

**A Supplementary Report on
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF
A 15.4 ACRE TRACT ON THE
NORTH SIDE OF UTSA BOULEVARD, BEXAR COUNTY,
TEXAS**

SUBMITTED TO

**NRC Contractors, Inc.
200 Concord Plaza Drive, Suite #900
San Antonio, Texas 78216**

By

**ABASOLO ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS
San Antonio, Texas**

Report No. 122A
Abasolo Archaeological Consultants
San Antonio, Texas
March, 2013

Abstract

In February 2012, Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted a pedestrian survey and backhoe testing on the 15.4 acre NRP-UTSA tract in north San Antonio. The investigations revealed that the surface of the property had been extensively altered by the addition of construction fill and leveling. Two of the six subsurface tests revealed minor cultural traces, in the form of fire-cracked rocks, in a soil horizon buried beneath the construction fill. No chipped stone artifacts were observed anywhere on the surface or in the tests. The trace evidence seen in Tests #3 and #5 was regarded as a continuation of previously recorded site 41BX233 located along UTSA Boulevard. No additional archaeological research was recommended.

On March 13, 2013, we returned to the NRP-UTSA tract to excavate five additional backhoe trenches. These further investigations had been requested by, and negotiated with, the Office of Historic Preservation, City of San Antonio. Details of the five new backhoe tests are presented here. No cultural material of any merit (one fire-cracked rock, and a few land snails) was found. We repeat our previous recommendations for this tract: no further archaeological investigations are needed.

Introduction

On February 12, 2013 Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted an archaeological survey of a tract of land in northern Bexar County, Texas (Shafer and Hester 2013)(Fig. 1). A follow-up field program was done on March 13, 2013 at the request of the Office of Historic Preservation, to ascertain if any further cultural remains might be recognized through additional backhoe testing. Our work was done under contract with NRP Group LLC of San Antonio.

The tract under reviewed is on the north side of UTSA Boulevard (southeast of its intersection with UTEX Boulevard), consisting of 15.4 acres lying about 1000 feet north of UTSA Boulevard (Fig. 1). The tract is connected to the street by two access or entryways, one at the southeast corner and the other near the southwest corner (Figs. 1 and 2). At present, the tract is slated for development as NRP-UTSA Apartments.

Initial Survey Results

The initial survey and backhoe test (six in all) findings are provided in the initial report (Shafer and Hester 2013) and will not be repeated here except to note that traces of cultural resources were observed in Tests #3 and #5 in the form of a few of fire cracked rocks. No chipped stone was observed in any of the tests. Based on these observations, Abasolo Archaeological Consultants did not recommend any further archaeological work based on five reasons, detailed below.

First, the material is not concentrated but is widely scattered; second, no temporally diagnostic artifacts were found in association that would signify how old the features are; third, the paucity (or in this case absence) of diagnostic cultural material; fourth, due to the extensive land modification that has taken place and the fact that the original surface has likely been much disturbed by heavy machinery operations; fifth, the soil zone containing the traces of cultural material is relatively thin (ca. 50-80 cm) and unlikely to contain intact cultural stratigraphy even if diagnostic artifacts are encountered. For these

reasons we do not recommend further work at this location.

Additional Backhoe Investigations

Scope of Work

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants presented the following scope of work to NRP-Group LLC on March 12, 2013 to complete the cultural resources assessment at the NRP-UTSA tract project. The purpose of these tests was to further define the limits and concentration of cultural resources that might be buried in the area. This scope of work was negotiated with the Office of Historic Preservation in lieu of hand dug testing proposed by Kay Hindes in her response to Jesse Valdez on March 6, 2013. In that communication, she requested a series of test units be placed at/near the “positive backhoe trenches” based on Abasolo Archaeological Consultants’ findings from the previous backhoe testing. Ms. Hindes concerns rested on the documented concentration of archaeological sites along Leon Creek (see Shafer and Hester 2013 for a listing of these sites, and Collins et al. [2003] and Tennis [1996] for the basis of Ms. Hindes concerns). Ms. Hindes did not specify these units to be hand dug, but it is understood that that her request implied a Phase II eligibility testing which calls for hand-dug units, not backhoe tranches. Ms. Hindes clarified her stipulations on March 10, 2013 and agreed to forego hand testing and monitoring for additional backhoe testing. Abasolo Archaeological Consultants proposed the following tasks:

Task 1: Excavate five additional backhoe tests along the western part of the tract; one near Test #6 (north of positive test #5), one near positive Test #3, and three additional backhoe trench tests.

Task 2: Compile a supplementary report for NRP Group LLC and the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. In this regard, we notified Ms. Hindes immediately following the additional backhoe testing and reported the results.

Results of Additional Backhoe Testing

Five additional backhoe trenches were excavated on March 13, 2013, to further investigate the possibility of buried cultural resources at the NRP-UTSA tract (Fig. 3). The contractor supplied a large backhoe, and the operator, upon instruction, spread out the fill from each bucket for close examination by the authors. The depth achieved by the larger machine immediately revealed the advantage of a larger backhoe over that of the smaller Kubota used in the initial backhoe testing. The relative locations of all backhoe trenches are shown in Figure 2. Two of these were to be placed near Tests # 3 and 5 to see if the traces of cultural resources encountered in those tests continued horizontally. Tests # 7 and 8 were dug to accomplish this goal. A brief description of each is provided below.

Test # 7

This trench, 3 meters in length, was located between Tests # 5 and #6. Its placement was based on the stipulation by the City of San Antonio archaeologist to further explore the area around Test #5 where a trace of cultural material was noted. This backhoe trench was 3.5 meters long and reached a depth of 1.4 meters (Fig. 4). No cultural material was observed in the carefully examined back dirt. The profile can be described as follows:

0-12 cm:	Topsoil
12-35 cm:	Limestone fill
35-40 cm:	Dark brown clay loam, humus Munsell 10YR4/3
40-80 cm:	Yellowish brown clay loam, Munsell 10YR5/4
80-130 cm:	Brownish-yellow calcareous clay heavily mixed with light gravel, Munsell 10YR 6/6
130 cm+	Very pale yellow gravel (Munsell 10YR8/4

Test #8

This trench was placed near Test #3 in the southwest part of the tract. It was 3 meters long and reached a depth of 1.05 meters. The profile parallels that previously

recorded in Test #3 except that no cultural material was observed in the back dirt or profile. The limestone fill is capped with topsoil and overlies in situ clay loam. The profile is described as follows:

- 0-10 cm: Topsoil
- 10-50 cm: Limestone fill
- 50-65 cm: Yellowish brown clay loam (Munsell 10YR5/4)
- 65-90 cm: Light yellowish brown clay loam (Munsell 10YR6/4)
- 90-105+ cm: Very pale brown gravel (Munsell 10YR8/3)

Test #9

Test #9 was placed between Test #3 and #4. This test was ca. 3.5 meters long and reached a depth of 2.5 meters. The test encountered the original floodplain and channel fill deposits of Leon Creek as the underlying gravels encountered in Tests 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 were not present. The profile is shown in Figure 6.

- 0-20 cm: topsoil/fill
- 20-100 cm: extensive fill, with large rocks, gravels
- 100-2.5 m: deep tan, clay silt, grades from 10YR4/6 at top to 10YR5/6 at bottom

Test #10

Test #10 was placed north of Test #9 along the northwest part of the tract. It was ca. 4 meters long and reached a depth of ca. 2 meters. This was the only test in which a trace of cultural material was encountered. The trace consisted of a single fire-cracked rock that came from ca. 1.2-1.4 meters deep and several *Rabdotus* snail shells. No chipped stone or other indications of cultural material were observed. The depth of the fire-cracked rock from the original ground surface would have been about 30 cm. The trench profile is described below and is shown in Figure 7.

- 0-10 cm: Topsoil
- 10-85 cm: Limestone fill
- 85-160 cm: Yellowish brown clay loam (Munsell 10YR5/4), few *Rabdotus*, one fire-cracked rock ca. 1.2-1.4 meters.

160-200 cm: Brownish yellow clay loam (Munsell 10YR6/6), heavily calcareous

Test #11

This test was placed at the northwest corner of the tract (Fig. 2). It was ca. 3.5 meters long and reached a depth of 2 meters (Fig. 8). The excavation revealed multiple layers of introduced fill that overall was 1.1 meters thick. Beneath this was the dark yellowish brown clay loam (Munsell 10YR4/3-10YR4/4). No cultural material was observed in the clay loam back dirt.

Findings and Recommendations

The results of the five additional backhoe tests at the NRP-UTSA tract confirmed the recommendations derived from our findings in the original previous six backhoe tests. Tests # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were on the first terrace above the Leon Creek floodplain, and Tests # 4, 9-11 were on the original floodplain. Introducing mostly crushed limestone fill had modified the entire area of all tests. The introduced fill has obscured the natural topographic relief.

There are no concentrated cultural resources within the tract area. The one trace was a single, small fire-cracked rock in Test 10 associated with a few *Rabdotus* shells, but this was not a concentrated deposit typical of prehistoric midden deposits in the region. The negative evidence from Tests # 9 and 11 confirm the prediction that no extensive cultural activity took place at this locality. Furthermore, no chipped stone artifacts (flakes, cores, or tools) were noted in any of the 11 tests. Chipped stone is the most common prehistoric cultural resource encountered in central Texas, and the absence is notable in that it indicates that no prehistoric campsites are present within the NRP-UTSA tract. Based on these negative findings, we do not recommend any further archaeological work to be conducted on this property.

Acknowledgments

Many people were involved in carrying out this project. They included Jesse Valdez of MBC Engineers, as well as David Allen, Armando Martinez, and Don Miller of that firm. H. Paul Johnson represented Tellus Consulting LLC, and David Parkerson, Kavanaugh Consulting.

We are particularly appreciative of the help with logistics and scheduling provided by Mark Jensen, Assistant Developer, The NRP Group LLC. It was the responsibility of Ms. V. Kay Hindes, city archaeologist, to provide oversight for the Office of Historic Preservation, City of San Antonio. She was committed to being certain that this section of the east Leon Creek floodplain did not contain important archaeological remains. We also thank the crew who worked with the backhoe on March 13, 2013. Operator reof the backhoe for much of the time was Pablo Lookingbill. Other members of the crew were Mike Rios (crew chief), Pete Garcia, and Antonio Sandoval.

References Cited

Collins, M. B., D. B. Hudler, and S.L. Black

2003 *Pavo Real (41BX52): A Paleoindian and Archaic Camp and Workshop on the Balcones Escarpment, South-Central Texas*. Studies in Archeology 41. Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin.

Shafer, H. J. and T. R. Hester

2013 *A 15.4 Acre Tract on the North Side of UTSA Boulevard, Bexar County, Texas*. Report 122, Abasolo Archaeological Consultants, San Antonio, Texas.

Tennis, C. L.

1996 *Archaic Land Use of Upper Leon Creek Terraces: Archaeological Testing in Northern Bexar County, Texas*. Archaeological Survey Report 234. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Figures

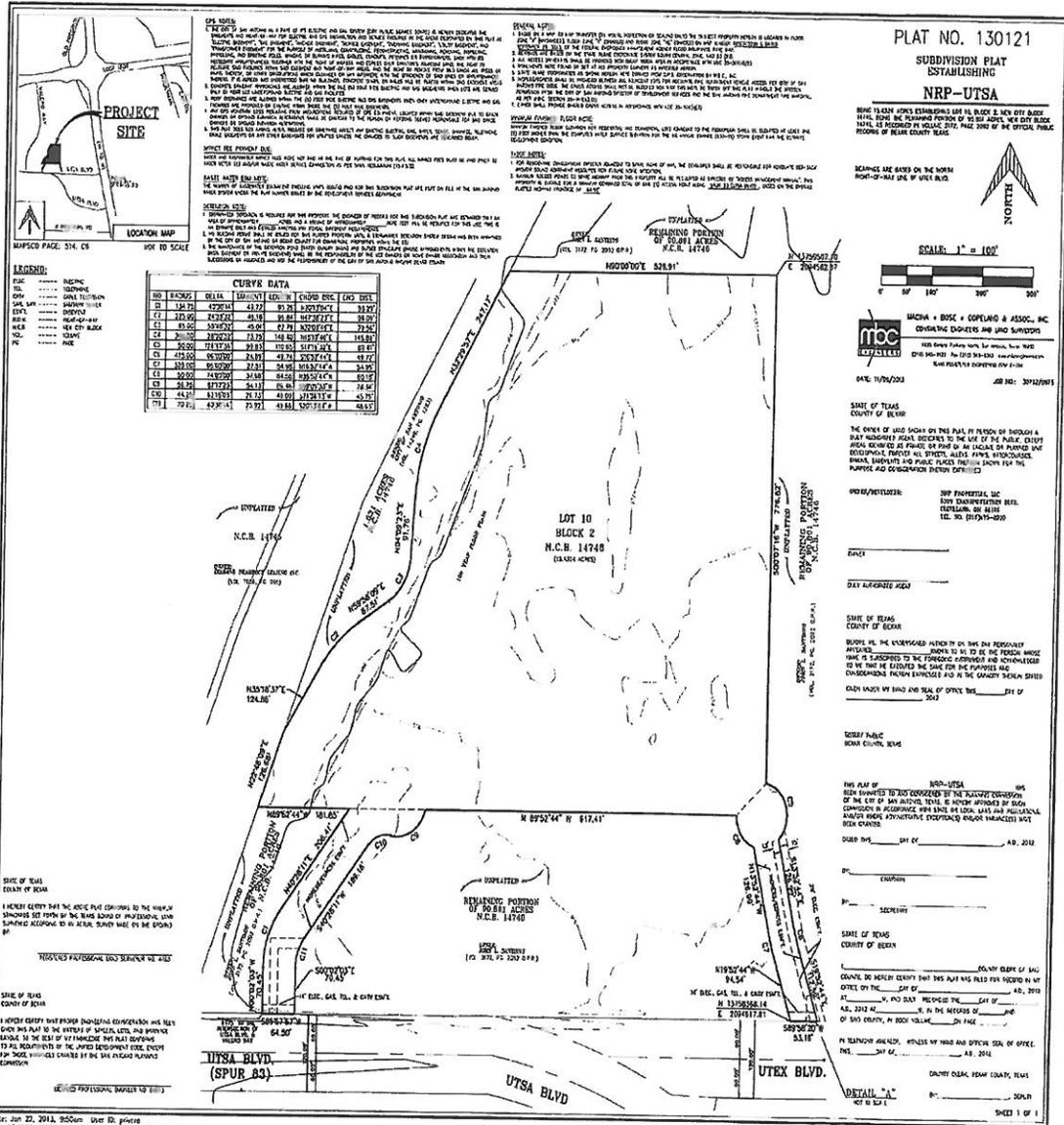


Figure 1. Plat of the NRP-UTSA tract along UTSA boulevard.

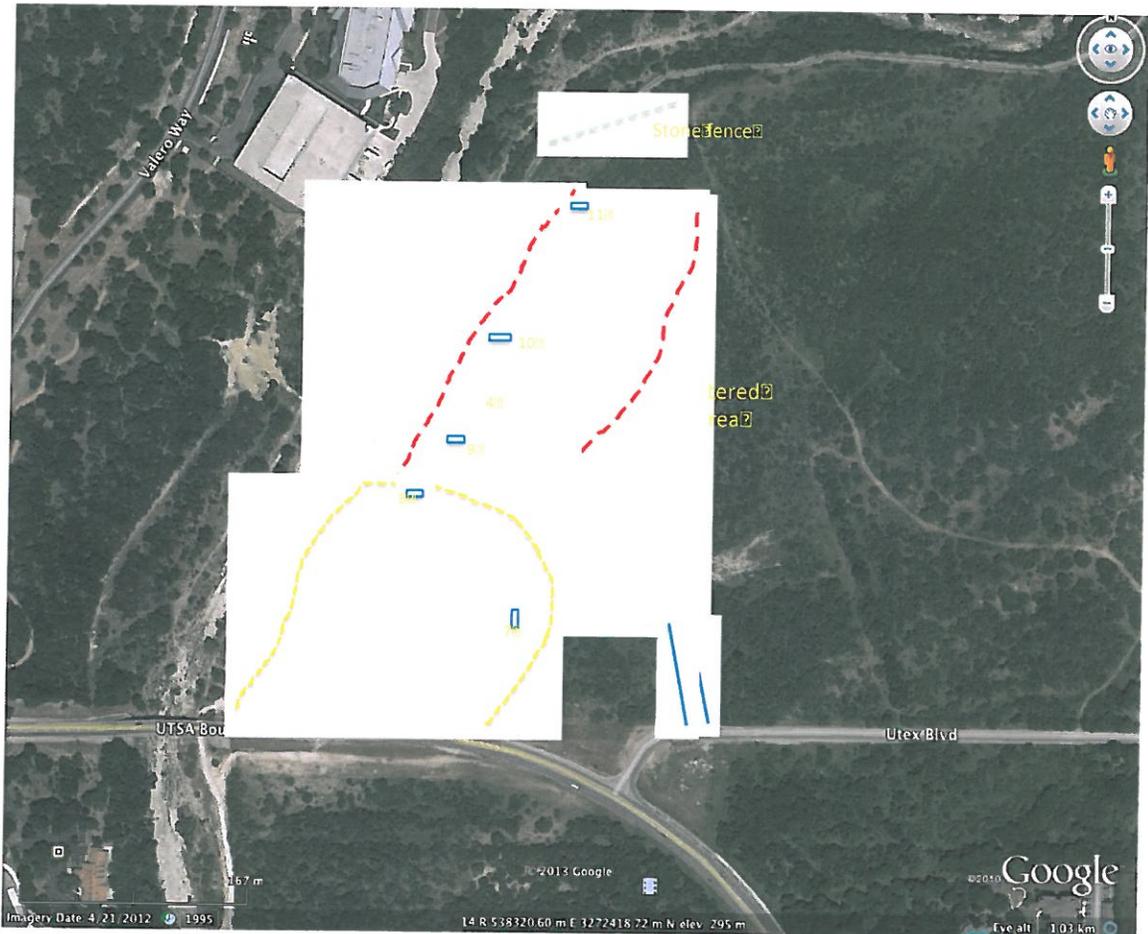


Figure 2. Aerial map of the NRP-UTSA tract showing the approximate locations of the eleven test trenches, degree of disturbances, approximate area of site 41BX233 (yellow dashed line), and remnants of a stone fence.



Figure 3. Backhoe testing at the NRP-UTSA tract.



Figure 4. Profile of Test #7.



Figure 5. Profile of Test #8 showing the topsoil, depth of limestone fill, and underlying in situ clay loam.



Figure 6. Test #9 showing the deep Patrick soils indicative of floodplain and channel fill deposits.



Figure 7. The deep profile of Test #10 showing the limestone fill capping floodplain deposits.



Figure 8. Test#11 profile showing multiple layers of fill overlying the in situ clay loam.