

Archaeological Monitoring of Transformer Installation and Underground Cable Excavations at 613 Mission Road, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas



by
Mikaela Razo

NON-REDACTED

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9171

Principal Investigator
Cynthia M. Munoz

Prepared for:
Adams Environmental, Inc.
12521 Nacogdoches Road #102
San Antonio, Texas 78217



Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, Texas 78249
Technical Report, No. 85

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Abstract:

On December 16-17, 2019, and January 6-8, 2020, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted archaeological monitoring at 613 Mission Road in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The work was performed in response to a request by Adams Environmental, Inc. (AEI) for underground primary cabling and transformer installation by CPS Energy. At the municipal level, the project falls under the City of San Antonio's (COSA) Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). Projects conducted on public lands are subject to the Texas Antiquities Code and require review by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9171. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator on the project, and Mikaela Razo served as Project Archaeologist.

Excavations on the APE consisted of a trench for primary cabling, measuring approximately 16.4 m (54 ft.) in length, 0.6 m (2 ft.) in width, and 1.0-2.2 m (40-88 in.) in depth, and an excavation for the installation of a transformer, measuring 1.3-x-1.2-x-1.2 m (50-x-48-x-48 in.). No cultural features or diagnostic artifacts were encountered during excavations. The CAR recommends that construction proceed as planned. However, in the unlikely case that archaeological features and/or artifacts are uncovered, the CAR recommends that work cease and that AEI, CPS, COSA-OHP, and the THC be notified immediately. The THC concurs with CAR's recommendations. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On December 16-17, 2019, and January 6-8, 2020, The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Center for Archaeological Research (CAR), in response to a request from Adams Environmental, Inc. (AEI) conducted archaeological monitoring for CPS Energy (CPS) at 613 Mission Road in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The archaeological work consisted of monitoring CPS-related excavation activities for underground primary cabling and transformer installation. At the municipal level, the property falls under the City of San Antonio (COSA) Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). Projects conducted on public lands are subject to the Texas Antiquities Code and require review by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9171. A scope of work was prepared using parameters requested by AEI and CPS to define tasks for the proposed project prior to its start. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator, and Mikaela Razo served as Project Archaeologist.

The project consisted of the mechanical excavation of two trenches, one for the installation of a transformer and the other for primary cabling. No cultural features or diagnostic artifacts were found during excavations. The CAR recommends that construction proceed as planned. However, in the unlikely case that archaeological features and/or artifacts are uncovered, the CAR recommends that work cease and that AEI, CPS, COSA-OHP, and the THC be notified immediately. The THC concurs with CAR's recommendations. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines in accession file number 2239.

As no material was recovered, this report follows the format suggested by the Short Report Content Guidelines of the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA 2020). There are four chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction and delineation of the Area of Potential Effect. Chapter 2 discusses previous archaeology near the APE, and the archaeological field, laboratory, and curation methods used during the project. Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the field investigation, and Chapter 4 presents CAR's summary and recommendations.

Area of Potential Effect

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located on COSA owned right-of-way (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The location of the work is along and within Mission Road just north of its intersection with Mitchell Street (see Figure 1-1). Excavations on the APE consisted of a trench for primary cabling, measuring approximately 16.4 m (54 ft.) in length, 0.6 m (2 ft.) in width, and 1.0-2.2 m (40-88 in.) in depth, and an excavation for the installation of a transformer, measuring 1.3-x-1.2-x-1.2 m (50-x-48-x-48 in.).



Figure 1-1. Location of the APE shown on Esri topographic map.



Figure 1-2. Location of the APE shown on Google aerial image.


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Chapter 2: Project Setting and Methods

Given the limited scope of this project, this report does not include an environmental section or culture history. Previous archaeological investigations are discussed here, along with the field, laboratory, and curation methods.

Previous Archaeology

According to the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas, no previously recorded sites are within the APE nor has it been surveyed (THC 2020). The project is within 1 km (0.62 mile) of the following sites: 41BX12, 41BX238, 41BX257, 41BX278, 41BX1665, 41BX1887, 41BX2136, and 41BX2179 (THC 2020; Figure 2-1). The APE is within the Mission Parkway National Register Historic District, and it is less than 0.40 km (0.25 mi.) north of Mission Concepción (41BX12). The mission, established in 1716, has been the subject of multiple archaeological investigations, including recent investigations in 2017 and 2019 by CAR (Kemp 2017, 2019; THC 2020). Flakes, modern ceramics, and glass were present at the multicomponent site 41BX238 (THC 2020). The Padre Navarro House (41BX257), or the Roy Bean House, is a designated Historic Site that was the original home of José Antonio Navarro in the 1850s (Casa Navarro State Historic Site 2020), but it was later occupied by Texas Judge Roy Bean (Scurlock et al. 1976:101). Navarro was one of the first signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and later signed the Constitution of the Republic of Texas (Siegel 2020). Judge Roy Bean, known as the “Law West of the Pecos,” was a frontier Justice of the Peace (Sonnichsen 2020). The Yturri-Edmonds House and Mill (41BX278) is located on Mission Road and is currently a tourist attraction managed by the San Antonio Conservation Society (THC 2020). The Roosevelt Park Site (41BX1665), a Late Prehistoric open occupation, is listed as a State Archeological Landmark (SAL; THC 2020). No information is available for site 41BX1887. The Mission Grove site (41BX2136) consisted of *Rabdotus* snails, flakes, an extensive buried deposit of fire-cracked rock, and a burned dart point. It was likely an Archaic occupation site (THC 2020). Site 41BX2179 comprises a series of transitional Archaic occupations with evidence of lithic scatters (THC 2020).



Redacted Image

Figure 2-1. Previously recorded archaeological sites located within 1 km (0.62 mile) of the APE.

Field, Laboratory, and Curation Methods

The CAR conducted archaeological monitoring for the transformer installation and underground cable excavations at 613 Mission Road. The work consisted of monitoring a mechanically excavated trench within the APE. CAR staff completed a standard form consisting of a daily log of activities. The log was supported by digital data, including Trimble GPS observations, photographs, and a photographic log. All field notes, forms, and photographs were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper and placed in archival-quality page protectors. 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. No artifacts were recovered during this project. All project related materials, including the final report, are permanently stored at the CAR curation facility in accession file number 2239.

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Chapter 3: Results of the Field Investigations

On December 16-17, 2019, and January 6-8, 2020, CAR staff monitored mechanical trenching at 613 Mission Road. Prior to CAR's submission of the antiquities permit application to THC, the construction contractor for this project started work on this project without approval from CPS. That contractor excavated approximately 5.5-6.0 m (18-20 ft.) of trench from the transformer pad location to the street. The trench was backfilled before the start of archaeological monitoring. The archaeological fieldwork consisted of monitoring the mechanical excavation of one continuous trench from the transformer pad location to the manhole in the center of Mission Road (see Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The previously excavated portion of the trench was reopened. CAR inspected the back dirt and the trench walls for evidence of artifacts or features. The trench, both the previously excavated portion and portion in the street, was excavated in three sections and is referenced in CAR's field notes, and below, as Trench Sections 1, 2, and 3.

Trench Section 1 was approximately 2.7 m (9 ft., west to east) in length, and it was excavated to 1 m (40 in.) below the surface from the transformer pad to the beginning of Trench Section 2 (Figure 3-1). No artifacts or features were found in either the profile or the backfill. Trench Section 2 was approximately 8.8 m (29 ft.; northwest to southeast) in length, and it was excavated to a depth of 1-1.6 m (40-63 in.) below the surface (Figures 3-2 and 3-3). The terminal depth on the eastern end of Trench Section 2 was extended beyond the targeted depth of 1.2 m (4 ft.) due to four exposed utility pipes. The profile sediment of Trench Sections 1 and 2 is identified as Sunev clay loam (California Soil Resource Lab 2020). No features were observed in the profile of Trench Section 2. Non-diagnostic artifacts, including glass, sewer pipe fragments, a metal spoon, and nails, were noted but not collected. Trench Section 2 connected to Trench Section 3 through a small hole dug beneath sidewalk. Trench Section 3 was approximately 4.9 m (16 ft.; northwest to southeast) in length, and it was excavated to alternating depths between 1.4-2.2m (54-88 in., Figures 3-4 and 3-5). The sediment in Trench Section 3 is identified as Sunev clay loam (California Soil Resource Lab 2020). Gravel deposits surrounded the underground manhole structure (see Figure 3-5). No artifacts or features were documented in this trench section or in the associated backfill.



Figure 3-1. Trench Section 1 from transformer pad running west to east, connecting to Trench Section 2.



Figure 3-2. Northwestern portion of Trench Section 2 from Trench Section 1.



Figure 3-3. Southeastern portion of Trench Section 2 ending at edge of the sidewalk.



Figure 3-4. Northeastern portion of Trench Section 3 that connects to Trench Section 2 beneath sidewalk.



Figure 3-5. Southeastern portion of Trench Section 3 connecting to manhole structure.

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Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

In response to a request from AEI, the CAR conducted archaeological monitoring for the CPS underground primary cable and transformer installation at 613 Mission Road in San Antonio, Texas. No features or diagnostic artifacts were found in the trench or in the backfill. The CAR recommends that the installation proceed. However, in the unlikely case that archaeological features and/or artifacts are uncovered, the CAR recommends that work cease and that AEI, CPS, COSA-OHP, and the THC be notified immediately. The THC concurs with the CAR's recommendations.

All records generated by and associated with this project were prepared in accordance with Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 79 and THC requirements for State Held-In-Trust collections. They are permanently curated at CAR in accession file number 2239.

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