

Archaeological Monitoring of Brick Paver Replacement at Milam Park (41BX922), San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by
Michelle Carpenter



Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484

REDACTED

Principal Investigator
Cynthia M. Munoz

Prepared for:
City of San Antonio
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78204



Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, Texas 78249-1644
Technical Report, No. 92

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Abstract:

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, the Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted archaeological monitoring at Milam Park (41BX992) in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The monitoring was performed in response to a request from the City of San Antonio for the repair and leveling of brick pavers in 20 locations as part of a park beautification project. At the municipal level, the project falls under the City of San Antonio 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. The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator on the project, and Michelle Carpenter and José Zapata served as Project Archaeologists.

Excavations at the park consisted of the removal of damaged concrete pavers, the addition of sand for leveling, and the replacement of the pavers. Approximately 349.4 square meters (3,760.9 sq. ft.) were manually excavated. Excavations were contained to the layer of sand previously imported as a base for pavers. No cultural features or artifacts were encountered during monitoring. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, in response to a request from the City of San Antonio (COSA), the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research (UTSA-CAR) conducted archaeological monitoring at Milam Park (41BX992) in Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas. The project involved monitoring the removal and repair of sidewalk pavers throughout the park. At a municipal level, Milam Park falls under the COSA Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). The project also falls under the Texas Antiquities Code, and requires review by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484. Because Milam Park was the location of the former City Cemetery (1848-approximately 1855) and there is a potential for the disturbance of human remains, the project falls under the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 711 as amended. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator, and Michelle Carpenter and José Zapata served as Project Archaeologists.

The project consisted of the manual removal of sidewalk pavers from 20 locations on the property. No human remains, cultural features, or artifacts were found during monitoring. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines in accession file number 2308. As no material was recovered, this report follows the format suggested by the Short Report Content Guidelines of the Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA 2020). There are four chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction and a description of the project area. Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the site, discusses previous archaeology near the project area, and outlines the field and laboratory methods used during the project. Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the archaeological monitoring and Chapter 4 presents the CAR's summary and recommendations.

Project Area

The Project Area is located on COSA owned Milam Park in downtown San Antonio. The park is bordered by West Houston Street on the north, North San Saba Street on the west, West Commerce Street on the south, and North Santa Rosa Street on the east (Figure 1-1). Twenty locations, approximately 349.4 square meters (3,760.9 sq. ft.), were manually excavated (Figure 1-2).

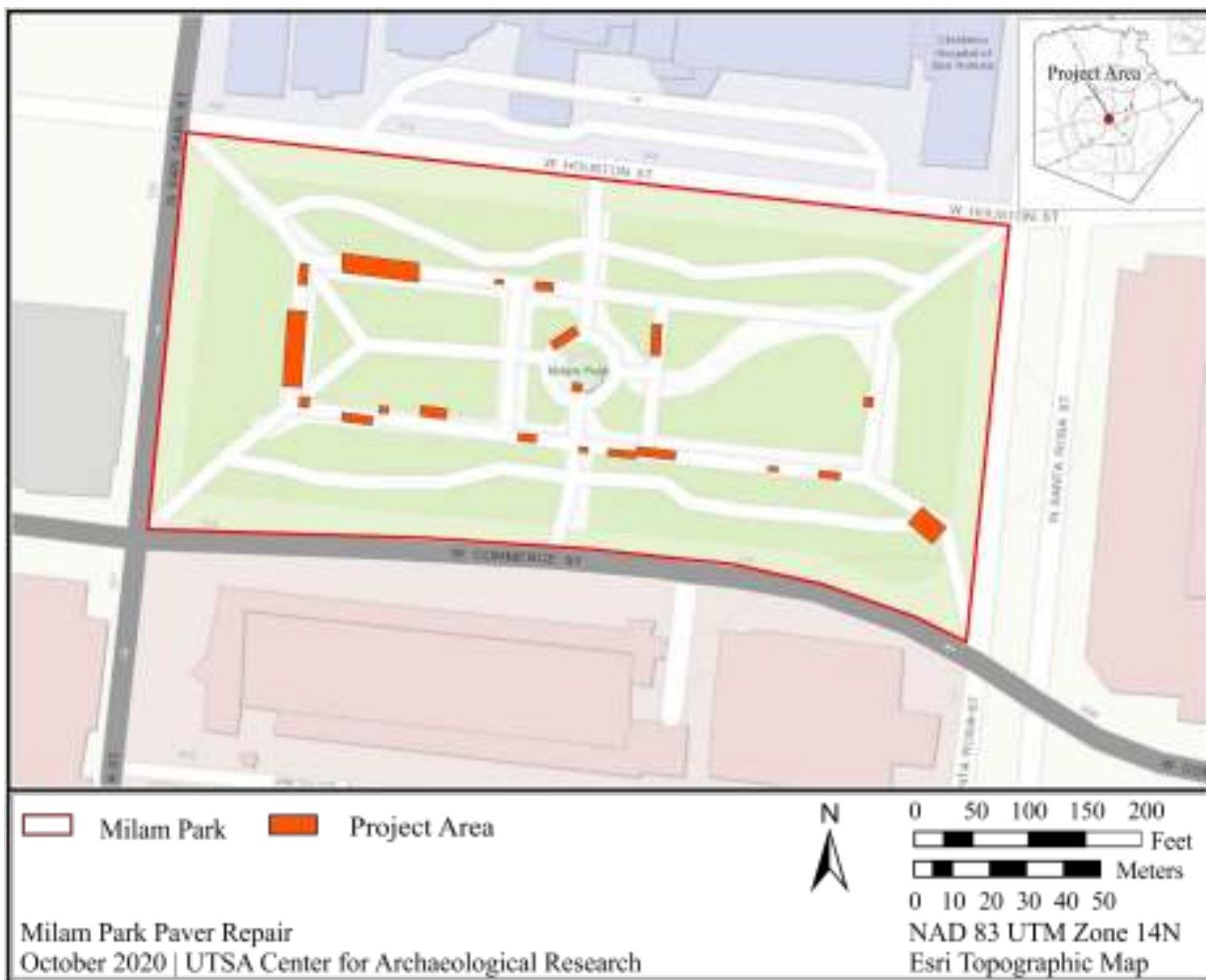


Figure 1-1. Milam Park Project Area.

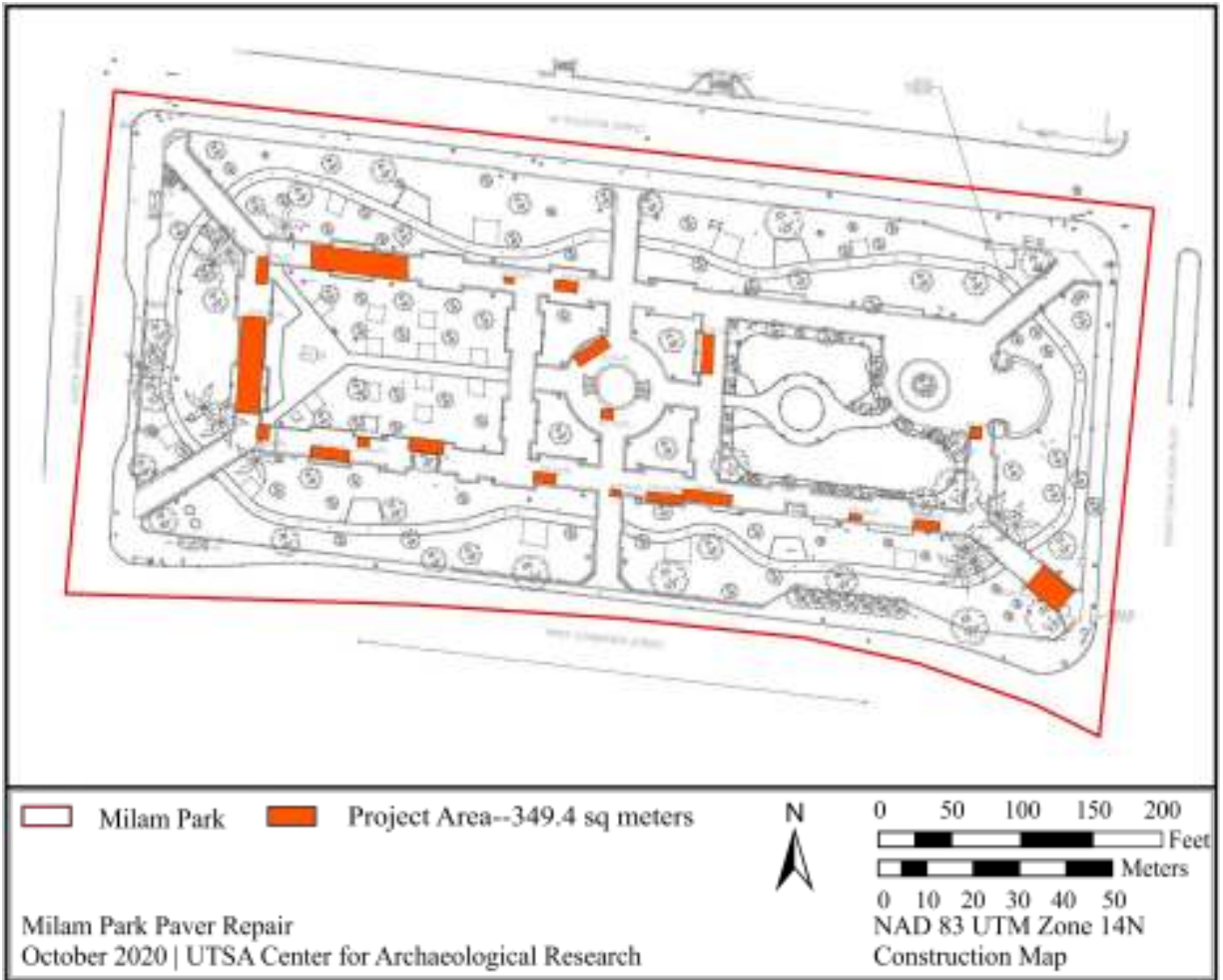


Figure 1-2. Areas manually excavated (in red) at Milam Park.

Chapter 2: Project Setting and Methods

Given the limited scope of this project, this report does not include an environmental section or culture history. This chapter presents a concise history of Milam Park and a discussion of previous archaeological investigations. It concludes with field, laboratory, and curation methods.

History of Milam Park (41BX992)

In April 1848, the COSA City Council created a four-acre public cemetery on the property that is now Milam Park. The cemetery was part of an eight-acre plot also containing the second San Fernando Campo Santo (established in 1808) and the Catholic Cemetery, both located immediately north of Milam Park on what is now the Children's Hospital of San Antonio (CCJMB A:135-136; Figures 2-1 and 2-2). The need for a new cemetery was based on the impossibility of burying remains at the Campo Santo without disinterring previous burials (CCJMB A:133). Four acres were intended for public use and four for Catholic burials (CESB 1:10-11). For an in-depth review of the cemeteries see McKenzie et al. (2020).

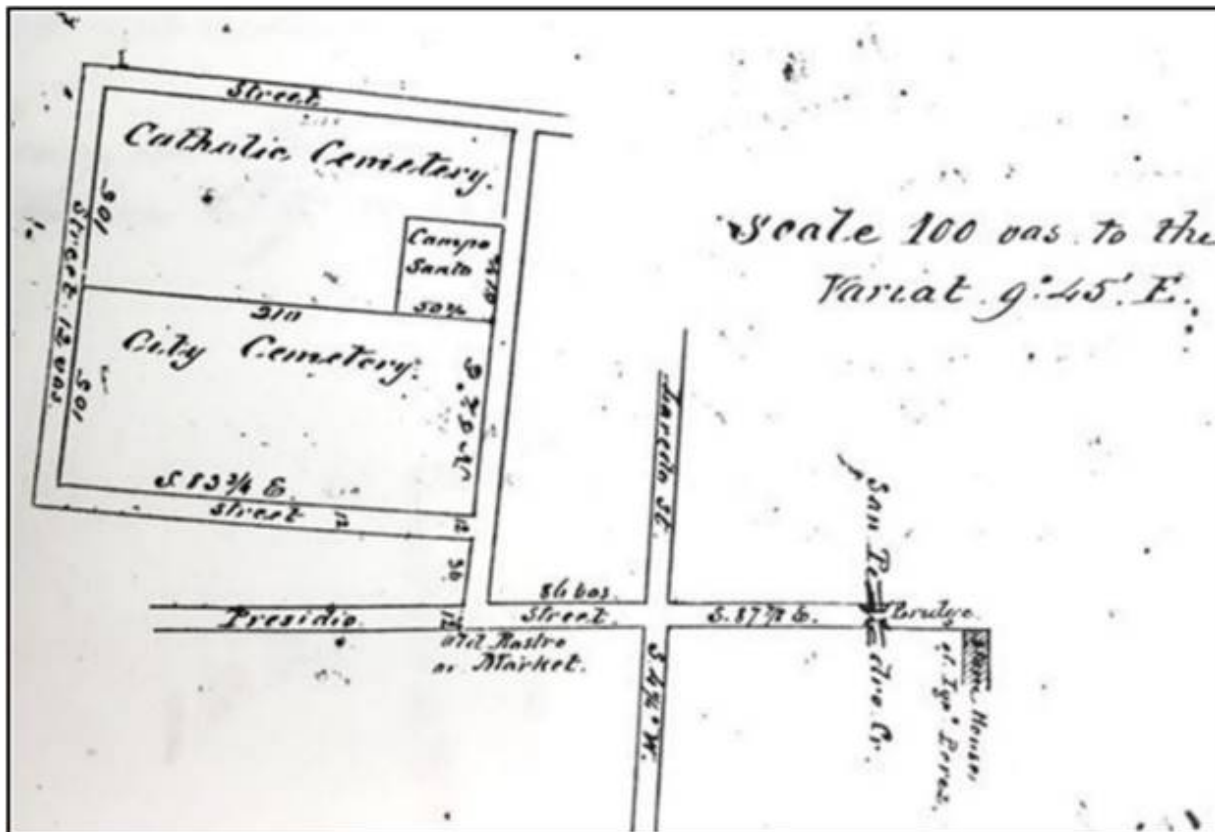


Figure 2-1. François Giraud Survey of the Catholic Cemetery and City Cemetery, March 22, 1848 (north is up; CESB 1:10).

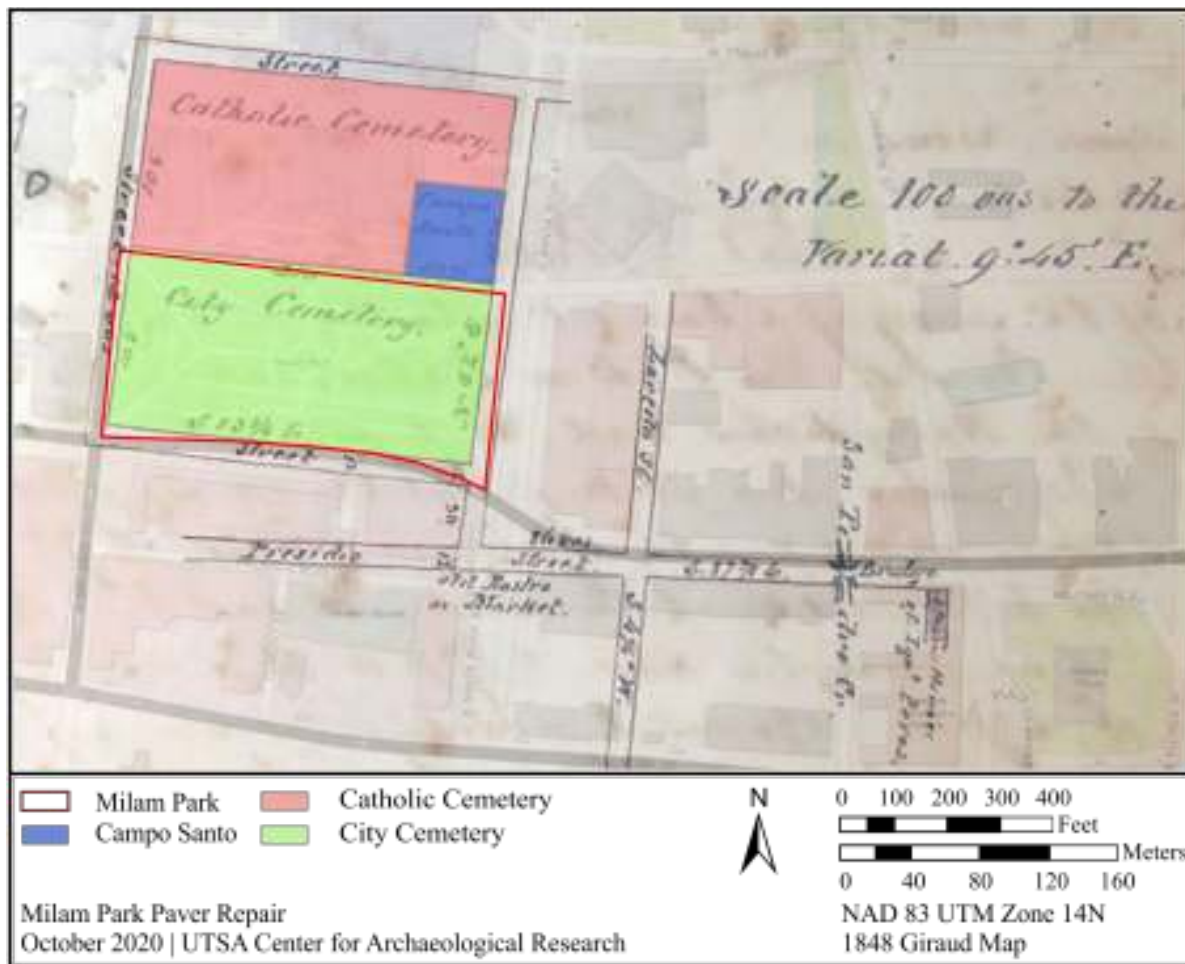


Figure 2-2. Georeferenced GIS map of the 1848 Giraud cemeteries plat with modern Esri topographic map.

The remains of Colonel Benjamin Milam, a hero of the Texas Revolution, were exhumed from the Court Yard of the Veramendi Palace, where he was killed by a Mexican sniper, and relocated to the center of the old City Cemetery in December 1849 (Barr 1990:50; *Western Texan* 1848:2). The project area was used as a public cemetery until May 1853 when the City began selling plots in the City Cemetery complex on East Commerce Street (CCJMBB:203-04; Pfeiffer 2000). The property was renamed Milam Square in 1884 in honor of Milam (Heusinger 1951; Tennis 1995a). A monument marking Milam’s grave, erected by the Texas Centennial Commission in 1879, was moved to the west end of the park during a 1938 park beautification project (Tennis 1995a).

Previous Archaeological Investigations

According to the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas, 42 archaeological sites are recorded within a 500 m radius of Milam Park (THC 2020; Figure 2-3). See Table 2-1 for a list of the sites with time period, brief descriptions, and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility recommendations.

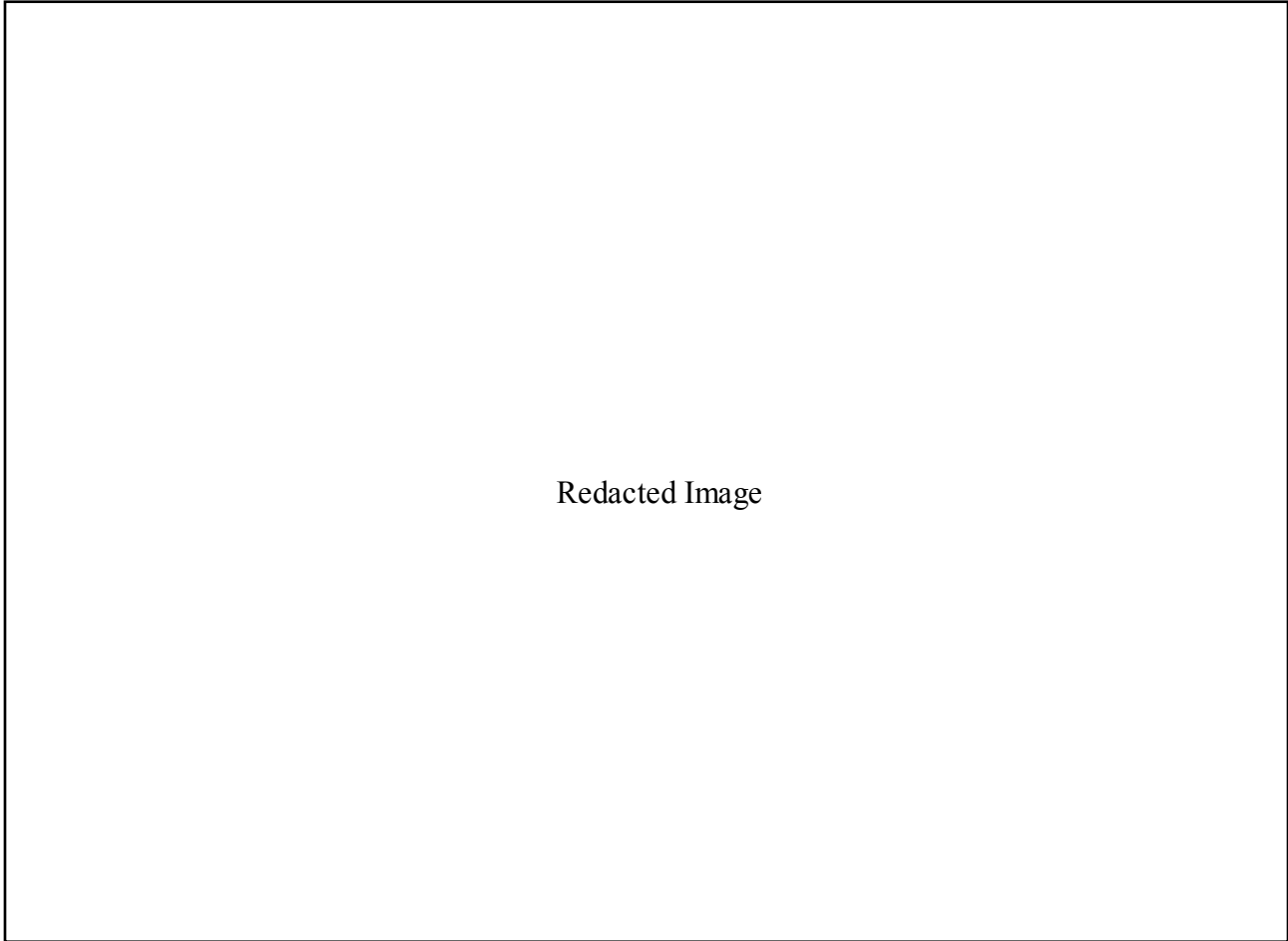


Figure 2-3. Archaeological sites within a 500-meter radius of Milam Park.

Table 2-1. Sites within a 500 m radius of Milam Park

Trinomial	Site Name	Time Period	Description	NRHP Eligibility
41BX7	San Fernando Cathedral	Historic	18th century Cathedral	Undetermined
41BX179	Casa del Capitan, Presidio de Béxar	Historic	Spanish Colonial, 18th century, and later structure and artifacts	Eligible
41BX302	Navarro House	Historic	Mid-19th century structures	Eligible, SAL
41BX508	Menger Soap Works	Historic	Mid-19th to mid-20th century structural remains	Eligible
41BX600	Steves and Sons, George Vaughn Complex	Historic	1907-1913 commercial structures, historic artifacts	Undetermined

Trinomial	Site Name	Time Period	Description	NRHP Eligibility
41BX604	Steves Sash and South, Steves Lumber Yard	Historic	1907-1913 commercial structures, historic artifacts	Undetermined
41BX611	Marx House, Peter Marx House	Historic	Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts	Undetermined
41BX612	Callaghan, Navarro House	Historic	Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts	Undetermined
41BX613	Navarro, Leal House	Historic	Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts	Undetermined
41BX615	Anton Reicher Shop	Historic	ca. 1889 commercial structure, historic artifacts	Undetermined
41BX616	Anton Reicher House	Historic	1889 residential structures, historic artifacts	Undetermined
41BX620	Alazan Acequia	Historic	Late 19th century irrigation ditch, Late-19th to early 20th century artifacts	Eligible
41BX795	Ruiz Property	Historic	ca. 1734-1950 residential/commercial structural remains, historic artifacts	Undetermined
41BX992	Milam Square	Historic	Cemetery and artifacts	Undetermined
41BX1598	N/A	Historic	Historic and Spanish Colonial period midden areas, St. Joseph's Orphanage (1800s), possible colonial wall (Presidio)	Undetermined
41BX1967	Santa Rosa Privy	Historic	Late Statehood (1865-1900), Modern (1901-present), yellow brick-lined privy	Eligible

Trinomial	Site Name	Time Period	Description	NRHP Eligibility
41BX2088	N/A	Prehistoric and Historic	Prehistoric burned rock midden, structural remains and trash pits (dating between Spanish Colonial to Early-20th century)	Undetermined
41BX2092	N/A	Historic	Domestic debris scatter	Undetermined
41BX2194	N/A	Historic	Structural remains, privy/trash pit, artifacts	Ineligible
41BX2195	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible
41BX2196	A. Androlli Saloon and Residence	Historic	Trash pit and artifacts	Ineligible
41BX2197	Gebhart Chile Powder Company Warehouse	Historic	Structural remains	Undetermined
41BX2198	Hotel Rex	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible
41BX2247	N/A	Historic	Structural remains, artifacts	Ineligible
41BX2248	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible
41BX2251	Courthouse Pit	Historic	Early to Mid-19th century artifact pit	Ineligible
41BX2252	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Undetermined
41BX2253	N/A	Historic	Structural remains, artifact concentration	Undetermined
41BX2254	N/A	Historic	Well, artifacts	Undetermined
41BX2255	N/A	Prehistoric and Historic	Prehistoric artifact scatters, historic structural remains and artifact scatters	Undetermined
41BX2256	N/A	Prehistoric and Historic	Privy/trash pit, Native American ceramics, Spanish Colonial artifacts	Undetermined
41BX2257	N/A	Historic	Spanish Colonial-Historic occupation site	Undetermined
41BX2258	N/A	Historic	Colonial structural remains, historic artifact concentration	Undetermined
41BX2259	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Undetermined
41BX2345	N/A	Historic	Possible acequia/irrigation ditch	Undetermined
41BX2346	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible

Trinomial	Site Name	Time Period	Description	NRHP Eligibility
41BX2347	Majestic Theater	Historic	First Majestic Theater built in 1913	Ineligible
41BX2348	First Presbyterian Church	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible
41BX2356	N/A	Historic	Streetcar track alignment	Ineligible
41BX2359	Menger Soap Works, AME Church, Alamo Icehouse, Alamo Ice and Brewing Company	Historic	Four structure foundations	Potentially Eligible
41BX2361	N/A	Historic	Layer of yellow brick pavers with a red star impressed brick, artifacts	Ineligible
41BX2363	N/A	Historic	Structural remains	Ineligible

Two investigations, one performed by the CAR from 1992 to 1994, which recorded the park as archaeological site 41BX992 (Tennis 1995a, Tennis 1995b), and one conducted in 2013 by Atkins North America, Inc. (Nichols 2013) have been completed at the park. Pape-Dawson Engineers is currently conducting exploratory investigations and monitoring mechanical excavations of the sidewalks and streets bordering the park. The CAR completed a two-phase survey of Milam Park in advance of park renovations (Tennis 1995a, Tennis 1995b). Phase I entailed the monitoring of three excavated trenches in an attempt to determine the exact location of the grave of Colonel Benjamin Milam. The burial was exposed near the center of the park, 1.1 m (3.5 ft.) below ground surface (Tennis 1995a). After his remains were exhumed and analyzed, they were reinterred in the western portion of the park at the base of the Milam Park monument. The remains, a Caucasian male, age 40-49, were determined to be Milam based on skeletal indicators, such as height, handedness, and pathologies (Tennis 1995a). A second burial was discovered in April 1994 while completing Phase II of the project (Tennis 1995b). During the mechanical excavation of an electrical trench on the south side of the park, human bone was observed in the trench wall, 0.5 m (18 in.) below the ground surface. CAR archaeologists exhumed the burial and remnants of the associated coffin. The burial and bone screened from the trench backdirt were analyzed at the Smithsonian Institution. The analysis indicated that the remains were a Hispanic/Caucasian male between the ages of 30 and 34 with no pathologies.

In 2013, Atkins North America, Inc. completed archaeological monitoring for redevelopment of Milam Park that included an update of a pre-existing 0.2 acre playground. Although the project was over an area that was built up to protect any unmarked human burials, it resulted in the discovery of five possible grave markers (Nichols 2013). However, after further evaluation and three test pits in the vicinity of the possible

markers, it was determined the “grave markers” were construction debris from past park renovations (Nichols 2013).

Field, Laboratory, and Curation Methods

The CAR conducted archaeological monitoring during the manual replacement, repair, and repositioning of sidewalk pavers at twenty locations in Milam Park. CAR staff completed a daily log of activities supported by 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. All records generated during the project were prepared in compliance 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 2308.

Chapter 3: Results of Field Investigations

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, CAR staff monitored the removal, repair, and replacement of sidewalk pavers from 20 locations at Milam Park (41BX992). The removal consisted of manually removing the pavers and correcting the substrate to achieve a level walking surface. Some locations required the removal of cement chunks that were preventing an even surface, while other areas required large additions of play sand to prevent shifting (Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3). No human remains, cultural features, or artifacts were found during monitoring. Because all excavations were confined to previously introduced paver substrate, sediments from the project were not screened.



Figure 3-1. Removal of pavers on the west side of the Benjamin Milam monument.



Figure 3-2. Paver repair on the west end of the park facing San Saba Street.



Figure 3-3. Paver repair near the gazebo and playground.

Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

In response to a request from COSA, the CAR conducted archaeological monitoring of the repair and removal of sidewalk pavers at twenty locations in Milam Park in San Antonio, Texas. All excavations were confined to previously introduced paver substrate. No features or artifacts were noted. Due to the property's prior use as the City Cemetery, the probability of encountering human remains is high. CAR recommends archaeological monitoring of any future work in the park.

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