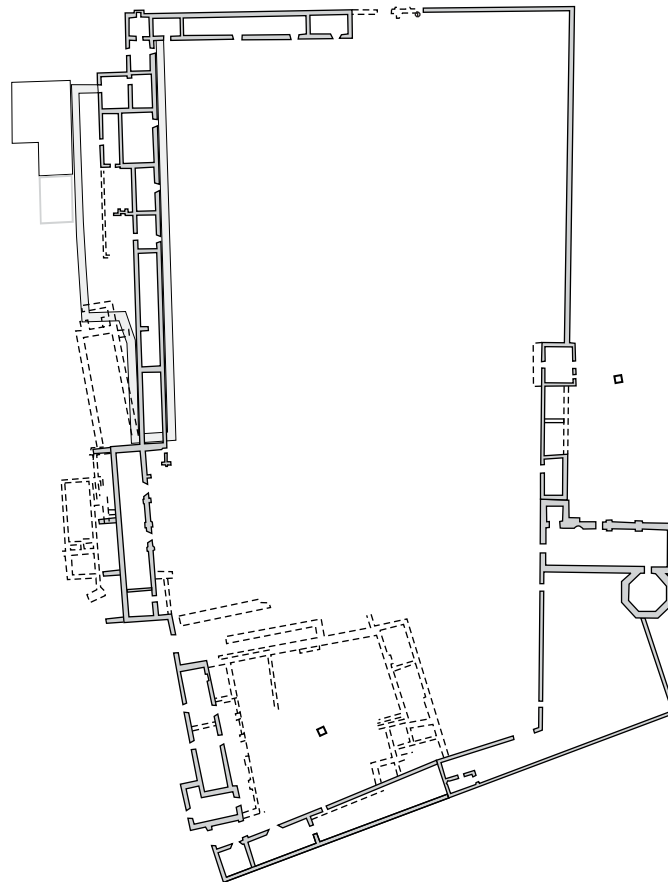


# Archaeological Monitoring of the Excavation of a Burial Plot for an Archdiocese Reburial at Mission San Juan (41BX5), San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

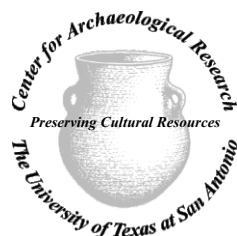
by  
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Texas Antiquities Permit No. 30937

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Technical Report, No. 98

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## **Abstract:**

On December 8, 2022, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted archaeological monitoring at Mission San Juan (41BX5) in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The monitoring was performed in response to a request from the Archdiocese of San Antonio for monitoring the excavation of a pit for the reburial of mission related human remains. As the mission is a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL) and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), excavations on the property are subject to the Texas Antiquities Code and require review by the Texas Historical Commission. The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 30937. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator on the project and Michelle Carpenter served as Project Archaeologist.

Archaeological work consisted of monitoring the hand excavation of one pit measuring approximately 1.8 m (6 ft.) long by 1.2 m (4 ft.) wide by 0.5 m (1.7 ft.) deep. Approximately 1.1 cubic meters (40.1 ft<sup>3</sup>) of sediments were manually excavated. No cultural features were encountered during monitoring. Low densities of faunal bone, floor tile, and bottle glass were noted. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines in CAR Accession No. 2700. No artifacts were collected.

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## **Acknowledgements:**

Several individuals assisted and/or supported this project. We are grateful to Rebecca Simmons and Isaac Huron of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and Dr. Emily Dylla, THC Regional Archeologist for South Texas. Michelle Carpenter of CAR conducted the monitoring. Thank you to Peggy Wall who produced the report graphics and Dr. Mary Whisenhunt who edited this report.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

On December 8, 2022, in response to a request from the Archdiocese of San Antonio, the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research (UTSA-CAR) conducted archaeological monitoring at Mission San Juan (41BX5) in Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas. The project involved monitoring of a pit for the planned reburial of mission related human remains. As the mission is a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL) and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), excavations on the property are subject to the Texas Antiquities Code and require review by the Texas Historical Commission. Because the pit location is adjacent to the Late Colonial church ruins, at the southeast end of the mission compound, 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. The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 30937. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator on the project and Michelle Carpenter served as Project Archaeologist.

The project consisted of monitoring the hand excavation of one pit of approximately 1.8 m (6 ft.) long by 1.2 m (4 ft.) wide by 0.5 m (1.7 ft.) deep. No human remains or cultural features were found during monitoring. Low densities of faunal bone, floor tile, and bottle glass were noted. No

artifacts were collected. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines in accession file number 2700.

Given the limited scope of this project, this report does not include an environmental section, culture history or discussion of previous archaeological investigations. This report follows the format suggested by the Short Report Content Guidelines of the Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA 2023). There are three chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction and a description of the project area. Chapter 2 outlines the field and laboratory methods used during the project. Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the archaeological monitoring and presents the CAR's recommendations.

### **Project Area**

The Project Area is located at Mission San Juan at Graf and Mission Roads in southeast San Antonio (Figure 1-1). One pit approximately 1.8 m (6 ft.) long by 1.2 m (4 ft.) wide by 0.5 m (1.7 ft.) deep was excavated near Room 24a. The pit is near the location of earlier excavations for the 1999 and 2013 reburials of human remains (Figure 1-2; Nichols et al. 2014; Tomka and Zapata 2001).

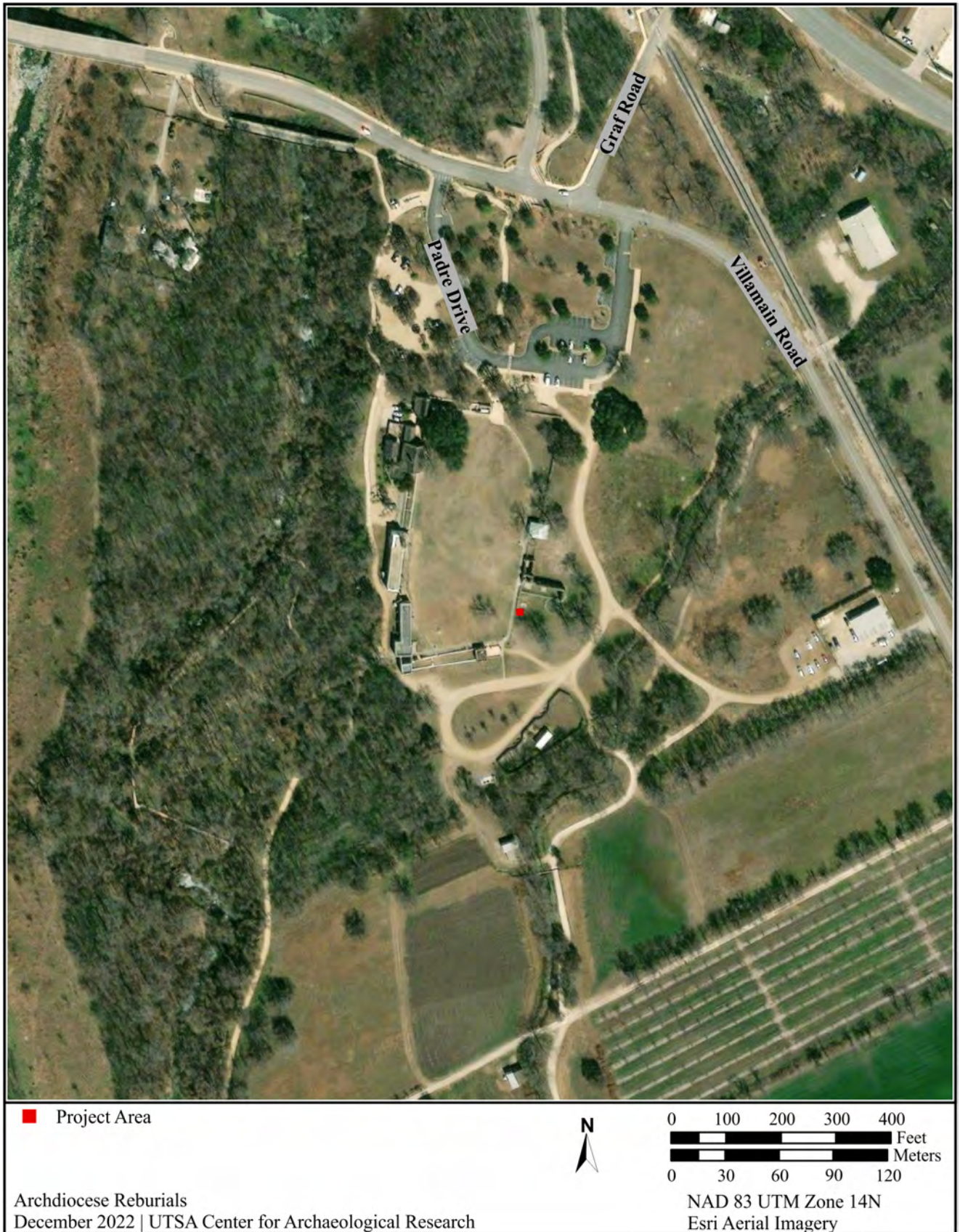


Figure 1-1. Project Area.

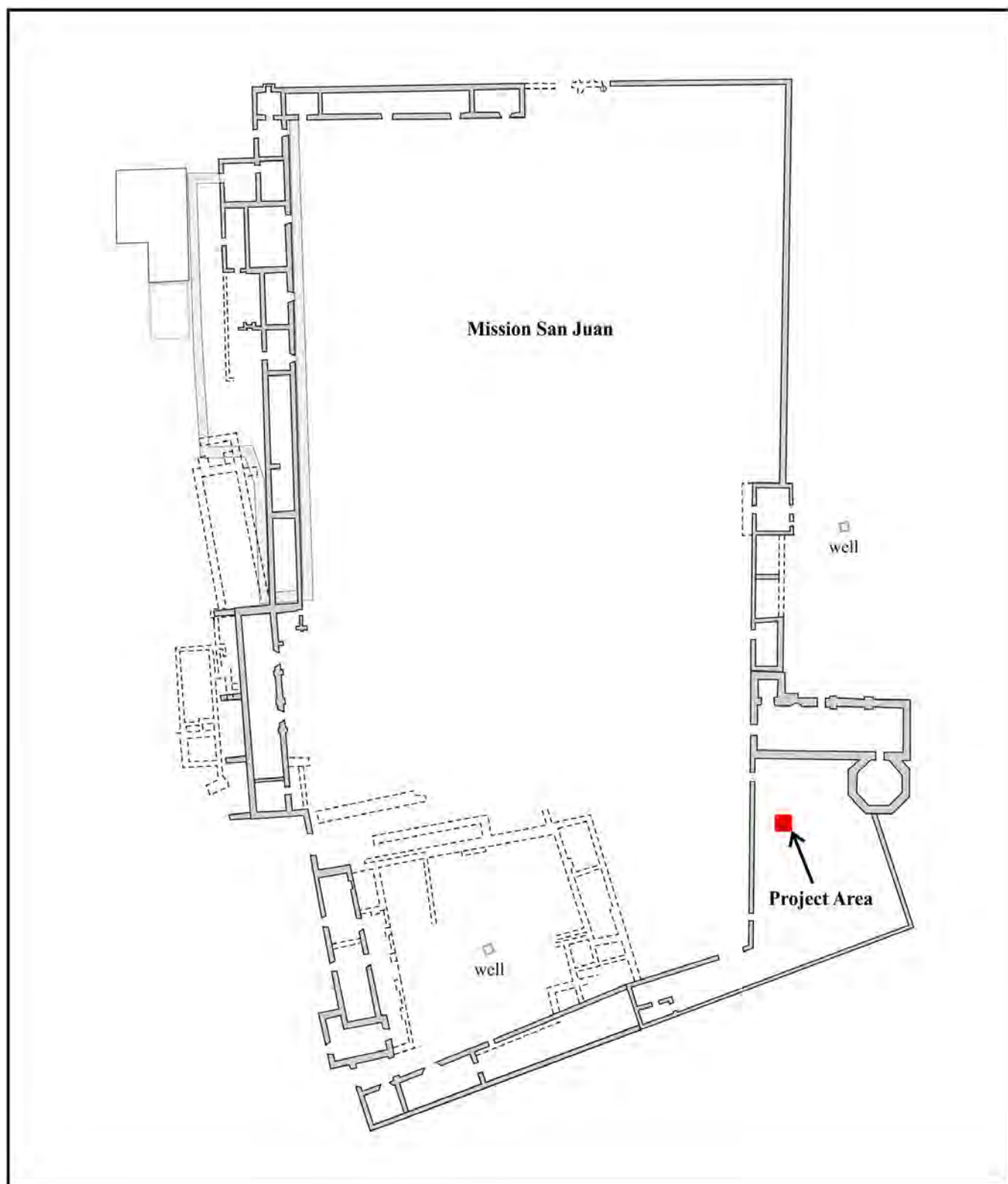


Figure 1-2. Hand-excavated pit monitored at Mission San Juan (Tomka and Zapata 2001).

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## **Chapter 2: Field, Laboratory and Curation Methods**

The CAR conducted monitoring of manual excavations of a pit at Mission San Juan for reburial of mission associated human remains. Sediments were not screened. CAR staff completed a project monitoring form 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 regulation 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 2700.

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### **Chapter 3: Results and Recommendations**

On December 8, 2022, CAR staff monitored the hand excavation of one pit measuring approximately 1.8 m (6 ft.) long by 1.2 m (4 ft.) wide by 0.5 m (1.7 ft.) deep (Figures 3-1 and 3-2). The pit was excavated for the Archdiocese

reburial of human remains associated with Mission San Juan. Approximately 1.1 cubic meters (40.1 ft<sup>3</sup>) of sediments were manually excavated. Excavated sediment consisted of loess soils on top of caliche, which was exposed at the terminus of



*Figure 3-1. Hand-excavation of a pit for reburial at Mission San Juan.*



*Figure 3-2. Hand-excavated pit at terminal depth.*

the pit. Sediments were not screened. No cultural features or human remains were encountered during monitoring. Low densities of faunal bone, floor tile, and bottle glass were noted in the excavated sediments.

Due to the Project Area's location near the Old Church, the probability of encountering human remains in the area is high. CAR recommends archaeological monitoring of any future work at Mission San Juan.

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