is channelized (Figure 4-7).



Figure 4-5. Central portion of the project area, note artificially raised appearance (facing south, Zarzamora Creek to the right).



Figure 4-6. Pavement within the project area (facing north, Callaghan Road in the background).



Figure 4-7. Channelized Zarzamora Creek within the project area (facing south).

Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations

CAR's pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the area proposed for the Majestic Ranch Apartments was conducted in May of 2019. The survey of the APE, including seven shovel tests, did not discover any archaeological deposits. Shovel tests documented significant disturbance throughout the area to a depth of at least 60 cmbs. These findings are consistent with CAR's 2006 survey of the area (Thompson 2007). CAR recommends that construction of the Majestic Ranch Apartment Complex proceed as planned. In the event that construction does encounter archaeological deposits, work should cease, and the City Archaeologist and/or the THC should be notified.

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